

**Minutes of Public Meeting of  
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board  
held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 at the Forvie Centre, Collieston**

**1. Present:**

R Dey	ADAA President representing Machar Pool
C I Wolrige Gordon	Chairman
A Drysdale	SNH
M Geoghegan	SEPA
E Ritchie	Ramornie
J Pirie	representing Ardlogie
A Paterson	representing ADAA, Ardlethen
A Kloppert	River Ythan Trust

**In Attendance:**

M H T Andrew	Clerk to the Board
M Bilsby	River Dee and Don District Salmon Fishery Boards

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

Ron Coutts

**3. Minutes of Meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

The Minutes of the meeting, which had been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Update from Clerk**

Following the retirement of the Water Bailiff, Sandy Milne, the Don and Dee District Salmon Fishery Board Bailiffs had been patrolling the river in a shift pattern of three patrols each lasting four hours with a maximum of twelve hours per week. Each patrol consists of three warranted Bailiffs from a pool of eight led by Jim Kerr,

After the first 2-1/2 months of activity, there is nothing, so far, to report. The team can be contacted at any time via their 24 hour 'hotline' on 01467 642121.

The Bailiff can carry out river improvement work including clearing blockages if required.

**5. Wild Fisheries Review**

The Clerk reported that Scottish Government had decided to retain DSFB's rather than create Fishery Management Organisations. However, to continue to operate as DSFBs, there would need to be a Fishery Management Plan in place for each District.

Mark Bilsby advised that the expectations for these plans were being reduced and a revised template was being looked at. There had been a uniform response against the proposals as they were and it was expected that the new template would be available by Christmas.

Fishery Management Scotland (FMS) which had replaced ASFB, was working in the interests of DSFBs.

## **6. Update on Seals**

SNH had held a seminar and public meeting at Newburgh on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 which Anabelle Drysdale, Anouk Kloppert and the Clerk had attended. The interests of angling and the impact, particularly in the sea trout fishings in the estuary, of seals on the Ythan, was particularly represented at the meeting by Mrs Forbes-Clark who now works for USAN and The Udney Trust. There were problems being caused at the car park and on the board walk by the number of visitors who were coming to see the seals. There was insufficient signage for visitors. It was noted that fishermen tend to spend more in the locality than seal watchers and that as a result of the numbers of seals there were less fishermen than in the past. This was acknowledged by SNH.

It was agreed to set up a group to include all interested parties to be led by Aberdeenshire Council. The Clerk had asked for a place on the group.

Alec Paterson asked if a proper scientific study of the impact of seals on sea trout could be carried out. Mark Bilsby advised that the Vattenfall Study would be monitoring the sea trout population within the three rivers (Dee, Don and Ythan). Tagging of sea trout, coupled with an acoustic array some 4 kms offshore, would provide interesting results.

## **7. The future of Worm Fishing on the Ythan**

Sandy Collie raised the matter of worm fishing and sought a ban for the period from February to May to be imposed by the Board. This brought up a discussion about the Conservation Code. The Code was voluntary and prohibition from worm fishing would require a Statutory Instrument if it were to be compulsory. No river in Scotland had such a ban and as there were proprietors and anglers who wanted to have the ability to fish with a worm, it would not be possible to apply for a ban.

The Chairman noted that there were differing opinions on the matter. It was also noted that finnock numbers appeared to be unaffected by worm fishing in the early part of the season as numbers were increasing year on year. The ADAA permitted worm fishing on certain beats where the water was slow and sluggish where it was an appropriate method of fishing. They also encouraged young anglers to fish with a worm as this method was more likely to be successful in catching fish. Once a young angler had caught fish, they usually wanted to (a) continue fishing and (b) use other accepted methods of fishing.

## **8. Conservation Code**

If applicable for salmon still in 2018, to remain unchanged.

## **9. Any Other Competent Business**

1. Alec Paterson raised various matters of interest and concern for information.
  - (a) Mink : A bid for control had been made under SISI to HLF promoted by SNH. This would cover invasive species within the Ythan catchment.

- (b) INNS: For the fourth consecutive year, the River Ythan Trust had teamed up with The Ythan Volunteers to control the spread of Giant Hogweed in the District. The Board had provided £1,000 and further fundraising with Tesco's (£2,000) and Aberdeenshire Council had enabled spraying to take place on over 50 miles of riverbank around Fyvie and on the Tarty burn. In the Fyvie area, control now reached 95% of the outbreak.
  - (c) Farm Inspections: SEPA had deferred inspections in the District until 2018. For another year, there would be no effective control of cattle waterings in burns. Michael Geoghegan reported that work was still ongoing in the Ugie District, where inspections had taken place some years ago to control cattle waterings. There were few positive results yet.
  - (d) Obstructions: A feasibility study was to take place on the Bronie burn at Scottisley by SEPA. This would involve ecologists and electro fishing. It was noted that the obstructions on the Bronie were only impassable in low water conditions.
- 2 (a) John Pirie raised the issue of the catch returns for the whole river for the season. Incorrect data had been provided for the estuary fishings which indicated a very low return rate. The Clerk had sent data information provided by Mrs Forbes-Clark to Marine Scotland and the official data had been rectified which showed a return rate of 59%.
- (b) Mr Pirie also commented on a report on the economic value of salmon fisheries in Scotland which indicated that the profitability of commercial nets was £40,000. The present moratorium on net fishing had resulted in compensation being paid to owners of netting rights. It was understood that compensation of £1.6m was being paid by Scottish Government over the three year period.
3. Bob Dey reported that the replacement bridge at Ardlethen would be installed in July. It was noted that the Peath bridge, which had been washed out, was still sitting on the bank.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The Triannual Proprietors' meeting to elect a Board and subsequent meeting of the Board, would be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 at the Haddo Estate Office.