

Angling Trust North East Forum  
Wear  
6th July 2016  
Bowburn Community Centre

Meeting opened by John Cheyne, Angling Trust National Regions Manager

## **Environment Agency Update – Jon Shelley, EA FBG Team Leader**

Fisheries Update – [Click here to download the presentation from the Angling Trust Website](#)

Post presentation Q&A session with Jon

Q – Are there more fish passes planned for the main river?

A – Yes there are, we have carried out a full survey and have prioritised the barriers to create a hitlist. However for obvious reasons it is easier to improve the smaller obstructions as they generally cost less money and funding is in very short supply. There are difficulties with making improvements to Chester Le Street weir because it's a gauging weir and provides flood warning downstream. A fish pass has been designed for it that also gauges but it would cost £200,000 plus to implement. We just need to find a way to fund it. We work closely with Rivers Trusts and other partners wherever possible to ensure that improvements can be made as cheaply as possible.

Q – If salmon stocks aren't improved, anglers will stop buying a licence and then there will be even less money for habitat improvement projects!

A – We want to improve Chester Le Street weir, Broken Scar and open up rivers for fish passage. Working with our partners is the most effective way forward.

Q – What is planned to improve fish passage at Durham Museum weir?

A – It's a world heritage site and low priority.

Q – What is the current situation with the NE nets?

A – The last order released in 2012 closed the fishery to anyone who wasn't already in it. Currently there are 11 drift nets, 25 T nets in Northumbria and 27 J nets in Yorkshire – these are to be reviewed in 2017. The EA have investigated catch limits of nets and have submitted this to the minister. Also in 2017 there will be a review of buying out the drift nets or the possibility of closing the fishery in 2022.

Q – It makes me sad to think that the net catch of 60,000 salmon and sea trout is much more than rod caught salmon and sea trout!

A – After the review in 2017 the AT will be pushing for new limits. I would imagine that because Scotland has suspended its net fishery, pressure would be put on England to follow suit.

Q – Are there plans to clear out feeder streams? I know a beck full of tyres that obstruct and change the river dynamics.

A – There are plans and we look for opportunities to work with Rivers Trusts to carry out these projects and come up with a list of priorities. Please let us know of any areas you feel require work.

Q – How many of the migratory rod caught fish have been returned over the last few years?

A – 80% of salmon have been returned, we would like this to increase.

Q – Could you not supply a salmon catch and release only licence?

A – I will ask the question but if it was priced lower than the existing licence it would lead to a loss of funding at the very time we are trying to do as much as possible to help improve salmon stocks.

Q – I think that clubs recommending their own bag limits is the way forward!

A – Possibly, but what we need most is buy in from all salmon anglers and an increase in C&R rates right round the country.

## **Fisheries Enforcement Support Service – Giles Evans, Angling Trust North East Fisheries Enforcement Manager**

Fisheries Enforcement – [Click here to download the presentation from the Angling Trust Website](#)

Post presentation Q&A session with Giles

Q – How many EA bailiffs are there in the region?

A – There are 5 and that is one of the key reasons that the new Fisheries Enforcement Support service is so essential. We need to get volunteers and the police involved if we are to have effective enforcement.

Q – We have reported 13 incidents to the EA and have all the reference numbers, only once have the EA attended!

A – Can we have a chat at the end of the forum to discuss this in detail. At any time if you feel you have not received the service you would expect from either the Police or the EA then please get in touch with Giles and he can investigate on your behalf.

## **Reservoir Flows Project – Paul Frear, Environment Agency Fisheries Technical Officer**

[Click here to download a copy of the presentation from the Angling Trust website](#)

Post presentation Q&A session with Paul

Q – My club fishes for trout and grayling on the Derwent and I'm worried changes to the compensation flows will diminish the fishery.

A – An investigation into the past and present compensation flows demonstrated that sometimes the flow needs to be more varied to mimic natural flows, we believe this will improve the fishing on the rivers.