

# Fishing – Scottish Government rules out rod licence proposal



An angler tackles a pool on the Almond near Livingston Rugby Club last summer

Proposals to introduce rod licences and a new wild fisheries levy will not be taken forward, Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham has announced.

The Scottish Government has ruled out these measures, as well as the criminalisation of freshwater fishing without written permission, and proposals to overhaul the structure and remit of District Salmon Fishery Boards, following a consultation on draft provisions for a Wild Fisheries (Scotland) Bill and draft Wild Fisheries Strategy.

The Scottish Government says it will encourage, empower and support the modernisation of fishery management, including the piloting of voluntary board mergers to identify any existing issues over legislation.

Holyrood will also develop a fishery management plan to trial any changes with boards and will also explore potential freshwater conservation provisions ahead of the introduction of a bill.

Ms Cunningham said: “The Scottish Government is committed to supporting our famous and valuable wild fisheries, to modernise our fishery management structures and to establish a more secure and sustainable future for this vital sector.

“Our Wild Fisheries Bill will build on our significant conservation achievements to date, including the annual salmon

conservation measures, Spring Conservation Orders, and the moratorium on coastal mixed stock fishery netting for three years.

“However it’s important that we represent the interests of our anglers, that’s why we have listened to the sector’s concerns around increasing costs and restricting access to fisheries and are ruling out the introduction of rod licences and a freshwater levy.

“We’ve heard through the consultation that these steps would limit the opportunities for our anglers and potentially discourage young people from taking part.

“Over and above this we will work with the angling community to identify ways to increase participation and to improve engagement across the sector.”