

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board



Annual Report
2010 / 11



ANNUAL REPORT 2010/ 11

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TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Chairman

William Jack (Mandatory for Ballathie Timeshare)

Members Elected by Upper Proprietors

W. Lindsay (Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare), J. Young (Mandatory for Lochlane & Laggan Fishery), A. Riddell, Viscount Stormont (Mandatory for The Viscount Stormont's Trust Trustees), R. White (Mandatory for Mrs C. Gifford), T. Steuart-Fotheringham, S. Mercer-Nairne (Mandatory for Meikleour Hotels and Fishing), S. Furniss (Mandatory for Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel), M. Wedderburn, J. Tritton (Mandatory for Mrs C. C. Ward) and B. Reid (Mandatory for W Reid)

Members Elected by Lower Proprietors

D. Godfrey (Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fisheries Company Ltd)

Co-opted Members

Representatives of Salmon Anglers

D. Barwick (Tay Ghillies Association)
A. Stewart
J. Wood
C. Lawson

Clerk and administrator

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2011

The 2011 fishing season was badly affected by the absence of any significant numbers of grilse. It was, of course, not simply the Tay that was affected, all Scottish rivers suffered.

The drop in numbers of fish was compounded by extremely wet conditions throughout the prime months of July, August and September. Indeed, the river flow was the second highest recorded since the SEPA records started in 1953. On a big river like ours, this makes catching even more difficult.

There were, however, some very positive aspects.

The upper part of the catchment enjoyed some of the best runs of recent years. Most of the fish counters showed numbers well above both 2010 and above the long term average. The count of multi-sea-winter salmon on the Tummel was the highest since 1979. Let us hope that this results in heavy upper catchment spawning.

The other notable feature of the season was the number of very large fish reported. One of 40lbs, a dozen or so in the 30's and virtually every day of the summer/autumn, several of 20lbs+.

A very poor grilse run can often be followed by a poor spring run and the Board is seeking to strengthen the catch and release code for 2012 by asking beat owners to incorporate a catch and release requirement as a condition of let for all fish caught up to the end of May. The overwhelming numbers of anglers already practice catch and release during this period and we are extremely grateful to all of them. This extra measure is aimed at the small minority who feel that regardless of how few spring fish there are entering our system, they can justify killing them.

In last year's report, I indicated that the Board should formulate a policy on stocking the system. I outlined the factors that should be incorporated in such a policy. I am pleased to report that such a document is now in place. It is published on our website and will be the blueprint for the Board's approach to this difficult issue in the future.

A core part of our stocking, both in the past and in the future, is the focus on spring fish. An important source of "spring" eggs has historically been Marine Scotland's kelt reconditioning unit at Almondbank (the only one of its kind in Europe). The announcement that it was to close, created a real setback, since it accounted for nearly half of all the spring eggs planted out. I am pleased to report that we have been able to take over this facility under licence and are now in the process of doubling its capacity.

This has been a major Board undertaking and has not been achieved without considerable effort, both physical and financial and, I am grateful to all who have helped, not least John Apthorp, who once again has come to the support of our river with a very substantial donation. I urge anyone who has not seen this operation to take the opportunity to do so. The invitation to visit applies to all who have an interest in salmon.

The hatchery and all that is required to gather stock, DNA test them, look after its eggs, plant out, monitor progress and maintain records, is a major part of our expenditure. Having a clear policy of how we will undertake this means that we are in a position to develop and publish a long term strategy for the management of our river system. That strategy is in its final stages of development. It will be ready to be presented to your new Board in the first quarter of 2012.

Last year's AGM passed, without objection, the commencement of a three year trial extension of the season from 15th to 31st October. The licence to do so was finally granted in August. I want to make clear that this is a trial and should not be taken as an automatic move towards a permanent extension. Once the results and impacts of the trial have been analysed and understood, the results and Board recommendation will be put to an EGM. Only with the support of such an EGM would any application be made for the trial to be made permanent.

The Board has reached the end of its term of office and I would like to thank all the members for the effort and commitment they have made on behalf of the river as well as for the support they have given me.

Finally, I would like to thank the TDSFB management. A lot has been achieved as a result of their efforts and to thank the team of bailiffs, whose willing help on a wide range of projects, in addition to their bailiffing duties, is greatly appreciated.

I hope that 2012 is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all who visit our river.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W H Jack', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W H JACK
Chairman

3 cm = 18 km

ACCESSIBLE
INACCESSIBLE —

2011 REPORT

Season 2011

The opening of the 2011 Tay salmon angling season on 15 January followed one of the hardest spells of winter weather for many years. Sub zero temperatures persisted in Perthshire from the last week of November to early January. Night-time temperatures frequently dipped below minus 10. Significant accumulations of snow lasted for many weeks, particularly in the Perth area.

Winter water levels were relatively low therefore and significant parts of the catchment froze for periods. It was anticipated that any spring salmon which had entered the river during the winter would most likely have accumulated in the lower river, unlike the general pattern of recent years.

However, in the event, a thaw set in on the 14th of January and opening day and much of the next week proved to be a complete washout. In that first week, the water level at Ballathie peaked at over 15 feet above summer level. Only one spring salmon was caught on opening day, at one of the few places that was actually fishable, just below the bridge at Kenmore. That fish, weighed approximately 20 pounds and won its captor, Lee Conway, the Redford Trophy for the largest fish caught on the River Tay on opening day.

Later on, as levels fell towards the end of January, spring salmon catches did pick up and were quite promising relative to recent years. A number of fish were caught on beats below Stanley, which was unusual for recent times. January ended on quite a promising note, therefore. But it was not to last.

Wet weather and high water levels persisted through most of February. Conditions were not generally good for fishing

and catches were depressed for most of the month. However, things did pick up at the end of the month, with over 17 spring salmon reported on Monday the 28th and that week proved to be the best for the time of year for several years. March continued to be a better month than February. Modest catches were well spread along the river and Loch Tay, with a number of fish still being caught in the lowest reaches. A number of days were lost during the latter part of the month due to high water. It was particularly heartening that a number of larger fish were caught in March. A fresh fish estimated at around 35 pounds was caught and released at Stanley and was scale read at the Freshwater Laboratory as being 4SW, but most unusually having a smolt age of only one year. This trend of bigger fish was in fact to continue in April and May.



Lee Conway being presented with the Redford Trophy 2011 and a bottle of Dalmore "Tay Dram" by Arnot McWhinnie

Early April was also affected by high water. Catches were suppressed initially, but they did pick up later in the month as water levels fell. Again, the fish continued to be well spread, but some areas saw the fishing pick up well, particularly the Tummel. The higher water at the start of the month even saw fish pushing into the Dochart, impacting on catches on Loch Tay. As mentioned above, more big fish were caught in April. The largest of these, caught on the Glendelvine beat by a novice angler on his first outing, was estimated at 38 pounds. Other fish of 30 pounds or greater were caught on Ballathie, Dalmarnock and Murthly, and numbers of fish in the teens and twenties of pounds were also caught. Due to the fact that significant numbers of 3SW fish were being caught it was not clear by the end of April just how strong or otherwise the 2SW run was.

May commenced with unseasonably warm weather and low water. Significant numbers of fish appeared to build up in the Islamouth beat particularly, suggesting that the 2SW run was increasing. However, the weather broke at the end of the first week with a particularly dirty spate from the east, and indeed never really settled for the remainder of the season. Another spate near the end of the month was the fourth largest May spate recorded by SEPA since 1953. This higher water did not help fishing in the main stem of the river but rather allowed fish to disperse upstream and into tributaries. Fish built up in big numbers below the Cargill's Leap waterfall on the Ericht at Blairgowrie. They remained there until early June until temperatures were high enough for them to move on. By then it was clear that large numbers were present and there was unfortunately some incidence of fungal disease and illegal fishing.

The best fishing in May occurred on the Tummel which experienced the best run of salmon for many years. The good catches continued into June, by the end of which the Pitlochry counter reached a level rarely seen at that time of year in the last 30 years (see page 38). Better than average catches were also experienced during this period on the River Lyon indicating it also had benefited from a good salmon run. While there were no large spates in June, flows were unsettled and catches in the Tay itself did not reflect the numbers of fish which were clearly passing upstream.

The wet theme continued in July which had the second highest average flow for the month since SEPA's records began in 1953. August was little different, having the fourth highest average flow since 1953. Catches in July were not as high as would be expected, partly as a result of the conditions, but also because no significant run of grilse had entered the river, even by the end of the month.

The first half of August continued in much the same vein, but catches increased considerably in the latter half of the month. This was caused particularly by a strong run of 2SW salmon rather than grilse, which did not appear in large numbers. Surprisingly, some of the highest catches were made in very low beats like Almondmouth despite the height of the water. However, it was apparent when the River Almond rose that a significant number of those fish may have been heading for that tributary, as good numbers of salmon were observed at obstructions like Buchanty Spout.

September was yet another wet month, having the second highest average flow since 1953. Catches were well down on 2010, although many beats still did better than in 2009. Conditions obviously played a part, but so must the continued weak grilse run. However, the highlight of the month was undoubtedly the continued presence of larger salmon, including at least two of 30 pounds and one 40 pounder from Cargill, albeit all three were coloured.

High water continued to prevail throughout the whole month of October, although the first half of the month was not quite as bad as during the trial extension in the second half. There were at least six separate rises during the extension period, making it something of a washout therefore. For most beats October was a disappointment. A season of continuous high water and seemingly lower numbers of grilse impacted on main river catches although big fish were again noticeable right to the end of the season.

River flows 2011

According to preliminary data obtained from SEPA, the average flow of the Tay over the course of the 2011 season was the 5th highest of any season since 1953.

In order to put 2011 more into context, the average flows for each month are shown in the figures below for the period 1953 – 2011. February, May, June, July, August, September and October were all relatively high flow months. No months during the season could be considered as having been dry months, although the very cold December of 2010 had the lowest flow of any December in the record.

2011 was the fifth year in succession when either July or August, or both July and August were wet. This is the most extreme period of continuous wet summers in the 50 year record. This is unfortunate because wet summers generally do not favour good catches in the main stem of the Tay.

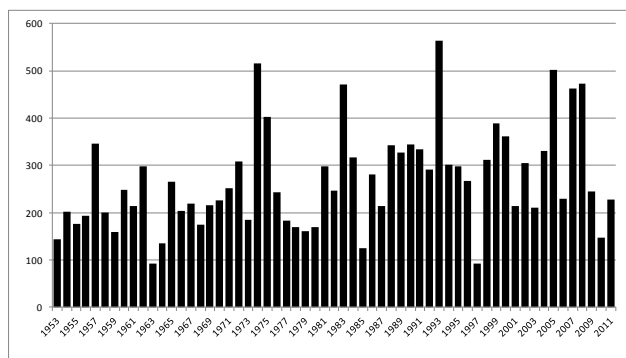


Figure 1. Average January flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

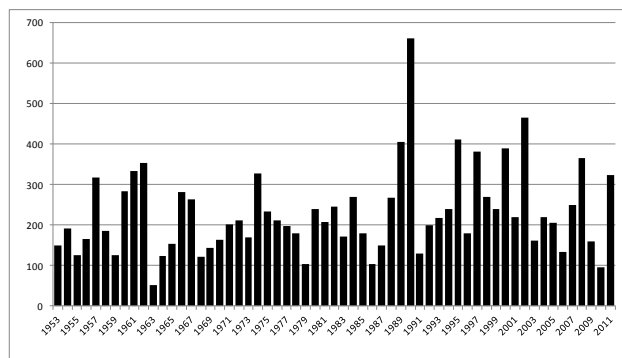


Figure 2. Average February flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

