

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Proprietors within the Tay District held in terms of Section 44(1) of the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 held at Birnam Institute, Birnam, Dunkeld at 11am on Tuesday, 13th December 2016.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Alastair Riddell
John Wood
Claire Mercer Nairne
Mike Smith
David Godfrey
Duncan Twigg
Edward Eadie
Simon Wright
Vivian Thomson
Alan Dunnet
Grant Tigwell
David Parratt
Bruce Reid

In Attendance: Dr. David Summers, Fisheries Director
Inga McGown, Clerk to the Board
Stephen Mannion
Mike Brown
Simon Furniss
Geoff Coates
Iain McLaren
Geordie Stewart
Bob White
Gordon Pollock
John Lessels
Gordon Nichol
Mike Hay
Gary McErlain
Simon Hill
Alun Williams
S Watt
John McDougall
Ian Young
Ken Freshwater

Apologies: John Apthorp

The Chairman welcomed the attendees, and proceeded to work through the agenda.

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Proprietors held on 8th December 2015:

The Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting of Proprietors were previously circulated in the Annual Report and taken as read. There were no matters arising, and on a proposal by Iain McLaren, and seconded by John Wood, were approved.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December, 2015

The Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2015, which were incorporated into the Annual Report, had been circulated and were taken as read.

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the accounts and the main variances year on year. 2015 saw a surplus of £27,547.

There were no questions, and on a proposal from Simon Furniss, and seconded by Alastair Riddell, the Accounts were approved.

Annual Report 2015/6

The Annual Report 2015/6 had been previously circulated and was taken as read. On a proposal by Simon Furniss, and seconded by Iain McLaren, the Annual Report was approved.

Board Activities for 2016 season and beyond

Dr. David Summers gave an overview of the events of 2016, highlighting the 2016 catch figures, what happened to the autumn run, the Wild Fisheries Review, and the main activities of the Board throughout the year.

The spring 2016 catches had shown an encouraging start. However, from August onwards, there had been a lack of fish, and those that were caught were generally not fresh, but the Tay was not the only river with this problem, as the Dee and the Tweed were hit just as badly, if not worse. This pattern has been seen before, as Dr. Summers demonstrated in a collection of graphs with commentary.

He went on to state that the lack of an autumn run may have had various underlying factors, but it was difficult to come to any concrete conclusion, and indeed, almost impossible to predict what would happen next. The unprecedented temperatures in the Arctic may have had an effect.

Dr. Summers then went on to examine the Wild Fisheries Review, giving the history behind the review, before moving on to the current situation. It is not clear now when any Bill is likely to be introduced. One had originally been planned for late 2016/early 2017 but this is no longer going to happen. Finance, in particular seems to be a big issue and has as yet remained unresolved. There is also the matter of categorization of rivers, with the Tay catchment being largely category 1, with the exception of the Earn and the Eden which were in category 3 in 2016. They have now been recategorized for 2017, both as category 2, after much lobbying by both the Board and representatives from the rivers in question.

Rivers of all categories now require a Conservation plan, but this has yet to be defined

As to the main activities of the Board, Dr. Summers summarized these as follows:

Hatchery/Kelt Reconditioning:

There was a slight setback to hatchery operations in 2016, with an outbreak of bacterial kidney disease (BKD). This disease was carried by new broodstock fish and those affected were culled. It did not affect the old broodstock, and measures have been put in place this year to minimise the risk of such an event happening again. Our progeny are principally being used to restock the Upper Garry, Lochay, Ruchill and Cononish, and for the first time, fin clipped parr were stocked in the Catholes beat as an experiment to see how well such fish do in the mainstem of the Tay.

River Garry:

Under EU Water Framework Directive, the Garry should have been rewatered by December 2015. This deadline has obviously not been met, but Dr. Summers confirmed that talks between the Board, SEPA and SSE had almost come to a satisfactory conclusion, and an announcement would be imminent.

Lyon Project:

Dr. Summers explained this was a project led by the Tay Foundation, funded in part by the Lyon proprietors, and assisted by the Board. In essence, the project is looking to determine whether the salmon environment is more hostile above Stronuich Dam than below using modern genetic techniques.

Tummel Smolt Project:

The Tay Foundation now has two rotary screw smolts traps and the joint project is managed by the Board's operations manager, Mike Brown.

Dr. Summers reminded the assembled group that the 100% catch and release regulations will remain in place until 31st March 2017.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Summers for his report, and introduced Mike Brown, TDSFB Operations Manager, who gave a presentation on the smolt project.

Any Other Business

Query on Annual Report:

Grant Tigwell asked where the data behind Figure 4 on Page 10 of the Annual Report had come from, as he believed more fish had been released than the figures stated. The Chairman thanked Mr. Tigwell for his efforts in Catch and Release, and Dr. Summers answered his query in that the figures had been provided by proprietors themselves.

Hatchery Capacity:

Ian Young stated that he had attended most of the Board meetings throughout the year and would like to commend the Board on how they went about their business. However, since the hatchery was running below capacity, he asked whether it be possible to bring in summer and autumn run fish. The Chairman agreed that the hatchery was currently running under capacity but that the priority was to kickstart the Garry at present. Once this has been achieved, the Board may look at other parts of the system. The Board were looking to prioritise areas in most need.

Seal problems

Duncan Twigg asked whether the growing seal population could be dealt with, to which the Chairman replied that the seal population was growing at an alarming rate, but the Board had looked into various methods to deter them, and while culling might appear the only permanent solution, that would be a political minefield.

Conservation Plans:

Simon Wright asked who was responsible for drawing up conservation plans and what they entailed, to which Dr. Summers replied that it would all be explained by Marine Scotland Science in due course.

Handling of fish:

Mike Smith commended the board on their work, with particular reference to Dr. Summers for all the hard work he had done. He then went on to enquire what the best way to handle fish was.

Dr. Summers replied that the Board's catch and release code recommended not taking the fish out of the water whilst unhooking and to handle as little as possible.

7 Day Fishing:

Ian Young asked the Board whether they would be supportive of the move towards 7 day fishing which he had heard about from Fishpal. The Chairman replied that he had queried this with Fishpal and they were yet to get back to him on the matter.

Notification of Category 2:

Simon Wright stated that it was still unclear whether the Earn and Eden were category 2, as they had received no formal notification. Dr. Summers replied that the information was on the

Government website and should therefore be taken as read. The Chairman asked whether it would help if the Board wrote to the rivers, to which SW agreed it would certainly provide clarity.

ACTION: The Board to write to all Eden and Earn proprietors to inform them of their Category 2 status for 2017.

There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting.