

Angling in 2015

Getting more people into fishing

Response from the Salmon and Trout Association

The Salmon and Trout Association (hereafter known as the S&TA) recognise the importance of increased angling participation to the future of sport. Having read the Environment Agency (hereafter referred to as the EA) Consultation Paper, Angling in 2015 – getting more people into fishing, the S&TA applaud the initiative and support the ethos of the document.

The S&TA also applaud the references to the Joint Angling Development Board (referred to in the document as the Joint Angling Governing Bodies and hereafter referred to as the JADB), and the recognition that they will be significant partner in the drive to increase participation in the sport.

We refer to the questions at the end of the consultation document and will attempt to respond to them in chronological order.

Question 1: Introducing new participants to the sport and sustaining their interest and involvement.

To respond to this question I will divide the potential target group into three areas:

- Juniors (Under 16's)
- Family Values
- The Grey market

Juniors

For most people born post 1950 the traditional route into angling was for father to take son/daughter fishing. A copy of Mr Crabtree goes fishing was an essential companion which lived beside the bed. Such an image has gone forever. Today responsibility for getting young people in to the sport lies with governing bodies (S&TA Junior Initiatives), Clubs (Christchurch AC Annual family day), Fisheries (Dearnford Hall / Wem School initiative) and the trade (National Fishing Week)

We certainly need to focus marketing attention towards schools in order to raise awareness of the sport. Moves towards alternative curriculum material through such initiatives as Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network – ASDAN are providing real opportunities to put angling on the curriculum. Thomas Adams School in Wem, Shropshire have recently attracted significant publicity with this scheme.

Family Values

We need to consider ways of using angling as a tool to develop family values – children spending quality time with parents and important family members by encouraging angling as a family activity. Again there are examples of successful projects to be found including one which has come out of schools in Ashington, Northumberland. Here children are encouraged to bring a parent with them when they participate in school based angling activities. Up to 250 children and parents are benefiting from this scheme every month.

I am sure that Social Services and family groups would be interested in developing further schemes around the country.

The Grey Market

The biggest growth area in the sport will come from the grey market. Here we have a group of people with time to go fishing, money to finance a new hobby and transport which will allow them to explore a vast range of venues. Development of the grey market will encourage growth in participation, increase sales of equipment and have impact on the tourist and leisure industry.

Whilst the Mr Crabtree model mentioned above has gone for ever, every “grey” converted to angling is potentially a grandfather who could take a grandchild fishing.

Under pinning all of this must be a structured coaching development programme, providing easy, affordable access to coaches who will be able to deliver a high, professional standard of instruction. The EA recognise the significant part the JADB have played in developing such a programme, and have in the past supported the group both financially and ethically. Such continued support is crucial to the future of coaching.

Question 2: What are peoples best roles in promoting and developing angling:

The Environment Agency: is a Government agency with responsibilities to increase participation in the sport thus increasing revenue raised. The EA has responsibilities for the management of budgets including monies to develop participation strategies.

The Joint Angling Development Board: exists to develop coaching and ethical/equity issues in the sport. The Board has established a high quality coaching development programme and is committed to having trained 2000 coaches across all angling disciplines over the next 4 years. The coaching development programme is underpinned by a coach licensing scheme which ensures the credibility of coaches.

The JADB is also responsible for equity issues including Child Protection, Gender and sporting equals (ethnic minorities). In co-operation with the British Disabled Angling Association the JADB also works to provide access for disabled anglers.

Social Inclusion is recognised by the JAGB as being an important part of its development work but also recognises that there are a range of bodies already developing best practice in this area.

Other Angling Bodies:

The S&TA recognise that there are a wide number of other bodies within angling who play an important part in the delivery and the management of the sport. The key partners have recently come together in a Unity initiative and are collectively known as ***FACT***.

In addition to FACT members the Association recognises the importance of the ***BDAA***, as motioned above and ***Professional Anglers Association, the Game Angling Instructors Association and the Register or Experienced Fly Fishing Instructors and Guides*** as trade bodies looking after the interests of instructors and angling guides

A successful angling trade will be a barometer for the state of the sport. The trade has a significant input into the economy of the nation.

Angling Clubs and ***Commercial Fisheries*** will provide valuable statistics relating to increased participation in the sport.

Individual angling projects required to be monitored more closely in order to network these schemes. Replication is a frequent occurrence. Being able to access projects will help to identify best practice and to establish good working models for other to adopt.

