2015
ANNUAL REVIEW

ASSOCIATION OF SALMON FISHERY BOARDS
(ASFB)

RIVERS AND FISHERIES TRUSTS OF SCOTLAND
(RAFTS)

STRUTT & PARKER

Contents

The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards is the representative body for Scotland's 41 District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs) including the River Tweed Commission (RTC), which have a statutory responsibility to protect and improve salmon and sea trout fisheries. The Association and Boards work to create the environment in which sustainable fisheries for salmon and sea trout can be enjoyed. Conservation of fish stocks, and the habitats on which they depend, is essential and many DSFBs operate riparian habitat enhancement schemes and have voluntarily adopted catch and release practices, which in some cases are made mandatory by the introduction of salmon conservation regulations. ASFB creates policies that seek, where possible, to protect wider biodiversity and our environment as well as enhancing the economic benefits for our rural economy that result from salmon and sea trout fisheries.

Formed in 2005, Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) is an independent freshwater conservation charity representing Scotland's national network of 26 Rivers and Fisheries Trusts and Foundations. Our members work across over 90% of Scotland's freshwaters to protect and develop our native fish stocks and populations by undertaking a range of activities including freshwater, river habitat restoration, fish and fisheries monitoring, research and education programmes. RAFTS is the membership organisation of the network of rivers Trusts operating in Scotland and is, itself, a charity and company limited by guarantee.

Chairmen's introductions

ANDREW WALLACE - *RAFTS*

2014 was a year of reorganisation and change for RAFTS, with our new director, Dr Chris Horrill, settling in quickly and restructuring the organisation to deal with the more challenging financial circumstances of recent years.

Chris has focused on cost reduction, income generation and developing more robust financial administration systems. I am pleased to say he has been successful in each of these endeavours. RAFTS has also had to respond to the inevitable challenges posed by the Wild Fisheries Review (WFR) and we have been working ever more closely with ASFB on how we respond to this. The challenge of developing a new fisheries management structure faces RAFTS, ASFB and their respective members equally, and it is beholden on us both to work closely together and with Scottish Government to design a new, modern fisheries management system for Scotland that is consistent with the objectives and wishes of our stakeholders and with Government policy.

With this in mind it is realistic to expect that RAFTS, ASFB and their members will, in their current form, cease to exist at some point in the reasonably near future. It is therefore beholden on both organisations and Government to ensure that the transition phase and the structures that will replace them build on the considerable strengths of the existing system whilst leaving behind some of its frailties. I would personally like to express my particular thanks, not only to the staff team, headed up by Chris, who have shown such commitment over the last 12 months, despite the unsettling consequences of the WFR, but also to Alasdair Laing, Alan Wells and the ASFB Board, who have made the essential job of working together on these plans for the future so easy. Thanks also are due to: our hard working board; to the officials in Government and its agencies who have been so supportive of RAFTS' work over the last year; to Strutt & Parker who sponsor our annual review; and also to the Fishmongers' Company whose unwavering support for Scottish fisheries management over many years has been much appreciated. The next two years will see many challenges and changes but I am confident that we have in place both the will and the way to respond positively to Andrew Thin's Wild Fisheries Review.

ALASDAIR LAING - *ASFB*

It would be a serious mistake to pretend that there is no cause for concern about fish stocks returning to Scottish rivers. Note that I use the word "returning"; there is strong evidence that our rivers are generally in good heart, most accessible nursery areas are well stocked with juvenile fish and good numbers of smolts are going to sea.

Boards and Trusts must take much of the credit for this – the most significant effect a Board or Trust can have on their fishery is to ensure the maximum number of smolts that their system is capable of producing naturally get to sea.

Yet, although there is still plenty of scope for further improvement in freshwater management – from pollution control to ameliorating the potential effect of global warming – it is increasingly recognised that something at sea is reducing the proportion of smolts returning as adult fish.

This was the focus of a workshop session at this year's AGM and, as we improve our knowledge and management of the marine environment, the ability of our nursery areas to "restock" the salmonid life cycle increases in importance.

2014 was another poor year for catches, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that most rivers recorded less than 50% of their long term average catch. Not surprisingly, in such circumstances the role of the management community has been questioned, but – as those working with their local Boards and Trusts will know – we are doing a great deal to respond to these problems. We should also remember that two bad years do not make a disaster – many rivers have had excellent seasons in the last decade and *Salmo salar* is a resilient species.

For ASFB the next year or two will be dominated by the developing debate around the Wild Fisheries Review's recommendations. We await the Scottish Government's consultation later in the spring and there is an article on the process on p.6 of this Review. Suffice to say here that ASFB and RAFTS have consulted widely amongst their members and have agreed to work closely on what will be the single most important influence on fisheries management for some years.

The Scottish Government has asked, and we have agreed, that Alan Wells be seconded to them to assist in this process. Having someone with his knowledge of freshwater fisheries at the heart of this process can only be a good thing. Meanwhile, Brian Davidson has taken up post as ASFB Director and will now be working fully for ASFB.

ASFB/RAFTS acknowledges and thanks the Fishmongers' Company for their support

Worshipful Company of Fishmongers

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ASFB news

DR ALAN WELLS - *Policy and Planning Director, ASFB* / BRIAN DAVIDSON - *Operations Director, ASFB & RAFTS*

A significant focus of the work of ASFB in 2014 was the Wild Fisheries Review, which is covered in more detail on page 6. But here are some of the other key areas we've been involved with over the last 12 months.

Control of exploitation in salmon fisheries

The exploitation of salmon and sea trout continues to generate both national and international interest. ASFB have maintained a dialogue with the Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland and we continue to encourage all net fisheries to play a full and active part in fisheries management through the District Salmon Fishery Board system.

In August, the Minister announced a consultation to protect early-running spring salmon through a combination of delaying the start of the salmon fishing season and through mandatory catch and release measures until 1st April (1st May in the Esk District). This became law in January. In addition, in December, the Minister announced a further consultation which will seek views on a conservation measure to ban killing wild salmon except under licence, along with an accompanying carcass tagging scheme to help enforcement. This was a key recommendation of the Wild Fisheries Review and it is anticipated that the measure may be in place for the 2016 season.

Offshore renewable energy

ASFB sits on the steering group for Marine Scotland's research strategy on diadromous fish and marine renewable energy. This was formed in response to the difficulties in assessing the potential negative impacts on migratory fish species of offshore renewable energy developments. The strategy has now been finalised and is published on the Scottish Government website. It is now vital that adequate resources are made available to deliver the research strategy in full, in order that the significant outstanding questions can be answered. Some aspects of the work have already been completed, including satellite tagging of returning adult salmon on the north coast of Scotland and a project to identify and collate available data on Atlantic salmon smolt output across Scotland. It is anticipated that test deployments of a video trawl to evaluate smolt distribution in coastal waters will commence in 2015 and development-specific monitoring of smolt movements using radio tracking and deployment of acoustic receiving stations will commence in 2016. The information arising from these studies will be incorporated into existing particle tracking models to provide information on the migration corridors used by juvenile salmon.

Sea trout captured illegally on the Tyne

Aquaculture

ASFB continue to engage with Scottish Government and the fish farming industry in an attempt to develop a more constructive working relationship between the two sectors. ASFB sit on the Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture and on several sub-groups which form part of this process, including the Interactions Working Group and the Containment Working Group. ASFB are closely involved in an initiative, via the Interactions Working Group, designed to improve communication and joint working between wild fish organisations and the industry through four local 'Interactions Pilots'. ASFB are also represented on the Board of Scottish Aquaculture Research Forum and we are closely involved in scoping a research programme into interactions between aquaculture and wild fish.

During the Parliamentary process for the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act, the salmon farming industry committed to publish information on levels of sea lice on fish farms at a greater level of resolution than previously. ASFB continue to monitor this situation closely.

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO)

ASFB attended NASCO's annual meeting in St Malo, France, as part of the Scottish Government delegation. There was a special session on management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks that are below their conservation limits. A report of this session is available on the NASCO website. Greenland has started to permit landings at fish factories with a quota of 35 tonnes imposed on these landings. The representatives of USA, Canada and EU again expressed concern about this situation and the representative of Denmark (on behalf of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), stated he would recommend to his Minister a minor reduction in the factory landings quota for 2015.

All Parties to NASCO are required to produce plans showing how they aim to implement the various agreed NASCO policies. Implementation plans (IP) for the period 2013-2018 were finalised last year and Annual Progress Reports (APRs) should be submitted during that period. APRs were discussed in open session and a series of questions were posed to the relevant parties. Scotland's APR was not evaluated as part of this process as it was considered that Scotland did not follow the correct process for annual reporting.

Fisheries enforcement initiatives

- Bailiff Development Group: as reported last year, the ASFB Bailiff Development Group was formed to ensure better co-ordination of training and operational matters in relation to salmon fisheries enforcement across Scotland. ASFB was particularly pleased to welcome formal representation from Scottish Government to ensure that the two current appointing authorities (Boards and Scottish Government) continue to work closely.

The Group has been particularly focused on how common standards can be applied nationally. This is important due to the varying nature of illegal activity from area to area, the capacity and resources available locally and how the appointing authorities can harmonize administration and operational activity on a national basis. The Group is proving to be a good conduit for bringing ideas to the table, and with a consultation on the Wild Fisheries Review (WFR) imminent, this co-ordinated approach will be essential in planning change.

- National warranting: ASFB, in collaboration with the IFM accredited training module, has introduced a bailiff warrant card system, which ensures the provision of standardised and secure warrant cards for all bailiffs appointed by Boards. We hope that this can be extended to bailiffs appointed by Scottish Government, and discussions are underway to achieve this.

- Bailiffs' Conference: the Ayr DSFB and Ayrshire Rivers Trust hosted the 2014 Bailiffs' Conference. This was very well attended and as well as wide representation from bailiffs across Scotland, we welcomed representation from Police Scotland, the National Wildlife Crime Unit and Niton Training. The event continues to blend training and continuous professional development with the opportunity for transfer of knowledge and practical experience. Site visits to fish passage projects and enforcement hotspots provided good opportunities to examine local problems and discuss how these can be tackled. The Ness DSFB will have hosted the 2015 Conference in Inverness on 4-5 March by the time this goes to press.

- PAW Poaching Sub Group: ASFB is a member of the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime Poaching Sub Group which was set up to ensure that fish poaching and related issues continue to be addressed at a more strategic level. This has allowed ASFB to develop a strong working relationship with the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) and Police Scotland, and more focused discussions are planned to consider what implications the WFR might have for enforcement. The Memorandum of Understanding between ASFB and NWCU to foster co-ordination on freshwater pearl mussel illegal activity was renewed in 2014.

Beaver reintroduction

The monitoring phase of the Scottish Beaver Trial at Knapdale has now finished and the Minister is due to make a decision on whether to proceed with a formal reintroduction programme later in 2015. As part of their wider considerations around the reintroduction of beavers within Scotland, Scottish Ministers have asked the Beaver Salmonid Working Group (BSWG), of which ASFB is a member, to consider the potential impacts of any decision on salmonid fish. It is clear that there is inadequate information to determine the balance between, and relative magnitude of, the potential positive and negative impacts of beaver activities on salmonid fish in Scotland. However, as a swift water migratory species, salmon will be more susceptible to negative effects than many other resident salmonids. Sea trout, which particularly use small spawning burns, may also be susceptible to the effects of damming during the spawning period. In the specific case of spring salmon, it is predicted that the potential for obstruction to migration will outweigh any potential positives (as these are unlikely to be realised in the upland oligotrophic streams used by these fish). On that basis, should the Minister decide to proceed with a licenced reintroduction programme, significant monitoring of streams, and active management of dams and beaver populations will be necessary in the future. Clearly this will have resource implications and clarity will be required on where such resources will come from.

Barriers

Pages 12-13 detail the considerable activity RAFTS and its member Trusts are undertaking in leading projects on barrier removal and easement to improve fish passage. This work is supported by ASFB and member Boards, and considerable resources – both within ASFB/RAFTS nationally, and Trusts/DSFBs locally – are being directed towards this work.

Beaver dam, Tay catchment. Photo: David Summers

RAFTS news

DR CHRIS HORRILL - *Director, RAFTS*

I am writing this report after my first year as the Director of RAFTS. As mentioned in last year's report and the Chairman's introduction, this has been a year of consolidation and restructuring for the future, with a number of staff changes to report. Although some of the changes were not easy, they were made with the full support of the Board and understanding of the membership. For both of these I am very grateful.

Despite the changes we have maintained a significant and diverse portfolio of over 20 projects. Some of these are described below and more fully elsewhere in the Review, along with an overview of future opportunities and challenges.

Staff changes

This last year has seen further staff changers as a result of the restructuring of RAFTS and its activities. Mark Coulson (Geneticist) has taken up a post with the Rivers and Lochs Institute, with whom RAFTS enjoys a close working relationship, and the contract for the Aquaculture Project Officer, Diane Kennedy, came to an end in March 2014. This work is now being undertaken by Argyll Fisheries Trust. Stephen Harris, the former RAFTS Office Manager, has also moved on and we wish Mark, Diane and Stephen well in their new ventures.

RAFTS board and governance

2014 saw the retirement of Mary Nicholson from the RAFTS Board. Mary served the Board with experience and dedication, and we wish her well with her continued work with the Galloway Fisheries Trust. The Board welcomed Jamie Ribbens as a new member, who specifically represents the scientific and technical field from the Trust membership. The Board met on four occasions during 2014 and, amongst other things, reviewed 13 operational and governance policies, including the Code of Good Governance. No substantive issues were identified with any of these policies.

RAFTS, through its project delivery role, is becoming increasingly involved in competitive tendering using public funding, primarily through the Water Environment Fund (WEF). The management of public funds places an obligation on RAFTS to ensure that: funds are directed at priority works; that contracts are awarded in a fair way; and that projects are managed professionally. In 2014 RAFTS made considerable progress, working with SEPA to refine its tendering and contracting arrangements to improve its capacity to deliver projects within an effective governance framework.

Barriers

As reported last year, RAFTS has undertaken a Scotland-wide prioritisation of in-river man-made obstacles to fish migration. Of the 81 identified barriers 44 are included on the RBMP high priority list and downgrade the WFD classification of a water body. RAFTS has been working closely with its member Trusts to undertake a review of the data behind the remaining 37 priority barriers to establish whether clear and reliable evidence exists to enable further review by SEPA with a view to adding structures to the RBMP2 priority list. This process of prioritisation has become a far more collaborative process over the last 12 months as our relationships with specific departments of SEPA strengthen.

In addition RAFTS currently manages six projects supported by the SEPA Water Environment Fund, encompassing 13 impassable barriers all of which are at various stages of survey/physical works. Easement of these barriers will make over 400km of river habitat accessible to fish. However, it is clear that in order for RBMP barrier easements to be maximised, the number of organisations undertaking barrier easement projects must increase. To this end RAFTS has developed a framework for the project management of barrier easement and removal that can now used to assist fishery Trusts in their own management of these projects. More information on the work of the barrier easement programme can be found on pages 12-13.

Invasive non-native species (INNS)

During 2014 RAFTS initiated work to evaluate the impacts of the invasive non-native plant control (INNPS) programme that has been implemented by its member Trusts and results of this work can be found on pages 10-11. The "Controlling Priority Invasive Non-Native Species and Restoring Native Biodiversity" (CIRB) project held its closing workshop in Galloway and was attended by over 60 participants from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England and Scotland. INNPS control work will continue with the support the Water and Environment Fund and a range of local funders.

The Scottish Mink Initiative (SMI) Phase 2 continues to operate with 9 fisheries Trusts coordinating volunteer and raft networks. During 2014 the number of rafts has remained stable (114 new rafts and 118 closed) as has the numbers of volunteers (57 new volunteers recruited and 47 volunteers lost). There were 54 mink captures during this period from across the SMI area with the greatest number (10) coming from south Tayside. This is to be expected as it borders areas where there is no control and, as such, will pick migrating mink. Fisheries Trusts are also proactive in awareness-raising using websites, twitter, facebook, events and school visits to educate and inform others about American mink.

Fisheries management and aquaculture

Work at a local level implementing the priorities identified through the fisheries management planning project has continued throughout 2014. RAFTS has worked closely with Argyll Fisheries Trust and other west coast fisheries Trusts and Boards to reduce impacts of salmon aquaculture on wild salmonid fish.

One component of this work is a programme of coastal netting for post-smolt sea trout that continued in May to July 2014, with almost 1000 sea trout caught and inspected for the sea louse *Lepeophtheirus salmonis* at 21 monitoring sites. Although the netting focuses on sea trout, the results do give us an indication of the sea lice conditions that migrating salmon

smolts have encountered as they leave their rivers for oceanic feeding grounds. A second component of this work is the locational guidance tool that has been updated with information from 2014. Results from this work will be published on the RAFTS website.

In parallel to the above work the Crown Estate has been holding a series of meetings between wild fisheries and farmed fish interests. The aims of these meetings is to provide a forum for frank discussions about interactions between wild fish and aquaculture, and to try and identify areas where both sides can work together.

The Crown Estate is also working with the ASFB on a pilot project that aims to bring wild fisheries and aquaculture interests together under the old Area Management Groups to establish a new joint working agreement. Currently being run in four areas, it is intended that these pilots will bring about larger scale monitoring of aquaculture and of sea lice impacts on wild fish populations, and also identify new work that will improve our understanding of how wild salmon and sea trout interact with fish farms.

Genetics

Although the main FASMOP genetics programme closed in 2013, further work was commissioned during 2014 and is currently being undertaken in partnership with the Rivers and Lochs Institute of the University of Highlands and Islands.

Pearls in Peril LIFE+ project

The Pearls in Peril (PiP) project is a four-year scheme that commenced in January 2013 and aims to secure the future of the freshwater pearl mussel in Great Britain. In Scotland a total of 19 rivers are involved, all of which are NATURA 2000 sites that are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Ten Trusts and RAFTS are delivering a broad range of actions that include survey and monitoring of pearl mussel populations, riparian enhancement, in-stream restoration, the "Pearls in the Classroom" education initiative, the "Riverwatcher" scheme and various awareness and promotional activities. This year has seen the project make major strides in delivering those actions and more information on this work is presented on pages 14-15.

Future opportunities and challenges

There is no doubt that last year was a year of challenge and, as described above, RAFTS with the help of its members has put in place measures that have resulted in a number of structural changes, creating in a leaner and more efficient organisation that has more effective communication with its membership.

Through a series of regional meetings RAFTS has worked with its membership to identify priorities for future programmatic or project-based work and RAFTS is currently seeking funding from a number of European, UK and Scotland-based government and non-government funding sources. These regional meetings, coupled with monthly progress updates and feedback from network representatives on the Board, have improved RAFTS' communication with its membership. RAFTS is also keen to build on the devolving of project management to members, based on the frameworks and experiences from the aquaculture and barriers projects.

We are currently seeking both recognition and financial support from a number of sources (including the EU) for the priorities identified in the regional meetings. These include wide-ranging work such as river restoration, climate change mitigation, inshore fisheries monitoring and natural flood risk management. As a result there are 13 projects in various stages of development, including a recently submitted £3.5 million application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for invasive species control.