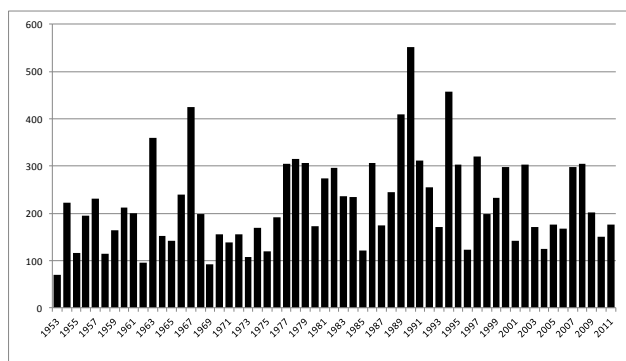


Figure 3. Average March flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

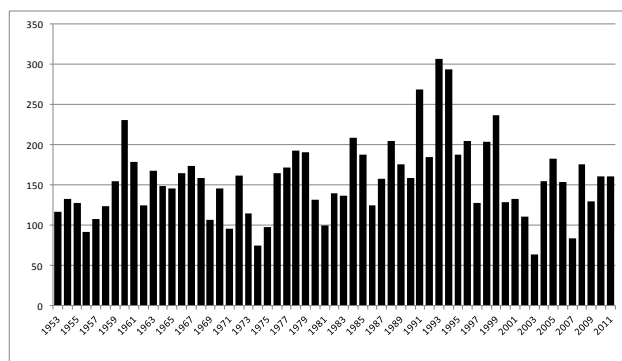


Figure 4. Average April flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

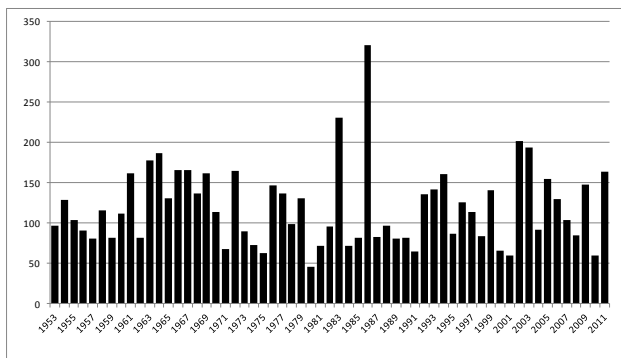


Figure 5. Average May flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

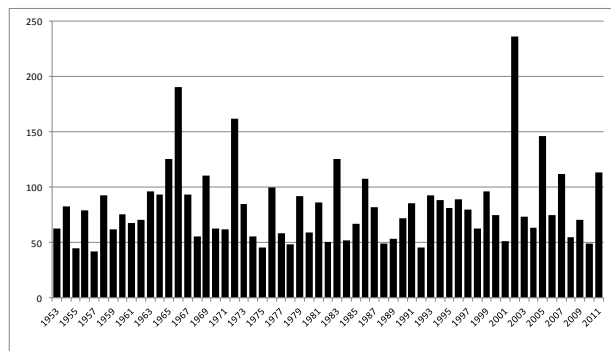


Figure 6. Average June flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

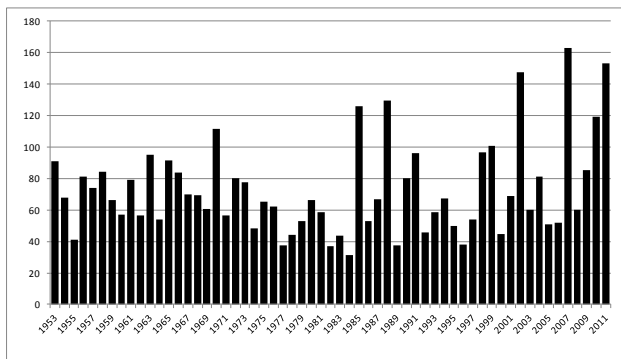


Figure 7. Average July flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

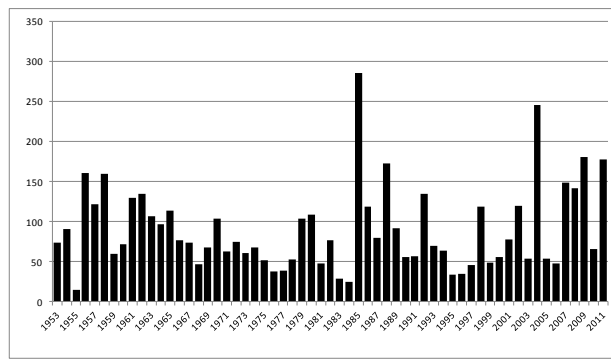


Figure 8. Average August flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

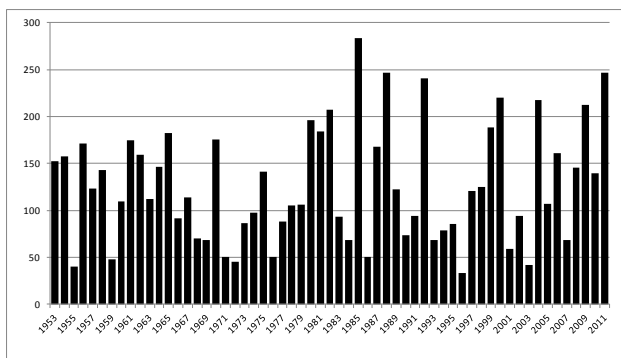


Figure 9. Average September flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

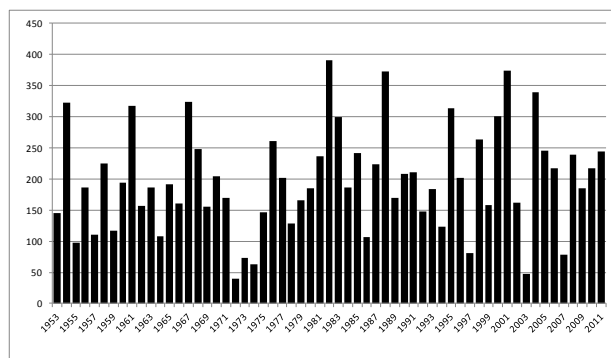


Figure 10. Average October flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2011. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

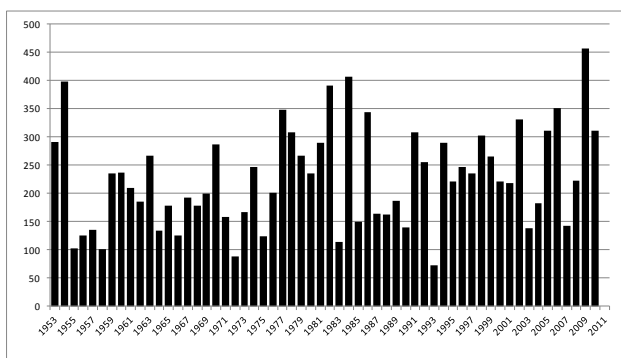


Figure 11. Average November flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2010. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

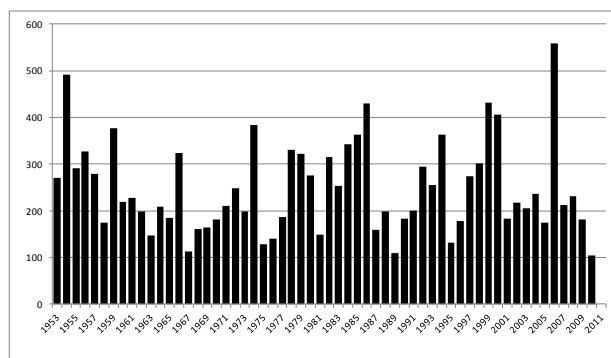


Figure 12. Average December flow (cumecs), River Tay, Ballathie, 1953 – 2010. Data obtained courtesy of SEPA.

Catch and release – spring salmon

In 2011, the Board continued to recommend the policy of 100% catch-and-release of salmon up to the end of May which had been introduced in 2010. Although 2011 data are not available at the time of writing, Table 1 shows that the policy of 100% catch and release was well accepted in 2010. 2011 is also likely to be high.

Table 1 shows that, as a result of the Board's evolving catch and release policy, there has been a complete change in the behaviour of Tay anglers over the last ten years. Indeed, in 2010 the Tay performed about as well as any other of the major Scottish salmon rivers in terms of proportion of spring fish released and the second highest actual number of fish released (Figure 13). However, while this change has clearly been accepted by the great majority, there do still appear to be some pockets of resistance. Therefore, in autumn 2011 the Board requested all proprietors not just to recommend the catch and release code, but to impose mandatory catch and release as a condition of let in 2012.

Year	Number released	Number killed	Total caught	% released
1998	41	540	581	7
1999	108	831	939	12
2000	193	637	830	23
2001	415	739	1154	36
2002	271	524	795	34
2003	199	281	480	42
2004	301	684	985	31
2005	446	669	1115	40
2006	739	854	1593	46
2007	349	339	688	51
2008	861	247	1108	78
2009	667	179	846	80
2010	689	55	744	93

Table 1. Numbers and percentage of rod-caught salmon released and killed before 30 April. Data from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches.

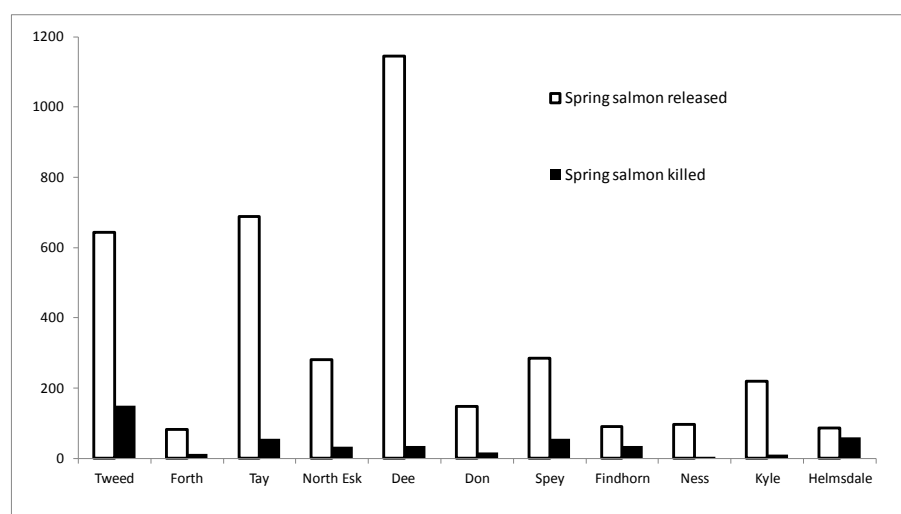


Figure 13. Numbers of salmon killed and released by anglers to 30 April 2010 on Scotland's major spring salmon rivers. Data from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletin.

Catch and release – summer

In addition to continuing the spring salmon policy, in 2011 the Board continued the policy that after May all female fish should be released and no more than one male fish should be retained per day, which should be clean and, where possible, weigh less than 10 pounds (i.e. clean male grilse). While 2011 data are not yet available, it is clear that the introduction of this policy in 2010 did have a clear impact on increasing the proportion of fish released compared to 2009 (Figure 14).

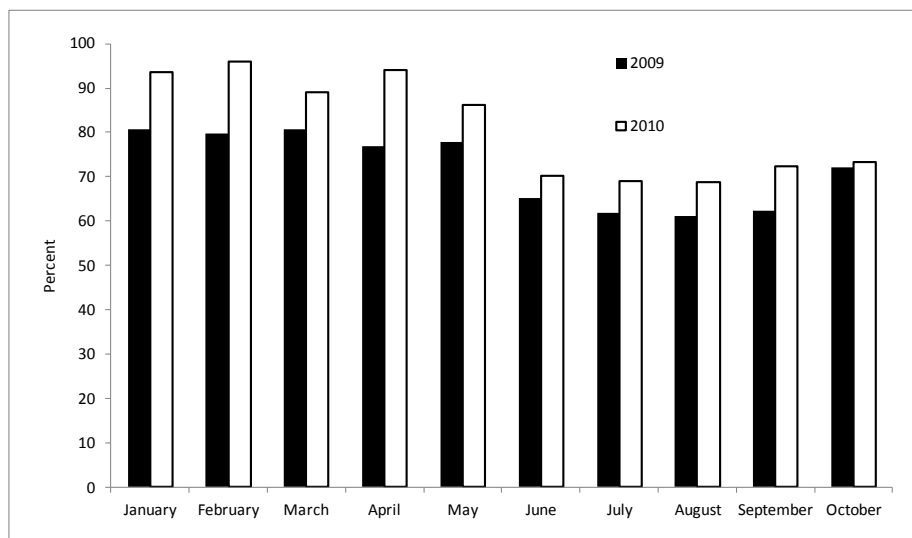


Figure 14. Percentage of the salmon and grilse catch released by month in 2009 & 2010. The data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.

