



marinescotland

**MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 : PART 6 -
CONSERVATION OF SEALS**

**Application for a Licence to Shoot Seals to
Prevent Serious Damage to Fisheries
in Scotland**

September 2011

Before completing this application, please read the associated Marine Scotland Guidance Notes.

Information supplied on this application may be subject to disclosure as required by the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 or the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. (Please see Section 10 of the Guidance Notes)

Marine Scotland will consult the Sea Mammal Research Unit, Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland Science about each licence application received.

Note: Marine Scotland may revoke or vary a licence at any time.

Please note that failure to fully complete any relevant section of the form or failure to provide supporting documentation could result in delays in processing or refusal of the application.

IF THE APPLICATION IS REFUSED YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO APPLY UNTIL THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

Please use BLOCK Capitals and consider typing if possible.

1. Name of Licence Applicant

(Seal Management Group, District Salmon Fishery Board, Netting Station, Other)

River Fishery Example

Please provide details of a contact person who can deal with any queries concerning the licence application and its contents in **ANNEX A**.

2. Name(s) of District Salmon Fishery Board / Fishery / Netting Station(s) covered by this application

River Fishery Example

3. Nature of Fishery or Fish Farm to be protected *(please tick all that apply)*

Fixed Engines

Net and Coble

Rod and line

Other *(please specify below)*

4. Fishing Seasons

4.1 Please indicate dates when fishery is active.

11 February – 15 October

4.2 If shooting is to take place out with season(s) stated above please provide dates and relevant justification for this.

Salmon runs occur during the close season and these must be protected as they are critical to the health of the river stock, particularly December – January.

5. Location of Fishery

A 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey map should accompany each application and be marked with:

- i) The boundary of the fishery
- ii) The location of any fixed nets

6. Evidence of Serious Damage

The relevant questions in tables 6.1 and 6.2 should be completed as fully as possible with realistic estimations based on clear calculations and/or historical data, wherever possible.

You are advised to read Section 6 of the Guidance Notes to ensure you provide the relevant information requested. This will assist the processing and consideration of your licence application while any failure to supply such evidence may result in delays in processing or refusal of a licence.

The evidence to assess the extent of seal predation should be provided for each seal species in tables 6.1 and 6.2 (If photographic evidence is available this should also be provided).

Information to assist seal identification is available from:

www.scotland.gov.uk/seallicensing

6.1 Grey seal details

(You should complete as many sections of this table as possible)

	GREY SEAL
Describe number of seals causing or likely to cause damage (number, date, time, location)	<p>Large groups of up to twenty grey seals lie on the sand banks of the estuary throughout the year, smaller groups of up to six seals at a time frequently enter the river following fish runs. Seals have been regularly sighted as far upstream as thirteen miles from the estuary.</p> <p>Seals venturing upstream coincide with particularly critical fish runs from December – January and March – July.</p>
Give details of feeding activity of the seals (when, where, how often)	<p>Most predation takes place in the area just upstream from the estuary where fish cannot easily escape before, during or after low tide or when river levels are low. We have seen small groups enter these areas, effectively blocking escape routes and driving the salmon to the shallows where they are easily caught – if not by seals then by the many sea birds which join in the feeding frenzy.</p>
Give actual or estimated numbers of fish previously killed, damaged or lost or likely to be killed, damaged or lost to seal predation (advising whether adult or juvenile). Please provide details of how estimates calculated.	<p>It is impossible to know the actual number of salmon killed in our river by the seals. We can give an estimate using damaged salmon numbers though. Our anglers caught 100 damaged salmon last season that suffered varying degrees of injuries from significant scale loss to deep lacerations. The majority of these fish were too badly damaged to be returned to the river. Assuming one fish is killed for every two injured 150 adult salmon are lost to seal predation annually.</p> <p>We cannot estimate the number of smolt killed but this combined with the adults killed has a detrimental effect on our river stock. We operate a catch and release policy for half the season and all spring run salmon are returned to the river throughout the season. We are trying to conserve our native species of salmon and need to be able to control the predatory seals to assist in this.</p>
Give full assessment of previous actual or likely economic damage to the fishery.	<p>Anglers are deterred by the presence of seals and the visit of a seal to a pool, no matter how short appears to affect the fishing for many hours after. A river with a reputation of a seal problem therefore deters anglers, damaging our business and the income of the local community. In 2007 an economic survey of our areas found that each rod caught</p>

