

**Minutes of Public Meeting of  
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board  
Held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 at 2.30 pm at the Newburgh Inn**

1. **Present:**  
Caroline Simmers representing SEPA  
Charles Buchan representing Auchmacoy Estate  
Anouk Kahanov representing River Ythan Trust  
Alec Paterson representing Aberdeen and District Angling Association  
And River Ythan Trust  
Ken Chalmers representing Newburgh Fishings  
John Pirie representing Ardlogie  
Eric Ritchie representing Ramornie  
Bob Dey representing Aberdeen and District angling Association

2. **In Attendance**  
M H T Andrew Clerk to the Board

3. **Apologies for Absence:**  
C I Wolrige Gordon (Chairman)  
Alexander Milne (River Superintendent)  
Annabel Drysdale (SNH – Forvie)

In the Chairman's absence, Mr Andrew (Clerk) chaired the meeting.

4. **Update from Clerk and Water Bailiff**

In the absence of the Water Bailiff, the Clerk reported that sea trout had been caught in the estuary and up as far as Ellon. Mr Chalmers confirmed that sea trout were being caught but not in great numbers and not large in size. Other rivers were finding similar results.

Mr Dey reported that the early part of the season had seen good catches of finnock throughout the river. Finnock of over 1lb had been caught – all had been returned. Two spring salmon had also been caught.

Mr Andrew reported that the Ythan, along with other rivers, had seen historic levels of flooding earlier in the year. It was not thought that this would have a detrimental effect on fishing or on fish eggs. He also reported that it seemed unlikely that USAN would net the river for sea trout although they had brought two cobbles to the river.

5. **Wild Fisheries Review**

Mr Andrew reported that there was likely to be a slow down in the process due to a change in the minister responsible.

Work was ongoing to determine the grouping of rivers within FMAs (Fishery Management Areas) and FMOs (Fishery Management Organisations). There was great concern about cost and it was anticipated that there would be a shortfall of £3m as matters stand. Rod licences were being considered but were strongly opposed. A charge on commercial salmon farming had been rejected but a proportion of Crown Estate income from licencing was being considered.

Mr Andrew explained that he and Mr Paterson had attended meetings with the Deveron and Ugie Boards. At the most recent, Jeff Gibbons of Scottish Government had been present but had not been very forthcoming. There were funding issues involving the Deveron / Ugie / Ythan combinations that were likely to prove difficult if that route was taken. Mr Andrew also had talks with the Dee / Don Boards who would welcome the inclusion of the Ythan. In many ways this was thought to be a better geographical alliance as there was word of a Moray coastal FMA which would include the Deveron. The Clerk sought consent to continue discussions with the Dee / Don which was approved.

**6. Update on Seals**

It was noted that the numbers were back up to similar levels as the previous year. There was no update on the proposed designation of a haul out site. Many local organisations, including the Board, Trust and local Council had expressed the same view that the area of designation should be restricted to the North bank where the seals had hauled out and not to other areas.

**7. Conservation Code for 2017**

The Clerk advised that he had not received any information or request from Scottish Government about the catch and release policy despite the river being in Category 2. In discussion it was noted that the Newburgh Club did not have a copy of the current code and that their limit on fish was considerably greater than the current code limit. It was suggested by the Clerk that he or another Board member should attend their annual meeting to discuss a change in their code. It was noted that currently the river performs very badly in sea trout returned to the water. This is primarily due to the estuary fishings

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

To be advised – late January / early February 2017.

**9. AOCB**

(i) Charles Buchan advised that he had been given, without request, about 100 salmon tags by Scottish Government. This seemed very strange as he only operates a net for sea trout. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Jeff Gibbons and ask for an explanation.

(ii) The huge spate had removed a great deal of weed but the roots remained and the weed was growing as in the past. It was agreed that removing the weed was the only effective method and that this needed to be done early. It was noted that whilst the weed is technically a waste, SEPA would not be taking action against those putting weed on the bank provided it could not fall back into the river.

(iii) Alec Paterson updated the meeting in regard to the activities of the River Ythan Trust. A copy of his update is attached as an annex to this Minute. The activities of the Trust included spraying giant hogweed plants on the Tarty burn. Mr Dey asked why the Water Bailiff, Sandy Milne, had not been helping with spraying. The Clerk advised that he would arrange for Mr Milne to assist with the spraying.

(iv) The Clerk reported that the 3 year season extension experiment had now come to an end and asked if there was any feedback from anglers as to whether or not it had been a success. It was generally felt that the extension had not added much to fishing and that the results had been mixed. It was agreed not to try to continue the experiment.