



North West Water Authority

Dawson House, Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LW
Telephone Penketh 4321

13th January, 1976.

To: Members of the Mersey and Weaver
Fisheries Advisory Committee
(Messrs. P. W. Jennings (Chairman);
J. S. Bailey; F. Burgess; F. Egerton;
A. Jones; T. N. McLoughlin; A. Ross;
F. W. Sims; Dr. J. W. Jones; and the
Chairman of the Authority (P. J. Liddell);
the Vice Chairman of the Authority
(J. A. Foster); and the Chairman of the
Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee
(J. R. S. Watson) (ex officio)).

Dear Sir,

A meeting of the MERSEY AND WEAVER FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE will be held at 2.30 p.m. on TUESDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 1976, in COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1, DAWSON HOUSE, GREAT SANKEY, for consideration of the following business.

Yours faithfully,

G. W. SHAW,

Director of Administration.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last meeting (previously circulated).
3. Land drainage representation on Local Fisheries Advisory Committees.
4. Report by the Divisional Scientist on fisheries activities.
5. Fish mortality in the River Dane.
6. Fish mortality in the River Weaver.
7. Possible angling venues for the North West Disabled and Handicapped Anglers' Association.
8. Fishing Licence duties.
9. "Taking Stock".

10. Seminar on Water Conditions Dangerous to Fish Life.
11. Any Other Business.

NOTE: Lunch will be served in the Members' Dining Room at approximately 1.00 p.m. The Menu for the day is enclosed, and members attending for lunch are asked to indicate their choice of main course to the officer on duty near the Members' Retiring Room.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976LAND DRAINAGE REPRESENTATION ON LOCAL FISHERIES
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

1. At the last meeting of the Committee held on 22nd October, 1975, a full report was presented on the progress made in achieving reciprocal representation of land drainage interests on the five Local Fisheries Advisory Committees.
2. The Local Land Drainage Advisory Committees made the following appointments at their November, 1975, meetings:-

<u>Land Drainage</u> <u>Advisory Committee</u>	<u>Fisheries</u> <u>Advisory Committees</u>	<u>Member</u> <u>Appointed</u>
Cumberland	South and West Cumberland	R.J.W. Slack
	Eden and District	R.K. Nicholson
Lancashire	Lune, Wyre & Furness	G.A. Martin
	South Lancashire	R. Farrington
Mersey & Weaver	Mersey & Weaver	A. Jones

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976REPORT BY DIVISIONAL SCIENTIST
ON FISHERIES ACTIVITIES
1ST OCTOBER-31ST DECEMBER, 19751. General Fisheries Management

Only seven requests were received for advice on fisheries matters which required site investigations, other enquiries which were dealt with by telephone or letter are not recorded.

Fishery Potention of Undeveloped Waters	4
General Management	2
Weed Control..	1
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One request for advice on fishery potential may prove of great interest in the future. Plans have been submitted to the Vale Royal District Council for the development of Nunsmere, a sand quarry pool near Cuddington, Cheshire, as a water sports centre. It is hoped to provide facilities for water skiing, canoeing, sailing, diving and angling. The Authority has been approached for advice on the development of the fishery.

2. Stocking

Applications for consent to introduce the following fish into waters in the areas have been approved.

Brown Trout	..	700)	
Roach	..	2,700	)	Several waters in Stockport
Perch	..	380	)	and Saddleworth areas
Bream	..	1,600)	

Fingerling brown trout surviving the toxicity tests have been distributed to the Borsdane Brook at Hindley (860) and the Micker Brook at Bramhall (320).

3. Biological Work

Biological river surveys:-

Main Rivers	..	..	8
Main River Tributaries	..	..	2

The number of fish toxicity tests carried out during investigations into the toxic effects of discharges to river (using brown trout) are as follows:-

Effluent Treatment Works	..	9
Industrial Premises	..	16

All tests were carried out on discharges to the Rivers Tame, Irwell and Weaver.