RAFTS and its members continue delivering a wide range of key Government policy objectives and we are increasingly being recognised as key partners in delivering the second cycle of River Basin Management Planning (RBMP). In addition RAFTS also performs a representative role on eight working groups covering fisheries management, aquaculture, diffuse pollution, research and INNS.

Of course the key challenge facing RAFTS, its members and Scottish Government is how we can work together to maintain and incorporate the momentum, achievements and future opportunities into the management system that emerges from the ongoing Wild Fisheries Review (WFR). RAFTS is looking forward to working with its members and partners to meet this challenge.

The Scottish Mink Initiative led to the capture of 54 mink in 2014. Photo: John McAvoy

The Crown Estate has been holding a series of meetings between wild fisheries and farmed fish interests


Scotland's Wild Fisheries Review

ALASDAIR LAING - *ASFB* / ANDREW WALLACE - *RAFTS*

Last January, the First Minister announced that a Wild Fisheries Review would be undertaken during 2014. The Wild Fisheries Review was led by an independent panel comprising Andrew Thin (Chair), Jane Hope and Michelle Francis, and was supported by a Technical Advisory Group drawn from Marine Scotland Science, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Institute of Fisheries Management. The review process included over 60 meetings with stakeholders, including a number of structured round-table discussions.

The report of the Wild Fisheries Review Panel was published in October 2014. The report made 53 recommendations, some of which are highlighted below. The Scottish Government will consult further on broad policy options in spring 2015. These options may encompass primary or secondary legislation and also areas of policy development which do not require legislation. This process will be followed by a public consultation on a draft Wild Fisheries Bill before May 2016. We understand that the Scottish Government will set up an external stakeholder reference group to discuss the detail of the forthcoming consultation and subsequent draft Bill.

ASFB and RAFTS consulted widely throughout this process and while, not surprisingly, there are concerns about the detail of some recommendations, the message from a clear majority of both organisations was twofold:

1. That the organisations should work together on their approach.
2. That a positive approach to the review was the way forward.

The two organisations are establishing a Joint Working Group of their respective boards to develop ideas, as appropriate, on how best to respond to any Government initiative to take forward recommendations from the Review. The Joint Working Group will also consider how best to ensure that any transition period between current, and any potential new arrangements, is efficiently managed.

ASFB have agreed to second Alan Wells to Scottish Government to help develop policy and legislation arising from the Wild Fisheries Review. This is a very welcome move which demonstrates the Government's commitment to deliver change in close partnership with the sector. We hope that this initiative will help evolve a structure that builds on the strengths of the current system, whilst making improvements to some accepted weaknesses.

Headline recommendations of the Wild Fisheries Review Panel

Fundamentals
The fisheries management system should be based on a decentralised and locally empowered model, with strategic direction, effective regulation and consistent national coordination provided by a National Wild Fisheries Unit within Government. The system should be based on an all-species approach.

Local delivery
Local delivery by a network of FMOs (recommended as charities), operating to an agreed local management plan. FMOs will need to satisfy certain criteria, which will define Approved Body Status, relating to capacity, competence, accountability, transparency and geographical coverage. Consideration should be given to establishing a formal advisory committee to the National Unit.

National leadership
Creation of a National Wild Fisheries Unit within Scottish Government to provide strategic leadership and coordination through development of a National Wild Fisheries Strategy and Research and Data Strategy. The Unit should be headed by a senior figure able to command respect among stakeholders.

Resourcing
The current levy system should be reviewed and extended to include all fisheries of significant potential commercial value. The levy will be split into: a standard levy rate, set at a level approximately equivalent to business rates, and deployed according to need (primarily though the FMO in the area where they are raised, but with the flexibility to redeploy funds to other FMO areas); and a locally enhanced levy for the purpose of funding local priorities. It is proposed that collection of both components of the levy should be centralised. Ministers should be given statutory powers to introduce a national rod licence scheme in order to support a national Angling for All programme.

Sustainable harvesting
Ministers should have the power to introduce a ban on the killing of particular species of wild fish in the interest of conservation. In the specific case of salmon, Ministers should introduce a ban on the killing of wild salmon in Scotland except under licence, managed through the issuing of numbered carcass tags. For mixed stock fisheries, a precautionary approach should be adopted where appropriate, and where licences are issued for catches significantly below current levels, a stepped reduction should be agreed.

Sound science
A system of clear national standards should be developed. Research and data gathering should be strategically driven and prioritised and management methodologies, research, data collections and skills development should be implemented in a manner that seeks to better integrate wild fisheries management within wider cross-cutting agendas. Effective training and continuing professional development should be ensured for all decision makers in the system.

Regulation and compliance
The system of closed days should be abolished, except with regard to the use of interceptor coastal and estuarine nets where there is scientific evidence to support the need for periodic closure. The protection order system should be reviewed and reformed. The warranting of bailiffs should be brought under democratic control through the national unit, whilst enabling individuals so warranted to be employed and managed by any appropriate public, private or third sector employer. All releases of fish into wild fisheries systems should be subject to licensed consent from the National Unit.

Scotland's developing approach towards conservation measures to protect Atlantic salmon

JEFF GIBBONS - *Marine Scotland*

Much of the focus over the last twelve months – and certainly since the meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) 2014 – has been on the Scottish Government's policy towards the increasing challenges for Atlantic salmon, and it is fair to say that the landscape has become very busy, with a number of ongoing initiatives.

As Scottish Government officials explored at NASCO, one of the key priorities has been to focus effort and resource on obtaining the necessary information to enable the development of meaningful conservation limits (CLs) upon which reliable management decisions can be taken.

At the beginning of last year project funding was secured to investigate the engineering requirements, technology options and costs of deploying and running counters in different environmental settings around Scotland. This project got underway in earnest around July 2014, and is scheduled to formally conclude around June/July this year, as originally envisaged, by which time it will provide information required to plan a strategic counter network.

In the course of that work, significant engagement has taken place with the Boards and Trusts, with offers of resource being made available to ensure the project is a success. Clearly one of the challenges going forward will be around the potential cost of any network and how that might be met at a time when everyone is feeling fiscal pressure. Work has already begun on the potential avenues that might be available to source the necessary income and that will be clearly need to be considered in parallel with any emerging conclusions from the planned consultation in the spring of this year on the recommendations from the independent review of wild fisheries.

Ultimately it is anticipated that data gathered from any future counter network, together with local biological information, would allow local stock recruitment relationships to be derived (from which CLs can be estimated) and measures of spawning escapement to be obtained.

While that work continues the new statutory conservation measures for 2015 are beginning to make an impact. Much commentary has been made about the necessity for the measures and the extent to which they go far enough. However, it is important to recognise that these measures in no way negate the ability for further voluntary measures to be agreed or indeed for individuals to exercise their conservation principals by not taking a salmon in other parts of the season. Moreover these measures will be reviewed and can be subject to change, so long as it can be evidenced that any changes are necessary and expedient.

We should also acknowledge that one of the first actions by Dr Aileen McLeod following her appointment as Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, was to announce the Scottish Government's intention to consult on a further conservation measure to ban the killing of wild salmon except under licence, along with an accompanying carcass tagging scheme to help compliance. That consultation is now underway and is already generating considering attention on the various fishing forums and by the river bank.

All of these activities are taking place in the context of the Scottish Government's commitment to consult in spring 2015 on broad policy options for a new management system, followed by consultation on a draft Wild Fisheries Bill before the end of the parliamentary session.

It is understandable that with potential and/or impending change there also remains an element of uncertainty. However, there remains an appetite to move matters forward and it is only right that we all look to grab that opportunity now.

The opportunities and benefits of river restoration

RICHARD JEFFRIES - *Water Environment Fund Unit, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)*

Naturally functioning river systems provide valuable habitats, healthy ecosystems and social and economic benefits for people. However, historical engineering such as weirs, straightening and dredging has stopped many of our rivers functioning naturally, often with ongoing financial and social costs.

Fisheries Trusts and District Salmon Fishery Boards work hard to improve in-river and riparian habitats by easing barriers to fish migration, fencing river banks and restoring channel habitats and processes. RAFTS, too, has been working at a national scale on a programme of barrier easements, working across catchments to scope out what can be done to fix some of the most complex and difficult barriers. As a result, RAFTS and its members have developed their experience and skills through restoration of the water environment, producing great projects on the way.

And there is more to do. SEPA is presently consulting on the second river basin management plan (RBMP). In order to meet the aspirations set by the EU's Water Framework Directive, there needs to be more restoration in coming years and a step change in the rate at which rivers are restored – with more barriers to ease, many more rivers to work on, and much more habitat to improve.

This is a challenge. It is also an opportunity.

A framework for restoration

The Scottish Government, SEPA and other agencies are developing a framework supported by legislation and financial tools to help restore the water environment. One of the tools is the Water Environment Fund (WEF), which provides support to projects that ease fish barriers or restore the physical condition of the water environment.

WEF can support scoping studies, designs and physical works, and has an annual budget of around £2 million. Its purpose is to support projects that achieve the objectives of the RBMP, and you can see what the objectives are for a particular area (either for fish passage or physical habitat) by looking at SEPA's website. The upcoming application deadlines this year are 15 April, 24 July and 12 October. It normally takes two months from the application date for funding to be approved, so you need to build this into your project planning.

We are interested in projects that work strategically and SEPA has a list of catchments prioritised for restoration (partly based on information provided by Trusts and Boards via RAFTS). This list might be your best starting point, and we would be happy to discuss it with you, perhaps to see where the priorities we have identified overlap with your area of interest.

Restoration projects require an appreciation of how to scope, design and then commission physical works to improve the environment. This makes them interesting and challenging, with the need to understand and manage contracts, liability and budgets carefully. Some Trusts have this experience and others do not, and on the very largest projects Trusts may prefer to be a project partner rather than a leader. However you are involved, the WEF offers several areas of support.

First, we have a team of experienced case officers to support projects. They will discuss initial project ideas, help you to write and develop your applications, and support you through to completion and onto the next stage if necessary (for example from a scoping study, to a design and then to works). We are also developing guidance for how to manage and monitor restoration projects, as well as guidance on technical tasks such as design and information to help you understand what your roles and responsibilities are. To find out more and to discuss a project, just contact restoration.proposals@sepa.org.uk and we'll be in touch.

A consultation on the future framework for restoration will be issued over coming months: please see SEPA's consultations webpage so that you can comment.

The role of the Trusts and Boards

Trusts and DSFB's can play a critical role in restoration. They are often the best-placed organisations to run projects, with existing knowledge of the catchment and the people who live and work there. Projects usually mean developing a relationship with landowners; and this is where Trust's local knowledge and contacts are critical.

Trusts also have much of the technical expertise needed to run projects, with communications and biological expertise, as well as project management experience. Projects do vary and Trusts don't have to lead: sometimes it may be better for others to do so. For example, if the project involves de-culverting through a council-owned park, then the Local Authority may be best placed to run it, with input from the Trust via a steering group.

Opportunities and benefits

What do Trusts and fishery Boards get out of restoration projects? Well, of course the overall goal is a better environment, which is a core objective of many such organisations. And in the long term, if fish stocks are increased, then Boards could also benefit from an increase in angling takeup.

But you can get a lot more than this. You can improve your skills as well as widen your contacts and expertise in areas such as stakeholder liaison, hydrology, geomorphology, engineering and project management. Many of these skills are likely to be useful in other parts of the Trust's day-to-day work and will contribute to the development of Trust staff.

Indeed, as Marshall Halliday of the Esk Rivers and Fishery Trust (ERFT) observes: "The project gave us the opportunity to discuss our aim of improving the environment with the aims of the estate, who wished to maintain existing land use and reduce their maintenance costs. As a result, ERFT were able to develop a good working relationship with the estate. We gained experience of managing large-scale groundworks, which stands us in good stead to make improvements elsewhere. The project has raised our profile as we have been able to use it to demonstrate the practicalities and benefits of restoration to hundreds of people including local farmers and members of the public, academics and students, policy makers and regulators."

Projects also allow you to engage by giving you an opportunity to meet and talk to people about your work and improve your profile, as Alison Baker of the River Forth Fisheries Trust reflects: "While our project officer was doing the catchment walkovers he often met people who wanted to discuss the project. This was a great opportunity to build relationships with stakeholders and this early engagement has led to owners coming forward at early stages to discuss the type of work involved and benefits from the project."

Restoration projects can improve a range of things, not just ecological quality. Projects may reduce flood risk, reduce the cost of maintenance, improve habitat networks and biodiversity, and increase amenity – so they can have major ecological and human value. For example, more fish could allow a greater takeup of angling, which in turn could improve physical and mental health. Many of these benefits have policy drivers behind them and there can be a variety of funding sources available in addition to WEF. When developing projects we encourage you to think about these wider benefits.

Overall, the future of restoration looks bright. There is lots to be done, and much to be learned. We look forward to working with you.

Case Studies

Midlothian Esks fish barriers scoping project

Theme: Tackling barriers to migratory fish across a catchment
Project lead: River Forth Fisheries Trust

The North and South Esk in Midlothian used to power many mills and whilst the industry has declined the weirs remain, preventing fish from migrating beyond barriers low down in the catchment, cutting off around 130 miles of spawning habitat. All 15 water bodies in the catchment are downgraded for fish passage. The project received funding from WEF so that the Trust could: (a) walk the main stem to survey all weirs and barriers and to check whether any obvious barriers were being missed (and several previously unknown impassable barriers were found); (b) commission a consultancy to undertake scoping studies; and (c) build relationships with owners of the weirs and develop a strategic plan for a programme of barrier easements from 2016 – 2018.

Rottal Burn restoration project

Theme: Channel restoration
Project lead: Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust

The Rottal Burn was straightened in the 19th century in order to improve agricultural productivity, but much of the surrounding land remained wet and boggy. The straightened channel was extensive enough to downgrade the water body from good to moderate for morphology. It also required dredging at regular intervals, destroying much of the habitat. This project involved re-connecting part of an older more natural channel line and constructing a new channel where the original had been lost. This restored natural river processes and in-stream and riparian habitat in this Special Area of Conservation, as well as reduced the maintenance burden and provided a great demonstration site.

Controlling invasive non-native plants in Scotland (2008–2015)

Dr Matt Oliver

River Trusts in Scotland have been undertaking invasive non-native plant species (INNPS) control projects since 2008. In 2014 RAFTS undertook a review of the work of 10 of its members – Annan, Argyll, Ayrshire, Cromarty, Dee, Galloway, Findhorn, Nairn, Lossie, Lochaber, Nith and West Sutherland – whose work was variously supported by the Water and Environment Fund, the European Union's INTERREG IVA programme, local authorities, numerous local organisations, DSFBs and the members themselves.

This article gives an overview of the key challenges faced, activities undertaken and outcomes achieved in raising awareness and reducing the distribution and abundance of the target INNPS in Scotland.

The initial situation

Work focused on four main INNPS, all of which are considered to have strong negative impacts on native biodiversity and to effect the use of riparian areas. These were: giant hogweed (GH), Himalayan balsam (HB), Japanese knotweed (JK) and *Rhododendron ponticum* (RP). The extent and location of INNPS infestations were first established by riparian walk over surveys covering 2375 km of waterways. INNPS were found to be a widespread and serious threat, with a total of c. 1,603,821 m^2 recorded as infested by INNPS. The greatest INNPS coverage was reported by Ayrshire (c. 649,000 m^2), followed by Findhorn Nairn & Lossie (c. 223,200 m^2); the Annan (c. 211,834 m^2); Cromarty (c. 210,000 m^2) and the Nith (c. 152,103 m^2) with all other Trusts reporting coverage of < 100,000 m^2. INNPS were least problematic in West Sutherland, where an area of only 620 m^2 was reported as affected.

Himalayan balsam had the greatest total coverage of the target INNPS, with 699,233 m^2 of riverbank recorded as infested. It was also the second most widespread INNPS, being reported by all but Argyll and Lochaber Trusts. The extent of HB infestation on some catchments represented a substantial challenge, eg Annan and Cromarty, where HB stands spread over tens of kilometres.

Rhododendron ponticum was only targeted by the Argyll and Cromarty Trusts, who identified and outlined an area of 572,000 m^2 for control.

Japanese knotweed was the most widespread INNPS, being recorded by all ten of the Trusts. A total of 567,241 m^2 was recorded as infested, though the scale of the problem varied substantially between areas, with only small patches covering 30 m^2 recorded in West Sutherland, compared to 88,500 m^2 in the FNLT area.

Giant hogweed was the least prevalent and abundant of the INNPS, being recorded as absent from Argyll, Lochaber and West Sutherland, with only a solitary small stand (20 m^2) reported by the Annan. However, elsewhere GH posed a considerable problem, with all of the other Trusts reporting coverage of > 4,000 m^2, and Ayrshire reporting an infested area of 188,000 m^2.

Treatment and action taken

Substantial proportions of the INNPS infested areas were treated by the Trusts. A total of 284,375 m^2 of GH, representing 84% of the infested areas, were treated at least once (Fig. 3). Similarly, a large proportion of the JK infested area (79%; 446,920 m^2) received treatment. Argyll treated 100% of the targeted 145,000 m^2 of RP infested area (Cromarty are currently collating their RP data). Forty five per cent of the HB infested area was treated, which represented a substantial 313,654 m^2. Note that these figures don't represent the total effort, as most INNPS stands were treated more than once and many were treated more than once per year for up to four years.

Costs of INNPS surveying and treatment

A total of £1,270,627 of expenditure was accounted for by the 10 Trusts. This paid for the pre-treatment surveys of 2375 km of waterways, as well as the treatment, re-treatment and post-treatment resurveys of the total 1,189,949 m^2 area controlled for INNPS. The costs could primarily be accounted for by staff time, travel, training (staff and 134 volunteers), and equipment and chemicals.

Awareness raising

The publicity campaign was widespread and intensive, with all of the Trusts engaging in a number of activities. These ranged from dedicated campaigns, such as "Check, clean, dry" and "Be Plant Wise", to providing information on Trusts' websites; online INNPS reporting systems; meetings with schools, environment/community groups, landowners and anglers; mailshots and INNPS workshops.

Outcomes: changes in INNPS distribution and abundance

In general there were very substantial decreases in INNPS abundance following treatment. Decreases in abundance between 50% and 80% were commonplace for GH treated sites. The most successful decreases in abundance were observed with JK, where the range was 48% to 99%, but Galloway, Cromarty and West Sutherland reduced abundance by an average of > 85%, and Argyll and Nith achieved an average 99% decrease (Figs. 1 & 2). HB proved more problematic, though decreases between 25% and 90% were achieved. Of note, Cromarty achieved a decreased abundance of around 83% (as well as clearing 31,000 m^2) across a large affected area, demonstrating what can be achieved with this species is prioritised (Fig. 4).

