

Fishing For Answers

The Final Report of the
Social and Community
Benefits of Angling Project



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Foreword

The Relevance of a 'Hidden' Activity

Angling is in many ways a 'hidden' activity.

It is not something that commands great media attention (and income) like football, cricket or rugby even though it has as many if not more participants. It is not often a part of the everyday 'vista of life', like seeing people cycling or running, although it goes on all around us. Angling doesn't generate much mainstream media hype around its celebrities, even though it has them.

Angling isn't visible in the way other activities are and for most people anglers are people they may see in odd locations and on odd occasions – by the canal in the city centre or on the beach when on holiday, or in quirky adverts. Such a lack of encounters generates a more general public ignorance of the activity: the widespread belief that it is entirely sedentary, and probably involves sitting still, in the rain, under an umbrella, doing and catching little.

Even though it encompasses every shade of enthusiasm, from the person who stumbles onto a boat to catch some mackerel once in a blue moon on holiday to the angler who dedicates their life to fishing – for many of those who have never taken part, it remains a mystery. Indeed, the EA reported in 2004 that for over half the people surveyed who had never fished, doing so simply had not occurred to them.

Whilst you can probably say this about many other sports, hobbies and leisure activities, it is unusual to be able to say so of an activity that has over 4 million participants in the UK, worth in the region of £3bn to the economy, is so historically rooted in the nation's cultural practices, and involves such a diverse range of practices that impacts on the quality of life and environment of both anglers and non anglers alike.

Our research suggests that the act of fishing embraces everything from sitting with a rod in hand by an urban pond a lone carp, to climbing mountain peaks in pursuit of hill loch trout, to braving Britain's coast chasing sea bass. This breadth in the act of fishing, however, generates a much wider range of other actions with real social, environmental and economic impacts.

So our research also suggests that angling is about volunteering – to run clubs and associations. It is about business and consumption - of the myriad magazines, websites and forums, tackle providers, TV programmes and DVDs. It is about working to clean up the environment - along rivers and beaches, improving habitats so that biodiversity (including fish) can thrive. Angling gets people involved in teaching and coaching - where young people learn not just about going fishing but also the life cycles and habitats of species. It is about the engagement of excluded young people - leading to their ongoing personal and social development. It involves travel and tourism - helping to sustain rural areas. And it involves family, friendships, social interaction and debate. Lots of debate.

The title of this report, Fishing for Answers is deliberately aimed to provoke questions amongst a non-angling audience, and to cause anglers to reflect on how they can successfully communicate the wider benefits of their sport to a non-angling public.

We cannot hope to include everything that this extensive project has encompassed in one report (and we have made all data and interim reports available in response to this). But we do hope that this final report provides some substance about the ways in which angling can deliver personal, social and community benefits – and how these can be improved, extended and developed into the future.

Dr Adam Brown
Research Director of Substance
Angling Project Manager

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This project would not have been possible without the contribution and participation of a huge number of people.

In particular we would like to thank the project's Advisory Group who have spared invaluable time to support, comment on, discuss and assist with the research project throughout the three years.

- Richard Wightman, National Angling Participation and Development Manager, Environment Agency
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- Eric Dawes, Business Development Manager, Angling Development Board of Scotland
- Naidre Werner, Director, Angling Trades Association
- Marion Lowe, former Chief Executive Get Hooked on Fishing (to December 2010)
- Ian Robertson, Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group, Scotland (2009)

Angling's national organisations have given huge encouragement and assistance – the Angling Trust, Angling Development Board, Angling Development Board of Scotland, Angling Trades Association, Scottish National Angling Association, Scottish Sea Anglers Federation, Scottish Coarse Anglers Federation and others.

We would also like to thank those projects with whom we have worked most closely during the life of the project. These include: all the projects trustees and managers of Get Hooked on Fishing; a wide range of other youth projects around the country; the coordinators of all of the Trout in the Town projects; a number of Assynt organisations (Angling Club, Angling Association, Crofter's Trust, Foundation, Community Council); Visit Scotland; the Highland Council; Country Sports Tourism Group and many more.

Finally we would like to extend our thanks to thousands of anglers, coaches, teachers, parents, young people and others who have openly shared their experiences and views with us and without whom the research would not have been possible.

About Substance

Substance is a social research co-operative working in sport, youth and community development and beyond. Substance helps projects and organisations delivering personal, community and social development to improve and demonstrate impact and value.

This project has been undertaken by Adam Brown, Natalie Djohari and Paul Stolk but has also had invaluable input from David Carpenter (websites) and associates Eva Serencisova (Assynt interviews), Loz Ives (Because Studio design), Fiona Mcgee (proofing).

For more information see:

Project Websites:

www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk

www.anglingresearch.org.uk

www.assynt.anglingresearch.org.uk

www.substance.coop

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is the culmination of three years research into the social and community benefits of angling. The research was funded by the Big Lottery Fund research programme from 2009-2011 and was undertaken by Substance, a research co-operative based in Manchester, UK.

The project has sought to provide in depth evidence about the different ways in which recreational angling can have positive benefits for individuals and communities, particularly the people who take part in it and the communities in which it takes place.

The Final Report is divided into six main sections which seek to summarise findings in areas that are the most important and most relevant to current policy and practice developments. It is designed to inform and influence future developments in those areas.

1. Sports Participation

The first section of this report describes angling's contribution to sport participation outcomes. This incorporates: angling's role in encouraging very large numbers of people to participate in a sport incorporating a breadth of physical activity; and how angling offers a distinctive alternative to other sports, including 'life-long' participation, green exercise and distinctive forms of competition.

It evidences how angling:

- Gets millions of people involved in sport in the UK
- Provides opportunities for many different levels of physical activity for people of all abilities, including the less able
- Provides a national infrastructure of clubs and governing bodies
- Is a gateway for a wide range of positive social and environmental activities
- Provides opportunities for structured contests as well as distinctive informal competition
- Differs as a competitive sport in a number of respects, particularly in enabling accessible, integrated competition
- Has some barriers to participation that still need to be overcome.

2. Health and Well-Being

Section 2 of the report describes the positive role that angling plays in improving public health and well-being. Angling offers specific health and well-being benefits: as an informal recreational activity that can build resilience against ill health through opportunities for relaxation, relief from stress, improved physical activity and access to natural environments; and as part of targeted intervention programmes that assist in the restoration and recovery from physical and mental ill health.

It evidences how angling:

- Contributes to preventative and restorative measures by increasing physical activity and providing programmes that assist in recovery from physical illness
 - Makes both a preventative and restorative contribution to mental health
 - Introduces protective factors that promote good mental health
 - Provides programmes that assist in the treatment and recovery from mental illness
 - Helps build young people's relationships and confidence
 - Provides opportunities for 'active ageing'.
-

3. The Natural Environment

Angling delivers benefits for the environment and for people accessing natural environments in two principal ways: by delivering environmental benefits through angler engagement in conservation, ecosystem monitoring and raising environmental awareness; and by acting as a 'gateway' for people to access green spaces and create connections with nature which improves the well-being of people and their communities.

This section evidences how:

- Angling helps improve aquatic habitats
- Angling organisations assist habitat conservation that has wider community benefits
- Anglers can be the eyes and ears of the natural environment because they spend so much time in and around aquatic habitats
- Angling contributes to public knowledge about freshwater and marine environments, both formally and informally.
- Angling is a gateway activity for people to make connections with nature.

4. Community Development

This section describes the positive role that angling and anglers can play in local communities in relation to: empowering people to be active citizens through the development of new or renovated water based community assets; and creating opportunities for greater cohesion and integration within communities.

It evidences how angling:

- Can be a means to empower people to become active citizens and bring people from different backgrounds together
- Organisations have been instrumental in developing, improving and maintaining community water assets that are accessible to a range of people from different backgrounds
- Can build positive partnerships with local authorities and deliver local services that help local authorities and agencies meet their community obligations
- Can assist in sustaining integrated and cohesive communities and embrace wider community needs and involve local people

5. Rural Communities and Angling Tourism

This section details the impact of angling in rural and remote communities. It illustrates: the valuable contribution that angling tourism can make to rural communities in terms of economic impact and wider tourism development; and how the development of good practice means angling can contribute to sustainable rural community development through employment and the conservation of cultural heritage.

It evidences how:

- Angling tourism can be extremely important in terms of the economic contribution that visiting anglers make to rural areas
 - Angling tourism can:
 - Lengthen the tourist season
 - Offset declines in other forms of tourism
 - Contribute to 'portfolio employment'
 - Assist in sustaining the cultural heritage of rural communities
 - Angling tourism can be developed through: provision and presentation of information using state of the art technology; increased public access to angling; development of a broader outdoor tourism portfolio; the clustering of businesses and co-operative competition; and community land ownership
 - Angling tourism needs to be developed sustainably, maintaining a balance between 'development' and environmental and social management factors.
-

6. Angling and Socially Young People

The last section of the report describes the positive role that angling can play in education, personal development and social inclusion of young people. Compared to other positive activities, angling has a very distinctive offer to make in terms of: providing personal and social development opportunities; raising attainment in education and employment; and diverting young people from crime and antisocial behaviour.

It evidences how:

- The UK is a leader in the field of delivering personal and social development outcomes for young people through angling
- Angling has some distinctive attributes that make it a particularly useful tool for young people's personal and social development
- The best angling programmes take a holistic approach to tackling young people's exclusion
- The most effective angling diversionary programmes establish exit routes into clubs and wider angling opportunities
- Angling programmes are particularly effective at addressing the need for young people to attain in education and training
- Angling is particularly suited to helping young people with additional welfare needs and behavioural or learning difficulties, especially ADHD.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The final section of the report provides a series of recommendations for how the social and community benefits of angling can be further developed in these six areas. A key aspect of this is a need for the ongoing generation of robust evidence about angling's social benefits, beyond the life of this project.

Introduction

The Social and Community Benefits of Angling Project Final Report

This report is the culmination of three years research into the social and community benefits of angling. The research was funded by the Big Lottery Fund research programme from 2009-2011 and was undertaken by Substance, a research co-operative based in Manchester, UK.

The project has sought to provide in depth evidence about the different ways in which recreational angling can have positive benefits for individuals and communities, particularly the people who take part in it and the communities in which angling takes place.

i) The Project Focus

The project has had three principal research areas:

Angling Participation: To understand more about what constitutes angling participation and how that participation can lead to personal or wider community benefits.

Young People: To explore how angling can be used for positive youth development, particularly amongst those who are socially excluded or who face additional life challenges.

Rural Communities: To research the role that angling can play in rural areas and in particular the ways in which angling tourism can contribute to community development.

The project was based on research in England and Scotland specifically, and it is on those two countries that this report is focused. However, we also considered examples of good practice occurring elsewhere, and the learning is applicable across the UK.

ii) The Purpose of Big Lottery Funding

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) research programme sought to enable third sector organisations to undertake and disseminate evidence based knowledge:

'to influence local and national policy and practice and, in the longer term, develop better services and interventions for beneficiaries.'

Angling is on one level a very simple activity – the act of catching a fish with a rod and line. However, it is also complex, multi-faceted, and a deeply historically rooted part of our culture. Its social effects are multiple and varied and not widely understood.

Furthermore, over the last decade, there has been an increasing interest in angling practice and policy about how angling can contribute to wider social and community development outcomes: from the allocation of public resources to increase and develop participation, to specific programmes that have sought to use angling in instrumental ways for individual and community development.

Our research has generated an enormous amount of evidence based knowledge about angling and has sought to help inform and influence those policy and practice developments.

iii) The Policy and Practice Context

The research has been particularly timely.

On a national level the first decade of the 21st Century saw moves in both England and Wales and in Scotland to unify the organisation and governance of angling. This included the formation of the Angling Development Board and Angling Trust in England (who are due to merge in 2012); and the formation of the Angling Development Board of Scotland. This has been followed by new funding streams to angling, from sports councils as well as environmental agencies.

On a local level, the last decade has seen an explosion of projects, initiatives, agencies, charities and facilities that have sought to develop angling participation and use it for the purposes of social, economic and environmental benefit. These range from projects to help clean up our rivers, to charities helping socially excluded young people, and tourism initiatives.

The changing policy landscape has seen a growing interest at governmental level in how activities in sport, culture and leisure can deliver social benefits. Alongside this, agendas around health and well-being, environmental improvement, localism and active citizenship, rural development and youth inclusion have all emphasised the importance of positive activities in delivering wider social benefit.

Angling-related organisations have begun to articulate how angling can contribute to these agendas and have sought new evidence to help them 'make their case'; often finding however, that the evidence was not there. It is within this context that the Social and Community Benefits of Angling project has taken place.

iv) The Research Context

The BLF research programme supports work that addresses particular evidence gaps. Despite the enormous volume of angling literature, academically rigorous research into the social aspects of recreational angling in the UK has lagged behind that of other sports and leisure activities. Whilst there is a developing body of research that has sought to understand the behaviour of anglers - often referred to as the 'human dimensions' of fisheries science research - this has usually been concerned with the impact of angling on fish and fisheries, rather than the impact of angling on people and communities. It is with the latter that this project has been focused.

In the UK the relative absence of social science research about angling's social impact stands in contrast to the significant bodies of work, for instance in the sociology of sport and leisure studies, about comparable participation activities, including 'mainstream' sports and those with high media profiles like football, cricket and athletics. As such there has for some time been an identified evidence gap in angling research.

In the last decade, interest in research into the social impacts of recreational angling has grown – including a number of studies about the economic value of recreational angling; a series of reports commissioned and published by the Environment Agency about participation and public attitudes to angling; and a handful of academic studies.

However, for the most part (and with some notable exceptions) this existing body of work has produced knowledge about angling's importance in general terms and on a national scale. Our research, in contrast, has sought to investigate how angling affects people's lives, the development of organisations, and particular local communities through a more in-depth focus.



In Focus: What is Angling?

Angling is the act of fishing with a rod, line, hook and bait or lure for recreational purposes (as opposed to subsistence).

There are traditionally three 'disciplines' in the UK that are normally recognised within recreational angling and to which we refer to in this report. They have been the basis around which national organisations have emerged and at their most basic level describe the kind of fish being caught:

- Coarse fishing – angling predominantly for freshwater fish that you do not usually eat.
- Game fishing – angling that is predominantly for trout, salmon, sea trout and grayling.
- Sea fishing – catching fish that live in the sea.

However, such blunt distinctions mask a myriad of complexities in terms of method, practice, location, species, cultural tradition and innovation. The terminology of both 'coarse' and 'game' fish hides some historically rooted assumptions (and prejudices) as well as changing angling practices. Furthermore contemporary angling practices suggest a blurring of boundaries that make such distinctions problematic – such as the growth in salt water fly fishing by many game anglers. Also, the exponential growth in carp angling has seen it emerge as a distinct form of coarse angling in its own right.

Millions of people take part in angling in the UK. Indeed it is often referred to as the most popular participation sport or leisure activity in the country. However, this participation involves a diverse range of commitment, involvement, frequency and practices. As such the definition of what makes 'an angler' can be varied and highly subjective.

v) Our Approach

To deliver such a wide ranging multi-faceted project across three years, our approach has necessarily used mixed methodology. It has involved:

- a) Large scale (national) survey work on angling participation involving over 2,400 anglers
- b) More focused surveys, including those with over 200 young people, 54 youth projects and over 200 angling tourists
- c) Nearly 700 in-depth semi-structured interviews and 'light touch' consultations with anglers, practitioners, policymakers and community members
- d) In-depth case study research with angling organisations amounting to over 185 fieldwork visits, over 430 hours of on-site observation of youth intervention programmes, and action research with youth angling charity Get Hooked on Fishing
- e) Case study research in the remote area of Assynt in of Sutherland, North West Scotland. This included repeat fieldwork visits, consultation with 20 local organisations, surveys of over 300 anglers and visitors, and over 50 in depth angler interviews
- f) Development of bespoke on-line tools, including those for qualitative data submission and interactive digital mapping amounting to over 280 individual online comment submissions and over 8,000 users of the Assynt Angling Research website
- g) Analysis of particular angling initiatives and events, including National Fishing Month and the Trout in the Town programme
- h) Consultation with over 245 angling organisations.

vi) Our Outputs

Summarising such an extensive and complex research project into one report is an impossible task.

Recognising this, as well as the need to use evidence based knowledge to influence policy and practice as the project progressed, we have sought to publish research throughout the project.

During the three years we published 17 Interim Reports on different aspects of angling and community benefit; 7 papers for partner organisations that have been the focus of our research; three academic journal articles have been submitted for peer review publications; 8 conference papers have been delivered; over 20 presentations have been made; and dozens of meetings have been held with stakeholder groups.

We also created and launched a bespoke Angling Research Resources website – www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk – which provides free, public access to:

- All Interim Reports
- Data visualisation, maps charts and graphs
- Interactive data dashboard
- Raw qualitative and quantitative data files
- Searchable directories of projects and research sites
- A unique, searchable on-line library of angling research.

vii) The Final Report

The Final report is divided into six main sections which seek to summarise findings in areas that are the most important and most relevant to current policy and practice developments. It is designed to inform and influence future developments in those areas.

These six sections of the Final Report are:

- 1. Sports Participation:** How angling participation meets sports development outcomes, but also the ways in which angling offers a distinction to other, more high profile, sports.
- 2. Health and Well-Being:** How angling delivers physical and mental health benefits and the unique features of the activity that lend itself to these outcomes.
- 3. The Natural Environment:** Ways in which angling can lead to environmental improvement, protection and monitoring as well as enable people to access 'green spaces'.
- 4. Community Development:** Evidence about the ways in which angling organisations contribute to community asset development, active citizenship and community cohesion.
- 5. Rural Areas and Tourism:** The contribution of angling tourism to social and economic development of rural communities and how this can be encouraged further.
- 6. Excluded Young People:** The instrumental use of angling as a tool for the engagement and personal development of young people, particularly those who are socially excluded or disadvantaged.

The final section provides a summary of recommendations.



1. Angling and Sports Participation

In Brief

The first section of this report describes angling's contribution to sports and participation outcomes. This incorporates:

- Angling's role in encouraging very large numbers of people to participate in a sport incorporating a breadth of physical activity
- Angling offering a distinctive alternative to other sports, including 'life-long' participation, green exercise and distinctive forms of competition.

1.1 Introduction and Context

Getting people involved in sports and activities has been a very long-standing concern for national and local governments and numerous charities and agencies in the UK. Increasing sport participation is a key aim of the national sports councils in the UK, and sport-based funding has been one of the key sources of financial support for developing angling participation in recent years.

- **In England**, angling participation is funded by both Sport England and the Environment Agency, with the Angling Development Board (ADB), soon to merge with the Angling Trust, as the main delivery agency
- **In Scotland**, the Angling Development Board of Scotland (ADBoS) lead participation development, funded principally by Sport Scotland
- Similar arrangements exist in **Wales** and **Northern Ireland**.

At times angling is considered somewhat sceptically as a 'sport' – usually based on ill-defined assumptions about physical activity levels – yet angling does deliver key sports-based outcomes and meets some standard definitions of sport¹: the active participation of millions of people; competition that is both formal and informal, elite and community; a structure of governing bodies, clubs and projects; and activities that attract support and resources from public agencies. However, angling offers some distinctive features from other sports that mean it delivers added value in some areas of social and community benefits from participation.

Our research into angling participation has been based on:

- An extensive, quantitative and qualitative, online survey of angling participation with over 2,400 anglers taking part²
- Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with over 150 anglers and angling stakeholders
- Website-based comment and feedback tools
- Site-based research at 12 key angling sites in England and Scotland, 36 young people's projects, a case study in Assynt, Scotland and numerous clubs, sites, projects and organisations.

1 Coakley, J. (2001) *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, Boston: McGraw-Hill p 23

2 Stolk, P (2009) *Angling Participation: Interim Report*, Manchester, Substance http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/project_reports/interim_reports_2009

1.2 Angling's Contribution to Sports Participation

1.2.1 Participation Numbers

Angling gets millions of people involved in sport in the UK.

Although estimates vary, it is indisputable that recreational angling in the UK has millions of participants and therefore must be acknowledged as making a valuable contribution to getting people active in outdoor settings.

- The EA *Public Attitudes to Angling* (2010) report³ said that 9% of the population over 12 years of age in England and Wales (equivalent to **4.2 million people**) had been fishing in the last year.
- Sales of the EA Rod Licence (a legal requirement for anyone fishing in freshwater in England and Wales) increased by 35% from 2000/01 to **1,431,981 in 2011**
- **In Scotland**, sports participation statistics show that around 3% of adults (16+years) and 3% of children (8-15 years) took part in angling during the most popular two months of each year 2006-2008⁴
- Based on 2008 population figures for Scotland of 5,168,500, this equates to **155,055 participants** (which has remained fairly constant since 1987⁵).

Sport England estimate that the numbers taking part in angling once per week stand at 134,000 with 980,000 taking part once per month⁶. This makes angling the 16th highest participation sport in England in terms of weekly participation and 16th in monthly participation. However, because angling is classed as a low intensity activity, it ranks at only 29th in terms of Sport England funding.

In Focus: The Angling Development Board www.anglingtrust.net/adb

In England, the **Angling Development Board** (ADB) is the main sports development organisation for angling. The ADB's *Angling Whole Sport Plan 2009-2013* secured funding for angling from Sport England on the Sustain and Excel outcomes; and from the EA on growing participation. The ADB will merge with the Angling Trust in April 2012 creating a single governing body for angling development.

The ADB's achievements between 2008 and 2011 include:

- Growth from 2 staff to 13 full time and 5 part time staff
- Green rating Sport England business assurance
- The establishment of 29 County Angling Action Groups (CAAGs)
- Securing £232,000 funding additional to Sport England funding
- Attracting 13,021 participants in CAAG and club projects (11,233 Under 18)
- The development of a new recognised coaching standard; 1040 new coaches qualified; £75,000 in coach training bursaries
- Approving 53 'Clubmark' standard angling clubs
- Organising 86 flagship National Fishing Month events 2011
- Achieving a sports satisfaction rating of 84.5%

Mass Participation: Angling's Distinction

Angling participation features some distinct characteristics compared to other sports, and it is these characteristics that add value to the absolute participant numbers it delivers:

- Duration of activity is typically much longer (though less frequent) than other sports (as such the Sport England measure of 3x30 minute segments of activity per week seems ill-suited to measuring angling participation)
- Participation can take place throughout the life course contributing to lifelong activity and 'active ageing'
- The extent and nature of participation in angling goes far beyond the act of simply holding a fishing rod, delivering many social and environmental benefits through a number of 'associated activities'.

3 Simpson, D. and Mawle, G.W. (2010) *Public Attitudes to Angling 2010*, Bristol: Environment Agency

4 Sport Scotland (2008) *Sports Participation in Scotland 2008*, Research Digest no.110, Glasgow.

5 Sport Scotland (2002) *A Profile of Angling in Scotland*, Research Digest no. 91. Edinburgh.

6 Based on Sport England's Active People Survey, statistics from ADB based on third quarter of 2011



In Focus: The Angling Development Board of Scotland (www.adbscotland.org)

The **Angling Development Board of Scotland (ADBoS)** is a partnership between the three Scottish National Governing Bodies for Angling; The Scottish Angler's National Association (SANA), The Scottish Federation of Coarse Angling (SFCA) and the Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers (SFSA). To date, ADBoS has been funded by sportscotland to deliver work programmes that include the development of the UKCC-endorsed coaching qualification for Angling at Levels 1 and 2, and the Club Angling package.

Since forming in 2010 ADBoS have:

- Launched the first ever licensed Coach Approval Scheme in Scotland with 15 approved coaches to date
- Launched UKCC approved Level 1 and Level 2 Coaching qualifications with 30 Level 1 and 10 Level 2 qualifications delivered per year; with an additional 4 coaches are currently working towards Level 3 qualifications
- Developed a Club Angling Programme to develop grass roots provision with over 220 young people participating per year
- Assisted the three governing bodies to secure 'fit for purpose' approval from sportscotland and the Foundation Equity mark.

ADBoS have secured sportscotland funding (one of a handful of non-Commonwealth Games sports to have done this) to support ongoing work to 2015 and will deliver:

- A 10% increase in Club Angling approved clubs
- 10% increase in people participating in Club Angling
- 50% increase in international level elite anglers
- Delivery of 72 Club Angling programmes by 2015
- Engagement with 60% of the new sportscotland Community Sports Hubs which will embed angling within broader sport provision across all regions of Scotland.

ADBoS are also:

- Developing new proposals for social inclusion angling delivery and are targeting Cashback for Communities (proceeds of crime) funds to assist with this.
- Supporting continued professional development of coaches.
- Working with the SQA to launch a secondary schools based angling National Progression Award which will sit on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

1.2.2 Physical Activity

Angling provides opportunities for many different levels of physical activity for people of all abilities, including the less able.

'After a good day's fishing on a boat I'm exhausted, especially if I'm fishing a competition!'
(Survey comment, 40 year-old male sea angler).

Ensuring the physical health and fitness of communities has become a strategic policy area for national governments. One of five main policies listed under *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government strategy for England (2008)* was a commitment 'to build physical activity into our lives'⁷. The Scottish national physical activity strategy, *Let's Make Scotland More Active*⁸, made a similar commitment when it was launched in 2003.

Whilst often regarded as a sedentary activity, data from the angling participation survey conducted for this research demonstrates the variation in physical activity that is inherent in angling. The column chart below illustrates the data from the relevant survey question, which asked respondents to assess the intensity of physical activity usually associated with their angling participation. Respondents could choose from 3 categories of intensity: low, moderate or high.

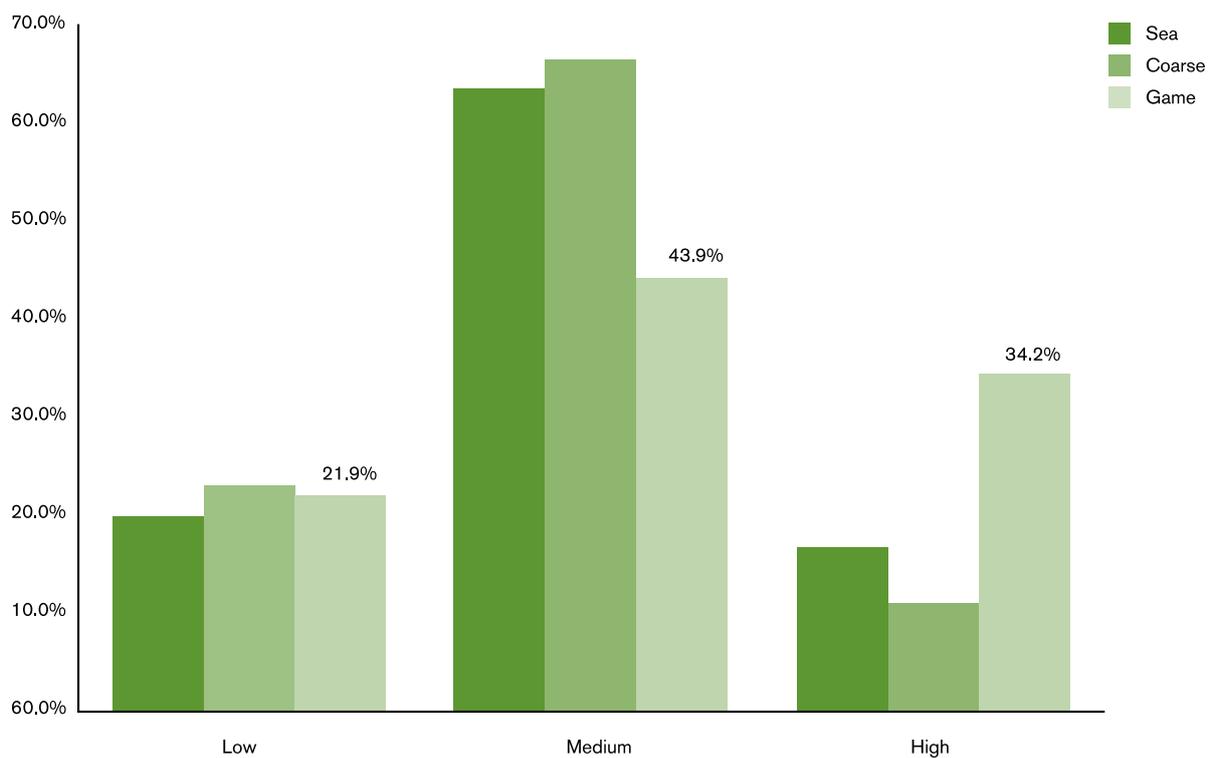


Chart 1: Physical Activity Intensity by Type of Angling

⁷ Department of Health and Department of Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a Cross-Government Strategy for England*, London: Cross-Government Obesity Unit

⁸ Physical Activity Taskforce (2003) *Let's Make Scotland More Active: A Strategy for Physical Activity*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

The findings shows that:

- While a similar proportion of coarse, sea and game angling respondents (approximately 20%) viewed their participation as being **low** intensity physical activity, these were in the minority
- Most anglers viewed their participation as **moderate**, although this was noticeably less for game anglers than for coarse and sea anglers.
- Many more game anglers (34.2% of the total) regarded their participation as **high intensity** physical activity.

It is also possible to contrast the physical activity associated with angling at some of the different settings in which we have researched angling participation:

- Sitting by a canal in Manchester coarse fishing with bait having driven a car to the location (very low intensity)
- Young people's GHOF angling event at Charlton's pond, Billingham (low intensity)
- Fishing the hill lochs of Assynt, Scotland having walked several miles up steep hills to the loch (very high intensity and long duration)
- The constant moving and casting involved in much fly fishing as observed at a Fishing for Everyone women's fishing event (moderate to high intensity)
- Wading in rivers or the sea and constantly casting and retrieving spinners, such as in salmon fishing in Scotland (high intensity)
- Walking along beaches and clambering over rocks to go sea angling in Northumberland (intermittent moderate intensity)
- Rowing boats to go fishing on a reservoir (intermittent moderate intensity).