A limited amount of fish cage work is being carried out at the present. Experiments are in progress to measure the uptake of toxic metals in fish and plant tissues downstream of a suspected source of waste metal in the River Etherow. Artificial substrate samplers are also being used to monitor any effects on invertebrate life. A similar investigation with fish and substrate samplers is being conducted on an intermittent source of toxic material in the River Tame.

4. Fish Mortalities Recorded During the Period

Natural Causes	..	..	..	..	2
Pollution	..	..	..	..	4

Compared with the previous report, there has been a reduction in the number of fish mortalities in the area, but this has been offset by the scale of one, namely, the destruction of between 10 and 15 miles of prime mixed fishery in the River Weaver by a spillage of caustic soda, following a road tanker accident. This incident is reported separately. A spillage of acid ferric sulphate killed an unknown number of trout in the River Dean below Bollington. Five hundred recently introduced trout died in a lodge near Bolton as a result of toxic conditions produced by low pH and dissolved metals from an undetermined source. Emulsion oil is thought to have killed two trout on the River Tame.

5. Fishing - General Comments on Sport

During the review period several large bag catches, some establishing new record weights, have been reported. A most noteworthy catch of 33 tench-weighing a total of 77 lb. has been taken from a pool at Aintree, Liverpool. Other large bags include one of 30 lb. at Combes Reservoir, 24 lb. on the River Dane at Swettenham, and 18 lb. and 10 lb. on the Weaver at Winsford and Hartford Bridge. New match records have been established for the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Lydiate (12¼ lb.), Parkers Lodge, Bury (24 lb. in 4 hours - beaten by a pleasure catch of 53 lb) and 8¼ lb. in the Bridgewater Canal near Runcorn.

Notable individual fish caught:

12 lb.	Carp	..	..	..	Rochdale Canal
8¼lb.	Mirror Carp	..	..	..	Bridgewater Canal
2 lb.	Roach	..	..	..	River Weaver
2 lb.	Roach	..	..	..	River Dane
5¼lb.	Eel	..	..	..	Shropshire Union Canal, Audlem.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976FISH MORTALITY IN THE RIVER DANE

1. Further to the brief mention of the fish mortality in the River Dane at the meeting of the Committee on 22nd October, 1975, the following report is now submitted for the information of members.
2. The incident occurred on 26th August, 1975, when contractors working at British Salt Limited of Middlewich, were lowering the level in a treatment lagoon, in an attempt to seal several leaks. The supernatant liquor flowed into a second lagoon and gave rise to an increased rate of discharge from that lagoon to the Sandersons Brook. The nature of the discharge was normal, but the flow rate was greater than consent conditions, giving rise to abnormally high chloride concentrations in the Sanderson Brook, River Croco and River Dane.
3. A Rivers Division inspector responded immediately on receipt of information about the fish mortality and samples were taken from the River Dane at Croxton Lane, Middlewich, and at Kings Lock, Middlewich, on the River Croco. The inspector visited several local firms but was unable to note any unusual occurrences owing to the onset of darkness. The following day, the river was inspected by the Area Biologist and the District Inspectorate staff, who attempted to assess the damage to the fishery.
4. The Company was visited and, after discussions, undertook to meet the Angling Association (Winsford and District Angling Association). The Authority's officers established that the Association's main concern was the restocking of the affected length as soon as possible.
5. As a result of these meetings, British Salt Limited entered into negotiations with the Angling Association and compensation was agreed at a figure of £1,000.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976FISH MORTALITY IN THE RIVER WEAVER

1. Rivers Division were notified by Cheshire County Police at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 3rd November, 1975, of a tanker accident at Sandford Bridge, Broomhall, near Nantwich, on the A.530. The accident had occurred at 10.10 a.m. when the tanker, carrying 14.6 tons of 47% sodium hydroxide solution, overturned on the bridge spilling between 10-12 tons of its load on to the roadway, and via road drains, into the river.

2. A river inspector who was at the time involved in a meeting in Northwich, was contacted and went immediately to the scene of the accident, arriving at 11.45 a.m. He sampled the river at various points downstream but could find no trace of the caustic soda or an effect on the river. This has been subsequently attributed to the heavier caustic liquor forming a dense lower layer in the bottom of the stream.

