



Report on Penstock Lagoon Boating Questionnaire Survey February 2012



PURPOSE

A questionnaire survey was conducted at a public meeting held to discuss a proposed change to electric motor only whilst fishing from a boat at Penstock Lagoon. The aim of the survey was to gather feedback on the acceptability of the proposal by anglers who regularly fish Penstock Lagoon, and ideas for future management.

METHODOLOGY

Approximately 88 people attended a public meeting on Saturday 6 pm at the Miena Community Centre, held by the IFS to discuss the proposal to prohibit petrol outboard motors. All those attending were offered a one page written questionnaire but not all elected to undertake or complete the survey. The questionnaire contained 12 questions, seven of which were closed answer questions and the remaining five sought an open answer. A total of 57 completed questionnaire forms were collected at the end of the meeting. Several attending took their questionnaire away with them, saying that they would return same by mail.

RESULTS

Penstock Angling Use

Out of a total of 57 anglers who completed the survey, 10 (18%) answered that they did not fish Penstock regularly, while 47 (82%) did. Given this proportion and the subjective meaning of 'regularly', it is likely that more than 85% of those attending the meeting regularly fished at Penstock Lagoon. This means that the survey provides a good indication of the behaviour and feelings of a key stakeholder group of fly fishers who regularly fish at Penstock Lagoon.

Respondents fished Penstock a total of over 1000 days per year combined, and on average each made about 20 visits per year. The total number of trips amongst the respondents combined was recorded as 979 but the actual number is likely to be over 1000 because several respondents who fish Penstock regularly did not give a number as an answer to this question.

Boat and Motor Usage

Amongst the 57 respondents, there were 54 (95%) who generally fished from a boat, three (5%) who fished from a canoe, one who fished from a float tub and 12 (21%) from the shore, with 13 (23%) indicating that they combined two or more methods.

Amongst the 54 boat users, there were two who rowed, 18 (33%) used electric, 28 (52%) used a 2 stroke and 27 (50%) used a 4 stroke motor, with 21 (30%) of these boaters using several methods to propel their boat on Penstock.

Amongst the 58 motors described, 19 (33%) were 10 hp or less, 17 (29%) were between 10 and 40, 19 (33%) between 50 and 80, and four (7%) were 100 hp and above.

Angler Concern for Protecting Penstock

Amongst the respondents, 22 (39%) stated that they thought Penstock is vulnerable to over-use and 35 (61%) did not.

Amongst the respondents, 46 (81%) stated that they agreed that Penstock needs protecting while 11 (19%) did not agree.

Amongst the respondents, 45 (79%) indicated that they did not support the proposal to prohibit the use of petrol outboards at Penstock, while 12 (21%) indicated their support.

Activities that have a potential impact on the fishery at Penstock Lagoon

Times	Activities mentioned that pose a risk to the health of Penstock Lagoon ecosystem
14	Number of big boats with big petrol driven motors, sheer boat numbers and movement
11	Damage caused by waders and number of waders
8	Lack of boating knowledge and etiquette, speeding
7	Use of drogues
5	Turbidity caused by Shannon Lagoon and upstream intake, or wind
5	Shack owner impacts, emissions, septic and grey water run-off, and unregulated boat launching across the shore
4	Water level, quality and water flow
4	Birdlife (swan)
3	Camping impacts, disposal of human waste
2	Angling pressure
2	Existing regulations not being enforced, lack of management and regulatory supervision.
2	Overstocking, over-management and over-regulation
2	Wind
2	2 stroke motors
1	Electric motors in shallow water
1	Lack of knowledge about water quality by IFS

Main concerns about the proposal and management of the fishery at Penstock Lagoon

Times	Main concerns about the proposal or Penstock Lagoon mentioned
16	Safety, electric motors can't handle wind and waves, limited use of petrol outboards is essential
6	Over use, angling pressure and people doing the wrong things
5	Lack of scientific data and evidence for decision making
5	Difficulty using batteries, recharging, especially when camping, storage and disposal
4	Equity, discriminates against older boating anglers and large boat owners
4	Cost of fitting out with an electric outboard exclusively for Penstock
3	Boating only one of a number of problems
3	Wading is more of a problem
2	Oversize boats
2	Quality of water from Shannon Lagoon
1	Lake levels
1	Shack-owners
1	Regulation prohibiting petrol motors may spread to other waters, eg Little Pine
1	Penstock is a livelihood for trout guides, especially important to protect
1	Alternative venue in bad weather. Restricted ability to fish effectively.
1	Nothing will be done and it will be too late
1	Drogues are more of a problem