Data collected from surveys of, and interviews with, anglers in Assynt, in North West Scotland showed that in some instances angling can be extremely vigorous. Two sets of survey data collected from anglers in 2009 and 2010 showed that angling participation was rated as high intensity physical activity by more than 55% of the total sample (n=108). The rugged terrain and large lochs in the area mean that just getting to a fishing spot (usually by walking or rowing) requires considerable effort. As the angler describes below, angling can be a significant element of weekly physical exercise:

'I trout fish on a long length of river. Contrary to popular perceptions of anglers "sitting on baskets" I often walk up to 6 miles in a day's fishing over varied and sometimes challenging terrain. Whilst I partake of several other forms of exercise I feel my weekly angling session contributes significantly to my fitness and overall health.'
(Web comment submitted 25/8/11)

However, the measurement of physical activity involved in sports tends to be 'blanket' - Sport England's criteria has been the number of adults participating in at least 30 minutes of sport at moderate intensity at least three times a week ("3x30").⁹ As such, angling has subsequently been classified as a low intensity activity, but such a classification does not take into account:

- The variation of activity in types and location of angling
- The often long duration but less frequent nature of angling activity
- The relationship of activity intensity to the ability of the individuals taking part



⁹ Sport England (2010) "One Million" Sports Participation Indicator <http://www.sportengland.org/.../idoc.aspx> accessed 18th November 2011

Physical Activity: Angling's Distinction

There are a number of ways in which the physical activity involved in angling offers something distinctive from other sports, and when considered collectively these distinctions demonstrate that angling plays a key role in getting people active, particularly those who might otherwise fall outside of 'mainstream' sports participation. The distinctions are summarised in Table 1 and suggest that angling:

- Provides opportunities for activity for the less able that many other sports do not
- Needs to be understood in relation to the ability of participants
- Helps keep or encourage people to be active later in life
- Provides sustained duration of physical activity
- Provides opportunities for green exercise with inherent added health benefits.

Distinction	Description	Evidence
i) Angling provides physical activity for the less able	Angling can offer many ways to be active for people with ability impairments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of 128 coarse angling respondent comments in our survey 33 explained that a disability impaired their physical activity. • Sport England's SQSE survey in 2009¹⁰ showed that 39% of the 1,469 surveyed anglers had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity (80% with affected activity), double the proportion of other sport respondents (19%).
ii) Physical activity levels are relative	Physical activity in angling needs to be understood as relative and subjective to the individual concerned – it can, for example, make relatively inactive people active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents revealed that angling was an important part of their recovery from ill-health; others disclosed that angling was one of the few activities they could manage given their physical limitations.
iii) Opportunities for older people to be active	Compared to other sports, people can readily participate (and compete) in angling until late in life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mean age of anglers surveyed in 2009 for our research was 48.9 years • The average age of respondents in our Assynt research was 53, with 20% in the 50-54 age range and 14% aged 45-49 and 14% aged 55-59 • 73% of anglers surveyed in the aforementioned Sport England research were aged 45 years or more (42% were 55+ years)
iv) Angling provides sustained physical activity	Angling is often less intense, but longer in duration than other sports, producing similar energy use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Pretty et al (2007) compared physical exertion in angling to six other activities¹¹, angling was half as vigorous as activities like mountain biking or horse riding but because of the longer duration, the total energy used per session was greater than any other activity.
v) Angling provides physical activity in green spaces	Exercise in 'green spaces' can have added value in terms of mental and physical health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our interim reports have emphasised the added benefits of activity in angling in terms of socialisation and environmental awareness.¹² • Other research highlighted in Section 2 has emphasised the mental and physical health improvements from green exercise.

Table 1: The Distinction of Angling in Providing Physical Activity Outcomes

10 Sport England (2009) *Satisfaction with the Quality of the Sporting Experience (SQSE) Survey*.

11 Pretty, J., Peacock, J., Hine, R., Sellens, M., South, N. and Griffin, M. (2007) 'Green exercise in the UK countryside: Effects on health and psychological well-being, and implications for policy and planning', *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 50: 2, 211 – 231.

12 See the series of project Theme Papers produced as interim reports in 2010 available at www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk

The lesson from this work is that when assessing angling as a source of physical activity there is a need to differentiate in relation to: (a) the type/discipline of angling being practised; (b) the physical capacity of the individual, and (c) the context/environment in which participation takes place.

In Focus: Does Angling Make Your Heart Beat Faster?

We were interested in identifying the potential effects that angling participation might have on the heart rate of an angler. Using a wrist-watch heart rate monitor we asked 'Thomas', a member of the Upper Don angling club, to record a session of fly-fishing on the river at Wharcliffe, near Sheffield. This involved:

- An experienced 37 year old game angler
- Prior benchmarking of heart rate: waking up (47 beats per minute); walking the dog (average of 114 bpm); and running (163 bpm). Calorie expenditure for the walk was 222 C.
- A fishing session lasting 3 hours 50 minutes and 8 seconds that had a calorie expenditure of 1075 C with an average heart rate of 102 bpm and a maximum of 151 bpm.
- Heart rates varied significantly dependent on activities - walking along the bank, wading in the river, casting, hooking and landing fish, missing fish, and disentangling line.

Chart 2, below, shows the changes in heart rate over the first hour of the session.

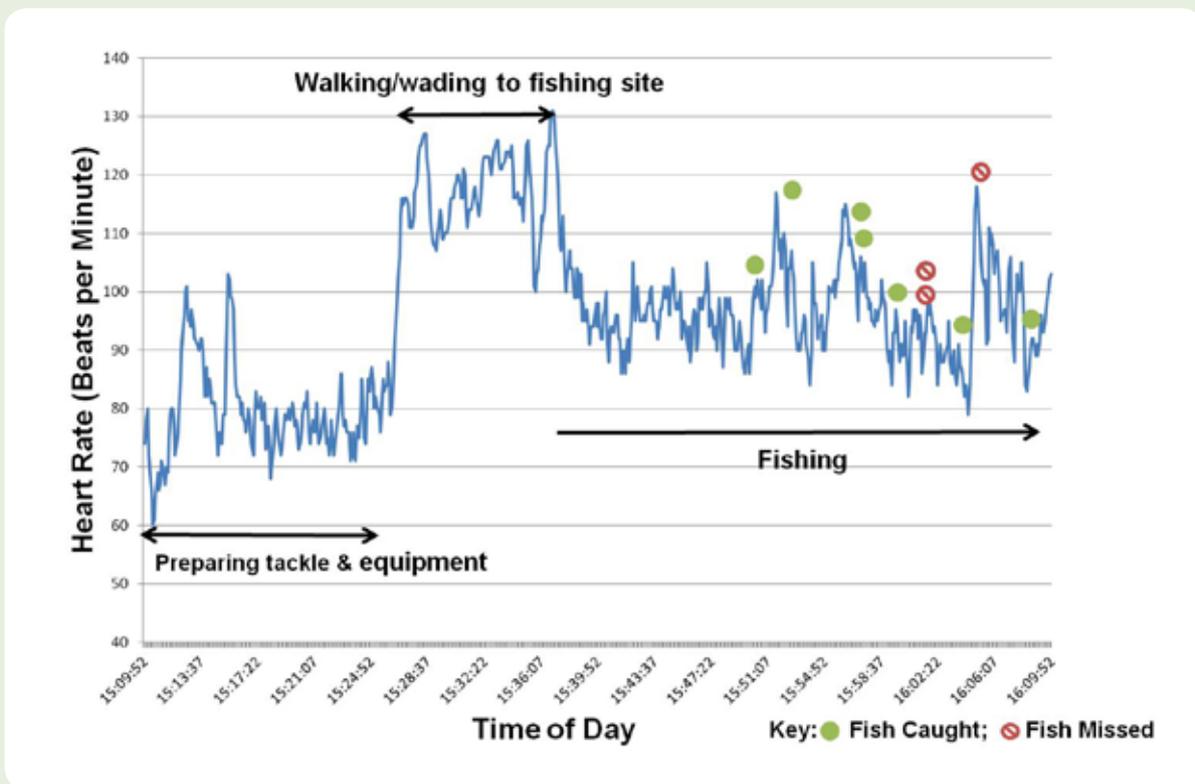


Chart 2: Measurement of Heart Rate and Activity, Game Angler

Although a basic, one-off exercise, it demonstrates the differentiation of heart rate within one session of one particular type of angling. For the record, Thomas landed and released a total of 54 fish (brown trout or grayling) during the session.

1.2.3 Clubs and Sports Infrastructure

Angling provides a national infrastructure of clubs and governing bodies.

Angling has a very large infrastructure of clubs which help develop participation, manage waters, skills and competitions and generate social value to individuals and communities.

- Our angling participation survey recorded a sample where 73% (n=1,704) of anglers were members of clubs. This is significantly higher than Sport England's Active People Survey data from the period 2007-2010 which put membership at 15-19%¹³
- The Angling Trust has over 1,500 member clubs.

Membership of clubs varies in terms of motivation and type of angling:

- Our survey suggested that anglers ranked access to waters as the highest club membership motivation with 86% (n=1,994) ranking it 1st.
- Club membership amongst sea angling respondents was 49% (n=175), with the most popular reason for joining a club 'to be around like-minded individuals' (67%, n=229) – due in part to the lack of private fishing rights for seas and coasts.

As with other sports there has been a drive to improve the running of angling and the governance of the sport. The unification of governing bodies in England (AT) and the creation of ADBoS in Scotland have improved national governance significantly. At a club level the ADB have 53 clubs that have been awarded the Clubmark scheme in England.

Angling's club structure offers a number of social and community benefits:

- Because angling takes place in natural environments, angling clubs frequently get involved in environmental improvement work through working parties, something discussed more fully in Section 3
- Because of the nature of the sport, angling clubs can be a gateway to charitable, community and education work
- Angling clubs can also be a route to a wide range of other activities that form a broader scope of participation.

In Focus: National Fishing Month (www.nationalfishingmonth.com)

National Fishing Month¹⁴ is an annual event that promotes angling through the provision of hundreds of showcase and local events designed to introduce people to fishing. It seeks to encourage people of all ages, and especially families, to try angling regardless of the cultural or social background they come from.

We conducted bespoke research on both NFM 2010 and 2011¹⁵. In the 2011 event:

- There were 15,000 people were engaged in 326 events
- The events brought together people of all ages from 2 year olds to pensioners
- 46.7% of participants were in the 10-15 age range with over 10% over 40
- 24.6% of participants were female (compared to around 5% nationally)
- 14% of participants were from the top 20% most deprived areas

¹³ Sport England (2010) [Active People Survey \(APS\) results for Angling](#). Period: APS3 (Oct 08/Oct 09) to APS4 (Oct 09/Oct 10). In part the difference was a bias in our survey, which was promoted heavily to the memberships of the angling national governing bodies in England and Scotland.

¹⁴ NFM is owned and run by the Angling Trades Association and supported by the Environment Agency, Angling Development Board, Professional Anglers Association and Angling Trust.

¹⁵ Brown, A et al (2010) [National Fishing Month 2010: Key statistics](#), Manchester: Substance; Brown, A et al (2011) [National Fishing Month 2011: Key statistics](#), Manchester: Substance; both available at: www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk

1.2.4 Extended Participation

Beyond the act of going fishing, angling is a gateway for a wide range of positive social and environmental activities.

Through 'unpicking' what is involved in angling participation, we found that anglers were involved in a wide array of other activities, not immediately associated with the act of fishing. Certain qualities of angling participation set it apart from mainstream sports in terms of the scope of additional activities involved.

- The **ownership of fishing rights** by clubs means they take on additional responsibilities and provide opportunities for anglers to undertake different tasks.
- Angling's **reliance on wildlife and nature** means that anglers have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of the angling environment.
- The **social structures and cultures of angling** lend themselves to widespread interchange about the activity – coaching, teaching and debating on the internet.
- The accessibility of angling can lead to **intergenerational learning** and integrated participation.

Our angling participation survey asked anglers to comment about additional activities they undertook. Chart 3 indicates the levels of participation in these activities, and the 'word cloud'¹⁶ in Figure 1 is used to visualise thirty of the most-frequently occurring roles: club themes were present in the highest number of comments (26), and activities involving writing about angling was the next most frequently occurring theme (21 comments).

Theme	Activities	Coarse Angling	Game Angling	Sea Angling	Count of all Responses (%)
		Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	
Tackle & Bait	Tying your own flies	136 (10%)	415 (68%)	61 (17%)	612 (26%)
	Preparing and maintaining tackle and rigs	1206 (85%)	319 (52%)	312 (87%)	1837 (77%)
	Collecting/preparing and maintaining your own bait	857 (60%)	89 (15%)	200 (56%)	1146 (48%)
Media	Buying/reading angling books and magazines	1183 (83%)	507 (83%)	290 (81%)	1980 (83%)
	Watching angling-related television and films	1100 (77%)	428 (70%)	277 (77%)	1805 (76%)
	Reading and/or contributing to angling blogs, internet discussion boards and websites	824 (58%)	342 (56%)	240 (67%)	1406 (59%)
Voluntary	Contributing to environmental or aquatic habitat conservation projects	291 (20%)	232 (38%)	70 (20%)	593 (25%)
	Teaching and mentoring other anglers	282 (20%)	177 (29%)	71 (20%)	530 (22%)
	Attending angling club meetings or undertaking angling club business	609 (43%)	299 (49%)	135 (38%)	1043 (44%)
Economic	Paid employment in an angling-related field	87 (6%)	69 (11%)	21 (6%)	177 (7%)
	I do not take part in any of these activities	19 (1%)	8 (1%)	3 (1%)	30 (1%)
	Other (please specify in the text box below)	78 (5%)	51 (8%)	31 (9%)	160 (7%)
	Answered question	1422	612	358	2392

Chart 3: Cross Tabulation of Types of Angling and Additional Activities Undertaken

¹⁶ A word cloud uses the size of words to signify their frequency/importance.

Rank	Count of Anglers (n=2329)	
1st	156	6.7%
2nd	270	11.6%
3rd	210	9.0%

Table 2: Ranking for Competition as Motivation for Joining Club

However, like other mass-participation activities such as cycling and walking (also formalised and codified into competition), much angling participation appears leisurely or recreational rather than as competitive sport.

Angling's Distinction as a Competitive Sport

Angling differs as a competitive sport in a number of respects, particularly in enabling accessible, integrated competition.

i) Integrated Competition

Angling is one of the few sports where individuals with very different characteristics and abilities can genuinely compete on similar terms against each other. Short or tall, male or female, able-bodied or disabled, young or old – angling is a sport that *truly* is within the capabilities of many people. The reasons for this include:

- The simple physical mechanics of angling (which can be varied through the equipment used and the type of angling discipline practised)
- The role that environmental conditions, and chance, can play in catching a fish or not which can effectively 'level the playing field'.

This is not to say that experience, skill level and elite training and development do not count in angling. However, because angling supports a 'mixed' profile of individuals participating alongside one another, there are legitimate opportunities for:

- Families to participate in sport together (i.e. as a unit)
- Competitions that involve males and females
- Participation involving able-bodied and disabled people
- Greater intergenerational interaction

An example of the integrated sociability offered through mixed participation is illustrated in the quote below:

'Fishing with [my dad] gave me time to learn about him as a man, his values and morals etc..... Since that time I have taken my own children fishing, and now I take my grand-children too. Fishing gives us quality time together... Angling is a family event in my own circle, but it can also bring together people of many and varied backgrounds and cultures, able and less-able [bodied] people can mix and socialise on equal terms whilst fishing.'

(Online comment received 27th July, 2011)

In Focus: Helping Mates get to Matches

At Wakefield Angling Club, anglers over the age of 65 years participate in matches alongside anglers with a disability. This policy has enabled anglers with a disability to receive assistance from able-bodied anglers to transport and set up equipment. Six anglers were interviewed at one of these matches, four of whom were restricted by a mix of disabilities that included knee replacements, gastro-intestinal illness and heart ailments. One of the able-bodied anglers over 65 (and retired) explained his commitment to helping his peers:

'One of the reasons I come is – as well as enjoying it – to give some of them [fellow anglers] a hand with the gear. If they've got bad breathing, they can soon knacker themselves up ... I enjoy fishing and I can help someone who might otherwise struggle.'

A similar response was made by a coarse angler in the general angling participation survey who, despite being over 60 years of age himself, assumed the role of an assistant to a fellow angler.

ii) Informal Competition

The challenge of catching fish, the leisure context of angling and the sometimes slow/fast nature of participation often mean that competition is more informal, involving friends and family.

'It's also nice to have competitions between friends and family for fun; [however] a lot of local/club matches I find are too serious and involve having to stay silent and get more bait for those hours than what I'd normally use in a month, and to me it's not really enjoyable. Although, I do fish some [angling club matches] occasionally for something to do.' (Survey comment made by 18 year-old male coarse angler.)

'Angling is a way of life to me, not simply a sport or a competition, and all I ask is for the right of quiet enjoyment.' (Survey comment made by 48 year-old male sea angler.)

Results from Sport England's SQSE survey indicate that this view of angling as non-competitive is in fact widespread – it was reported that 74% of 1,469 respondents (481 general participants and 988 affiliated club members) participated in 'non-competition social' angling. Our interviews with anglers found this kind of 'social angling' often embraced informal competition amongst friends, against one's self, or with a particular fish species. The informal competitive appeal of angling can be considered a driver of increasing sports participation – offering an alternative to hi-octane sports and appealing to those seeking relaxation, those suffering mental health issues, and young people disenfranchised or alienated by other sports.

In Focus: Formal and Informal Competition - Attracting Young People

Recognising the difference between formal and informal competition in angling is particularly important for increasing participation amongst young people.

On one hand formal club competitions and new forms of angling developing in continental Europe, like competitive Street Fishing, are attracting young people to the sport. The ADB report that clubs and schools find formal competitions engage some young people.

On the other hand some of our research has found that angling appeals to many young people precisely because it allows them to escape the overt competitiveness of traditional school sports.¹⁸ This distinction can be seen in angling clubs set up by young people themselves, such as Little Windsor Angling Club and Staffordshire Youth Anglers.¹⁹ Both clubs incorporate competitions into their activities, but they are keen to stress angling is primarily a social activity, a chance for friendly matches as opposed to what they consider to be the pressures of more serious training and competition in other angling clubs.

Because angling can appeal to both those seeking formal competition and elite pathways as well as those seeking more informal social experiences, it is important that clubs accommodate both types of angler.



18 Djohari, N. (2010b) *In Their Own Words: Young People's Angling Experiences Part 2: Maximising the Benefits of Angling Participation*, Manchester: Substance. http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/young_people_Part2_barriers_2010.pdf

19 *ibid*

iii) Other Distinctions

Other distinctions in terms of angling competition include:

- **The nature of the opposition:** This can be another team or individual, but they are not fundamental to participation, and for many participants angling competition is a contest with the fish and the elements.
- **Definitions of success:** Catching fish is an instantly gratifying demonstration of success. This can be particularly appealing to young people, especially those with low confidence in their own abilities (see Section 6).
- **Types of competition:** Alongside catching fish, casting competitions (for example at Highland Games) provides a skill challenge based on distance and accuracy akin to archery or target shooting.
- **Chance:** Because angling takes place in the natural environment and involves fish, it is subject to environmental influences, there is a level of unpredictability which makes it accessible to the non-expert.

1.2.6 Barriers to Participation

Some barriers to angling participation still need to be overcome.

Despite very high participation numbers, a number of barriers exist to prevent even more people taking up angling. These have been identified in other research²⁰ and include:

- Not knowing what to do
- Not having equipment
- Not having someone to go fishing with
- Not being able to access fishing locations.

Such barriers can be overcome: for example the EA's production and distribution of regional guides to fishing locations in 2008/09 led to a 12% increase in licence sales.

Young people face some particular barriers. In our survey of 219 young people, 96.3% said they would like to go fishing more often, but only 52.7% agreed that it was easy for them to go fishing when they wanted to. Table 3 below illustrates some of the most common barriers to angling participation identified in our Young Anglers' survey and suggested remedies²¹.

Barrier	Recommendations
1. Lack of junior angling clubs and coaching events.	Increase high quality provision of junior clubs and coaching events for non club members. ²²
2. Can't travel to venue on their own, particularly when fisheries are located out of towns.	Local Authorities should improve access to local waters and make leasing of waters conditional on junior access. ²³
3. Clubs too dominated by match fishing and competitions.	Provide a diversity of club activities with formal competition and informal participation.
4. Poor disability provision and lack of toilet facilities (cited by girls in particular).	Develop accessible fisheries and provide access to toilets. Arrange mixed participation angling events.
5. Non angling parents do not know how to take children fishing and fisheries are not always welcoming to family groups.	Encourage family friendly fisheries e.g. family tickets, fun days and coaching or parent packs. ²⁴

Table 3: The Top 5 Barriers to Young People's Angling Participation

20 Environment Agency (2004) *Our Nations Fisheries* Bristol: Environment Agency

21 For more detail of our Young People Angling Survey see Djohari, N (2010b) op cit.

22 For example of good practice see Worksop and District Angling Association in Djohari, N (2009). *Angling and Young People. Interim Report 2009*, Manchester: Substance p26 http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Research_Task_2_Angling_and_Young_People.pdf

23 For more detailed recommendations for Local Authorities see Brown, A., Djohari, D. and Stolk, P (2011) *Making the Most of Community Waters: Localism, Health and Angling*, Manchester: Substance. http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Making_the_most_of_community_waters.pdf

24 Cob House in Worcestershire is an excellent example of this. Reviewed in Djohari, N (forthcoming, 2012) 'Re-imagining the Role of the Fishery: Angling Intervention work with young people' paper presented to World Recreational Fishing Conference, Berlin August 3rd 2011. Available from author.

The cost of participation: is an additional barrier to young people, particularly at the threshold between junior and adult ages. Reviewing the numbers of young people holding junior EA Rod licenses that were eligible to transfer to adult licenses in the upcoming 2009-10 season, we found only 34.4% renewed, amounting to a 'drop-off' of 65.6%.²⁵ While the increase in EA rod license fees from £5 for junior to £25 for adults cannot alone explain the drop off, young people told us that it was the combined cost of Rod Licence fees, adult fees for club membership and adult day water charges that was prohibitive for those turning 16.

'I believe that membership prices for people still in education should be the same price as a juniors because they do not work and therefore struggle to find the money they need. Another of my local clubs requested that because I am 16 I need to pay £30 instead of the £6 I paid last year.'

(Survey respondent: Male, 16)

Reducing cost certainly has the potential to increase participation.

- The introduction of the £5 junior license fee in 2001 resulted in the dramatic increase of license sales to 12-16 yr olds from 30,000 to 110,000²⁶.
- The Angling Trust has sought to address cost as an issue by making junior membership free to ages 17 and under, and by introducing a reduced cost young adult membership fee for 18-21 year olds.

1.3 Issues and Recommendations

1.3.1 Physical Activity

The benefits from physical activity in angling need to be better understood, measured in more sophisticated and nuanced ways, and evaluated in terms relative to those taking part. The 'blanket' means by which sports are judged to qualify for funding, i.e. based on short, intensive participation (the '3x30minutes' assessment), is simply inappropriate for angling (as well as other outdoor activities including sailing, mountaineering and canoeing), where participation is usually for longer duration but often less frequency. Some assessments (such as Pretty *et al*) suggest that the long duration of angling participation results in higher levels of calorie burn than other outdoor activities.

1.3.2 Participation Figures and Funding

Developments in the organisational structures that support angling participation – especially the changing role of the EA and a new strategic plan for Sport England in 2012 – suggest that some uncertain times lie ahead. Currently, angling is ranked at 29 in terms of sports funding (0.4% of available funding) yet Sport England's calculations place angling as:

- The 6th highest monthly participation sport (970,000)
- 16th in weekly participation at moderate intensity (138,000)
- Having the 3rd most satisfied participants in all sports

More accurate and appropriate ways of determining participation levels, duration and benefits that reflect the distinction that angling offers, should inform future funding decisions. Angling should remain within the funding framework of sports participation as it offers many of the same benefits and routes as other sports.

In Scotland, angling is somewhat better placed with the ADBoS having secured funding from Sport Scotland to 2015.

However, all angling governing bodies also need to seek to broaden the base on which participation development is funded. Utilising the outcomes and findings of this research, which highlights the range of social and community benefits angling can deliver, should help inform those new approaches.

²⁵ Djohari, N. (2010b) op cit

²⁶ Mawle, G presentation to ADB workshop, Strelley Hall, Nottingham December 15th 2011.

1.3.3 Full Benefits of Participation Unrecognised

Whilst angling delivers key sports participation outcomes, by analysing angling participation within a rigid sports/exercise framework, many of the benefits that come from participation are unrecognised within formal funding structures and assessments. Our research suggests that a broader notion of what constitutes 'participation' is required of the full range and extent of social benefits from a sport such as angling are to be understood.

In order to help achieve this however, angling needs to be better at accounting for participation; at monitoring and evaluating impact and at demonstrating how it meets sports based outcomes.

1.3.4 Young People

The fluctuating nature of angling participation – an angler's 'career' – in which participation most frequently begins young, may dip between the ages of 18–40 years of age, then return later in life, emphasises the importance of an early introduction. With severe financial challenges for young people and the government's commitment to increase the leaving age from education and training to 18 by 2015, eliminating cost as a potential barrier to young people's continued participation in angling needs to be a priority. Overcoming barriers for young people to participate is an essential component of securing future participation levels.



2. Angling and Health and Well-Being

In Brief

This section describes the positive role that angling plays in improving public health and well-being. Angling offers specific health and well-being benefits:

- As an informal recreational activity that can build resilience against ill health through opportunities for relaxation, relief from stress, improved physical activity and access to natural environments.
- As part of targeted intervention programmes that assist in the restoration and recovery from physical and mental ill health

2.1 Introduction and Context

Improving health and well-being is a priority across policy areas because it can positively impact on wider outcomes in education, employment, and social exclusion. Two recent papers, *No Health Without Mental Health*²⁷ and *Confident Communities: Brighter Futures*²⁸, call for a cross-departmental approach to improve the mental health and well-being of both vulnerable individuals and the general population. These papers stress the need for an integrated approach to mental and physical health that recognises the importance of:

- Connected communities
- Purposeful participation
- Building the strength and resilience of both people and communities
- A 'whole life course' approach to achieving health and well-being.

Angling makes a distinctive contribution to health and well-being in three ways:

- i) It incorporates a **range of physical activity levels** and encourages activity amongst the inactive, those recovering from illness and older age groups who may not participate in other sports.
- ii) It incorporates **therapeutic engagement** and contact with 'blue-green spaces', and as a consequence helps maintain positive mental health, provides stress relief and can support programmes for people experiencing mental illness.
- iii) It provides a rich social world that facilitates the relationship building, connection and **participation in social life** essential to securing well-being and active ageing.

Evidence our project has generated about angling's contribution to health and well-being comes from our angling participation survey, over 150 in-depth interviews with anglers, research visits to projects that employ angling as a tool to intervene in physical and mental health, and an online comment facility that collected anglers' personal interpretations of the health and well-being benefits of their participation. Indeed, improved health and well-being has been one of the most cited personal benefits of angling during the project, for young and old alike.

²⁷ Department of Health (2011) [No Health Without Mental Health: A cross government mental health outcomes strategy for people of all ages](#), London DoH

²⁸ Department of Health (2010) [Confident Communities: Brighter Futures. A framework for developing well-being](#), London DoH

In Focus: What is Well-Being?

Well-being is a dynamic, multi-dimensional state relating to how people feel and function in life.²⁹ It takes into account:

- Subjective well-being (how people think and feel about the quality of their lives)
- Psychological well-being (the ability to cope with stress, self-esteem, sense of purpose)
- Physical health and sense of bodily wellness
- A sense of connection to people, communities and the environment.

Consequently, well-being is more than the absence of mental or physical illness, or the satisfaction of basic needs, as it takes into account a wide range of domains that enable people to live happy, healthy, productive lives.

The UK public health white paper, *Healthy Lives, Healthy People*³⁰ sets out an increased role for local authorities in encouraging active ageing and the development of communities for well-being that facilitate greater access to green spaces. *Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland*³¹ places particular emphasis on active citizenship, and calls for the Third Sector in Scotland to innovate new approaches and interventions for health and well-being. Overall, both the Scottish and English policies echo the findings of the 2010 Marmot Review into health inequalities, which drew attention to the importance of combating social isolation, providing access to restorative local environments and the role of positive social networks in improving health and well-being outcomes.³²

2.2 Angling's Contribution to Health and Well-being

2.2.1 Physical Health

Angling contributes to preventative and restorative measures by increasing physical activity and providing programmes that assist in recovery from physical illness.

Although we have already discussed some aspects of angling and physical activity in Section 1, it is worth highlighting the distinctive health benefits here.

i) Physical Activity and Health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises physical inactivity as the fourth leading risk factor in global mortality³³. Only 39% of adults are meeting recommended physical activity targets in Scotland³⁴, while in England 39% of men and 29% of women³⁵ are meeting them. Approximately 23% of adults in England³⁶ and 28.2% in Scotland³⁷ are considered obese. Without intervention, by 2050 obesity is expected to rise to 60% for men and 50% for women and will cost society £49.9 billion per year.³⁸ Crucially, for those who are inactive, the ability to gradually increase duration, frequency and intensity over time is critical in order to reach activity goals.

29 Newton, J. (2007) *Well-being and the Natural Environment. A brief overview of the evidence*, University of Surrey <http://www3.surrey.ac.uk/resolve/seminars/Julie%20Newton%20Paper.pdf>

30 Department of Health (Nov 2010) *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England*, London: DoH.

31 Scottish Government (May 2009) *Towards a mentally Flourishing Scotland: Policy and Action Plan 2009-11*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

32 Marmot Review (2010) *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: A Strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010*

33 World Health Organisation (2010) *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health*. To improve and maintain physical health, the WHO recommends minimum targets of 60 minutes moderate to vigorous intensity activity a day for young people (aged 5-17 years), and 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity throughout the week for 18-64 years and those aged 65 years or over.

34 Scottish Government. (2011) *Scottish Health Survey 2010*.

35 The Health and Social Care Information Centre (2010) *Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet: England, 2010*.

36 NHS Information Centre (Dec 2010) *Health Survey for England 2009: Health and Lifestyle Leeds: The NHS Information Centre*

37 Scottish Government (Sept 2011) *Scottish Health Survey 2010*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

38 Foresight (2007) *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices Final Report*

Due to the variability of physical activity levels possible in angling, it is a sport that delivers a means by which inactive people can become more active. Angling allows for gradual increases in participation frequency, duration and intensity as confidence, fitness and skills develop. This characteristic makes it particularly accessible to individuals who are inactive or have underlying disabilities with limited opportunities for physical activity and it is these individuals who are most at risk from poor well-being due to low activity. By moderating technique or location, anglers are able to remain physically active long after their ability to participate in other sports and leisure activities has declined.