At 2.30 p.m. the inspector left the site to attend another incident at Northwich. He was unable to return to Sandford Bridge before nightfall but he continued investigations the following morning. Believing that some of the liquor might be trapped in the road drainage system, he checked it thoroughly but found only small quantities present. He then went to Audlem where it was apparent that the caustic "slug" was passing through that stretch of the river.

3. Immediately, the Rivers Division emergency procedure was put into action, and farmers, downstream Local Authorities, abstractors, angling societies, etc., were informed, as were B.P. Chemicals Limited, who supplied the caustic soda, and Sommerfields who owned the tanker. B.P. Chemicals Limited offered to supply a tanker of hydrochloric acid to neutralise the highly alkaline river water. After consultations within the Rivers Division, it was decided to attempt to neutralise the river where good access was available at Shrewbridge near Nantwich, approximately 15 miles below the incident and 10 miles below Audlem. Equipment, pumps and personnel were obtained from the Cheshire Area Office at Winsford and Scientific Department Staff monitored the river. Additional assistance was also obtained from Southern Division. The river was monitored throughout the night of 4th/5th November, the "slug" arriving at Shrewbridge at approximately 7.30 a.m. on the 5th November. The pH of the river rose to 9.4 at Shrewbridge which was not an entirely acceptable level, so the neutralisation system was put into operation.

4. Numerous dead fish were seen at Audlem, but none were seen at or below Shrewbridge. A biological survey was carried out on 5th November, 1975, over the affected length of the river. Surprisingly, the survey revealed little serious affect on the invertebrate fauna, being largely unchanged only 4 miles downstream of the spillage. However, large numbers of dead stone-loach, bullhead and gudgeon were found generally as far as Batherton Hall, approximately 14 miles downstream.
5. The Area Biologist considers that the fish population for 11 miles downstream was virtually eliminated and affected adversely for a further 4 miles. As sufficient food supply is available, immediate restocking is essential to provide reasonable fishing in the next three to four years which is the expected time scale for natural recolonisation.

The Angling Clubs effected by the incident after preliminary discussions with Rivers Division Officers have met with Sommerfields Limited and B.P. Chemicals Limited to discuss compensation for the incident. As the number of fish claimed to have been killed is in excess of 68,000 and the loss of revenue is also substantial, Sommerfields have placed the matter in the hands of their insurers.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976POSSIBLE ANGLING VENUES FOR THE NORTH WEST
DISABLED AND HANDICAPPED ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION

1. Following the report to the October, 1975, meeting of this Committee on 22nd October, 1975, the Regional Fisheries Officer was asked to continue his enquiries and to submit a further report.
2. It was understood that any possible sites should not be too distant from the main conurbations in the southern part of the Region. Enquiries were accordingly directed to all dual-purpose Divisions except Northern Division. Replies have been received from Pennine, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Divisions.

In each case, a copy of the National Anglers' Council's questionnaire was sent with the original enquiry, in order that the special requirements of disabled anglers might be made quite clear.

3. All the replies received, with the exception of that from Southern Division, show that no suitable venues exist on waters which are controlled by the Authority. Southern Division referred to a picnic site at Alwen Reservoir which was being developed jointly by the Forestry Commission and Clwyd County Council, and which gave very close approach to the water's edge.

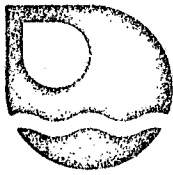
The Regional Fisheries Officer has been in touch with the County Council, who were sympathetic to the enquiry but indicated that the major responsibility for development of the site rested with the Forestry Commission. A letter was therefore sent to the Commission seeking their views to which a reply is awaited.