	salmon and grilse generated £500 of angler expenditure in the local area. The loss of a minimum of 150 salmon represents a loss of £75,000 to the area which is a massive amount for a small rural location.
Give assessment of consequential damage to the fishery (including environmental impact). For example damage to nets.	The fishery in our river has been stable for the last three years after 15 years of decline. We are rebuilding river banks and clearing blocked streams in order to rejuvenate the area for returning fish. The continual attack on our stocks by a few rogue seals makes the aim of conservation all the more difficult which is why we are applying for this licence.
If evidence of serious damage caused by seals is based upon changes in the number of fish caught in fishery please provide statistics to support this.	The number of fish caught by anglers has not changed significantly in the last three years but the number of fish caught showing seal damage has. During the periods of decline in our landing numbers there was a notable increase in the number of seals resident in our estuary and travelling upstream. It appears that the size of the seal population has also stabilized as the numbers venturing upstream has remained constant over the last three years.

6.2 Common / harbour seal details

(You should complete as many sections of this table as possible)

	COMMON/HARBOUR SEAL
Describe number of seals causing or likely to cause damage (number, date, time, location)	Common seals are rarely seen in our river. There has been just one sighting in the last year upstream of the estuary.
Give details of feeding activity of the seals (when, where, how often)	
Give actual or estimated numbers of fish previously killed, damaged or lost or likely to be killed, damaged or lost to seal predation (advising whether adult or juvenile). Please provide details of how estimates calculated.	
Give full assessment of previous actual or likely economic damage to the fishery.	

Give assessment of consequential damage to the fishery (including environmental impact). For example damage to nets.	
If evidence of serious damage caused by seals is based upon changes in the number of fish caught in fishery please provide statistics to support this.	

7. Non-lethal Measures.

As an alternative to shooting, do you have any of the following currently in use?

7.1 Seal scarers / acoustic deterrents

Yes

No

If Yes,

a) What is being used - please give device name, model and manufacturer?

We have agreed to trial an ADD upstream for SMRU.

b) How is it used?

We are hoping it will provide a noise barrier effect to prevent seals travelling upstream. The equipment will be powered from the shore.

c) How long has it been in place?

It will be in place for the year including the close season.

d) What were the results (please provide stats)

n/a

e) In your opinion please rate its effectiveness on a scale on 1 – 5 where 5 is very effective and 1 is ineffective (*please circle*)

Ineffective < 1 2 3 4 5 > Very Effective

f) If ineffective or not completely effective what, in your view, is the reason for this?

If No,

g) Give reasons and provide supporting evidence (*e.g. advice from SNH on other impacts*)

7.2 Modified gear

Yes

No

If Yes,

a) What is being used - please give details of gear modification?

b) How is it used?

c) How long has it been in place?

d) What were the results (please provide stats)

e) In your opinion please rate its effectiveness on a scale on 1 – 5 where 5 is very effective and 1 is ineffective (*please circle*)

Ineffective < 1 2 3 4 5 > Very Effective

f) If ineffective or not completely effective what, in your view, is the reason for this?

If No,

g) Give reasons and provide supporting evidence (*e.g. advice from SNH on other impacts*)

n/a

7.3 Other non-lethal measures

Yes

No

If Yes,

a) Please give details of other measures used?

Noise, floats and buoys

b) How is it used?

We have used boats and people to attempt to scare seals downstream, and set buoys around the river entrance to try to deter the seals.

c) How long has it been in place?