In our participation survey, more than half of the sample (52%) rated their participation in angling as important, very important or extremely important to them being physically active.³⁹ It also offers opportunities to build up activity and for older people to get active:

'I broke my back in an accident. After a few operations I started to walk. I was told to try and get some exercise and build slowly. I went with my brother salmon fishing. I only watched to start but after a year of doing this I started to fish myself, two or three casts to start with, slowly building my stamina. I honestly believe that without the exercise I got from angling I would be in a wheel chair. I am not alone - my surgeons think the same.' (Web comment submitted 23/07/11)

[I have] walked more than eight miles in a fishing match, made a 600ft cliff descent and subsequent ascent and weighed myself before and after a hard bait digging session and recorded a 4½ lb weight loss. Angling is as physical as you want to make it.' (Survey comment made by 61-year old male sea angler)

Furthermore, angling creates opportunities for physical exercise in 'green' or 'natural environment' settings. Research by the University of Essex⁴⁰ has emphasised that 'green exercise' can lead to:

- Improved psychological wellbeing by enhancing mood and self-esteem
- Improved recovery from physical illness
- The facilitation of social networking and creativity

Mental health charity MIND, the Countryside Recreation Network and research by Pretty *et al* (2006) have all identified these additional benefits of taking exercise in natural/green spaces in their work.⁴¹

ii) Recovery from Physical Illness

While angling can help increase the physical health of the general population by raising levels of physical activity, it can also have specific benefits for those recovering from ill health. A growing body of research has pointed to the positive effects of green environments on physical recovery,⁴² and many hospital and outreach programmes now include green activities such as horticulture to facilitate patient recovery.⁴³

Recovery is both a physical and mental process. Reflecting this, angling provides opportunities to assist recovery from physical health problems in three ways:

- Increased physical movement
- Psychological benefits of being in green environments
- Increased social connection

'As an 82 year old man with cancer, I feel it an effort to get motivated to get out and about. However, when fly fishing a still water I very much enjoy the technique involved in making high-quality casts, the thrill of the take of a fish, the pleasure of being out of doors in a rural environment, and the kindness of strangers (mostly elderly men who feel as I do) on the waterside.' (Web comment submitted 16/09/2011)

While people can access the restorative benefits of angling through their own recreational participation, many projects now also offer targeted programmes of support.

39 Stolk, P. (2009) *Angling Participation Interim Report 2009*, Manchester: Substance, p30

http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Research_Task_1_Angling_Participation.pdf

40 Pretty op cit

41 Mind (2007) *Ecotherapy: The green agenda for mental health*, Mind Week report May 2007; Countryside Recreation Network (2005) *A countryside for health and wellbeing: The physical and mental health benefits of green exercise*; Pretty, J., Hine, R. and Peacock, J. (2006) 'Green exercise: The benefits of activities in green places', *The Biologist*, 53 (3), 143-148.

42 Newton, J. (2007) op cit

43 For example, see the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital's therapy garden

<http://www.rnoh.nhs.uk/clinical-services/rehabilitation-and-therapy/occup/therapy-garden>

Casting for Recovery⁴⁴ is a programme that encourages women who have experienced breast cancer to take part in fly fishing. Physical activity is used to strengthen muscles and increase movement and confidence following surgery. However, the benefits extend beyond the physiological; women find social support in their shared experiences and the camaraderie of angling, as well as a positive mental focus on wellness and having fun.⁴⁵

Angling is also being successfully used to work with people who have experienced strokes, where participation in angling is an opportunity not only to improve motor function and dexterity, but also to reconnect with society and begin to focus on the positive experiences in their lives.

In Focus: Angling and Stroke Recovery in Tameside

'Sometimes when people have a stroke the world becomes a very small place – often the front room of their home – and depression kicks in.'

Three years ago the Stroke Association's Tameside and Glossop Information, Advice and Support Service,⁴⁶ decided to 'test the water' and feature angling as an activity for people of working age. Joyce Booth from the Stroke Association explained the impetus behind starting these sessions:

'We want to engage people in as many activities as we can. The benefit of fishing would be to get out and about in the fresh air, and to see something different...I also think it was just about offering something to people that wasn't focused on their disability, and to show them something that they could do, and could achieve, with as much or as little support as they need.'

The decision proved to be far more successful than the service team thought possible. The Tameside and Glossop service now works closely with Tameside angling organisation Friends of Catch Nature,⁴⁷ and together they have developed sites with facilities that meet the special needs of their client group. Demand for angling sessions amongst those recovering from strokes has been consistently strong, prompting an increase in sessions from 3-4 outings per year to one a week during the summer months.

The Tameside and Glossop team identify angling participation as providing particular benefits for stroke survivors. These include physical improvements such as increased muscle strength, improved co-ordination and exercise, along with improvements to mental and emotional well-being through skill development, socialisation and opportunities to relax.



44 Casting for Recovery was founded in 1996 in Vermont, US. In 2007, Casting for Recovery UK/Ireland was established.

45 From data collected in interviews with members of Casting for Recovery.

46 See the Stroke Association website, http://www.stroke.org.uk/in_your_area/services_map/tameside_and_1.html accessed 5 December 2011.

47 See Friends of Catch Nature website, <http://www.catchnature.co.uk/index.html> accessed 5 December 2011.

2.2.2 Angling's Contribution to Mental Health

Angling makes both a preventative and restorative contribution to mental health.

Angling can assist mental health in two principal ways: by providing an activity that helps the development of positive mental health in participants; and as an activity that is used in a targeted way to treat mental health problems.

i) Promoting Positive Mental Health

Angling introduces protective factors that promote good mental health.

Positive mental health describes a positive state of being rather than just the absence of mental illness.⁴⁸ Developing protective factors, such as resilience and coping skills, as well as a network of social support, helps to maintain positive mental health.

Across the country many people already make use of angling to maintain positive mental health. In our survey of 2,400 anglers, 87% identified rest and relaxation as an important motivation for angling participation, with 30% citing rest and relaxation as 'extremely important'.⁴⁹ 90% of surveyed anglers also claimed escaping crowds and noise was an important, very important or extremely important part of their angling experience⁵⁰.



48 World Health Organisation (2010) *Mental Health: Strengthening our Response*. Fact Sheet No 220
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/index.html>

49 Stolk, P. (2009) op cit :30.

50 ibid

Angling provides opportunities to escape from daily stress and moments for respite and restoration. Research suggests mental restoration is best achieved through environments and activities that provide breaks from the effort of sustaining tired cognitive patterns.⁵¹ Amongst the data from our angler interviews, online comments and survey, angling was clearly described as having many of the distinct features of mentally restorative environments that contribute to the maintenance of positive mental health as outlined in Table 4.

Feature	Benefit	Angler response
Escape and 'Getting Away'	Fishing provides an opportunity to 'take time out' and 'get away' from busy fast moving lives. It removes people both physically and mentally from the stresses of their day to day environments.	<i>'Being in the country away from the hustle bustle of fast track living is a great thing, even if it is sitting on the banks of a canal as it passes through a town or city. The noises and sounds take you to another place and the speed of life slows down.'</i>
Attention and Fascination	Angling 'fascinates' attention, allowing people to concentrate for long periods of time seemingly effortlessly. As they become completely absorbed there is no room for other thoughts and the singular focus serves as a mental break. ⁵²	<i>'Fishing provides me with total escape from other worries. I am 100% absorbed in the art of casting, the movement of the water, the weather and the environment around me. It's a great stress buster: there's no space left for thinking of other things.'</i>
Relaxation and Excitement	The relaxation of engaging in an enjoyable repetitive activity is punctuated by moments of excitement and the anticipation of catching. This holds interest, encouraging people to participate for longer, reaping the benefits of taking time out to relax without becoming bored.	<i>'Angling provides a distraction to the stresses of modern living. It requires long periods of concentration to adapt techniques to ever changing conditions. Relaxation comes from intense concentration whilst excitement arises from the anticipation and the unpredictability of catching.'</i>
Access to Nature	Escaping into green spaces and feeling close and connected to nature boosts feelings of well-being, improving mood and enabling people to find respite from life stresses. ⁵³	<i>'I cannot imagine anything else that allows such an escape - it is the ultimate means of levelling out from stress for me. Fresh air, exercise, stimulation and a feeling of being 'at one with nature' all contribute to a very necessary experience in today's world.'</i>
Achievement and Purpose	Active learning and developing skills can provide a sense of purpose and motivation, increase opportunities for achievement and boost self-esteem.	<i>'The only time I get to completely unwind is when we are fishing. A day out with mates, a laugh, being close to nature and sometimes a few fish. Never anything big or record breaking but it still brings a sense of achievement and well-being. Can you put a price on this? I don't think so!'</i>

Table 4: Distinctive Features of Angling Contributing to Positive Mental Health

51 Kaplan, S. (2001) 'Meditation, Restoration and the Management of Mental Fatigue' In *Environment and Behaviour* Vol. 33, p482-506

52 This is a feature of restorative environments described as essential for mental restoration, *ibid*

53 This echoes research on the impact of green environments for improved mental health. Newton, J. (2007).

ii) Assisting Treatment and Recovery from Mental Illness

Angling provides programmes that assist in the treatment and recovery from mental illness.

a) Informal

At any one time, approximately 16% of adults and 10% of children are affected by common mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.⁵⁴ The most recent estimates suggest this costs £105 billion per year in England once all the wider impacts are considered.⁵⁵ In Scotland recent estimates of the social and economic cost of mental illness are in the region of £10.7 billion.⁵⁶ Finding effective ways to assist in the recovery of people from mental ill-health is consequently an important concern for the whole of society.

A significant body of work is emerging to explore how green environments, particular those that include water⁵⁷, can improve mood and self-esteem and stave off mild forms of depression and anxiety.⁵⁸ Increased physical activity has also been shown to have a positive effect on improving mood and reducing symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety.⁵⁹ Participation in angling capitalises on both these benefit areas, while also incorporating a number additional benefits for those suffering from mental ill-health. These include:

- Escape and respite from stressful environments
- Reduced isolation and reconnection with living things (fish, nature, other people)
- Increased access to blue-green environments that improve mood and self-esteem.
- Increased engagement in physical activity
- Opportunities to rebuild relationships with carers or families through positive, shared participation that does not focus on illness
- Sense of achievement and independence from others
- Confirmation of capabilities and immediate sense of gratification and success
- Participation in a calming, therapeutic activity.

As one sea angler explained:

'When my mental health deteriorates I am able to "escape" and go fishing. The solitude of the sea shore, the sound of the waves, and the need to concentrate on watching for a bite clears my mind of negative thoughts, fixing me back into a happier frame of mind. Alternatively when I'm hyper manic the slow rhythm of fly casting and the need to carefully stalk my quarry brings me back down into a calm state.' (Web comment submitted 13/07/2011)

b) Targeted Intervention Programmes

While the aforementioned health benefits are accessible through angling participation more generally, organisations are increasingly beginning to provide targeted intervention programmes for people experiencing mental ill-health.

The mental health charity MIND incorporated angling into their Get Active programme in Worthing, West Sussex⁶⁰. The Get Active programme aims to improve mental and physical health through a variety of exercise and physical activities. Stephen, one of the regular Get Active participants, explained how the *'peaceful, relaxing'* experience of going fishing *'takes your mind off [the passing of] time'*. By contrast, a day at home presents certain mental challenges. Going fishing removes Stephen from his usual domestic setting – a place where anxiety attacks can be triggered by a ringing telephone or knock at the door – and delivers him to a tranquil environment where he has greater control over the amount of interaction he has with other people.

54 Foresight (2008) *Mental Capital and Well-being: making the most of ourselves in the 21st Century*.

55 Department of Health (Feb 2011) *No Health Without Mental Health: A cross-government mental health outcomes strategy for people of all ages* London: DoH, p10

56 The Scottish Association for Mental Health (2011) *What's it worth now? The social and economic costs of mental health in Scotland*

57 Pretty and J. Barton. (2010) 'What is the Best Dose of Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health?', in *Environmental Science and Technology*, Vol. 44 (10) p 3947–3955

58 Newton (2007:23); Mind (2007) *Ecotherapy: The green agenda for mental health*. http://www.mind.org.uk/campaigns_and_issues/report_and_resources/835_ecotherapy

59 Baker, L.A, Cahalin, L.P., Gerst, K. and Burr, J.A. (2005). 'Productive activities and subjective well-being among older adults: the influence of number of activities and time commitment', *Social Indicators Research* 73, pp. 431-458.

60 Stolk, P. (2010) *Interim Theme Paper 2: Angling and personal Health and Well-being*, Manchester: Substance http://www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Theme_Paper_2_Angling_and_Personal_Health_and_Well-being.pdf

Another example can be found in Scotland, where nursing staff from two NHS mental health hospitals in Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Leverdale and Dykebar, introduced angling in 2011 to help calm patients and increase their quality of life. The majority of those engaged are in long term wards and angling offers them one of the few opportunities to change their routine and get out to experience the natural environment.⁶¹

Both of these examples illustrate the potential role angling can play in supporting targeted mental health provisions. Opportunities for this type of involvement would be greatly increased by developing stronger links between angling and mental health organisations and institutions at local, regional and national levels.

In Focus: Working with Anxiety Disorders

In the UK, 4.4% or 195,000 young people aged 11-16 have an anxiety disorder.⁶² A further 3.6% of 16-24 year olds are thought to have a generalized anxiety disorder.⁶³ Anxiety can be complicated by low-confidence and self-esteem, feelings of not fitting in, experiences of bullying, or isolation and limited friendship networks. In young people anxiety can manifest as panic attacks, agoraphobia, or obsessive compulsive disorder, triggered by stressful social situations such as meeting new people or going to school.

Youth intervention project Get Hooked On Fishing (GHOF), has found angling particularly effective for working with young people with anxiety disorders because angling introduces them to a calming activity that can be used to minimize anxiety during engagement sessions. As a result workers are able to discuss difficult issues or introduce young people to social situations that would otherwise potentially trigger anxiety attacks.

'Fishing relaxes me so much. I used to get panic attacks in year 7. And now I'm dead relaxed, it's weird because I used to have panic attacks at school, and then one day I just couldn't breathe, and the next day I was with GHOF again and I was fine. It happens when I have something on my mind to do, coming to school. Whereas tying a hook, having something to do where I'm just sitting here, something to relax. It calms me down.' (Male, 13)

Through an approach that combines the therapeutic aspects of angling with youth intervention work, young people learn to manage their anxiety, overcome fears of social situations and develop social skills that give them greater confidence in social interactions.

2.2.3 Angling's Contribution to Improved Social Well-Being

The quality of people's social relationships has been found to be one of the most robust predictors of well-being.⁶⁴ The two most significant determinants relate to:

- The quality of interpersonal relationships between close family and friends
- A sense of connection, belonging and contribution to a wider community

i) Family

Learning to fish has long been associated with social and family networks, with angling skills, techniques and information often being passed to young people from parents, grandparents, friends or extended family.⁶⁵ While the breakdown of family networks may have disrupted some of this process, our data suggests that young people continue to go fishing predominantly with family.

61 Scottish Herald. (May 2011) <http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/health/fishing-on-the-nhs-for-mental-health-patients-its-a-good-sense-of-achievement-when-we-catch-a-fish.13775733>

62 Green, H., McGinnity, A., Meltzer, H., et al. (2005) *Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain 2004*. London: Palgrave.

63 McManus, S., Meltzer, H., Brugha T, Bebbington, P Jenkins, R. (2009) *Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England, 2007: Results of a household survey*, London: The Health and Social Care Information Centre

64 Raben, M, D. (2010) 'The promotion of well-being: A primer for Policymakers: Working paper 10-25, *Economic and Finance Working Paper Series*, London: Brunel University.

65 Wheelock, J., Oughton, E. and Whitman, G. (2009) 'Well-being and the Values of Angling', Research poster for the *Angling in the Rural Environment* project.

In our young angler survey, 76.4% of the sample indicated that a family member fished. However, only 49.7% said they most often went fishing with family members, and the proportion of respondents was more heavily distributed amongst younger age groups. Nonetheless, in qualitative interviews with young people and their families, spending quality time with family members represented a significant part of their enjoyment, particularly when this gave an opportunity for bonding across gender boundaries.⁶⁶ As one young girl explained, angling was one of the few activities they could do as a whole family where everyone could be equally proficient. For adults too, spending quality time with siblings, children and grandchildren, was cited as an important aspect of angling participation.

'It's something me and my brothers tend to do together, we carry on the tradition that our father passed onto us. Sometimes even though me and my brothers fish together there will be a moments of silence, but generally we have a good catch up, there's also that element of competition there.' (Survey comment made by 39 year old male angler)

ii) Friends and Contributing to the Wider Community

Angling is also an important means of forming connections and meaningful relationships outside of the family unit. As alluded to in Section 1, angling participation involves a wide variety of affiliated activities that support a rich social world, including membership of clubs and associations, coaching and mentoring, contributing to websites and taking part in competitions. Membership of formal social structures such as angling clubs and associations provides opportunities to engage in democratic processes, take on responsibilities, join social events, engage in coaching or volunteering, and meet new people.

For older adults in particular, formal volunteering has been shown to be a protective factor in psychological well-being by providing a sense of purpose and productive roles in later life.⁶⁷ Volunteering opportunities build social capital, and facilitate feelings of collective belonging, civic engagement and connectedness.⁶⁸ Because angling promotes opportunities to build meaningful relationships based on shared interest rather than religious, ethnic, or regional affiliation, it has the potential to facilitate greater community integration (Section 4).



66 Djohari, N (2010) *Young People's Voices Part1: The Well-being Benefits of Angling Participation*, Manchester: Substance. http://www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Young_People_Part1_wellbeing2010.pdf

67 Greenfield, E and Marks, N. (2004) 'Formal volunteering as a protective factor for older adult's psychological well-being', in *Journal of Gerontology*, Vol 95b (5) 258-264; see also Dolan, P., Peasgood, T. and White, M.P. (2006) *Review of Research on the Influences on Personal Well-being and Application to Policy Making*, London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

68 For a detailed discussion of the benefits offered by club membership, see Putnam, R.D (1995) 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6:1, pp.65-78.

2.2.3 Angling Across the Life Course

Angling addresses specific well-being issues for both young and older people.

Sustaining well-being is about encouraging healthy life choices at all stages of life, from early childhood development through to old age. Angling, being open to participation across the generations, represents an excellent example for understanding how a single activity, when adapted to different stages of life, can bring health and well-being benefits throughout the life course.

i) Angling, Children and Young People

Angling helps build young people's relationships and confidence.

Securing the well-being of children has become a particularly pressing concern for the UK in the wake of ranking last in UNICEF's 2007 table on young people's well-being across 21 of the richest nations⁶⁹. Among the UNICEF well-being domains where the UK performed poorly were 'family and peer relationships' and 'subjective well-being'.

Amongst the 188 young people we interviewed and the 219 who completed the Young People's Angling Survey, angling emerged as an important contributor to well-being in three distinct ways:

- Building strong supportive social relationships with adults and peers
- Boosting confidence and self-esteem
- Providing respite and escape from stressful situations

'I do it to get away from anything bad happening, I can just come down here, I can escape from everything and it's my space to chill out in, relax and do what you want.' (Male 15)

These benefits are clearly captured in responses to the Young People's Angling Survey (see graphic in figure 2) and reveal the important role angling can play in supporting young people to live happy, healthy lives. For young people who are socially excluded or do not participate in other sports or recreational activities, the benefits of meeting supportive adults and peers can be especially significant.⁷⁰



Figure 2: Well-being Results From the Young People's Angling Survey

69 UNICEF (2007) *An Over View of Child Well-being in Rich Countries*, Report Card 7.

70 More detailed qualitative accounts from young people can be found in the Djohari, N. (2010b) *Young People's Voices Part 1: The Well-being Benefits of Angling Participation*, Manchester: Substance http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Young_People_Part1_wellbeing2010.pdf

ii) Angling Benefits for Older People

Angling provides opportunities for 'active ageing'

'When I retired in 2003 aged 67, I found that carrying all the equipment for coarse angling was getting a bit much, and a couple of years ago I took up fly fishing. I joined a Fly Dressing Group and made new friends. The group organises fishing trips, we give demonstrations and teach children. In about a month's time I will be 75. Fishing has given me good friends, a meaningful existence, and a sense of worth I could easily have missed had I retired to the TV sport and old folks' organisations. Life is full and I enjoy every minute.' (Online comment submitted 16/9/2011).

With an increasingly ageing population, and people expected to work longer before retirement, the Foresight *Mental Capital and Well-being report*⁷¹ highlights two emerging social challenges:

- i) How to **maintain mental capital** (cognitive capabilities, resilience, social skills) that will help older people maintain their well-being and independence into old age;
- ii) How to make more use of **older people's capabilities** and reverse negative stereotypes.

Our research has found that angling is contributing to positive outcomes in both these areas by encouraging *active ageing*. '**Active ageing**' refers to people's continued participation in the social, political and cultural aspects of life. It focuses not only on maintaining physical and mental health but also on creating an environment through which older people can maintain their autonomy and independence, and engage in a fulfilling social life. Angling facilitates active ageing in four interconnected ways which are outlined in Table 5.

Active Ageing Criteria	Angling's Contribution
Life-long learning: a protective factor against cognitive decline. ⁷²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages people to continue engaging in learning, through angling skill development. • Taking on new roles and responsibilities as coaches or within angling clubs.
Continued physical activity: Can delay functional decline and reduce the onset of chronic disease. ⁷³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling participation is not restricted by a person's level of physical ability. • Can be effective at keeping older people physically active long after their ability to participate in other sports and recreation activities have declined. • Older people can come to angling later in life, unlike many other sports.
Reducing isolation and increasing social connection: Can combat increased morbidity and psychological distress in older people. ⁷⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling offers a rich social world in which to participate and meet new people. • Participation in angling clubs leads to social networks, volunteering and competitions. • Informal interactions on the waterside also offer potential for developing friendships.
Making a meaningful contribution to society: Recognises and utilises the wealth of experience and helps share it with younger generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling is one of the few sports where older people can continue to contribute long past retirement age. • Angling involves an intergenerational exchange of knowledge which is beneficial for young and old alike. • Across angling clubs and projects working with some of the most challenging young people, we have found many retired people take up new opportunities as volunteers and coaches. The ADB report approximately 37% of the 1040 newly qualified UKCC coaches since 2009 were over 50.

Table 5: Angling's Contribution to Active Ageing

71 Foresight Mental Capital and Well-being Project (2008) *Final Project Report: Executive Summary*, London: The Government Office for Science, p11.

72 *ibid*

73 World Health Organisation. (2002) *Active Ageing: A policy Framework*.

74 *ibid*; Cattani, M, Bond, J; Learmouth, A; White, M. (2005). 'Preventing social isolation and loneliness among older people: a systematic review of health promotion'. In *Ageing and Society*, Vol. 25, pp. 41-67.

2.3 Issues and Recommendations

2.3.1 Access

One of the greatest strengths of angling is that **participation is not restricted** by a person's underlying physical ability. Nonetheless, those with disabilities and restricted mobility can sometimes find fisheries ill-prepared to meet their needs. In addition, young people face additional challenges to participation, being restricted to fisheries in urban centres or those they can access on their own via public transport. More needs to be done to ensure everyone, regardless of age, physical ability or status, is able to access the benefits provided through angling.

If angling is to develop its delivery of health and well-being outcomes, particularly to those suffering physical or mental health problems, then there is a need to improve access to fisheries and fishing opportunities. Although much good work has been delivered in recent years, supported by angling governing bodies and agencies such as the Environment Agency, more needs to be done. Local authorities should commit to opening or maintaining access to fishing at accessible venues in centralised locations that are close to public transport routes.⁷⁵ Fisheries themselves should continue to improve disability access and facilities.

2.3.2 Connections with Health Providers

Angling as a sector is **not particularly well connected** with health providers or policymakers, locally, regionally or nationally. Although we have seen some very good examples of angling as a restorative health activity and some innovative projects, this is the exception rather than the rule. Angling governing bodies at a national level in the UK, and ADB Regional Managers, County Angling Action Groups (CAAGs) and angling clubs and projects, need to establish these links if the potential is to be realised.

As such there is a need to strengthen links between angling and the health sector. Angling organisations should make links with the health sector at a national, regional and local level. This should involve providing information on the benefits angling can deliver and building relationships, pilots and joint projects with both national and local agencies in mental and physical health work. Work being done with MIND and the Stroke Association are good examples of the fruitfulness of collaborative projects.

- **National policymakers and charities** should meet angling governing bodies to discuss development of the health and well-being benefits
- **Regional managers** should contact regional health forums, open dialogue and develop pilot projects.
- **CAAGs and local angling clubs** should contact PCTs, local authority public health officials and GP forums to provide information on activities they can offer.

2.3.3 Evaluation

The benefits of angling for health and well-being are little known outside of the angling sector. In part this is due to an **absence of demonstrable data**, with few intervention programmes effectively monitoring and evaluating their outcomes. In order to successfully communicate with health care professionals, the future GP consortia expected to replace Primary Care Trusts, and local authorities who will have responsibilities for public health, angling will need to be able to provide robust evidence that programmes are delivering the intended health and well-being benefits.

There is a need for angling to work with health and research professionals to provide evidence of angling's contribution to health and well-being. This can be easily achieved through basic monitoring and evaluation of health and well-being outcomes across angling programmes. For targeted interventions in particular, lessons can be learnt from horticulture and green exercise programmes that have gained widespread recognition within health sectors because they have engaged in more robust evaluations. Commissioning of more in depth specific health research should be explored.

⁷⁵ See Brown, A et al. (2011) *Making the Most of Community Waters: Localism, Health and Angling* (2011), for more suggestions on how to improve community access to angling. http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Making_the_most_of_community_waters.pdf

3. Angling and the Natural Environment

In Brief

Angling delivers benefits for the environment and for people accessing natural environments in two principal ways:

- Delivering environmental benefits through anglers' engagement in conservation, ecosystem monitoring and raising environmental awareness.
- Acting as a 'gateway' for people to access green spaces and create connections with nature which improves the wellbeing of people and their communities.

3.1 Introduction and Context

The current and future contribution of angling to accessing, improving and raising awareness of the natural environment means that it is relevant to several key policy agendas.

- **Valuing the ecosystems of the UK** has emerged as an important cross-departmental agenda, contributing to both personal well-being and economic prosperity.⁷⁶ The environment white paper, *The Natural Choice: Securing the value of nature* (2011), makes a commitment to 'mainstream the value of nature'⁷⁷ by:
 - Supporting local actions that protect and enhance nature
 - Creating a green economy
 - Strengthening the connections between people and nature
 - Showing international leadership on natural environment matters.
- The public health white paper, *Healthy People, Healthy Lives*⁷⁸ specifically recognises the **health benefits of green spaces** (discussed in the previous section) and sets out Local Authority responsibilities for facilitating greater access to quality green spaces.
- The UK's responsibilities to the **EU Water Framework Directive** (WFD) include the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all water bodies in the environment.
- **Greener neighbourhoods** can reduce crime and improve quality of life⁷⁹. However there has been a noted decline in the condition and accessibility of urban green spaces in the UK, particularly in deprived urban areas.⁸⁰ Contemporary initiatives to address this include the Localism Bill, the future Community Right to Reclaim Land, and the new 'Green Area Designations' that will empower people to protect and improve the green spaces that are important to them.⁸¹

76 The UK National Ecosystem Assessment sets out in detail the economic and health benefits of the natural environment and its related services (2011).

77 DEFRA (2011) *The Natural Choice: Securing the value of nature*, London: DEFRA

78 Department of Health (2010) *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England*, London: DoH

79 DEFRA (2011) op cit. See also Louv, R. and Frumkin, H. (2007) 'The Powerful Link Between Conserving Land and Preserving Health', *Land Trust Alliance Special Anniversary Report*, 2007

80 United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (2011) *The UK National Ecosystem Assessment: Synthesis of the Key Findings*, Cambridge

81 DEFRA. (2011) op cit. p49-50

The data for our research in this area was collected using quantitative and qualitative survey work, through research at a variety of angling projects and online qualitative submission forms. This included some in-depth work with Trout in the Town, a project run by the Wild Trout Trust, which helps to improve urban river environments.

3.2 Angling's Contribution to the Natural Environment

Angling can help reverse downward trends in access to green spaces, contributing to environmental improvement, developing quality green spaces, as well as providing opportunities for people to connect with nature.

3.2.1 Environmental Improvement Work

Anglers and angling organisations help improve aquatic habitats.

Anglers and angling organisations lead, or are partners in, a wide range of projects that aim to improve the quality of aquatic and marine habitat. The rehabilitation of existing waterways, monitoring and improving fish and invertebrate populations, and making structural improvements to waters – such as combating bank erosion in rivers – are common examples of the kind of work anglers are involved in. In the vast majority of cases these activities are carried out by volunteers, although often in conjunction with statutory agencies.

There are two principal ways in which angling contributes to the management and conservation of the natural environment:

- Improving Aquatic Habitats
- Monitoring ecosystems and environmental health

i) Improving Aquatic Habitats

Anglers' involvement in assisting habitat conservation has wider community benefits.

'Not only do anglers get a sense of personal achievement from carrying out this sort of voluntary work but, as this work is usually carried out in the local area, this benefits the local community as well.' (Online comment submitted 23/06/2010)

In our angling participation survey, 593 respondents (approximately 25% of the sample) said that they 'contributed to environmental or aquatic habitat conservation projects'.

Many angling clubs and associations encountered during our research - for example Salford Friendly Anglers' Society and the Shropshire Anglers' Federation - regularly take part in conservation work which includes:

- Removal of invasive plants (such as Japanese knotweed)
- Removal of invasive species (such as signal crayfish)
- Planting of riparian vegetation to improve the function and appearance of natural habitats
- Removal of rubbish from rivers.

In another example, as part of the Trout in the Town project, Disley and New Mills Angling Club (DNMAC) members have been working under the guidance of The Wild Trout Trust and the Environment Agency to improve the health of stretches of the River Goyt. This has included a number of specific tasks, such as bank stabilisation to prevent erosion and the installation of large woody debris to create pools, scouring and changes in water flow.

Although much angler-led habitat improvement takes place on rivers, the actions of anglers can also benefit still waters and regenerate neglected urban green spaces. For example, after purchasing Walker's Dam, Alverthorpe, in 2006, members of Wakefield Angling Club have, with technical assistance from the Environment Agency, transformed the water from a neglected state to a balanced coarse fishery managed by the club.