4. Assuming that it should prove to be feasible to make arrangements at this site for disabled anglers, it must be appreciated that any such arrangements are liable to be rendered inoperative due to drawdown of the reservoir, which would cause the water level to recede beyond the reach of an angler on the site. Short of providing a series of interconnected platforms down the foreshore, this problem could not be overcome, and it is questionable whether the expenditure likely to be involved could be justified.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYMERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE20TH JANUARY, 1976FISHING LICENCE DUTIES

1. The Authority were notified on Friday, 21st November, 1975, that the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had approved the proposed new structure and scale of fishing licence duties with one modification; the duty for a draw, draft or seine net on the River Eden being reduced from £300 to £150.
 2. Since the duties were to come into force on 1st January, 1976, an immediate Press Release (a copy of which is attached as an appendix to this item) was made in the interests of the fishing public at large.
 3. At this stage the following points still required clarification by the Ministry:-
 - (1) The exclusion of fishing for freshwater fish and eels by rod and line in any pond or other water having a surface area of not more than 1 hectare (2.47 acres) and not connecting or communicating with any river;
 - (2) The issue of licences to children under 14 years of age.
- It was therefore felt that as members of the Regional Committee and all Local Committees had been kept fully informed of developments at recent meetings, these two points should be clarified prior to notifying members individually of the final details. Following contact with the Ministry this was done in a circular letter to members on 1st December, 1975.
4. From the outset the aim of the Authority was to introduce new duties with effect from 1st January, 1976, but as time elapsed and the Minister had not reached a decision, members were informed verbally at meetings that if a Public Inquiry was to be held it might not be possible to introduce the new duties until 1st January, 1977. However, the Minister's decision not to call a Public Inquiry but to deal with the objections himself and approve the structure and modified scale, enabled the Authority to introduce the duties on 1st January, 1976.
 5. It was hoped that the formal notification to members would be issued within a day or two of the Press release but in the event this was not possible. Had this been apparent initially, members would have been sent a copy of the Press Release.

NORTH WEST WATER NEWS



Increases in the North West Water Authority's fishing licence duties - many of which have remained the same for years - have now been approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. They will operate from January 1.

The new duties follow months of discussions and recommendations by the Authority's various local advisory fishery committees. The increases affect all rod and line anglers and all the netsmen operating in the tidal reaches of the rivers within the region.

Points considered before the Authority arrived at its proposals were the need to provide a more realistic income to set against fisheries expenditure; to rationalise and simplify licences in the whole region; increasing fishing available to the angler with a new regional licence and the dramatic fall in money values since existing licences fees were set. Net licence duties in the Lancashire Area were last fixed as far back as 1957. The Minister has yet to approve the Authority's request to exempt from the system of licensing, fishing for freshwater fish and eels with rod and line in any pond or other water within the region having a surface area of not more than one hectare (2.47 acres) and not connecting or communicating with any river. The duty for draw, draft or Seine net on the River Eden is the only other modification.

Full details of all charges have been added to Fishing in the North West, price 25p (postage extra) available from Public Information Unit, Dawson House, Great Sankey, Warrington.

End

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THE AUTHORITY has more than 9,000 employees and serves a population of around seven million in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and parts of adjoining areas. It is responsible for water supplies, sewage treatment and disposal, pollution control, rivers management, fisheries, land drainage and allied recreation.

MERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

20th JANUARY, 1976

"TAKING STOCK"

1. At the last meeting of the Lune, Wyre & Furness Local Fisheries Advisory Committee held on 20th October, 1975, the Regional Fisheries Officer was requested to report on the progress made by Water Authorities in implementing the recommendations contained in the Association of River Authorities' publication "Taking Stock" (a copy of which has been supplied to each member). It is considered, however, that this report should be presented to each Local Fisheries Advisory Committee for information.
2. The position in this Authority, and in other Authorities as ascertained by correspondence, is set out below:-