The greatest success for complete clearance (ie zero growth being detected, post-treatment) was achieved with GH, where 54,242 m^2 (16 % of the pre-treatment infested area) was recorded as clear. Whilst most of the Trusts placed a lower priority on HB than GH, a total of 74,555 m^2 (11% of the pre-treatment infested area) was nevertheless completely cleared of this INNPS. Success with JK was not far behind, with 57,500 m^2 (10% of the pre-treatment infested area) being completely cleared. Finally, 100% of RP adult growth was removed from infested sites, an area of 145,000 m^2. However, for RP, as well as most sites where mature GH and JK were removed, regrowth of germinating seedlings, or shoots from the sub-surface rhizome in the case of JK, prevented sites from being categorised as completely cleared.

From a practical perspective, it is worth noting that a further 179,666 m^2 (32% of the infested area); 95,617 m^2 (28%); 78829 m^2 (11%) of JK, GH

and HB treated sites were respectively reduced to a coverage of less than 25%, and for each species the majority of this was in fact less than 10%. A number of Trusts reported greatly diminished difficulties and costs in treating all species following the initial treatment of mature stands. Therefore, 44%, 42% and 22% of the GH, JK, and HB infested areas could respectively be considered as either clear, or in a low-maintenance state, following this phase of the project. It's also worthy of note that these numbers are all likely to be underestimates, as not each and every Trust was able to provide the specific relevant data for these calculations. Additionally, it's important to remember that not all of the infested area was treated as, particularly for HB, the extent of infestation recorded was beyond the funds and time available to some of the Trusts.

Conclusions and lessons learnt

The INNPS work carried out by these 10 Trusts represented a very substantial output, with 2375 km surveyed and 1,189,949 m^2 of the infested areas treated, retreated and resurveyed. There was also a significant awareness-raising campaign. Although impressive, these figures are in fact minimum estimates, as not all of the data was available for every Trust. Additionally, the Trusts often reported using different measurement units (eg m, km or m^2) and standardisation of the linear measurements (m or km) to area (m^2) will also most likely be underestimates, as the majority of the riparian zone surveyed and infested areas treated will be greater than 1m wide.

The work has delivered a very visible impact on the target areas, with 10%-16% of infested areas cleared completely, 22%-44% in a low maintenance state, and general decreases in abundances of 25%-99% following treatment. The riparian zones of these areas are unquestionably in a considerably more healthy and natural state than prior to the project, and riparian users and the wider public are more aware of the threat posed by these INNPS.

Through this work, a number of valuable observations and lessons have been learnt and these should be incorporated into future work plans and best practice protocols:

1) The persistence of the GH seed bank means it is very unlikely that mature stands can be completely eradicated over a few years. Similarly the JK rhizome may persist after no more surface activity is apparent. Anecdotally, larger stands of all INNPS were reduced less successfully. Further investigation aiming to understand and overcome this should be a priority. Field studies should aim to measure how seed bank abundance, or rhizome size, deplete with time, which should also help to predict the time required for eradication. Experimental disturbance of the topsoil, or repeated treatment of seedlings should also be considered as potential ways of encouraging germination and expediting the depletion of the seed bank.

2) HB may colonise sites cleared of HB or JK. Thus, the proximity of HB should be considered when prioritising sites for treatment, with upstream HB stands removed prior to GH and JK work. Most Trusts prioritised control of GH over HB and this should potentially be revised.

3) The Trusts varied greatly in how they involved and benefitted from volunteers. Volunteer strategies need to be carefully planned, with volunteers being carefully selected and prioritised for particular INNPS work (eg manual HB removal) which should help to maintain morale, minimise training costs, and maximise impact and cost-effectiveness.

4) The Trusts also differed greatly in terms of data collection protocols and strategies. There is a clear requirement for a standardisation of volunteer and control strategies as well as data collection protocols, which should help to maximise the efficiency of, and information gleaned from, future work.

Figure 1: Photos illustrating the impact of foliar spray treatment on a Japanese knotweed stand on the Annan. The picture on the left was taken pre-treatment and the picture on the right one year later.

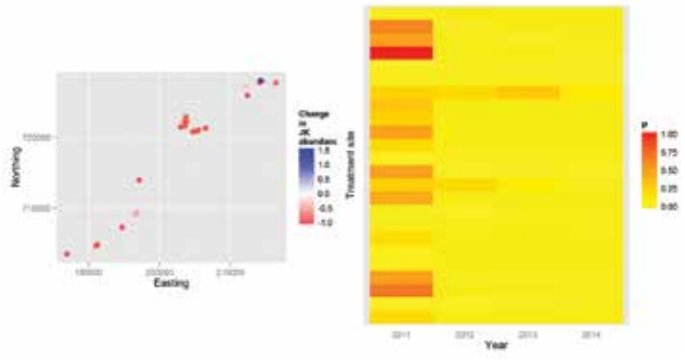


Figure 2: Graphical illustrations of the impact of treatment on the intensity of coverage at Japanese knotweed infested sites in Argyll. In the left figure a value of -1 (dark red) indicates a 100 % decline in coverage at that site. In the heat plot on the right each bar is a separate site. Note dramatic reduction from 100% coverage (red) to absence (yellow).

Figure 3: Findhorn Nairn and Lossie Trust staff (left) and a volunteer (right) demonstrate approaches taken to foliar spraying of giant hogweed. Photos provided by Bob Laughton, FNLT.

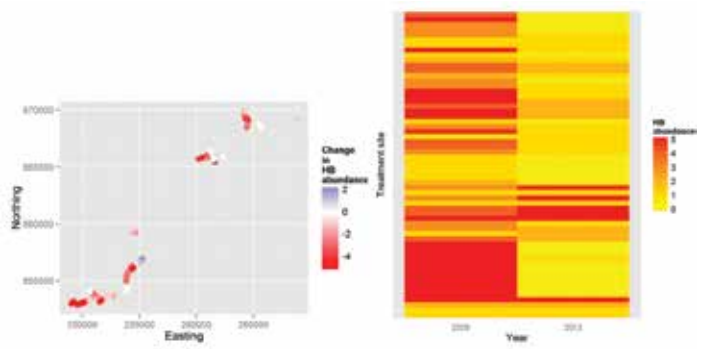


Figure 4: Graphical illustrations of the impact of treatment on the intensity of coverage at Himalayan balsam infested sites. (These plots illustrate the substantial broad scale decline in HB in the CFFT area following treatment.)

Barrier prioritisation and easement/removal

ROB MITCHELL - *RAFTS Project Management Officer*

Weirs and other man-made structures continue to present significant obstacles to fish migration in some of Scotland's rivers. Removal or easement of these obstacles is one of the single biggest actions fishery managers can undertake to dramatically and rapidly improve fish populations. There are also many associated ecological and economic benefits, and for these reasons RAFTS and its member Trusts' involvement in barrier prioritisation and easement/removal projects continue to grow.

The RAFTS Barrier Easement Programme has two distinct components – the identification of priority barriers and the implementation of removal/easement projects. Both these components have been running for a number of years and have undergone significant transformations since they began in 2011. Experience gained by RAFTS over the past few years has helped to identify efficiencies and methodologies leading to improved results for both work streams.

Barrier prioritisation

With Government support, from 2011-13 RAFTS undertook a Scotland-wide prioritisation of in-river manmade obstacles to fish migration. RAFTS and SEPA both agree that collaborative working towards the common goal of a single barrier prioritisation list allows RAFTS to inform the Second River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) processes of member Trust's priorities whilst benefitting from the data analysis capabilities that a regulatory body such as SEPA has at its fingertips. In this way a system of checks and balances can be made, based upon water body characteristics such as habitat upstream of barriers, channel width and gradient. Because of the costs of barrier easement, it is extremely important to be able to warrant any spend from the public purse when it comes to improving passability for fish, and RAFTS and SEPA have developed agreed data requirements to justify further action.

The information received by member Trusts originally identified 81 high priority barriers. Of these, a total of 44 of the structures have sufficiently rigorous data to demonstrate impassability and are included on SEPA's high priority list as impassable, therefore downgrading the WFD classification of a water body. RAFTS is now working closely with fishery Trusts to carry out a forensic review of the data behind the remaining priorities identified by Trusts. This process will determine whether clear and reliable evidence exists to enable a further review of the agreed RBMP2 high priority barrier list. Review of the barrier priority list will be an ongoing process, and the recent RBMP2 draft consultation presents the current list for review and comment prior to publication of the final plan in December 2015.

Barrier prioritisation

Over the past year RAFTS has completed six pieces of work associated with various phases of barrier easement and removal. Feasibility and optioneering studies were carried out on barriers in Speyside, Dumfries & Galloway and South Lanarkshire. This work enables an initial assessment of the structure and then provides an assessment of the risks and benefits of each available option (from full removal right through to formal fish pass), allowing the project steering group to determine the best option to move forward for design.

Ferniegair Weir on the River Avon in South Lanarkshire

Phase 1 of a catchment-wide project, encompassing seven barriers on the River Almond in West Lothian, was completed in 2014. This first phase required a range of specialist investigative surveys, which have provided a good understanding of these barriers, prior to identifying the best option for passage. These surveys are important due to the urban nature and industrial history connected to the Almond catchment, and the existence of infrastructure and built developments close to the weirs. Any solution to address fish passage will have to consider these potential constraints. The surveys provided information on the physical characteristics and composition of each structure and adjoining structures (eg upstream bridge foundations), utilities, silt accumulation, depth and existence of toxic compounds, ecology and in some cases flood risk associated with removal. Phase 2 is expected to report by summer 2015, and this will address the feasibility of options for fish passage. Design and final works will follow on from the feasibility study.

The final stage of a project is physical works, and it was pleasing to see a former bridge apron in the Beauly catchment reach this milestone. The structure was proving impossible for fish to migrate across, and in September 2014 contractors began the job of creating a channel through the concrete apron to provide access to the pristine habitat upstream. The resulting channel was immediately subjected to 2 significant flood events and, as a result, it shifted somewhat (whilst remaining passable). This has resulted in the opportunity to monitor these movements and use the experience to inform future works elsewhere.

Going forward into 2015 RAFTS is currently managing a further six project phases, supported by the SEPA Water Environment Fund (WEF), all of which are at various stages of survey/design/physical works. These projects encompass 13 impassable barriers to migration, and each contributes to or directly drives a downgrade (to moderate ecological potential at best) in Water Framework Directive water body classification. It is also worth noting that the combined figure, in terms of habitat currently unavailable to migratory fish as a result of these 13 barriers, equals a river length of over 200km.

The projects range from relatively small individual barriers to more complex multi-site projects, such as the seven River Almond barriers detailed above. What has become very clear, however, is that there is no such thing as a simple barrier project and, whilst some do present a clearer way forward (such as single ownership, for example), all present their own very unique challenges. The temptation is to focus almost exclusively on the heavily urbanised ex-industrial river landscape of Central Scotland, and while many barriers do indeed exist in this region, it is pleasing to note that projects in more rural areas such as the Beauly and Spey catchments are moving forward. Indeed, it is looking possible that projects in the Outer Hebrides and the Kyle of Sutherland may be initiated shortly.

Implementation of barrier work has benefitted from the significant changes to how the WEF operates. There is now a dedicated WEF unit consisting of a manager, six restoration specialists and a technical administrator, proactively seeking potential projects based upon RBMP2 objectives. Identified projects are assigned a case officer, and the applicant works closely with their respective case officer to: a) determine if the project falls within WEF remit, and b) address all project aims, risks and objectives so that the final decision by SEPA senior management to approve the project can be made with confidence. These changes have hugely influenced the success rate of these projects, and RAFTS fully recognises the support provided by this new team.

The future

In recent years RAFTS has taken the lead in terms of barrier project applications to the SEPA Water Environment Fund. However, every project has been managed in close collaboration with the local fishery Trust. Using the experience from this arrangement, RAFTS has been able to build and develop a series of project resources, templates and guidance tools including:

Culburnie former bridge apron pre-works (from downstream)

Culburnie former bridge apron post-works (from upstream)

- Management of risk through issues logs/risk registers.
- Clearer understanding of liabilities through standardising contracts (such as the National Engineering Contract – NEC3).
- High quality procurement/tender scoring processes based upon SEPA standards.
- Management of stakeholders and project partners.
- Project-wide communications strategy.

It is now clear, however, that in order to deliver the high number of WFD objectives due to be addressed between now and 2027 the approach needs to be modified and RAFTS alone does not have the resources to be able to manage all of these projects. As such RAFTS should not manage each and every project but instead support and assist fishery Trusts in managing their own projects. RAFTS will continue to take the lead on some projects where necessary; for example where a Trust perhaps lacks the staffing resources or the experience to take on the demands of management. To facilitate this broader approach, the framework for delivery outlined above can be rolled out to Trusts to build the required capacity across the network. By decentralising barrier project management in this way, the number of applications to the WEF can increase and significant inroads can be made into the list of barrier priorities included in RBMP2.

The opportunities for barrier easement and removal in the coming years are without a doubt very exciting. Of course there will be challenges to project implementation, but these projects remain one of the best ways of increasing productivity through enabling access to spawning areas and other in-river habitats.



Pearls in Peril LIFE+ – Project Officer's update

LORNA WILKIE, FLORA GRIGOR-TAYLOR and STEFF FERGUSON
Pearls in Peril Scotland Project Officers

The end of 2014 brought us to the halfway point of the Pearls in Peril (PiP) project, which concludes in September 2016. The PiP project's remit in Scotland is widespread and varied, with ambitious targets for facilitating riparian improvements across five catchments; implementing in-stream habitat restoration in four catchments; and raising awareness of wildlife crime and other threats against mussels throughout the 19 Scottish SACs included in the project. This article summarises the overall progress made by the project in four major catchments.

This year the River Watcher launched two River Watch schemes, in Assynt and the Kyle of Sutherland, covering six SACs. In 2015 River Watch schemes will be launched on the River Naver, River South Esk, River Kerry and River Moriston, and in Lochaber at Fort William. Unfortunately, in 2014, evidence of poaching was found at a number of sites in West Sutherland and in North Harris. Staff from several fisheries Trusts have also been taking our Pearls in the Classroom education programme into primary schools throughout the north of Scotland.

Last year we reported on plans for several kilometres of riverbank to either be planted with native trees or managed in such a way as to protect existing riparian woodland. We are delighted that all of these proposed schemes have now been actioned on the ground. There has been some swift installation of riparian enhancement groundworks, often as a result of lengthy lead-in preparations to secure funds and formalise stakeholder consultations.

In 2014 in-stream restoration works commenced on the River Dee, but lengthy consultation and licensing processes have meant that most works on the Dee, South Esk, Naver and Mallart will take place in summer 2015. However, the overall number of sites being progressed has far exceeded our targets.

River Dee

Upper Dee – Three large woodland compartments have been created along the Clunie and Baddoch tributaries of the River Dee, totalling approximately 19 ha of native woodland creation and equating to 5550m of banks protected. During 2014, funding was approved for a further 3 ha (2460m of bankside protection) scheduled for planting in spring 2015. An additional 6100m of fenced banks are currently being planted with scattered tree cover.

In some situations large scale deer-fenced woodland compartments are not suitable. Here, we have installed instead clusters of smaller 4x4m or 4x6m stock-fenced enclosures in which native trees have been planted in high density. Utilising PiP funds, a total of 304 of these structures were installed during 2014, with the remaining 226 due for completion in 2015. Additional funding was secured allowing a further 15 small tree enclosures to be constructed, and funding has also been secured for at least 50 more, scheduled for installation in 2015. Altogether, this translates to approximately 17 km of riparian enhancement.

PiP is exploring options for in-stream habitat restoration on the Upper Dee. To date, no works are scheduled to take place; however we hope to make progress with one site in the coming months, and at least a further two in 2016.

Middle Dee – In August three boulder croys were removed from the Aboyne/Birse fishing beats. These croys directed flow towards the middle

Removing boulder croys to improve mussel habitat, River Dee

of the channel, scouring the river bed and increasing the depth and speed of the water. Works were carried out by staff from the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and the River Dee Trust. Using hand winches to minimise disturbance to the river bed, the boulders were re-distributed randomly in the river to break up the flow, allowing gravel spawning beds to recover. The boulders will provide habitat for freshwater pearl mussels as well as lies for adult salmon. At Banchory a further 15 croys have been identified for either partial or full removal in 2015, subject to consents.

In 2014 over 10km of bankside fencing was installed to help tackle diffuse pollution issues, using funding secured the previous year. Due to a hiatus in government funding, throughout 2014 efforts have been concentrated on targeting and surveying stretches of four tributaries, as well as establishing links with landowners and farmers in key areas. With applications for SRDP grants opening in 2015, much is planned for the coming year.

River South Esk

PiP has been granted permission by the landowners, SEPA and the Cairngorms National Park to remove 13 sections of boulder bank protection – a total of 873m – on the White Water and River South Esk. These works will restore natural flow and erosion processes. The bank material is sand, gravel and cobble with little fine sediment, which when eroded into the river will help sustain the in-stream habitat for freshwater pearl mussels and salmonids. The proposals also include the reconnection of three old channels which have previously been in-filled, providing additional habitat and reducing energy in the main channel. Works will take place in May 2015.

During preparatory surveys PiP staff also found evidence of water voles – the first record of the species at these sites. Bank restoration work will benefit these rare mammals by increasing and improving habitat.

Riparian enhancement has been confined largely to Glen Clova, where funding was secured for the establishment of native woodland along 5390m of watercourse. Through the autumn 6700m of fencing work progressed along the Quharity Burn, thanks to external funding. Associated small-scale tree planting will commence in spring 2015 and a workshop is planned to encourage more farmers to participate in riparian enhancement works.

River Naver

Following hydromorphological surveys and options appraisals on the River Naver and River Mallart, several possible in-stream restoration sites have been identified. The PiP Scotland Project Officer and Naver Fisheries staff have met with a number of landowners, crofters, estates and fisheries staff on site to discuss the range of options available through the project. Feedback has been encouraging, and we hope to be able to progress with some works in 2015.

Following a brief introductory meeting with farmers in the catchment, much of the PiP Agricultural Project Officers' initial visit to the river was spent familiarising themselves with the landscape and riparian issues as well as meeting crofters. With the launch of the new SRDP Agri-Environmental and Climate Scheme in 2015, funding opportunities are in place where land managers wish to proceed with riparian enhancement proposals.

River Evelix

During 2014, the entire main stem and major tributaries of the River Evelix were surveyed in order to note diffuse pollution hotspots and map sections for potential riparian enhancements. Results allowed PiP to contact individual land managers to highlight where improvements could be made and offer help with implementing these targeted suggestions.

Summary

Although 2014 has been challenging for the PiP project, it has brought excellent and rewarding results. The project is now well on track to meet – and in many cases exceed – most of its targets. Throughout the process of getting works in place, PiP staff have gained a great deal of knowledge and experience, and this is in no small part down to the input of the staff of fisheries Boards and Trusts, of farmers and of landowners. The Project Officers would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has engaged with us this year, and we look forward to working with you in 2015.

PiP are on Twitter @MoTheMussel or our webpage is http://www.pearlsinperil.org.uk/

Middle Dee: newly fenced Tarland Burn SRDP water margin

Upper Dee: small tree enclosures fence installation on the Cunie Water

Upper Dee: completed tree enclosures in Glen Callater

Times, they are a-changing

ANDREW RETTIE - *Strutt & Parker*

I am writing this article at the very end of January 2015. With sub-zero temperatures and snow on the ground, reflecting on summer days in pursuit of salmon is one way of trying to keep warm. Whilst my day job is that of a partner at Strutt & Parker, my passion is salmon angling.

