
NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
Annual Public Meeting Minutes

Time: 19:30

Date: 19th January 2017

Location: Press & Journal Suite, Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club

1. ATTENDANCE

The public meeting was attended by 24 individuals including local anglers from across the district, representatives from Inverness Angling Club, Lochaber DSFB, The Scottish Ghillie, Grahams of Inverness, Ness Castle Fishery and Dochfour Fishings.

2. PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction

Neil Cameron – Acting Chairman, Ness District Salmon Fishery Board (NDSFB)

In the absence of Michael Martin (Chairman of the NDSFB), Neil Cameron gave a brief welcome and introduction to the 2016 Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 15th May 2016. He thanked each of the sponsors CBEC Ecoengineering, Ness Castle Lodges and Strutt and Parker, without whom the high-quality print productions would not have been possible.

2. "2016 – A Year in Review"

Chris Conroy (CC) – Director, NDSFB

Chris provided an overview of the activities of the Board over the previous year (including an analysis of the provisional 2016 rod catches) together with those planned for the forthcoming year.

3. "Ness and Beaully Fisheries Trust: Report on 2016 Activities"

Nick Barker (NB) – Senior Biologist, Ness and Beaully Fisheries Trust

Nick provided an overview of the activities of the Trust over the last year, in particular the results of their fish monitoring programmes.

4. "The River Lochy Smolt Programme"

John Gibb (JG) – Drimsallie Hatchery Manager, Lochaber

Our guest speaker John Gibb gave an overview of the River Lochy smolt programme, together with other projects that are being delivered via the Drimsallie Hatchery.

3. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions were invited after the presentations. Topics discussed included:

- ***Is there something that you could inject into Wild Salmon, for lice protection, similar to what is used for farmed fish?***

JG responded that smolts can be dipped in a treatment called SLICE, but the problem is trapping a large enough proportion of the smolts to make a difference. He said that they have considered taking two control groups, tagging both and only dipping one, then observing survival rates.

- ***I would like to congratulate Chris for the work he work he's undertaken on Facebook. The significant number of views received of some of his recent underwater videos has brought visibility and interest in the catchment that is far wider ranging.***

Chris Conroy thanked Scott Mackenzie for his support. He stressed that the Ness DSFB in keen to promote the Ness district salmon fishery wherever possible and to encourage more rods on its rivers and lochs.

- ***Is there any way to transport smolts trapped above Garry Dam down to Loch Oich to avoid pike predation?***

CC reported that measures are currently underway to improve smolt passage through Garry Dam. Rather than physically transport the fish, the Ness DSFB is working with SSE to assess the feasibility of passing the fish through the machine at Garry Dam.

- ***Just going back to the question about sea lice treatments, does that protect them for life?***

JG responded that it protects the fish for about five weeks, possibly nine. It would just be enough to get them out past the fish farm cages.

- ***What about Inland fish farming?***

JG responded that inland fish farming is feasible, with the new Inchmore Hatchery on the Moriston being an example. The problem is that it would be significantly more costly.

- ***About predator control, can we look inside the stomach of sawbills to see whether they have been eating Salmon, as evidence?***

CC explained that the results of such research are already available and used in our annual application for a sawbill management licence. The quota on our current licence is the highest it has ever been, allowing shooting as an aid to scaring. This system has worked well on the Ness system in recent years.

- ***Wild Fisheries Review - is there an update?***

NC reported that boards and trusts may still amalgamate with their neighbours, but the pressure to do so has dissipated. The Scottish Government stated that they are not in a position to be conclusive about the legislative timetable for fisheries reform. They are also giving further consideration to funding arrangements.

4. AOCB

CC report that no requests of matters for consideration at this meeting had been received.

5. CLOSE

NC thanked our guest speaker Jon Gibb, together with Chris Conroy and Nick Barker. Finally, he thanked everyone for coming and wished them a successful fishing season.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21.45