



Case Study: Springwater Lakes Coarse and Game Fishery

Safeguarding the Future

sustainable development training
for the professional business



Fisheries Management for the Future

sustainable development
training for the Fisheries
Management sector

Copyright of the published materials from the Swansea University PP4SD project, in printed and CD formats, is held by the authors. We encourage the use of the materials, and request only that the following acknowledgement is given each time they are used:

"These materials were developed by the PP4SD team at Swansea University, with specialist input from PP4SD UK. Their development and production was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government's Knowledge Exploitation Fund and the European Social Fund under Objectives 1 & 3."

(Copyright of the original PP4SD handbook, on which the Swansea University material draws, is held by the Institution of Environmental Sciences.)





Case Study: Springwater Lakes Coarse and Game Fishery

Introduction and Background

Mr and Mrs Bexon moved to Springwater Lakes near Llandovery, mid-Wales, in 1999. When they bought it the fishery consisted of two lakes and some fields, but they could see potential for development and soon added two more lakes and set up facilities for caravanning and camping on site. The addition of a small tackle and bait shop followed. Wales is traditionally a game-fishing area, but the aim at Springwater was to create a first class coarse fishing venue and so attract a wide variety of fishermen and their families to the area. The business is now well established and may have in excess of 100 people on site at any one time. The site attracts visitors for a variety of pursuits. In addition to fishing, visitors come for bird watching, or just to enjoy the peace and quiet.



Company Aim

From the outset the aim was to build the fishery into a viable business and thereby achieve a career change for the owners.

The Practice

The aim at Springwater Lakes has been to continue to improve economic viability whilst maintaining the high quality of the surrounding environment so vital to the success of the business.

The lakes are all spring-fed with the overflow running into a nearby stream. Lakes two and three can be interlinked if necessary as can lakes one and four. The lakes are not permanently linked together, so any problems such as infections, can be controlled and not automatically transferred to the other lakes.

*Source: J. Morgan,
Swansea University*

Management practices at the lakes differ, to take account of the differing fishing styles. Around the coarse lakes the grass is only cut to allow reasonable access for anglers. However, around the trout lakes the grass is kept fairly short. It is also mown in some other areas such as around the reception area and along the access road. Water levels at all the lakes can be controlled, but Mr Bexon has never had to alter the water levels as they fluctuate very little.

Environment

Mr and Mrs Bexon have a very positive attitude to the environment and conservation. Both appreciate the importance of the site for local wildlife and feel that for at least 50% of their anglers this is also an important consideration. Species regularly seen on the site include moorhens, herons, cormorants and kingfishers. Red kites and buzzards are frequently seen overhead and there are Canada geese nesting on Lake 1. Otter prints are occasionally seen around the banks of the stream and Mr Bexon has also seen a polecat.

The proprietors are also keen to explore the possibility of working towards an environmental award scheme such as the David Bellamy award or Green Dragon.



Key Drivers

- The need to improve economic viability while still maintaining a personal interest and satisfaction
- The business needs to expand and key to this will be the involvement of the local government planning department
- Advertising and marketing are also paramount to the business and the proprietors have been active in setting up the West Wales Premier Fisheries group for the purposes of increasing opportunities to market the fishery, with particular reference to the coarse-fishing facility.

Business Benefits

- Recreational anglers demand a high quality angling experience in unspoilt surroundings. The attention given to preserving the local environment at Springwater Lakes ensures that their customers enjoy their experience and return year after year
- Working in partnership with other fisheries increases marketing opportunities
- Diversification maximises angling-related income.

Environmental Benefits

- Well balanced spring-fed lakes support a variety of wildlife
- Sensitive mowing regime encourages local fauna
- Tolerant attitude to predators and sensitive deterrent techniques minimise impact on local wildlife.

Challenges for the Future

- To maintain the growth in customer numbers in the face of increasing competition from other angling establishments
- To further develop the holiday accommodation part of the business.