Similarly, at Charlton's pond in Billingham and Hemlington Lake in Middlesbrough, improvements to angling waters have included creating fish refuges, bankside planting and the construction of fishing pegs. The regeneration of these two urban areas has helped to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, and transformed previously neglected green spaces into community assets. These areas now attract a broad range of community members interested in various forms of outdoor recreation, such as bird watching, walking and picnicking – as well as fishing.

There is, however, potential for angling to play a much greater role in environmental improvement and regeneration of urban green spaces:

- The Natural Choice white paper proposes new **Green Areas Designations** which offers scope for angling organisations to work with other community groups⁸².
- The demand from anglers to be involved in such work is evidenced by our angling participation survey: 37% of game anglers said they had joined, or would consider joining, an angling club to participate in environmental initiatives (26% for coarse anglers, and 24% sea anglers).
- Work with young people to deliver conservation and ecosystem education is expanding, helping young people to learn about the wider consequences of pollution and encourage environmental stewardship⁸³. However, concerns about health and safety need to be overcome to extend provision and young people's involvement in river clean up and aquatic conservation practices.

In Focus: Trout in the Town

Trout in the Town (TinTT) is a community-focused initiative of the Wild Trout Trust that is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. TinTT aims to:

'improve the quality of river habitat in urban areas for the benefit of trout and wider biodiversity, and to raise awareness of wild trout as a totem species for clean water and living rivers.'

The core principles of the Trout in the Town programme are habitat restoration and a commitment to increasing awareness of, and education about, urban rivers. Currently TinTT has projects in both England and Scotland, centred on Huddersfield Greenstreams, Colne Water (East Lancs.), Glazert. Water and the Rivers Wandle, Don, Goyt, Cray, Erewash, Cole, Wye (Buxton) and Irwell⁸⁴.

TinTT coordinator Dr Paul Gaskell says anglers and angling clubs make up around 90% of the Wild Trout Trust membership and are therefore inevitably involved in running TinTT projects. Paul also believes that anglers place a much greater emphasis on maintaining the health of urban rivers:

'There might be plenty of people that use an urban river corridor, but it would be just as attractive to them if it... wasn't as biologically diverse...Whereas there is a particular value – a particular ecosystem value – that game anglers, and coarse anglers as well, would [place on the river]. They would notice if it [the river] deteriorated, and they'd also feel strongly about trying to protect it.'

Our research has identified TinTT as an example of good practice in terms of angling's contribution to improving urban aquatic habitats. Anglers who have committed to TinTT projects are involved in activities that deliver wider community benefit, including volunteering, environmental rehabilitation, monitoring invertebrate and fish populations, information sharing with community members and young people's education. For more information see www.urbantrout.blogspot.com/

ii) Monitoring Ecosystems and Environmental Health

Anglers act as the eyes and ears of the natural environment because they spend so much time in and around aquatic habitats.

'Anglers have long been the unpaid 'early warning system' for any pollution problems. It is they who are on the frontline and able to report any problems or incidents direct to the EA. Without them, our waterways would be a lot worse off.'
(Angler comment submitted online 16/08/2010)

Anglers spend huge amounts of time either in or alongside bodies of water, developing an intimate knowledge of particular waterways, still waters and coastal stretches. They are often the first to report incidents of pollution and change in ecosystems. This role as the 'eyes and ears' of aquatic habitats has been recognised by the establishment of telephone hotlines and other reporting mechanisms specifically for anglers by both the Environment Agency (in England and Wales) and SEPA (in Scotland). Angler feedback can include reports of signs of fish in distress, poaching or environmental pollutants.

82 DEFRA (2011) op cit.

83 Djohari, N. (2010c) *Young People's Voices Part 3: The Added Value of Angling Intervention Programmes*, Manchester: Substance, p15
http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/young_people_intervention_2010.pdf

84 http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/data_visualisation/maps/titt

However, anglers also provide an often untapped and 'unofficial' resource as repositories of aquatic history. Individual knowledge about the life of rivers, canals, still waters and coastlines is developed, held and shared over many years – sometimes decades – of angling experience. More formally, many angling clubs are actively involved in invertebrate and 'kick' sampling, as well as monitoring through projects such as the Riverfly Partnership's Angler Monitoring Initiative⁸⁵. This work:

- Gathers knowledge of river conditions
- Provides 'hard' ecological evidence valued by environmental agencies
- Extends the abilities of people and communities to actively participate in monitoring water quality.

These types of initiatives are not limited to inland waters. The Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network (SSACN) charity has introduced a number of conservation initiatives for the benefit of the marine environment. One of these is The Scottish Shark Tagging Programmes (SSTP), which seeks to gather much needed statistical data on shark, skate and ray populations that are becoming endangered. SSTP:

- Run fish tagging events, such as the Sharktag weekend on the Solway, where anglers are taught how to safely catch and tag the relevant species and record data online.
- Have tagged 2390 fish
- Have to date involved 192 anglers.⁸⁶

Sharktag events also helps to generate media interest and raise awareness about the plight of sharks around the Scottish coast and encourage good conservation practices among those fishing for them. This is complemented by the direct educational work SSACN do in schools, encouraging children to attend shark 'eggcase hunts' and identify them later in classrooms.



85 Riverfly Partnership Angler Monitoring Initiative: http://www.riverflies.org/index/riverfly_monit.htm

86 SSACN (2011) *Scottish Shark Tagging Programme. Progress Report Dec 2011*. <http://www.tagsharks.com/reading-room>

In Focus: Angling Businesses as Champions of Environmental Monitoring

Angling-related businesses should be showing strong leadership in angling's commitment to maintaining the health of the natural environment. One example with good credentials in this area is The Arundell Arms.

The Arundell Arms is a historic fly-fishing hotel in Lifton, Devon that offers guided fishing on 20 miles of the River Tamar and its tributaries. The hotel has been owned and managed by the same family since 1961, and is commonly associated with former manager Anne Voss-Bark MBE, whose actions helped establish one of the first rivers trusts in the UK.

Mrs Voss-Bark managed the hotel between 1961 and 2010, and developed a passion for both angling and the local river catchment during that time. With the help of poet Ted Hughes and other colleagues, Mrs Voss-Bark began to investigate the effect of farm fertilisers leaching into soil in vulnerable river catchment areas. This initial work was formalised into the Tamar 2000 project, and later the Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT).

The current manager of the Arundell Arms is Mrs Voss-Bark's son, Adam Fox-Edwards. He sits as a director on the board of the Westcountry Rivers Trust, and explained to our researcher that his mother and her colleagues were 'among the first to say there needed to be a more joined-up approach' to catchment management.

3.2.2 Raising Environmental Awareness

Angling contributes to public knowledge about freshwater and marine environments, both formally and informally.

Improving people's understanding of the environment, and encouraging their involvement in monitoring and conservation, is important to protecting green spaces both now and into the future. Angling participation is a gateway to an improved individual understanding of the natural world, but also helps with the sharing of this knowledge with others, in formal and informal ways.

i) Informal Environmental Education

Our interviews with anglers and angling organisations consistently showed that many anglers had developed extensive knowledge of the environment and local ecosystems through their angling participation. Our survey of young anglers (n=219) found that 84.4% said that fishing had taught them more about caring for the environment.

As a part of everyday angling practice and discourse, anglers frequently share information about the quality of aquatic environments, the life and behaviour of fish, encouraging sustainable practices and the effect of environmental change on habitats and fish populations. This happens as a *matter of course* in clubs, on bank sides, in internet forums and pubs.

Because angling is about catching fish, as a practice it relies upon a knowledge of local aquatic habitats – even in the most man-made, stocked urban settings. This marks it out from most mainstream sport and leisure pursuits (although bird watching, flora and fauna monitoring, field sports etc. have some similarities). As such, angling provides a hugely valuable informal means of circulating environmental knowledge that can generate improved environmental awareness and more sustainable practices.

In turn, environmental awareness can motivate anglers to participate in planned environmental work and become involved in environmental education. As one angling coach explained about his reasons for teaching young people:

'We are the eyes and ears of preservation; we are out there all of the time sitting by the side of the lakes and rivers. We are seeing things going wrong and reporting them. There's no substitute to being there. When we are gone, us older guys, there has to be someone to take our place or all the passion that we provide for the environment will have dried up.' (Interview comment from angling coach and educator).

However, not all anglers behave in an environmentally responsible way, and often this is due to a lack of awareness. Problems can include littering, not returning undersized fish, poor fish handling technique, and neglect of by-laws. It is important therefore for anglers to be fully educated on their responsibilities.

- In Scotland, the **Club Angling Candidate Pack developed by ADBoS** for all new anglers, has been designed so that learning around environmental safety and fish biology is given precedence over learning about tackle and angling equipment. This includes the promotion of 'catch and release' in wild fisheries as part of sustainable fishing practices.
- The **SSACN** are promoting responsible fishing through their 'Give Fish a Chance' initiative, educating anglers on minimum landing sizes and providing information on good fish handling practices to improve survival rates and breeding.

Work with young people is particularly important for encouraging sustainable fishing practices. **All the young people's angling projects** we researched included education about fish anatomy and the role of fish within wider ecosystems in order to help young people understand the science behind fish welfare handling practices. Angling-based youth intervention projects, as discussed in Section 6, also use environmental learning to encourage young people to develop a sense of social responsibility and ownership of their local environment.

'Now I know how to fish properly. When you understand fishing, you start to look at the welfare side of it; you want to look after the fish, because if there's no fish there's no fishing.' (Interview comment made by Male 18 years old, GHOF)

At Billingham Angling Club young people are encouraged to attend an initiation coaching course in order to get a reduced rate for club membership (from £10 to £5 for 12-16 year olds and free for under-12's). The induction focuses on teaching fish welfare practices, environmental awareness and basic health and safety, encouraging sustainable angler practices from the very beginning. We have recorded this sharing of environmental knowledge elsewhere as well:

'The good thing about the fishing is getting the kids to sit down for a couple of hours and you can really engage with them and you can talk about the environment and looking after the area, not littering. So it gives us a tool to work with them.' (Interview comment made by Recreation Manager at Hemlington Lake).

ii) Formal Environmental Education

Angling-related organisations also help deliver more formal environmental education, often incorporating opportunities for student learning outside the classroom.

Both the National Curriculum in England and Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence⁸⁷ incorporate an emphasis on the importance and benefits of learning outdoors. Learning outside the classroom has the potential to **develop young people as active citizens and stewards of the environment**⁸⁸. Research suggests that an emotional affinity with nature and a desire to protect it can be established in positive childhood experiences in the natural environment⁸⁹.

The **value of outdoor education**, however, is not just in raising environmental awareness. Research shows that outdoor education programmes have the potential to improve educational outcomes, encouraging experiential learning (which helps students to build bridges between theory and reality), improve attitudes to learning, and decrease the risk of permanent exclusion⁹⁰.

Bringing learning outside – thereby providing access to the natural environment – also has the potential to remedy what Richard Louv described as the 'nature-deficit disorder' afflicting young people in contemporary society.⁹¹ The importance of outdoor learning for child development and education is also recognised in *The Natural Choice* White Paper, with an explicit commitment made to support schools teaching outdoors by reducing unnecessary rules and barriers.

Within angling, we have found angling-related groups currently make a significant contribution to environmental education in primary and secondary schools through programmes such as:

- **Trout in the Classroom:** Initially delivered by the Wandle Trust in south London in 2001, but now delivered throughout the UK in partnership with numerous organisations.
- **Mayfly in the Classroom:** Delivered as part of the Trout in the Town programme.
- **Salmon in the Classroom:** Delivered in Scotland since 1991 by Galloway Fisheries Trust, now adopted by multiple delivery partners across schools in Scotland.
- The **Salmon Homecoming** project delivered by the Wye and Usk Foundation
- **The Brown Trout Book:** A primary school educational publication delivered in Scotland through the Salmon and Trout Association, including versions in Gaelic.
- **Stickleback in the Classroom:** Led by the EA and Leicester University in Leeds, and by Thames 21 in North London.
- **Beachcombing:** Educational activities regularly run by GHOF Easington in the North East of England.
- **Fly-tying and Entomology:** Taught variously through fly tying and fly fishing associations as well as GHOF Shropshire.

87 The Scottish Government Curriculum for Excellence: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE>

88 See Council for Learning outside the Classroom. <http://www.lotc.org.uk/>

89 Kals, E, Schumacher, D and Montada, L (1999) 'Emotional Affinity toward Nature as a Motivational Basis to Protect Nature' *Environment and Behaviour*, Vol. 31, No. 2; and Ballantyne, R, Packer, J (2002) 'Nature-based Excursions: School Students' Perceptions of Learning in Natural Environments' *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 11 (3), pp. 218-236.

90 Fox, P and Avramidis, E. (2003) 'An evaluation of an outdoor education programme for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties', in *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* 8 (4) 267-283; also see LOTC (2009) *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto*.

91 Louv, R (2005) *Last Child in the Woods*, Carolina: Algonquin Books.

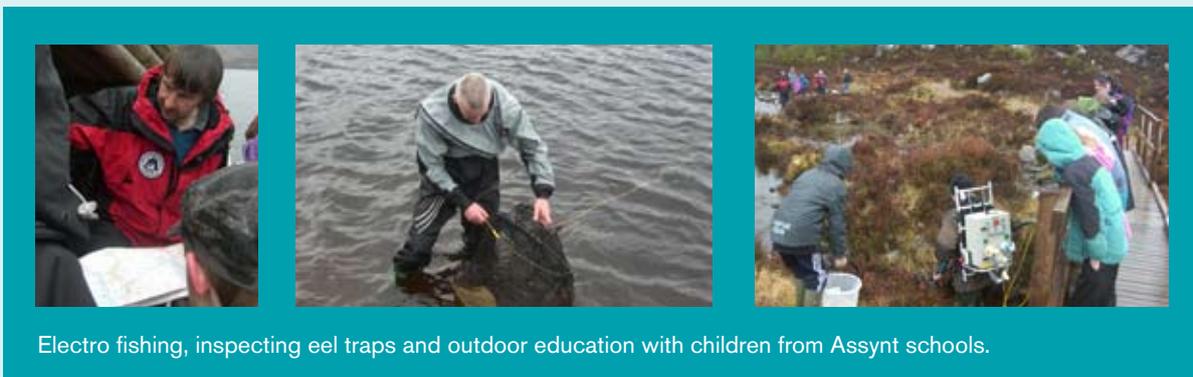
In Focus: The Eel Project , Assynt

As part of our research in Assynt, Sutherland, we observed the delivery of the Eel Project. This was a partnership project by the Culag Community Woodland Trust, the Highland Council Ranger Service and the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust (WSFT).

The project was one of a series of indoor and outdoor classroom sessions with local schoolchildren to educate them about the life cycle of the eel. It covered a whole range of issues from factors affecting eel population and local loch water quality, to invertebrate life and other fish populations. Whilst trout and salmon dominate in north west Scotland, educating local young people about the eel, whose numbers have been dropping all over the UK, helped to broaden young people's understanding of their local ecosystems.

One session we observed in May 2010 was delivered outside, in the rain, at two lochs on the Little Assynt Estate which is owned by the CCWT (www.culagwoods.org.uk). With primary school children from Stoer, Lochinver and Achiltibuie attending, it involved:

- Kick sampling with identification of invertebrate
- Electro fishing small burns
- Testing water quality and acidity
- Eel trapping



Electro fishing, inspecting eel traps and outdoor education with children from Assynt schools.

3.2.3 Connecting People with Nature

Angling is a gateway activity for people to make connections with nature.

'I've had some amazing moments, I've seen a heron dive in and catch fish only metres away from me, seen huge carp warming themselves in shallow water. Angling gets me outside, alone, and has given me the opportunity to experience an evening beside a lake in summer, to watch the sun set and feel like the day could not have been better spent.'
(Online comment submitted by 15 year old male).

Increasing people's access to nature is a core component of government policies for the environment, community and health in both England and Scotland. Accessing green spaces is important for people because it has been found to generate:

- Increased levels of physical activity
- Improved health, particularly mental well-being⁹²
- Improved environmental awareness and protection
- Wider community involvement and cohesion, (e.g. conservation volunteering)

⁹² Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2007) *Briefing Paper 2: Health and the Physical Characteristics of Urban Neighbourhoods: A Critical Literature Review*, Glasgow: GCPH

Angling contributes to these outcomes in a number of ways.

- Angling allows people to **access nature as part of the activity**. In our angling participation survey, 93% of anglers claimed that angling participation was either an 'important', 'very important' or 'extremely important' way for them to experience nature. During angler interviews, connecting with nature was a recurring theme:

'I like being close to nature. If you fish on your own with no disturbance you see a lot of animals/birds behaving naturally, which you don't see if there are a lot of people, noise, dogs or boats around.' (Interview comment made by 52 year-old male)

'When fishing I am consumed by the experience, to the extent that I do not think of anything else for the hours I am at the river/lake/sea. I am immersed in the experience and the natural world, relaxed and stress-free.' (Survey comment made by 56 year-old male)

- Angling can facilitate **connection with nature, even in highly urbanised settings**. This was highlighted in one research visit to an urban pond in Leegomery, Telford and Wrekin, situated in a large housing estate. Despite not being a 'green' environment, local residents appreciated being by the water because it provided an opportunity to observe small changes in pond life, local nesting birds and other wildlife.
- Angling provides these opportunities for a vast cross-section of the population because it is **accessible both across the life course and levels of ability**, increasing access to nature for those who may have limited opportunities for outdoor recreation otherwise.
- Angling can also be a route to participation in **conservation volunteering**, something DEFRA in particular is keen to encourage through support of programmes such as Muck In4Life.⁹³ Environmental organisations increasingly recognise that people are an integral part of ecosystems with an essential role to play in solutions to environmental problems.⁹⁴ However, conservation volunteering also benefits both local communities (through sense of ownership, improved access and active citizenship⁹⁵) and individual participants (through improved health and wellbeing, reduced isolation and improved mood⁹⁶).

Many anglers see their participation in conservation activities as having a positive impact on improving the quality of life in their local community.

'Stewardship of the environment is [also] stewardship of the community to some extent. The clubs with whom I have membership maintain their local environments and promote access to them from the local communities. In this way the environment is seen as a shared resource, which anglers, by dint of their special interest, make an effort to preserve and share.' (Online comment submitted 10/6/10)

'River and bank restoration combined with predator control on our river in the Derbyshire Dales has improved the ecosystem for many birds and animals, especially water voles that live in and near the river. I get great pleasure from positively improving the environment and from the excitement members of the public show when they see the voles, dippers and kingfishers.' (Online comment submitted 25/8/2011)

Anglers' contact with nature as part of their sporting practice can also potentially lead to much wider community involvement. One example of this we have researched in-depth is The Wandle Trust, where the experience of anglers in the river ultimately led to the development of a community wide, volunteer based organisation delivering environmental improvement.

93 DEFRA (2011) op cit. p54

94 Ockenden, R. 2007. *Volunteering in the natural outdoors in the UK and Ireland. A literature review*, Institute for Volunteering Research, p10

95 Ibid: p19-20.

96 Greenfield, E and Marks, N. (2004) 'Formal volunteering as a protective factor for older adults' psychological well-being', in *Journal of Gerontology*. Vol 95b (5). 258-264; see also Dolan, P., Peasgood, T. and White, M.P.

In Focus - The Wandle Trust

The River Wandle flows through four boroughs in southwest London to join the River Thames at Wandsworth. In the 17th and 18th centuries the River Wandle was heavily industrialised and subjected to various forms of pollution and modification⁹⁷. By the 1990s, the continuing poor state of the river provoked a group of anglers to organise informal river clean-up events. This eventually gave way to the establishment of the Wandle Trust in 2000 – an environmental charity dedicated to restoring the health of the river and its surrounding areas.

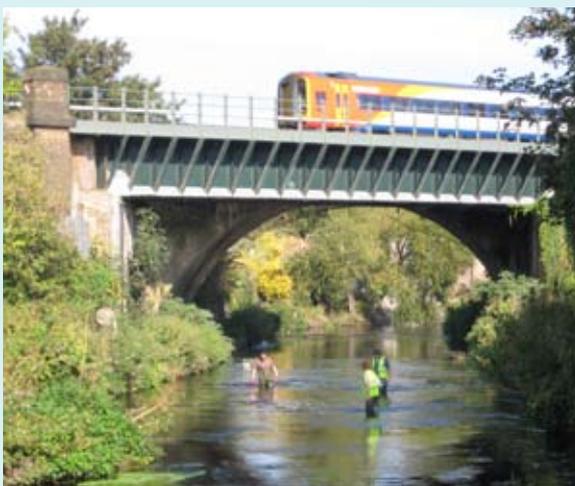
The Trust now coordinates regular events to remove invasive plant species and improve existing, aquatic habitats. It runs litter removal events every month, rotated along different stretches of the river to include all boroughs. Over the last decade the Trust has also been working with local schools, delivering their 'Trout in the Classroom' education initiative which sets up in-class aquariums to rear the fry of brown trout before they are eventually released into the River.

The Trust has changed considerably over the years in terms of the size and composition of its volunteers and supporters. Current river clean-up events typically attract between 40-50 volunteers, and according to The Trust many of the volunteers are either non-anglers or have little knowledge of angling occurring on the river. Our interviews with non-angler volunteers at a clean-up event illustrate volunteering for The Trust is helping individuals to initiate a relationship with the river, to revisit childhood experiences, or to simply feel they are contributing to a better place to live and work .

'Well, I grew up on the Wandle. It has given something to me. It sounds corny, but it is about giving something back to the river from what it gave me as a kid – all the fun I got out of playing in it as a kid!' (Interview comment made by 41 year-old male volunteer)

'It is nice to do something beneficial for the environment. It's social, it's fun. You get to feel smug at the end of the day because you've done something good! I do a bit of conservation work – I live at Wandsworth – and it's really nice to be able to just walk here rather than having to travel!' (Interview comment made by 40 year-old female volunteer)

Anglers are still a part of the volunteer work-force at clean-up events, and the Wandle Piscators, an angling club founded in close alliance to The Trust in 2004, are committed to the conservation and restoration of the River Wandle by virtue of their club constitution. To date, The Trust appears to have balanced the interests of angling, the natural environment and the community very successfully. On 30th August 2011, the EA announced the River Wandle as one of UK's ten most improved rivers, citing a 'huge local enthusiasm for the river which has resulted in a vast improvement of water quality' whilst noting that 'the Wandle is now well known as one of the best urban coarse fisheries in the country.' (Environment Agency 2011).



⁹⁷ Wandle Industrial Museum 2011, see <http://www.wandle.org>, accessed 3rd December 2011.

3.3 Issues and Recommendations

3.3.1 New Institutional Relationships

New institutional relationships at a national level offer the opportunity to further develop angling's contribution to the natural environment.

In England, the combination of a number of factors, including the changing role of the EA⁹⁸, government spending cuts and the 'Big Society' agenda, means that the EA, angling and fishery organisations are in a process of renegotiating the terms of their relationships. The potential for such new relationships is enhanced by:

- The **growth of the Association of Rivers Trusts** from one trust in 1994 to 27 trusts in 2011, which has been supported by EA investment over a number of years. Rivers Trusts provide a well-resourced national network of local expertise for managing the health of rivers
- The creation of the **Angling Trust and its forthcoming merger with the Angling Development Board** in 2012, representing over 1,500 clubs, 400,000 anglers and a regional network of County Angling Action Groups
- Ongoing development of **existing partnerships** between the AT and Association of Rivers Trusts, Riverfly Partnership, Barbel Society, Wild Trout Trust and Get Hooked on Fishing.
- Recent examples of **good partnership practice**, including the **Our Rivers** campaigns in 2009 and 2010 (AT, Salmon and Trout Association, the World Wildlife Fund and the Royal Society for Protection of Birds); and development of **best practice guides** for anglers and fishery owners, which have been developed by the EA in conjunction with the Angling Trades Association, Angling Trust and National Swan Convention.

In the marine environment, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 led to creation of 10 Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). These offer a new opportunity for recreational fishing representatives to work with government agencies, local authorities, environmental groups, commercial fishing interests and marine research organisations to promote 'the sustainable management of inshore fisheries resources in their local area'.⁹⁹ If run in an open and cooperative way, IFCAs could be the basis of increased involvement of recreational sea anglers in marine environment improvement and conservation.

In Scotland, the 42 District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs), the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) and ADBoS could work closer together on promoting sustainable fisheries and improved aquatic habitats. This could also be furthered through SANA (Scottish Anglers National Association) and SFCA's (Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling) membership of the Freshwater Fisheries Forum, a stakeholder group that provides advice to the Scottish Government on all aspects of freshwater fisheries management.¹⁰⁰

Marine Scotland are already a co-funder of the work of ADBoS and the angling governing bodies. Their priorities around sea fisheries include the sustainable management of Scottish sea fisheries, support for sea fisheries-dependent communities, and ensuring the use of Scottish marine space balances the interests of fisheries with those of other marine users¹⁰¹. These priorities should be the basis for developing the existing work done by recreational sea anglers, as exemplified by the SSACN and others.

98 Environment Agency (2011) *Corporate Plan 2011-15*. Environment Agency, Bristol.

99 Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/www/ifca/>, accessed 1st December 2011.

100 See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/Forum> for more information. The Freshwater Fisheries Forum was responsible for the publication of the Strategic Framework for Scottish Freshwater Fisheries in 2008, the key strategy document for future management of freshwater fisheries in Scotland.

101 Marine Scotland (2010) *Strategic Plan 2010-2013*, Edinburgh: MS. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/04/16154510/1> accessed 8th January 2012

3.3.2 Angling and Environmentalism

There is a clear vested interest for anglers and the angling sector to become involved in the conservation, preservation or rehabilitation of aquatic habitats. In our research, this was referred to by some anglers as an 'environmental ethic' in angling:

'To spend time in a beautiful environment, doing what we enjoy, is a privilege not a right. All outdoor environments are under increased pressure, not least from the recreational lobby. If we want to retain our ability to enjoy these things we need to show the rest of the world that we are responsible and care about all aspects of what we do.'
(Survey comment by 58 year-old male game angler)

However, some anglers' behaviour can have a detrimental impact on the environment. Littering has been noted in other angling research¹⁰² as well as ours (21 comments in our angling participation survey), although the dominant discourse has been about ways of minimising this sort of negative impact.

The desire for environmental protection on the part of some fishery scientists can imply that the best way to protect fish stocks is to not fish for them. Such a position tends to view humans as separate from nature rather than part of it; and it also tends to ignore or diminish the importance of human (or in this case angler) engagement with nature as a vital way of observing, understanding, valuing and, ultimately conserving nature.

Moreover, on occasions where anglers have been involved in habitat improvement work, critics have pointed out that such efforts are merely constructing a particular version of the natural habitat that is good for fish and fishing.¹⁰³ This point was also made in the Angling in the Rural Environment (AIRE) project on river rehabilitation work for pearl mussels¹⁰⁴. The AIRE project researchers posed the question: 'does angling enhance green spaces and therefore encourage health and well-being benefits for communities; or does it force a particular version of green space to be protected/created/enhanced to benefit angling'? The answer may be both, but as long as natural environments are developed as resources which need to be sustainably managed – rather than wildernesses in which no human treads – then angling is well-placed to make a positive contribution.

3.3.3 Recommendations

- i) New institutional responsibilities and relationships at a national and regional level in the UK offer an opportunity to create new partnerships between angling organisations, environmental agencies and charities. This should involve organisations like the Angling Trust and the Rivers Trusts taking on new roles within the context of devolved statutory responsibilities that could include coordinated environmental improvement work; fishery management; responsible angling practice; and angling regulation (such as policing rod licences).
- ii) Angling national governing bodies in both England and Scotland should promote the work of angling in environmental improvement, monitoring, access and awareness through: publicity, maintaining a public database of clubs and projects working in this area and representation and advocacy of this work at a national level.
- iii) National angling organisations and their regional divisions should help coordinate the development of partnerships between angling clubs and young people's projects and local environmental organisations (Rivers Trusts, Wildlife Trusts etc.). Public agencies with responsibility for environmental improvement and stewardship should seek to fund such partnerships.
- iv) There is a particular opportunity for the development of environmental improvement, monitoring and education work with young people. The expanding number of young people's angling projects outlined in Section 6 suggests that partnerships between organisations such as Trout in the Town and Get Hooked on Fishing could be mutually beneficial. National bodies should develop advice and guidance to clubs and associations on the range of activities young people can safely be encouraged to participate in.
- v) At both a national and a regional level there is a need for new strategic partnerships, increased cooperation and transparency and a new openness between marine agencies and sea anglers and their organisations.

102 Angling in the Rural Environment was a study undertaken by Newcastle and Durham Universities and funded by the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme, funded by UK research councils: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/aire/pics/webpageOutline.pdf>

103 Washabaugh, W., with Washabaugh, C. (2001) *Deep Trout: Angling and popular culture*, Cambridge: Berg

104 Bracken, L. (2009) *Knowledge and Evidence in Angling in the Rural Environment*, paper presented to Angling in the Rural Environment Dissemination Conference, York, May 27th 2009.

4. Angling and Local Community Development

In Brief

This section describes the positive role that angling and anglers can play in local communities in relation to:

- Empowering people to be active citizens through the development of new or renovated community facilities
- Creating opportunities for greater cohesion and integration within communities

4.1 Introduction and Context

Much of the focus of national and local policy over the last decade has been concerned with ways of improving the lives of people within their local area. This has included drives to develop community cohesion, initiatives to give communities the right to buy land (such as the Scottish Land Reform Act 2004) and new legislation to give communities a greater role in owning and running facilities and services (epitomised by the Localism Bill in England).

More recently, the 'big society' agenda has come to represent this policy focus and has also been used to formalise efforts around the promotion of volunteering, the introduction of a changing role for key non-governmental agencies, and a desire to increase the role of 'third sector' organisations (co-operatives, charities and social enterprises).

Our research has found a number of ways in which angling is contributing to this agenda. There are opportunities for angling to extend the community benefit from activities like volunteering, for angling organisations to take on new roles, as well as for new partnerships between local authorities, angling and the Third Sector. In 2011, an Interim Report from our research, *Making the Most of Community Waters: Localism, Health and Angling*¹⁰⁵, set out some of the more detailed evidence about how angling can contribute to local agendas.



