

DEE (KIRKCUDBRIGHT) DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

Chairman	Treasurer	Clerk	Legal Adviser
J.P.H. Ingall	Mrs. P. Campbell	Mr.T.Ewing	Gavin Scott,
Airds House,	12a The Crofts,	Wayside, Townhead	Messrs. Gillespie,Gifford
Parton, Castle Douglas	Kirkcudbright.	of Greenlaw , Castle Douglas	& Brown, Kirkcudbright

Minutes of the DDSFB AGM held on 09.04.2019, 10am-12.00pm at Threave Estate education Centre, Castle Douglas

In attendance - Mr J. Ingall (JI), Mrs P. Campbell (PC), Mr T. Ewing (TE), Mr S. Ferns (SF) DRAX , Mr J. Ribbens (JR) & Mrs R. McCleary (RM) Galloway Fisheries Trust. Mr D. Thompson (DT) National Trust Scotland Threave Estates. Mr I. Lindsay (IL) Bailiff

Apologies-, Mr D. Forbes Mr R. Agnew

1. Chairman's welcome & annual report. JI Welcomed all attendees, sorry to see a low turnout.

JI reported that there had been no complaints against the board.

Board members are to be reminded to attend meetings.

Stated that DRAX had recently purchased the Galloway Hydro scheme and hoped to have a constructive future relationship with them.

JI disappointed that the river was designated a Cat 2 conservation status and should advise fisheries to continue with full catch & release. JR stated that the model for categorisation needed to change

JI Thanked NTS Threave for hosting, Pat Campbell, Tim Ewing and the GFT for all their works done in the interests of the fishery and Drax for the support given to the hatchery and that DRAX will continue to be supportive.

- 2. Treasurers Report** – PC reported that the accounts were in order although six beats hadn't paid in time, 2 had since paid and there was around £900 outstanding from Mains of Kenmuir, Slogarie, Hensol and Threave Estates. The accounts still showed the board to be slightly in profit.
- PC stated her frustration in trying to get payments from Threave Estates and DT assured her that he would poke them hard to speed up the payments. PC wondered if insurance for board members could be secured through the ASFB and that Brian Davidson at the ASFB should be contacted about this.
- PC put forward that she would most likely have to retire this year.
- 3. Matters arising/2018AGM Minutes** – JI & SF agreed minutes were in order and asked that in future key actions be added at the end of the minutes. JI stated that despite the poor turnout by board members, 2 members were enough to make the meeting Quorate but efforts would be made to encourage greater turnout.
- In discussion around the continued funding for the hatchery, SF stated that in his personal opinion there would be a requirement to provide non-discretionary funding for the continued operation of the hatchery and JI felt that with DRAX being a UK based company it would be easier to engage with them over such issues.
- SF proposed and discussions were held on the potential to close the fish ladder in the winter months in order to avoid the majority of damages to the gates from woody debris. It was agreed by all that a tentative investigation could be undertaken with an annual review and a guarantee that the water would then be used at appropriate times as freshets when fish were present.
- DT Introduced himself as the new estate manager for NTS Threave, stating that he was there representing the 2 salmon anglers they had left fishing Threave waters.
- 4. Galloway Fisheries Trust** – RM data from last season had been impacted by the Vaki being out of action and it should be up and running by May. The final amended 2017 counts showed an up-count of 595 Including 72 sea trout, the run showed the greatest proportion of springers since 2007 and a good June/July run. The final count for losses due to early season fungal infection was 44 fish. Grilse numbers were low, a trend reflected nationally and the Autumn run was poor, ending early and highlighting the difficulty faced in procuring fish for the hatchery.
- E-fish national electrofishing surveys were making a push to collect more data on juvenile populations in an effort to make sounder judgements on Conservation Statuses. A new protocol would see 30 sites annually surveyed across Galloway, 10 of which are repeat sites over a 9 year project. The Dee would have 7 sites sampled annually.
- Sadly, AS crayfish had been detected at three sites on the Water of Ken.
- DT stated that Threave were involved with the Galloway Glens landscape Partnership to

enhance habitats on the Mill Burn and he hoped that this would bring improvements for juvenile salmon populations.

RM stated that there was a proposal from DRAX that to minimise damage from and issues with debris impacting the fish pass gates, the pass could be shut down for several months during the highest flows and most troublesome times (winter). This would be looked at for feasibility and any impacts on early fish or Kelts.

JR reported that Ms J. Rodgers is running a project using temperature monitors in and around the fish ladder to assess the effects of temperature on the incidence of fungused fish and to ascertain if this is a growing trend or an occasional 'flake' and whether the temperature gradient throughout the ladder proves a barrier to migration through the ladder. Drax is supporting the research into why it is happening and how to predict and manage the problem. The temperature loggers will run throughout the year and data already highlights a major difference in temperatures between the top and bottom of the ladder.

JR stated that 14 sites had been monitored for the gas pipeline installation and that 9 sites had given rise to concerns. Notable on the Dee catchment were the Auchlane Burn and the river bed collapse on the lower Tarff. A further 19 sites were monitored for the SWS pylon installation, 4 sites were of concern with trout populations collapsing post operation. In light of this SWS has donated funding to the Galloway Glens Landscape Project for habitat improvements on the Black water of Dee.

JR reported that there was no area committee funding for the control of INNS this year and that there were concerns over the movement of crayfish in the upper system both at the fish farm and at the Doon/Deugh transfer pipeline.