Sea trout conservation

In 2009 the Board first recommended that, following a long decline in their numbers, all sea trout should be released without exception. This policy was continued in 2010 and 2011. Since the introduction of the policy the great majority of the catch has been released, although a proportion are still being killed (Figure 15). While 2009 and 2010 catches were encouraging, the Board considers that problems may still continue to occur and that catch and release of sea trout should continue until there is a sustained recovery.

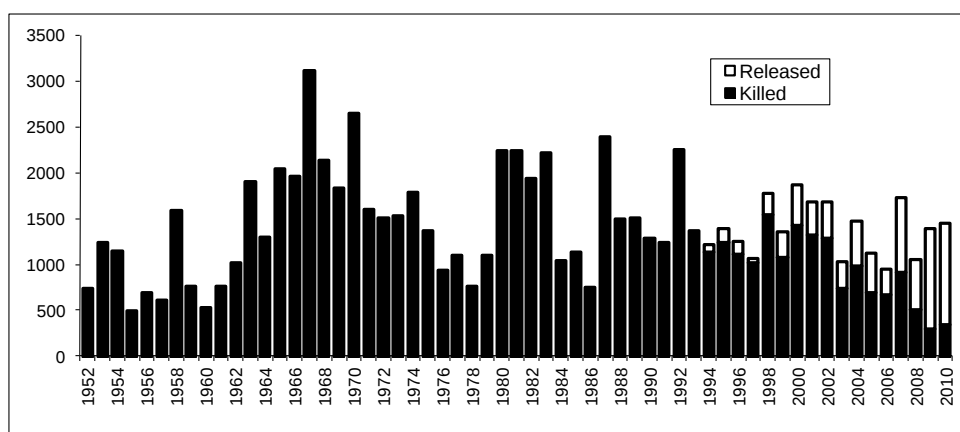


Figure 15. Tay District rod & line catch of sea trout, 1952 – 2010. (Data obtained from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches)

Staff Changes

The only change to the Board's staff in 2011 was the employment of a new part time staff member. At the start of the year, Steve Keay was employed by Marine Scotland Science at its experimental fish farm / hatchery at Almondbank where, among other things, he had developed more experience than perhaps anyone on kelt reconditioning. However, when that facility was taken over by the Board in April 2011, Steve was taken on by the Board to continue to look after the kelt reconditioning project. As the Board previously made significant annual contributions to the Kelt Reconditioning Project this post was funded through a diversion of existing expenditure rather than requiring new income.

Enforcement

2011 proved to be the busiest year for some time in terms of enforcement. The stronger run of spring salmon was a factor in attracting illegal fishing activity in the Blairgowrie area in particular.

Excellent cooperation was obtained from both Tayside Police and Strathclyde Police in the course of the year and reports were sent to the Procurator Fiscal by the Police regarding four separate incidents involving the Board's bailiff team. Unfortunately, no proceedings were taken in one case, but by November the other three cases are proceeding but have yet to be concluded.

Health and Safety at Work

Health and safety at work is a major consideration for the Board. The Board's staff are frequently required to work in situations where potential hazards are present. Therefore the Board is insistent that health and safety provision is of the highest standard. The Board's health and safety policy is regularly reviewed and updated, most recently in 2010.

No accidents reportable under RIDDOR occurred in 2011.

Takeover of the Kelt Reconditioning Project

The biggest issue which faced the Board in 2011 was Marine Scotland Science's (MSS) decision to close down its experimental hatchery / fish farm at Almondbank on 31 March 2011.

This facility housed the Kelt Reconditioning Project, a joint project between MSS and the Board which has been operating since the early 1990s. This project would have had to come to an end.

In the Kelt Reconditioning Project, spring salmon caught at the point of spawning in headwater areas by Board staff are kept in captivity and are successfully fed to spawn in subsequent years. This facility produces eggs from spring run females which would otherwise have died. In recent years, it has produced approximately 750,000 eggs per year from the most important spring populations in the district. The facility is particularly valuable as it can produce eggs for reviving highly depleted populations without being limited by the small number of potential broodstock which could be obtained from such populations. This facility has, for example, already proved extremely valuable for stocking

the River Lochay and the Cononish, which could never have been stocked without it. All this would have been lost had the facility been closed.

Therefore, the Board entered into discussions with Marine Scotland to determine whether the facility could be saved. As a consequence of these discussions, the Board was given a licence to occupy the facility until the end of 2011 with the option to enter into a formal lease thereafter. Thus, at the beginning of April the Board took over the facility on a trial basis and employed one of the staff members part time. This meant that, not only could the stock of existing reconditioned kelts be saved, but as the Board now had complete control of the facility, the option would be available to adapt it to hold more reconditioned kelts and increase its output.

Coincidentally, the Board had already decided to perform a review of its hatchery policy (see page 21). This review concluded that using kelt reconditioning or something similar to “pump prime” new areas of habitat was the best way in which hatcheries could benefit the Tay. Therefore it was considered that, in future, kelt reconditioning should be the main method of generating eggs for restocking and therefore the Board should try to secure this facility and maximize production from it. This would, in turn, reduce the need to obtain broodstock in other ways.

There are, however, significant costs associated with this facility, e.g. in terms of rent, rates, water supply etc, which will be additional to the Board’s existing commitments. New sources of funding will be required to keep the facility open in the longer term. However, an extremely generous donation was made by John Apthorp which will go a considerable way to meeting these costs over the next three years and to installing the four new large fish holding tanks to allow the capacity to be doubled. The proceeds from the fundraising at the River Tay Conservation and Awards Dinner are also to go towards it.

Hatchery report 2010/11

Broodstock for the hatchery are currently obtained by netting spring salmon in upper tributaries, some of which are then reconditioned (see above) and by angling for autumn salmon in the main stem Tay and larger tributaries. However, the 2010 / 11 winter again proved to be difficult for obtaining broodstock. For the third year in succession, high water persisted after the end of the angling season, making netting difficult in the higher tributaries.

Later in November, the weather turned very cold and this persisted through until January. This presented another set of problems. For example, broodstock caught in the main stem of the Tay in December did not ripen and produce eggs until February, meaning the adults had to be kept in tanks for much longer than is normally the case and that their offspring were not sufficiently advanced enough to be stocked out until well into June. The same thing also seemed to occur in the wild, as large numbers of fish which had yet to spawn were caught in the first few weeks of the 2011 season, particularly on the lower Tay. (For more information on that issue see <http://www.tdsfb.org/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.htm>)

As also reported in last year’s Annual Report, it was just as well that the broodstock holding area was enclosed during the winter of 2009/10. Had that not been the case, the severe temperatures experienced in December 2010 would have frozen the broodstock tanks solid.

Despite these challenges approximately 1.225 million eggs were incubated in the hatchery. These were stocked out as a mixture of eyed ova, unfed fry and, for the first, some (80,000) as fed-on parr. Ova and fry were stocked out into areas close to where the broodstock were sourced, i.e. either the same tributary or smaller tributaries close to the source area.

The following numbers were released in different areas in 2011:

River Tilt tributaries (Lochain Burn, Tarf Water)	95,000
River Lyon tributaries	245,000
River Garry	150,000
Banvie Burn (Garry)	15,000
Errochty Water	70,000
River Lochay (Corrycharmaig to Kenknock)	65,000
Fillan tributaries	60,000
Cononish	65,000
River Almond (headwaters)	30,000
River Braan	200,000
Keithick Burn (Isla)	35,000
Tullimet Burn (Tay)	40,000
Dowally Burn (Tay)	10,000
Ruchill Water (Earn)	90,000
Earn tributaries near St Fillans	55,000
Total	1,225,000

Table 2. Estimated numbers of eyed ova / unfed fry stocked out into respective tributaries in 2011.

During the winter of 2010/11 a new self-cleaning parabolic filter was installed in the hatchery to filter incoming water before entering the header tank. This ensures that the flow to the hatchery does not get choked with leaves and other debris.

Thanks are extended to the Tay Ghillies Association who raised the funds for the filter.



2011 WORK PLAN

In 2011, for the second year in succession, the Board agreed a plan of the work for the year along with indicative starting and finishing dates. Of the 25 stand-alone projects (not including on-going tasks which happen every year) which are described on the Board's website (<http://www.tdsfb.org/tayprojects.htm>), 16 were completed within the year. Adverse weather and delays in obtaining permission prevented some projects from being completed. However, the unforeseen requirement to take over the Kelt Reconditioning Project from Marine Scotland Science meant that time and resources had to be diverted from some of the planned projects.

The following pages summarise progress of the planned projects.

Tay Eastern Survey

In recent years much of the Board's interest has centered around upland tributaries because they are the areas where spring salmon mainly spawn. However, the Board is aware that significant problems exist in the lowland tributaries and that these also need addressing.

Accordingly, at the start of 2010 Board staff commenced a two year survey of lowland tributaries. In the late winter of 2010 tributaries of the lower Tay, lower Isla and the lower Earn were walked. In the later winter of 2011 the survey was extended to the Melgam Water and the Cromie, Corbie and Gairie burns (Isla tributaries) and the main stems of the River Eden and the Dighty Water. These surveys will be used as the basis to identify improvement projects on these streams.

Alyth Burn Weir

As a result of the Eastern Survey, a significant weir was found in 2010 on the Alyth Burn just upstream of Alyth. An electrofishing survey proved that salmon pass this weir intermittently and perhaps only in restricted numbers.

Some parties with an interest in this weir were identified in 2011 and a survey of the weir was conducted by Board and Tay Foundation staff. It is thought that a simple "baulk" fish pass might be all that is required and this could be constructed by the Board's staff relatively cheaply.

A plan has been submitted to the relevant authorities but the issue of what should be done is awaiting resolution. Hopefully this work will be completed in 2012.

Burn clearance

During the late winter / early spring period, when bailiffing and hatchery demands are at their lowest, some of the bailiff time routinely concentrate on riparian habitat improvement works such as tree thinning and removal of obstructions.

In the late winter of 2011 work was concentrated on some of the lowest tributaries of the Tay, in particular the St Martin's Burn, where the first year of the Eastern Survey had identified significant numbers of barriers to fish migration.

Comparison of performance between stocked unfed fry and stocked fed-on parr

One of the questions often asked is whether it is better to feed on fry in the hatchery for a period rather than stock them out as unfed fry or eyed ova. While there are many opinions on this subject, there appear to be few reliable comparisons between the different approaches and even these have provided equivocal results.

Previously, from the Board's hatchery, stocking has only been conducted with eyed ova or unfed fry. But, in order to help inform the debate, in 2011 80,000 fed-on parr were reared in the facility at Almondbank which the Board took over from Marine Scotland Science.

Thanks particularly to the expertise of new staff member Steve Keay, the fed on fry survived very well in the tanks and appeared to be of high quality – i.e. they were fully finned etc. They were then released in October in variable densities into parts of the River Braan catchment, this being the optimum time to stock out such fish according to some proponents. Earlier in the summer, unfed fry had also been stocked into some of the areas which were stocked with parr. This will allow future comparison of survival and growth rates between the two different stocking strategies.



80,000 salmon fry were introduced into tanks in June and fed until October when they were released (right) as part of an experiment to investigate their future survival



River Earn Japanese knotweed spraying

The Tay Foundation is in receipt of grant money from the Esme Fairbairn Foundation to control invasive weeds, in particular Japanese knotweed, as part of an all Scotland project led by RAFTS. This project has been implemented by the Tay Foundation, although with assistance from TDSFB staff. Spraying commenced in the autumn of 2010 between Crieff and Aberuthven. The project continued in 2011, and most of the knotweed between St Fillans and Crieff was sprayed. It is hoped that this work will continue over the next few years and that it will be possible to repeatedly spray all the knotweed on the Earn until it disappears.