The two combine neatly and I have spent a good part of my 33 years practising as a chartered surveyor providing advice with regard to valuations, sales and purchases of beats of salmon fishings and sometimes entre river systems throughout Scotland.

Compared to the preceding decade, which was generally encouraging from a piscatorial perspective, 2014 will go down as a season to forget for salmon fishermen in Scotland. Lower numbers of salmon entered the rivers and, therefore, catches were down. This was exacerbated by a warm, dry summer which was great for ice cream salesmen but not for anglers. This has not been the case on every beat – for example, the main beats on the Spey suffered a drop in catches, but I do know of some beats on Tweed where the 2014 catch was broadly the same as the previous year.

Fishermen are naturally optimistic and, now that we are into a new calendar year, there is hope that this coming season will prove to be more prolific than the last one. There is always excitement when the new seasons open and tales start to emerge of catches of spring fish. We need to remember that the lower beats on the Tay had a very good start to their season in 2014, and I vividly recall one owner saying to me that it was one of the best years he could remember.

I have a hunch that salmon fishing in Scotland will become more affordable over the next few years, and owners and their factors are going to have to budget for reduced incomes from their fishing lets. The wider world is increasingly accessible and the opportunities to fish overseas have never been greater. All sorts of exciting packages are offered by different companies on the internet, and bone fishing in the Caribbean and/or the Indian Ocean is very tempting when temperatures in Scotland are hovering at sub-zero. Although a lengthy journey, holidays to catch big sea trout on the Rio Grande in Tierra del Fuego and the Rio Gallegos in southern Argentina have become increasingly popular. When you add in salmon fishing trips to Iceland, the Kola Peninsula in Russia, and Norway, the opportunities abound for those prepared to travel.

It is perhaps, therefore, not surprising that capital values of beats of salmon fishings on our Scottish rivers are under pressure and reducing. I vividly recall the glory days of 1989 ad 1990 when the capital value on one of the big four rivers in Scotland exceeded £10,000 a fish. The combination of fewer fish in our rivers, the recession of 2008-2013, and overseas distractions mean that capital values have reduced.

My own firm was involved during 2014 in a number of sales in Scotland, and as a general yardstick the following capital values will apply during 2015:

- Medium-sized/large rivers – value of £5,000-8,000 per salmon expressed over a 10-year average and £1,500-2,500 per sea trout.
- Small and spate rivers – value of £3,000-5,000 per salmon and £1,000-2,000 per sea trout.

As always there are anomalies. For example, I was involved in the sale of a good beat of salmon fishings on a well-known spring river which achieved a figure in the region of £3,500 per salmon; and I was also involved in the sale of a beat on a larger river which made £8,500 per salmon.

As ever, supply and demand are the key determinants and there is no doubt that one of the absolute joys for those people who have built their businesses or made a killing on the financial markets is to buy themselves a beat of a salmon fishings on a Scottish river. I am sure this will continue to be the case and, as such, will underpin demand and, therefore, value. I dream that my own financial advisor will one day ring up with the good news that I can go and buy my own beat!

Salmon angling remains popular with the affluent

Putting the season in context

ANDREW WALLACE - *Chairman, RAFTS*

The following graphs pretty much say it all about the 2014 salmon season, which has proved to be a really difficult one for anglers and fisheries managers alike. But, before people reach for their chequebooks to fund large hatcheries, or resort to drastic conservation measures, be assured that the pain is being shared across most of the salmon producing countries of the North Atlantic. The reason: our old friend "marine survival rates" which, this year in Scotland, seem to have compounded the misery of a run of 2-3 poor years.

However, it is worth reminding ourselves that in 2010 Scotland recorded its highest ever rod catch. Looking at the data it is pretty clear that there seems to be almost no relationship between the size of the run in one year and that of future years. This would make sense in rivers which are at, or above, their conservation limits. One of the poorest catches in recent years on the Tweed was 2009, which was followed by the record catch in 2010. Proof, if it were needed, that when time and tide allow, salmon populations can and will respond enthusiastically.

So what should our response be? Salmon are a uniquely challenging species to manage as we have so little control over the factors that drive the significant fluxes in their abundance. Most of these drivers take place in the marine environment, which explains why we get such a variation in numbers from what is, essentially, known to be a relatively stable annual Scottish smolt run.

The job of fisheries managers here in Scotland, and elsewhere, when times get tough, is to ratchet up the precautionary approach to management by focusing on that part of the lifecycle of the species over which we might have a chance of a positive impact: control of exploitation (rods/nets and predators – human and animal); availability and quality of habitat; and mitigation of any specific regional impacts (fish farming/forestry/pollution etc). This is the work of the fishery Boards and Trusts in Scotland and, whilst none of this will ever deliver eureka solutions, we are making progress at ensuring that, where possible, these factors are better managed and controlled.

Against the background of a bad run of years, it would seem logical for managers to "up the precautionary ante", which is the rationale behind the Government's new licensing arrangements. But, to be brutally frank, the freshwater and near coastal marine conditions that delivered the 2010 salmon run will not be that dissimilar, across the piece, to how they are today. So perhaps it is better not to kid ourselves that through such actions we will fundamentally affect salmon abundance, which seems to be driven by factors largely beyond our control and which are manifestly affecting the species across its range.

Some will argue this summary is not very helpful or hopeful. They may even think it complacent. There are many high profile voices in our world who claim to have magic bullets to solve these problems. But experience suggests that this "snake oil" approach to salmon management is as capricious and unreliable as the species itself. Such is the vanity of man that we think we can find easy solutions to all these problems and even out the bumps to meet the demands of an angling public who inevitably have high expectations. We can't: and that is the great mystery of salmon management and angling.

After last year's season there will be plenty of anglers, and their self-proclaimed spokesmen, who will want to lash out at the nearest available target – proprietors, government, anglers or scientists. But, before you are tempted to do so, please try to bear in mind the context of our situation here with regard to what is going on elsewhere in the UK and beyond and support in every way possible those who are doing what they can to underwrite the salmon's future – however unsexy, plodding, methodical and inconclusive it might appear. Believe you me, if the soothsayers really did have an easy answer, and it was supported by evidence and actually worked, we would have heard about it and would more than likely be doing it.

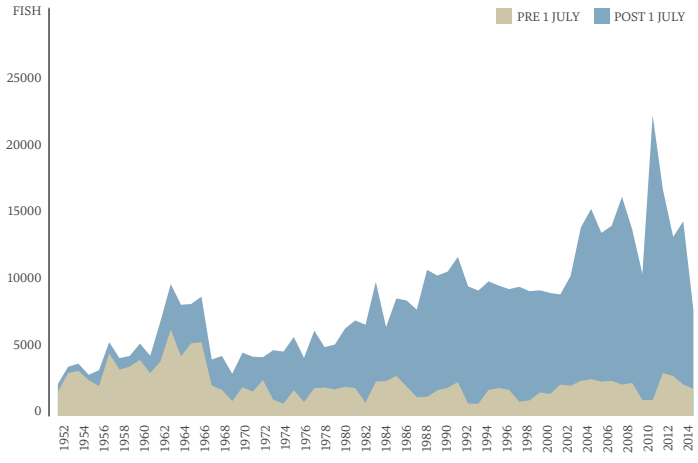
Tweed

Nick Yonge - *Director, Tweed Commission and Foundation*

Salmon catches were very low for 2014 in all parts of the Tweed system. The spring run was unexceptional but from the summer onwards catches were poor, particularly in the later months of the season, and very few large salmon were caught. The sea trout catch, however, held up and was near the high levels seen in recent years. Inexplicably the two fish counters on the river showed no downturn in the run, although there were certainly fewer fish showing to anglers. Conversely, catches of brown trout and grayling were exceptionally good, some anglers recording catches unheard of in recent times. The spring salmon conservation scheme to protect the spring run continued, as did other conservation payments to the headwaters. Additionally, payments were made to some net fisheries not to take salmon.

	2014 total	pre Jul 1	post Jul 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	7,767	1,737	6,030	1,979	14,351	96/71/77%	33lb
Sea Trout	2,050	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,165	54%	n/a

Season dates: 1 Feb – 30 Nov.



TWEED ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - RIVER TWEED COMMISSIONERS

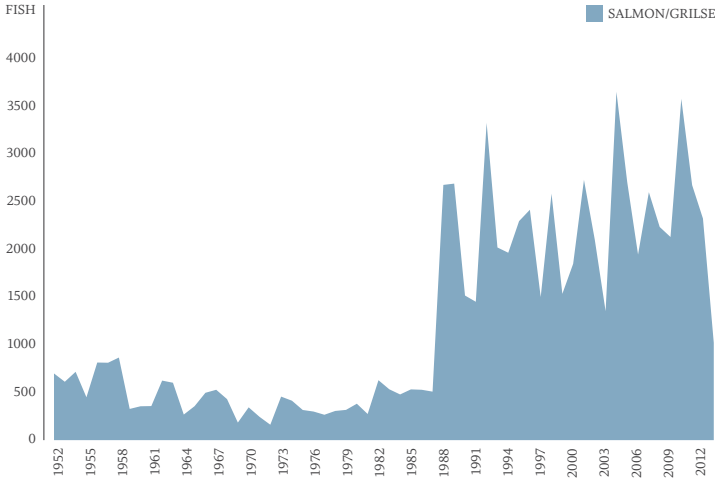
Forth

Alison Baker – *Forth Fisheries Trust*
Fen Howieson – *Chairman, Forth DSFB*

All fisheries within the Forth District had a hard year – with water levels either too low or in flood and catch returns at their lowest since 1987. October, as usual, was the best month, accounting for the overwhelming majority of salmon and grilse. The Board continues to monitor stocks and review conservation measures; many rivers within the District currently practice full catch and release while all rivers in the District do so before June. Rivers with high numbers of barriers and morphological issues continue to return very low numbers, with some recording no salmon caught. These physical issues, coupled with aggressive poaching incidences within the District, continue to impact on catches. An extensive programme of works for the next 5 years has been started by the Trust which will open up at least 185km of additional spawning areas, together with easement of cumulative barriers on other rivers, which will significantly improve fish passage throughout the District.

	2014 total	pre Apr 1	post Apr 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	997	258	739	66	2,270	94/76/74%	16lb
Sea Trout	391	n/a	n/a	90	791	73%	3.5lb

Season dates: 1 Feb - 31 Oct



FORTH DISTRICT ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - FORTH DSFB

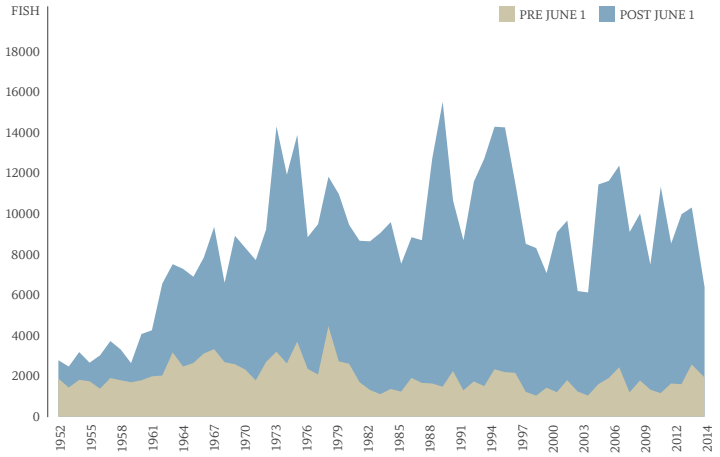
Tay

Dr David Summers - *Director, Tay DSFB and Tay Foundation*

Apart from a few extremely wet weeks at the beginning, the 2014 season started off very well for the Tay. February saw an above average catch and that for March (538) was the highest reported since 1980, despite relatively poor conditions. A noticeably stronger run of 3SW fish seemed to contribute to this high catch. April also was also above average but, in May, things started to change. From June to the end of the season, catches were well down in every month. Low water and hot temperatures were a major problem in high summer, but it was clear by the end of the season that the grilse run had been disappointing too. A decision was expected on the restoration of the River Garry, which Scotland committed to doing by end 2015 under the first River Basin Management Plan. However, a decision has yet to be made and it is hard to see how this objective can now be achieved in time. 2014 also saw the fourth and final year of a trial season extension. Following a proprietors' vote after the end of the season it was decided not to make the extension permanent.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	6,382	1,963	4,419	n/a	10,301	89/80/83%	34lb
Sea Trout	1,201	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,269	90%	9lb

Season dates: 15 Jan – 15 Oct.

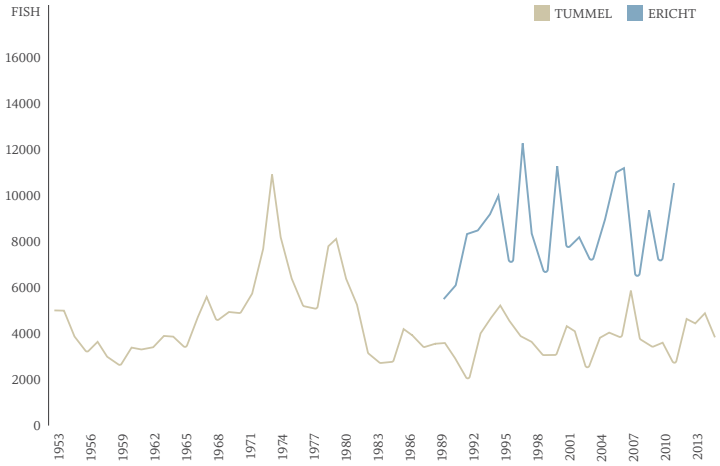


TAY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - TAY DSFB

Tay catchment counters

Dr David Summers - *Director, Tay DSFB and Foundation*

Following three good years, the total count in 2014 was back to the general level that prevailed over the previous 10 years or so. The count to the end of June was still good relative to the 2000s but a decline in the summer/ autumn run compared to the last three years meant that the overall numbers were similar to those seen in the last decade.



RIVER TUMMEL (PITLOCHRY) UPSTREAM COUNT 1953-2014
SOURCE - SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY
RIVER ERICHT UPSTREAM COUNT 1990-2010
SOURCE - TAY DSFB

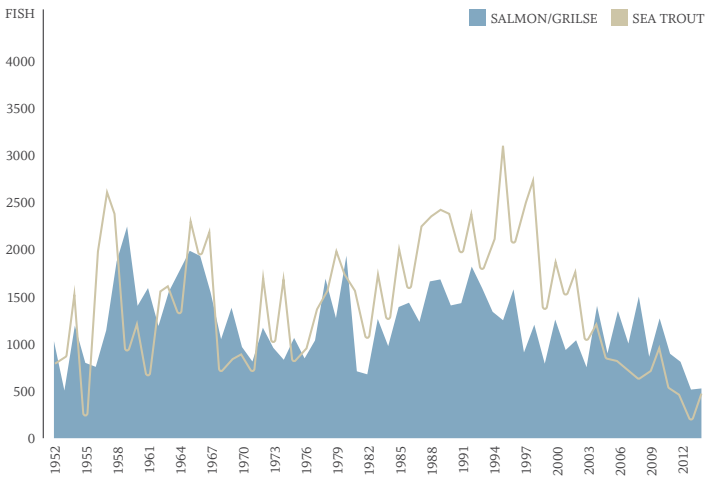
South Esk

Dr Marshall Halliday - *Esk Fishery Board and Trust*

Salmon rod catches were only 52% of the 10-year average, with grilse scarce and appearing very late. Sea trout runs were reasonable and the catch was not far off the 10-year average. The Board and Trust are concerned about the changing hydrology of the river, with high flows increasing in both frequency and volume. Furthermore, the rate of run-off of these spates is increasing, reducing ideal angling conditions. For these reasons the Trust has established a pilot scheme of contour planting in the upper catchment to reduce the rate of run-off.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	527	138	389	n/a	1,006	98/48/77%	n/a
Sea Trout	547	n/a	n/a	n/a	663	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 16 Feb – 31 Oct.



SOUTH ESK ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - ESK DSFB

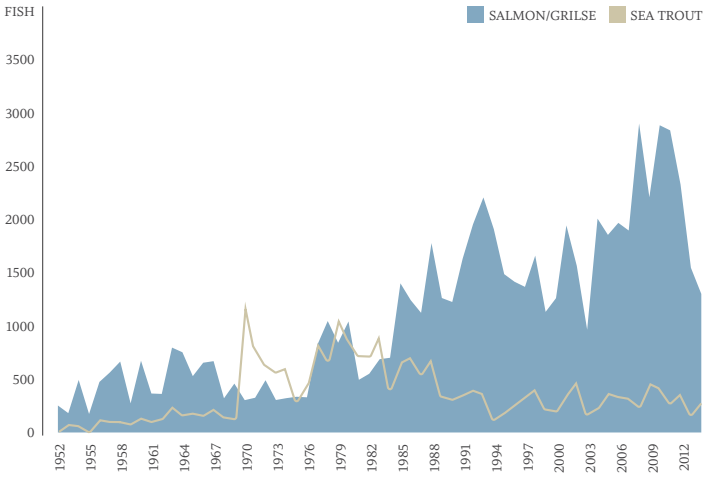
North Esk

Dr Marshall Halliday - *Esk Fishery Board and Trust*

Salmon rod catches in 2014 were 59% below the 10-year average, with grilse being particularly scarce. The condition of the salmon and grilse varied throughout the season, with runs of fish being fine in some weeks then a noticeable change in other weeks. Early running salmon were well into the middle river by the opening of the season, perhaps due to the breach in Morphie Dyke in late 2013. The Esk Board has commissioned a report and preparation of a CAR licence to stabilise the dyke and restore the river to its natural width. Sea trout runs were reasonable in 2014.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,309	332	987	n/a	2,214	83/67/72%	n/a
Sea Trout	309	n/a	n/a	n/a	486	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 16 Feb – 31 Oct.



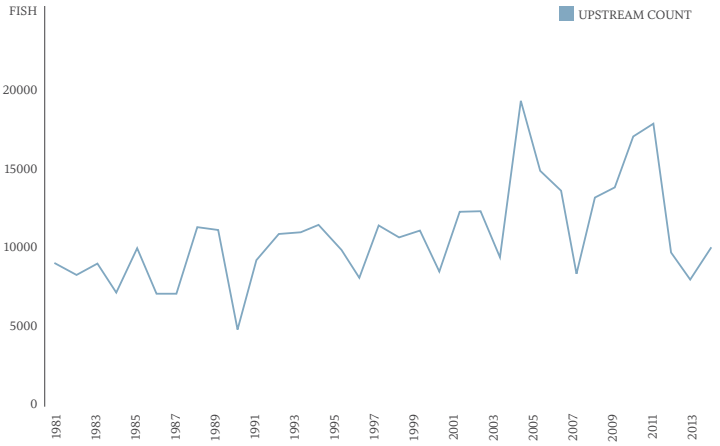
NORTH ESK ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - ESK DSFB

Logie counter (North Esk)

Dr Marshall Halliday - *Esk Fishery Board and Trust*

The 2014 counts reached 10,133, putting them – somewhat surprisingly – ahead of both 2012 and 2013, and only marginally below the 10-year average of 12,736. The spring numbers (January to May inclusive) were down compared with the 10-year average – at 2,579 compared to 3,172 – while late summer and autumn runs were better than expected, despite anglers reporting very few grilse. It is interesting to note that the counter will count large sea trout which run in the lower river in May to early June and this may enhance the total count for these months, while very small grilse will be missed.



