American Canoe Association

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APPENDIX II

DELPHI TECHNIQUE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

DELPHI TECHNIQUE - ROUND 1
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

NB: To maintain anonymity the comment numbers are not related to any of the panel members and hence are not consistent in successive rounds.

Comment 1

My score (1) assumes that only the impact on fish populations is being considered, rather than the impact on angling itself. I am unaware of any way in which canoeing could realistically impact on coarse species, given the relatively large rivers that such species typically inhabit.

My score (2) assumes that only the impact on fish populations is being considered, rather than impact on angling itself. I have given a slightly higher score to the impact on salmonid species because these typically inhabit smaller rivers where physical disturbance, including potential damage to redds, is more likely. In addition, although this may be beyond the present remit, I consider that river flow management for canoeing may have detrimental effects on the macroinvertebrates of salmonid habitats.

Comment 2

I have no hard evidence of harmful effects. My mark (2) is based on the fact that disturbance is likely to interfere with feeding, breeding, migration, and predation of populations. The impact will depend on the degree and frequency of disturbance and the state of the fish populations and nature of the habitat.

I have no hard evidence of harmful effects. My mark (2) is based on the fact that disturbance is likely to interfere with feeding, breeding, migration, and predation of populations. The impact will depend on the degree and frequency of disturbance and the state of the fish populations and the nature of the habitat.

Comment 3

Coarse fish will be disturbed by large moving objects (like canoes) close to them and thus various activities (feeding, spawning, etc.) may be affected. However, as most canoes are likely to be moving smoothly and steadily along the river, the disturbance will be very short-term and therefore minimal. It is important to note though, that if numbers of canoes are operating regularly on one stretch of the river on a daily basis, then more serious damage may be done – especially, say, in spawning areas at spawning time.

Salmonid fish will be disturbed by large moving objects (like canoes) close to them and thus various activities (feeding, spawning, etc.) may be affected. However, as most canoes are likely to be moving smoothly and steadily along the river, and more quickly in faster flowing salmonid habitat rather than stretches favoured by coarse fish, the disturbance will be very short term and therefore minimal. It is important to note though, that if numbers of canoes are operating regularly on one stretch of the river on a daily basis, then more serious damage may be done – especially, say, in spawning areas at spawning time.

Evidence from experimental work at Loch Lomond, with Brown trout in cages, indicated that they were relatively little disturbed even by boats with outboards approaching them and it was not until the boats were very close and especially when the boat shadow fell on a cage that the fish showed any real escape reaction.

Comment 4

There is the potential to disturb / damage macrophyte beds and hence habitat for young fish, refuges from predators etc. but this depends on the extent of canoeing activities. It is unlikely to be extensive. There is also potential for sediment addition via canoe slipways, but this is likely to be minor and of limited longitudinal extent.

Canoeing is unlikely to take place in preferred salmonid habitats of low order/headwater streams, which are generally shallow, riffle/pool sequences.

Comment 5

Canoes would be little different to logs floating downstream- a natural phenomenon. As they cause little physical disturbance to either substrate or macrophytes I cannot see how they would significantly disturb coarse fish stocks.

The comment above ... is applicable here ... . However should canoeists walk or drag their craft across gravel shoals during the November to April period they could disturb/kill many salmon eggs in redds. (Score = 1 [except in the November to April period when 5 would apply; no supporting evidence).

Comment 6

Canoeing hardly damages aquatic vegetation (= spawning sites, fry habitat), which would be the only case for concern (as it is in the case of motor boats, i.e. damage by propellers and boat wash).

Disturbance to benthic invertebrates (= salmonid prey) on shallows and to spawning fish has been reported, but probably these have only minor population consequences. See Marnell, L., Foster, D., and Chilman, K. (1978) *River recreation research conducted at Ozark National Scenic Riverways 1970-1978: a summary of research projects and findings.* Van Buren, Missouri. National Park Service.

Comment 7

I think it feasible that, where spawning shallows are in short supply (e.g. heavily engineered rivers), coarse fish such as barbel and chub could be regularly disturbed during spawning by fairly intensive canoeing activity over relatively shallow, fast flowing river sections. This could affect recruitment success. Outside the spawning period I think that population effects on coarse fish are likely to be negligible.