TDSFB staff also sprayed giant hogweed in the upper Tay area in the spring of 2011. This plant has recently been making an appearance in that area. If not dealt with immediately, this will become a significant issue in future.

Re-watering of the River Garry

The issue of restoring flow to the River Garry ground on slowly during 2011.

As mentioned in last year's Annual Report, Scottish and Southern Energy made a formal application to SEPA in 2010 to restore flow. The Board objected to the proposals at the time, proposing instead other flow arrangements which it believes are more appropriate. Under the the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005, SEPA then had the responsibility of "determining" the licence. Despite the application having been made in May 2010, SEPA had still to determine the application by the spring of 2011. However, SEPA then made an administrative error which meant that the application had to be rejected. A reapplication was then made in summer 2011 by SSE and this was subject to another round of public consultation. We were again able to reiterate our position on the application, but with one major exception.

The levels of flow proposed by SSE are based on estimates made by a computer software package. In early 2011 the manufacturers of the software made changes to make it more accurate. The Board was able to show that the upgraded software estimated that more flow would be required to meet the agreed "flow standards" than had initially been thought.

Unfortunately, however, the Board has been informed that SEPA do not now intend to determine this application until at least the end of 2012. Apparently the agreed UK "flow standards" for restored rivers are due for review in 2012 and, it has apparently been agreed, that it would not be appropriate to determine the Garry application until the outcome of this review is known.

No flow is likely to be restored to the Garry until at least 2013.

Weirs on the Ruthven Water

The Ruthven Water is a significant tributary of the lower / middle Earn and is unusual in naturally having good access to the headwaters for salmon and especially sea trout. Most of the other Earn tributaries are naturally inaccessible because of large waterfalls in their lower reaches.

However, two weirs which are likely to be impassable to migratory fish, block the upper Ruthven Water and the upper part of a tributary called the Cloan Burn.

The last Annual Report stated that discussions had taken place between the owner of the weir on the Cloan Burn and SEPA regarding the installation of a small hydro scheme and it was hoped that, if and when an application was made to SEPA, a fish pass would be installed as a condition of the abstraction license. However, when the application was eventually made in 2011, there was no reference to a fish pass. The Board has made representation to SEPA to the effect that there should be, and SEPA's decision is awaited. SEPA have indicated, however, that the amount of available habitat above the weir does not warrant the expense of a fish pass. This might be true in the case of salmon, but streams of this size are of disproportionate importance to sea trout, particularly in the context of the River Earn.

The weir on the upper Ruthven Water was surveyed by TDSFB staff in 2011 and designs for a fish pass are being considered.

Loss of the Ericht Fish Counter

Since 1990, the Board has operated a resistivity fish counter on the River Ericht just upstream of Blairgowrie. The counter was installed in a fish pass on Keathbank Weir, a redundant weir which had formerly diverted water to a mill. This counter has provided very valuable information on the state of the Ericht's salmon stock.

However, over the autumn / winter of 2010/11 a major breach occurred in the weir through which fish can now swim. They have, therefore, no need for the fish pass, which is also partially de-watered. Work had earlier commenced on an Archimedes screw hydro station at this weir and this has had to be abandoned. The cost of replacing the weir would appear to be too great.

Therefore, after 20 years of counting, the fish counter was no longer functional and was removed.



Over the autumn / winter of 2010/11 a breach formed in Keathbank Weir on the River Ericht making the fish pass and fish counter redundant. A proposed Archimedes screw turbine had also to be abandoned despite significant work already having been done.

Shochie Burn Fish Counter

The Shochie Burn is a tributary which joins the River Tay at Luncarty. For salmon, it is the most significant burn sized tributary to directly enter anywhere on the main stem of the Tay. It is widely stated by locals that runs of salmon in the Shochie are less than they were several decades ago. In order to understand more about the numbers of salmon which run the Shochie, in conjunction with the Tay Foundation, it was decided to install a fish counter in a fish pass in the lower reaches of the burn.

It had been intended to install a VAKI infra-red fish counter, which has been obtained. However, the counter which had been in the Ericht was more suitable for installation at this

site and, when it unexpectedly became available, it was decided to move it to the Shochie. Other sites are being considered for the other counter, therefore.

The Shochie fish counter was installed in September 2011 and has already provided a lot of unexpected information. Nearly 900 fish have already been counted between September 2011 and late November 2011, with even more expected.



In the autumn of 2011 a fish counter was installed in a fish pass at a large weir on the lower reaches of the Shochie Burn. By late November nearly 900 fish had already been counted upstream.

Site Condition Monitoring

Some years ago, the River Tay and its accessible tributaries (not including the Earn), were designated an EU Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Atlantic salmon. It was given this designation because it has one of the best salmon populations in the EU. However, such designations require member states to meet certain conditions. For example, the “conservation status” of the Tay’s salmon population should not deteriorate.

To this end, there is a requirement for SAC rivers to be monitored every six years to check on the health of designated species. This is known as Site Condition Monitoring (SCM). The last SCM exercise took place in 2004/05. Another was scheduled for 2011.

The 2011 SCM exercise took the form of an analysis of catch trends which was conducted by RAFTS with Tay Foundation and TDSFB input and an extensive juvenile electrofishing survey. The survey protocol was designed and commissioned by RAFTS and delivered by the Tay Foundation with assistance from TDSFB staff. However, in the event, while it proved possible to survey smaller tributaries, many of the sites on larger tributaries could not be fished in the autumn of 2011 on account of water heights.

Salmon in the Classroom

Salmon in the classroom is a joint project which is now headed by the Tay Foundation and funded by Scottish Natural Heritage. Other partners include Perth and Kinross Council Ranger Services, Angus Council Ranger Services, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Ranger Services, Atholl Estates Ranger Services and the Esk and Tay district salmon fisheries boards.

In 2011, salmon eggs were provided from the Board's hatchery at Almondbank to seven primary (Pitcairn, Stanley, Crianlarich, Balhousie, Blair Atholl, Inverarity and Stracathro). In the spring the participating classes visited the Board's hatchery and were given talks and demonstrations on the salmon life cycle and its conservation, the process of the hatchery and the fisheries on the River Tay. This experience appeared to be very well received.

Trial Extension of the Tay Salmon Angling Season

In 2010, it was proposed that a two week trial season extension, on a catch and release basis, should be sought for the main River Tay downstream of the junction of the Tay and the Tummel. This would help determine whether it is appropriate to consider any permanent changes to the duration of the Tay season. Proprietors were consulted and only a very small percentage objected to the proposal. It was then raised at the Annual Meeting of Proprietors in December, where there was no objection. Therefore, in the spring of 2011 the Board decided to make an application to the Scottish Government.

The process of obtaining a licence for the trial was more involved and took longer than originally anticipated, but a licence was obtained at the beginning of August to conduct the trial for three years. The first year of the trial went ahead, therefore, in October 2011.

The main features of the trial were as follows:

- Participating beats were on the Tay from Perth to Dalguise only. No tributary beats were included.
- All fish were released as a condition of the licence.
- Only barbless hooks were used.
- Worm was not allowed.
- One third of the income generated by participating beats, averaged over the three years, is to be donated to the Tay Foundation.

The trial was limited to the lower and middle Tay because previous experience indicated that few fresh fish are likely to be encountered further upstream. Many would, in fact, be old spring salmon which would be close to spawning and better left well alone.

Anglers were requested to record hours fished with each method, estimated weights of each fish caught, sex of fish and an assessment of colouration. A selection of beats also photographed each fish caught and provided samples of scales for ageing purposes.

In the event, catches were not remarkable during this first year of the trial. As described previously, fishing conditions were very much against it. Fishing effort on some beats was also relatively low and the autumn grilse run did not appear to be strong anyway.

At the time of writing, the data are still being collated. Once this has been completed, a better indication will be obtained as to which of those three factors might have been most important and an interim report will be published on the Board's website. At the end of the three year trial a final report on the findings will be compiled and the Board will decide whether it is appropriate to seek permanent changes to the Tay salmon season and, if so, in which parts of the river system. This will also include consideration of the start date of the season as well as the end. Information will also be collected on unspent "baggots" at the start of the season to assess the status of such fish.

Review of the Board's Stocking Policy

In 2011, the Board conducted a review of its stocking policy to ensure the hatchery facilities were being used optimally and delivering value for money. The updated stocking policy has been issued as a formal document and is available on the Board's website (www.tdsfb.org).

The key conclusions of the review are as follows:

- It is recognised that stocking has a valuable role to play in the development of salmon stocks in the Tay district, but it must be managed carefully to avoid negative impacts and waste.
- The main aim of salmon stocking in this district is to assist the natural recovery of salmon populations where these have been depleted for some reason and where natural recolonisation processes alone are unlikely to be successful, except in the very long term. This will be done in conjunction with best evidence and guidelines for population restoration and will be driven by needs which have been carefully assessed.
- Those areas which might benefit most from this approach include those shown in Table.3. The total number of eggs required to stock those areas would amount to approximately 1.5 million per annum.
- As broodstock availability is low in such areas, the eggs or juveniles to be stocked will be obtained through the process of kelt reconditioning at the former Marine Scotland facility at Almondbank. This will require the capacity of that facility to be doubled. Genetic testing will be conducted to ensure that broodstock selection meets best practice guidelines.
- All stocking will be carefully monitored to allow its success or otherwise to be assessed.
- Stocking will not be undertaken in areas where healthy natural spawning populations are present. Stocking does not work in such situations.
- Stocking will be undertaken with eyed ova or unfed fry in spring and early summer and parr "grown on" at Almondbank to the autumn. For logistical reasons, it will be necessary to spread the stocking load in this way.
- Comparative trials will be undertaken of the different stocking strategies to determine which provides the highest rate of return.

<i>The upper Garry and tributaries</i>	This area is dry at present but is likely to have flow restored in the next few years. However, the proposed flows may not be ideal for encouraging salmon to spawn throughout the newly re-watered area. Even if that was not an issue, stocking would still help to greatly speed up the recolonisation of this stretch of river, but given it is, stocking might have an even greater role in restoring the population and thereafter maintaining it at full capacity.
<i>Upper Tummel</i>	The western part of the Tummel catchment is well understocked with salmon because of the difficulties of access to that area owing to the number of dams etc present. Stocking could increase smolt production from this area, however there may still be questions regarding the survival of downstream migrating smolts which may reduce the success of any stocking in this area.
<i>River Lochay</i>	For some years fry were stocked into the upper Lochay with reconditioned salmon eggs and this did successfully increase salmon densities in this tributary which is impacted by partial barriers and perhaps water abstraction.
<i>Water of Cononish</i>	For reasons still not fully understood, the Cononish (Dochart headwaters) had very low densities of salmon. After stocking with reconditioned salmon fry the juvenile population has risen markedly. This stocking may need to continue for some years until natural spawner numbers build up.
<i>Water of Dubh Choirein</i>	Again, for reasons still not fully understood, this upper tributary of the River Earn has very low densities of salmon despite good habitat. As in the Cononish stocking may help restore fish to this area or if not, help to identify the cause of poor salmon numbers.

Table 3. Parts of the Tay district identified as potentially requiring restoration stocking

Upper Tay Rafting Issues

For many years past, commercial rafting activity has affected angling in the upper Tay. Since the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, riparian owners in the area, principally through the Upper Tay Riparian Owners Association (UTROA), have sought, through various means, to achieve an agreement to have several consecutive days each week when no

rafting would occur during important periods for angling. Having, they believed exhausted voluntary means, in 2010, the Board instructed Fishlegal to seek a byelaw from Perth & Kinross Council to regulate rafting in the upper Tay area.

The matter was considered and rejected by PKC's Community Safety Committee on 8 June 2011. Fishlegal have since lodged a formal complaint with PKC over the way the application was handled. The response to this complaint is awaited.

UTROA has since also issued a writ in the Sheriff Court to seek judicial determination of the existence and extent of rafting rights as allowed for under Section 28 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. However, this is separate from the byelaw issue.