Under EU funding Ms J. Rodgers had been appointed as Salmon Restoration Officer, working on issues affecting salmon aiming to prove where the biggest impact can be made and implementing a cost/benefit analysis for the best results and actions required.

JR advised that the GFT website had been updated and that most of the pertinent information about the GFT activities and the region's Fishery Boards would be hosted here. Fishery Boards can adapt their own page on this website to suit their needs. The Galloway Glens partnership is involved with the upper Dee project to ascertain how far fish travel and survive within the system.

The GFT are seeking match funding to run a smolt tagging project to identify issues with smolt migration and survival in the Dee. The Atlantic Salmon Trust has advised holding off until next year when funding may be available.

The GFT have applied for the Biodiversity Challenge fund for INNS funding

- 5. Bailiffs & Hatchery Report** – Below is an extract from the Bailiffs & Hatchery reports presented to the board, on the day there was insufficient time to deliver it in full. **TE** monitored for the re-appearance of fungused fish. Regular patrols of the ladder and

lower river between Tongland Dam and the Linn Pool as temperatures rose. Mortalities were observed throughout this vulnerable period although a number of fish in the ladder had some small lesions/fungal patches. Some tens of salmon were observed moving through and during the prolonged heatwave in July, salmon were holding up in the deep top ladder pools where flows were good and the water well oxygenated. Some of these fish were in the high teens to low 20 lbs, looking fresh and healthy, it was also observed that a number of very large Kelts were slowly dying, trapped above the dam unable to move downstream. At the same time the smolt run was on and many thousands of smolts were milling around day after day unable or unwilling to make the move to sea. Temperatures were high and these fish were undoubtedly stressed and at heightened risk from predation although thankfully no piscivorous birds were observed. These issues have been observed year after year and were being reported on by the old Head Bailiff Arthur Rigby some 20 years ago. Getting our smolts to sea should be a top priority.

In June TE had a report of a Gill net out at Ross Bay at the head of the estuary, inspections were made over the following tides but the net didn't re-appear. Further sporadic reports of similar nets around the coastline came in over the summer and autumn, all apparently set by boat. Despite patrols on suitable tides no vessels were observed setting or fishing with these nets.

The Clerk was also contacted by Jim Henderson from the Nith Board asking for permission to act as bailiff on behalf of the Kendoon fishery who were having issues with their rainbow trout being poached. TE wrote up permissions and helped facilitate contact with Scottish Power. No report has as of yet been made back to the bailiff as to the success or otherwise of this endeavour.

July saw some of the highest temperatures and the lowest flows in memory, many of the burns throughout the system were critically low with many smaller watercourses completely drying out and even larger water bodies like the Shirmers burn down to a small trickle. The Bailiff toured the catchment inspecting the majority of water courses and was saddened to see dire conditions throughout. The GFT helped by rescuing stranded fish in New Galloway but the scale of the drought made this approach unfeasible over the entire catchment.

The annual INNS Knotweed control was undertaken in late summer, spraying was carried out between New Galloway and St. John's Town of Dalry on both banks, the Coom burn, Mossdale and below Glenlochar.

TE Pleased to see that the fish ladder was cleared of debris build ups in the resting pools, thanks to DRAX and GFT for braving the late January chill to do that.

Again, anglers reported not seeing many fish at all during the season and that those that did show were not interested in being caught, seeming to run through the lower beats rather than hold up. This seemed to be apparent at the end of the season with few fish showing on the spawning beds at the Bridge of Dee and none being caught for

the hatchery. Most felt that they missed the early fish not being a typically productive time to fish and that no late fish ran making the normal comparatively good tail end fishing very poor.

Hatchery

In early autumn the hatchery was cleaned, disinfected and prepared for broodstock and ova, permissions for electrofishing broodstock in the ladder as well as for out of season rod and line capture were obtained from Marine Scotland.

Rod and line saw no fish produced at the tail end of the season and very few fish were apparent in the river around the spawning beds.

Arrangements for electrofishing the ladder were made and finally agreed on for 30th November. The lack of a fish counter meant we were not sure if any fish would be present, visual inspections had not offered up much hope of any fish and indeed no salmon were present on the 30th or again when tried on the 6th of December. A number of sea-trout were rescued and moved above the dam although numbers of these were also on the low side compared to most years.

Sadly, for the first time since its inception the hatchery did not run.

The lack of fish at the season's end was reflected across Scotland with very low numbers of fish entering most river systems. In late December the hatchery was dried out and cleared.

After a meeting between the board, GFT and Drax it was agreed that some of the monies not used for running the hatchery could be allocated for repairs and maintenance works on the hatchery in preparation for the 2019/20 season. This will be carried out during low flows this summer.

6. A.O.B.-

IL Offered the use of a drone to survey the river and check for poaching equipment and poachers. He requested that the board fund a licence so he could do this. **JJ** stated that at this time the finances couldn't support this but the kind offer would be recorded and perhaps called upon in the future.

Key Actions

DT will chase up the outstanding monies owed by Threave Estates to the Board.

JJ Look into finding a suitable replacement for **PC** as Treasurer.

SF to look into feasibility of closing ladder in winter months to reduce damages to pass gates from debris.

TE to arrange a board meeting in late August to elect the chair in the triennial elections.

TE to include actions agreed on in the minutes.