Where winter canoeing occurs at high frequency over and close to salmon and trout spawning areas I think that it is quite feasible that these salmonid fish may be hampered, to a degree, in spawning site choice and perhaps in optimal spawning behaviour. This could affect

recruitment success. Outside the spawning period I think that population effects on salmonid fish are likely to be negligible.

Comment 8

Where canoeing and coarse fish populations meet, it is unlikely that there is a large amount of physical disturbance. The only potential disturbance would be weed removal on paddles and this could have some limited effect, if weeds contained eggs, but this would probably be negligible. It is hard to imagine canoeing removing all weed.

Canoeing is likely to have some limited impact on salmon populations where it is very intensive, perhaps during competitions and if canoeing takes place when eggs or alevins are still in the gravel and sensitive to disturbance of the substrate. However, I believe this effect may be localised and hence the low score (2).

Comment 9

The intensity of canoeing activity, the timing of the activity, and the size of the river are not specified, making the question rather open ended. However, in general the disturbance (or activity) caused by canoeing could cause some stress to the fish, but unless this coincided with reproduction or systematically upset feeding, little impact is expected.

The intensity and the timing of canoeing activity again are not specified. Nonetheless, salmonid rivers tend to be shallower and/or smaller, and riverine salmonids are generally territorial, increasing the possibility of a detrimental impact on the population, particularly in the case of intensive canoeing, through disturbance of feeding or reproduction (depending upon the timing of the activity). In the case of the occasional and/or irregular canoeing activity, no impact is expected.

Comment 10

I suspect canoeing will only have a minor effect on coarse fish populations in most places. The main problem I can foresee would be the disturbance factor to fish which could prevent fish from occupying feeding lies at certain periods. If canoeing activity was protracted then this might perhaps ultimately impact on growth or fish residence. On the River Tay there are few coarse fish. One of the best areas for roach and grayling is in a particularly slow stretch of river above Stanley Weir. This, however, is a hotspot for canoeists. Although they are primarily attracted to the fast flow below the weir they spend much time rolling etc. in the pool above where the roach are. Another concern is that canoeists could spread diseases and parasites - argulus is something which has recently appeared in this catchment and might be further spread by them.

On a river like the Tay, frequented by canoeists, white water rafters etc., spawning salmon might receive considerable disruption in some areas. They are unlikely to disrupt juveniles but could displace adult salmon from holding pools. While the direct effect may be generally limited, I am much more concerned about long-term indirect effects. Disease and parasites (e.g. gyrodactylus). In some areas the frequency of canoeists can make angling impossible. While this is a separate issue, anything which undermines the financial viability of salmon angling in Scotland will undermine our ability to fund management activities (habitat restoration, bailiffing etc.).

DELPHI TECHNIQUE - ROUND 2
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Comment 1

There appeared to be good consensus between respondents, but I feel that canoeing would have more impact on salmonids than coarse fish because of the increased disturbance to substrate in salmonid rivers and the importance of that to salmonid spawning success. The only issue I had not previously considered seriously was the transfer of parasites and disease. However, there are so many other activities that occur in rivers which could equally transfer disease and parasites. As far as I am aware there is not any particular characteristic of canoeing which would increase the risk of transporting parasites or disease.

Comment 2

On balance, I would reduce my salmonid score from a 3 to a 2 as the direct effects are likely to be limited as all are agreed. There is no information to make me reconsider my coarse fish estimate.

While I agreed with the general tenor of the responses on direct effects of canoes on fish, I am concerned that we may underestimate the future impacts of canoeing. This is because canoeing will become much more popular if the proposed legislation on access comes through (well this is the case in Scotland at least). Most responses assumed the presence of canoes to be fleeting but there was recognition that areas of intensive use could occur. I am concerned that such use could become much more common in the future. In the Tay catchment for example, which has perhaps the highest frequency of 'paddlers' of all descriptions of any river, canoeists do use anything from moderate headwater tributaries to the main stem. There are a number of localities where paddlers are present almost permanently, often all day and on most days. To make matters worse these are usually groups, often practising paddling etc. in the presence of instructors. This will get more frequent.