Beavers

Over the last few years there have been increasing reports of beavers being reported in the Tay catchment, either escapees from private collections or deliberate releases. There appear to be several tens of animals at large. Evidence of beaver activity has now been reported the full length of the main stems of the Tay and Earn and much of the Isla. The Board is co-operating with other organizations to find a solution to this issue. Otherwise, if beavers were to become established they could significantly impact on fish access in important spawning tributaries.

Lows Weir, River Almond

Low's Weir is a large weir on the River Almond situated just below Almondbank. Its purpose is to divert water from the River Almond into the Perth Town Lade. The weir is a long sloping structure and, while perhaps not a barrier to migrating salmon during higher flows, it was once a popular poaching spot in medium flows. In the past, there was no official regulation of the amount of water drawn off into the lade, and during droughts, most of the flow could be diverted leaving very little flow in the lower reaches of the Almond.

However, some years ago, a breach formed in the weir and, since then, no flow has entered the lade in normal conditions. Perth and Kinross Council has been keen to repair the weir in order to restore flow to the lade, particularly as there can be water quality issues where the depleted lade flows through Perth. The issue came to a head recently because the very large spate which occurred following the snowmelt in mid January caused a large amount of gravel and cobbles to be dislodged from above the weir and deposited downstream. The resulting flow deflection caused serious bank erosion threatening some properties.

Perth and Kinross Council engaged Atkins, an engineering consultancy firm, to design a repair of the weir. This will take the form of a concrete core with dressed stone on top. A fish pass will also be incorporated which should mean that fish passage is unlikely to be an issue, given there was no fish pass before.

However, when PKC applied to SEPA for the relevant licences, the Board objected on the basis that the proposed timing of the works (August – winter 2011) was inappropriate and could cause difficulties for salmon migration and potentially impact on angling downstream. Also, the proposed historic abstraction rate is too high at low flows and, indeed, far exceeds the Scottish Government's accepted standards for abstraction.

In the event, it was not possible for work to be conducted in autumn 2011. This has now been deferred to spring 2012. SEPA's determination on the permitted level of abstraction is awaited.

New hydro stations

New hydro stations continue to create a significant amount of work for the Board, although in 2011 the number of new proposals was less than it was several years ago. The prime steep stream sites have largely been claimed and constructional issues have been coming to the fore. Some of the more significant issues are described below.

Proposed hydro station on the River Isla

Following the issuing of a "Scoping Report" in 2010, Scottish & Southern Energy engaged consultants in 2011 to collect environmental information in support of an application to construct a new hydro scheme on the River Isla. The formal application is awaited.

The proposal is to abstract water from the Isla just upstream of the Reekie Linn waterfall and return it 9.5 km downstream at Shanzie. The particular attraction of this part of the river is a large head difference resulting from a sequence of large waterfalls. Salmon cannot ascend these waterfalls, but approximately half of the proposed abstracted section is accessible to salmon with two important spawning streams, the Melgam Water and Auchrannie Burn. The Board and local fisheries interests are very concerned that this proposal will impact on both salmon production and the quality of local fisheries.

While no official application has yet been lodged, the issue was raised by the Fisheries Director at SSE's annual general meeting in July.

Loch Ordie Dam

Loch Ordie lies in the hills to the east of Dowally and feeds the Dowally Burn, a tributary of the middle Tay. An application to install a hydro station on this burn has already been consented and was under construction in 2011. Most of the length of burn impacted by the scheme is not accessible to salmon, however.

In 2011, a further proposal was made to raise the level of the outlet of the loch in order to increase flood storage and thus increase the amount of electricity which can be generated. The Board had concerns with this proposal in that, in a particularly dry autumn / winter, it is possible that the occasional small spate could effectively be trapped in storage and not translated into a rise further down the Dowally Burn. In such circumstances, salmon could potentially be denied opportunity to spawn in the lower part of the Dowally Burn that is accessible to salmon. Discussions are continuing to find a practicable solution such that, if such conditions ever did prevail, some form of "freshet" would be released.

Estuary tagging experiment to determine angling capture rates of autumn salmon

From an angling perspective, the most important part of the season is the autumn. That is when, in recent times at least, the largest catches are made and the greatest revenue is generated. The autumn salmon run underpins the entire angling economy and pays for the Board's management of the river. But, despite the importance of autumn salmon, they are the least understood. We do not know how many enter the river or what proportion of

these are caught by angling. Such information would be very helpful, for example, in considering whether extending the season is appropriate or not.

However, because autumn salmon spawn in the main stem of the Tay or in larger tributaries like the Isla, it is not practicable to count them using fish counters. An alternative that is often used in such circumstances is to tag fish entering the river and determine “exploitation rates” on the basis of the proportion of tagged fish that are subsequently recaptured. Such an exercise has been undertaken annually on the River Tweed since the mid 1990s, where a netting station is operated in the close season and all the fish caught are tagged and released.

In 2011 the Tay Foundation, which holds the leases of the former Tay Salmon Fisheries Company netting stations in the Tay estuary, agreed to allow experimental netting to be carried out for the purposes of tagging and releasing fish. After a licence was obtained from Marine Scotland to fish after the end of the official netting season (20 August), experimental netting commenced at one of the old netting stations downstream of Kinfauns. The netting was conducted by former netsmen from the Tay Salmon Fisheries Company and was attended by Tay Foundation and TDSFB staff to tag and release the fish.

In the event, netting salmon proved to be no simple task. Many stones and other snags had accumulated on the bottom of the river since nets last operated in 1996 and these were a considerable hindrance. Netting took place, on something like seven occasions over a period of two weeks, but only two salmon were actually caught and tagged. The exercise had to be abandoned in early September because of very high water and was not resumed.



Experimental netting was tried in the Tay estuary to catch salmon for tagging. In the event only two salmon were caught. Problems encountered included the frequent snagging on stones such as the specimen opposite which had accumulated since netting was last practiced in the 1990s.



Developing a long term strategy

In 2011 the Board determined to develop a long term strategy. This will include the role of hatchery work, prioritization of projects and other long term aims. It will also include a commitment to continually review the work being done and monitor its effectiveness.

It is intended that the strategy will be completed by the time the present Board demits office and will be adopted and implemented by the newly elected Board in 2012. The strategy will be made available on the Board's website so that anyone with an interest in the River Tay and its salmon can see exactly what the Board seeks to achieve.

Media and Public Relations

In 2011, the Board continued to achieve good media attention for its activities. Significant publicity was achieved around Opening Day, including coverage on BBC News 24. Andrew Graham Stewart continued to be used as PR consultant and worked extensively with the Tay Foundation Development Manager and the Board's Fisheries Director to publicize issues of relevance. Significant coverage was generated about some of the larger salmon caught in the Tay in 2011. This was particularly helped by an article written for the *Field* by Andrew Graham Stewart.

Opening Day celebrations at Dunkeld

In 2011 the Board once again lent its support to the new opening day celebration organized by the Dunkeld and Birnam Tourist Association. After an address by the Board's chairman, Bill Jack and John Swinney MSP, John Swinney again made the symbolic first cast near Dunkeld Bridge.



John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth in the Scottish Government, preparing to make the symbolic first cast of the 2011 Tay season in what proved to be very hostile conditions.

The River Tay Conservation and Awards Dinner

The 6th River Tay Conservation and Awards Dinner was held at Dunkeld House Hotel on Friday 14 October 2011.

This proved to be a very successful event. An auction and raffle raised in the region of £25,000 for the Tay Foundation.

Long service awards were presented to mark the retiring of three gillies – Peter Keay from Almondmouth, Geordie Mainland from Taymount and Bert Shearer from Glenlyon.

The Tay Salmon Conservation Award was awarded to John Apthorp, for a second time, in recognition for his outstanding generosity towards the river. In particular Mr Apthorp's help was pivotal earlier this year in rescuing the irreplaceable Marine Scotland Science hatchery and kelt reconditioning unit at Almondbank, which would have been closed otherwise. In Mr Apthorp's absence the Ballathie Trophy was fittingly accepted on his behalf by Duncan Glass, who has also worked tirelessly in recent years to help the river.

An entertaining address was made by the broadcaster, Fiona Armstrong.

The Board is very grateful to all who kindly donated lots for the auction and prizes for the raffle and Lorna Bromley-Martin and the Dinner Committee for all their hard work in organizing the event.

New website – www.fishthetay.co.uk

While there are many websites available providing information on fishing, for example www.fishtay.co.uk, it was recognized that information on the management of the river is less readily available. Both the Board and the Tay Foundation have websites describing their work (www.tdsfb.org, www.tayfoundation.org), but these do not appear to be commonly accessed websites.

Therefore, in order to provide an easy access portal to information about the river, from fishing reports to news of recent activities and events, a new website was established – www.fishthetay.co.uk.

This website should, in future, be the main point of entry for finding information on fisheries management work on the river.



The 2011 Tay Salmon Conservation Award was made to John Apthorp whose generosity to the river has been outstanding once again in helping the Board acquire Marine Scotland's Fish Rearing Unit at Almondbank

FISH COUNTER RESULTS 2011

Pitlochry Dam

The annual count at Pitlochry Dam in 2011 was the highest since 2006, and indeed, one of the highest in the last 30 years (Figure 1). However, the significance of this count increases when the monthly breakdown of the count is considered.

Previously in Annual Reports, monthly counts have only been presented back to 1997, older data apparently having been unavailable. However, during the course of 2011 attempts were made to find the missing monthly count data back to the 1950s. This has largely been successful, except for a short period in the late 1980s. Much assistance was provided by Professor Michael Gardner of the University of Bradford and Ross Gardiner and David Stewart at the Freshwater Laboratory. The resulting monthly counts are presented in Figure 3.

With the exception of what might have happened between 1987 and 1991, Figure 3 shows that 2011 saw the record high count for April. While May and June counts were within the range of recent years, the July count was much higher than recent years. It was in fact the highest since 1981. As observations of fish passing through the viewing chamber and rod catches in the Tay and other Scottish rivers indicated a relatively poor grilse run in July, the July count was composed of a greater proportion of MSW salmon than usual. This would imply that the total count of MSW to the end of July was the highest since at least 1979.

While there was clearly a much stronger run of MSW salmon in 2011, another factor which is likely to have influenced the timing of their ascent of the dam is temperature. Met Office records show that April 2011 was the warmest April in the last century (Figure 2). This is likely to have stimulated fish to start passing through the counter earlier than usual, while cooler weather in May and June may then have delayed fish which might have ascended in those months, leading to a higher count in July.

This excellent Tummel salmon count is rather curious given that the Tummel grilse count in 2010 was actually very poor, in contrast to the experience of many other Scottish rivers last year. Clearly, that poor run could not have been caused by the large Tummel flood of December 2006, as suggested as a possibility in the last *Annual Report*. Had it been, there would have been few salmon in 2011 also.

So what caused the exceptional salmon run in 2011? One possibility might be that the potential Tummel grilse of 2010 just stayed out at sea for another year and matured later. Maybe they did. But this does not tie up with the experience of board staff during broodstock collection in the autumn. Unlike their usual experience, there was a surfeit of females in 2011. This may be significant, because Tummel grilse are normally predominantly male and the salmon predominantly female. Had fish merely delayed their maturation, then more of the salmon ought to have been male, but that does not appear to have been the case, unless they return as 3SW salmon in 2012.

What this does tell us, however, is that while poor salmon runs sometimes do follow poor grilse runs, they don't always. The poor grilse run of 2011, might be followed by a poor 2SW salmon run or it might not. We simply do not know. But what we might be more hopeful of is a good run of 3SW fish in 2012. Time will tell!