Sport England is responsible for the distribution of money to sports in England based on a Whole Sport Plan and the sports ability to deliver during the defined period. Together with the ***Government***, Sport England must recognise the participation strength of angling, its ability to provide alternatives to physical sport, its ability to deliver and be socially inclusive, and the sports ability to work with and encourage positive behaviour amongst disaffected young people. The sport must also impress on its paymasters the economic value it has in local areas, as well as its ability to increase treasury funds through licence revenue.

It is equally important that the appointed agents to work with Sport England, JADB must demonstrate its ability to be accountable for its work, its management strategies and its finances. Sound procedures and accountability will hopefully enable Sport England to increase funding to the sport.

Question 3 What do we need to do to increase funding to develop angling and increase participation?

Angling Unity is central to the sports ability to attract new funding. The Government needs assurances that the sport is well structured, well managed, and able to deliver. It needs to be accountable; this cannot be achieved by acting in isolation or by servicing ego's.

The sport should continue to lobby government with the values of the sport:

- Angling offers a sound alternative to those who do not want to / or cannot take part in a physical sport.
- Angling takes place in a healthy environment
- Angling is socially inclusive
- Angling is the sport most likely to be accessed by disabled people.
- Angling is accessible by all ages from 4 to 104
- Angling has a proven history of reducing involvement in crime by disaffected young people.
- Angling through the licensing of the sport is a revenue provider for the treasury via the Environment Agency.

Angling through its clubs, its fisheries and the trade has to continue to accept responsibility for angling initiatives to increase participation. It will need to adapt sound business acumen recognising that investment in angling participation may have short term costs but long term gains. In particular game fisheries must be persuaded to make access to young people possible by creating a realistic charging structure.

The sport still has a long way to go to raise awareness amongst local authorities and other developmental agencies. Such bodies are always impressed when they are made aware of the work we are doing. Such responses suggest that there are long term gains to be made from good marketing strategies being adopted and applied.

Question 4: Training Instructors:

We must first recognise the positive developments that have been made in the past five years. The sport has produced a quality training programme of coach education. As the 1st4Sport Certificate in Coaching Angling, the scheme is fully accredited and is recognised by both the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

The whole programme is underpinned by a Licence to Practice Scheme, sound Child Protection protocols, CRB checking and insurance.

The EA have been a catalyst for development of the programme, providing funding and encouragement to those involved in the development process. They have become an end user, and have done much to raise the awareness of the schemes and their benefits to angling.

There are still issues to be resolved:

Cost:

At around £400 courses are expensive. The sport must continue to lobby the Learning Skills Council for parity for approved centres. The LSC does not recognise approved centres such as the S&TA as educational establishments in the same way as the recognise Further Education Colleges. This means that the S&TA and the NFA are unable to source funding to subsidise the course costs. Continuing high costs are a barrier to individual anglers with no access to funding

Parity

Having gained parity between qualifications being delivered in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and between all of the bodies responsible for qualifying coaches in those areas, it is essential that the differences with Wales are resolved before the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate comes live in 2007.

Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning:

The JAGB should continue to provide representation to the awarding bodies to ensure the recognition of an individual's prior achievement which would count towards a final coaching award.

Career Pathways:

The coaching development scheme is intended to provide a career pathway for coaches wishing to work in the industry. The S&TA support the development of the Level 3 CCA, however they also recognise that there are issues over the complexity of the level 1 scheme. The S&TA support a full review of this and the notion that the Level 1 be replaced with a more simplistic Volunteer package.

Initiatives

The S&TA support initiatives such as the Dreamstore Academy intended to bring young coaches into the system who will work with youth groups and schools. The S&TA recognise the need to develop more partnerships with significant bodies to expand similar initiatives.

Relationships and Roles

The S&TA believe that the developments of strong organisations to manage the interests of coaches and to develop CDP are essential to the maintenance of the coaching structure. Whilst applauding the roles played by the GAIA and PAA, there is a need for trade associations to be more clearly defined.

Question 5 – getting the balance

Broadening inclusion in angling is an essential route to increase participation. As mentioned in section 1 the **Grey market** is undoubtedly a strong one. Here we have a significant group of people who have the time, the money and the interest to get involved in a “new” leisure pastime.

The sport does, however, need to consider a marketing strategy to raise awareness of the sport amongst these groups. Instructors should be working with larger companies to establish a “pre retirement” programme for employees. The trade needs to support such initiatives. Likewise, organisations such as SAGA should be developed as a partner and used to offer angling as one of their “interest” sectors.

Local authorities should be encouraged to work with local instructors to use local facilities to introduce the “greys” to the market place.

