

1. Introduction

Ayrshire Rivers Trust (ART) completed a report in March 2008 as part of a contract commissioned by the government agency Fisheries Research Services (FRS). Rivers and Fisheries Trusts across Scotland produced similar reports to FRS. The aim of the report was to provide a summary of the data held by the Trusts, with a view to creating comprehensive fisheries management plans (FMP).

Following successful completion of the first phase of the contract in 2008, and a consultation period when the draft Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was available for comment, ART has completed an Ayrshire Fisheries Management Plan. ART hopes to work in partnership with a range of other organisations to protect and enhance the freshwater fisheries of Ayrshire. It is anticipated that measures to improve rivers, fish populations and the fisheries they support will also bring about benefits for all biodiversity dependent on the mosaic of riverine habitats present.

The Ayrshire FMP has been prepared using the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre template (SFCC)(<http://www.sfcc.co.uk/index.asp>). This plan has been prepared in conjunction with a number of different organisations but it is essentially Ayrshire Rivers Trusts view on the status of fish and fisheries in Ayrshire and how they should be managed.

ART operates within the limits of the three local authority areas, North, East and South Ayrshire, and includes all watercourses within that area with the exception of the River Nith catchment which has its source in East Ayrshire and the Water of App in South Ayrshire where a neighbouring Fishery Trust currently works with the proprietors.

Ayrshire Rivers Trust has a remit to be concerned with all indigenous species of freshwater fish although it must be recognised that several introduced species have become well established and are unlikely to be eradicated. Most of the Trusts work has concentrated on the economically important salmonids such as salmon, sea trout and brown trout and this plan will inevitably focus on them. The requirements of other species are considered where appropriate but the Trust acknowledges that there are major gaps in its knowledge regarding other fish species and their habitats

2. Aim and Objectives

ART have produced this plan in the hope and expectation that it will provide a framework for the protection and conservation of fisheries and that habitats they depend upon in Ayrshire. The plan sets out to describe the context of fisheries in Ayrshire, considers limiting factors and presents a series of management actions which if implemented will result in significant improvements in fish populations and the fisheries they support.

The specific aims of the FMP are:

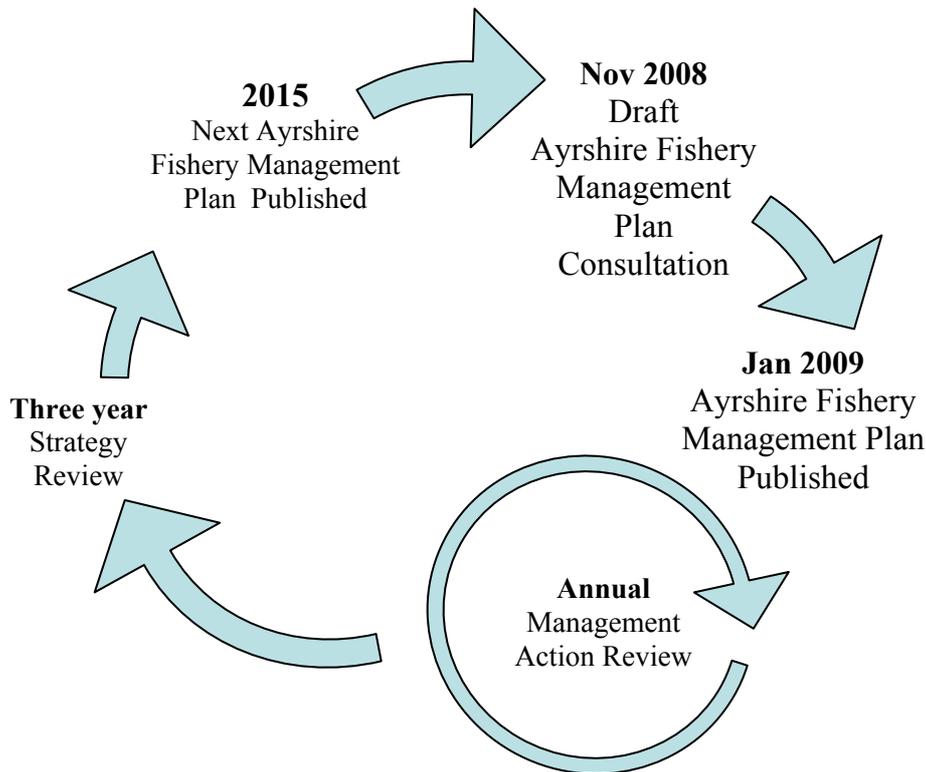
- To conserve and restore indigenous fish populations and the habitats that support them.