I consider the spreading of disease to be serious risk and was surprised this had not been noted by other respondents. I personally know people who have taken canoes on holiday with them to Scandinavia. This could be a means of transmitting gyrodactylus to this country.

Comment 3

Coarse fish: I agree with most of your respondents remarks with these exceptions:

(1) I do not agree that coarse fish necessarily inhabit 'relatively large rivers'; many small rivers and canals have coarse fish populations and some of these are used by canoeists.

(2) It is partly true that 'Canoes would be little different to logs floating downstream' (though I have never seen any logs flapping their branches regularly in the water) but there are places, especially where there are competitions or where instruction is being given to young canoeists, that activity and disturbance are high; if these coincide with important fish habitat, then some disturbance will occur- especially if disturbance is regular over a season.

Most respondents seem to agree that disturbance will be related to the extent of usage by canoeists. Without knowing what this is, scoring is difficult, but in these circumstances I believe that a score of 2 is a realistic one.

Salmonid fish: Again I agree with most of the comments except:

'Canoes would be little different to logs' (see above).

Again, most respondents seem to agree that disturbance will be related to the extent of usage by canoeists. Without knowing what this is, scoring is difficult, but in these circumstances I believe that a score of 2 is a realistic one.

Comment 4

The spread of disease aspect was one which I had not really considered but it would seem unlikely to be significant unless circumstances were exceptional. I would not revise my estimates.

I suspect that the differences in response are due simply to the differing experiences and perceptions of the respondents. For example, if the respondent is mainly familiar with salmon in small, shallow streams it would be easier to imagine disturbance of spawning by passage of canoes.

The main difference (albeit a small one) between the evaluation of the effects on coarse fish and salmonids stems essentially from the fact there are fewer species of the latter involved, they are more conspicuous (and have been studied in more detail) in their behaviours and thus potential disturbance is more apparent. In practice the differences in susceptibility between different species of coarse fish are probably as great or greater than those between salmonids and coarse fish.

Comment 5

No information was provided which affected my estimates, either for coarse or game fish. Rather, I found myself in agreement with most of the comments made by the other experts. I found it notable that most experts, including myself, made some comment on the potential impact of canoeing on redds of salmonid fish.

My only comment addressed to the comments of other experts is that I do not consider that canoes would have a significant effect on macrophyte beds, even when effects during the spawning season are considered.

Comment 6

The responses in Round 1 do not affect my estimates, which were spot on the medians. The citation of a report on the topic is nice to see, as I doubted the topic has not been addressed somewhere by somebody.

Most respondents appear to have similar views on the potential impacts of canoeing on cyprinids and salmonids. The comment of one respondent that even outboard motors did not disturb brown trout in experimental cages in Loch Lomond supports a personal

communication I have from a colleague in France who stated that fish generally ignore motor boats except at very close proximity. The concern of one respondent about the transfer of diseases by boats corresponds well with boating regulations in parts of North America, where the movement of boats overland requires decontamination treatment of the boats, either for reasons of fish diseases or to impede the spread of detrimental exotic aquatic plants.

Comment 7

No new information. I am aware of a paper mentioning canoe disturbance of radio-tracked barbel.

Comment 8

Re coarse fish: A number of comments raised the potential of some deleterious effects but this was totally dependent on the intensity and location of the activity. Without further information on either of these factors, I would not consider changing my score.

Re salmonids: In my opinion the major potential damage for salmonid populations would occur if the canoeing activity took place in the major spawning reaches and habitat of fry and parr. This is likely to be headwater streams (normally 1st or 2nd order). Is it likely that canoeing will occur in such streams ? Unless additional information is available to suggest that canoeing will occur here, I am not convinced there will be any effect. If the canoeing is set to occur in these headwater streams, or if management of the system to facilitate canoeing is take place, then I would consider increasing my score.

