

Photo by Gordon Lennox, P&J



Findhorn,
Nairn &
Lossie
Fisheries
Trust

Newsletter

Summer
2013



FINDHORN
NAIRN
LOSSIE

Welcome to the Summer edition of the FNL Fisheries Trust Newsletter which is generously sponsored by Tomatin Distillery.

Lossie Smolt Surprise!

The River Lossie is full of life and especially full of salmon smolts. This is great news for the River Lossie and for other wildlife on the river and of course for anglers in the future.

Measuring the smolt output from a river is one of the best ways to determine the health of a river's salmon population and to achieve this, the FNL Fisheries Trust, borrowed a rotary screw trap from the Atlantic Salmon Trust during spring 2013. The trap was installed in the upper Lossie at Kellas Estate for two months to help estimate the fish populations. The young fish caught were then identified and measured, and a small sample of scales was also collected to determine their age before they were released back into the river. The trap was examined every morning from mid- April to the end of May with the help of staff from Kellas Estate and local volunteers.

The results have been a pleasant surprise: 1095 salmon smolts and 621 trout were captured, along with 5 Brook lampreys and a 3-spined-stickleback! Throughout the study a proportion of the salmon smolts were marked with a blue tattoo on their underside and re-released above the trap. This provides an estimate of the trap's efficiency and indicated that 31% of marked fish were recaptured. Applying this efficiency to the catch the total salmon smolt run was estimated at 3536 fish. The area of river upstream from the smolt trap was estimated at 77,000m² and this means that around 5 salmon smolts per 100m² are being produced. Smolt production for Scottish rivers typically ranges from 1 to 10 per 100m²,

this year's data from the Lossie means it is well within the expected range which is good news.

The number of adult fish caught by anglers on the Lossie has been low in recent years, which suggested the fish populations in the river were low. However, this project indicates that the river is still producing plenty of healthy young fish, which will grow into healthy salmon and trout for anglers in the future.

The FNL Fisheries Trust would like to thank Tony Andrews, Director of the Atlantic Salmon Trust, for providing the trap, Frans Jurgens of Kellas Estate, and in particular Eddie Gormanley and the Estate staff and volunteers who helped to make the trap operation a great success.



Photo by Gordon Lennox, P&J

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Chairman's Message

The passage through the Scottish Parliament of the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill in May, highlights the enduring importance of rivers and fish as major natural resources in Scotland. It also indicates the importance of Rivers and Fisheries Trusts, District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs), other key statutory bodies and other river users, working closely together to conserve and improve our river catchments and native fish stocks. We are trying to do this even better on the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie.

From the 1st of April 2013, our Director and biologist, Bob Laughton, has relinquished his responsibilities on the Spey and now works for the Trust full time. This is good news as there is much to do and Bob's experience and direction is just what we all need. The Trust, in coordination with the Boards, already has a significant number of activities and projects in motion for this year.

Beth Dunlop, who was the Trust's Administrator since its beginning in 2009, left us with our grateful thanks in March and has been replaced by Valerie Wardlaw. Valerie has a degree in botany and a wealth of experience in the fields of research, education, fundraising and heritage.

Funding for the Trust's activities is an ongoing challenge. We receive grants and donations from the three Fishery Boards, and from RAFTS, SEPA and SNH for specific projects and from anglers and other river users – but there is always a shortfall. The Trust is increasing its fundraising activities and raising people's awareness of its work. If you are able to support the Trust in anyway through volunteering or making a donation or leaving a legacy, we would be most grateful, please contact Bob or Valerie at the Fisheries Office or complete a donation form. Thank You!

Seymour Monro

Support the Trust

The Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust promotes the sustainable management of river resources and fish populations through research, restoration and education. As a charity, the FNLFT relies heavily on donations and grants for its income.