105 Brown, A., Djohari, N. and Stolk, P. (2011) *Making the Most of Community Waters: Localism, Health and Angling*, Manchester: Substance. http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Making_the_most_of_community_waters.pdf

In Focus: The Localism Agenda

The emergence of the 'localism' policy agenda in 2010 and new priorities in public health provide possibilities for local angling clubs, associations, groups and projects to play a wider, positive role in local communities. This policy initiative is part of a wider drive to:

- Encourage decentralisation
- Create greater local involvement in the delivery of 'public services'
- 'Empower communities' to improve and increase the roles of social enterprises, co-operatives and 'civil society organisations'
- Encourage civil society organisations to increase 'citizen involvement', especially volunteering, and owning and running community assets.

In England, the Localism Bill includes provisions to encourage communities to take over failing facilities that are otherwise likely to close, or land and buildings that are already unused or derelict and which could be put to better use by the community in which they are based.¹⁰⁶

The Bill will also enable community interest groups (CIGs) to nominate land or buildings to be registered by the local authority as 'Assets of Community Value' (ACV) and potentially bid for them.

These new provisions open a way for properly constituted community groups to own and manage local community assets. This has the potential to include local waters currently owned by local authorities or privately. Given that many Local Authorities already lease the rights to fish on local waters to local angling organisations, there may be new opportunities for angling and community organisations to play a greater role, in partnership with Local Authorities, in running or even owning local assets¹⁰⁷.

4.2 The Contribution of Angling to Community Development

Angling can be a means to empower people to become active citizens and bring people from different backgrounds together.

Angling contributes to community development in two broad ways:

- i) As a means to **empower people to become active citizens** who are involved in improving their local areas – developing, owning and managing facilities for community use, and working with local authorities.
- ii) As a means to **bring local people together** and increase their participation in community life through the creation of opportunities for community interaction and participation.

In doing this, angling organisations and individuals can play an important role in changing **spaces into places**; increasing access to, changing perceptions of, and encouraging stewardship for local resources. The adoption of new organisational structures may be needed to maximise these opportunities.

4.2.1 Empowering Communities through Community Assets

In its broadest sense 'community assets' can be understood as those factors, resources and environments that people feel are valuable to maintaining their quality of life. They may be used in daily life to:

- Develop personal capabilities - such as use of leisure or cultural venues
- Build social capital – for example through club membership or volunteering
- Improve and maintain physical and mental health – through use of parks
- Facilitate access to other resources – e.g. through educational resources.

Many ponds, canals, stretches of river, lakes and reservoirs can be considered community assets. However, if they are to be of maximum benefit to communities, they need to be adequately maintained and accessible to a diverse range of users.

¹⁰⁶ House of Commons Library, 'Localism Bill: Local government and community empowerment' [Bill No. 126 of 2010-11] [Research Paper 11/02](http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/rp2011/RP11-002.pdf), p48, available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/rp2011/RP11-002.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ For more detail on how local authorities can work with angling organisations, see Brown et al (2011) op cit.

i) Developing New Community Facilities

Angling organisations have been instrumental in developing new facilities.

In the Breaking Barriers report on community cohesion (2010), it was noted that:

*'...poor urban architecture and decaying physical environments can exacerbate community conflict and create a lack of cohesion. Access to venues can provide an 'escape' from this environment and provide a neutral space for new interactions and bring people together from different areas, ethnicities and backgrounds.'*¹⁰⁸

Angling has played a particularly important role in relation to the construction of new ponds and new community facilities, often in conjunction with local authorities. In many instances this role has helped 'reclaim' former industrial landscapes, and contributed to urban regeneration. One example of this sort of contribution is **CAST in Nottingham**.¹⁰⁹ Founded in 2001, CAST is part of the Future Newstead community group that secured £433,140 of funding from the Big Lottery Fund's Village SOS project in order to transform 220 acres of land at the former colliery spoil heaps. The new development will see a sustainable, eco-sensitive Country Park established at the site as well as the construction of a visitor centre with classrooms, workshop facilities and angling lakes run by CAST.

CAST has successfully been using angling to engage disaffected young people: improving outcomes in education and encouraging young people to become actively involved in community improvement work. The Newstead site development is an extension of this work and has engaged young people and the local community in the creation of fishing platforms, planting, hedge maintenance and care of the lakes.

Anglers are often explicitly involved in the regeneration of sites for the wider benefit of their local communities, not just for anglers. In 2008, the **Staffordshire Youth Anglers (SYA)**¹¹⁰ began the conversion of a former railway embankment site at Carney Pools Fishery into a wildlife asset for use by local young people, schools and families. They were actively involved in the funding, planning and development of a wildlife pool, including the creation of disability friendly pathways, parking spaces, a pond-dipping platform and extensive replanting. The site, now known as Railway Meadows Wildlife Ponds, incorporates natural seating areas, a sensory garden, and the creation of another wildlife pond, making it a much-valued community asset, involving young people and the wider community in conservation, work parties and encouraging use by local schools.

ii) Improving Existing Local Assets

Angling organisations can also play an important role in improving local assets, most notably through habitat improvement works.

More common than creation of new assets, is the involvement of angling organisations and individual anglers in the improvement of water-based community assets. This contribution is particularly important for communities that lack adequate resources for site maintenance and/or where these sites are not prioritised for regeneration.

As already discussed in Section 3 of this report, anglers are involved in a diverse range of environmental improvement and maintenance work. In our survey of more than 2,400 anglers, 24.7% said they participated in environmental conservation work.¹¹¹ At local ponds and reservoirs, through to stretches of river, we have found angling to be a motivator for environmental improvement work that focuses on increasing public access and aesthetics, as well as increasing biodiversity and the quality of natural habitat.

One example of this is **Hemlington Lake in Middlesbrough**, located in the heart of a housing estate. The quality of the resource went into a steep decline around the turn of the century with fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour commonplace. The 'Friends of Hemlington Lake' (FHL) group formed by local residents worked with the local authority to create all-abilities paths around the lake, education boards, pond dipping kits for local schools/families to use, and sculptures by local artists.

108 Crabbe, T and Brown, A (2010) *Breaking Barriers: Community cohesion, sport, and organisational development*, London: Active Communities Network, p59.

109 For more details of our research visits see: http://www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/project_research_sites/site/7

110 http://www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/project_research_sites/site/8

111 Stolk, P. (2009) *Angling Participation. Interim Report*, Manchester: Substance http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Research_Task_1_Angling_Participation.pdf

Central to this rejuvenation was the improvement of angling at the site, including disabled and junior angling provision which has helped reduce vandalism and provide a constructive activity for young people. Courses run by **Get Hooked on Fishing Teesside** help young people 'get to know' the local community, build relationships with FHL, instil environmental respect and provide young people with a fishing kit and a pass for free use of waters until they are 16 years old.

Developments are sensitive to wildlife and the environment and balance the needs of residents, anglers, model boaters and canoeists with the needs of wildlife. As one member of the Friends of Hemlington Lake remarked:

'Now you walk around [the lake] and residents say hello. You might find a carrier bag blowing around and it's picked up by people walking along. It's because people have seen the improvements and they're taking more pride in the lake itself and the area.' (Interview, 2010)

iii) Owning, Maintaining and Running Facilities

Angling organisations can help to initiate new forms of ownership and undertake maintenance of local assets.

Once facilities have been created they also need running and maintaining in order to be sustainable. The responsibility to maintain local assets can help broaden community involvement through both formal and informal 'ownership' of assets and involve the development of new 'third sector' angling organisations. This is particularly important in relation to both localism and 'big society' agendas where co-operatives, charities and social enterprises are seen as key delivery agencies for greater community management of local areas.

One example is the newly established social enterprise **Get Hooked Ealing**. In 2007, Northala Fields was developed into a country park with lakes using rubble from the demolition of Wembley Stadium. Following consultation with Get Hooked On Fishing and the Metropolitan Police, the local authority decided greater community benefit could be delivered through the development of a self-sustaining angling youth intervention project at the site.

In 2010, Get Hooked Ealing was established on-site. Following a business model approach designed by GHOF North East in Durham, the project seeks to be a self-sustaining social enterprise within three years. Project development has included:

- An environmentally sensitive visitors centre, which houses a café, toilet facilities, tackle shop, classroom and management office for GHOF
- The lease of the waters and management of the building to GHOF Ealing for 3 years, enabling the project to generate its own revenue
- Third party lease of the café securing maintenance costs for the entire building.

The establishment of a social enterprise in the GHOF model maximises the benefits of the local water by providing a thriving local fishery, resident junior angling club, and targeted youth intervention work involving angling and business management.

iv) Local Authority Partnerships

Much of the good practice identified by this research has involved partnerships between angling organisations and local authorities.

There are few local authorities in the UK that do not have access to rivers, waterways, or coastlines. Our interim report, Making the Most of Community Waters¹¹² highlighted how local authorities and angling organisations can work together to develop and improve community assets, and by doing so address local authority priorities such as:

- Urban regeneration and improvement to the physical environment
- Public health and well-being by creating access to green spaces¹¹³
- Civic involvement and community safety

There is significant mutual benefit that can be generated in co-operative work on community assets. We have identified three key approaches to successful joint working:

¹¹² Brown et al (2011) Op cit

¹¹³ J. Pretty, J. Peacock, R.Hine, M. Sellens, N. South, M.Griffin. (2007) 'Green exercise in the UK countryside: Effects on health and psychological well-being, and implications for policy and planning', in *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. Volume 50 (2). p 211-231; Richard Louv (2005) *Last Child in the Woods: saving our children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, Algonquin, Chapel Hill N.C. Mind (2007) *Ecotherapy: The green agenda for mental health*. http://www.mind.org.uk/campaigns_and_issues/report_and_resources/835_ecotherapy

- i) **Local authority leadership:** Agreeing conditional leases for waters; providing free CRB checks; and investing in community ponds or piers.
- ii) **Development by a community group:** Involving local community groups in maintenance and development of local waters to access funds and assist communities to respond directly to their own needs.
- iii) **Establishment of a mutual, charity or social enterprise:** To help realise the full potential of local waters by developing co-operatives, social enterprises or charities to benefit local communities and embrace a range of interests.

In Focus: The Importance of Partnership - Hillingdon

The London Borough of Hillingdon stands out as an example of good practice in how Local Authorities can take the lead in encouraging more active use of community waters. Many of Hillingdon's waters had become neglected, prone to incidents of anti-social behaviour and were inaccessible to young anglers. It undertook a number of initiatives:

i) Development of a free and accessible family fishery

Transformation of the Little Britain Lake with volunteer help into a free, attractive community site. Improvements included clearing paths, creating disabled-friendly fishing pegs, re-planting of a picnic area, and installation of street lighting on the access road.

ii) Conditional leasing to encourage junior angling

Clubs renting council waters are now required to have a junior section as part of the renewal condition of their lease and are given free CRB checks and other advice/guidance.

iii) Provision of free family fishing events

The council launched a free Family Fishing Fun Day, which in 2010 attracted 1040 participants of all age and abilities.

iv) Encouraging wide use of angling facilities

Working with the support of Les Webber's Angling Projects, the council runs a scheme to assist local Scout groups achieve their angling badges. This involves classroom and bank side sessions, minibus provision and presentations by the Mayor. The council is also working with schools to run vocational courses on site maintenance, construction of new waters, fencing, path maintenance, and horticulture, as part of student training.

Hillingdon is successful because the council acts as the hub for a network of current and potential anglers, introducing those who would like to take up angling or those who can provide it. Lyn Summers, angling development coordinator, says:

'It's not as hard as people think, it's about getting stuck in and giving it a go and you'll find that people start to join in. People will start approaching you, like the Scouts, the local teachers. But it wouldn't be possible without the effort and commitment of people like Les Webber and the volunteers - we'd never find the volunteers we need within the council alone. So it's about building that base of volunteers.'



v) Providing Local Services

Angling organisations can deliver local services that help local authorities and agencies meet their community obligations.

Given reductions in local authority spending and moves to 'farm out' services to the third sector, angling organisations may be able to assist local authorities to deliver aspects of leisure, education, health and young people's services. As we discuss in Section 6 of this report, angling-based youth intervention projects are often incorporated into the delivery of alternative education provisions for young people.

Get Hooked On Fishing Liverpool have had a long standing relationship with both Stanley Park and Birkenhead Park, providing regular angling coaching events throughout the summer holidays. In Hastings, the **Fishing4u project** has been contracted as a provider of angling for the local council-run Active Hastings healthy lifestyle scheme.¹¹⁴

There is, however, greater scope for angling organisations to be involved in wider service provisions, particularly in relation to public health. In much the same way as local Wildlife Trusts offer conservation volunteering opportunities, many of the local angling clubs and river charities that hold regular conservation work parties and river cleans could be incorporated into wider 'green exercise' provisions.

4.2.2 Creating Integrated and Cohesive Communities

The way facilities are designed and used is vital to their role in creating integrated and cohesive communities.

The full value of angling organisations developing and running local assets can only be realised if the assets are utilised for wider community benefit. It is the **use of, and access to 'spaces' that constitute the means by which locations are transformed into 'places'** and subsequently attain special value and meaning within local communities.

Our research has shown that angling sites become recognised community assets when people are involved in the maintenance of the site and a spectrum of community members (including non-anglers) are able to access the site for diverse activities. Previous research by Substance has identified that the manner in which facilities are run is very important in determining their cohesive potential. The work suggested facilities needed to be:

- **Accessible** – affordable, available and 'open' in the broadest sense of the word
- **Comfortable** – a place in which people can feel at ease
- **Neutral** – not perceived as being provided for a particular constituency
- **Within reach** – locally situated or via good transport links
- **Positive in their contribution** – minimizing negative impacts to local residents
- **Connected** – working with local agencies and organisations to engage people
- **Professional** – ensuring delivery is of high quality.¹¹⁵

i) Working With and In Communities

By working with local communities angling-related organisations can help embrace wider community needs and involve local people.

For angling to realise its potential within local communities there is a need for angling organisations to develop organisational structures, facilities and activities that include non-angling local people. Sample approaches include:

- Creating or improving community facilities that are designed for multiple users
- Adopting new organisational structures to embrace different local interests
- Hold activities and events that attract a wider spectrum of the local population

The work of two very different organisations - the Wandle Trust and Get Hooked on Fishing in Billingham - are instructive in this regard because they show how wider community involvement can be generated using distinct approaches.

¹¹⁴ http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/project_research_sites/site/36

¹¹⁵ Crabbe, T and Brown, A (2010) *Breaking Barriers* op cit: 59

The Wandle Trust is a successful example of an organisation that began with angling interests to the fore, but has become much more associated with a broader community remit. It has changed considerably in terms of its size and the composition of its volunteers – river clean-up events have grown from a handful of anglers to typically attracting between 40-50 volunteers. According to the Trust, many of the volunteers are either non-anglers or have little knowledge of angling on the river.

Trust Director Dr Bella Davies explained that engaging non-anglers is both a deliberate and essential strategy:

'The Wandle Trust has a very, very community-oriented base/origin, and – rightly – completely recognises that to do anything in an urban area you need the complete support of the community, or at least as much as you can get. To do that, you need to have extensive consultation and involvement with people.'

Trustee Gideon Reeve identified that a key consideration for The Trust was to address the public perception of it as a community organisation, not one that only represents the interests of anglers:

'We didn't want to be seen as a glorified fishing club that was trying to feather its own nest ... I realised it is very good that we are closely associated with fishermen if they are the right kind of fishermen, such as the Wandle Piscators. In their constitution they state they are an environmental and community-based mixed fishing club. So there is no elitism, it caters to everybody, it is about the community.'

This balance of community and angling interests has been fundamental to the Wandle Trust's success.

GHOFT Teesside have been instrumental in assisting the development of Charlton's Pond, a local water situated in a housing estate in Billingham. Once a site for anti-social behaviour, it was re-established as a productive fishing venue through a grant secured by GHOF and the angling club with the support of the EA. Key characteristics make it stand out as an example of community engagement:

- **Location** in the urban environment making it accessible.
- A **'safe space'** where young people know members of the community, feel comfortable fishing on their own and form a network of informal surveillance.
- **Exit routes** are created for young people to the on-site angling club to enable them to access regular positive activity and GHOF's personal and social development support.
- **Inter generational and intra-community relationships** are developed
- **Junior matches become community 'rituals'** where the Saturday 'weigh in' becomes an all-community social event, and a public celebration of young people's achievements, including a 'community procession' around the pond.

The pond is used by record numbers of angling club members as well as local residents as a recreational space for walking, picnicking and watching the wildlife.

'It's the community engagement as much as anything. Once that's caught up, things seem to flow from there, the interest grows...Where you get a community working together, even if it's just starting from such basic recreational interests, they can go on from there.' (Interview with Jean O'Donnell, Councillor for south Billingham)

ii) Designing Assets for Multiple Uses

By creating assets that are used for non-angling purposes angling can assist community cohesion.

For water resources to assist community cohesion, they must be able to accommodate a variety of uses. Creating exclusive angling use does not allow a sense of wider community ownership to develop, nor does it permit opportunities for interaction between people. Multiple use that truly 'opens up' the asset needs to:

- Be based on design principles that ensure optimal use of space and resources.
- Involve formal and informal activities with 'targeted' and 'open-access' provision.

Albrighton Trust Moat and Gardens is an example of how angling-focused green space can help improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and special needs. Located near Telford, the Moat and Gardens is an initiative that aims 'to provide inclusive social, learning and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities'. The architect-designed site incorporates a network of wheelchair-friendly paths that enable access to a moat stocked with coarse fish species, seven large fishing platforms, a themed garden, and a resource and learning centre.

The Moat and Gardens serves a varied clientele, from young people with a physical or mental disability through to groups of the elderly or infirm. Significantly, however, angling is not the sole attraction of the site – there are 35 themed garden beds, a horticulture greenhouse, a small putting green, a boules pitch, and numerous picnic spaces – but it is central to the enjoyment of many visitors.

GHOFF North Lincolnshire have established a nature trail and pond-dipping area around the council-owned waters in Immingham. This includes a series of 'interpretation boards' that detail the insect, bird and plant life in the area. Local schools and families are encouraged to use the site as a space for their own environmental lessons.

iii) Making Assets Accessible

Local waters must be accessible to a range of people from different backgrounds.

Water-based community assets need to be accessible to people. This means not just physically accessible, but also accessible in terms of cost, location and being welcoming to people from different backgrounds.

In some ways salmon angling in Scotland might appear to be the most inaccessible type of fishing– often in remote locations, sometimes with limits on angler numbers, and frequently expensive. However, Stirling Council has shown how such barriers can be overcome.

In Focus: Stirling Council Salmon Angling

Stirling Council either owns or manages the fishing rights for salmon and sea trout on a four-mile stretch of the River Forth adjacent to the city (rated as the top producing beat in 2010), and two stretches of the River Teith near Callander. The Council has implemented a number of measures to create a facility accessible to the local community.

- **Resident Friendly Permits:** Season and roving permits to local residents at subsidised prices with further discounts for concessions specifically designed so that local residents are not priced out of access to this valuable community resource.
- **Conservation:** Promotion of fish conservation and responsible angling with tags provided for landed fish, encouragement of catch and release (in 2010 70% of caught fish were safely returned) and council run 'fish in the classroom' projects with local schools.
- **Sustainability:** Additional revenue generated through a range of fishery management services (fish surveys, river clean-ups, bank rehabilitation) for partner organisations.
- **Disabled Access:** Disabled platforms installed (Craigforth section of the River Forth (2001) and at the Geisher Pool on the River Teith (2010) for use by anglers and other community members; paths constructed to access the platforms providing benefit to other users such as children from the local nursery, bird-watchers and dog-walkers.



Increasing accessibility is also possible in even the most remote rural settings. The **Culag Community Woodland Trust**¹¹⁶ owns part of the Little Assynt estate in Assynt, North West Scotland. It has developed an all abilities path that circumnavigates two of the lochs on the estate, creating access for the first time for people with limited mobility. The path is used not just by local people but also visitors, and user groups include anglers, bird watchers and local schools.

¹¹⁶ www.culagwoods.org.uk

Other good practice we have identified includes the **Liverpool Parks Lake Scheme** which offers free fishing across 8 park waters upon registration for a permit. This makes fishing particularly accessible for young people in urban centres who have difficulty reaching out of town commercial fisheries and have little disposable income. Registration also strengthens the relationships and responsibilities between anglers and park managers.

iv) Developing Volunteering

Angling participation already involves huge numbers of volunteers – but this could be further developed.

Volunteering is an important part of both community development policy and practice, and can help to turn spaces into the kind of places people want to spend time in. Large numbers of anglers are involved in voluntary activities. At a local level we have seen numerous instances of angling organisations and projects delivering important work, based largely – if not entirely – on voluntary labour, taking on roles in club management, coaching and the organising of matches/angling events.

In our **angling participation survey**:

- 25% (n=593) of anglers surveyed volunteered to help with habitat improvement
- 22% (n=530) took part in teaching or coaching activities
- 44% (n=1043) took part in angling club business, such as club governance

Using local volunteers has been a feature of **Trout in the Town (TinTT)** projects. We conducted a survey of TinTT volunteers to determine the kind of activities they were getting involved in and the results are presented in the bar chart below. Anglers who have committed to TinTT projects are involved in environmental rehabilitation activities like clean-ups and removing invasive species; monitoring of invertebrate and fish populations; information sharing with community members; and young people's education.

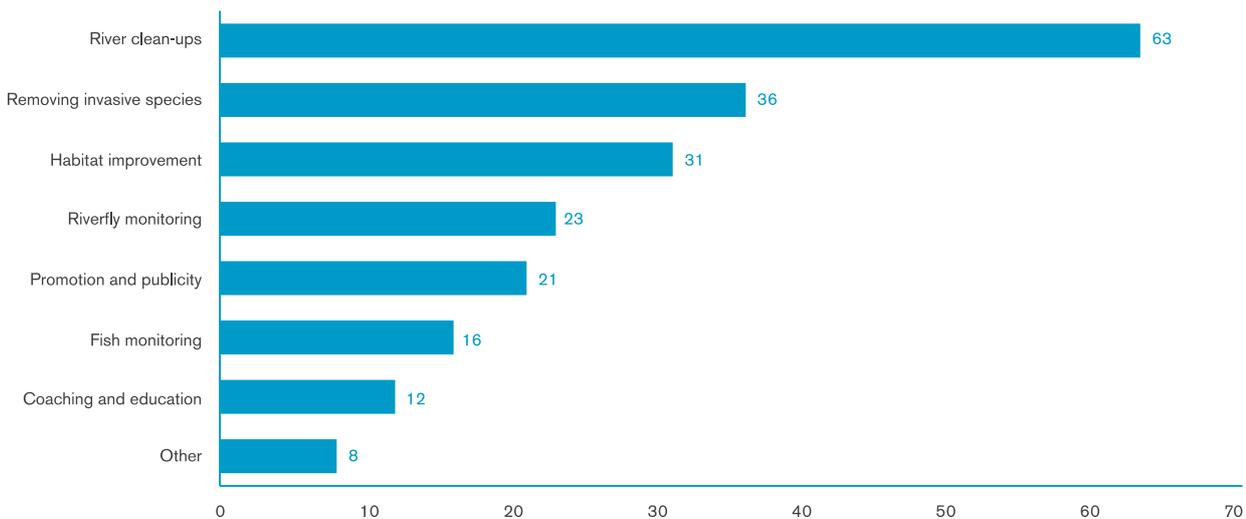


Chart 4: Participation by TinTT volunteers in project activities (n=71)

In **Stirling**, the salmon fishery profiled earlier in this section benefits from the dedication of a group of passionate volunteers, who assist on a range of river maintenance tasks. In some cases they conduct highly technical work like habitat surveys alongside Council and Forth Fisheries Trust staff. Several volunteers from the Forth Fisheries Angling Association maintain the small-scale hatchery that the Council uses as part of the Fish in the Classroom programme.

Angling organisations frequently rely upon significant amounts of volunteering in rural communities which supports the wider economic benefits that angling can bring through tourism. For instance in **Assynt** (see Section 5) a small number of individuals dedicate many hours to it voluntarily, and this is a vital contribution to the local community as a whole.

Angling based youth intervention projects such as **Les Webber's Angling Project** (London) and **Angling for Youth Development** (across Scotland) rely completely on volunteers for the delivery of their work. Volunteering opportunities are not limited to adults, and young people are also building skills and experience for angling-related volunteering.

In Focus: Young People Volunteering - The GHOF Liverpool peer mentors

Youth angling charity Get Hooked On Fishing (GHOF) use peer mentoring as part of their personal and social development programme, encouraging young people to regularly volunteer to teach other young people and members of the wider community to fish. There were 22 peer mentors between the ages of 13 and 17 registered with the GHOF Liverpool project for the period January 2010 to November 2010. The majority completed over 50 hours of volunteering, with one peer mentor totalling 147 volunteer hours.

In a year, GHOF Liverpool peer mentors have the opportunity to volunteer over the course of 9 weeks. This period includes school holidays (excluding the Christmas break and spring half term), where they assist in taster days and open sessions at local parks. To receive their V50 awards peer mentors averaged 22.2 hours a month, with the maximum being 65.3 hours a month. To give this contribution some context, the *2008-2009 Citizenship Survey: Volunteering and Charitable Giving Topic Report* found young people between the ages of 16-24 engaged in formal volunteering for an average of 7.4 hours in the four weeks prior to being surveyed.¹¹⁷

Among the 2010 cohort of GHOF peer mentors, two have since gone on to gain their angling coaching Level 1 qualification and now assist in the delivery of GHOF sessions in schools.

Given that current government policy is actively promoting volunteering (for example through the National Citizenship Service), angling should be well placed to develop:

- National volunteering schemes
- New partnerships with other agencies in youth, conservation and wildlife
- Support for training and management of volunteers at a local level
- An angling volunteer database on a local or regional basis

viii) Social Integration

Angling organisations and events can be the nexus around which people from different backgrounds can interact.

Ultimately, community cohesion is about people from different backgrounds mixing, working, living and playing together. Some angling projects have been particularly successful in being the nexus around which such integration can occur. This has been particularly notable in terms of inter-ethnic connections and intergenerational exchange.

There has been considerable concern expressed over recent years about people who are recent immigrants to the UK undertaking angling practices that are seen as contradictory to accepted practice. In particular, this concern has focused around East European and especially Polish anglers now living in Britain. Anglers from these backgrounds have been observed keeping coarse fish species (notably carp) rather than returning them, because that is accepted practice in their country of origin.

Although at times the media debate around this issue has verged on the xenophobic, there have been some innovative approaches taken by local and national angling bodies that suggest a much more positive way forward:

- When the practices of Polish anglers were identified as a 'problem' by other anglers, **Thames 21** helped to get the Polish anglers involved in their work, including taking up coaching roles. This led to better understanding and working together.
- **The Angling Trust's Building Bridges project**,¹¹⁸ funded by the EA, is being piloted in the South West and East of England to help educate migrant workers about acceptable angling practices. This has led to much improved communication and positive relationships between Eastern European and British anglers, and activities have included:
 - The distribution of free multi-lingual signs for fisheries
 - 21 educational articles published in the Eastern European Media
 - 11 angling clubs engaged in project activities
 - 3 educational meetings were organised
 - 3,000 multi-language leaflets distributed via tackle shops or angling clubs available to download from the Angling Trust website.

¹¹⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2010) *2008-2009 Citizenship Survey: Volunteering and Charitable Giving Topic Report*, London: DCLG.

¹¹⁸ www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=709%A7ionTitle=Building+Bridges+with+Migrant+Anglers

Angling projects can also assist in bridging gaps between young people – often identified solely as a ‘problem’ in local and national media – and other members of the community. As part of **NACRO’s Reading Angling Project**, a group of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) were encouraged to design and deliver an angling coaching event for community members. Young people on the project identified elderly residents, many of whom were non anglers, as potential beneficiaries and invited them to participate in an angling taster day they had organised. These types of events provide opportunities for young people and community members to interact; and demonstrate to both young people themselves and the wider community that young people can be valuable, active members of society. Local waters are emerging as key sites for this type of community engagement.

Staging, promoting and getting involved in events are also good ways for angling organisations to play a role in community integration. **National Fishing Month (NFM)**¹¹⁹ has been a focus for involving national organisations such as the Angling Development Board and local clubs and fisheries, in the delivery of hundreds of angling events, including events for: British Blind Sport Participants; family intervention programmes; and black and minority ethnic communities.

4.3 Issues and Recommendations

4.3.1 New Organisational Relationships

At a national level, changes to the role of the EA and other agencies such as British Waterways present the opportunity for new strategic partnerships between angling, government and non governmental organisations. While these examples relate closely to environmental work (explored in detail in Section 3), other changes also related to the ‘big society’ agenda mean that there are new organisational relationships possible for the angling sector.

Changes in the provision of public health (with responsibilities moving from PCTs to doctors and local councils) and the delivery of local authority services offer commissioning possibilities at a more local level. In health, education, environment, sport and leisure and young people’s services, angling can help provide some of the answers to community development.

Although the localism agenda offers some new possibilities for angling’s role in local communities, national angling organisations need to help guide and inform local developments. Also local government spending cuts and a lack of resources mean that the capacity of angling organisations in relation to the ‘right to provide’ and ‘right to buy’ legislation in the UK needs to be addressed.

4.3.2 New Organisational Models

If angling organisations are to play a leading role in new models of community development, especially in relation to local asset development, then new organisational models need to be explored, understood and supported.

Angling clubs are most often formed as membership clubs, often without being legally constituted bodies. Others are more formally structured, especially if they own or lease significant amounts of waters. Some are formally constituted charities and a few are social enterprises, but this is the exception rather than the rule. However, the localism agenda emphasises the role that charities, co-operatives and social enterprises should play.

For angling organisations to take advantage of new opportunities in their locality around asset management or service delivery, there is a need for improved knowledge of different corporate structures. This could involve:

- Distribution of advice and support about different organisational structures
- Work at a national level by angling bodies to develop relationships with organisations such as Co-operatives UK to provide guidance and resources
- Work at a local level to adopt new organisational structures in order to take up new roles and facilitate wider community engagement.

¹¹⁹ www.nationalfishingmonth.com NFM is owned and run by the Angling Trades Association and supported by the Environment Agency, Angling Development Board, Professional Anglers Association and Angling Trust.