I would agree that if canoeing did occur in breeding habitats for salmonids, then the potential impact on redds and habitat for fry and parr could be locally important, but is it likely that canoeing will occur in such headwater (1st and 2nd order) streams ? If there was more information on the location and activity level of the planned canoeing, and whether or not any in-stream management activities were to take place to facilitate the canoeing, a more rational assessment would be possible.

Comment 9

The comments from Round 1 largely reinforce my initial scores of 1 (coarse fish) and 2 (salmonid fish). However, it is evident that any assessment of the effects of canoeing on fish populations needs to embrace the size of the river and the intensity and timing of canoeing activities. For coarse fish, also, the particular species in the river is/are important.

My experience of boat operations (inflatable dinghies rather than canoes) in coarse fish and salmonid rivers is that boat passage hardly disturbs fish, either within or outside spawning periods. I believe that heavy canoe traffic **could** have an effect on gravel-spawning fish (e.g. chub, dace, barbel), either on spawning activity or on deposited eggs, if boats are dragged across spawning shallows. However, I consider the risk to be very small- smaller than that for salmonids, whose eggs are present in the gravel for much longer periods than those of coarse fish. I do not believe that species that spawn among marginal aquatic plants will be affected in any way.

Although there has been very little research on the subject, some past studies of the impact of egg mortality in dace from invertebrate predation and siltation have shown that it is negligible

in its effect on recruitment success compared with mortalities of 0 group fish (especially during their first few weeks of life) arising from predation and lack of suitable refugia. I suspect that the same would be true for any impact of canoeing.

The possible spread of disease and/or parasites is mentioned in the comments. Yes- this is a risk, but my view is that the risk is not great enough to warrant a score greater than 2.

I assume that the comments on the impact on salmon angling and fund management activities are irrelevant within this particular Delphi assessment.

I retain my score of 1 for the effect of canoeing on coarse fish populations. However, canoeing in some salmonid rivers may have a minor impact and, consequently, my previous score of 2 seems justified. Perhaps an eventual recommendation would be to prohibit canoeing during the salmonid spawning season (which varies geographically).

Comment 10

In the light of the comments made by other respondents, I do not wish to change the scores I gave for the questions asked in Round 1.

DELPHI TECHNIQUE - ROUND 3
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Comment 1

I do accept the point made about potential introductions of diseases or parasites, but this rather limited threat was incorporated in my initial scores. I also agree that the impact of canoeing is of course linked to its intensity, but the present study is intended to address only the generalities of its potential conflict with fisheries interests.

My only comment addressed to the comments of experts is in reply to point 1 of Comment 3 which stated that 'I do not agree that coarse fish necessarily inhabit 'relatively large rivers''. If this is in reply to my initial statement, I would like to point out that I qualified the remark with 'that such species typically inhabit'. Of course, I accept that many coarse fish populations, particularly of species such as dace and chub, inhabit relatively small rivers comparable in dimensions to 'typical' small game rivers. My point was that on a national basis, coarse fish populations generally occupy relatively larger rivers than do game species and so are less likely to be impacted by canoeing.

Comment 2

There was little information in Delphi 2 that we had not previously seen. Keeping in mind that this is considering impacts at the population level and not on individual fish I retain my score of 1 for coarse fish and 2 for salmonid fish.

Comment 3

A consensus seems to be building based upon what I consider to be sensible opinions of the various potential risks.

Comment 4

I have read through all the responses and do not feel there is anything new there which would make me change my scores. The main uncertainty, as several respondents have pointed out, is the extent of canoeing taking place and it is only knowledge of this which would make me change my score.

Comment 5

I have read all the responses but, as mentioned by some of the other respondents, without any further information on where the planned canoeing will occur, or the likely intensity, I do not wish to alter my estimates. There is only a small discrepancy overall amongst the respondents, and this will largely stem from the experience of the various researchers and where they themselves work in lotic systems. Information on where the planned canoeing is to occur (i.e. the type and order of river) would, I am sure, help everyone, but perhaps you are not authorised to release this.

Comment 6

I had previously overlooked the question of canoes spreading disease and/or exotic species. Clearly they have the capacity to do so. One might avoid changing current average scores on impacts if it were compulsory to disinfect canoes before moving from one catchment to another. Without such compulsion it would seem necessary to increase average scores very significantly.

