

NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD Annual Public Meeting Minutes

Time: 19:30

Date: 23rd January 2014

Location: Kingsmills Suite, Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club

1. ATTENDANCE

The public meeting was attended by 34 individuals including representatives from Inverness Angling Club, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Scottish National Heritage, Spey DSFB, Dochfour Estate, Ness-side Estate and Ness Castle Estate, in addition to the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board (NDSFB) and Ness & Beaully Fishery Trust (NBFT).

2. PRESENTATIONS

There were three presentations given, each of which is published on the NDSFB website (<http://ness.dsfb.org.uk/good-governance/publications/>). The presentations were as follows:

Introduction

Michael Martin, Chairman NDSFB, gave a brief welcome and introduced the 2013 Annual Report and the first speaker Chris Conroy.

2013 – A Year in Review

Chris Conroy, Director NDSFB, gave a presentation providing an overview of the activities of the Board over the last year and those planned for the forthcoming year.

Why are more than 90% of our salmon dying at sea? Problems identified and some possible solutions

Tony Andrews, Chief Executive Atlantic Salmon Trust, provided an insight into the latest research into the survival of Atlantic salmon at sea.

There was an opportunity to raise questions at this point, prior to a short break.

Update on Monitoring and Projects within the Ness System

Keith Williams, Senior Biologist NBFT, gave a presentation providing an overview of the activities of the Trust over the last year and those planned for the forthcoming year.

3. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Initial questions were invited after the talk by Tony Andrews, from the Atlantic Salmon Trust. At this time the questions and comments included:

- One attendee spoke of the potential impact of renewable energy scheme proposals on salmon populations and asked Tony Andrews (TA) whether the impacts are known.

TA stated that the available data in Scotland is insufficient to show the damage being done

and justify the protection of the Salmon. Chris Conroy (CC) commented that the Pentland Firth project on the North Coast had identified a number of areas where the data was lacking and that they Marine Scotland Science were attempting to address this.

- TA suggested that the funding required to carry out the necessary research and protection of salmon populations was lacking. He said that if only 25% of the profits from the sale of salmon angling equipment were reinvested into the conservation and protection of wild fish stocks, then much could be achieved.
- Further comment was passed that the Crown Estates would be receiving funds from wind turbine and aquaculture in the UK and that this was not being reinvested either.
- TA commented that Fisheries Trusts overall were underfunded by comparison to those in Canada and North America.

Further questions were invited at the end of the presentations. Questions and comments included:

- Had the barrier to fish passage on the Farigaig mentioned by Keith Williams (KW) been removed yet?

KW answered that it had not and explained the complexity of achieving such a task. He noted that a CAR license would be required for an operator to remove it and that the Water Environment Fund might be worth contacting in order to explore funding options.

- One attendee commented that they were delighted that we will be tagging fish again this year and asked about the rates of recapture we might expect.

CC provided some indications of catch statistics from other areas. Michael Martin commented that we cannot manage what we cannot measure and that this will be a valuable addition.

- One attendee asked about the sawbill licence application and commented that the Spey were awaiting a response also.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21:30.