

**Common Good Fund Committee – 27 February 2013****PERTH TOWN WATERS FISHING BEATS: REVIEW OF 2012 SEASON AND PROPOSALS FOR MANAGEMENT CHANGES****Report by the Depute Director (Environment)**

This report summarises the review of the Perth Town Waters Fishing Beats for 2012 season and recommends changes to the beats, fishing from boats and sale of permits in response to management issues.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to

- (i) Note the review of fishings for 2011/2012.
- (ii) Removal of beat Five from the Council Fishing Permit.
- (iii) Fishing by boat to be removed from the conditions on the permit.
- (iv) Discontinue the use of Visit Scotland to sell fishing permits for the Council.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The fishery which the Council administers is typically known as the “Perth Town Waters”; the actual locations and numbers of beats are illustrated on the attached map (Appendix 1). The right to fish within this area was granted to “the people of Perth” by Robert II in 1375 and was subsequently embodied in Royal Charters. For the purposes of this definition, “the people of Perth” has been interpreted to be anyone living within the City of Perth ward boundaries.
- 2.2 In 1959 there was such local demand for fishing that a permit system was introduced (up until then access appears to have been free). As the Perth and District Angling Association (PDAA) was the only club associated with the Town Water, permit eligibility was extended to members of the PDAA. Members who live outwith the “City of Perth” ward boundaries can obtain permits but at a higher charge.
- 2.3 In 1988 the then Leisure and Recreational Department for Perth and Kinross District Council assumed responsibility for the issue of day and season permits and other administrative matters. Today this responsibility rests with the Community Greenspace Section of The Environment Service. Specific duties include the issue of permits, keeping records of permit holders, collating returns, and completing statutory information requests for catch returns of salmon and sea trout, as requested by the Scottish Government Fisheries Research Services.
- 2.4 The Town Waters fishery is one of the first to open within the Tay catchment area each year, commencing on 15 January and operating until 15 October

(for this period in 2012 income from permits was £2,113.00). All revenue received through the issue of permits is passed onto the Common Good Fund.

- 2.5 The cost of visitor day permits is currently £10 between 15 January to 30 June, and £15 from 1 July to 15 October (last day of the season). Seasonal permits for £18 are only issued to local residents who stay within the Perth City boundaries or members of the Perth and District Angling Association (PDAA) who live within 15 miles radius of Perth. Perth and Kinross residents who reside out with the city boundary pay £36 for a season permit.
- 2.6 Both day and seasonal permits are issued for rod and line fishing only within Perth Town Waters fishing beats for salmon and fish of the salmon kind.

### **3. CATCH RETURNS FOR SALMON & SEA TROUT 2012 SEASON**

- 3.1 In 2012 there were 87 seasonal fishing permits issued, a decrease on the previous two seasons; 2011 - 92 season permits, 2010 - 139 season permits. There were 35 day permits sold in the past season, a slight increase on the two previous years.
- 3.2 Rod and line fisheries such as the Perth Town Waters are not currently required to provide indices of fishing effort (no. of fishermen, no. of days fished, length of time involved etc) to statutory bodies. The number of permits issued, in itself, is not an indicator of the extent of fishing being undertaken. In light of this, no data has been collected, preventing any sound linkages to be formed between the numbers of fish caught and potential increased levels of fishing.
- 3.3 The total number of season permit holders to submit their catch returns in 2012 was 40 out of 87 permits issued. The total number of day permits catch returns in 2012 was 30 returned out of 35 issued.
- 3.4 Catch returns for salmon, grilse and sea trout caught and retained and released in the 2012 season is summarised in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 2. The statistics presented within this section are obtained from permit holder returns (even if nil) made in response to the provisions of Section 64 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. Data published in the tables are as reported; the Council relies on anglers correctly classifying grilse and salmon categories.

### **4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 Through the review of the 2012 season three management issues have arisen which the Council would like to address. These involve:
- (a) Blocked access to fishing beats
  - (b) A number of complaints about fishing from boats

- (c) The potential increased administration fees proposed by VisitScotland for day permit sales.

#### 4.1.1 Access to Fishing Beat Five

4.1.2 Fishing beat Five known as Incherrit located near Kinfauns Castle (see appendix A), was accessed via a lay by on the Dundee Road and informal crossing of the railway line. Network Rail shut the access in 2010 by erecting a 2.5m high fence in response to their new safety policy for public access across railway lines and have confirmed this is a permanent closure. Unfortunately there is no other access by foot to the beat and therefore it is proposed to remove this beat from the permit.