In the last five years Lough Derg on the River Shannon, one of the largest lakes in the British isles has been "invaded" by the Zebra Mussel. It is thought to have been introduced by boat. This mussel is thriving and has already caused major changes in the ecology of this large lake (surface area 11,700 ha).

Comment 7

The latest comments do not persuade me to change my previous scores of'2' for salmonid fish and '1' for coarse fish. I have nothing more to add to my previous comments.

Comment 8

Coarse fish:
From the information received from other respondents, I do not wish to alter my score – 2.

Game fish:
From the information received from other respondents, I do not wish to alter my score – 2.

Comment 9

I have no further comment or change to my scores.

Comment 10

No, there seems to be general agreement, though some aspects are perhaps emphasised more by some respondents than others. My estimate remains the same.

No, I do not expect that any further statements I provide will cause others to re-evaluate.

DELPHI TECHNIQUE - ROUND 4
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Comment 1

We seem settled in our opinions which are largely similar. Quite reassuring really !

Comment 2

The disease influence raised again by one respondent in the last round of course a possibility, but I have not come across any data on canoes transferring disease/invasive species. In the USA, where canoeing is extensive, presumably there is much movement across catchments but I have not heard of any restrictions imposed. The invasion of Zebra Mussels into Ireland appears to have been from relatively boats and I think mainly in ballast water. With the requirement for a generalised evaluation of impact on rivers "of any type" I do not feel any change in the score is warranted. Scores on the effects of canoeing on different specifically identified types of rivers and with different intensities would vary somewhat, for many of the reason already raised by various respondents, but at a general level, I feel the current consensus is about right

Comment 3

My estimates are unaffected. However, I would make the comment that the proposal for a requirement to disinfect canoes between different water bodies would be practically impossible to enforce. I also suspect that in terms of avoiding introductions of diseases or potential pests (e.g. Zebra Mussels), the level of disinfection required would be very difficult to achieve without specialist facilities.

Comment 4

The question about the size of river inhabited by coarse fish seems to have incited a small debate. From my experience in a number of catchments, river size is probably less important than water quality. The upper courses of some lowland streams, previously characterised by trout, have been subjected over the long term to elevated nutrient levels, and these same streams are now characterised by sticklebacks, accompanied by benthic species such as stoneloach, bullhead, and minnow. Some slightly larger stretches of these same streams contain extremely high numbers of small roach, dace, etc., sometimes large perch though trout would have traditionally been found in these waters (in some cases, remnant trout populations still exist, though barely). These developments have resulted in the description of a so called 'stickleback zone', which I have seen mentioned in a publication somewhere – though this is not a new idea, with some of the initial publications (late 1800's) describing European catchments that started off upstream with a 'stoneloach zone' or 'minnow zone'.

Some chalk streams in the south and east (again, rather smaller water courses) are now so nutrient rich that trout are unable to reproduce and the dominant species are chub, roach, barbel, etc. So, even from a national basis, river size would be a poor indictor of the composition of the fish community. However, in areas where truly 'upland' streams exist, the generalisation, that coarse fish inhabit larger rivers, may perhaps be applicable.
No further information has been provided that would tempt me to alter my scores.

No, I do not expect that any further statements I provide will cause others to re-evaluate.

Comment 5

My responses for Round Four are that I do not wish to change my scores for either coarse or game fish. There seems to be a good consensus among respondents and nothing new in comments to make me change my remarks.

However, it is clear from the overall comments that (a) scores would increase with canoeing effort (if this was known), (b) they might also vary seasonally (e.g. be higher for salmonids in the autumn), and (c) with size of river (i.e. a negative relationship), and (d) that there is some danger from the transfer of disease and parasites. This would imply that the organisers of such events can minimize disturbance to fish by taking these points into account and having a code of conduct for canoeists in general.

Comment 6

The latest responses do not lead me to change my assessments of "1" for coarse fish and 2 for salmonids. My feelings about the scores are summed up in Comment 1 (para 1) and Comment 4 of the R3 responses.