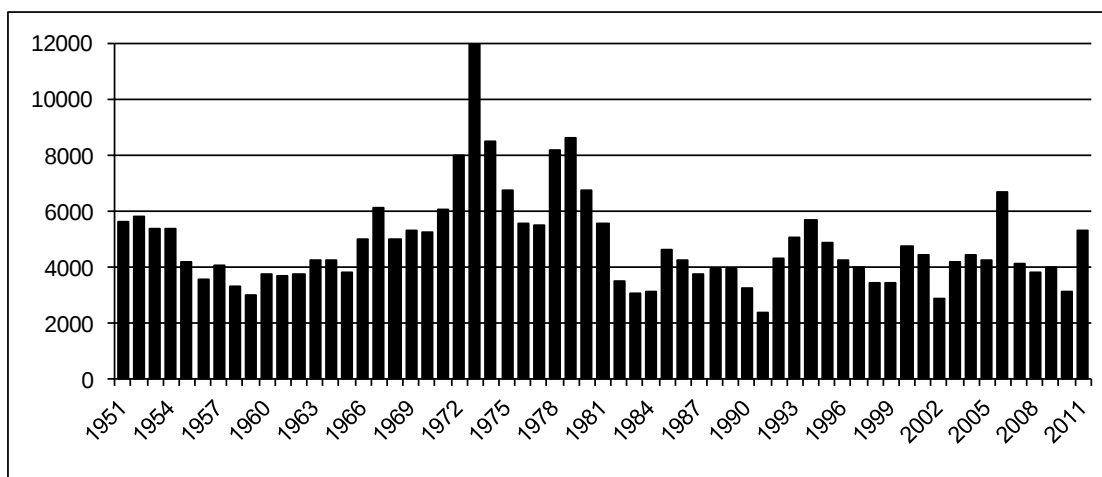


Figure 1. Annual net upstream counts (that is down counts are subtracted from up-counts on a daily basis) through Pitlochry Dam fish ladder, 1953 – 2011. (Data courtesy of SSE)

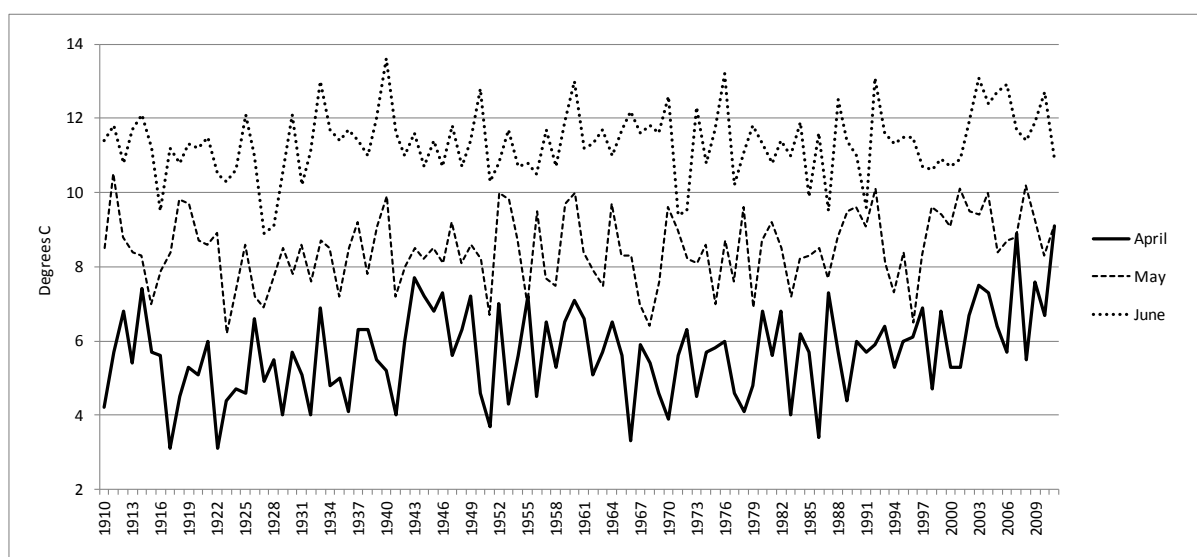


Figure 2. Average temperatures in eastern Scotland for the months of April, May and June over the period 1910 – 2011. (Source of data www.metoffice.gov.uk)

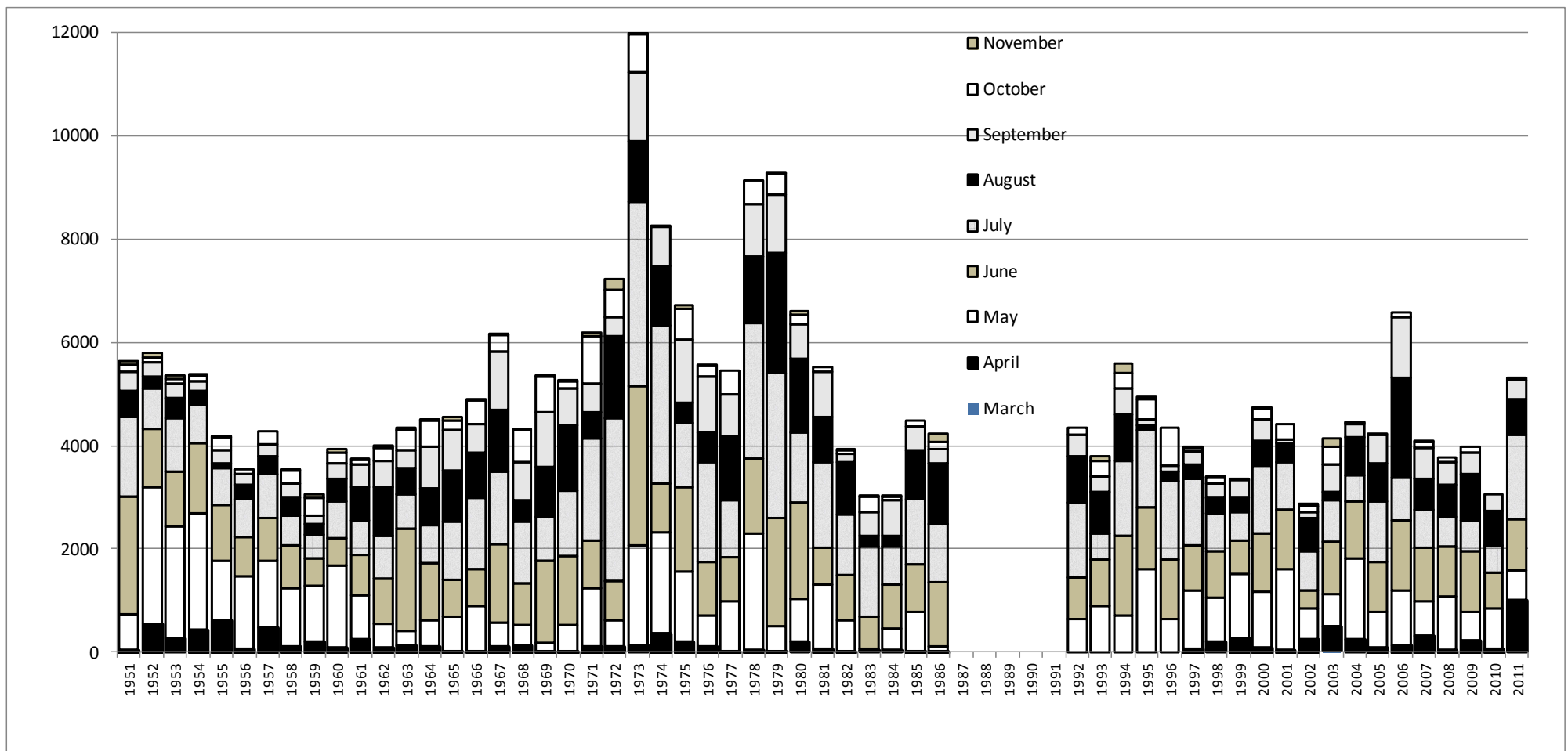


Figure 3. Monthly net upstream counts, Pitlochry Dam, 1951 to 2011. (Data courtesy of Michael Gardner, David Stewart, Ross Gardiner and SSE)

Clunie Dam

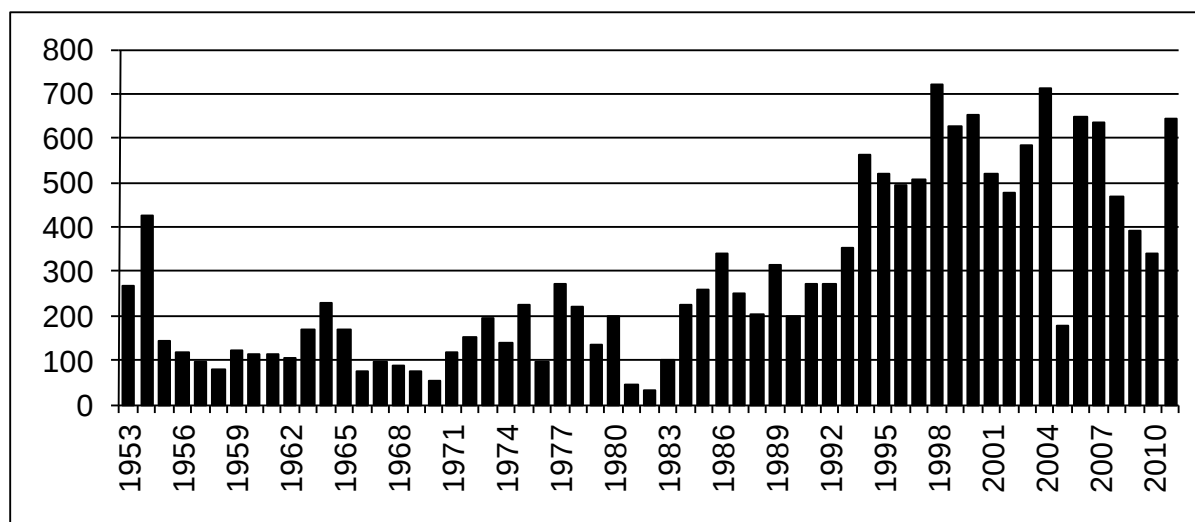


Figure 4. Net annual upstream counts through Clunie Dam fish ladder, 1953 to 2011. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2005). (Data courtesy of SSE)

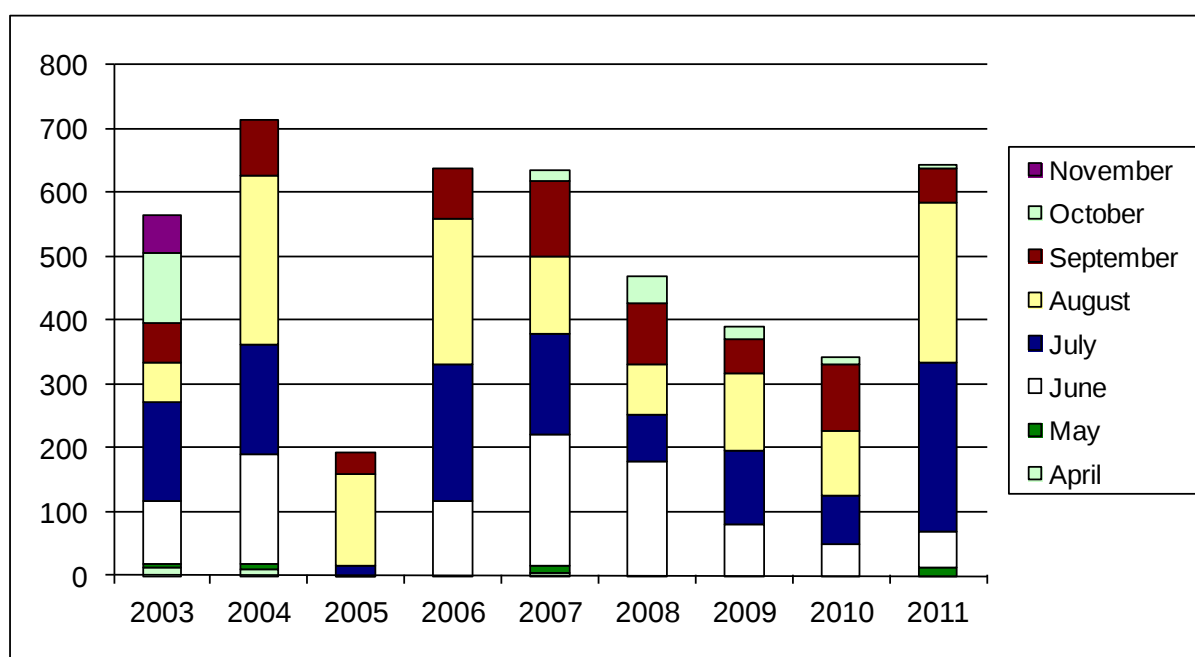


Figure 5. Monthly net upstream counts, Clunie Dam fish ladder, 2003 – 2011. (Data courtesy of SSE)

As at Pitlochry Dam, the 2011 count at Clunie Dam was well up on the last few years. It has now returned to the high levels which prevailed between the late 90s and the mid 2000s.