In Focus: New Partnerships - The Scottish Canal Project

The Scottish Federation for Coarse Anglers (SFCA) has struck a landmark deal with British Waterways that will now allow SFCA to offer free fishing to under 16s on the lowland canal system that runs across the central belt of Scotland. Gus Brindle chairman of the SFCA explains that it is their intention to establish coaches and Angling Induction Centres across the canal system to coordinate junior angling clubs, coaching and education.

To fish for free will require signing up for a free junior SFCA membership, and means young people are incorporated into the angling network from an early age where they will receive the training and support they need to become successful anglers. The Scottish canal system is an excellent resource as it passes through many deprived urban centres. Encouraging fishing access on these waters maximises local resources to provide a positive activity that will have a direct impact on young people and community well-being.

Taking the lead from SFCA and British Waterways it is important for local authorities and land owners to re-appraise their waters and consider whether they could support the well-being of young people and their local communities through angling provisions.

4.3.3 Local Authorities

Although our research has highlighted examples where local authorities work very positively with angling, at other times this has not been the case and on occasion some local authorities have appeared hostile towards angler use of facilities.

The Angling Trust has already supported some local angling groups in addressing local authority measures – for example lobbying to help reverse Rother council's proposed bylaw to restrict sea anglers¹²⁰. However there is a need to:

- i) Make sure local authorities and the wider community understand the community benefits delivered through angling so that they can make informed decisions about the use of local waters.
- ii) Develop guidance and advice on how to successfully manage local waters for wider community benefit – including information on how to encourage multiple use sites, manage user conflicts, and ensure accessibility to a broad section of residents.

Further guidance on how local authorities and angling can work positively together can be found in our interim report *Making the Most of Community Waters*¹²¹.

4.3.4 Maximising Angling's Potential

Although our research has considered a number of examples where angling is directly addressing local agendas, and where angling organisations are assisting in community asset and service development, much more could be done. This should include national angling organisations, working with partners to develop:

- Volunteering opportunities including work with the National Citizenship Service, Muck in 4Life, and green exercise initiatives.
- Resources and support for local organisations to adopt new organisational structures
- New relationships between the Angling Trust and Local Government Association, to publicise existing work and broaden angling's involvement with local authorities
- Identification of new funding streams, such as the new Coastal Communities Fund across the UK¹²² to develop national, regional and local projects in coastal areas.
- Best practice and practitioner guides, building on this research, in working with communities and working with local authorities
- Exploration of new ways of raising capital finance such as community shares schemes¹²³

At a regional level, the Angling Development Boards and County Angling Action Groups (CAAGs) can support local angling organisations to make links with local government, health services, and community organisations.

¹²⁰ Angling Trust (2011) [Angling Trust Calls On All Councils To Follow Rother's Lead And Back Sea Angling](#), Media Releas

¹²¹ Brown, A et al (2011) op cit.

¹²² http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_86_11.htm

¹²³ www.communityshares.org.uk

5. Angling and Rural Communities

In Brief

This section details the impact of angling in rural and remote communities. It illustrates:

- The valuable contribution that angling tourism can make to rural communities in terms of economic impact and wider tourism development
- How development of good practice means angling can contribute to sustainable rural community development through employment and cultural heritage.

5.1 Introduction and Context

*'The experience [of foot and mouth disease] clearly demonstrated how much people value the countryside and the relationship between agriculture and other economic activities, especially tourism and recreation.'*¹²⁴

The importance of tourism to sustaining rural areas has been emphasised in the last two decades:

- In response to the **Foot and Mouth** outbreak in the UK in 2001, there was a push for greater diversification of rural economies. In England and Wales the Environment Agency (among others) highlighted angling tourism as a potential source of external income for rural areas.¹²⁵
- **In Scotland** there has been a growing interest in the contribution that 'country sports' in general, including angling, can make to rural development; and of marketing tourism based on 'distinctive regional opportunities'.¹²⁶
- The Environment Agency in England and Wales, and recent reports from the Scottish Executive have calculated that **expenditure** from participation in angling has a significant impact in rural areas.
- More generally there has been a desire to see: **diversification of rural businesses**; increased rural income and employment development; and sustainable strategies for addressing rural exclusion issues (including housing, youth unemployment, isolation, transport and seasonal economies).

The increased awareness and understanding of angling's contribution to rural economies has led to the emergence of a number of recent initiatives aiming to promote angling tourism and re-invigorate rural areas. They include:

- **Fishing Wales**, a partnership between the Environment Agency Wales and Wales Tourist Board which seeks to promote Wales as 'the premiere destination for game, sea and coarse fishing'.¹²⁷
- The promotion of angling within a broader portfolio of 'country sports' by the **Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group**, including a pilot initiative in 2008 to promote wild brown trout angling in Assynt, Sutherland¹²⁸.
- The promotion within **English regions** of angling tourism that includes work in Northumberland; an angling festival in the

124 DEFRA (2004) *Review of the Rural White Paper: Our countryside: the future*, London: DEFRA p22

125 Ibid; Environment Agency (2004) *Our Nations Fisheries*, Bristol: EA

126 TNS (2004) *Country Sports Tourism in Scotland*, Perth: Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group <http://countrysportscotland.com/About.asp>; Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2011) *Operating Plan 2011-2014*, Inverness: HIE <http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/about-hie/what-we-do.html>

127 www.fishing.visitwales.com

128 www.countrysportscotland.com; Brown, A. (2009) *Angling and Rural Areas: The Assynt Angling Study: Interim Report for the Social and Community Benefits of Angling Project*, Manchester: Substance. http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Research_Task_3_Assynt_Angling_Rural_Areas.pdf

Lake District run in 2009, 2010 and 2011¹²⁹; and the development of an 'angling passport' scheme for visitors and residents, as implemented by the Wye and Usk Foundation and the Westcountry Rivers Trust¹³⁰.

Yet despite the growing body of policy, research and practice based initiatives to promote angling in rural areas, little is known about angling's impact in particular rural communities, the different ways in which it involves local people and visitors, and the ways in which it can contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities.

Our research focused on a case study of a small remote rural community, Assynt, in the county of Sutherland, far North West Scotland. Our research involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection, and comprised: online and face to face surveys of anglers and other visitors; semi-structured interviews with over 50 visiting anglers; visitor postcode mapping and angling permit surveys; an action research initiative that explored the use of new technology for information provision; and angler feedback. Findings from this work have informed broader recommendations about angling tourism and rural development.

In Focus: Assynt

Assynt is an area of outstanding natural beauty and natural scientific interest and is historically significant in terms of Highland development and land ownership. Assynt has around 1000 inhabitants¹³¹ living in 475km² of mostly remote mountainous landscape. Its nearest major population centre is Inverness, over 2 hours drive away.

Assynt faces challenges common to many remote and rural areas, such as:

- A seasonal tourist economy
- Declining owner occupancy and rising house prices (in two of its townships, Stoer and Clachtoll, over 50% of homes are holiday homes)
- Although ward statistics¹³² show a spread of different employment categories, 30.2% of employment is in distribution, hotels and restaurants, the second highest category after the public sector (32.4%)
- Average unemployment lies at 3.8%¹³³, with seasonal peaks and troughs.¹³⁴

5.2 The Benefits of Angling for Rural Communities

Angling can contribute to rural communities in diverse ways; in addition to the direct impacts on local economies generated by angling tourism, there is a range of more nuanced impacts, such as reducing seasonality effects and sustaining cultural heritage.



129 www.cumbriafishingfestival.co.uk

130 See <http://www.wyeuskfoundation.org>; www.wrt.org.uk/projects/anglingpassport/anglingpassport.html

131 The 2001 census said that the population of the Assynt Community Council area in 2001 was 953

132 Ibid

133 Source: Highland Council: <http://www.highland.gov.uk> accessed on 17.12.10

134 MacLeod, K (2007) *Assynt Area Profile*, Lochinver: Assynt Office Services for Assynt Crofters Trust

5.2.1 The Economic Contribution of Angling Tourism

Angling tourism can be extremely important in terms of the economic contribution that visiting anglers make to rural areas.

In 2001 Sharpley and Craven warned that in the UK 'the scope of tourism in rural areas remains largely unrecognised'.¹³⁵ This situation has changed over the last decade, with the publication of some notable studies that have emphasised the importance of outdoor recreation based tourism to rural economies:

- The Country Sports Tourism Group of Scotland report in 2004 estimated the value of country sports in Scotland at around £200m, and that 67% of the value of game and coarse angling was attributable to visiting anglers.¹³⁶
- Other studies have emphasised the contribution of angling to specific areas. Some have centred on specific river catchments, such as the SQW report on the River Tweed which estimated a GVA of £7m supporting 487 FTE jobs from angling; others have taken a regional focus, such as the Nautilus (2006) study estimating local resident spending of £110m and visitor spending of £165m in the South West region of England.¹³⁷
- The value of freshwater fishing (Radford 2007) and sea angling (Drew 2004, Radford 2009) to the national economy has also raised the profile of angling as a driver of economic development.¹³⁸
- In a broader sense, a recent study in Scotland has also sought to assess the 'social value' of natural spaces in Scotland. The Scottish National Heritage's 2010 report estimated the value of 'nature based tourism' at £1.4 billion, with 39,000 associated FTE jobs.¹³⁹

Although diversification has been recognised as an increasingly important element in sustainable rural development, the *relative* impact that angling can make is less often understood within *particular communities*, and in the wider context of regional economies and employment figures.

In 2009 and 2010 we surveyed visiting anglers in Assynt (n=125) to determine the average expenditure by anglers in a number of areas. We used estimates of total visiting angler numbers (at 1,200 and 1,500 per year) and standard multipliers to estimate the economic contribution to the area:

- Between £887,000 and £1,109,000 contribution by visiting anglers annually
- A Gross Value Added of £345,840-£432,300
- Employment impact of between 25 and 31 Full Time Equivalent jobs

Whilst this is a study of just one remote rural area, there are some findings that have relevance for other rural communities:

- It suggests that **angling tourism can play a significant role** in bringing income into small rural areas, and can help sustain employment in often economically fragile communities.
- Local, regional or national governments, or statutory and regional agencies, should consider **investment in angling-based tourism** initiatives to increase economic benefits through increased numbers.
- Should the numbers of anglers visiting in a year increase, the **benefit of this should also increase proportionately across economic indicators** (a 10% increase in the numbers of angler stays in Assynt could result in 3 FTEs and an additional £100,000 economic contribution).
- In an internationally competitive market, where rural areas have a distinctive angling offer, this can assist in creating a **'USP' to attract visitors**.

135 Sharpley R, Craven B. (2001) 'The 2001 Foot and Mouth crisis: rural economy and tourism policy implications: a comment', *Current Issues in Tourism* 4(6): p 527–537.

136 TNS (2004) op cit.: 2

137 SQW (2006) *Economic Impact from Angling on the Tweed River System*; Nautilus (2005) *The Motivation, Demographics and Views of South West Recreational Sea Anglers and their Socio-economic Impact on the Region*

138 Radford A., Riddington, G. and Gibson, H. (2009) *The Economic evaluation of inland fisheries: The economic impact of freshwater angling in England & Wales* Bristol: EA Science Report SC050026/SR2; Drew Associates (2004) *Research Into the Economic Contribution of Sea Angling*; Radford, A. Riddington, G. and Gibson, H. (2009) *Economic Impact of Recreational Sea Angling in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

139 Bryden, D.M., Westbrook, S.R., Burns, B., Taylor, W.A., and Anderson, S. (2010) *Assessing the Economic Impacts of Nature Based Tourism in Scotland* Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 398

5.2.2 Lengthening the Tourist Season

One particular way that angling can contribute to tourism in rural areas is that it can help 'lengthen' the tourist season and thereby reduce the peaks and troughs associated with seasonality. For many rural areas, and in particular remote ones where the length of travel tends to mean people stay for relatively longer periods (a week or two weeks according to our surveys), tourist trade can be focused on relatively short periods in the year. Due to the varying seasonality of different types of angling in different locations, this benefit will be at different times of the year in different places.

As part of our research in Assynt we mapped the sale of trout angling permits in 2009 and 2010. The graph below illustrates how angling can encourage visitation outside the principal holiday periods – in this case (where game angling is most prominent) on the 'shoulders' of the summer season in May, June and in September.

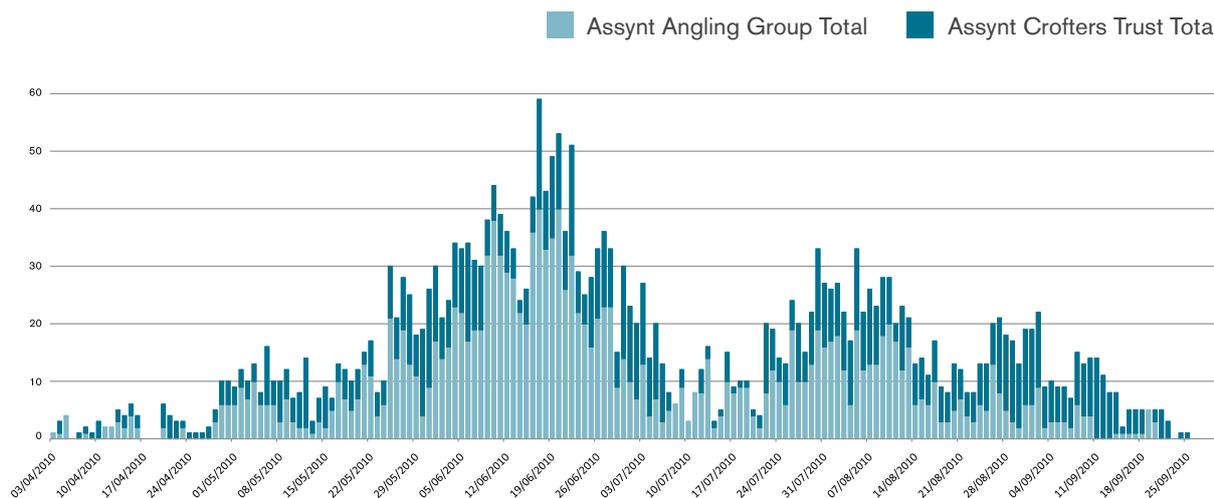


Chart 5: Trout Angling Rods per Day in Assynt 2010

As part of our work we have also suggested ways in which additional promotion of different angling opportunities in the Assynt area could extend this impact further, such as:

- Specialist ferox¹⁴⁰ angling in the early season/April
- Further promotion of trout angling in mid-late May
- Family angling offers for the July and Scottish summer holiday periods
- Offers for trout and salmon fishing 'combo' deals in September

Although our study was specific to one area, in other areas winter sea fishing, early season salmon angling, spring coarse fishing or autumn grayling fishing might be a different focus.

5.2.3 Offsetting Declines in Other Forms of Tourism

Specialist outdoor activity based tourism, such as angling, can also help rural areas offset more general declines in visitor numbers. Other studies have recognised the contribution of developing niche or special interest tourism in offsetting such declines¹⁴¹ and the development of tourist loyalty and repeat visitation. This can be enhanced further by dedicated project and promotional work (such as our project which emphasised information provision to niche markets).

Our surveys of visiting anglers in Assynt highlighted the 'loyalty' many had to the area – between 70% and 80% had visited Assynt previously and a significant number of anglers interviewed had visited on multiple occasions. This suggests that angling can assist in retaining visitors from one year to the next when more general tourism declines.

¹⁴⁰ Ferox trout are predatory and cannibalistic brown trout that can grow very large.

¹⁴¹ Carson D and Schmallegger, D, Fishing 'The Big Rivers in Australia's Northern Territory: Market diversification for the Daly River' in Prideaux, B. and Cooper, M. (eds.) (2009) *River Tourism*, CAB International pp131-149

In Assynt, during our research, there was a notable increase in angling tourism during the lifetime of our project:

- In 2010 there was an estimated 12% decline in all visitors to Assynt but a 25% increase in income from trout angling permits for the Assynt Angling Association (AAA), with an additional 10% increase in permit income for the AAA in 2011
- In 2011 the Assynt Crofters' Trust recorded a 10% increase in permit income gross takings since 2009.

This suggests that specialist work on angling – such as our project's provision of centralised high quality information – can help maintain and increase angler tourism even in the context of wider tourism downturns.

5.2.4 Contributing to 'Portfolio Employment'

Angling tourism has a role to play in a portfolio of rural employment – an economic strategy that is often an essential part of rural economies, enabling households and businesses to draw consistent income in an economy affected by seasonality.

The AIRE project undertaken by Newcastle and Durham universities in 2009 generated some important findings in relation to angling and the economic development of rural communities in the North Yorkshire region. It found that:

- Different types of angling produce very different economic impacts
- Angling businesses in rural areas need to be appreciated within the context of a larger and sometimes complex economic 'jigsaw'
- Angling income can be small, but can also be very important - a difference between viability and non viability in some cases
- Angling tends to be 'invisible' in policy/development contexts and in England it is frequently not linked to rural development initiatives because it falls 'below the radar of development indicators'.¹⁴²

The 'small but significant' role angling can play in household or business income is also reflected in our research into angling's impact in rural areas. In such areas, many people have a 'portfolio of employment' that involves different jobs at different times of the year, reflecting seasonal variations in agriculture and tourism.

For example, in Assynt, angling helps to support the viability of families or businesses by adding extra income for example through permit sales or tourism related services. In Yorkshire as the AIRE project found, this income is often not enough to register on regional development employment measures, yet it can make an important difference at the household/small business level.

5.2.5 The Cultural Heritage of Rural Communities

Angling is also an activity that can be an important element of the cultural heritage of rural areas, steeped in a cultural history that defines communities and contributes to a collective identity. This is also an added attraction to visiting anglers and something rural communities can help research, develop and display.

As part of our research in Assynt we began to collate an online archive of material including:

- Historic literature detailing visitors' experiences dating back to the mid 19th century
- Digitally recording hotel angling records dating back to the 1880s
- Collecting old photographs and making old cine footage available.¹⁴³

This material has been made available electronically on a project-specific website, as well as being displayed in the local Tourist Information Centre at Lochinver. It is also being submitted to the Assynt Community Archive housed in the community-owned Lochinver Mission building. The ACA is an excellent example of good practice in the management of cultural heritage, enabling community groups and individuals – from the area as well as elsewhere - to digitise and catalogue archive material.¹⁴⁴

This kind of angling-specific archiving can sit alongside other community initiatives such as historical society projects and helps a community to 'know itself' as well as preserve and communicate its history to visitors.¹⁴⁵

142 Oughton, L, Wheelock, J, Whitman, G. (2009) 'The Move to Still Waters: the rural development implications' paper presented to [Angling in the Rural Environment](#), Dissemination Conference, York, May 27th 2009.

143 http://assynt.anglingresearch.org.uk/?q=angling_history

144 http://www.dspacedev2.org/index.php?option=com_content&catid=85&id=3558&view=article ; <http://www.lochinvermission.org.uk/>

145 Assynt demonstrates some very good practice in this regard – the voluntary work of Historic Assynt (www.historicassynt.co.uk) and the Assynt Historical Society (www.normist.co.uk/mills.htm) has helped restore historic buildings in the area and provide information and interpretation signage at key sites that are valued by visitors (not just anglers).

5.3 Increasing the Impact of Angling Tourism

Our research has explored a number of ways in which angling tourism can be enhanced.

5.3.1 Provision and Presentation of Information

In some rural areas, especially where recreational angling is provided by more than one supplier/landowner, information for visitors can be piecemeal, difficult to get hold of and sometimes confusing or outdated. In our research we sought to address this through the:

- Design of a bespoke website to provide a one-stop information point as well as feedback tools for visiting anglers
- Online mapping of angling locations, utilising Ordnance Survey map technologies which are particularly suited to rural areas
- Use of the online map to collect angler feedback about their experiences fishing in particular locations and facilitate up to date peer-to-peer advice
- Use of the website as a portal for local angling history, information on other forms of fishing, wildlife reports and other activities
- Production of a booklet comprising summary information on all angling opportunities in the area distributed to accommodation providers, tourist agencies and angling organisations
- Development of an angling 'hub' using designated space in the tourist information centre, featuring poster displays, leaflets and free use of a computer with access to the bespoke website.

Such initiatives are popular with visiting anglers and could be easily replicated to promote angling in other rural areas.



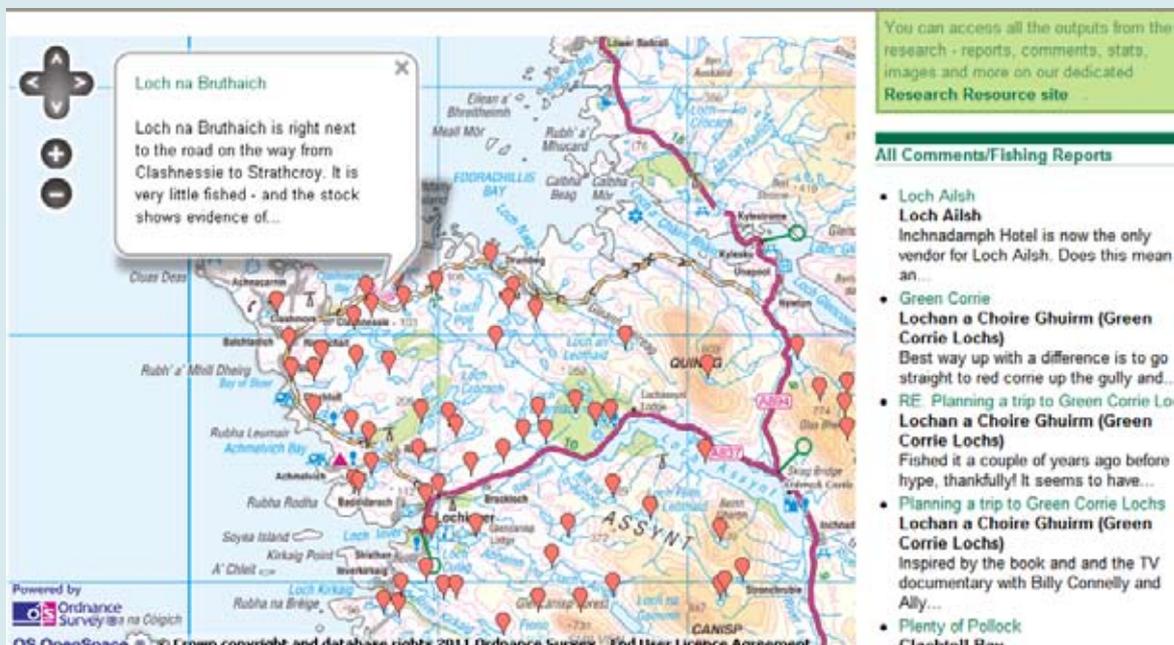
In Focus: Mapping the Rural Angling Offer – www.assynt.anglingresearch.org.uk

Part of our research took an action research approach to case study work. This included testing new technological solutions to the provision of information and the generation of angler feedback.

The problem: No central point of information; a number of different angling providers producing their own information; poor access to the internet in self-catering accommodation; and almost no solid data on visiting anglers or what they caught.

The solution: *The Assynt Information and Research* website, and in particular the digital, interactive, online map, based on Ordnance Survey's OpenSpace API. The map included:

- Over 100 angling locations tagged by a map marker
- A 'zoom-in' feature providing precise topographical information about angling locations and routes
- 'Click through' facility giving location, access, permit and other details.
- A comment tool on each location allowing anglers to post feedback about their experiences and share them with others



Making it work: Apart from providing the map we also publicised it on internet forums and in angling and mainstream press¹⁴⁶ to raise awareness; we reached an agreement with Visit Scotland to provide dedicated PC access in the Lochinver Tourist Information Centre and distributed leaflets and posters locally.

Our map tool was recognised by the OS as an example of good innovative practice¹⁴⁷ and has been very heavily used by visiting anglers. The website visit statistics include:

- 22,098 visits
- 10,457 unique visitors
- 106,294 page views
- An average of 5 pages viewed per visit

¹⁴⁶ www.assynt.anglingresearch.org.uk/press

¹⁴⁷ Ordnance Survey (2010) 'New Users Harness the Power of OpenSpace', Media Release <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/media/news/2009/october/osopenspace.html>

5.3.2 Increasing Access to Angling

Making angling accessible to visitors is not just about generating accurate information, but also about ensuring the angling offer is easily understood, affordable and well-publicised.

Developments in several rural areas in the UK demonstrate the effectiveness of 'angling passport schemes'. The first of these was developed by the Westcountry Rivers Trust and Wye and Usk Foundation, and has been followed by similar schemes in the Eden, Ribble and Tyne areas. These schemes help to bring together formerly disparate sources of information and permits for angling and make it easy for visitors to access previously inaccessible angling.

The staging of angling festivals can also help to advertise angling in areas that might be better known for other activities or attractions:

- The Cumbrian fishing festival which began in 2009 has helped to make the wide variety of fishing available in the Lake District more widely known and attracted visitors in mid-May.
- The Bridlington 'European Open' sea angling festival brings large numbers of visitors from long distances to the area in February and March each year, increasing tourism impact in low season

'I annually attend the beach fishing comp at Bridlington, 280 miles from my home; it's now called the European Open. It's a great 5 day stay and winter break. Four of us go up each year, and it's the only competition we compete in.'
(Survey comment made by 45 year old male sea angler)

In Assynt, a number of changes since the early 1990s have assisted in increasing angler tourist numbers:

- The Assynt Crofters Trust buy-out of the North Assynt Estate made trout angling in the whole of that area available for minimal cost to visitors
- The formation of the Assynt Angling Association in 2000 created a 'mini-passport scheme' bringing together all other trout angling in Assynt under one banner
- Public access to angling was also increased as a result of the Assynt and Coigach Protection Order.
- The marketing of salmon and sea trout angling on the two primary rivers in the area from 2010 by CKD Galbraith, has broadened the price range of rod days and made it available to all visitors (not just hotel guests).



5.3.3 Developing Angling within Outdoor Recreation Based Tourism

One of the ways in which angling tourism can be developed is by positioning it within a broader outdoor recreation 'offer'. Our research suggests that the motivations for anglers are much broader than simply going fishing, and tapping into these motivations can help 'deepen' the attraction of certain locations for anglers – whether in the South West of England, the Lake District, Wales or other parts of Scotland.

We asked anglers in our Assynt Anglers Survey in 2010 to identify the most important things about angling in Assynt. The results are presented in the bar chart below. Although the catch-related aspects of the angling experience – most notably the quality of fish stocks – perhaps inevitably received a large number of 1st place rankings, the remoteness, fishing mountain lochs, being able to fish without seeing others and the scenery in which people go fishing scored highest overall. These results suggest that anglers who visit Assynt value the social isolation and the quality of the landscape at least as much as they do the actual fishing.

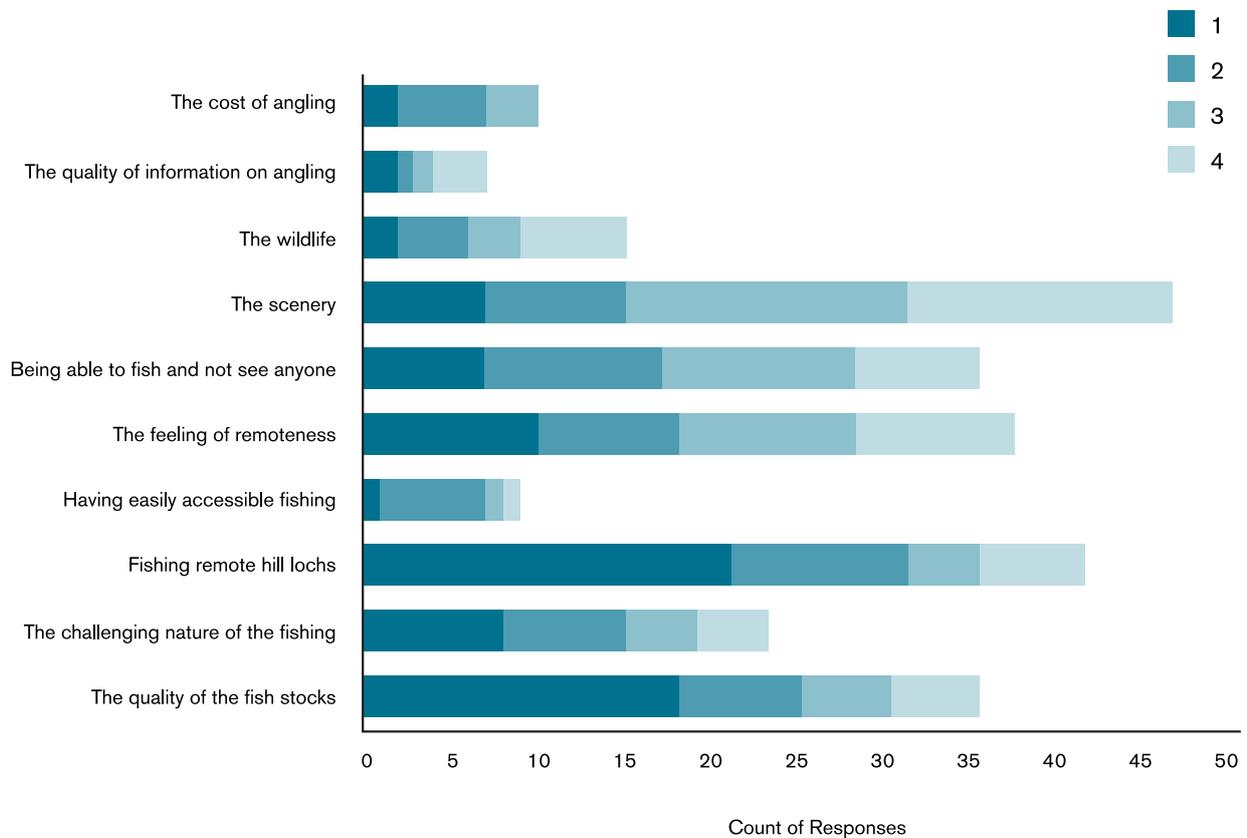


Chart 6: Responses to 'Please rank from 1 to 4 the four most important things to you about fishing in Assynt.' (Assynt Anglers' Survey 2010)

In qualitative interviews, anglers stressed the importance of hill walking in particular as an additional and associated activity.

'It's not just the fishing up there. One of the things I love is being out in the hills. We hike a lot, that's one of the great pleasures of it.'

Anglers also reported their interest in flora and fauna, organised walks put on by the Highland Council Ranger Service and activities such as kayaking and mountain climbing.