It is possible to imagine an ***extreme*** situation that ***could possibly*** lead to a higher level of damage to a fish population, but my scores reflect my assessment of both the low likelihood of such an extreme situation arising and the low chance of it creating such damage. As Marnell *et al* (1978) noted regarding disturbance to fish breeding sites - this is no basis for concluding "that such occurrences will impart biological consequences to the *population* (my italics) of the species involved".

It would seem from the scores that most participants have taken this view for all the potential impacts of canoeing on fish populations in rivers.

I do not consider any of the new information received is sufficient to cause me to alter my scores. However, I was interested to hear of the concerns regarding the spread of Zebra Mussels in Lough Derg. The mobility and frequency of canoeists has to make them potentially a very serious means of spreading diseases and parasites.

APPENDIX III

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY FORM DETAILS

Dear ...,

APEM have been commissioned by the Agency to undertake the R&D project:

"Effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks and Angling."

As part of the project we are attempting to gather as much information as possible with regard to potential impacts of canoeing on fish and areas of conflict with anglers. Any reports which you may have, or may be aware of, will be particularly valuable.

In addition we would be interested to hear of areas where canoeing agreements have been reached or indeed revoked, such that we may examine any fisheries data available in these areas.

I enclose a brief questionnaire together with a prepaid envelope for your convenience. Feel free to circulate the same to any of your colleagues who may be able to furnish us with any relevant information.

As the project is operating to a tight Agency deadline, I would appreciate a prompt response if at all possible.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Regards.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Keith Hendry.
Managing Director

Enc.

"Effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks and Angling."

1. Please provide details on whether you participate in canoeing and/or angling ?

2. Do you have, or are you aware of, any written reports or publications regarding the effects of canoeing on fish stocks and angling ? Please supply details.

3. What is your perception of the damage, if any, caused by canoeists to fish populations ? Do you have any evidence to support your views ? If possible please state name of water body and location.

4. Are you aware of any major conflicts between anglers and canoeists ? If so, please provide details. If relevant, are you aware of areas of water bodies and times (seasons) when such problems are more prevalent and/or severe ? If possible, please state name of water body and location.

5. Please provide details on any areas where canoeing agreements have been reached or even revoked.

May we contact you to follow up any of the comments supplied above ? Y/N

Contact Details

Name: _____ **Organisation:** _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

APPENDIX IV

BRITISH CANOE UNION WEBSITE QUESTIONNAIRE

"Effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks and Angling"

1. Please provide details on whether you participate in canoeing and/or angling?

2. Do you have, or are you aware of, any written reports or publications regarding the effects of canoeing on fish stocks and angling? Please supply details.

3. What is your perception of the damage, if any, caused by canoeists to fish populations? Do you have any evidence to support your views? If possible please state name of water body & location.

4. Are you aware of any major conflicts between anglers and canoeists? If so, please provide details. If relevant, are you aware of areas of waterbodies and times (seasons) when such problems are more prevalent and/or severe? If possible, please state name of waterbody and location.

5. Please provide details on any areas where canoeing agreements have been reached or even revoked?

May we contact you to follow up any of the comments supplied above? Y/N

Contact Details

Name: _____ **Organisation:** _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

APPENDIX V

NAFAC QUESTIONNAIRE

"Effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks and Angling."

1. Please provide details on whether you participate in canoeing and/or angling ?

2. Do you have, or are you aware of, any written reports or publications regarding the effects of canoeing on fish stocks and angling ? Please supply details.

3. What is your perception of the damage, if any, caused by canoeists to fish populations ? Do you have any evidence to support your views ? If possible please state name of water body and location.

4. Are you aware of any major conflicts between anglers and canoeists ? If so, please provide details. If relevant, are you aware of areas of water bodies and times (seasons) when such problems are more prevalent and/or severe ? If possible, please state name of water body and location.

5. Please provide details on any areas where canoeing agreements have been reached or even revoked.

May we contact you to follow up any of the comments supplied above ? Y/N

Contact Details

Name: _____ **Organisation:** _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

APPENDIX VI

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