NORTH ESK UPSTREAM COUNT 1981-2014

SOURCE - MARINE SCOTLAND SCIENCE

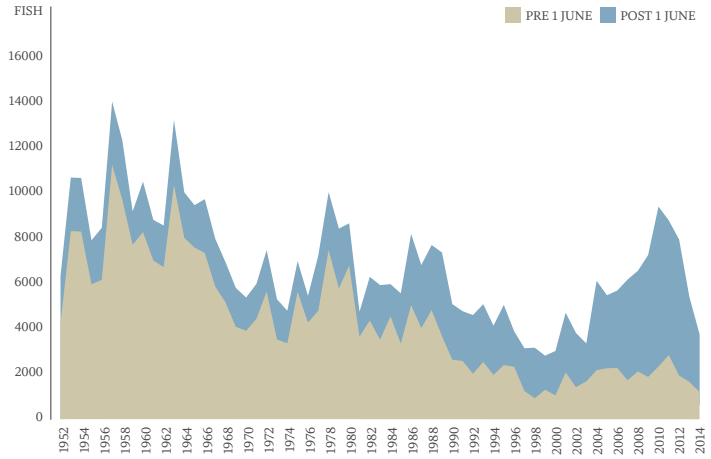
Dee

Mark Bilsby - *River Dee Director*

A very cold spring produced a lower return, both in terms of the number of fish caught and the actual number of fish running the river. The cold spring quickly turned into a long, hot, dry summer, without a significant spate between June and September, and catches were lower than in recent years, although the red counts carried out later in the year were average, with enough eggs to start the next generation. A £2.6 million project to protect the riparian zone through the creation of buffer strips and tree planting was started, under the title Pearls in Peril. Four obstructions to fish migration were also eased during the year, in partnership with the Dee DSFB, River Dee Trust and Aberdeenshire Council. Disinfection facilities have been established on all fishing beats to improve biosecurity. All anglers are now asked to disinfect their waders and landing nets prior to fishing.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	3,570	1,311	2,259	n/a	6,599	99% / 98%	28lb
Sea Trout	1,436	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,829	93%	5lb

*Season dates: 1 Feb – 30 Sep. * spring / summer/autumn*



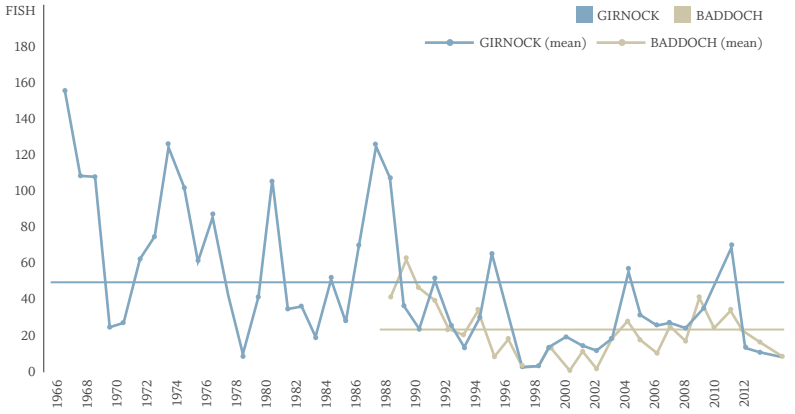
DEE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - DEE DSFB

Girnock and Baddoch fish traps (River Dee)

Freshwater Laboratory – Marine Scotland Science

Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory operates two traps on upper tributaries of the Aberdeenshire River Dee (Girnock and Baddoch burns). These tributaries are dominated by early-running MSW salmon, the stock component that has been of most concern in recent decades. Although numbers of male and female salmon caught at the traps show similar temporal trends, female numbers are plotted as they are considered the fundamental spawning component. The 17 females caught in the Girnock trap and 18 females caught in the Baddoch trap in 2014 represent 32% and 62% of the long-term means respectively. For further information on the status of these stocks, see: Anon (2014). MSSR 03/14: Status of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Stocks 2013.



GIRNOCK & BADDOCH FEMALE UPSTREAM BURN TRAP COUNTS 1966-2014

SOURCE - MARINE SCOTLAND SCIENCE © Crown copyrightt

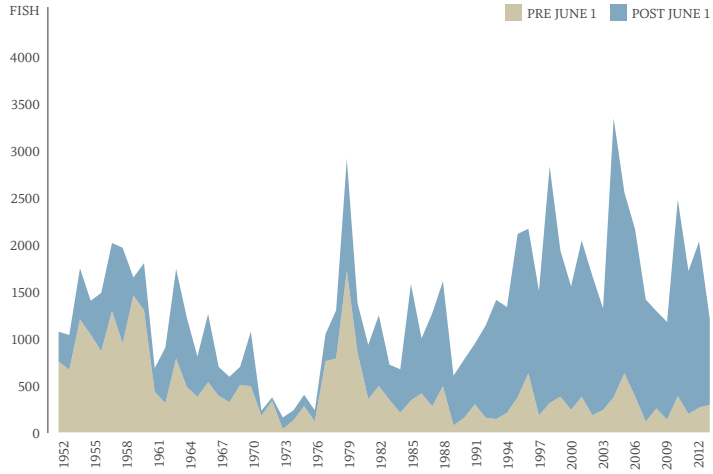
Don

Jon Davison - *Chairman, Don DSFB*

The final catch returns for 2014 are not available at time of writing, but every indication suggests another very poor season. Although fish were caught in good numbers through February, March and April on the lower beats, low water levels throughout the summer months discouraged the salmon angler and those summer salmon and grilse that were caught were smaller than normal. On a brighter note, a number of good sea trout were landed and the smolt trap caught significantly more – and significantly bigger – smolts than last year. October did see a reasonable run of salmon, despite poor angling conditions prevailing, and a high note was the catch and release of a 28 pounder. Control of giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam continues in line with our Fishery Management Plan. Many salmon, sea trout and brown trout have been fitted with radio tags to follow their movements – primarily in and around the river's 2 hydro schemes. This is part of an on-going PhD study which is researching the affects that hydros may have on migratory fish.

	2013 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,205	294	911	n/a	1,935	92/84/86%	28lb
Sea Trout	229	n/a	n/a	n/a	418	83%	8lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



DON ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2013

SOURCE - DON DSFB

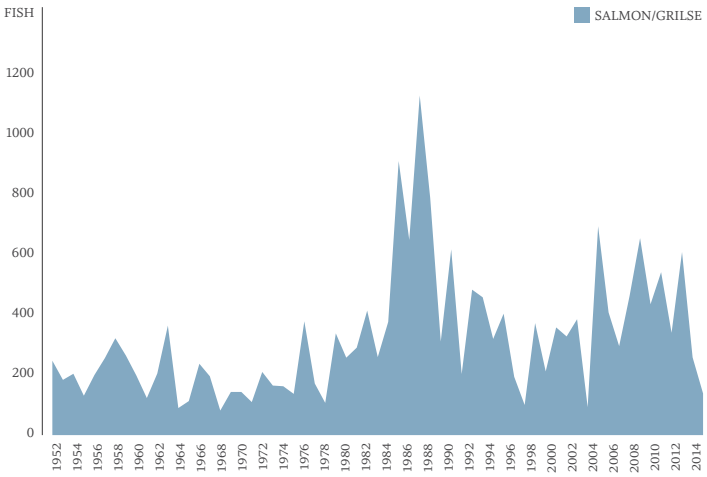
Ythan

Mark Andrew - *Ythan DSFB*

There were few salmon running during the angling season and very few caught – with catches down by 50% compared to 2013 which was a poor season too. Sea trout numbers were, on the other hand, much better than previous year and were above the 8-year average, while a good number of finnock were caught and released too. The River Ythan Trust has carried out a number of minor obstruction removals and have, in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, Formartine Partnership and Ythan Volunteers, installed a new fish pass on the Kelly Burn which will open up 14km which was previously only accessible to salmonids following prolonged high water. The Ythan Code, which has been imposed by most proprietors, allows anglers to keep very limited numbers of either salmon or sea trout, depending on the time of year. It will be interesting to see how net catches change in 2015, following the acquisition of the estuarial fishings and coastal netting rights by Usan.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	8yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	137	0	137	125	390	60%	n/a
Sea Trout	1,806	n/a	n/a	79	1,625	72%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



YTHAN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - YTHAN DSFB

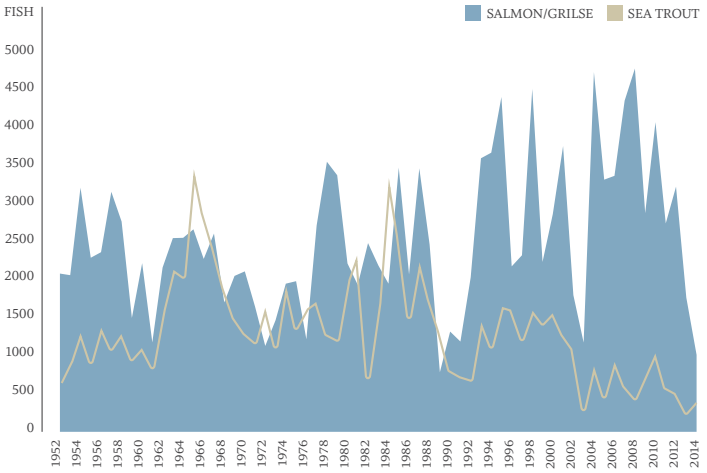
Deveron

Richie Miller - *Senior Biologist, Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust*

Last season close to 1,011 salmon and grilse were caught by rod and line, which was a significant decrease on the previous year's total (1,747) and well below the long-term average. Spring catches decreased from the previous year by 60%, to 54 salmon by end of May, with 46 (85%) returned to the river, aided by the Chivas Regal spring salmon conservation scheme. Summer catches of salmon were poor, with minimal rainfall and sub-optimum angling conditions. During September and October there was a more visible presence of salmon and catches increased during this period. A notable salmon of 22lb was successfully caught and returned during October which ultimately secured the Morison Trophy. The sea trout catch increased by 42% from 296 to a total of 421, of which 96% were returned to spawn. Although both the 2013 and 2014 seasons on Deveron were poor, it is important to note that the most recent 10-year average catch (2003-2012) shows 3,418 salmon and grilse and 685 sea trout, with 4 of the 10 seasons within this period producing over 4,000 salmon and grilse to the rods, making Deveron the fifth most productive angling river in Scotland. The Board asks that all salmon are returned from 11th Feb to 31st May 2015 to help conserve spring stocks and also all sea trout are returned throughout the season. The guidance on sea trout will be in place for a minimum of three years or until stocks recover to acceptable levels.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,011	54	957	1,549	3,418	85/78/74%	22lb
Sea Trout	421	n/a	n/a	311	685	96%	4lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



DEVERON ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE -DEVERON DSFB

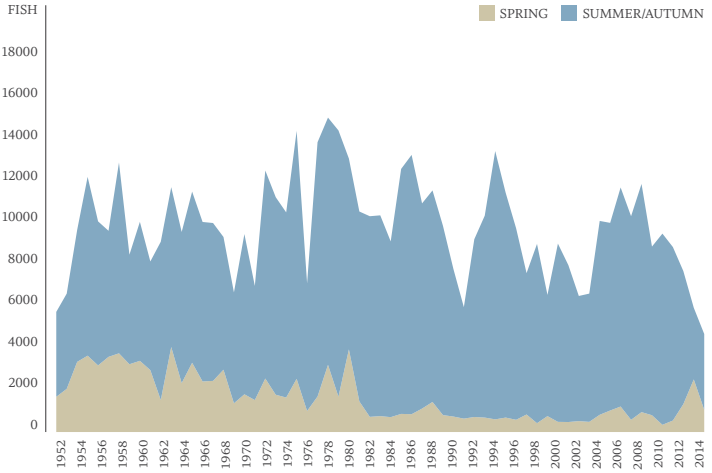
Spey

Roger Knight - *Director, Spey Board and Foundation*

In common with many other Scottish rivers, 2014 was a particularly challenging year. Despite an encouraging start, catches slowed in mid-April and remained low, along with the river height, until a significant spate on 11th August brought an upturn. Yet anglers have responded positively by returning 92% of the fish caught and juvenile fish numbers are healthy. Furthermore, the sea trout catch was the highest since 2010 and above the 10-year average. The Board welcomed the withdrawal of Scottish & Southern Energy's application to take yet more water from its upper tributaries – the Rivers Tromie and Truim – as part of plans to re-water the River Garry in the Tay catchment. However, the Board remains concerned by the significantly high levels of water abstraction, particularly in the upper catchment by Rio Tinto Alcan, which is licensed to divert water from Spey Dam to Fort William, and no salmon fry have been recorded above the dam in 2014. The Board is alarmed by the significant number of salmon destined to spawn in the Spey that are killed in the interceptory nets around Scotland's north and east coasts each year.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	4,563	1,035	3,528	n/a	8,662	91/92/92%	29lb
Sea Trout	2,511	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,205	81%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb - 30 Sep



SPEY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - SPEY DSFB

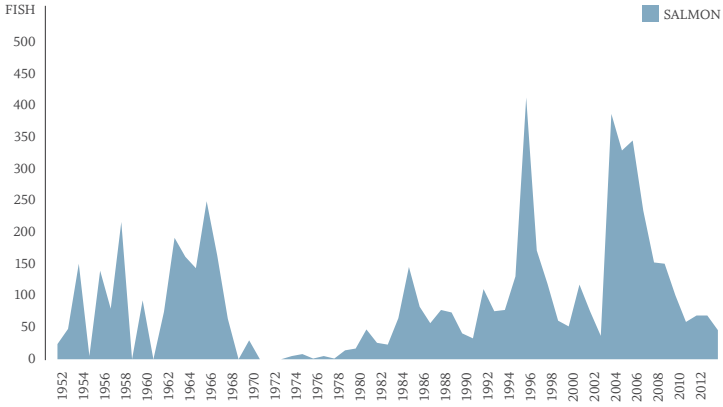
Lossie

Valerie Wardlaw - *Administrator, Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust*

Although the complete catch figures are not available at the time of writing, it is clear that 2014 was an even poorer season than 2013 with low water levels followed by a very large spate in August. The Elgin Flood Alleviation scheme construction continues to reduce access for anglers. Sea trout were running very late in the year. Juvenile fish surveys were completed in the upper Lossie as part of Rothes WF monitoring contract. Distribution and abundance of juvenile fish were similar to previous years. Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed control continues, but infestations are severe. Mink control continues, with rafts and traps in place and 5 mink trapped. Barriers to fish passage on the Linkwood Burn are being improved or removed over the next few years. Riparian habitat remedial works are being considered for areas damaged during the August spate. The 2014 Conservation Code follows ASFB advice with 100% release to the 15th May.

	2013 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	46	2	44	0	196	100/50/52%	n/a
Sea Trout	19	n/a	n/a	0	230	26%	n/a

Season dates: 25 Feb – 31 Oct.



LOSSIE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2013
SOURCE - FINDHORN, NAIRN AND LOSSIE FISHERIES TRUST

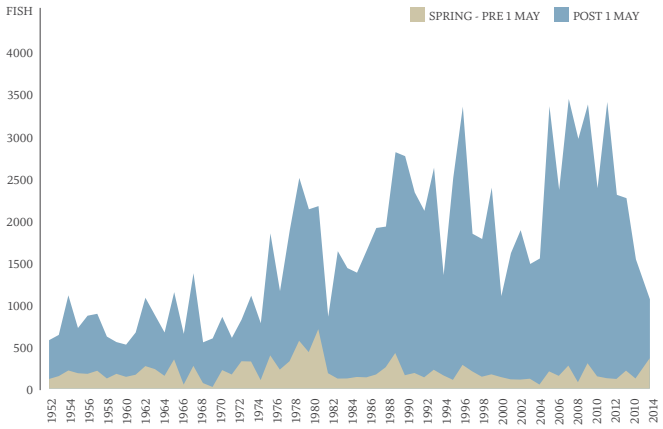
Findhorn

Alasdair Laing - *Chairman, Findhorn DSFB*

Following on from the poor 2013, 2014 did not show the hoped for improvement. Overall catches of salmon and grilse represent 46% of the 10-year average. Unlike 2013, when poor water conditions were assumed to have played a large part in poor returns, there was heavy snow cover in the high Monaliadhs and water levels remained good into the late spring. The only bright spot was that the early spring run was the best since 2008. August saw the biggest spate since 1970 which resulted in reports of dead fish of all ages being washed up but survey work since indicates that the overall effect has not been disastrous. The spate does, however, highlight the importance of maintaining a close watch on catchment development. The river director worked closely with the Berryburn windfarm developers and partly because of this the roads and ditches, which were well designed and maintained, survived a major storm. We also had an example in the catchment where roads and culverts in another development would not have survived such an event had they not been upgraded following observations from the river director.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,164	347	817	n/a	2,543	84/75/78%	n/a
Sea Trout	86	n/a	n/a	n/a	104	86%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb - 30 Sep



FINDHORN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - FINDHORN DSFB

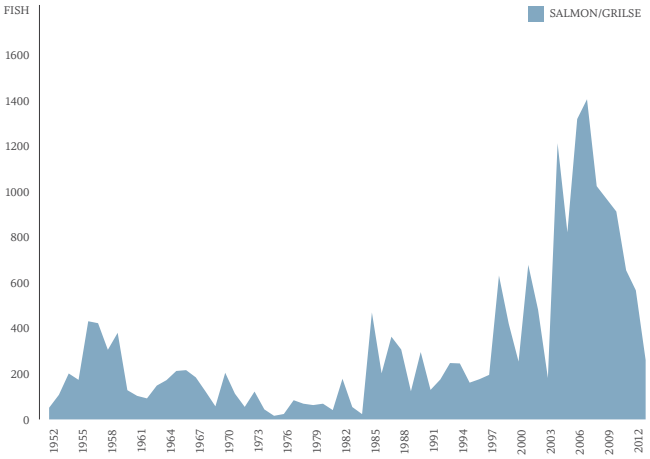
Nairn

Valerie Wardlaw – *Administrator, Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust*

The river remained very low from March to July with poor catches being recorded. Three weeks of prolonged rain in August, including a major flood, restored water levels and increased catches at the end of the season, but not sufficiently to halt the trend of decline experienced over the last few years. On a more positive note, numbers of fish were seen in the river throughout the season, the Duntelchaig fish pass was improved by Scottish Water and a habitat improvement project in the upper catchment will commence in 2015. Crayfish control continues, with over 2500 trapped this year and a PhD project commenced to test alternative methods of control. INNS control continued and was boosted by a new three year funded project to control hogweed, knotweed and balsam in the upper catchment. Mink control continued. The spate in August caused major bank damage and altered the course of the river, removing fishing pools and causing some fish mortality. The Conservation Code for the 2014 season followed ASFB advice and introduced 100% catch and release until 15th May.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	260	16	244	n/a	854	98/51/52%	19lb
Sea Trout	26	n/a	n/a	n/a	98	77%	8lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 7 Oct.