The BDAA have provided research to suggest that amongst **disabled people**, angling is the number one activity they have expressed an interest in having a go. The Governing bodies have made great strides in creating a working relationship with the BDAA intended to increase awareness of working with disabled people and to increase participation. There is a need for increased investment in the following:

- Disability awareness training for clubs and fisheries;
- More clear briefings on the Disability Act and its effect on the industry.
- Disability Training for instructors;
- The promotion of courses for disabled people to try angling.

In addition to the above, the industry must recognise the expertise of the various disability groups and continue to develop sound working relationships. In particular the **BDAA** should be recognised as a key group.

In the US 40% of all anglers are women compared with 6% in the UK. The JADB have an Equity Policy and are committed to working towards increasing participation amongst **woman and girls**. Each governing body has prepared its own working document which reviews the current state of affairs, and also tries to identify the barriers which prevent woman and girls coming into the sport. On 19th March 2005 the JADB will be holding a conference at Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham which will consider the above and an action plan to take forward in to the Whole Sport Plan.

The issue of **rural poverty** is an extremely worrying one, as it often goes unrecognised by the casual visitor to the countryside. There have been significant successes with the development of a number of initiatives across the country. A notable success has been the Angling and Conservation Centre at Witton near Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, which offers a range of angling

experiences to disaffected young people in the area. There is a need to collect data on schemes from around the country and to identify best practice in this area.

The Salmon and Trout Association recognise the value of **angling tourism** to many rural areas and in particular the upland regions of Wales, the Lake District and the Pennines. They also recognise the importance of underpinning angling activities in these areas with a sound professional guiding system for those involved in delivering angling tourism. The Association has supported the development of a pro guiding scheme which has been piloted in Ireland, and is about to be launched in the remainder of the home countries in the Spring of 2005. The scheme has found a sponsor in Hardy-Grays and will be known as the Hardy-Grays Pro Guide Programme.

The sport needs to develop a much stronger link with the tourist industry, in order to create angling as a high profile sport in rural areas.

Question 6 – angling projects, social inclusion and disaffected young people.

The value of **independent projects** such as Get Hooked on Fishing and Stoke Angling for Everyone is often overshadowed by internal and petty politics which do not reflect well when seeking further investment. We believe that whilst these projects are very applaudable there must be a system of accountable management review to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness Of the schemes.

The aforementioned statement is a reflection of the whole sport. In order to turn strong interest in investment and in particular investment from Government and its agencies, the sport must prove that it has an efficient and transparent management capable of being accountable.

Much work has been done in the **establishing and raising of standards** through the JADB Coaching Development Programme. The sport is committed to providing a single coherent and easily recognisable schedule of instructor training by working with scUK. The outcome will be a nationwide programme by 1st January 2007, which will stand alongside identical programmes from the top 30 sports in the UK.

The UK Coaching Certificate in the Coaching of Angling will be achievable at three levels, will be wholly accredited as a **formal educational achievement**.

The Coaching Development Programme and its associated Coach Licensing Scheme will provide independent projects with baseline instructors to deliver angling participation at every level and amongst the extensive range of groups they are working with in order to be socially inclusive.

Question 7: How does angling best support the representative bodies and help implement the "Whole Sport Plan".

The Salmon and Trout Association is acutely aware of the need to raise awareness of its work in order to increase membership and attract greater sponsorship. When recruiting new members the most common question asked is "Why should we join?" It is clear that as a Governing Body we have in the past failed to make the public aware of our function and the valuable work that the S&TA and the other NGB's do.

The S&TA has appointed a communications manager and procured the services of A PR company to help to address these issues. It has also introduced a thrice yearly publication, Gamefisher, intended to keep the membership informed as well as being available to the general public.

We have described concerns about the management structure of the Governing Bodies leading to the possible lack of government support in our response to Question 6. Improved sponsorship deals will depend on the success of projects such as National Fishing Week.

The disappointing funding from Government to fund the Whole Sport Plan will mean that the sport is going to have to look to third party support. To attract such interest is going to require a high quality, slick approach to development of marketing and participation.

Conclusion:

The sport should take heart that it is not being ignore. The Government are giving it funding, albeit an insignificant amount against the high participation rate and the sports ability to raise revenue through the licensing legislation.

Spokespeople in the sport should take care not to associate the sport with the demise of hunting. Whilst we should never be complacent, the arguments against fishing are very different. Such isolated comments are likely to drive away sponsors and other funding rather than endear them.

Over the past four years the sport has used the initial National Angling Development Plan to cement a relationship with Government, and to lay strong foundations for future development. We must build on these with the Whole Sport Plan. This should be done by working together in unity, by recognising the skills and expertise of all of the partners and by creating a atmosphere of trust and willingness to succeed.