This has been tried for years.

d) What were the results (please provide stats)

Very little. Some seals appeared to travel upstream to get away from the noise while others ignored it. The floats were completely ignored with the exception of some individuals that were attracted to them!

e) In your opinion please rate its effectiveness on a scale on 1 – 5 where 5 is very effective and 1 is ineffective (*please circle*)

Ineffective < 1 2 3 4 5 > Very Effective

f) If ineffective or not completely effective what, in your view, is the reason for this?

Large seals are pretty fearless as they have grown accustomed to human noise while travelling the river. They are motivated by food so cannot be deterred.

If No,

g) Give reasons and provide supporting evidence (*e.g. advice from SNH on other impacts*)

8. Maximum Number of Seals

8.1 Indicate the maximum number of each species of seal you are applying to be permitted to shoot in the next licence year in the boxes below:

Species	Number
Grey	10
Common/Harbour	1

8.2 Explain how you arrived at these numbers.

With an allowable number of 10 grey seals we hope to be able to protect our river all year round, not just during the fishing season. We have asked for such a low number as we understand that if we have a particularly large problem later in the year we can ask for more if needed. We have included one common seal as it is possible that we may have an incident with an individual over the period of a year.

Note: In its consideration of licence applications Marine Scotland will compare the maximum numbers submitted for each seal management area against the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) figure for these areas.

Note: Even where a licence is granted shooting of seals should only be undertaken as a last resort.

It is an offence under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 to exceed the maximum number specified on your licence.

9. Reporting

Reports on all seals shot, including nil returns should be submitted to Marine Scotland on a 3-monthly basis providing:

- Location of seals shot
- Species of seal shot
- Date of seal shot

- Whether any seal carcasses have been recovered and reported to Scottish Agricultural College

A copy of the Reporting form will be provided with a seal licence if granted. It can also be downloaded from: www.scotland.gov.uk/seallicensing

10. Training Courses

Please complete Section **10.1** or **10.2** below as appropriate.

10.1 Have the nominated marksmen listed in **Annex B** completed the relevant seal management training course?

Yes

No

If not, when are they due to complete the course?

10.2 Have the nominated marksmen listed in **Annex B** achieved accreditation in the relevant seal management training?

Yes

No

If not, when are they due to complete accreditation?

10.3 Please provide evidence of the above (certificate or letter from college or Marine Scotland)

Marine Scotland must not grant a seal licence unless it is satisfied that any nominated marksman has adequate skills and experience.

Supporting Evidence

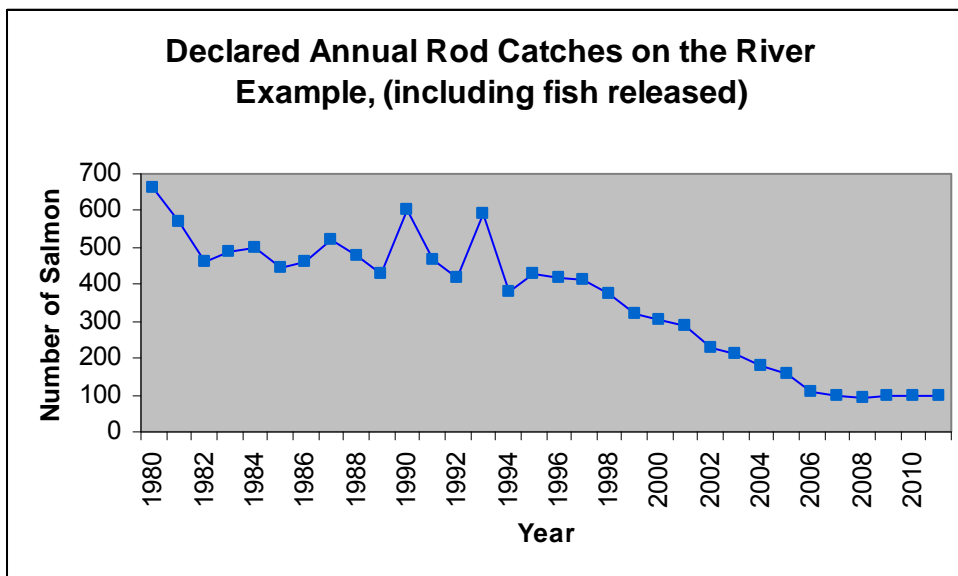


Figure 1
Graph showing the decrease in Rod Catches since 1980 and the improved stability with the introduction of conservation measures. The aim of our fishery board is to improve the health of the River Example and see returns to previous catch rates.

