

Introduction

Gordon Brown, Head of Freshwater Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, SEERAD

Good morning everyone & a warm welcome to Dundee – West Park Conference Centre – impressive.

Hope you found us easily – and safely parked – glad weather has been kind for January!

Domestics first:

- Fire alarm test at lunchtime – any other time – evacuate by marked exits
- Toilets all marked
- Lunch at about 12.30 – hot/cold – and on the Executive!

This is the 3rd public Freshwater Fisheries Forum

Terrific attendance - as before at Stirling and Battleby – for which thanks.

Attendance at these events is a reflection of their success – indeed the whole process.

- Opportunity later in the day to talk about the forum – what it has done – and its future agenda.

Another indicator of how important the Executive regard freshwater fisheries, and this process, is the presence today of our Minister – Rhona Brankin.

- Delighted you are able to attend Minister – will hear from you very shortly.
- 2 of the 3 foras have now been attended by Executive Ministers.
- I would also like to welcome government colleagues from the Welsh Assembly – over next 2 days we will be sharing information about developments on freshwater fisheries – learning from each other.

Our main purpose today:

- Consult and listen to your views about the proposals for an Aquaculture & Fisheries Bill – emphasis on listening.
- 2 hour slot
- Consultation document was issued in December and written comments must be with us by 24 February.

- But additionally, we decided we wanted to get out of Edinburgh – meet you on your home ground – hear your views.
- Forum part of a series of “Bill roadshows” – so far – very successful – well attended – very informative.
- My colleagues David Ford and Alistair Prior will be facilitating the Bill discussion later – same form as other roadshows.
- Consulting not only on the Bill proposals – but unusually, on issues – future fishery management – that will require a 2nd Bill – in next or subsequent parliament.
- But present proposals and the future are inextricably linked.
- Later today hear from Andrew Wallace and consultants APEM – commissioned to explore future management options.
- Again there will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

Gyrodactylus salaris (Gs):

- This afternoon – change of tack.
- Receive an update on the Executive led GS Task Force.
- Arthur Griffiths, Task Force Leader, will update us on progress.
- Again opportunity for questions and discussion.

Future of Forum:

- Last but not least – Ron Woods from the Coarse Anglers Association – will offer reflections on the Forum process and its future
- And he will invite your views – especially on the future agenda we should pursue – now that Bill development is drawing to a close.
- All of this assumes - you will want Forum process to continue – but that is a question in itself

Enough from me for now – I will MC proceedings and offer some comments at the close – which will be by 4pm.

Enjoy the day – hope you find programme interesting and informative.

Now – would you join me in welcoming the Deputy Minister for ERAD – Rhona Brankin.