

**Minutes of Annual Public Meeting of
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board
Held on 27th January 2015 at Haddo Estate Office**

1. Present:

C I Wolrige Gordon	Esslemont (Chairman)
G Smith Jnr.	Ellon Castle
R Coutts	Secretary of Newburgh Angling Club
A Drysdale	SNH - Forvie
J. D. Pirie	Mandate for Ardlogie
E Ritchie	Mandate for Ramornie
R Dey	ADAA President representing Machar Pool
C Simmers	SEPA - Fraserburgh
M Geoghegan	SEPA - Fraserburgh
C Buchan	Auchmacoy
A Paterson	ADAA – River Ythan Convener representing Ardlethen
A Wells	Association of Salmon Fishery Boards

In Attendance

M H T Andrew	Clerk to the Board
A Milne	River Superintendent

2. Apologies for Absence:

No apologies had been received.

3. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman of the Ythan District Fishery Board welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meetings purpose was to ensure an opportunity for members of the Public to question any aspect of the Boards work and to raise any issues relevant to the management of the resource. The meeting Agenda had been published on the Ythan District Fishery Board website and all proprietors had been informed in writing. Copies of the Annual Report had been sent to Proprietors and were available on the website. Copies were available at the meeting.

4. Consideration of Report by Clerk and Bailiff 2014 and Accounts to 25 July 2014

The clerk advised that there had been a significant fall in catches of salmon and grilse. This totalled 141 for the season with a further 29 caught in the extension. The 8 year average was 394. Sea Trout catch had held up well with a total of 1821 fish caught in the season against an average of 1634. The season extension had been less successful than the previous year.

No questions or comments arose from the report save that R Dey advised that the artificial stocking with non-native sea trout stock was not supported by science unless there had been a catastrophic loss of fish.

Mr Dey also queried that cost of mobile phones and asked if a different “cheaper” contract could be entered into.

5. Update on Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Review

Alan Wells of ASFB advised that the report had been published in October with a wide range of recommendations which would be consulted on further. These included:-

- a. A licence being required by anglers who wish to kill fish – governed by a tagging regime.

- b. A de-centralised model of management with Fishery Management Organisations being the local delivery vehicle.
- c. A central governing and policy unit within Scottish Government.
- d. Finance
 - i. A levy system administered centrally altered to include other fisheries (Coarse fish).
 - ii. A rod licencing scheme the income from which to be used to encourage angling "Angling for All".

Once Scottish Government has carried out the a inter-departmental review of the report a consultation document leading to a Draft Bill to be published in 2016 will be produced and parties given a further opportunity to consider the terms of new measures. It was noted that Land Reform forms part of the review process.

It was also noted that Scottish Government is currently subject to a number of complaints to the EU in relation to levels of exploitation within SAC rivers.

6. Programme of Activities for 2015

These are contained within pt. 15 of the report and were read out by the Clerk.
These are:-

The Ythan is vulnerable to diffuse pollution from the agricultural activities in the District and to accidental pollution from farms, industrial estates, development and housing. Previous incidents have been numerous and led to significant fish kills.

The Board staff will continue to monitor the river for pollution and to support SEPA with any subsequent action,

The Board will encourage anglers to abide by the Conservation Policy and will ensure compliance with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2014 no 327 – Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Time and Catch and Release) (Scotland) regulations which requires all fish caught from 11th February to 31st March to be returned alive at to the river.

Board Staff will carry out electro fishing surveys (conditions allowing) in support of surveys being undertaken by The River Ythan Trust.

The Board will support Aberdeen University and SNH in monitoring and surveying seals within Forvie NNR. This includes work to establish the proportion of salmonids in the diet of seals. Scottish Government has been unwilling to provide financial support for this work.

The Board will continue to work with SEPA in all cases of pollution or CAR licensing failures.

Board staff will continue to monitor the river for poaching or angling without a permit and to carry out coastal patrols and to work with Police Scotland to protect the river against illegal activity.

Board staff will continue to liaise, monitor and inspect netting activity to ensure compliance with weekly close times and to ensure that nets are compliant with statutory conditions.

The Board will continue to collect catch data from anglers and proprietors.

7. Proposals made by salmon anglers, tenant, netsmen and members of the public

No proposals had been intimated.

8. Date for next meeting

25th June 2015 at Newburgh. Venue to be confirmed

9. Any Other Competent Business

No other business was raised

