



SECTION 7: 5TH EDITION OF THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN – TWEED AND EYE FISHERIES DISTRICT

The Guiding Principle of this Management Plan is consistent with:

- 1) The EIFAC (European Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee) Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries 2008:-

Article 11.1: The over-arching goal of recreational fisheries management is to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources thereby safeguarding the availability of these resources for future generations. Sustainability of fisheries resources includes conserving biodiversity at all levels, including genetic diversity, as well as supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

- 2) The Strategic Framework for Scottish Freshwater Fisheries (SFSFF):-

a) Scotland will have sustainably-managed freshwater fish and fisheries resources that provide significant economic and social benefits for its people.

b) Management decisions affecting freshwater fisheries and fish species should be underpinned by scientific evidence.

and is based on:

- 3) The Resolution adopted by the River Tweed Commission in March 2007 that:-

The Tweed and its tributaries should be wild fish fisheries

and is that:

Fisheries Management within the Tweed and Eye Fisheries District should ensure robust stocks of wild fish that can sustain fishing pressures in the long term, based on a thorough understanding of the natures of these stocks and how they are produced by the local environment so that so that problems can be identified immediately they arise and be dealt with quickly and effectively.

The Structure And Function Of The Plan

The structure of the Plan arranges and orders the gathering of the information needed to assess and compare the past and present conditions of the different stocks of the exploited fish species of the Tweed. On the basis of these assessments and comparisons, an appropriate Management Level for each stock is recommended to the RTC. The purpose of these Management Levels is either to ensure enough fish of each Salmon, Sea-trout and Brown trout stock survive all the pressures on them to fully stock their spawning areas for their next generations and to maximise their production (Levels 4 and 5) or to make progress towards such conditions (Levels 1, 2 and 3). Ensuring sufficient spawning escapement is classified as "Output 1" of the fisheries management process and maximisation of juvenile survival as "Output 2".

These two outputs should result in both the preservation of the existing diversity of the Salmon, Sea-trout and Brown trout stocks and the maximisation of their abundances, but the importance of conserving stock diversity in particular is recognised, i.e. no management action should assist stronger stocks to overwhelm or displace weaker ones. Stock diversity is the safeguard against a changing environment, the greater the range of stocks, the greater the adaptability of the population to new factors and conditions. The diversity of Salmon stocks is also the basis for the long, ten month, Salmon fishing season of the Tweed.



Defining the sort of management needed for each stock as a particular "Level" also provides a convenient and descriptive system for the members of a large organisation like the RTC to use to discuss fish stocks and their appropriate management.

Each Section of the Plan to do with fish is structured around the "Inputs" needed to make the Assessment for each definable stock. These Inputs are information on:

- (A) The different stocks of fish and their home areas
- (B) The quality and quantity of their nursery habitats (*see Note A below*)
- (C) The extent and state of their juvenile stocks and trends in their abundance
- (D) The extent and effect of the fisheries on the adults and their stock structure
- (E) The exploitation rate of the fisheries on each stock, and
- (F) The counting of adult populations of each stock to show whether enough are escaping to spawn

The function of the Plan is to set out the policies to be followed over the next five years to gather the information needed as "Inputs". Not all the policies will be put into operation during this period: some may need particular opportunities to arise before becoming practicable, or more funding. Other policies may not run for the whole period of the Plan. Annual combined meetings of the Trustees of the Tweed Foundation and the Committee of the RTC are held to review progress of the work programme within the Plan, agree the Plan and priorities for the coming year, and identify any new areas of work for the future.

Note A: Habitat Work Background and Strategy:

1. It is now over ten years since the Tweed Foundation began its work on habitat and the context within which such work now takes place has changed greatly. In the early 1990's the whole field was unfamiliar to those working in fisheries in Scotland and a major part of the early work was importing the concepts from Ireland and North America and demonstrating that such ideas worked in this area. The Tweed Foundation then appointed its own Habitat Manager to undertake such work, and raised considerable sums of money for it.
2. The context is now quite different. Habitat work is now accepted as part of the proper work of fisheries management organisations, and indeed, in other environmental fields as well. Without good habitat, it has been realised, little can be done for the conservation of fish and other wildlife. Agricultural support mechanisms now take this into account, and will undoubtedly do more so in the future.
3. While obstacles to fish movement (Habitat Quantity) will always remain of particular interest to fisheries organisations such as the RTC (who have a statutory remit to improve fish passage), habitat quality in and around rivers is of much wider interest. Fencing of banksides to promote natural revegetation and create buffer zones to run-off is of interest to SEPA (from the pollution / run-off aspect), SNH (wildlife corridors), the Borders Forest Trust (riparian woodlands) and farmers & landowners (Rural Stewardship funding etc.). All these bodies, and others, have or attract funding for such work, which contributes to the Tweed interest, the protection of the existing quality of nursery area habitat.
4. In this changed environment, the Tweed Foundation's approach to general riverside habitat work has also altered and is now largely indirect, encouraging other organisations and advising them on the fisheries aspects of such work. This involves :
 - a) Supplying other organisations with "added-on" fish reasons for their work. The Salmon is the Icon of the Tweed, as well as being very obviously an economic asset to the area that depends on good environmental quality.
 - b) Encouraging habitat protection and restoration at the policy and catchment levels, such as extensification of grazing, wetland restoration, native woodland regeneration and reduction in fertilizer run-off.
5. It should be noted that the current climate change predictions for this area are for wetter winters and drier summers, with more extreme storm events. Well-vegetated banks will protect against higher and more frequent spates increasing erosion and damaging habitat, giving some insurance for the fisheries of the catchment against the effects of climate change.
6. The Tweed Foundation's current tactics on habitat protection and restoration are therefore to undertake direct action only in areas of specific fish interests ("Attacking" problems directly affecting fish stocks of importance) and otherwise working indirectly through and with others to upgrade the habitat of the catchment generally ("defending" it against degradation and the impacts of climate change).