

President's address, ADAA AGM 2023, brief notes

- A short briefing as all what was to be said was included in my News Letter. Also, Ash McKinnon is going to say a few things the committee are working on for the coming year. However, there are a few points that I would like to stress to you this evening that requires input from us all;
- Looking at our annual catch returns they are quite pleasing given the changeable weather conditions we experienced throughout the year, and especially pleasing are the salmon and grise returns.
- However, some of us are not reporting all their catches and in particular catches on the River Ythan and the River Don at Parkhill. Members report seeing fish caught and when I look at catches for these beats a few days later there are no records of these catches
- I must emphasise the importance of registering catches. It is a legal requirement for the ADAA to register salmon catch catches on all its fishing's. Also registering blank/nil catch returns this is also very important legal requirement.
- Salmon are in serious decline and it is up to us all to reverse this process if we are to continue fishing for them. There are many pressures that they face, Climate change, Pollution and Predation -both marine and avian. There is not much we can do as an Association on Climate change, but as far as pollution and predation there is much, and I shall explain.
- The Association is fortunate to have committee representation on all three riverboards and as such we are at the chalkface of negotiating and instigating conservation measures to improve our salmon stocks.
- We have a seat alongside Government agencies such as Marine Scotland, SEPA, NS. And having over 700 members- political clout too as I have had both press and TV briefings. On behalf of the Association, I have met with MSPs expressing our concerns regarding pollution and predation and the effect they are having on members angling and it's in these two areas that your help and assistance is required to help lobby these representatives and institutions.
- Yes, we have all seen "Sammy" the seal on its marauding excursions up the river harassing fish to the extent that they clear the pools making fishing a waste of time. It's happened to me at Culter, Kingcausie and at Lower Parkhill. So, what can we do about it, I hear you say?
- First of all, the seal is an "A" list protected animal and only non-lethal methods of control are allowed..... Now that is! There are however,

under certain circumstances a license granted to cull a particular “rogue seal”. Not that there have been many, if any at all of these licenses being granted recently. But I am sure given strong representation a license application could be forthcoming. And this is where your help is needed. If you see a salmon in the river, on any river, or beat – report it- phone it in to the river office. If you are fishing among friends get them to phone it in too. Even if it is the same seal, phone it in. The more recorded sightings of seals in our fishing’s then more can be done.

And as for Piscivorous birds, or should I say Goosanders, yes, they too are on our wanted list. Fortunately, there are licenses for culling a set number of these birds annually and thanks to strong lobbying in this area, this annual cull figure has been increased though not as high as one would like, but improvement non the less.

- Pollution is also problem that we suffer particularly on the River Don at Parkhill and again I stress the importance of reporting it however, small you may think it is, let the authorities know and they can deal with it. The River Fly Initiative which we will be hearing more about later will shed more light on to the effects pollution is having on our invertebrate life with in the river.
- Now to conclude. I hear you say what has this to do with catch returns and in particular recording a blank catch return that I mentioned to you earlier. In a nutshell it’s the difference between angling effort and angling success that is important. It is this gap that reflects the problems that pollution and predation are having on our catches, and the wider that gap is becoming. That is why I stress the importance of recording both a successful catch and a blank return. Hopefully, those in authority, the decision makers will listen to our plight for the sake of the salmon and do more to help.

Well, that’s all what I have to say but just before I hand over to Ash, as I said there was a full report in the annual newsletter. It’s been a challenging year for the Association but the future looks good that I am sure of despite the cost-of-living crisis that is affecting us all. Our Association is in “Rude Health”, financially secure and offering excellent fishing’s for both members and visitors.

Thank you and introduce Ash.