Alternative management strategies suggested for Penstock

Times	Alternative strategies suggested
8	Limit boat number, and boat and engine size, and limit anglers
6	Ban 2 stroke engines
5	Increase policing. Enforce speed limits and regulations.
5	Introduce a speed limit down the centre of the lagoon, a corridor for use of outboards with speed restricted to 'no wake' rather than 5 knots, and rowing and electric only outside in shallow water.
4	Build second boat ramp at southern end of lagoon
4	Limit the parking facilities, restrict the number of trailer parking bays
2	Transition to cleaner 4 strokes over a number of years. Phase in changes.
2	Increase water level
2	Limit wading. Restrict wading to 5 m from shoreline (no deep wading).
2	Enforced correct camping around western shoreline (ensure correct human waste disposal). Enforce 14 day camping limit to help reduce angling effort.
1	No power boating (petrol) in canal, row or electric only
1	Remove some structures on the eastern shore shack area on public land
1	Filter water from Shannon Lagoon
1	Ban drogues
1	Install fountains to keep water moving
1	Ban boating at low water levels
1	Introduce electric outboard only during Dec-Feb

Comments collected

Times	Comments received
9	More information and science on boating and angler impacts, needs strong evidence for the need to ban petrol motors, and no decision should be made before a full scientific study of Penstock has been undertaken.
2	Increase policing required and stringent boating regulations
2	Catch and release, or limit fish size and limit of one fish per day
2	Get Shannon Lagoon operating or drain it so clean water from Great Lake can get to Penstock.
2	Could be an agenda for other small waters in the Tasmanian fishery
1	Boat ramp at southern end of the lagoon.
1	Limit car parking facilities.
1	Minimise stocking because juvenile fish feed on insect otherwise eaten by mature fish.
1	Maintain water levels
1	No problem with current water no deterioration in fish quality. All that is needed is just commonsense by anglers.

CONCLUSIONS

There were 57 anglers surveyed, most (85%) regular users of Penstock 85% who together make over 1000 trips to fish Penstock each year. This represents a good survey size and sample group for obtaining feedback from key stakeholders.

The majority of people (95%) surveyed fish from a boat at Penstock, however a proportion (21%) also wade. While about one third (33%) of boaters have an electric motor, about half have 2 stroke and the other half have 4 stroke engines. Engine size varies with 33% being 10 hp or less, 29% between 10 and 50 hp, and 40% being 50 hp or over.

Respondents were divided about 60:40 regarding whether Penstock is vulnerable to over-use, with the majority thinking not but a much higher proportion, closer to 80:20 were in favour of protecting the lagoon. Ultimately, the proposal to prohibit the use of petrol motors on Penstock – in its current form – was not supported by a majority of the group, who indicated otherwise.

The size and number of boats, including engine size and boat usage (speed, etiquette and knowledge), was the stand out concern for respondents when considering activities they think pose a risk to the health of the Penstock ecosystem. It was followed by damage caused by wading and drogues, and then the impact of water quality (turbidity caused by intake from Shannon Lagoon), levels and flow and the impact of shack-owners (eg emissions, septic and grey water run-off, and unregulated boat launching across the shore).

Safety was the main concern about the proposal to prohibit petrol outboards at Penstock Lagoon mentioned by respondents due to the belief that electric motors are

not powerful enough to handle inclement weather conditions at the lagoon. Lack of scientific data and evidence of a need to ban petrol motors was also highlighted. There was also the difficulty and inconvenience involved with electric motors, especially recharging and storage when camping, and the prohibitive cost of fitting out a boat especially for Penstock. It was felt that the proposal discriminated against older, less financial anglers and large boat owners.

In suggesting alternative strategies, respondents indicated that some boating restrictions were necessary including limiting boat numbers, boat and engine size and even a limit on the number of anglers fishing Penstock. The suggestion to ban 2 stroke engines was quite popular as was increasing the enforcement of boating regulations. There was also the suggestion of establishing a corridor down the centre of the lagoon for use by petrol outboards with the speed restricted to 'no wake' rather than 5 knots, and rowing and electric motors only outside the area in shallow water. Two other popular suggestions were to limit the car parking facilities and building a second ramp at the southern end of the lagoon.

Amongst the general comments received from respondents, a good number focused on the need for more information and science on boating and angler impacts at Penstock. In particular, there was a strong view that more evidence is needed before a ban on petrol motors can be introduced, and that no decision should be made before a more in depth study of the impacts of angling at Penstock has been undertaken.