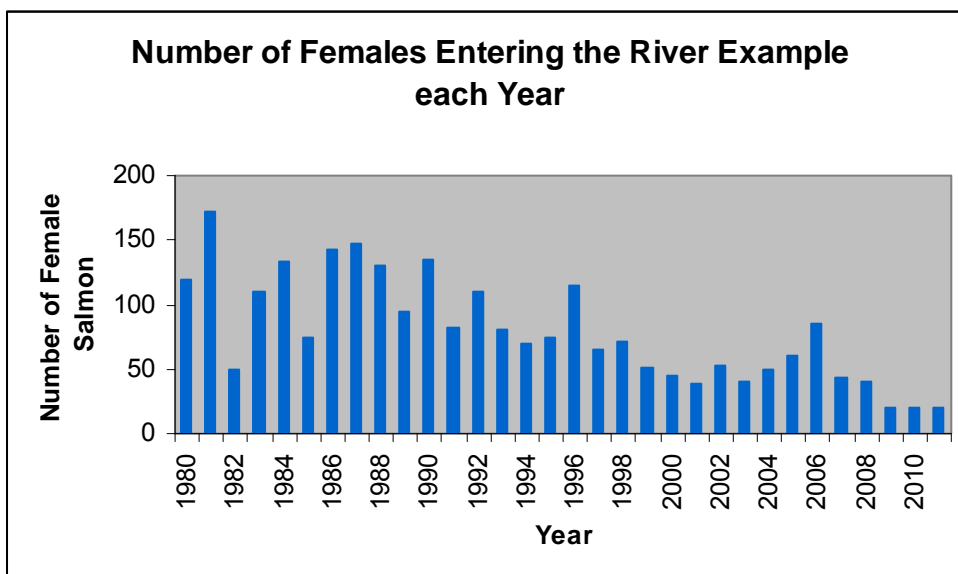


Figure 2
Graph showing the decrease in the number of Females returning to the River example each year. We believe the large number of seals at the entrance to the river are a strong contributory factor in the very low return rates seen in the last three years.