With your support the Trust can continue to:

- Provide a scientific basis for conservation policies by assessing angling catch data and juvenile fish populations.
- Collect basic fish data to monitor fish stocks.
- Remove weirs to facilitate adult fish access to spawning grounds.
- Monitor and control predators such as mink, seals and sawbill ducks.
- Train anglers, proprietors and gamekeepers in recognising fish diseases.
- Improve river habitats and control invasive non-native species such as giant hogweed and American signal crayfish.
- Educate and enthuse the next generation through schools programmes.
- Advise and consult with government agencies and statutory bodies to support methods that enhance the countryside, improve biodiversity and are compatible with farming, forestry and fisheries management.

You can support the Trust by
volunteering, contact the Fisheries Office
Tel: 01309 611220
or by making a donation via website
www.fnift.org.uk or Gift Aid form.



Photo by Valerie Wardlaw

Protecting Moray from Floods

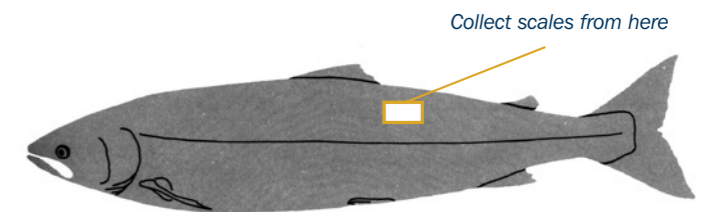
Viewing the recent flood alleviation works on the River Findhorn near Forres are Bob Laughton (FNLFT), Steve Truluck (Royal HaskoningDHV), Maj Gen Seymour Monro (FNLFT), Dr David Sneddon (Forres Angling Assoc) and Donnie McBean (Forres Angling Assoc). The river bank beside Gordons Pool has been lowered through the removal of gravel, the pool and current river course have not been changed, but the removal of the bank material here and at other sections of the lower Findhorn combined with the opening of the back run will allow a much greater volume of river flows to be accommodated during spates. The Trust, Boards, and Angling Associations are in regular contact with Moray Council to ensure that this scheme and the one on the Lossie within Elgin progress without compromising fish habitat. You can follow the progress of the two schemes on www.moray.gov.uk.

Scale Samples Required

Salmon and trout scales provide important data about the age and growth patterns of the fish during river and sea phases of its lifecycle. Currently data on the age of adult salmon and trout within the three rivers is fairly limited so over the next few years the Trust, with the help of the Moray Firth Trout Initiative, will address this shortfall by building up a collection of scales.

Catch and release of salmon and sea trout is the highest priority and we encourage anglers to adhere to each rivers conservation code. Please do not attempt any scale collecting from live fish intended for release. However, if you do retain a fish we recommend that scales and the following data be taken.

Collection of scales is fairly straight forward. Collect scales from the area shown in the diagram using the back of a knife



remove excess mucus from the area, then run the blade of a knife gently back against the scales and remove approx 10 scales. Insert the blade into a scale packet (not plastic bag) and pinch the packet against the blade so the scales are left in the packet as the blade is withdrawn.

Record the following details on the outside of the packet: **Location, Species, Length, Weight, Date, Sex** and any **Remarks**.

Forward the scale envelope to the Trust or your fishing proprietor. The samples will be read over the winter and the findings published on the Trusts web site www.fnift.org.uk.



Photo by John Webb

Fishing the Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie

The 2013 season is now well underway. Fishing tickets, tackle and good advice is available from these local suppliers:

Forres Tackle Shop
97d High Street, Forres IV36 1AA 01309 672936

Angling Centre
Moss St, Elgin IV30 1LU 01343 750288

J. Graham & Co
125 High Street, Nairn IV12 4DB 01463 233178



Photo by John Webb

MEET THE TRUST

The Trust will be present at the following events.

Piping Hot, Forres, 29th June 2013

Moy Game Fair, 2-3rd August 2013

We look forward to seeing you there.

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 - Sunday: 12.30pm to 4.30pm (no tours but we offer a short film and a free tasting)
- Tours are £3 per adult (18+), kids go free. Booking is recommended

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