



The Grayling Society

PROMOTING AWARENESS, CONSERVATION, AND ANGLING FOR GRAYLING

Diffuse Water pollution from Rural Land Use

The Grayling Society is represented in several countries throughout the northern hemisphere. Our aims are to promote awareness, conservation and angling for grayling, with sustainable stocks for the future being key. We applaud this move by the Scottish Executive to tackle diffuse water pollution. Angling organisations have highlighted water quality problems stemming from agricultural, forestry and other rural sources for many years. It seems to us, however, that despite the causes being increasingly and more widely recognised remedial measures have concentrated on a few specific issues, have been often advisory in nature, and have rarely required offenders to comply with the advice available.

We sympathise with farmers, for it must be a nightmare to keep track of all the regulations, advisory documentation and other published data that has bearing on their operations. Some undoubtedly pay heed and do their best within the constraints of the various pressures they are under. Yet there are still too many who pay insufficient attention to water courses and the attendant problems caused by their activities; they seem to be unaware of or don't care what impact their actions have on aquatic and riparian health locally or downstream.

As far as grayling are concerned, there is much anecdotal evidence to show populations in several rivers have declined over the past twenty years or thereby. River flies seem also to be in similar decline. How much of this is due to diffuse pollution is unknown, but it seems to us that it must have considerable impact. The grayling has a lower tolerance to pollution than other salmonids so has some value as an indicator species.

With reference to the questions on page 37 of the consultation document:-

1. - we agree you have identified the water quality issues that need to be addressed.
6. - a checklist would be a helpful tool.
7. - farm visits, catchment officers, and structured auditing would all be helpful. There is a need for education and these would in our view prove more productive than leaving it to individuals to react to advisory documentation and codes of practice.
8. - Yes.
9. - Yes.
- 10.- Yes.
- 15.- Doubtless SEPA monitors the impact the Chernobyl fallout continues to have on the Scottish land mass, though little is heard about it. There is still a view shared by some water owners and anglers that rivers have not been the same since that accident occurred. How much credence can be put on that view is debatable, but it should not be forgotten.

This paper mentions siltation of salmon spawning grounds and the eutrophication of lakes (p.9) but makes no reference to angling and the importance anglers accord to good water quality and riparian habitat. There are several million anglers in the UK, and a recent study concluded that angling contributes a conservative £113 million to the Scottish economy. It would be considerably more if our rivers and lochs were as productive as they once were. Diffuse pollution has undoubtedly in our view contributed to lower fish stocks, and is something that should be highlighted when requiring farmers and other rural industry to comply with good practice aimed at improving water quality.

Alan Ayre
Area Secretary (Scotland)
The Grayling Society
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Respondee Information

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Consultation Title – Diffuse Water Pollution from Rural Land Use

1(b) Responding on behalf of an organisation ie The Grayling Society

2c Yes, content for my details to be made available to the public.

3. Yes, content for the SE to contact me in the future.