

Mr Finlay Carson MSP
Convener, Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
Scottish Parliament

Our Ref: JB33161

1 October 2025

Dear Finlay

Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association
RE: Proposed River Gradings 2026

I write on behalf of the above-noted organisation, to advise on their position regarding proposed river gradings for the 2026 salmon fishing season.

Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA) disagrees with the changes proposed for the 2026 season, in particular, the grading given to the Lomond System (River Leven, River Endrick, Clyde Estuary and River Fruin).

The Association contests that absolutely no assurance has been provided relating to the completeness and accuracy of data used to determine the 2026 gradings for the Lomond System.

In the absence of any assurance in respect of this, the LLAIA formally objects to the Lomond System's grading of 'poor conservation status'.

You may be aware that the LLAIA also formally objected to the 2025 river grading, due to concerns over data accuracy, completeness and the lack of 'robust' processes for collecting data from all relevant landowners and fishery owners to ensure that all returns are received and included.

I also raised this matter on behalf of the LLAIA at the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, on January 22nd, where these concerns were supported by a number of MSPs.

In addition, I tabled a motion to annull the Conservation of Salmon (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 as a result of these concerns over lack of confidence in the data used.

I am disappointed that the Scottish Government does not appear to have made much progress. The LLAIA reports having received no assurance or details of any specific actions to improve the accuracy or completeness of data on which the 2026 River Gradings for the Lomond System are based.

Last year, the Association's concerns over the validity of Catch Return data relating to Endrick Water, formed the basis of their objections.

The Association has raised numerous concerns with the Marine Directorate relating to Wild Salmon numbers .

Concerns were earlier expressed that catch data produced by the Marine Directorate relate only to numbers reported by the LLAIA and that no other riparian landowner with salmon rights is submitting catch declarations as required by the terms of the Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003.

It was also contested that nil catches were also declared when LLAIA water bailiffs have seen and recorded the catching of salmon on non-LLAIA stretches of the River Endrick.

The LLAIA submitted names and addresses of other known salmon riparian landowners to Simon Dryden and Keith Main, formerly of the Marine Directorate, in late 2017, following a meeting at Atlantic Quay on October 30th, 2017 and despite following up on this, the data was never updated to include other salmon catches.

The Association further believe that Marine Scotland have not appropriately executed their duties, as a result of the failure to ensure catch data was obtained from other owners.

Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association's position is that, as an organisation, it has invested significant time and effort in meeting with representatives of Marine Scotland and providing detail relating to fishing areas owned on the River Endrick, not only by themselves, but by other riparian landowners, in order to improve data and records.

LLAIA believes that the lack of robust and appropriate data is of concern in arriving at the 2026 River Gradings.

I would be grateful if you would take these comments on board and note the reasons for objection and concerns over robustness of data used.

I have also sent similar correspondence to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Yours sincerely



Jackie Baillie MSP
Dumbarton Constituency