More generally, these findings suggest that there may be an opportunity for rural areas to maximise the attractiveness of their area by highlighting the range of outdoor activities on offer and even making links between the two. This is particularly relevant to rural areas in the UK given the variable weather and water level conditions.

5.3.4 Clustering Businesses and Co-operative Competition

Some tourism studies contend that 'clustering' visitor-related services in remote rural areas can assist the production of a greater overall economic benefit. Research by Jackson and Murphy at La Trobe University in Australia¹⁴⁸ applied Porter's clustering theory to rural development, and as a result surmised that more benefit can be derived from activity-based tourism by:

- i) Understanding demand better and the local 'USP' in relation to other areas
- ii) Working cooperatively and developing local networks
- iii) Developing work between complementary businesses
- iv) Using government support to assist new developments
- v) Developing interdependent businesses in 'cooperative competition'
- vi) Support work by developing research and training

Clustering approaches have been developed, for instance, in relation to wine tourists where regional tours of vineyards, wine purchases, food and accommodation providers all work together to create packages that create mutual benefits. Such 'clustering' and 'cooperative competition' can also operate on both an intra-regional basis (e.g. within a particular rural community) and inter-regional basis (e.g. across wider areas or regions).

Our research in Assynt suggested that although such cooperation does occur, it happens on an ad hoc basis. In relation to angling tourism, there is the potential to further develop co-operative approaches both in terms of 'general' tourists and visiting anglers. This might include:

- Marketing of '**accommodation and fishing' packages** in which small discounts might be offered and services such as provision of permits and angling information are offered on arrival
- Packages to **promote low demand periods** of the year, such as multiple activities for families
- Developing '**angler friendly' schemes** for accommodation and food businesses
- Cross-marketing and further development of other outdoor activities with fishing – walking, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, wildlife watching, guided 'walk-and-fish' tours
- **Food initiatives** such as 'eat what you catch' offers at local restaurants
- **Signposting** between businesses to ensure visitors use local services

5.3.5 Land Ownership and Community Benefit

One way in which rural communities can collectively benefit from angling is through common ownership of land and riparian rights. Income earned directly from the sale of fishing permits can then be used for purposes that benefit either local community organisations or collective angling organisations. This is not to say that other forms of land ownership do not allow wider benefit from angling in rural areas, but rather that collective organisations can deliver added value in this regard.

In Scotland, the Scottish Land Reform Act 2004 has given communities the right to buy land if it comes up for sale, provided a number of conditions are met. In England, the new Localism Act (2011) gives communities the right to nominate land as assets of community value, something discussed in Section 4 of this report. These two pieces of legislation provide opportunities for rural communities to generate direct economic benefit from angling held collectively for use by the community.

Our research in Assynt allowed us to examine how angling is managed within different forms of rural business structure and land ownership in the area. This helps to demonstrate how direct angling income from permit sales can help support the work of community owned organisations:

- The **Assynt Crofters Trust (ACT)** is a cooperative trust of crofters who won an historic right to buy their land in 1993¹⁴⁹. Income from angling is the single biggest source of profit for the ACT, contributing to the work of the collectively owned trust. ACT income increased from £6,102 in 2009, to £6,720 in 2011.

148 Jackson, J. and Murphy, P. (2002) 'Tourism Destinations as Clusters: Analytical Experiences From The New World', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol.4, N°1, pp. 36-52.

149 MacAskill, J. (1999) *We Have Won the Land: the story of the purchase by the Assynt Crofters' Trust of the North Lochinver Estate*, Stornoway: Acair

- The **Assynt Angling Association (AAA)** is a collection of other landowners in the area that is responsible for the sale of trout permits. Proceeds are distributed to a range of land owners, including some charities and local trusts:
 - The Assynt Foundation, a community trust that owns the 40,000 acres Gelncanisp and Drumrunie estates. Income from angling to the trust was £1,288 in 2009; £1,291 (2010) and £1,835 (2011)
 - The Culag Community Woodland Trust, a charitable organisation that manages the Little Assynt estate and has developed all abilities access as well as benefited from a new boat one of its lochs with income from the AAA
 - The Assynt Angling Club is a long standing local angling organisation that receives significant income from the AAA sales.

In addition, income from permit sales has been reinvested in improving the AAA fishing experience, particularly through the increased provision of boats which are much valued by visiting anglers and help to generate ongoing revenue. Local angling groups have also been supported in other ways. A guide booklet, *Trout Fishing in Assynt* compiled by local angling expert Cathel Macleod, produced by the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group in conjunction with our research, has helped raise further funds for collective benefit.

5.4 Striking a Balance: Issues in Angling Tourism Development

One of the most important factors in promoting angling-based tourism in rural areas is balancing the desire for increased visitor numbers and associated economic growth with the potential social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts related to tourism development. This is a particular concern in rural areas where wild fish stocks may be more sensitive to increased angling pressure than commercial or stocked fisheries. There are two related issues at stake:

- Whether developing angling tourism in rural areas creates too much **'angling pressure'** and damages sensitive fish stocks or the environment.
- What impact angling tourism has on the visiting angler experience, either through **exceeding social carrying capacity** or 'over development'.

Increasingly, rural industries have to operate within parameters that conserve the special qualities of rural areas¹⁵⁰ – and angling is no different. Angling tourism needs to function within the broader context of 'ecotourism', defined as supporting environmental, economic and social/cultural sustainability,¹⁵¹ if it is to be considered a viable component of rural development. Our research has highlighted some common dilemmas:

- i) The need to implement **sustainable management systems** to protect fragile areas;
- ii) The need to **mediate** between the at times different aims of conservation, preservation and local development;
- iii) The need to encourage **balanced, broad-based** but community-focused economic growth.

5.4.1 Angling Pressure and the Environment

The effect of angling tourism on the ecology of the destination is one that is not confined to our study nor to the UK. Zwirn *et al's* study of the potential of angling tourism in Russia argued that:

*'When angling tourists reach threatened freshwater ecosystems... there is a risk of degrading the very fishery and landscapes that attracted them, thwarting long term economic development prospects and reducing biodiversity... we believe that angling can be legitimately considered a form of ecotourism that contributes positively to conservation, science, and local or regional economic development.'*¹⁵²

However, the AIRE project found that angling development can have a mixed impact on natural habitats and biodiversity¹⁵³ and our research in Assynt recorded the concerns of some anglers that any 'development' of angling or increase in angler numbers would both harm fish stocks and mean that there were too many anglers.

'Please do not "develop" and "improve" the angling to attract more visitors. The fishing pressure is about right and doing anymore will damage the very point of wild trout fishing in wild places!' (Online comment submitted August 2009)¹

150 Sharpley, R. and Roberts, L. (2004) 'Rural Tourism - 10 Years On' *International Journal Of Tourism Research*, 6, 119–124: 119

151 Honey, M. (1999) *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* Washington, DC: Island Press quoted in Zwirn, M., Pinsky, M., and Rahr, G. (2005) 'Angling Ecotourism: Issues, Guidelines and Experience from Kamchatka', *Journal of Ecotourism*, 4:1, 16–31: 22

152 Zwirn *et al* (2005) *op cit*

153 Lucas, M (2009) 'Angling, Biodiversity and the European Context', paper presented to *Angling in the Rural Environment*, Dissemination Conference, York, May 27th 2009.

'Please keep it wild. This is a precious resource and one of the last wildernesses in Europe. In the last few years I have seen the first signs of unacceptable developments that if continued will begin to destroy the point of this area that brings people who care.' (Survey comment submitted June 2010)¹⁵⁴

Part of the solution to such issues is having adequate ongoing monitoring both of angler numbers and of fish stocks. However, this is neither straightforward nor easy for often poorly resourced rural communities and angling organisations. In the Assynt case, although it is a historically renowned angling destination that attracts hundreds of anglers every year, there has been almost no natural sciences research about the brown trout population¹⁵⁴; minimal catch returns; and very little monitoring of angler numbers and 'angling pressure'.

Our research has explored a number of ways in which these shortcomings could be addressed at low cost:

- Development of a web site with interactive OS mapping that allows anglers to feedback information on their experience and catches
- Use of online survey tools for catch returns
- A survey of permit sales (through analysis of permit stubs) in order to:
 - Calculate total rod day numbers
 - 'Map' angling pressure across a year
 - Understand maximum, minimum and average rods fishing in Assynt on any one day

Our permit survey provided some particularly firm evidence on which to base debates about angler numbers in Assynt. It showed that for an area of several hundred lochs and lochans, during the vast majority of the year angling numbers are very low:

- On only 12% (n=21) of available days there were more than 30 rods fishing.
- On exactly half the total days (92 days) there were between 5 and 20 rods
- For 20% of the time (36 days) there are less than 5 rods fishing in Assynt

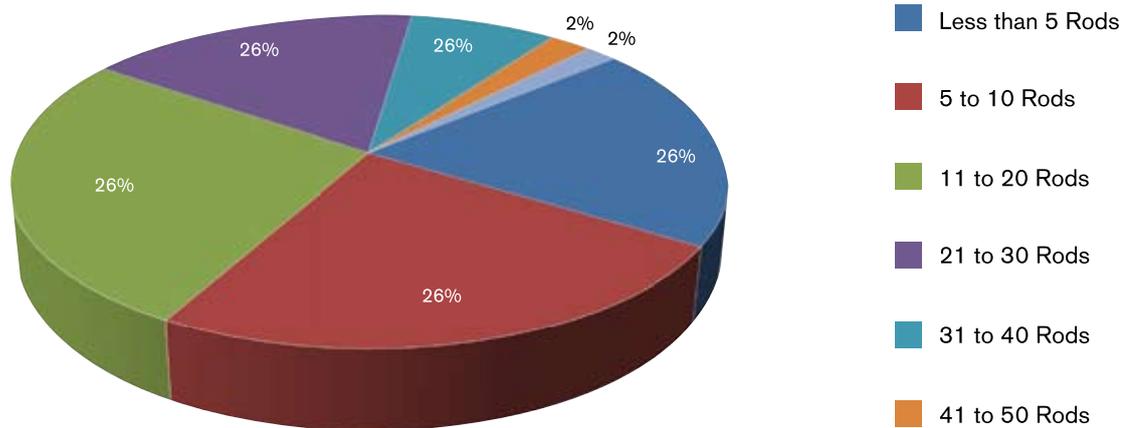


Chart 7: Trout Angler 'Rods per day' in Assynt, 2010

Irrespective of the specificities of our case study, the provision of accurate angling participation information to inform developments is essential.

5.4.2 Social Carrying Capacity

The need to maintain the 'rurality' of rural areas¹⁵⁵ has been a key objective of policy makers and rural development agencies. This is in part because an absence of 'development' – particularly but not exclusively of the built environment – is something that is important to residents and is attractive to visitors.

¹⁵⁴ Stephen, A. (1986) The Brown Trout Project; and some work by the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust

¹⁵⁵ Sharpley, R. and Roberts, L. (2004) op cit: p121

In relation to angling tourism, and indeed outdoor recreation more broadly, the absence of people is a key driver for visitors. The **'social carrying capacity'** of an area refers to the subjective valuation made by participants that includes visibility of others but also encompasses factors such as the behaviour of others in any given context.¹⁵⁶ Maintaining a **balance between increased numbers** (that can generate additional income for rural communities) **and the subjective experience of anglers** is vital in development of angling tourism.

Our surveys of anglers in Assynt suggested that being able to fish alone, or with a small group, and not see other anglers was an appealing feature of angling in the area. In our 2010 survey, although quality of fish stocks and the fishing were the main motivators, the 'feeling of remoteness' and 'being able to fish without seeing others' followed close behind. This was also referred to in several of the interviews we conducted:

'Part of the attraction is spending a day in the hill and not seeing another living soul ! It would be good if the management of this fishery was able to maintain this as much as possible, whilst still increasing visitor numbers. It could be done.' (Assynt angler interview 2011)

However, for others angling in Assynt there doesn't appear to be any problem at all:

'I'm wondering if there is any fisherman in Assynt?! I've been, in the last seven days, in more than twenty lochs, most of them around two hours of walk from the first car park, and I haven't met ONE fisherman. But lot of deers and, sometimes, very nice trouts.' (Comment submitted online by French angler July 2011)

Alongside monitoring the numbers of anglers (or rod days) and their distribution across the year, **feedback from anglers about their experience is required to continually inform communities about the social qualities of angler experiences.** The type of data gathering we developed makes it possible to identify when and where numbers could be increased as well as managing where anglers fish.

5.4.3 Local Capacity

Although angling in rural areas can form part of a portfolio of income for local residents, the local angling offer is **often heavily reliant on a small number of people**, many of whom are volunteers. The capacity of an area to maintain and develop angling and increase community benefit from it can consequently be severely limited by the availability of personnel. Within rural communities, the management of fisheries for community benefit requires attention to five key areas:

- **Maintenance** – for example dealing with boat problems especially where they are located in remote areas; or maintaining boat engines
- **Administration** – dealing with permit distribution and income as well as club or association costs
- **Membership** – either declining, or inactive, membership of clubs or associations
- **Advice provision** – this is often given by a few people who get overburdened with ad hoc advice provision
- **Coordination** - angling permit income may not be sufficient to support specific appointments and need public support if community-wide benefits are to be achieved.

It is important to recognise the valuable contribution individuals make to angling provision. Maximising the benefits of angling for rural communities, however, requires greater attention to be paid to capacity building – such as funding development and volunteer coordination. **Given the benefits that angling tourism can bring to rural areas, it is important that national and regional policy as well as funding and development agencies recognise the role it can play and assist communities in building their capacity.**

5.4.4 Summary of Recommendations

Development of angling-based tourism to rural areas can increase income to small community groups and generate wider benefits through visitor expenditure. However, any development needs to complement the ecosystems of the area, local community interests and the attractions for visiting anglers.

¹⁵⁶ Graefe, A. R., J. J. Vaske, and F. R. Kuss. (1984) 'Social carrying capacity: An integration and synthesis of twenty years of research.' *Leisure Sciences* 6: pp395–432

In order to do this, angling clubs, community development agencies and public bodies (including tourism and regional development) need to:

- Develop the local capacity to monitor angler numbers properly
- Develop ongoing data collection to better understand the visiting angler market, and angling experience
- Explore ways in which social research can be delivered alongside natural sciences
- Involve all stakeholders in the local community in a neutral way

The provision of accurate 'one-stop' information utilising web based technology can support local organisations with limited capacity and should be seen as one way in which public agencies can assist.

Public agencies should help build local resources through part-subsidised posts, training and information dissemination to help address low capacity such as the overburdening of volunteers. This is particularly important in remote rural areas.

Community land ownership, while not unproblematic, can mean that development of rural angling tourism has more direct benefits to local organisations and people.

Local angling organisations, business and community groups, local authorities and other public agencies need to work together to develop good practice in:

- Business clustering
- Development of local festivals and attractions
- Improving provision of information technology
- Angling Passport schemes



6. Angling and Young People

In Brief

This section describes the positive role that angling can play in education, personal development and social inclusion of young people. Compared to other positive activities, angling has a very distinctive offer to make in terms of:

- Providing personal and social development opportunities
- Raising attainment in education and employment
- Diverting young people from crime and antisocial behaviour

6.1 Introduction and Context

In the last twenty years national policy has increasingly focused on positive activities as a means of addressing youth exclusion.¹⁵⁷ The Department of Education's (DfE) current vision, *Positive for Youth*,¹⁵⁸ has continued with this approach, outlining how youth services and targeted programmes for disadvantaged or 'at risk' groups will be expected to support young people to:

- Achieve in education and training
- Reduce engagement in crime and risky behaviour
- Access opportunities for personal and social development
- Participate in volunteering programmes.

The riots in the UK in 2011, along with record rates of youth unemployment¹⁵⁹, have placed disenfranchised youth firmly in the spotlight. Questions have been raised about young people's sense of alienation from society, their moral development, and the negative public attitudes towards them. New approaches to tackling these issues are needed to ensure all socially excluded young people are adequately supported. In particular the government is looking to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to play a greater role in the provision of sustainable youth services, with the National Citizenship Service in England and Volunteering Action Plan in Scotland being examples of how this role might be fulfilled.

Our research has found that the UK has become a leader in the field of targeted angling provision for young people, with a huge expansion of both national and local projects in the last decade.¹⁶⁰ This development has coincided with the emergence of specialist Angling-related Youth Intervention Projects (AYIPs) – organisations that are expert in the application of angling for working with disadvantaged young people (Figure 2). These specialist projects, alongside more general angling opportunities for young people by local angling clubs, river trusts and environmental charities, are contributing to a broad array of high quality service provisions for tackling youth exclusion.

157 See summary of previous policy in Djohari, N. (2009) *Angling and Young People Interim Report*, Manchester: Substance http://resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/sites/resources.anglingresearch.org.uk/files/Research_Task_2_Angling_and_Young_People.pdf; See also DCSF (2007) *Aiming Higher For Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities*, London: DCSF

158 Department for Education (2011) *Positive for Youth. A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13-19*, London: DfE

159 1.03 million young people (16-24) were unemployed in the 3 months to Oct 2011, the highest since comparable records began in 1992, although calculations suggest the rate was higher in the mid 1980's *ONS Labour Market Statistics: Dec 2011*

160 For a typological breakdown on key provisions and approaches see Djohari (2009) op cit p24.

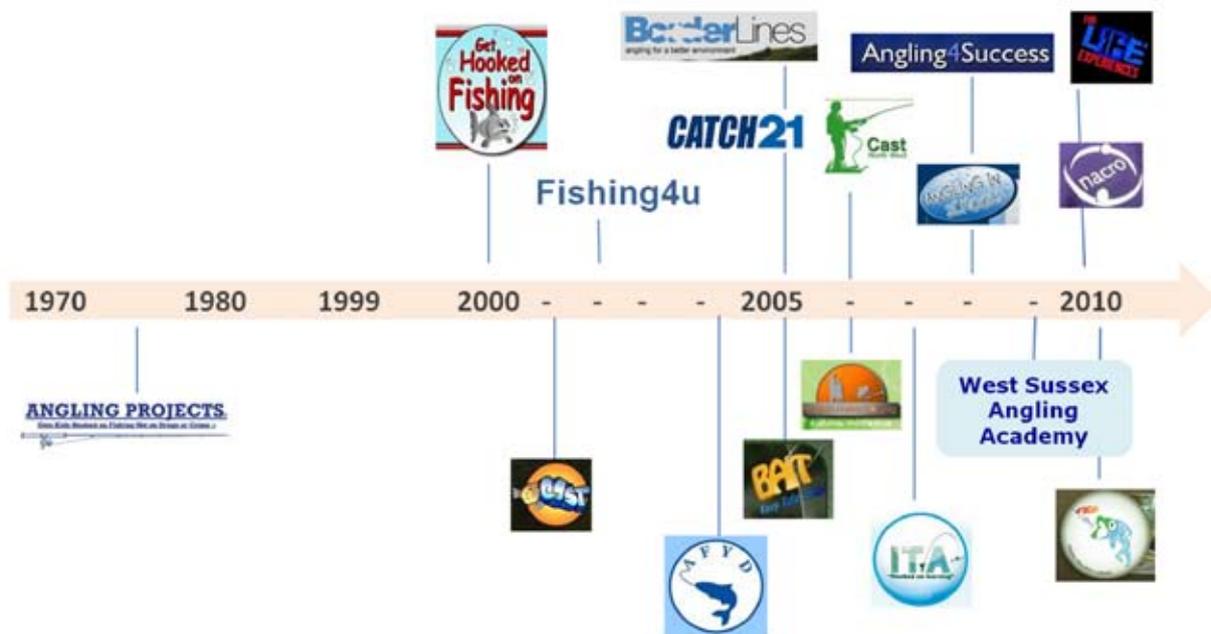


Figure 2: The Rapid Expansion of Angling-related Youth Intervention Projects (AYIPs)

Our research is based on extensive fieldwork between May 2009 and Sept 2011 and included in-depth action research with UK charity Get Hooked On Fishing (GHOF)¹⁶¹, 33 visits to other intervention projects, schools and angling events and over 400 interviews. It also included a survey of 219 young people and data submitted via online comment tools.

6.2 Angling's Contribution to Tackling Youth Social Exclusion

The UK is a leader in the field of delivering personal and social development outcomes for young people through angling.

In the past decade, the diversification of angling provision into more targeted youth work has created a distinct sector within angling with a particular focus on improved social outcomes rather than increasing angling participation.¹⁶² The majority of the work in this sector is carried out by Angling-related Youth Intervention Programmes (AYIPs) that make use of the distinctive features of angling participation to:

- Provide personal and social development opportunities
- Improve achievement in education and employment
- Divert young people from crime and anti-social behaviour.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ <http://www.ghof.org.uk/>

¹⁶² Djohari, N. (2009) op cit, p24

¹⁶³ It is worth noting, however, that angling clubs and associations, individual coaches, river trust, and environmental charities also provide some services, particularly coaching for youth offending teams and environmental education courses in schools.

6.2.1 Angling as a Distinctive Tool for Youth Inclusion Work

Angling has some distinctive attributes that make it a particularly useful tool for young people's personal and social development.

We identified five attributes that make angling distinctive as a tool for engaging socially excluded young people as detailed in Table 6¹⁶⁴. AYIPs make use of these distinctive aspects to deliver programmes for young people that focus on: (i) personal and social development; (ii) diversion from crime and anti-social behaviour; and (iii) attainment in education and employment.

Attribute	Description	Relevance for youth intervention
1. Fascination and excitement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling is something out of the ordinary. • There is an instantly gratifying 'buzz' from catching fish. • Young people often know of relatives that fish. • Angling is seen as part of the transition into adult recreation. 	The fascination and excitement of angling serves as an incentive for participation , drawing a diverse group of inquisitive young people into supportive services.
2. Celebrating success and mitigating failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling is 'levelling'- it is possible for a well-coached novice angler to catch a fish. • The perceived 'failure' of non-catching can be played down by referring to environmental variables rather than personal deficiencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling is especially suited to working with vulnerable young people who have low self-esteem and avoid activities that have an emotional risk of failure. • It is particularly attractive for those who do not participate in other mainstream sports and avoid peer competition.
3. Opportunity for mixed ability participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling enables mixed participation which is unusual in mainstream sports provisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation from peers is reduced amongst young people who are excluded from participation in other sports or recreation. • Mixed participation means greater awareness, integration and toleration across social divides.
3. 'In-community' delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling intervention work is not restricted to segregated environments • It allows young people to be visible participants in positive activities at venues where adults from their community also attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people can make the transition into adult spaces, learning responsible public behaviour and having meaningful contact with the community. • Members of the community have an opportunity to observe, speak to and re-evaluate young people as positive members of society.
4. Opportunities to contribute to society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling creates opportunities to participate in conservation and community beach/river clean-up work. • Volunteering as peer mentors to deliver angling to other young people and members of the wider community is a key feature of AYIP programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people learn self-awareness, develop understanding of the wider consequences of negative behaviour and find opportunities to contribute to society. • Peer mentoring is personally rewarding, developing confidence and self-worth, as well as encouraging empathy.
5. A varied and flexible tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling consists of a diverse range of practices across sea, coarse and game in a wide range of locations. • This makes it distinctly flexible as a tool for personal and social development; relationship building; and developing interests in learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By adapting angling techniques, angling projects can manage public encounters with socially anxious young people; build teamwork; facilitate 1-to-1 developmental work; build young people's concentration; create new challenges; and inspire learning in science and the environment.

Table 6: Angling's Distinctive Attributes for Youth Inclusion Work

¹⁶⁴ More detailed explanation is given in Djohari (2009) p15.

6.2.2 Social Exclusion and Personal and Social Development Opportunities

The best angling programmes take a holistic approach to tackling young people's exclusion.

'In school, I would sometimes hang out with the wrong crowd, older boys than me, but now I don't. If someone asks me I just say I don't want to do it. I've become more confident and listen to people when they're trying to help me.
(Interview with Male 15, Inclusion Through Angling project (ITA))

Social exclusion describes a complex process where *multiple factors* coalesce to prevent young people participating in the economic, social and political life of society.¹⁶⁵ Tackling social exclusion requires a **holistic approach** that acknowledges young people will require assistance on multiple fronts in order to re-integrate into society. Such an approach takes into account the personal capabilities of young people (e.g. underlying physical, mental or emotional difficulties; poor social development, education attainment); their social situation (e.g. living in care; parent in prison; a young carer); and structural disadvantages (e.g. living in areas of high deprivation or experiences of discrimination).

The key providers of high quality targeted social exclusion work in angling:

- i) Have expertise in working with challenging young people with a variety of complex needs
- ii) Are committed to high quality long term provisions
- iii) Are specialised in the delivery of personal and social development outcomes.¹⁶⁶
- iv) Often adopt a business model based around paid contracted work with schools, youth justice services and local authorities.¹⁶⁷

Key providers include: Get Hooked on Fishing (GHOF)¹⁶⁸ in England, Scotland and Wales, CAST Angling Project¹⁶⁹, and Angling For Youth Development (AFYD)¹⁷⁰.

Key aims and outcomes are best delivered by angling programmes that take a holistic approach to tackling social exclusion, working on young people's personal development by encouraging pro-social behaviour through activities such as volunteering. Key outcomes of this long term engagement approach include:

- Reduced engagement in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Re-engagement with education
- Improved confidence, self-esteem and resilience
- Raised aspirations
- Improved relationships with society

AYIPs work with a diverse range of young people, taking referrals from across education and the youth justice sectors in an attempt to have a lasting effect on transforming behaviour.



165 Duffy, K (1995) *Social Exclusion and Human Dignity in Europe*, Council of Europe; Klassen, S. (2000) *Social exclusion, Children, and education: conceptual and measurement issues* OECD.

166 See Djohari, N. (2009) op cit., p 36 a for a more detailed explanation.

167 Notable exceptions include Les Webber's Angling Project (London) and Angling For Youth Development (Scotland), who provide free services run by volunteers.

168 <http://www.ghof.org.uk/>

169 <http://www.castangling.co.uk/>

170 <http://www.afyd.co.uk/home.htm>

In Focus: Get Hooked On Fishing's Holistic Model

The GHOF approach to social exclusion works simultaneously on the multiple barriers to social inclusion. While GHOF concentrates on transforming behaviour at the level of the individual (developing confidence and self-esteem), they also provide opportunities to strengthen young people's close personal relationships, providing positive role models, family bonding opportunities and introducing young people to new peer groups.¹⁷¹ These supportive relationships give young people the confidence to develop their social and emotional skills further.



Figure 4: GHOF's Holistic Approach to Social Inclusion

Through their voluntary peer mentoring scheme, GHOF encourage young people to coach others, in the process developing empathy and important interpersonal skills.¹⁷² Peer mentoring at community events and local schools provides opportunities for young people to actively contribute to their communities. In turn their positive behaviour and visibility at these events and local fisheries, encourages the local community to interact with young people and transform the negative perceptions they have of local youths. This model is effective at tackling youth social exclusion because it facilitates a sense of belonging as well as equipping young people with the necessary skills to flourish.

6.2.3 Diversion From Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

The most effective angling diversionary programmes establish exit routes into clubs and wider angling opportunities.

'By the time I was really starting into fishing I was hanging around with the wrong sort of people. I had two choices, it was either fishing or go out and start taking drugs. I chose fishing. It's good to offer angling to young people. It gives them options.' (Interview with GHOF peer mentor, 18)

The key providers in this area of work have historically been the police and fire service. One of the most notable is the annual East Cheshire Emergency Services Fishing Competition which attracted over 900 young people in 2010. More long term engagement provisions include:

- The police run Bestwood Angling Interest Team (BAIT in Nottingham)¹⁷³
- Fuzz Fishing Project (Boscombe)
- West Mercia and Humberside police forces working with GHOF.

The Angling Development Board of Scotland (ADBoS) are also developing new work in the Forth and Clyde area in conjunction with the police working with young people involved in gangs as well as other social inclusion work with Barnardos.

¹⁷¹ See Djohari, N. (2010a) *Young People's Voices Part 1: The Well-being Benefits of Angling Participation*, Manchester: Substance, p10; and Djohari, N. (2011) *The Added Value of Angling Intervention programmes* Manchester: Substance, p12-13.

¹⁷² For more detail see Djohari, N. (2009) op cit: pp37-38; and Djohari, N. (2011).

¹⁷³ Djohari, N. (2009): op cit p30 for case study. BAIT project website: <http://www.bait-project.co.uk/homepage.php>

Local Authorities and housing associations also provide funding or commissions activities from angling clubs and AYIPs to target 'hot spot' areas or provide diversionary activities during the school holidays. Amongst those we visited were King William IV Angling Society¹⁷⁴ in Manchester and Fishing4u in Hastings that delivers angling as part of the council's Active Hastings scheme, 'nesting' targeted intervention within open access provisions.¹⁷⁵

Key aims and outcomes of diversionary approaches are to provide alternative activities for those at risk of engaging in crime, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and alcohol abuse.

However, providing temporary diversionary activities alone seldom proves to be a long term solution - the benefits only last as long as the programme is active. More progressively, we have found that the most effective angling diversionary programmes establish exit routes into clubs and wider angling opportunities, include personal and social development work to tackle underlying causes, and seek to rebuild young people's relationships with society. An example of these good practices can be found in programmes that seek to strengthen relationships between the young people and the police.

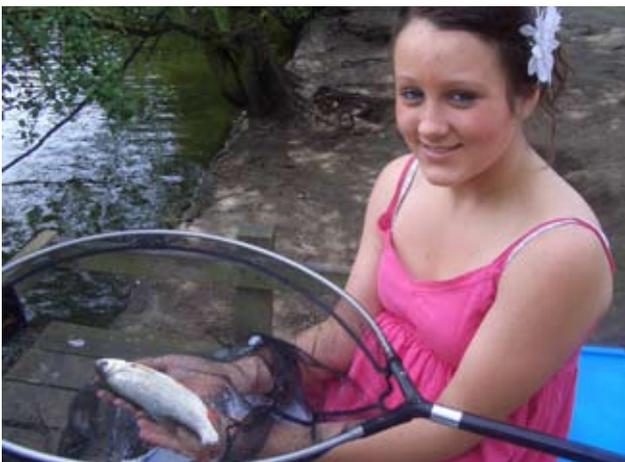
In Focus: Building Relationships Between Young People and the Local Police

West Mercia Police have been working with GHOF Shropshire in Meole Brace (Shrewsbury) since the charity set up locally in 2008. Meole Brace contains the second most deprived ward in Shropshire, falling within the top 14% most deprived wards nationally.¹⁷⁶ It has high levels of long term unemployment, poor health outcomes, and low levels of education attainment. When the community policing team and GHOF began working in the area, Meole Brace was classified as a priority 'red area', due to high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and high fear of crime. Although deprivation continues to be an existing challenge, Meole Brace was removed from the local police 'red' classification in early 2010. Sergeant Darren Smith stressed that this success is not all down to the angling programmes he leads with GHOF, but he does believe angling has changed the relationship between young people and the police.