In terms of the seasonal distribution of the count, June was poor relative to July, but this may have been a reflection of the relatively low temperatures which prevailed in June 2011 (Figure 2), resulting in a delayed migration.

Lochay Falls

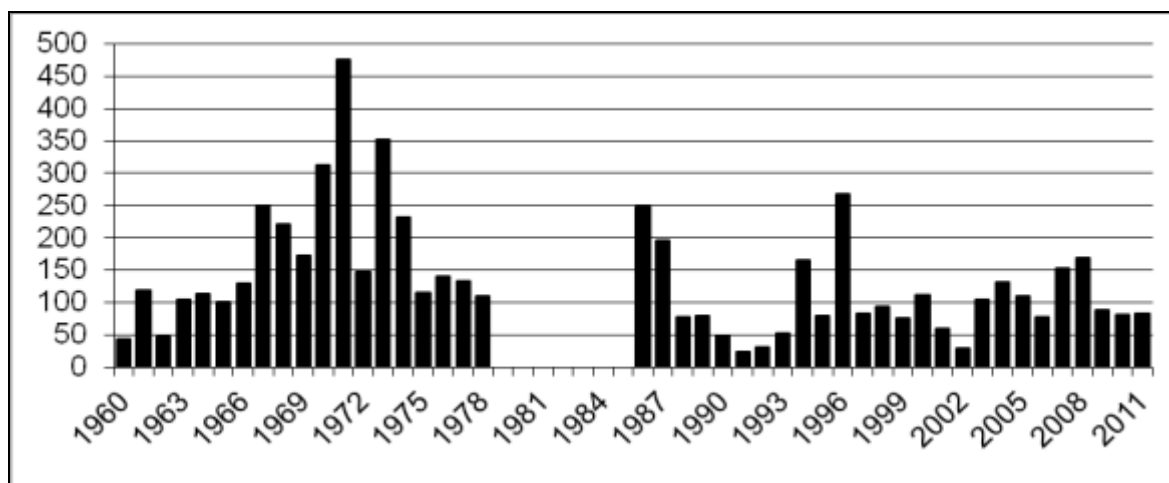


Figure 6. Net annual counts at Lochay Falls fish lift, 1960 to 2011 (Data courtesy of SSE)

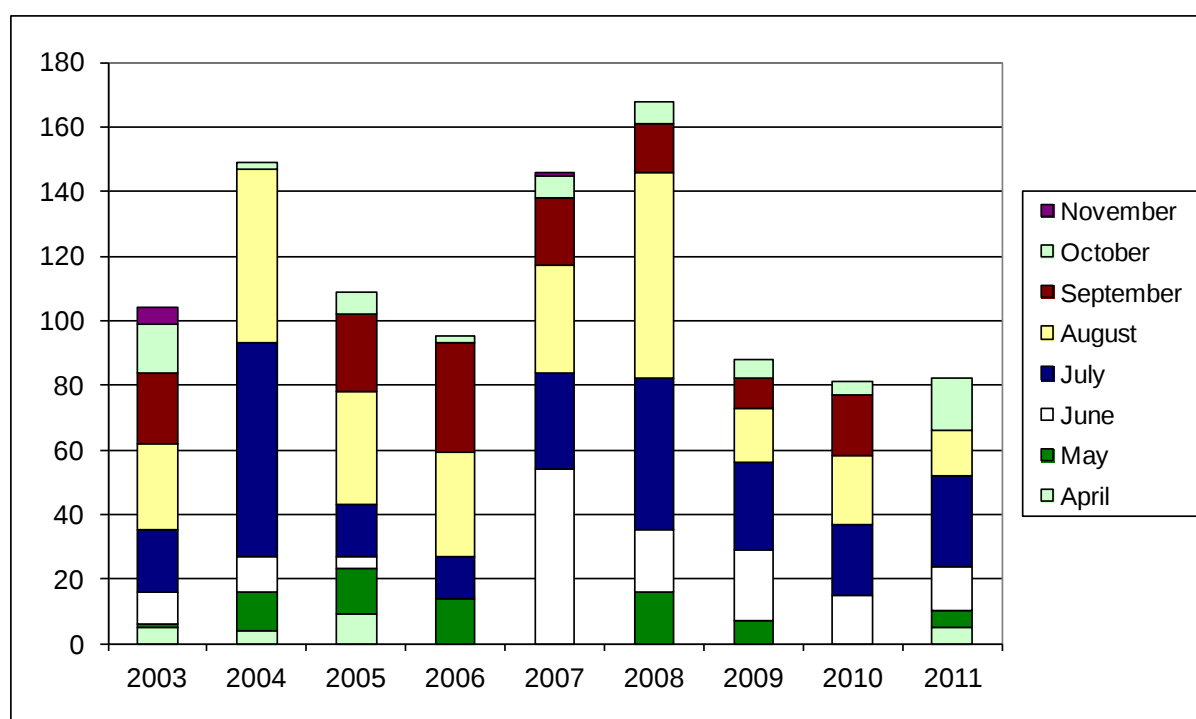


Figure 7. Net monthly upstream counts at Lochay Falls, 2003 to 2011. (Data courtesy of SSE)

The Lochay Falls are a naturally insurmountable barrier to salmon on the lower reaches of the River Lochay near Killin. As compensation for the loss of former spawning areas on the Lyon, the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board installed a Borland fish lift to allow salmon access to the Lochay. SSE now operate a fish counter on the upstream exit of the fish pass.

The net upstream count in 2011 was of a similar level to 2009 and 2010, which were not particularly good years. However, the graphs above do not show that, by the end of August, the net upstream count stood at a more respectable 91. Unfortunately, there was then a large number of down counts, indicating that fish left the tributary and did not return.

Stronuich Dam

No counts are available from Stronuich Dam (River Lyon) in 2011 due to technical problems with the counter.

River Ericht

As mentioned earlier, the weir which diverted fish to the Ericht counter has been breached, therefore this counter is no longer operational and is unlikely to be replaced.



The Dalmore “Tay Dram” was launched at Scone Palace in 2011. Dalmore will make a donation to the Tay Foundation for every bottle sold.

For more information see <http://www.onlinespirits.co.uk/dalmore-tay-dram>

Minute of the Annual Meeting of the Proprietors within the Tay District held in terms of Section 44(1) of the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 held at the Birnam Institute, Birnam, Dunkeld at 11am on 7th December, 2010.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Colin Lowson
John Young
Jock Tait
James Taylor
Gary Harkin
Ian Marsden
Ian Massie
Sir William MacPherson of Cluny
Lord Stormont
Sam Mercer-Nairne
Ross Gardiner
Bob White
Thomas Steuart Fotheringham
William Lindsay
John Wood
Bruce Reid
David Barwick
David Godfrey
Victor Clements
Donald Skene
Stan Pelc
Simon Furniss
John Furniss

In Attendance: Dr. David Summers
Rob Mitchell
Lee Fisher
Lorna Bromley-Martin

Apologies: Alastair Riddell
Alex Stewart
Lord Ogilvie
Malcolm Taylor
Gavin Jack
John McGregor
Ian Davie
Callum Towns

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 8th December, 2009.

The Minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting were taken as read and were approved.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December, 2009

The Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2009 which were incorporated in the Annual Report, had been circulated and were taken as read.

The Chairman acknowledged there had been concern over the increase in the assessment which had taken place in 2010 but explained that it was the Board's intention that no further increase should occur in the next three years. It was hoped that despite this it would be possible to create an annual surplus in future by making savings and finding other sources of income. A good start had already been made.

There were no further questions and on a proposal by Lord Stormont, seconded by John Young, the Accounts were approved.

Annual Report 2009/10

The Chairman introduced the 2009/10 Annual Report and invited questions at the end of the meeting.

On a proposal by Thomas Steuart Fotheringham, seconded by John Wood, the Annual Report was approved.

Presentation on 2011 work plan

An illustrated presentation detailing the project work that the Board and the Tay Foundation intended to carry out in 2011 was made by Rob Mitchell, Tay Foundation Biologist.

Presentation on the Tay Western Catchment Project

An illustrated presentation on the Tay Western Catchment Project was made by Victor Clements of Scottish Native Woods, who was standing in for Alastair Riddell who was unable to attend because of the weather.

Presentation on the proposed three year trial Tay salmon season extension

An illustrated presentation was made by Dr David Summers on the proposal to apply to the Scottish Government for a three year trial extension of the salmon angling season in the lower and middle Tay.

Following the presentation and questions, the Chairman asked the meeting for its views. The proposal received unanimous approval.

Questions

The Chairman invited questions on any aspect of the Board's work.

Victor Clements asked about the outcome of the experimental trial of shrimp fishing that had been conducted in August 2010 and was described in the Annual Report. The Chairman explained that the Board had not yet had sufficient time to consider the findings and that

this would be done at the next Board meeting. The future direction of this experiment would be considered then.

Thomas Steuart Fotheringham wished to know what response there had been to the shrimping experiment from other DSFBs. The Chairman explained that this had been discussed with the chairmen of the Dee, Spey and Tweed. The Tay, of course was a very different river to those others, not least in having an average flow which is greater than that of the Dee, Spey and Tweed combined. The shrimping experiment had been conducted to see if it had the potential to reverse the decline which had taken place in summer letting in recent years due in part to adverse conditions which was having a knock on effect in terms of increasing part-time rather than full-time employment and on hotels etc.

No further items were raised and the meeting was closed.

Report of the Auditors to the proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District

In accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003, section 44, we have audited the statement of accounts on pages 38 to 42. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2007), under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 40.

This report is made solely to the proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the proprietors those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the proprietors for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of duly elected and duly co-opted board members and auditors

Section 44 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 requires the Board to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Board and of the surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those accounts, the Board members are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Board will continue in operation.

The board members are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the board. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Board and hence for taking reasonable steps in the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Our responsibility is to audit the statement of accounts in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). We report to you our opinion as to whether the statement of accounts give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. We also report to you whether in our opinion the information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the statement of accounts.

In addition, we report to you if, in our opinion, the board has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the statement of accounts.

We read the Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the statement of accounts. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Board members in the preparation of the statement of accounts, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the statement of accounts.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- The statement of accounts give a true and fair view, in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to Smaller Entities of the state of the Board's affairs as at 31 December 2010, and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- The statement of accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003; and
- The information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the statement of accounts.

