

I attended the AGM of the River and Fisheries Trusts at Perth on 20th March.

We heard of the considerable work done since RAFTS was formed in 2005, mostly working closely with the Fishery Boards. In that time:-

1100Km of riparian habitat has been protected

114000 trees have been planted

500Km of riparian fencing has been erected

100 barriers to fish migration have been removed resulting in 2250Km of upstream habitat being made available to salmon and sea trout.

1300Km of watercourses were treated for invasive species.

A talk was given by Andrew Thin who has been appointed by the Scottish Executive to chair the Wild Fisheries Review. He is to publish his report in about six month's time. He had not had sufficient time since his appointment to have reached any conclusions. He and his team will be consulting locally with interested parties. His remit is generally to comment on the future management of fisheries. I shall keep you informed of any meeting which you may be entitled to attend and any interim information coming out.

The other discussion of interest was the RAFTS stocking policy. We, of course, have had the hatchery at Blackwood for some time.

RAFTS commissioned a technical paper which shows that hatcheries, at best, have little effect and, at worst can do real damage to wild stocks and suppress natural ability of fish to adapt to an ever changing environment.

The recommendation is that hatcheries be used only to have a reserve in case of catastrophic damage to stocks in the river or for stocking in streams where there have previously been stocks which have been diminished or wiped out, provided the reason for the diminishment/wipe out has been discovered first and dealt with.

Our Board is well aware of all of this and agrees with these recommendations.