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

<u>Recommendation number</u> <u>in "Taking Stock"</u>	<u>Action already taken or proposed</u>
1. Prohibition of commercial monofilament nets.	New draft byelaws provide for prohibition of monofilament nets.
2. Numbers of commercial nets.	Certain aspects are under consideration.
3. Restriction of netting at times of low flow.	Experimental work to obtain information about the movement of migratory fish from salt into fresh water is to be undertaken on the Lune estuary. A tentative proposal relating to netting restriction at times of low flow has been mentioned in a paper prepared for National Water Council Fisheries Liaison Committee.
4. Licensing of netsmen.	No action.
5. Sale of salmon and sea trout.	Current Northern Ireland legislation examined, but considered much too stringent ever to be accepted by Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Irish fishery authorities however claim it is very effective in reducing poaching.
6. Catch returns.	Standard form for North West Region proposed in draft byelaws.
7. Net licence duties.	Increases proposed under licence duty revision have been approved by M.A.F.F. and come into force on 1st January, 1976.
8. Fish pathology laboratory.	Discussions with M.A.F.F. and local Veterinary Investigation Centres has

resulted in trial introduction of local fish pathology facilities at certain Centres, under guidance and advice of M.A.F.F.'s Weymouth laboratory, which will supply virus strains, information on techniques, etc. Calthwaite, Penrith, is one such Centre.

9. Abstraction. Agreement for works of this kind has been reached for the Hodder (re raising of Stocks Dam), on the Leven (Manchester Water Order), and is being negotiated on the Leven in connection with an abstraction for power generation.
10. Fish monitoring. Existing network in Lancashire to be extended, as finance permits, to cover remaining two main migratory fish rivers. Start to be made as finance permits on setting up similar network in North Cumbria.
11. Coarse fish stocking. No action.
12. Development of new fisheries. Incorporated in Authority policy is approval for purchase of sites capable of development as fisheries.
13. Acquisition of fisheries. This is agreed Authority policy, when finance permits.
14. Bailiffs. Numbers in North and South Cumbria have been increased by about 20% and grading has been improved. Conditions of service have been clearly laid down. Career structure in abeyance at present due to financial structures.

WELSH NATIONAL WATER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

At present the ratio of rod catch to net catch of migratory fish is 1:1 and there is no shortage of salmon or sea trout anywhere. No action is being taken to implement the recommendations, and it is unlikely that any of them will be implemented. A Regional Survey of commercial fishing is to be undertaken, and a Fishery Scientist has been advertised for to carry out the survey with a view to completion in 1979. The forthcoming report of the A.R.A.'s Salmon Stocking Working Group is expected to be a more valuable document than "Taking Stock" when it appears shortly.

SOUTHERN WATER AUTHORITY

The recommendations in "Taking Stock" have not been formally adopted as objectives in fishery management, but they are accepted as guidelines and are referred to when individual management decisions are under consideration.

SOUTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

Progress so far made covers the following aspects:-

1. Prohibition of commercial monofilament nets. A byelaw has been published prohibiting the use of this type of net in all waters

in the Region for the taking of salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels. No objections received, and move supported by Cornish Netsmen's Association.

7. Net licence duties. A new licence structure will be introduced on 1st January, 1976 which includes a revision of net licence duties. Increases range from 30% to 150%. In future, General Licences will be issued only for Authority-controlled or owned fisheries and no new General Licences have been issued in 1975.
10. Fish monitoring. As part of a wider monitoring programme and within budget limitations, electronic counters are being installed, priority being given to catchments in which reservoirs are to be constructed.
12. Development of new fisheries. Development of reservoirs as fisheries has been Authority's major response to its new recreational duties. A further three reservoirs have been opened recently to make a total of 19 available for fishing with a combined surface area of 1300 acres. These are principally trout fisheries ranging from intensively-managed 'put-and-take' fisheries to natural fisheries with no bag limit. Two reservoirs are managed as mixed trout/coarse fish waters, and one as a pike fishery.
13. Acquisition of fisheries. This is declared Authority policy. A lease has been acquired from the National Trust of their fishery on the River Lyn, one of the most productive sport fisheries in the Region.
14. Bailiffs. Bailiffs of the former River Authorities have been redesignated 'Wardens' to take account of their recreational duties.

NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AUTHORITY

Recommendations Nos. 2, 3 and 4 were implemented before the Report was published.

