

**Minutes of Annual Public Meeting of
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board
held on 23rd January 2018 at the Haddo Estate Office**

1. Present:

Robert Dey	ADAA President representing Machar Pool
Charles Buchan	Auchmacoy Estate
Sandy Collie	Haddo House Angling Club
Mike Stewart	Haddo House Angling Club
Eric Ritchie	Ramornie
David Smith	Aberdeen & District Angling Association – Ardlethen
John Pirie	Mandate for Ardlogie
Val Leeming	M Bruce & Partners Ltd

In Attendance:

Jamie Urquhart	Don / Dee DSFB
M H T Andrew	Clerk to the Board

2. Apologies for Absence:

Alec Paterson	ADAA
Charles Ian Wolrige Gordon	Chairman

- 3.** In the absence of the Chairman, the Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting's purpose was to ensure an opportunity for members of the Public to question any aspect of the Board's 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 2017 and Account

The report and the relevant pages of the accounts had been circulated to Proprietors and had been available in the Fishery Board website.

The year had seen the retirement of Sandy Milne as Water Bailiff and his being replaced by the River Don Bailiffs who worked in parties of three at different hours throughout the day and night. Over the period that they had been operating on the Ythan (April 2017 to date), they had given three warnings to anglers who were found to be fishing without written consent.

The Clerk reported that the salmon and grilse catch had been a great deal better in 2017 than 2016 with around 129 fish caught of which 111 had been returned. A rate of 86%. For sea trout, the numbers had held up well with 954 sea trout and 571 finnock, of which 1,263 had been returned. A rate of 83%.

It was noted that the River Ythan Trust had succeeded in having the invasive species (Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed) controlled along the river banks and tributaries. It was confirmed that the Board would assist the Trust again in 2018 if necessary.

The accounts were approved and signed by the Clerk on behalf of the Chairman.

5. Update on Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Review

The Clerk reported that there had been no change supported by the Government and that as a result, the Board structure remained the system for operating salmon fishings in Scotland. It was felt that this was now unlikely to change.

The Ythan had now fallen into Category 3 in which all salmon have to be returned to the water. The bailiffs or Police Scotland would be responsible for prosecuting anyone who killed a salmon within the district.

6. Programme of Activities for 2018

The Clerk advised that this was included in the summary within the report which had been circulated.

7. Proposals Made by Salmon Anglers, Tenant Netsmen and Members of the Public

- i) Members of the HHAC proposed that with all fish having to be returned, the practice of worm fishing on the Ythan should now cease. There was considerable debate amongst anglers with members of ADAA in support of worm fishing, particularly for finnock, and little evidence that fish caught on a worm were less likely to be returned to the river alive.

The Clerk advised that to ban the practice of worm fishing, there would need to be complete agreement by all Proprietors on the river and that such agreement was obviously not going to be obtained. In the absence of agreement, the practice of worm fishing remained a legal method of catching salmon or sea trout but could be banned by the Proprietor or club operating in the District on their own water.

- ii) The number of seals at Newburgh was increasing each year and it appeared that the seals were now pupping there which confirmed their preference for the haul-out site at Newburgh. The haul-out site destination had been confirmed and there was active deterrence against disturbance of the seals by Seal Watch. The seals had become a tourist attraction to Newburgh and the car parks could not cope with the number of visitors.

The number of seals chasing salmon up river was thought to have increased. The Board had a licence to shoot three grey seals and one had been despatched near Boatie Tam's in September. Another had been seen at Methlick and possibly the same seal had been close to the railway bridge at Ellon for some time. The Clerk asked that anglers and proprietors report seal sightings to him for the necessary control to take place. It was agreed that the Bailiffs' 24 hour hotline number be given to proprietors to report seal sightings.

Charles Buchan suggested that a seal scarer could be installed at Logie Buchan bridge where he could obtain a nearby power supply. The Clerk agreed to look into this with the River Dee Directors who had experience of setting up and operating seal scarers.

- iii) It was suggested that better use be made of the skills of the Bailiffing team as poaching was having little impact on the river and was considered very rare. The improvement of habitat or salmon and sea trout spawning / juvenile stock was suggested as was some electrofishing surveys and counts of goosander, merganser and cormorants.

- iv) Anglers asked if any more 'pink salmon' had been caught in the Ythan. There had been one at Ardlethen during the season and it appeared that numbers in 2017 had reduced. This could be because the pink salmon life cycle is two years so spawning adult fish return to the fresh water every other year. It had been reported that spawn laid in Scottish rivers had hatched and gone to sea in the autumn when there was little for the fry to feed on so their chances of survival had been severely reduced.

8. Election of Board Members

It was agreed that the Board would comprise:-

Lower Proprietors

Robert Dey
Charles Buchan
Val Leeming

Upper Proprietors

Eric Ritchie
Alec Paterson (or David Smith)
John Pirie
Charles Iain Wolrige Gordon

Co-opted

Anglers	Mike Stewart	-	HHAC
	Ron Coutts	-	Newburgh AC

C I Wolrige Gordon had intimated that he no longer wished to be Chairman and had proposed Bob Dey to be the new Chairman. This was seconded by Charles Buchan and David Smith. There were no other candidates.

9. Date for Next Meeting

Proposed for 26th June 2018 at 2.30 pm at the Haddo Estate Office.

10. Any Other Competent Business

None.