NAIRN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - NAIRN DSFB

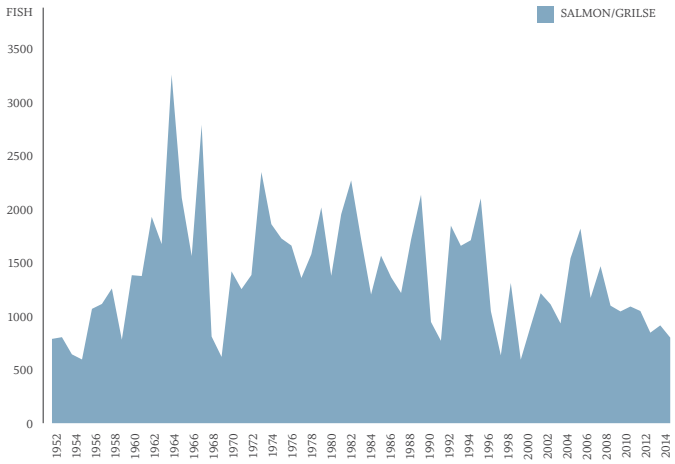
Ness

Chris Conroy - *Director, Ness DSFB*

The 2014 rod catch was down from 930 in the previous year and 14 per cent below the 5-year average (932 fish). Grilse catches fell from 385 in 2013 to 324 in 2014 (16 per cent down on the five year average of 387 fish). Numbers were down on the River Ness, but increased on Loch Ness, suggesting that the fish ran straight through. The total of 478 MSW salmon reported was 12 per cent lower than the 5-year average and down from 545 fish in 2013. However, the average size of MSW salmon has risen from 9.2lb in 2005 to 11.4lb in 2014. A total of 192 'spring' salmon were reported, just below the five year average of 194 fish and, although the 'spring' component is still in long-term decline, it has showed signs of improvement since 2010. Sea trout catches were the lowest on record with just 39 fish. This is very surprising given that anglers reported a good run of fish between June and August and might suggest a degree of under reporting. Projects that took place last year include the Upper Garry Salmon Restoration Project, the Holm Burn Restoration Project and the River Tarff Restoration Project. Furthermore, a conservation agreement with two net and coble operators was extended for a further year and has resulted in no fish being recorded by the nets for two years in a row.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	802	192	610	n/a	1,116	99/82/86%	24lb
Sea Trout	39	n/a	n/a	n/a	62	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 1 Feb – 15 Oct.



NESS ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - NESS DSFB

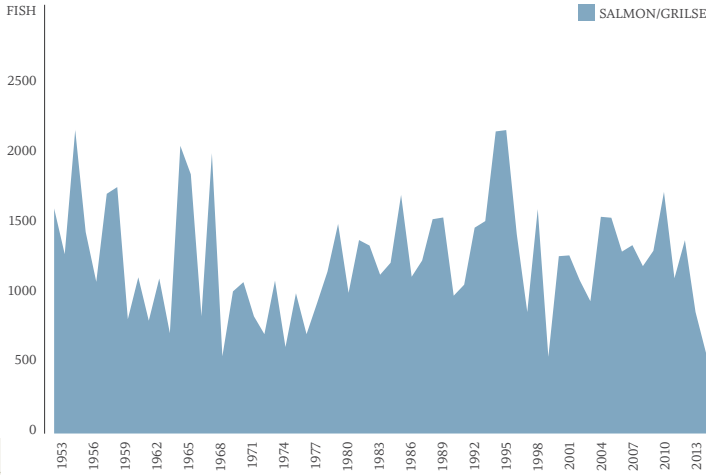
Beauly

Alastair Campbell - *Clerk, Beauly DSFB*

2014 was one of the poorer seasons on record, beaten only by 1999. The salmon catch was poor in both spring and summer with a small, late grilse run occurring in August. Weeks in July normally associated with peak catches proved particularly unproductive as the river level hardly rose above compensation all month and high water temperatures deterred fish from stirring. The Board once again joined with the Ness Board to negotiate a moratorium on commercial netting in the Inner Moray Firth with the proprietors of coastal netting rights. In August the former bridge apron on the Culburnie Burn was 'eased' with funds from SEPA's Water Environment Fund. It is hoped that the work will open up a further 5km of spawning and mixed juvenile habitat. A barrier to fish migration was also eased on the Bridgend Burn, which will open up a further 2km of habitat. 2014 also saw the start of the Inner Moray Firth's Invasive Non-Native Plant Removal led by Coille Alba. Although much of the work on the Beauly catchment was aimed at fine-scale mapping of Japanese knotweed in the tidal sections of the river, a large stand was treated on the Bridgend Burn. Attempts to eradicate INNPS will begin in earnest in 2015.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	572	20	552	n/a	1,235	90/83/83%	n/a
Sea Trout	275	n/a	n/a	n/a	299	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 15 Oct.

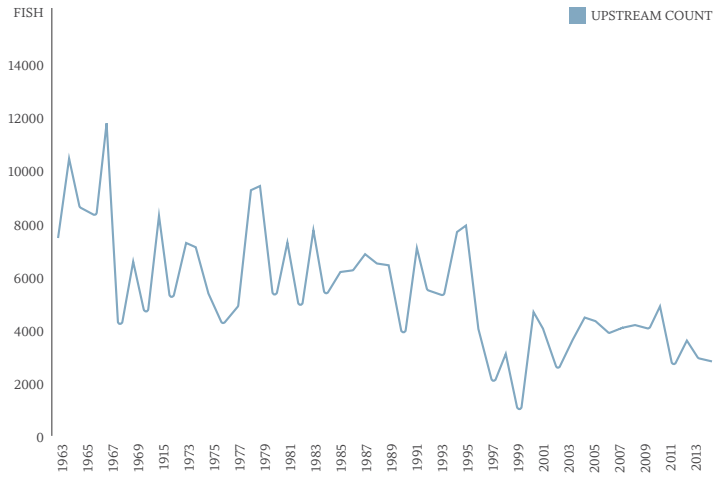


BEAULY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - BEAULY DSFB

Beauly counter

Alastair Campbell - *Clerk, Beauly DSFB*

The fish pass count figures provided by SSE up until early November are 3,422 through Kilmorack Dam (5-year average - 3,904) and 2,889 through Aigas Dam (5-year average - 3,683). The annual rod catch of salmon was down by 50% against the five year average whereas the fish pass count figures were only down by around 12%. This confirms the very poor catch was significantly related to difficult fishing conditions and not solely as a consequence of the run of fish. However, the long term trend in the runs of returning fish remains a concern and there is no doubt that 2014 saw a reduced run, along with most other rivers in Scotland.



BEAULY (AIGAS) UPSTREAM COUNT 1963-2014
SOURCE - SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ENERGY

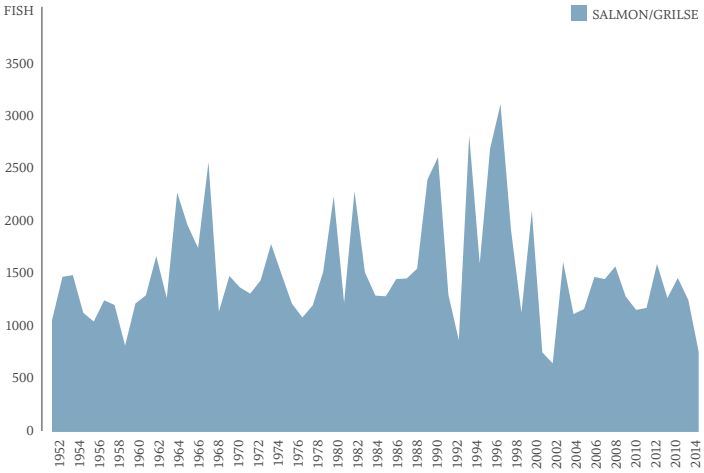
Conon

Simon McKelvey - *Cromarty DSFB*

June and July brought very dry and hot conditions, which were followed by a short period of heavy rainfall in August before a return to drier weather in September. Combined with a poor grilse run, this made times tough for anglers. Dam counts on the Conon were ahead of the 5-year average in June but fell behind in July and August. By the end of October the count through Tor Achilty dam was 939, compared with the 5-year average of 971. On the River Blackwater 589 salmon and grilse were caught at the Loch na Croic fish trap, compared with 869 in 2013. 2014 was the year we would expect to see an increase in the numbers of returning adults to the River Meig, following the restoration of the Corriefeol fish ladder. Electro-fishing for the last three years has shown an increasing distribution of salmon fry upstream of the ladder and in 2014 the Meig Dam fish counter recorded 435 returning adult salmon compared with 186 in 2013 and a 5-year average of 238. A carcass tagging scheme for anglers continues to be operated in the region to support the Board's Conservation Policy.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	760	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,387	n/a	28lb
Sea Trout	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



CONON ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - CONON DSFB

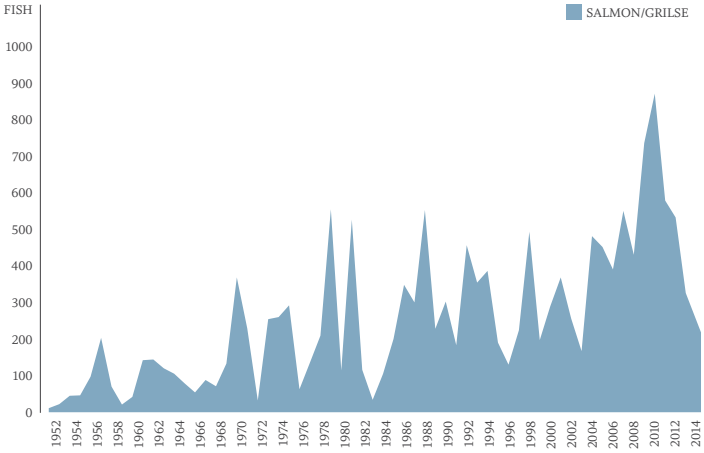
Alness

Roger Dowsett - *Novar Fishings Manager*

The rod catch for the Alness was approximately 35 per cent of the prior 5-year average. It was the second dry summer in succession, though not quite as extreme as 2013, and again catch numbers were skewed towards the end of the season. The main reason for the poor catch numbers though appeared to be poor runs of both grilse and MSW salmon. For the second successive year, major engineering works involving heavy plant were carried out on the Dalmore Distillery weir during the peak of the expected summer runs, necessitating temporary closure of the fish pass. There has again been no progress made by the Board in resolving the lack of salmonid access to the Allt na Seasgaic burn, caused by a poorly designed road culvert. This burn was once one of the most important spawning burns on the entire system. In mitigation a small broodstock programme remains in practice with the aim of stocking the Allt na Seasgaich with fry each spring.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	5yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	215	2	213	n/a	504	100/70/71%	17lb
Sea Trout	63	n/a	n/a	n/a	71	86%	2.3lb

Season dates: 10 Feb – 31 Oct.



ALNESS ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - CROMARTY DSFB

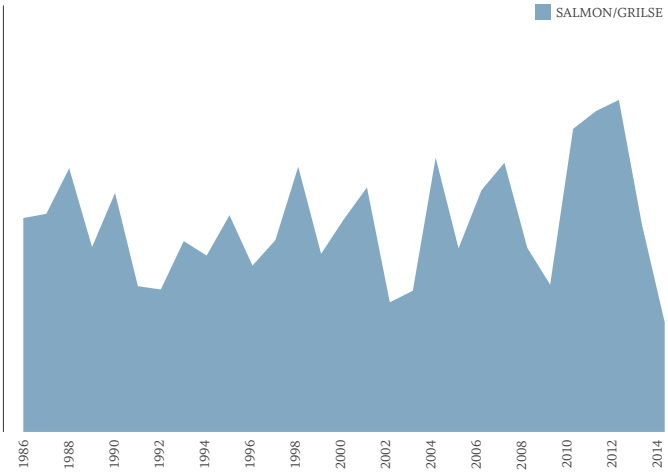
Carron (east coast)

Keith Williams - *Director, Kyle DSFB*

Catches of salmon until the end of May are probably best described as being satisfactory rather than spectacular. An encouraging start to the season was initially made with a number of fish being caught as early as February. River levels were low and water temperatures high for much of the remainder of the season with the exception of August when the very heavy rain and the resultant floods caused considerable damage to banks and walkways up and down the river. Grilse were noticeable largely by their absence. September returned to dry conditions and low water levels. Sea trout catches were close to the recent average. Kyle Fisheries staff undertook a major habitat and electro-fishing assessment of the Diebidale Burn during the summer months with the aim of quantifying habitat available upstream of a manmade obstacle.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	413	175	238	n/a	973	97/90/93%	n/a
Sea Trout	67	n/a	n/a	n/a	75	90%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Jan – 30 Sep.



CARRON ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1986-2014
SOURCE - KYLE DSFB

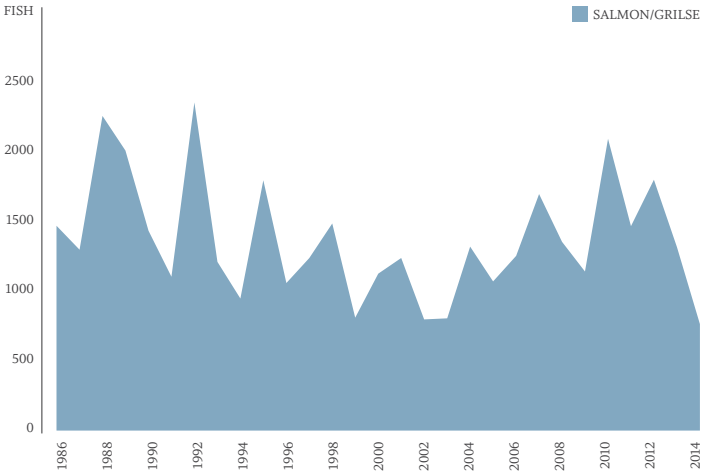
Oykel

Keith Williams - *Director, Kyle DSFB*

Spring fishing was mediocre although it would appear that those salmon that were present were intent on running as fast as possible to the upper parts of the catchment. The consensus was that the numbers of fish caught did not entirely reflect the size of the early run. The dry summer compounded by the lack of grilse resulted in generally poor catches, with only the rainfall in August rescuing the season from complete disaster, albeit at the cost of considerable damage to the Oykel area from the resulting floods. A dry final month of the season added to the sense that 2014 was a season best to be forgotten. On a more positive note, sea trout numbers were encouraging and some good sized fish were captured. Kyle Fisheries staff undertook a number of monitoring actions as part of the Pearls in Peril project during the year. Project actions by Forestry Commission Scotland aimed at removing commercial forestry plantations from some sensitive areas have also commenced.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	758	92	666	n/a	n/a	98/97/98%	n/a
Sea Trout	123	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	98%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Jan – 30 Sep.



OYKEL ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1986-2014

SOURCE - KYLE DSFB

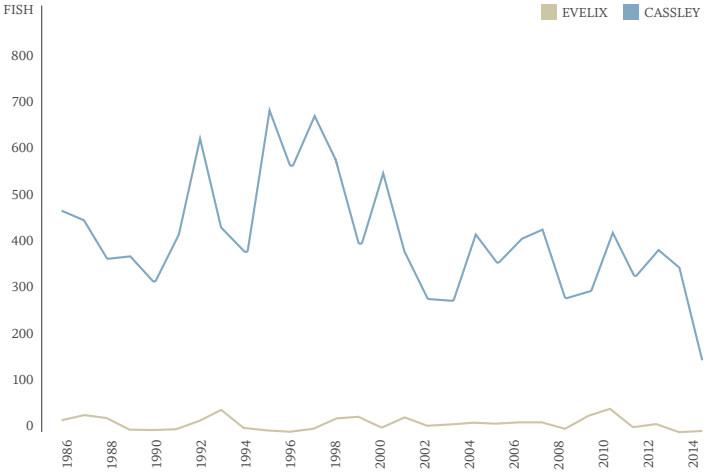
Evelix & Cassley

Keith Williams - *Director, Kyle DSFB*

The 2014 season on the Cassley followed a similar pattern to the other rivers in the Kyle district with a mediocre spring followed by a very dry summer with associated high water temperatures. As with the neighbouring Oykel, the early-running fish appeared to want to reach the upper parts of the catchment with the minimum of delay. The view of the ghillies that the fish were travelling as far and as fast as possible was backed up by the counts from SSEs fish pass at Duchally. Against the expectations of many, the 2014 count was very much in line with the 5-year average, suggesting that the catches did not fully reflect the numbers of early-running fish. Meanwhile, on the Evelix, conditions were not favourable due to a lack of water but at least a blank season was avoided. Work by Kyle Fisheries staff took place in the summer under the auspices of the Pearls in Peril project to improve the monitoring of juvenile salmon populations in the river. Forestry Commission Scotland are also planning to improve the habitat in the catchment in some sensitive locations.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	109	44	65	n/a	n/a	96/95/95%	n/a
Sea Trout	11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Jan – 30 Sep.



EVELIX & CASSLEY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1986-2014

SOURCE - KYLE DSFB

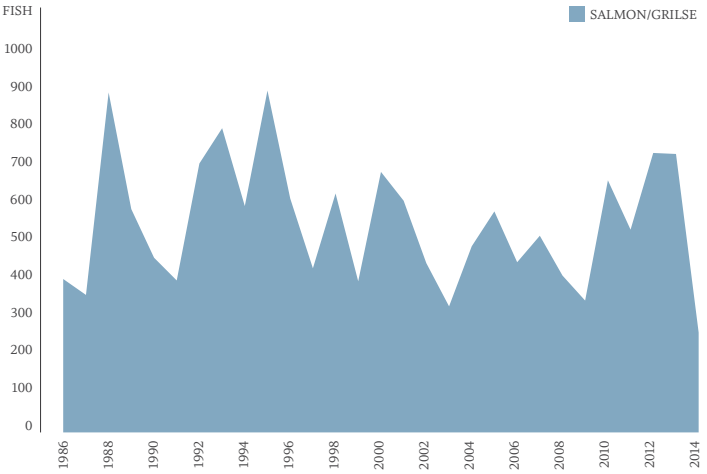
Shin

Keith Williams - *Director, Kyle DSFB*

After the excellent catches of 2013 hopes were high that 2014 would be another bumper season for Shin anglers. In the event, catches were more modest than hoped, particularly in the late summer months. The compensation flows from SSE usually ensure that the Shin suffers less from drought conditions than its neighbouring rivers but the lack of grilse in particular appeared to affect all rivers in the district and the Shin was no exception. The SSE fish counter at Shin Diversion gave a somewhat different picture to the rod catches with the verified count being broadly in line with the 5-year average. Subsequent to the end of the rod season a small number of broodstock were collected by Kyle Fisheries staff and subsequently fertilised eggs were placed in the Board's hatchery. In the spring of 2015 the hatched fry will be stocked into the River Tirry as part of ongoing research and restoration efforts.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	263	36	227	n/a	n/a	100/99/98%	38lb
Sea Trout	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Jan – 30 Sep.