- No. 1 is not being implemented.
- No. 5 is agreed with but not implemented.
- No. 6 is agreed with but implementation is impossible.
- No. 7 - action is being taken.
- No. 8 - too expensive under present economic conditions.
- No. 9 - agreed and implemented.
- No. 10 - agreed.
- No. 11 - agreed but more investigation required.
- No. 12 - already partially implemented.
- No. 13 - implemented.
- No. 14 - implemented.

The Report is described as being a 'rather ill-advised document'.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

RECOMMENDATIONS AS LISTED IN "TAKING STOCK"

1. Monofilament nets used for the commercial catching of salmon should be prohibited as is the case in the Foyle river system in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland.
2. The number of commercial nets operating off-shore and in some of the estuaries of England and Wales is too high and they must be reduced.
3. Regional Water Authorities must be given more power and freedom to control estuarial netting, powers which would enable them to stop all netting when river flows are reduced either by abstraction or natural drought conditions below a pre-determined level.

These levels should be determined for all rivers and varied only as conditions change or by the agreement of the Regional Water Authority.
4. Licences should be allotted only to bona fide fishermen who fish commercially for sea fish for nine months out of twelve, for salmon during the open season, and who take an active part in the actual netting operations.
5. We support the view that salmon and sea trout should be sold only through licensed dealers who should be limited in number and appointed by each Regional Water Authority after consultation with the appropriate organisation involved.
6. There appears to be no standard procedure for the making of catch returns by netmen. We recommend that a standard form should be introduced which should be completed daily by each licensee and forwarded weekly to the appropriate Authority. The licensee should be required to warrant that his return is correct. Should it be found that incorrect returns are made the Regional Water Authority should have powers to cancel the licence.
7. Net licence charges at present in force are unrealistic and should be reviewed.
8. We advocate the setting up of a fish pathology laboratory located centrally in England to which all Regional Water Authorities and other water interests should have direct access and to which financial contributions should be made.
9. Where rivers have been radically denuded of water in their headwaters by abstraction, fishery works and devices should be installed to mitigate past harm.
10. Electronic monitoring of fish stocks in rivers should be given priority of attention and the limitations of existing equipment should not be used as an excuse for postponement.
11. Pressure is being exerted upon the River Authorities by many angling associations who wish to introduce coarse fish on a large scale into what are essentially game fish rivers. These pressures should be resisted for such introductions are likely to have an adverse effect on migratory fisheries.
12. Regional Water Authorities should survey their areas and compile a schedule of sites where new fisheries can be developed and these should be exploited to a high degree to ease the existing pressures on fish and rivers in general, and salmon fisheries in particular.
13. Regional Water Authorities should acquire fisheries of value to the public as and when they become available.

14. Bailiffs now employed by River Authorities are too few to protect fisheries. Their numbers should be increased, their status improved and a proper career structure inaugurated. For the future we envisage the appointment of River Wardens whose duties will extend far beyond those that currently apply to Bailiffs of River Authorities.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

MERSEY AND WEAVER
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

20TH JANUARY, 1976

SEMINAR ON WATER CONDITIONS
DANGEROUS TO FISH LIFE

1. At the last meeting of this Committee held on 22nd October, 1975, it was resolved that the Divisional Scientist and the Regional Fisheries Officer investigate the possibility of staging a seminar on water conditions dangerous to fish life.
2. The primary aim of such a seminar will be to give anglers a better understanding of the effect of deteriorating water quality upon fish, so that they might recognise at an early stage dangers such as falling dissolved oxygen levels in summer.
3. At the meeting of the Regional Committee in November, the view was expressed that such a seminar could be of interest to anglers in other areas, in which case it might be possible to hold a meeting in the northern, as well as in the southern, part of the region if sufficient demand should exist.
4. For this reason the matter is being brought to the attention of each of the other Local Fisheries Advisory Committees at this round of meetings, to obtain their views. Following these meetings the Officers intend to arrange venue(s) and agree the subject matter of the seminar(s).