



**Angling Trust North East Fisheries Forum (Wear)
September 20th 2017
in association with the Environment Agency**

Bowburn Community Centre
Durham Road, Bowburn, DH6 5AT

AGENDA

Meeting opened by John Cheyne, Angling Trust National Regions Manager

Environment Agency Fisheries Update, Paul Frear

Q – Waskerley and Tunstall are bone dry? Where does the water come from to keep the river flowing?

A – It will be managed from other sources and Northumbria Water will manipulate the flows so that there will never be a case of no water in there.

Q – Are the EA in control of the water coming out of Kielder? I don't see why water can't be released for the River Wear?

A – We are in control, for water to be released into the Wear either Northumbria Water would release water because they think it's the right thing to do or the Reservoir Act would need changing.

Freemans Reach Hydro update, Phil Rippon

Q – This case is in the hands of Fish Legal and I don't think this problem should be discussed!

A – John Cheyne – informed the forum that it was ok for Phil to give us an update.

A – All the info presented at the forum is in the public domain. A camera has been installed in the turbine so we can see what's happening.

Q – Why can't something be put on the turbine to stop the fish going into it?

A – The council are looking into something to stop this.

Q – I find it frustrating the Angling Trust are recommending anglers use nets with small mesh to stop damage to fish, while this turbine is damaging them!

Q – Have the figures/math been gathered for the worth of the hydro? Is it worth all these damaged and dead fish?

A – John Cheyne – The Angling Trust has been arguing this point since hydro started.

Q – How many years of operation before the hydro pays for itself?

A – 30 years.

Q – How many of the salmon that get damaged, swim off and survive?

A – John Cheyne – I think the EA have put actions in place as you have been shown to protect salmon.

Jon Shelley, Environment Agency, will talk about the “Managing Salmon Fisheries” consultation.

Q – How many drift net retirees applied for T nets?

A – Many people who took compensation for drift nets also had T nets.

Q – The majority of J nets don't get close attention; can you explain to us how there could be a sea trout only fishery?

A – T nets would hold large salmon and they would not be gilled, so they could be released. Grills would get gilled. The proportion of fish that get gilled will depend on the weather conditions and other factors. We would like to hear from you if you think a sea trout only fishery is a viable option?

Q – I've printed out the documentation and I don't like the term exploitation, I thought exploitation is what goes on in the Faroe Islands and other countries, I may have kept three salmon in last fifteen years, is that exploitation?

A – Yes, that is exploitation and the documentation is out now and doesn't have emotional connotations.

Q – There are thirty goosanders taking thirty salmon each from Boarder Esk, every day!

Q – It's the ones who are buying a rod licence who are being exploited.

Q – The only ones who are being consulted are those that buy their licence online!

A – This has been the most widely spread consultation we have carried out, working with the AT, angling and daily press. We've tried to promote as widely as possible on twitter and facebook too, alerting people how to get involved.

Q – I buy daily licences and I'm not a member of a club, I haven't been consulted because I don't buy a yearly licence.

A – You can make consultation, you don't need to have a yearly licence, we welcome views from everyone.

Q – If you allow a sea trout fishery to continue, how will bycatch be monitored?

A – If you think a sea trout only fishery is a silly idea, say so in your consultation.

Mark Owen, Angling Trust Head of Freshwater, will talk about Salmon & Sea Trout netting and the need to get involved with the current EA "Managing Salmon Fisheries" consultation. He will also give an update on the AT Save Our Salmon Campaign.

Q – If we had healthy numbers of salmon in rivers, would predatory birds be such a problem?

A – Less so of course, they migrate long distances and even if we had healthy rivers we would still be at risk and a lot of our rivers aren't healthy, lacking the right habitat.

Q – Is there anything to be done to protect stocks at sea?

A – The 5 Point Plan does include survival at sea and there are work plans, a lot of this is research. Tracking smolts will be very valuable for protection. The government has said they will respect international obligations, at the moment with Brexit, it's anyone's guess.

Q – Are there any smolts getting out to sea considering predation?

A – That's a good point, smolts find themselves in pinch points and mortality is high in these.

Jon Shelly – There are high mortalities of smolts and this needs more enquiry and consideration, also barriers to smolts getting out to sea – certainly needs to be investigated further.

Phil Rippon – flow is critical for smolt survival, a dry spring causes high mortality from stress and predation.

Q – I've fished all my life and when I was a boy there wasn't many fish and now we must appreciate all the work by the EA and Government.

Q – I remember before the EU, we used to shoot predatory birds.

A – The cormorant is the most studied bird in the world – because they eat fish. Their increase in numbers seems to have risen since the banning of DTE.

Q – If T&J nets stop, would that include the Duke and Church?

A – If you ask us then yes, if the national bylaw is changed then statute law for nets is removed.

Q – Are all the consultation questionnaires going to be answered?

A – Yes, they will and all points noted.

John Cheyne – You all know other anglers, please get them to fill in the consultation before the deadline 9th October 2017.

The consultation and a guide for filling it out can be found by visiting:

<http://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=1754>