SHIN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1986-2014

SOURCE - KYLE DSFB

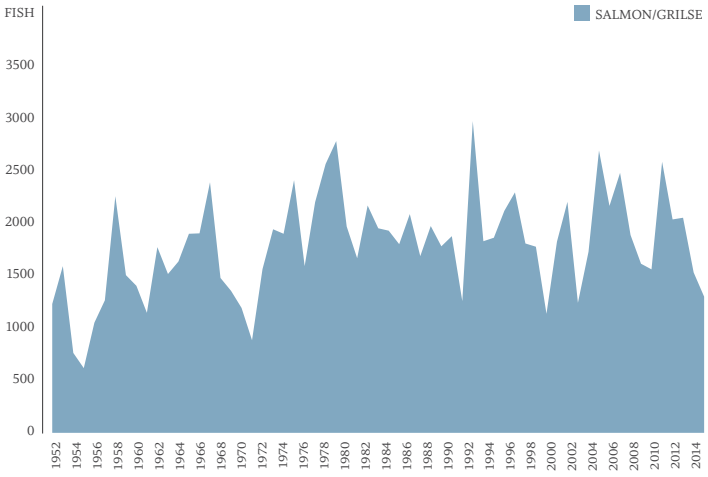
Helmsdale

Michael Wigan - *Fishery Manager, Helmsdale DSFB*

2014 was the year of few grilse. Nonetheless the catches on the Helmsdale remained steady, grilse being substituted in mid-summer by older salmon. 302 of the catch total of 1,291 were recorded as grilse, August being the principal grilse month. 89% of all fish were returned. Spring fishing was around average for this period in the salmon/grilse cycle, with 176 salmon caught up to the end of May. Weights were above average, at 8lb overall, although with the practice of releasing fish these statistics have lost some precision.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,291	319	972	n/a	1,826	85/90/89%	24lb
Sea Trout	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Jan – 30 Sept.



HELMSDALE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - HELMSDALE DSFB

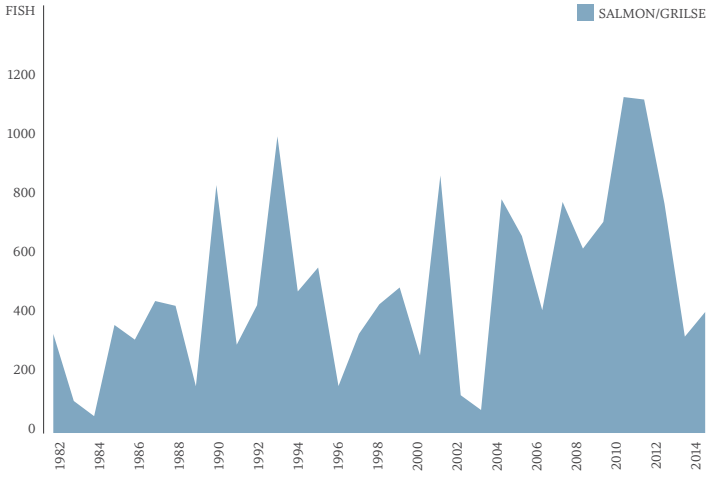
Wick

John Mackay - *Secretary, Wick Angling Club*

We suffered from a lack of water in the early part of the season and a lack of fish in July and early August. The fishing picked up in mid-August and over half the year's total was recorded that month, but although a few fresh fish entered in September and October the fishing was a non-event. All in all it was another below average season, following a disappointing 2013.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	404	8	396	n/a	698	13/33/32%	16lb
Sea Trout	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



WICK ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1982-2014

SOURCE -RIVER WICK

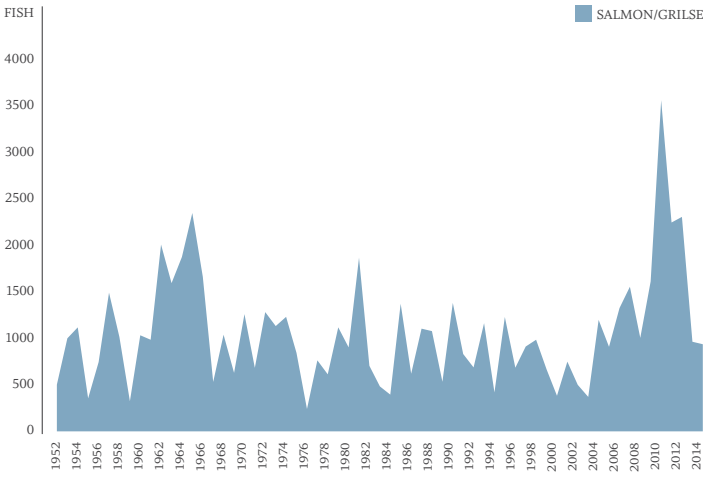
Thurso

Eddie McCarthy - *Thurso River Manager*

It was another very strange season, with fish proving very reluctant to take a fly for long periods. I am of the opinion that it has been something to do with the atmospherics. From late March through to mid-May river levels were poor. Loch More rose considerably in mid-May and many salmon gained access to the safety of the loch via the fish pass. Another very dry period followed which lasted until early August, when we had a good rise in levels. The river ran very coloured for several days but, when the water quality improved, many fish entered the system. Even when water and overhead conditions felt good our fish proved very difficult to catch. The grilse seemed to be very scarce, but silver grilse were seen entering the river in early November. Walking the redds in November seemed to vindicate the opinions of the ghillies, with hundreds of pairs of salmon to be seen spawning throughout the system. This was the second season of our C&R policy, which lasts until mid-June, and the concept now been embraced by the great majority of our anglers.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	922	129	793	n/a	1,568	95/85/87%	23lb
Sea Trout	94	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	81%	7lb

Season dates: 11 Jan – 31 Oct.



THURSO ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014

SOURCE - THURSO RIVER MANAGEMENT

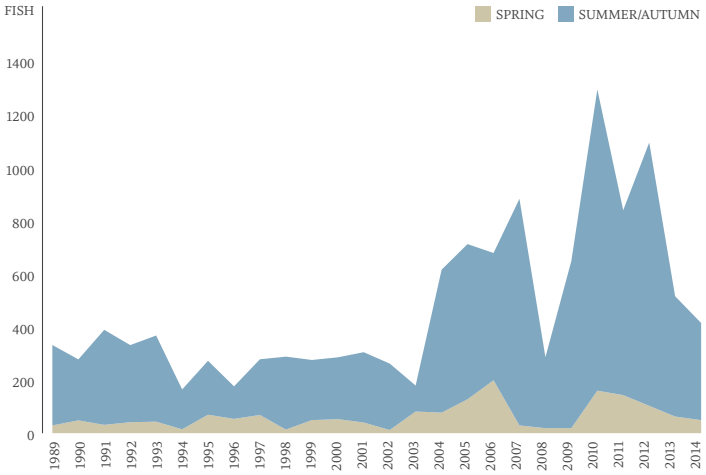
Halladale

John Salkeld - *Halladale Partnership*

This was a disappointing season, characterised by particularly poor runs of grilse and very low water in the key months of June, July and September. However, despite poor catch numbers, there appears to be sufficient spawning stock this year to sustain the river. The main runs of salmon followed rises in water levels and arrived in mid to late May and early June, while the main grilse runs started later than usual and arrived between the end of July and the end of August – again following rises in water levels. On a more positive note, both salmon and grilse were mostly in very good condition and our major concerns relating to felling of forestry on the main Dyke tributary have been eased by RSPB cooperating with felling plan timing and conservation measures. The mandatory catch and release code had been strengthened and, from this year on, all salmon caught before 15 June will have to be released.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	423	50	373	n/a	671	79/88/76%	20lb
Sea Trout	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	55%	4lb

Season dates: 12 Jan – 30 Sep.



HALLADALE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1989-2014
SOURCE - HALLADALE PARTNERSHIP

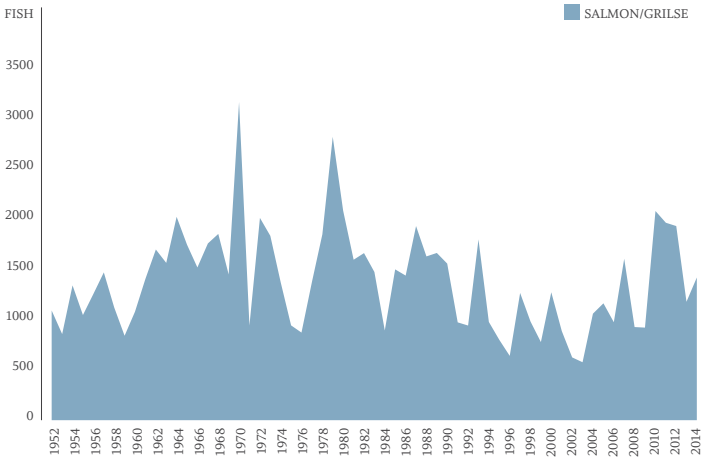
Naver

Matthew Heeps - *Head Bailiff & Fishery Manager*

A total of 1,267 salmon and grilse might be marginally below the current 10-year average, but it does at least represent a 21% increase on 2013. Spring catches were steady, but the summer was a different story altogether – prolonged dry and hot conditions with associated low flows left large numbers of fish, predominantly grilse, visibly languishing in the tidal waters, unable to progress any further upstream, while those that had already made it into the system proved very lethargic. August, however, brought exceptional rainfall which sparked everything into life, with five times as many salmon and grilse banked than in the previous month. Catch & release figures were particularly pleasing this year – with over 96% of springers, and over 92% of all fish banked across the season, returned.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	1,267	324	943	n/a	1,355	97/91/92%	30lb
Sea Trout	314	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5lb

Season dates: 12 Jan – 30 Sep.



NAVER ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - NAVER MANAGEMENT

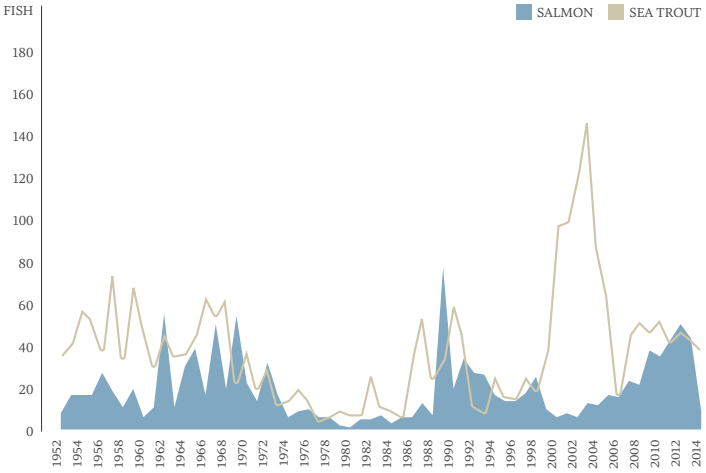
Polla

Charles Marsham - *Chairman, North and West Sutherland Board and Trust*

Although the season was generally poor, we had a run of unusually large salmon in early July, with several fish up to 16lb caught. However, very few were caught in August or September, with the latter month especially dry, and there seemed to be a shortage of salmon and grilse, as well as poor fishing conditions. The run of seatrout was so-so, and the average size of these was 2.5lb. Undoubtedly the most dramatic event of the year was the huge flood on 5th August that washed out the main feeder burn. The damage was massive and in the river we lost every cauld and had the main pools filled with river rubble. We have already collected 110 boulders of over a tonne from the washout to replace the caulds.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	9	0	9	n/a	30	82%	16lb
Sea Trout	40	n/a	45	n/a	39	82%	4.75lb

Season dates: 1 Jun – 30 Sep.



POLLA ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - NORTH AND WEST SUTHERLAND DSFB

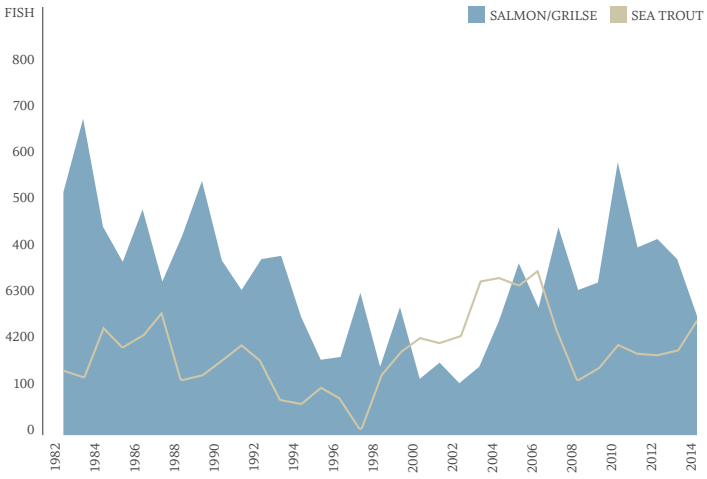
Dionard

Jim Allingham - *North and West DSFB*

2014 was a poor season which was dominated by periods of drought, although decent runs of salmon and grilse arrived whenever water levels rose from August onwards and sea trout numbers were much better than they were in 2013. In terms of timing, the salmon runs are now significantly later than they were 30 years ago.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	255	n/a	n/a	n/a	376	87%	n/a
Sea Trout	253	n/a	n/a	n/a	220	95%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



DIONARD ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1982-2014
SOURCE - NORTH AND WEST DSFB

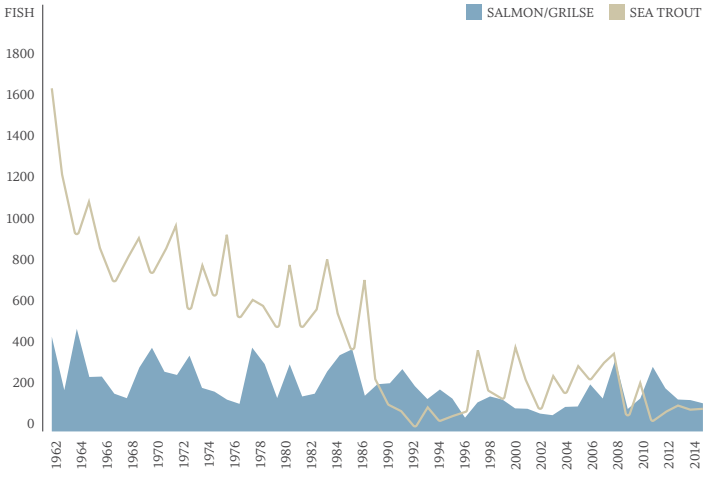
Laxford

Shona Marshall - *Biologist, West Sutherland Fisheries Trust and Reay Forest Estate*

It was a disappointing season, with low numbers of both salmon and grilse, while sea trout catches were also poor. There seems to have been a shift back to a preponderance of grilse, with their proportion in the catch being higher than seen recently. The bulk of the fish were caught slightly later in the season than usual, mainly in September as opposed to the more normal August run. In a bid to improve the habitat, there is ongoing change from non-native conifer woods to indigenous woodland around riparian water. The effects of a large spate in one of the main salmon spawning burns 7 or 8 years ago may still be apparent in the population. Changes in the riparian zone of several of the sea trout spawning burns, with growth becoming extreme, may also be having a negative effect.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	148	4	144	n/a	195	50%/81%*	20lb
Sea Trout	115	n/a	n/a	n/a	208	100%	2lb

*Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct. * spring / summer/autumn*



LAXFORD ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1962-2014
SOURCE - WEST SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST

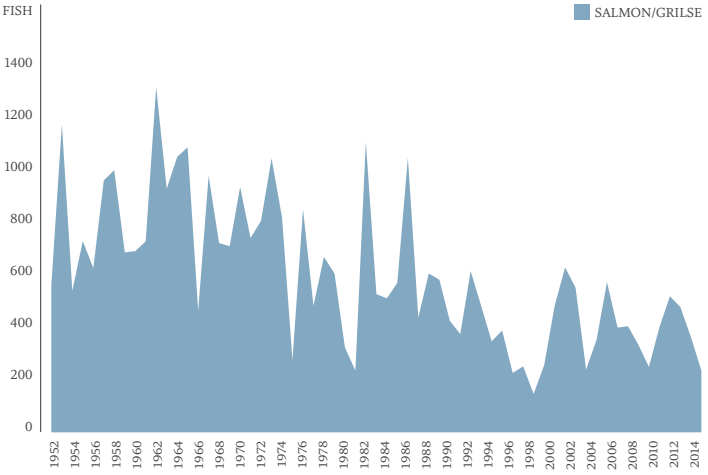
Grimersta

Simon Scott - *Manager, Grimersta Estate*

A reasonable run of fish was particularly visible in the sea loch from mid-July, and thereafter dispersed throughout the system. Without a fish-counter we can only estimate, but consider that the run was sufficient to have maintained or improved 5-10 year averages. Despite this, the final rod return was only half that of the 10-year average and the fourth lowest since Grimersta records began in 1875. This is partially explained by extended periods of high pressure, no wind, and very warm water temperatures, which made for extremely challenging conditions, particularly for loch fishing. However, even when conditions briefly improved, fish seemed determined not to take. The arrival of serious October gales and a late season rise in water levels saw a significant improvement in returns and demonstrated what might have been. We continue to work to achieve consensus on fisheries management and best practice on Loch Langavat, the headwaters of the "system", and throughout the wider catchment. The recently formed Loch Roag Working Group is a voluntary forum of regulatory and statutory bodies, salmon farmers, freshwater fisheries and shellfish growers. The group has the aim of sharing information and improving cooperation between interested parties.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	231	3	228	n/a	394	100/84/84%	18lb
Sea Trout	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	295	100%	3lb

Season dates: 3 Jun – 15 Oct.



GRIMERSTA ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - WESTERN ISLES DSFB

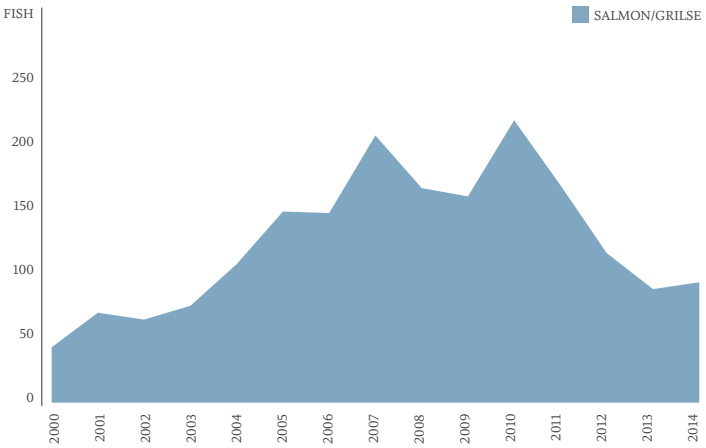
Snizort

Derek Dowsett - *Snizort River Manager*

The third disappointingly dry summer in succession produced only a handful of spates and almost certainly affected the number of fish caught – while July is usually a productive month, very few salmon were landed before August because of low water conditions. As well as the rainfall issues, there have been concerns about the local aquaculture industry, not least because of a marked increase in applications for new salmon farms on Loch Snizort, two of which have been approved, despite active objections from SDSFB and other environmental groups. This is particularly worrying given that the incidence of Amoebic Gill Disease and high sea louse counts in farms in north Skye seem to be increasing critically – one site lost its entire harvest and two or three others lost up to half their biomass. We continue to operate a strict catch and return policy and no legal netting practices are active on this catchment.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	87	n/a	n/a	n/a	136	92%	17lb
Sea Trout	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	64	100%	3.5lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 15 Oct.



