

PADDLERS ON THE RIVER SPEY: GUIDANCE FOR ANGLERS



The River Spey, as well as being one of the world's finest salmon fishing rivers, is also popular with other water sports users, including canoeists and rafters.

In 2003 the Land Reform (Scotland) Act gave recreational access rights to the general public to most land and water within Scotland. This right applies to recreational, commercial and educational activity, including walking, cycling, horse-riding and canoeing. In 2005 the Land Reform Act confirmed the right of reasonable and responsible pedestrian access (including walkers, cyclists, horses) over land (except curtilage and cropped field) and to non-motorised craft over water.

Guidance on responsible behaviour for both recreational users and land managers is contained within the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, a copy of which is available online at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Furthermore, the Scottish Canoe Association has produced detailed guidance under the "Paddler's Access Code" (available from www.canoescotland.com), about which the majority of canoeists and rafters are aware. Paddler guidance, specific to the Spey, is available online at www.speyguide.co.uk

Anglers on the River Spey are quite likely to see canoeists and rafters when they are fishing, approaching anglers from upstream. The Spey Fishery Board continues to work with the Scottish Canoe Association to try to ensure that both anglers and paddlers experience as little disruption as possible to their sport. To facilitate this the Board and the Association have produced the Guide for Anglers printed overleaf. It is hoped that this will allow both anglers and paddlers to enjoy their respective sports with the minimum of disruption. The key to harmony on the river is mutual respect as well as courtesy between all river users.

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Anglers can reasonably expect that:

- The leader of the paddling group will endeavour to ensure that anglers are aware of their presence, either by shouting or blowing a whistle that can be heard above the water noise.
- Once contact has been established, the leader will request the angler's preferred line of passage for the paddling group.
- The paddlers will wish to cause minimum noise and disturbance to the angler and will move in the direction indicated, water depth and obstructions permitting. Where the angler is standing on the bank, the direction indicated to the paddlers may include going towards the opposite bank, towards the angler and even under the rod. If the angler is wading, canoeists will be happy, where possible, to pass behind the angler i.e. between the angler and the bank.
- Paddler group leaders will endeavour to have their group pass in fairly close formation, allowing for a reasonable, safe distance between each boat, thus minimising the time taken to pass.
- If an angler is playing a fish, paddlers normally wait upstream until the fish is landed or until there is an indication from the angler or ghillie that it is safe to pass in the angler's preferred direction.
- In the event of an inadvertent capsize, paddlers will do their utmost to affect efficient rescue and refloat the upturned canoe as soon as possible. Anglers will know that the River Spey is fast-flowing and its currents can catch out even the most experienced paddlers!
- Once past the angler, the paddler group will quietly continue on their way downstream. Paddlers will not "loiter" unnecessarily or "play" in a pool where someone is fishing.

Anglers are requested to:

- Acknowledge that they are aware of the presence of the paddlers.
- Carefully consider which line is most practical for both angler and paddler.
- Give clear direction as to the preferred route the craft should take.
- Refrain from casting whilst boats pass by (although it is not always necessary to take in line).
- Only resume fishing once the boats have completely passed the angler.

(Issued jointly by the Scottish Canoe Association & the Spey Fishery Board.)