Alan Taylor (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Campbell Dallas LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
4 Atholl Crescent, Perth, PH1 5NG
28 November 2011

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

	NOTES	£	2010 £	2009 £
INCOME				
Fishery assessments	2		438,791	390,436
Revaluation Appeals			-	(2,016)
Bad debts, changes to provision for doubtful debts etc			(823)	(2,054)
			-----	-----
			437,968	386,366
Compensation Received (SSE)			5,843	5,706
Contributions from Tay Foundation			21,755	97,579
Contribution from SEPA			2,000	2,068
Consultancy			2,600	21,147
			-----	-----
			470,166	512,866
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries and National Insurance		208,125		259,039
Contribution to TF Salaries		32,307		-
Pension plus Death in Service- Board's contribution		11,465		10,567
Recruitment		-		107
Training		1,501		360
Employee Expenses		889		2,323
Motor cars and boats running costs, incl insurance		34,146		29,665
Rent, rates and general insurance		23,105		15,050
Heat & light		5,753		5,792
Repairs&maintenance - General		3,544		809
Repairs&maintenance - Hatchery		12,678		6,246
Telephone & Communications		6,775		8,484
Printing, Stationery & Advertising		4,358		3,360
Annual Report Costs		577		544
Meetings and other statutory costs		2,878		2,453
Public Relations		-		320
Ghillies lunch and meeting		1,787		800
Administration costs		18,000		18,000
Legal fees		-		2,114
Audit and accounts fees		2,512		2,173
Depreciation		26,024		27,074
Subscriptions and levies		12,524		12,223
I T costs		1,158		1,536
Health & Safety implementation incl clothing		5,340		6,659
SOAFD - Kelt reconditioning		16,500		16,500
Sweatshirts		2,288		2,793
Project Work		15,504		16,926
Websites		7,166		6,458
Conservation Dinner		560		7,527
Gifts & Presentations		136		240
		-----		-----
			457,600	466,142
			-----	-----
			12,566	46,724
Gain on sale of fixed assets			-	2,350
			-----	-----
			12,566	49,074
Interest received	3		4	117
			-----	-----
			12,570	49,191
Transfers to reserves: NASF(UK)	5		-	-
			-----	-----
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year			12,570	49,191
			=====	=====

The notes on pages 38 to 42 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2010

	NOTES	£	2010 £	2009 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	4		130,746	145,149
			-----	-----
			130,746	145,149
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & prepayments		21,370		26,169
Cash at Bank and in Hand		190,401		170,309
		-----		-----
		211,770		196,478
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Other creditors & accruals		30,196		41,877
		-----		-----
Net current assets			181,574	154,601
			-----	-----
NET ASSETS			312,320	299,750
			=====	=====
Representing:				
Reserves	5		83,434	83,434
General Fund	6		228,886	216,316
			-----	-----
			312,320	299,750
			=====	=====

These accounts were approved on 21st June 2011

WILLIAM JACK
.....

WILLIAM JACK
BOARD MEMBER

WILLIAM LINDSAY
.....

WILLIAM LINDSAY
BOARD MEMBER

The notes on pages 38 to 42 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS AT 31 DECEMBER 2010

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and are in accordance with applicable accounting standards. The following accounting policies have been applied:

Fixed assets and depreciation

The cost of fixed assets is stated at the net amount after deducting grants available. Donations relating to expenditure on fixed assets are credited to the Profit and Loss Account in the year of receipt, where there are no conditions attaching to the donation.

Depreciation is provided on all fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned as follows:

Hatchery	Over term of the lease
Motor vehicles	25% per annum straight line
Boats	25% per annum reducing balance
Plant and Equipment	25% per annum reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3 % straight line

Taxation

No taxation is provided due to the fact that HM Revenue and Customs has agreed that the Board is not liable for corporation tax.

Death in service scheme

Contributions to the Board's scheme are charged to the Income and Expenditure account in the year in which they become payable.

2 FISHERY ASSESSMENTS

	2010		2009	
	Rateable Value	Assessment	Rateable Value	Assessment
	£	£	£	£
Upper proprietors	715,751	436,608	719,785	388,684
Lower proprietors	13,630	8,314	13,955	7,535
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	729,381	444,922	733,740	396,219
	=====		=====	
Less River Shee		(183)		(356)
Estuarial netting stations		(5,948)		(5,427)
		-----		-----
		438,791		390,436
		=====		=====

The assessments are based on 61% of Rateable Value (2009 - 54%)

3 INTEREST RECEIVED

	2010	2009
	£	£
Bank interest	4	117
	-----	-----
	4	117
	=====	=====

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (cont'd)
AT DECEMBER 31 2010

4 FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Property £	Motor VehiclesBoats £	Equipment £	Plant & Equipment £	Office and Computer Total £	£
Cost:						
At 1 January 2010	139,981	68,695	42,671	186,517	17,572	455,436
Additions	-	9,708	-	-	1,913	11,621
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
At 31 December 2010	139,981	78,403	42,671	186,517	19,485	467,057
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Depreciation:						
At 1 January 2010	29,683	56,928	41,645	164,939	17,092	310,287
Charge for year	9,194	10298	257	5,398	877	26,024
Eliminated for disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
At 31 December 2010	38,877	67,226	41,902	170,337	17,969	336,311
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net book amounts:						
At 31 December 2010	101,104	11,177	769	16,180	1,516	130,746
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
At 31 December 2009	110,298	11,767	1,026	21,578	480	145,149
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

5 RESERVES

	GENERAL £	NASF(UK) £	TOTAL £
At 1 January 2010	83,434	-	83,434
Provision in year	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----
	83,434	-	83,434
Expenditure in year	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----
At 31 December 2010	83,434	-	83,434
	=====	=====	=====

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

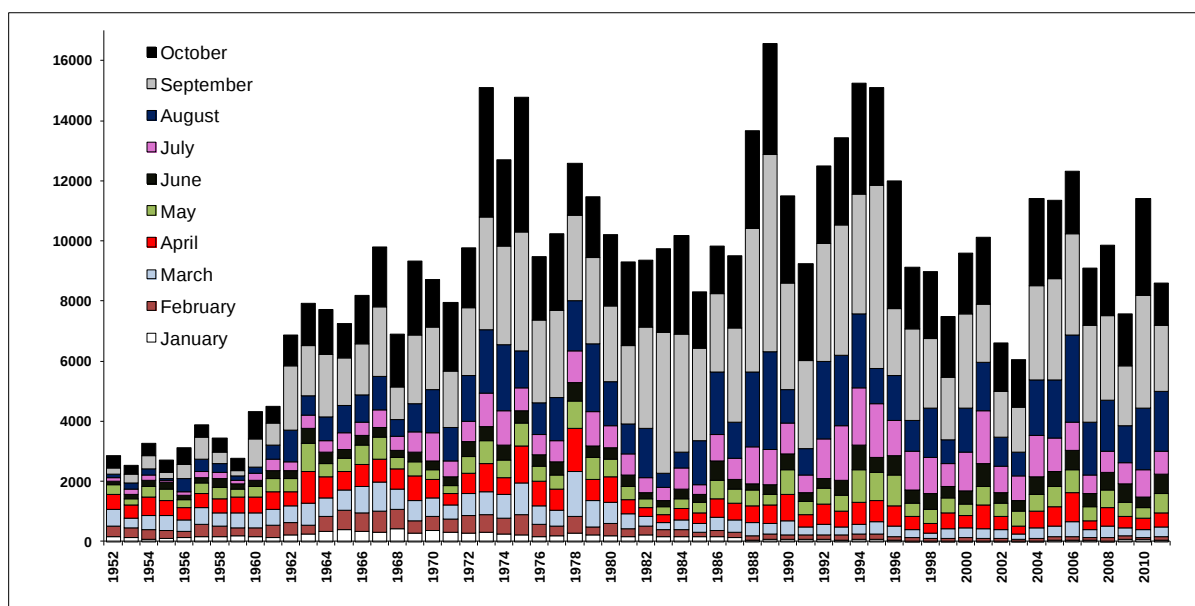
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (cont'd)
AT DECEMBER 31 2010

6 GENERAL FUND

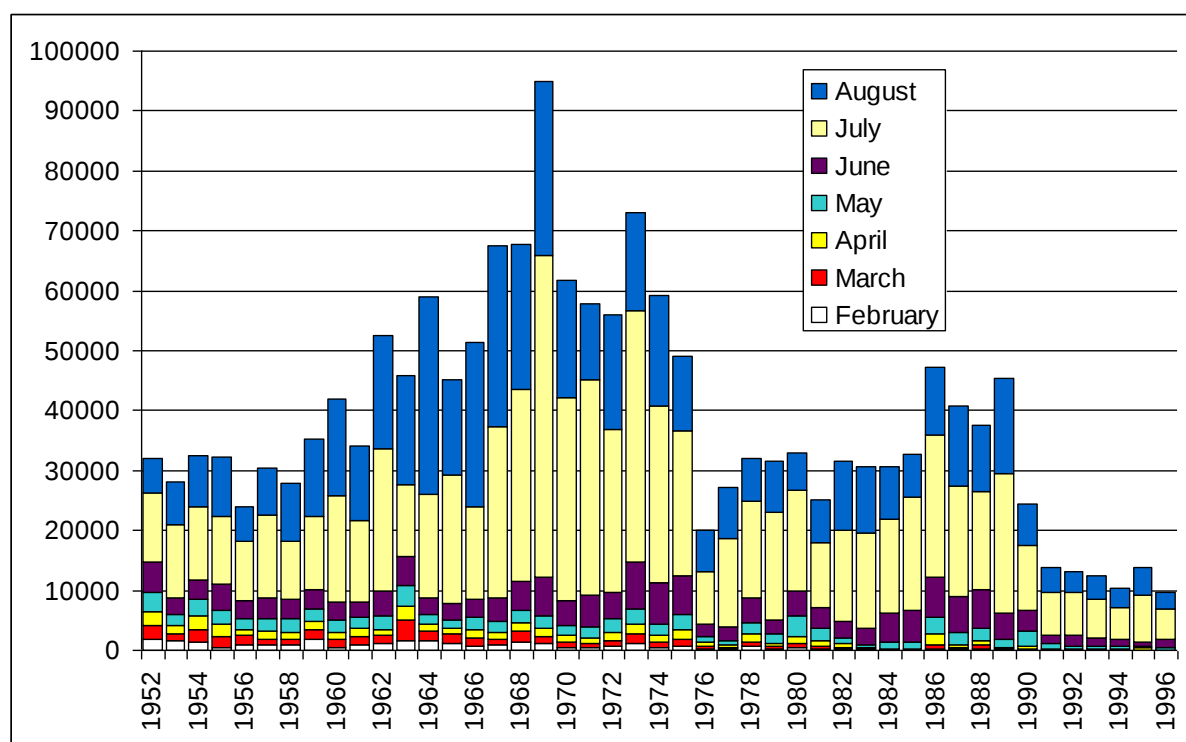
	2010	2009
	£	£
At 1 January 2010	216,316	167,125
(Deficit)/Surplus for year	12,570	49,191
	-----	-----
At 31 December 2010	228,886	216,316
	=====	=====

7. CAPITAL COMMITMENT

At the year end the Board had budgeted for Capital Expenditure totalling £12,250 including a new vehicle at £10,000.



Monthly angling catch for the Tay District 1952 – 2011 (including released fish). The 1952 – 2010 data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science, Aberdeen. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties. 2011 is a preliminary estimate based on fishtay website analysis.



Monthly net and coble catch, Tay District 1952 – 1996 (netting largely ceased in 1996). The data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science, Aberdeen. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE FOR 2010

	9 February	20 April	22 June	24 August	12 October	7 December
W. Jack	X	X	X	X	X	X
D. Barwick	-	-	X	X	-	X
I. Davie	-	-	Resigned			
S. Furniss	X	X	X	X	X	X
R. Gardiner	X	X	X	X	Resigned	
D. Godfrey	X	-	X	X	X	X
W. Lindsay	X	X	X	X	X	X
C. Lowson	X	-		X	-	X
I. Massie	X	X	X	-	-	X
S. Mercer-Nairne	X	X	X	X	-	X
B. Reid	X	X	X	X	-	X
A. Riddell	X	-	X	X	X	-
T. Steuart Fotheringham	X	-	X	X	X	X
A. Stewart	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lord Stormont	X	X	-	-	-	X
J. Tritton	-	-	-	-	-	-
M. Wedderburn	-	X	-	X	X	-
R. White	X	X	X	X	X	X
J. M. Wood	X	X	X	X	-	X
I. Wotherspoon	-	X	-	-	Resigned	
J. Young	-	X	X	X	-	-

- X Present
 - Apologised for non-attendance

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board wishes to acknowledge the following people, organisations and companies for their very kind assistance and support throughout 2010 and 2011.

All Proprietors within the Tay District
 Callum Towns
 Andrew Graham-Stewart
 All Honorary Bailiffs
 All Ghillies and Boatmen
 All Tay Board staff
 The Tay Ghillies Association
 The Tay Foundation
 Scottish Environment Protection Agency
 Mike Miles and Jim Muir at the Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Almondbank
 The staff of Marine Scotland at:
 Victorian Quay, Edinburgh
 Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry
 Montrose Research Station
 The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
 The River and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland
 Scottish Natural Heritage
 Scottish and Southern Energy plc