'We have seen huge reductions in anti-social behaviour, year on year...I think it's more to do with the relationship that's been built than the few hours we keep them employed. The spin-off is they [local young people] all know us very well and there is not a stigma attached to getting in touch and speaking to the police.' (Sergeant Smith, West Mercia)

The 2011 riots have highlighted a need for the police and young people to build stronger relationships and understanding. As Sergeant Smith explained, angling is particularly well suited to this:

'Angling gives you time to sit there and chat to young people. We do football sessions, but the difference with football is that you are there with them for an hour, you're running around, it's a good laugh and they enjoy themselves but there's very little engagement. Whereas if you're sat 5 or 6 hours next to some lad, trying to teach them how to fish, you start talking about all sorts of things...They get to know a little about you, you get to know a little more about them. A bit of mentoring takes place.'



174 http://www.heatonpark.org.uk/HeatonPark/Community_Groups/Anglers/

175 Djohari, N. (2009) op cit 45.

176 The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

6.2.3 Achievement in Education and Employment

Angling programmes are particularly effective at addressing the need for young people to attain in education and training.

'I've cut down my drinking a lot now and due to that I've done probably 5 or 6 qualifications in sports and fishing. I wouldn't have dreamed about it before. Now just from coming on one coaching course it's made me want to be a coach, and I've been offered a part time job with Sporting Chance.' (Interview with Male, 17, CAST Nottingham)

Education and training outcomes are particularly important given, at the time of writing:

- Over one million 16-24 year olds are unemployed¹⁷⁷
- An estimated 8.5% of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in England.¹⁷⁸
- 13.7%.¹⁷⁹ young people in Scotland are NEET
- The long term public finance costs of current NEET 16-18 year olds is £9.1 billion with resource costs of £16.8 billion.¹⁸⁰

Boys from lower income backgrounds in particular are at higher risk of disengagement, with 19% eligible for free school meals not achieving 5 or more GCSE's¹⁸¹, and both permanent and fixed term exclusions disproportionately affecting this group in England and Scotland.¹⁸² Angling programmes are particularly effective at providing solutions for re-engaging this cohort by raising self-esteem, efficacy and aspirations alongside assisting them to meet basic levels of attainment¹⁸³.

The key players delivering this sort of work are:

- **Angling clubs**, assisted by the Angling Development Board (ADB) and the Angling Development Board of Scotland (ADBoS) who are increasingly offering enrichment opportunities by providing extra-curricular sports participation in schools.
- A growing number of **schools and colleges**, such as Lord Williams School (Oxford),¹⁸⁴ Barony College (Dumfries), and Sparsholt College (Hampshire) who offer vocational courses in fishery or land management.
- **AYIPs** who dominate the provision of more targeted educational support. Key amongst these are programmes offered by GHOF, Inclusion Through Angling (ITA)¹⁸⁵, CAST North West¹⁸⁶, AFYD and Angling4Success¹⁸⁷, that combine qualification attainment with more targeted personal and social development work to support those most disengaged with education.

The key aims and outcomes of angling-related education programmes are:

- Keeping young people motivated and engaged in school
- Increasing education attainment
- Raising aspirations and progression to further education, employment or training
- Intervening early with those at risk of disengagement
- Improving wellbeing and social integration in schools

This is achieved through programmes offered as part of a whole school approach and more targeted early interventions. Below we outline the four principal provisions:

- Enrichment and extra-curricular activities
- Complimentary learning programmes
- Qualification attainment through accredited courses
- Welfare and additional student support

177 Office of National Statistics (2011) *Labour Markets Statistics: Dec 2011*, London ONS.

178 This number is significantly down on previous years where it was at 10.4% in 2008. DfE *NEET Statistics, Quarter 4 2010*.

179 The Scottish Government (2011) *Local Area Labour Markets 2010*

180 Calculated from Audit Commission figures and current number of NEETs. Audit Commission (2010) *Estimating the Lifetime Cost of NEET: 16-18 yr olds not in education, employment or training*, London: Audit Commission

181 Dept. for Education (2009) *GCSE Attainment by pupil characteristic in England 2008/09*, London: DfE

182 Dept. for Education (2010) *Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2009/10*, London: DfE; Scottish Government (2011) *Exclusion Data Set 2010/11*.

183 This is particularly the case because studies show young people who are statistically more likely to fail can quickly become demoralised by a culture that prioritises academic success through streaming in schools. Perry, E and Francis, R. (2010) *The social class gap for education achievement: a review of the literature*, RSA p11

184 Djohari, N. (2009) op cit.

185 <http://www.inclusionthroughangling.co.uk/>

186 <http://www.castnw.co.uk/>

187 <http://www.energize-solutions.co.uk/angling4success/>

i) Enrichment Provisions and Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular angling programmes run by angling clubs and intervention projects (such as GHOF, Les Webber's Angling Project and AFYD), are **quality social, cultural and recreational learning opportunities outside of the classroom** that develop students' personal interests, sense of achievement and self-confidence, making school life enjoyable. The **ADB's 'school-club link' programme** in particular has led to greater involvement by local angling clubs in the delivery of angling coaching and taster events in schools, with over 80 school-club events being delivered in 2010.¹⁸⁸ In Scotland, 2011 saw the launch of the first **ADBOS 'Club-Angling' programme**, linking Kinross Fishery with the local Community Sports Hub and Portmoak Primary school, in order to deliver a children's coaching programme and assist in the setting up of the first angling after-school club in the area.

Angling is particularly effective as an extra-curricular, enrichment activity because it provides **an opportunity to engage young people who do not participate or achieve in the traditional school sports or arts offers**. As one teacher from Thomas Adams School (Shropshire) explained, it can be a challenge to find activities for boys who are not interested in sports such as football. She goes on to explain:

'Angling is a way really for children who do not excel necessarily academically, do not excel on the sports field, they don't fit into those areas in school where they get a lot of praise, it's where they can actually achieve. But it's where any child can achieve, where even the brightest child can achieve, it really is equal for everybody which is why it works so well.'

A key feature of this type of provision is that it is offered as a **mixed participation opportunity**: it incorporates young people who need extra incentives, are at risk of disengagement, and who benefit from more experiences of success. Interviews with young people, teachers and coaches reveal this type of mixed participation approach removes the perceived stigma or 'unfairness' often associated with targeted programmes, and encourages young people to benefit from the influence of more positive peers.

ii) Complementary Learning Programmes

Angling is also used to complement curriculum education by providing **novel ways to engage young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)**¹⁸⁹ as well as **environmental learning** (see Section 3). Key examples include:

- **'Fishing For Knowledge'**, a programme delivered by Borderlines¹⁹⁰ across 21 schools in Dumfries and Galloway in partnership with District Salmon Fisheries Boards and Solway Heritage that introduces young people to their local environmental heritage.
- **Focus on Fishing (FoF)**¹⁹¹, which develops interest in STEM subjects through activities built around fishing tackle design and production using applied physics and maths.

Young people at the education project **Inclusion Through Angling** (Wales) identified two further features of complementary angling education courses that encourage curriculum learning:

- Scheduled angling breaks provided an opportunity for mental restoration in between difficult learning sessions
- Coaches provide additional personalised support to understand some of the more complex academic content

As one young person explained:

'In school I wouldn't follow instructions; I didn't use to listen as much as I do now. Now I'm much more focused...I can sit in the class room [at the angling centre] and they go through it step by step and they don't rush you on. You go at it in your own pace in the whole class room.' (Interview, Male 15, ITA)

188 Angling Development Board (2011) *Talent Development Plan for Angling 2011-2015*, Nottingham: ADB

189 The Wolf Report has raised particular concern that young people are not developing interest in STEM subjects. Dept of Education (2011) *Review of Vocational Education. The Wolf Report*, London: DFE 00031-2011, p76

190 <http://www.borderlines.org.uk/Fishing%20for%20Knowledge.html>

191 <http://www.fofacademy.co.uk/>

iii) Qualification Attainment through Accredited Courses

Over recent years numerous accredited courses have emerged in angling-related subjects. These include GHOF's AQA fishing modules, the OCN Introduction to Angling and the Environment, NACRO's Reading Angling Project's E2E pilot¹⁹², AFYD's Game Angling course¹⁹³, BTEC's in fishery management, land based industries, and the BTEC in Game Angling currently being developed by The Game Angling Instructors Association (GAIA), as well as numerous angling-related ASDAN and Foundation Learning courses.¹⁹⁴

Our observational visits and interviews with staff and young people suggest the importance of these courses is in developing the **soft skills** needed to go into the workplace and encouraging confidence, self-belief and renewed interest in formal learning, rather than in their GCSE equivalency credits. The exceptions to this, in terms of substantive qualification attainment, are the BTECs (see In Focus feature).

The establishment of the **Sports Leaders Award** in angling (ages 14-16) and the progress of young people into **Levels 1 and 2 UKCC Coaching qualifications** also provide additional attainment opportunities. Our interviews with young people found that although they were disengaged with education they often had a desire to complete further education or training, for example in youth work and community sports provisions. In **GHOF Liverpool** in particular, the professional development of these young people was encouraged further through access to volunteering opportunities and work related courses such as first aid and child protection.

'I'm looking into sports coaching or youth work now. Since I've been with GHOF, being a youth worker and seeing what goes on, it looks interesting...I've been on a few courses, equality and diversity, child protection and I've done my first aid. So gradually I'm getting to know it and my confidence is growing.' (Male 18, GHOF)

However the diversity, and varying quality, of angling related courses and qualifications suggests a need for some rationalisation and quality control by angling's governing bodies. This will help to improve and clarify current provision for both angling organisations seeking to deliver programmes and the education sectors wishing to commission them.

One example of good practice is a new partnership between **ADBos and Barony College**, in a development funded by Marine Scotland. This created an SQA approved progression award for angling, which schools will be able to deliver, creating approved education pathways in natural sciences, fish husbandry, fishery management and other angling related areas.

In Focus: BTECs and employment in the land based industries

BTECs are substantive, specialist work-related qualifications through which young people gain employer-recognised qualifications. Schools and AYIPs are beginning to offer angling-related BTEC courses (in fishery management and land based industries) as supplementary options at Key stage 4 (14+)¹⁹⁵, particularly (but not exclusively) amongst those at risk of disengagement. When taken alongside core GCSEs in Maths and English, these BTECs offer clear progression pathways into BTEC courses in further education and strengthen the feeder system into land-based industries. We found students engaged in angling related courses, particularly the BTECs, expressed a desire to move into broader land based industries including conservation, aquaculture, game and wildlife management, horticulture, and fishery management.¹⁹⁶

Projected estimates suggest the land based industries will need to recruit a further 232,000 employees across England, Scotland and Wales within the next 10 years, with a particular emphasis on recruiting more young people.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, angling-related BTEC courses represent a viable route into further education, training and employment, particularly amongst young people who may need encouragement and the incentive of personal interest to raise their confidence and aspirations.

192 <http://www.nacro.org.uk/services/thames-valley/nacro-reading-angling-project/>

193 Credit rated against the Scottish Course Qualifications Framework.

194 See Djohari, N. (2009) op cit p 33 for more detailed examples.

195 We visited three separate BTEC courses provided by GHOF Shropshire with Tudor Grange Academy (Worcester), GHOF Easington with Easington Community Science College (County Durham); and Lord William's School (Oxford).

196 Based on interviews with young people on BTEC courses as well as those engaged in wider education programmes run by GHOF, CAST, and Inclusion Through Angling.

197 Lantra. Land Based and Environmental Industries. Fact sheet, 2010-2011 for England, Scotland and Wales: <http://www.lantra.co.uk/Factsheets.aspx>

iv) Welfare and Additional Student Support

Angling is particularly suited to helping young people with additional welfare needs and behavioural or learning difficulties, especially ADHD.

Young people suffering behavioural or learning difficulties, experiencing bullying, or bereavement, who have difficult family circumstances, low attendance, or are experiencing difficulties making friends, can benefit from the additional personal support provided by dedicated angling programmes.¹⁹⁸ Angling also appears to have a very particular benefit for young people with **hyperkinetic disorders, such as ADHD**.¹⁹⁹

Interviews with teachers, parents and young people correspond with findings from our observational data that showed with repeat angling sessions young people (both with and without ADHD) were able to hold concentration – despite distraction – for longer periods of time²⁰⁰. Angling techniques combine prolonged focused attention with the instantly gratifying reward of catching a fish. When allied with the beneficial tranquil setting of green environments²⁰¹, angling appears to be effective in assisting young people to strengthen their ability to concentrate and control impulsive behaviour. Experienced young anglers eventually find less effort is required to maintain attention and angling subsequently becomes relaxing.²⁰²

'Once they get that bug, I think it's a combination of things, the environment they're in, other like-minded people, common interest. He's in control of what he's doing, and there's a routine to things, which for kids with any sort of cognitive issue, it seems to work. It's also short bursts of concentration followed by a reward. It's not landing fish all day, it's the peace that goes along with it. It's repetitive. It's a structure.' (Mother of young angler with ADHD)



198 See Djohari, N. (2011) op cit;

199 See Djohari, N. (2011) op cit; and Djohari, N (2010) op cit.

200 Concentration requires both selective attention (ability to focus on stimuli while suppressing distractions) and sustained attention (ability to maintain attention over a period of time). Brickenkamp, R and Zillmer, E. (1998) d2 Test of Attention. Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe and Huber.

201 Newton, J (2007: 28) Wellbeing and the Natural Environment. A brief overview of the evidence. <http://www3.surrey.ac.uk/resolve/seminars/Julie%20Newton%20Paper.pdf>; Taylor, A.F., Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan, W.C. (2001) 'Coping with ADD: The surprising connection to green play settings' in *Environment and Behaviour*, 33(1), 54-77

202 This experience echoes studies on 'focused attention' meditation that suggest improving attention can be the product of trainable skill. Lutz, A; Slagter, H, Dunne, J; and Davidson, R. (2008). 'Attention regulation and monitoring in meditation' *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* Vol 12 (4); Maclean et al. (2010). Intensive Meditation training Improves Perceptual Discrimination and sustained attention. In *Psychological Science*, Vol 21 (6): p829-839.

In Focus: Getting the Measure of Attention in Angling

As a pilot to determine the possibility of measuring angling’s impact on attention and focus we used the d2 test of attention²⁰³ to measure before and after changes in 5 young people aged 14-15. The d2 test of attention measures both selective and sustained attention

The pre-test baseline was established one week prior to the angling session at the same venue. The results showed a dramatic increase for all 5 participants in both attention and inhibitory control (TN-E) and overall speed and accuracy of concentration performance (CP) following an angling session.

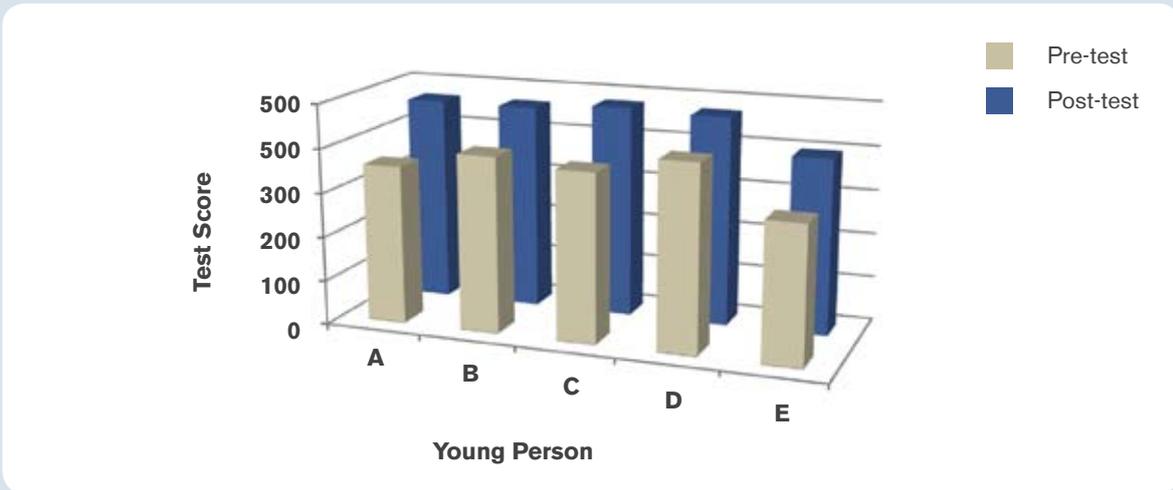


Chart 8: Pre- and Post-Test Scores for TN-E

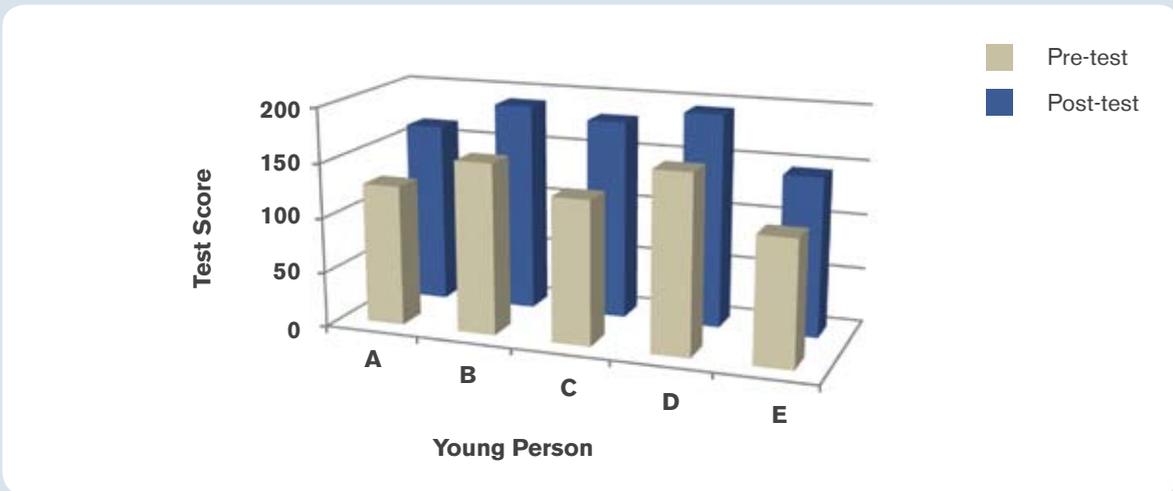


Chart 9: Pre- and Post-Test Scores for CP

The small sample size means these results are not conclusive in themselves, but they do demonstrate the potentially significant impact angling has on improving young people’s concentration and focus. Measurement of the effect within a controlled trial would give further quantitative weight to the qualitative findings from interviews with teachers, parents and professionals working with young people with hyperkinetic disorders. We recommend future studies focus on this particular aspect of angling and how improvement to attention may be beneficial for young people with ADHD.

203 Brickenkamp, R and Zillmer, E. 1998. *d2 Test of Attention*. Gottingen, Germany: Hogrefe and Huber. This is principally a visual cancellation test that has been used in both research and applied setting, including with young people with ADHD

6.3 Issues and Recommendations

6.3.1 Youth Inclusion Work and Angling

The provision of angling projects targeting personal development outcomes (AYIPs) has seen rapid growth within the last decade and represents the evolution of good practice in angling's work with young people. However, more needs to be done to raise the representation and knowledge of this exceptional work.

There is a need for raising awareness of the distinct offer angling can make to some of the most socially excluded young people within our society, across the angling sector and beyond. The interim reports produced as part of the *Social and Community Benefits of Angling* research project and the accompanying Angling Research Resources website (www.resources.anglingresearch.org.uk) have attempted to address some of this deficit. However, angling governing bodies need to work more closely with AYIP organisations and help advocate their work at the highest levels. The merger of the ADB and Angling Trust in England, and the expanding work of ADBoS and GHOF Scotland, represent a timely opportunity for this to happen.

In particular angling governing and development bodies should support angling's contribution to tackling social exclusion in the following ways:

- i) Provide greater clarity and guidance on key differences and expected standards of delivery. Currently the Sport England 'club mark' classification is used to recognise high quality sports provision. Angling governing bodies should look to develop a similar guidance system for educational and personal and social development programmes.
- ii) Angling governing bodies should actively promote the work of angling organisations engaged in tackling social exclusion. This can include:
 - Assisting angling projects to establish links with education, youth justice, and wider youth services and charities outside of angling, at local, regional and national level.
 - Providing centralised, online information explaining the work of AYIPs and contact details of projects to assist those seeking this type of service in their area.
 - Help develop shared approaches to monitoring and evaluation, reporting and best practice guidance, using the framework provided in Table 8 below.



6.3.2 Networking for Wider Recognition

The distinctive and innovative offer that angling has developed in the UK in relation to personal development work with excluded young people needs wider recognition. One way that this could be achieved is through the creation of a network of providers – possibly under the ADB and ADBoS – in order to help share good practice and key learning, particularly in the development of education courses, which would also help to avoid duplication and unnecessary competition.

In England the establishment of ADB regional officers and County Angling Action Groups (CAAGs)²⁰⁴ has begun to address some of the needed coordination and support of localised work. However, greater incorporation of AYIPs in particular is needed to rebalance a focus that has traditionally centred on sports development. In particular there is a need to further support angling's educational work in the following ways.

- i) Schools do not always have the necessary in-house expertise to offer high quality BTECs.²⁰⁵ Working with education providers, the angling sector can support schools wishing to incorporate angling-related BTEC programmes by:
 - Encouraging BTEC delivery by AYIPs with relevant expertise
 - Provide high quality materials to complement BTEC components
 - Facilitate partnering between schools and the fishery sectors
 - Build on and share good practice developed by BTEC providers at the school level.

- ii) The immense range of angling courses on offer can lead to confusion over what provisions mean in relation to content and qualification attainment. A review is urgently needed of angling-related education courses, to provide a more unified understanding within angling and clearer guidance for schools and education providers, parents and young people. The review should focus on clarifying:
 - The central purpose of courses (e.g. personal development or vocational training)
 - The substantive value of accreditations achieved
 - Potential routes for progression
 - Content, subject level and methods of assessment
 - The recommended level of staff expertise required to teach the course



204 <http://www.anglingresearch.org.uk/node/236>

205 Dept of Education (2011) Review of Vocational Education-The Wolf Report, London: DfE :95

6.3.3 Evaluating and Reporting

Across the sector, more needs to be done to effectively monitor, evaluate and report the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged young people from participation in angling. Only a more rigorous outcomes-based approach, supported by evidence collected from diligent monitoring, will support its ongoing development and wider recognition. This should follow the criteria of successful projects provided in Table 8.

	Essential	Desirable	Good to have
Aims and objectives	Clarity of purpose with clearly defined aims and objectives, long term engagement and exit routes.	Provision of volunteering opportunities and accredited outcomes.	Evidence of the link between programme type and subsequent outcomes.
Staff	Knowledge of angling and ability to work with challenging young people. Opportunities for professional development and on-going training of staff.	Staff of mixed age ranges will encourage further intergenerational engagement.	Staff of mixed gender and ethnicity can unlock participation amongst a wider range of groups and serve as important role models.
Organisational structure	Professional organisations meeting all child protection policies, with clear plans for sustainability	Steering groups incorporating key people from the community and young people.	Explore different organisational structures (e.g. mutuals and social enterprises).
Evidence (Monitoring and Evaluation)	Consistent monitoring and evaluation that includes number of participants as well as hard outcomes achieved (such as qualifications).	Soft outcomes and long term progress- such as exit routes. (e.g employment/ education)	High quality evidence of programme success from before-after trials/studies of specific interventions.
Organisational relationships	Working relationships with local police, schools and local authorities incorporating referral and information sharing systems.	Embedded within community networks that include youth services, police, education, and CAF panels.	Partnerships in delivery, training and knowledge exchange with practitioners across youth services.
Young people's engagement	Opportunities for young people's feedback to shape delivery.	Young people involved in decision making and steering groups.	Young people developing and running programmes.

Table 8: Criteria for Assessing Angling Based Youth Intervention Services

Concluding Comments and Summary Recommendations

The Social and Community Benefits of Angling research has generated a huge amount of evidence about the positive roles that anglers and angling can play in people's lives.

In doing so, and in line with the aims of the research funding, we have also sought to make recommendations about how these benefits can be increased and how practice and policy can be developed to support that.

The merger of the Angling Trust and Angling Development Board in England and Wales and its development of a National Angling Participation Action Plan (NAPAP) along with the expanding and diversifying work of the Angling Development Board of Scotland demonstrate that angling has significantly improved its governance and delivery in recent years.

In part this process has been informed by a greater understanding of the social benefits that angling can deliver, something this research has sought to support.

This research provides a framework for the ongoing development of angling and its social and community benefits in six outcome areas:

1. Sports Participation
2. Health and Well-being
3. The Natural Environment
4. Community Development
5. Rural Communities and Tourism
6. Young People

In this final section we provide a summary of key recommendations in those areas.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Participation

There needs to be **more appropriate ways of determining participation levels** in angling that reflect the particularities of the activity (duration, frequency) along with appropriate levels of sport development funding to match.

Sports councils and funding agencies need to have a **more nuanced and sophisticated measurement of physical activity** as it relates to angling in order to account for the huge variation in activity levels across diverse angling practices. This needs to reflect how angling activity is relative to physical ability, and as a result contributes to getting people of all ages and abilities more physically active.

Angling participation needs to be better understood, beyond that generated by a rigid sport development framework, in order to embrace the multi-faceted range of (beneficial) activities that extend beyond the act of catching fish itself.

Angling governing bodies, national and local policymakers need to work to **overcome the barriers to angling participation**. This is particularly so in relation to overcoming cost barriers for young people.

2. Health and Well-Being

Angling governing bodies and development agencies need to work with fishery owners, environmental agencies and local authorities to **develop facilities that are accessible** so that people of all abilities and ages can access the health and well-being benefit of angling participation. This should include access to centralised fisheries near to population centres.

The health departments of UK and devolved governments need to work with angling governing bodies to **understand the unique health and well-being benefits** angling can bring.

Angling governing bodies and regional and local organisations should **champion the health and well-being benefits of angling** more effectively and lead an approach to health policymakers and professionals. This should include work with national mental and physical health charities and agencies such as Mind and the Stroke Association.

Regional and county based angling managers should **develop networks** involving angling clubs and charities along with locally based health agencies and local authorities.

There is a need to develop **more robust health based research**, particularly around the mental health benefits of angling.

3. Natural Environment

Angling organisations need to **coordinate and further develop approaches** that involve anglers in environmental education, improvement, monitoring and access. This could include extending the work of rivers trusts and the development of a database of projects delivering this sort of work

This needs to be supported by **better evaluation, reporting and publicising** of the outcomes of angling's contribution in this area.

New institutional relationships offer some exciting new opportunities for both environmental protection agencies and angling. This is particularly so in England where the role of the Environment Agency in relation to angling promotion and regulation is changing.

The NAPAP (in England and Wales) and the angling governing bodies in Scotland need to make links between the work of environmentally orientated angling-related bodies (Rivers Trusts, Wild Trout Trust etc.) and projects focused on **education and young people**.

There is a need for a closer, more co-operative and transparent relationship between **marine protection agencies and sea angling** organisations.

4. Communities

New national and local policy relationships brought about as part of the **'big society'** agenda offer distinct opportunities for angling to develop its work within local communities.

In particular this includes opportunities for angling clubs and projects to develop their role in **developing, owning and managing local waters**.

At a national level angling governing bodies should work with organisations such as the Local Government Association, Locality and government departments to **promote the beneficial role that angling can play in local communities**, highlighting good practice that this research has described.

Local authorities need to work with angling organisations in their areas in order that the significant health, environmental and community benefits of properly managed and run local waters and coasts can be realised.

In order to take advantage of new opportunities in relation to localism and the changing role of local authorities, there is a need for **angling bodies to work with national third sector agencies** such as Coops UK, Social Enterprise Network and the Charities Evaluation Service to provide advice, training and guidance to local angling organisations about appropriate charitable, co-operative and social enterprise business models.

National and regional **programmes of angling volunteering** should be developed building on the extensive volunteering that already takes place, with a particular focus on delivering benefits for both young people and older age groups.

5. Rural Communities

National tourism agencies in the UK should work with angling governing bodies to promote and **develop the benefits of angling based tourism**, with a particular focus on rural areas.

There is a need to work with **regional development agencies and local authorities** to promote angling tourism in order that the significant economic benefits of angling tourism can be more widely felt.

This work should include:

- Development of information technology to support angling tourism
- Business clustering
- Development of local festivals and attractions
- Angling passport schemes

Angling tourism development should be undertaken in conjunction with **sustainable management systems to encourage balanced, broad-based but community-focused economic growth**. To support this there is a need to:

- Develop local capacity to monitor angler numbers and feedback properly
- Develop ongoing data collection to better understand the visiting angler market, and angler experience
- Explore ways in which social research can be delivered alongside natural sciences
- Involve all stakeholders in the local community

6. Young People

Angling needs to **promote the excellent work of angling based youth inclusion projects (AYIPs)** in which the UK is a leader in the field.

This should include:

- Providing **centralised, online information** explaining the work of AYIPs and contact details of projects to assist those seeking this type of service in their area.
- Assisting angling projects to **establish links with education, youth justice, and wider youth services** and charities outside of angling, at local, regional and national level.
- Development of **consistent approaches to monitoring and evaluation**, reporting and best practice guidance with greater clarity and guidance on key differences and expected standards of delivery.

Education policymakers and practitioners need to work with angling to coordinate and develop a more coherent offer in terms of **angling-related educational qualifications and attainment**.

Demonstrating Outcomes

This project has provided a wealth of evidence about the positive role that angling can play in social and community development. If angling is to realise its potential in the six outcome areas outlined then it needs to convince non-angling policymakers and practitioners on an ongoing basis about its delivery and impact.

This will require an agreed, more unified and robust research, monitoring and evaluation framework and the tools to undertake that task. The research that this project has delivered provides a firm basis on which such a framework can be implemented and Substance will work with the angling governing bodies and their partners to develop and implement it.



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