

# YTHAN DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

## Annual Report of the Clerk and Water Bailiff for 2017 Fishing Season

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### Board Members

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C Buchan  
R Dey

J D Pirie  
A Paterson  
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**1. State of the River**

Once again ranunculus has been present on ADAA / Ellon / Ramornie / Esslemont and Auchmacoy waters. There were no complaints of broken weed affecting downstream fishings. The weed also affects the Ebrie burn which is important for Salmon and Sea Trout spawning.

**2. Predators**

We were granted a license to shoot seals above the Logie Buchan Bridge and one was shot at Boatie Tam's. Attempts were made to shoot a seal that had been seen in the Haddo House water but it got away. There remain, however, plenty of seals at the mouth of the Ythan estuary and a recent online story has recorded them pupping at Newburgh

No mink have been caught this season but vigilance continues.

Cormorants, mergansers and geeseanders are scared off from eating young fish (including finnock).

**3. Coastal Nets**

Scottish Government has placed a three year ban now in its second year on netting in the sea and therefore no nets were operated at Port Errol during the season.

**4. Nets on the River**

USAN did not operate a net and coble system during the season. Auchmacoy estate operated a net and caught 26 sea trout

**5. 2017 Season**

River catches of salmon have been reasonable this season and very much better than 2016. Catches of sea trout in the estuary and in the lower waters were reasonably good. Good finnock fishing has been enjoyed at the beginning and end of the season. All were returned.

**6. Spawning**

Despite high water events early in the year the spawning season was good for both salmon and sea trout with a good number of sea trout in the Fordoun burn above Rothienorman and salmon below Rothienorman. The Little Water held good numbers of sea trout and Ffnnock above Cairnbanno and salmon from below Asleid to near Cairnbanno. The main stem of the river attracted sea trout above Auchterless and salmon below Auchterless. A number of sea trout were seen spawning in the main river around Fyvie and a number of salmon and grilse in the Ebrie and Bronie. Sea trout was also seen in the Youlie Burn. A number of salmon and sea trout were spawning above Methlick.

- 7. Stocking**  
No stocking took place during the year.
- 8. Seals**  
Designation of the haul out site on the North side of the estuary was confirmed.
- 9. Vehicle and Communication**  
The vehicle has now been sold
- 10. Board Staff and Honorary Bailiffs**  
Sandy Milne retired from his position of River Superintendent on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 since which time the work of bailiffing the river has been conducted by a team from The River Don District Salmon Fishery Board. There have been no reports of poaching. The team can be contacted at any time 24/7.
- 11. Sea Poaching**  
There have been no reports of poaching on the coast of the Ythan during the season.
- 12. Pollution / Obstructions**  
There have been no reports of pollution during the year.
- 13. River Ythan Trust**  
The Bailiff congratulated all those concerned for their work for the Ythan Trust, with special thanks to Alec Patterson. The report from the Trust is attached as an annex to this report.
- 14. Conservation Policy**  
The Board has adopted a conservation policy since 2008. This has been updated annually and places restrictions on the numbers of fish that can be caught and kept. The river has been placed in Category 3 which requires all salmon to be returned to the river. There will be an opportunity to discuss the number of sea trout that can be taken – if any.
- 15. Complaints Handling**  
The Board has adopted a Complaints Handling Procedure which is available from the Clerk.
- 16. Members' Interests**  
The Clerk will keep a register of financial interests of all members of the Board and any person associated with the Board.

**17. Activities for 2018**

The Ythan is vulnerable to diffuse pollution from the agricultural activities in the District and to accidental pollution from farms, industrial estates, development and housing. Previous incidents have been numerous and led to significant fish kills.

The Board will continue to monitor the river for pollution and to support SEPA with any subsequent action.

The Board will ensure anglers to abide by the Conservation Policy and will ensure compliance with the 100% catch and release policy on salmon that is being imposed on the river during 2018 season.

Board Staff will carry out electro fishing surveys (conditions allowing) in support of surveys being undertaken by The River Ythan Trust.

The Board will support Aberdeen University and SNH in monitoring and surveying seals within Forvie NNR. This includes work to establish the proportion of salmonids in the diet of seals. Scottish Government has been unwilling to provide financial support for this work.

The Board will continue to work with SEPA in all cases of pollution or CAR licensing failures.

Board staff will continue to monitor the river for poaching or angling without a permit and to carry out coastal patrols and to work with Police Scotland to protect the river against illegal activity.

The Board will continue to collect catch data from anglers and proprietors.