



Case Study: Dôl-Haidd Isaf Fishery

Safeguarding the Future

sustainable development training
for the professional business



Fisheries Management for the Future

sustainable development
training for the Fisheries
Management sector

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Introduction and Background

Dôl-Haidd Isaf and the surrounding 40 acres (27ha) are owned by Brian and Pat Scull and the business consists of 40 acres (27ha) with four cottages all renovated to a high standard, offering self-catering holiday accommodation with its own private salmon, brown trout and sea trout fishing on the famous River Teifi. The River Teifi is one of the major game rivers of Wales, generally fast flowing and subject to rapid rise and fall after heavy rain. Dôl-Haidd Isaf has three quarters of a mile of private fishing.

The self-catering holiday cottages occupy a unique site on a low rise overlooking the River Teifi. The complex is of historical and architectural interest as it dates in parts from the 15th century. The grounds surround the farmhouse and four cottages, which are grouped around a south-facing courtyard. At the rear, they overlook a lawn bounded by fields. An easy, level, access makes the river area

particularly suitable for anyone with disabilities.

The varied waters offer the opportunity to fish large sea trout early in April and May, followed by school sea trout in June. Good catches of brown trout can be made on any day of the season. The autumn rain in September and October brings good runs of salmon, with the record fish caught at Dôl-Haidd Isaf being 24lb (>10kg).

In December 1997 the area was designated a national Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its animal and plant life.

In 2006 the Teifi Valley was given a European designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Visitors have the opportunity to see a variety of wildlife in their natural environment including otters, badgers, foxes, buzzards, red kites, barn owls, dippers etc. Seventy-two bird species have been recorded on the site in recent years.



Source: Yvonne Jones,
Swansea University

Challenges and Pressures for Change

- Customer demand for high quality accommodation in an unspoilt environment
- Commitment to providing a high quality angling facility
- Competition within the tourism and angling sector
- Avoidance of over-fishing
- Fishery easily affected by factors originating further afield, for example the banning of Irish keep-nets will hopefully have a positive effect on numbers of salmon coming upstream. Negative effects can impact for example river pollution
- Loss of financial assistance from local government in relation to self-catering accommodation
- Environment Agency Wales (EAW) controls numbers of fish removed from the river; for example since 2000, all salmon caught before June 17th must be returned to the river
- High numbers of mink, a particularly voracious predator.



Approach

Dôl-Haidd Isaf do not have a written Sustainable Development policy but the owners are acutely aware that they are in the business of selling a quality angling experience in unrivalled surroundings in an area of great attractiveness to tourists. Environment Agency Wales have in 2007 allowed restocking on two of the tributaries of the Teifi by releasing 13,000 young salmon. The river Teifi needs a hatchery to supplement the decrease in migratory fish numbers.

Environment Agency Wales allows a bag of two salmon per day (maximum of five fish per week), and four sea trout per day (maximum 28 per week), which Mr and Mrs Scull feel is far too high. They are therefore concerned that over-fishing could become a problem. To minimise this risk to the business Dôl-Haidd Isaf imposes additional limits, allowing only two rods per cottage, but a maximum of five rods on their river stretch at a time. In order to keep within this limit, they will refuse bookings if necessary.

A number of other sustainable practices are integrated into the everyday running of the business:

- Local produce is used wherever appropriate
- Efforts made to recycle as much waste as possible
- Improvements to the river banks are kept to a minimum and are sympathetic to the landscape
- Only access areas mown
- Un-mown natural areas included wherever possible
- Mainly indigenous species are planted
- Activities sympathetic to angling are encouraged, such as bird watching and painting.

Business Benefits

Dôl-Haidd Isaf attracts a loyal and growing customer base who appreciate the quality angling experience they offer. The commitment of the owners to protecting and enhancing the surrounding environment appeals to an increasing number of customers who demand holiday venues with 'greener' credentials.

Limiting the number of rods using the stretch of river ensures a consistent good quality angling experience for all customers. Though this can sometimes mean loss of bookings.



Environmental Benefits

- Buying local encourages quality produce and services whilst benefiting the local rural community
- Minimal mowing encourages biodiversity which in turn enhances customer experience
- Planting indigenous species encourages local biodiversity
- Strict avoidance of over-fishing maintains biodiversity of the river as well as protecting the primary resource of the business
- Waste recycling reduces waste to landfill.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The rule prohibiting salmon catches before June 17th means a loss of revenue during the spring months. It is therefore essential to find alternative income to the business.

The abstraction of water during the summer months by Welsh Water is an increasing problem.