#### 4.2.1 Fishing from Boats

4.2.2 A number of complaints (approximately 10) have been made by anglers fishing from the bank about the increased use of boats for angling. The main problem seems to be that one or two boats tend to put down an anchor and fish from the best fishing places for long periods of time. This prevents larger numbers of anglers fishing from the bank. Anglers on boats also pay for permits to fish on Council beats but as their use of boats prevents other anglers from using the beat it is proposed to solve this by making the fishing permit bank fishing and by wading only. This would also ensure that bailiffs can ensure anglers have permits and avoid the problem of boats fishing outwith the designated beats.

#### 4.3.1 VisitScotland Fish Day Permits

4.3.2 VisitScotland have to date sold Council Fishing Day Permits for which they received a commission of 8.33%. They have advised us that they have decided to increase the commission they require to 10%. As only 9 permits were sold last year by VisitScotland and the Council sells fishing permits from Pullar House it is proposed to stop selling permits through VisitScotland. Day permits can be obtained from Pullar House Monday to Friday during office hours. Day permits have and will continue to be posted out to anglers wishing to fish the river at weekends prior to their visit. This proposal will streamline permit sales and avoid paying additional commission.

## 5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board and Fisheries Research Services were consulted in the preparation of the report. The Head of Legal Services and The Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of the report. Consultation with VisitScotland has been ongoing for several months.

## 6. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no staffing or property resource implications associated with this report. There may be a slight increase in income as a result of the removal of the commission paid to Visit Scotland.

## **7. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012**

7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report relates to the following Objectives:-

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)**

8.1 An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

8.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- i) Assessed as **relevant** and actions taken to reduce or remove the following negative impacts: whilst the proposals will affect people there were no specific impacts associated with people or groups with equalities characteristics

## **9. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

9.2 However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 This report has set out the catch returns for the boats covered by permits issued by the Council. It has also addressed a number of management issues which have occurred during the fishing season. The proposals, if accepted, should ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for subsequent seasons in terms of access to and use of the beats and sales of permits.

**BARBARA RENTON  
DEPUTE DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENT)**

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

- Report to the Common Good Fund Committee in February 2010 re Public Space Management

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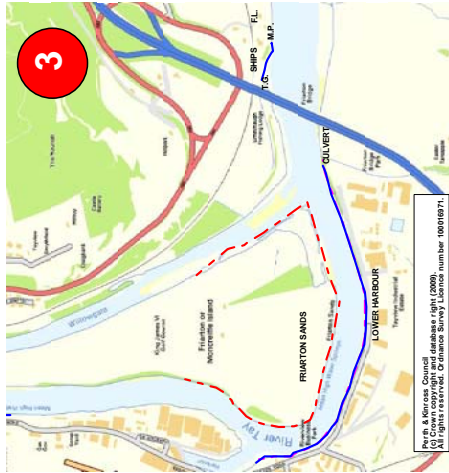
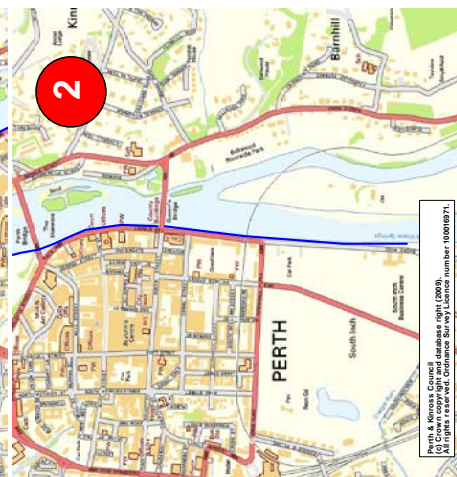
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# MAP OF COUNCIL FISHING

## River Tay Between Perth and Inchyra Pier - Rod Fishery





## Appendix 2

**Table 1:** 2012 Season Returns for Fish Caught and Retained

	Weight	Salmon	No Caught	Grilse	No Caught	Sea Trout	No Caught
Jan	lbs						
Feb	lbs						
Mar	lbs						
Apr	lbs						
May	lbs						
Jun	lbs					5.50	2
Jul	lbs			12.25	2	6.00	3
Aug	lbs			14.00	2	3.25	1
Sep	lbs	21:00	3			10.50	3
Oct	lbs	18:00	2	8.00	1	2.00	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.00</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>34.25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27.25</b>	<b>10</b>

**Table 2:** 2012 Season Returns for Fish Caught and Returned

	Weight	Salmon	No Caught	Grilse	No Caught	Sea Trout	No Caught
Jan	lbs						
Feb	lbs						
Mar	lbs	45.00	5			5.00	2
Apr	lbs	6.00	1			4.00	1
May	lbs					10.50	4
Jun	lbs	13.00	1			4.00	1
Jul	lbs	38.00	4	35.00	7	2.00	1
Aug	lbs	29.00	3			2.00	1
Sep	lbs	29.50	2	27.00	4	15.50	5
Oct	lbs	25.25	2	10.00	2	4.50	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>185.75</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>72.00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>47.50</b>	<b>17</b>