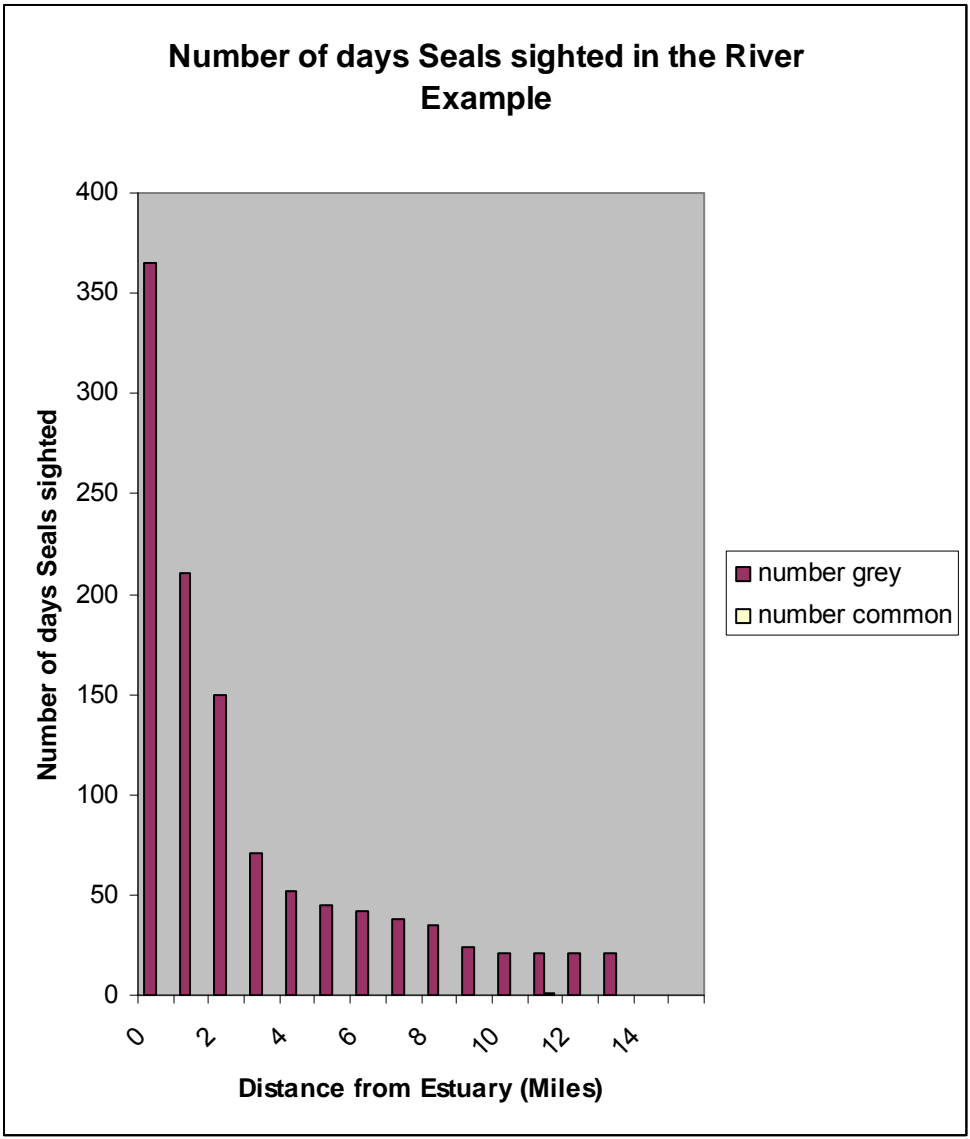


Figure 3

Graph showing the distribution of seal sightings in days from the estuary. There is only one recorded sighting of a common seal over the whole year, far upstream at 11 miles from the river entrance.

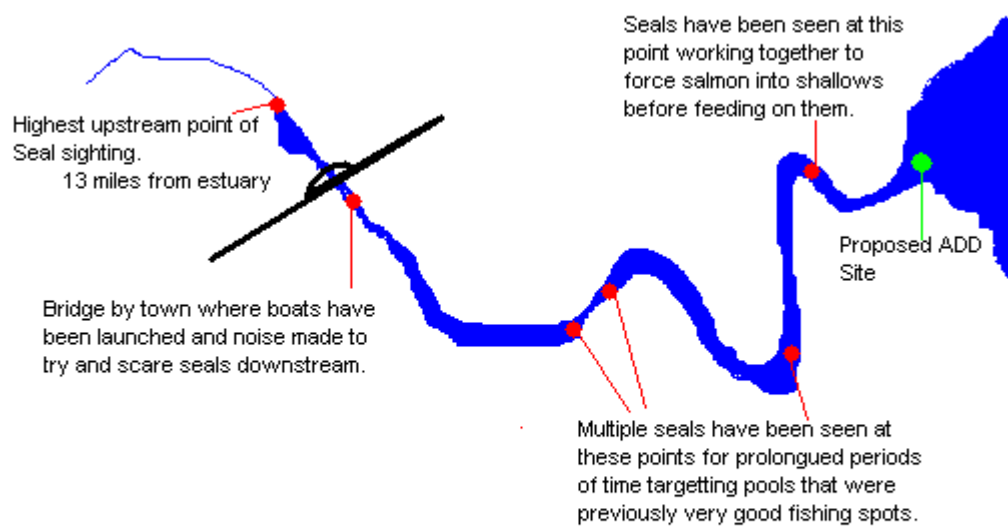


Figure 4

Map showing areas of particular interest to this application.