

Bid to halt salmon decline

GLOBALLY, Atlantic salmon have suffered a massive 70 per cent decline in the past 30 years and this continuing downward spiral has triggered a major new research collaboration.

British and French scientists are pooling expertise, resources and 30 years of data to maximise current international research efforts.

This three-year collaborative study, MorFish (Monitoring for Migratory Fish), comprises two leading research partners, including the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, a leading UK research charity based at Fordingbridge, and the Institut

National de la Recherche-Agronomique, a French research agency.

Funding of 2.5m euros has been achieved through the EU Interreg programme, which encourages cross-border partnerships and demonstrates the importance of the project to unlock some of the complexities of fish declines.

There is no single reason for the decline: overfishing, climate change and habitat destruction have all been linked to depletion.

Its complex life cycle – salmon begin life in a stream, migrate to sea for their

adult life and finally return to their birthplace to reproduce – makes it even harder to pinpoint the primary factors.

Dylan Roberts, head of fisheries research with the GWCT, explained: “With collapses in populations continuing, there is an urgent need to gain a better understanding of the causes.

“The GWCT and INRA hold more than 30 years of under-exploited data on salmon and by combining our experience, expertise and technologies, we believe will add considerably to the pool of knowledge currently available to the international scientific community.”