- To ensure that freshwater fisheries are managed in a sustainable manner
- To improve and share knowledge of all fish species and the habitats upon which they depend.

To fulfil the aims outlined above the plan will have the following objectives:

- Complete genetic map of wild salmonid stocks in Ayrshire
- Complete habitat surveys of all catchments in Ayrshire.
- Ensure that migratory salmonids are able to reach the limits of their natural distribution within Ayrshire
- Prioritise restoration of salmonid production in lowland agricultural tributaries in Ayrshire
- Investigate the decline in Ayrshire sea trout populations
- Promote sustainable fisheries management
- Raise awareness of freshwater ecology across Ayrshire
- Develop knowledge of stillwater fish populations within Ayrshire.
- Assess potential for the development of new fisheries
- Raise awareness of the risks of introducing new species and develop strategies for the control of invasive non-native species

If this plan is to be practical and meaningful it is essential that the objectives established are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based, otherwise known as SMART. This plan covers the period 2009 to 2015 and will be reviewed annually in accordance with the following planning cycle.



This reporting period coincides with the SEPA Water Framework Directive (WFD) reporting cycle (<http://www.sepa.org.uk/wfd/rbmp/scotland.htm>). SEPA are leading the production of the Clyde Area Management Plan (AMP)(which includes Ayrshire) which is due for publication in early 2009. Many organisations have contributed to the Clyde AMP. ART sit on the Clyde Area Advisory Group and have been able to represent fisheries and wider river issues in Ayrshire. SEPA has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders during the development of the Clyde AMP and continuing involvement of stakeholders will be essential for the successful delivery of the plan. The Clyde AMP will share the same reporting period as the WFD.

SEPA have recently launched updated classification data for all watercourses on their website (<http://gis.sepa.org.uk/rbmp>). This provides a comprehensive assessment of the pressures affecting Scotland's waters. There is a great deal of overlap between the pressures identified in this FMP and those identified by SEPA in the Clyde AMP.

There are a number of other plans and policies in existence which are relevant in the production of this FMP. ART have contributed when appropriate on consultations regarding a number of local and national plans. The key documents are listed below.

- SEPA Clyde Draft Area Management Plan (http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx)
- SEPA Significant water management issues in the Scotland river basin district ¹.
- SEPA Freshwater Fisheries Directive Improvement Plans ².
- Scottish Rural Development Plan³
- Scottish Water Ayrshire 2010 ⁴.

- The Bathing Waters Scotland Regulations 2008 ⁵.
- Ayrshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Biodiversity in Ayrshire) ⁶.
- North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) Resolutions ⁷

If implemented many of the management actions identified in this plan will assist with the delivery of the aims and objectives for the documents listed above. Of particular relevance in the SEPA Clyde Draft AMP 2009 -2015 are the priority issues: urban drainage, diffuse pollution from rural sources, managing the impacts from our industrial past and water flow and levels.

ART's work encompasses a range of riparian species, including water voles and freshwater pearl mussels, and specific habitat issues, such as invasive weeds. Many of the management actions proposed within this plan will complement conservation measures designed specifically for these species and habitats. However, this plan is a fishery management plan and as such concentrates on relevant issues. Where appropriate reference will be made to complimentary actions but the plan is written on the implicate assumption that measures to improve habitat or water quality will benefit all riparian biodiversity.

References

- 1 SEPA, 2008. Significant water management issues in the Scotland river basin district.
(http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning/significant_issues.aspx)
- 2 SEPA website
(http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/freshwater_fisheries/reports.aspx)
- 3 Scottish Government website
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP>)
- 4 Scottish Water website
(http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_INVESTMENT/SWE_PGE_INVESTMENT/WHAT_VIS_AYR)
- 5 Office of Public Sector Information website
(http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2008/ssi_20080170_en_1)
- 6 Ayrshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Biodiversity in Ayrshire). The Conservation and Enhancement of Ayrshire's Biodiversity 2007 -2010.
- 7 North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization. Resolutions, Agreements & Guidelines. Agreements on the Precautionary Approach to Salmon Management (<http://www.nasco.int>)