SNIZORT ROD CATCH STATISTICS 2000-2014
SOURCE - SKYE DSFB

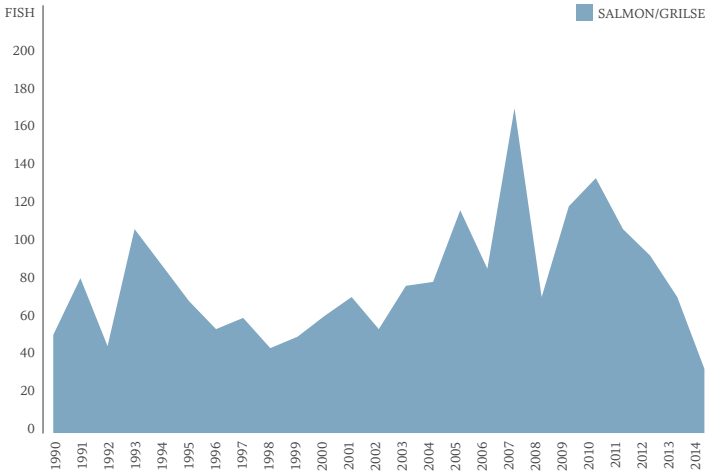
Little Gruinard

Brian Fraser - *Manager, Eilean Darach Estates*

It was a very poor year with all our salmon being caught in August and September. The big plus this year was the amount of finnock seen around the coast and 114 were caught in the river. Ardessie fish farm has been fallow all year, which could have made the difference – time might tell.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	34	n/a	n/a	n/a	97	100%	15lb
Sea Trout	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	2lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



LITTLE GRUINARD ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1990-2014
SOURCE - LITTLE GRUINARD MANAGEMENT

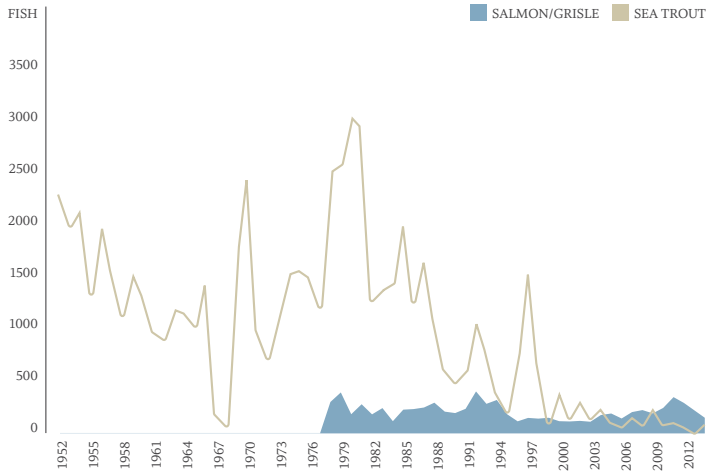
Ewe and Loch Maree

Peter Cunningham - *Biologist, Wester Ross Fisheries Trust*

Salmon were caught throughout the summer and autumn, but not in the numbers of other recent years and less than 10% of the reported catch was taken above Loch Maree. Water levels were low for much of the season, except on 11th August and subsequent days when sustained heavy rainfall caused levels to rise to record levels in some coastal burns, causing much damage. Loch Maree was relatively lightly fished, but one boat of dedicated local anglers reported 4 salmon, 31 sea trout (to 4lb), 60 finnock and 67 brown trout (to 4lb) over 14 days from July to September. Many of the larger fish were fat, with little evidence of sea louse damage. The WRFT sweep netting team netted fin perfect sea trout of up to 52cm (1580g) at Boor Bay in June. Loch Ewe was designated as part of the Wester Ross Marine Protected Area in July 2014; a consultation on fisheries management measures ended on 2nd February. The Bruachaig restoration project continues to stock salmon fry of Kinlochewe river origin. Some work was carried out on the Slattadale Burn with the Forestry Commission and volunteers to improve habitat and remove invasive rhododendron saplings.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	146	5	141	n/a	216	100/90/91%	23lb
Sea Trout	114	n/a	n/a	n/a	117	95%	5 .5lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



RIVER EWE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1978-2014
LOCH MAREE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST

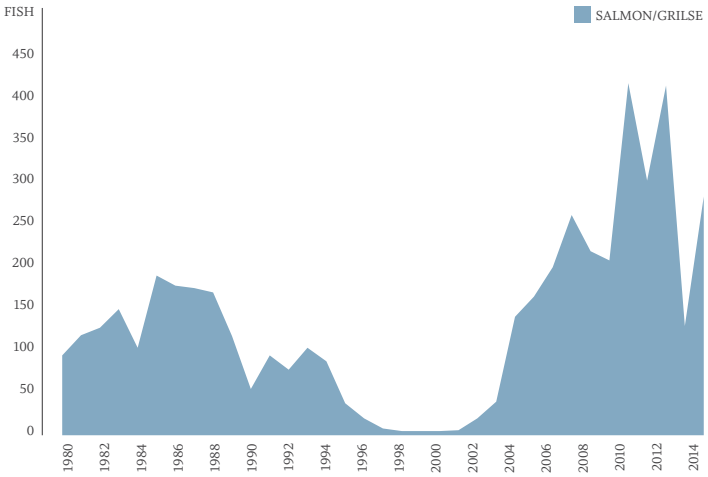
Carron (Wester Ross)

Bob Kindness - *Carron River Manager*

The season was a good one, with roughly the same number of salmon caught as in 2013 but more than 4 times the number of grilse – despite only having 6 weeks of good fishing water. The bulk of the fish entered the river in early August when the rain arrived. All salmon, grilse and sea trout were in excellent condition with almost no sea lice present. A 100% catch and release policy is in place with the use of keep-nets to allow recovery before release, although fish that die before they can be released are retained. Towards the end of the season salmon and grilse are retained for broodstock..

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	284	n/a	n/a	n/a	261	92%	15lb
Sea Trout	90	n/a	n/a	n/a	114	100%	4.5lb

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



CARRON (W.COAST) ROD CATCH 1980-2014

SOURCE - RIVER CARRON MANAGEMENT

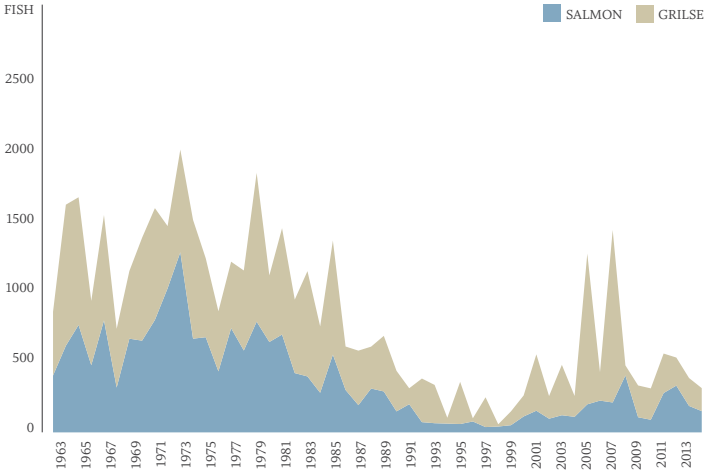
Lochy

John Veitch - *Lochy River Manager*

2014 saw overall catches drop by 25% on the 5-year average. However, the spring component, which incorporates May and June, continues to buck this trend with numbers improving slightly over the same period. The average size of fish during these early weeks was an impressive 17.5lb. July and September's catches were well down on 5-year averages – more than likely due to very low river levels and water temperatures that reached the high 60s °F. By contrast, August was the best since 2011, but this coincided with rain and much cooler conditions. Sea trout numbers were almost back to the days of old and, although many were caught in the tidal beats, most beats held good numbers going into October. The biggest notable change over the last few years has been water temperature and the main grilse run now coincides with the highest in-river temperatures. This plays a major part in depressing catches as the fish tend to seek out the cooler parts of the river as soon as they enter.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	317	29	288	n/a	605	100/92/92%	27.5lb
Sea Trout	675	n/a	n/a	n/a	254	100%	6.5lb

Season dates: 15 May – 15 Oct.



LOCHY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1963-2014

SOURCE - LOCHY ASSOCIATION

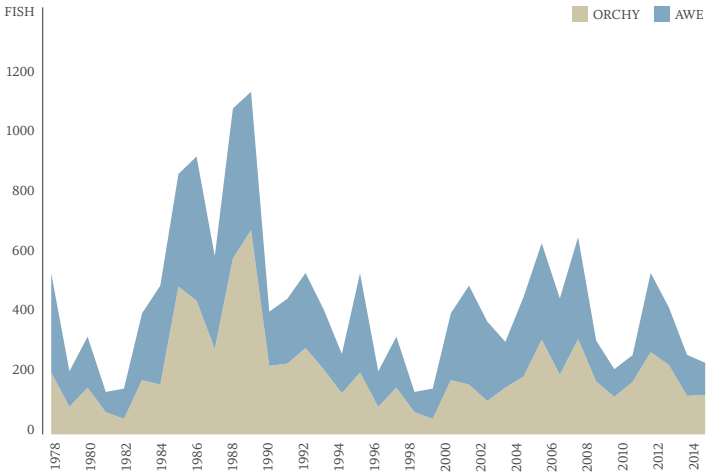
Awe and Orchy

Roger Brook - *Chairman, Argyll DSFB*

The total catch of 236 salmon is 10% down on the previous year but the true story is much more dramatic and puzzling. The run of fish, as measured on the Awe counter, was up by 60% on 2013 so the percentage of fish caught fell dramatically to half the previous 5-year average. This could be partly explained on the Orchy, which is a spate river, by the very low water levels resulting in very few fish being caught in September. It does not explain why the Awe catch fell by the same amount. The Awe is fed by a constant flow of compensation water from the hydro-electric dam. In the last 10 years the percentage of the fish caught has varied from 13.6% to 34%.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	236	16	220	n/a	399	100/94/94%	n/a
Sea Trout	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 15 Oct.



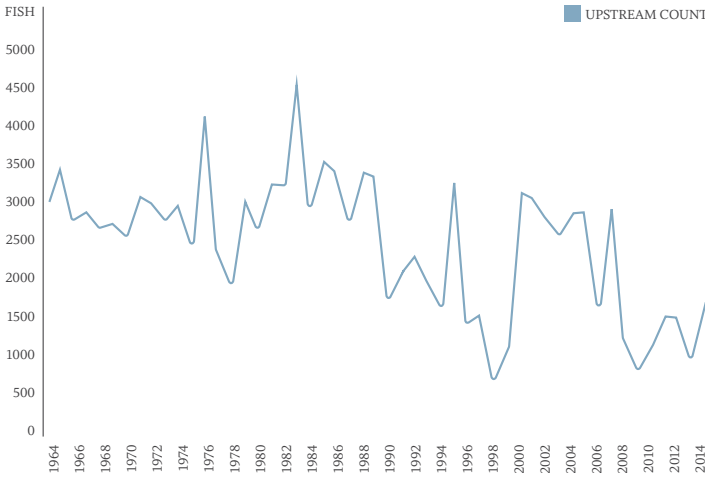
AWE & ORCHY ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1978-2014

SOURCE - ARGYLL DSFB

Awe counter

Roger Brook - *Chairman, Argyll DSFB*

The total run of fish recorded on the Awe fish counter was 1,734, which is up 60% on the previous year's total of 1,066 and up 40% on the previous 5-year average. Although this is a much more positive count than in recent times it is still 1,000 short of the number of fish that used to run the river up to 1990. The timing of the run followed the usual pattern but with higher numbers in the peak weeks. In addition there was an unexpected late run of fish in October.



AWE BARRAGE UPSTREAM COUNT 1964-2014
SOURCE - SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ENERGY

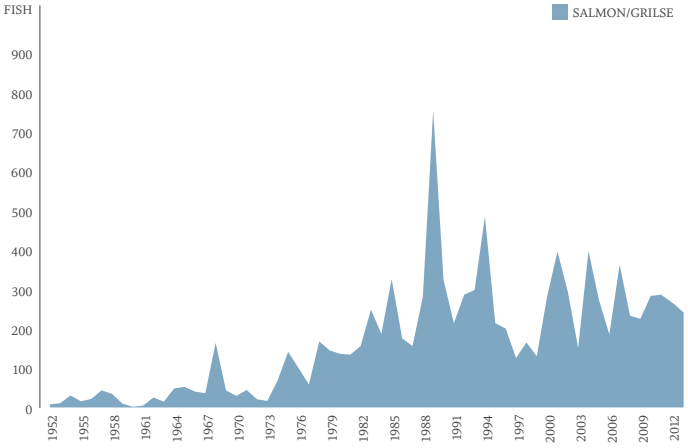
Irvine and Garnock

Stuart Brabbs - *Ayrshire Rivers Trust*

The 2014 catch returns were not available at the time of writing, but reports suggest that the season was consistent with other Ayrshire rivers and adversely affected by a lack of rainfall. However, once rain did come at the back end, catches appear to have been good on some middle to upper beats. Overall, the Irvine system appears to be holding its own compared to other local rivers with catch returns fairly consistent. Work to remove the Dean Ford (aka Lauder Ford) has begun and should be completed this spring. The ford has been replaced with a 4-section box culvert and fish pass. This was the last major obstacle on the Kilmarnock Water and should make a tremendous improvement for migrating salmon and trout on this small catchment. We have already received reports and witnessed a number of salmon upstream of the old ford and expect this to increase over the next few seasons. Poaching continues to be a problem within the Irvine Valley, but a new bailiff force is in place and is well equipped to tackle the gang poaching that is commonplace in the tidal areas. Several nets were recovered in 2014 although, to date, there have been no prosecutions. The new River Irvine improvement Association hatchery at Dean Castle Park in Kilmarnock continues to stock the Fenwick Water with salmon in an effort to restore stocks to former levels.

	2013 total	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	240	n/a	288	49%	n/a
Sea Trout	182	n/a	n/a	61%	n/a

Season dates: 15 Mar – 15 Nov



IRVINE/GARNOCK - ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2013
SOURCE - AYRSHIRE RIVERS TRUST

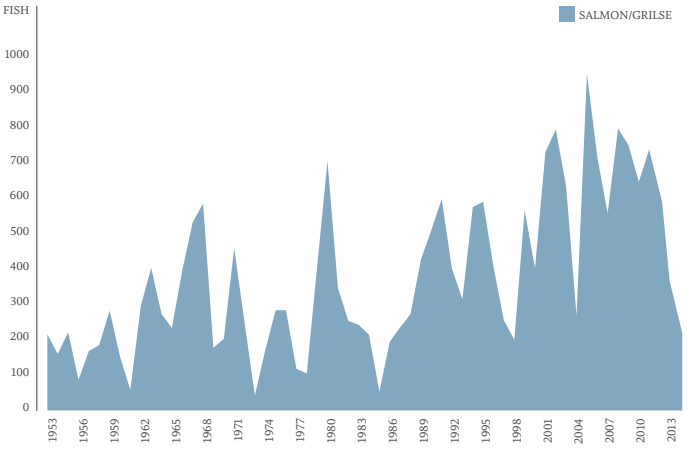
Ayr

Stuart Brabbs - *Ayrshire Rivers Trust*

River levels were low throughout late spring and summer, bringing few fish into the system and most beats had the bulk of their catch during October. Although clearly a poor season, the final figure was not helped by the fact that several beats had yet to submit their data to the Board. SEPA continues to target diffuse pollution within the catchment in order to improve water quality and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Major works took place at Catrine Dam, a notorious bottleneck, and all summer contractors diverted flows as they refurbished the weir and fish pass. Great hopes for improved fish passage soon faded with the arrival of the first spate in however, when salmon were seen to be struggling to find the entrance to the fish pass. The developers have been instructed to make further improvements to allow migration to continue across most heights of water and this should be carried out early in 2015. The bailiff force continues to operate throughout the catchment and reported offences and prosecutions were well down from last year, which hopefully indicates that the message is getting through to the poaching fraternity.

	2014 total	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	237	n/a	529	35%	n/a
Sea Trout	58	n/a	n/a	86%	n/a

Season dates: 15 Feb – 31 Oct.



AYR ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - AYRSHIRE RIVERS TRUST

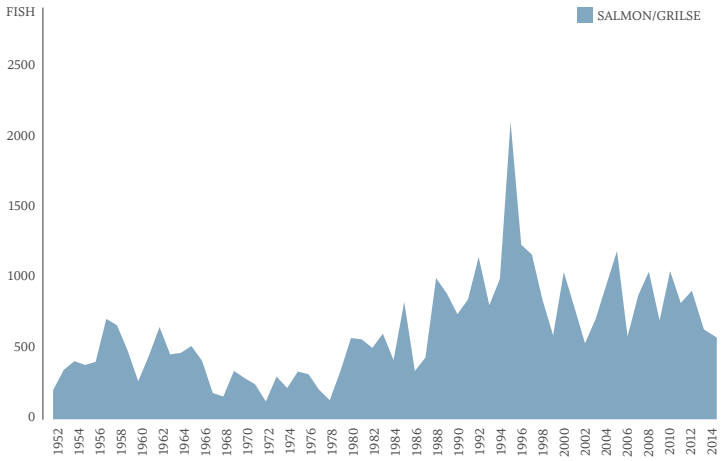
Doon

Stuart Brabbs - *Ayrshire Rivers Trust*

Angling conditions on the Doon benefitted from the compensation flow received from Loch Doon Dam, producing better catches than elsewhere in Ayrshire, but the long dry summer didn't encourage anglers onto the river as expectations were low. In general, the lower and middle beats fared worse than the upper reaches, where some beats recorded their best catches for years. In recent years, several excellent beats have changed ownership and angling effort has all but ceased on these stretches. This doesn't help when assessing the river's overall performance but should be taken into account. At the time of writing, a few catch returns had yet to be submitted which may have reduced the total reported rod catch. Sea trout numbers improved this year but catches are still way down on where they should be – if targeted by anglers, the catch rate can be expected to increase significantly. The Doon DSFB continues to install fencing to improve habitat and reduce diffuse pollution, particularly in the middle catchment. An improvement in the salmon release rate from 55 to 64% is to be commended.

	2014 total	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	556	n/a	529	64%	n/a
Sea Trout	68	n/a	n/a	97%	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct



DOON ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - AYRSHIRE RIVERS TRUST

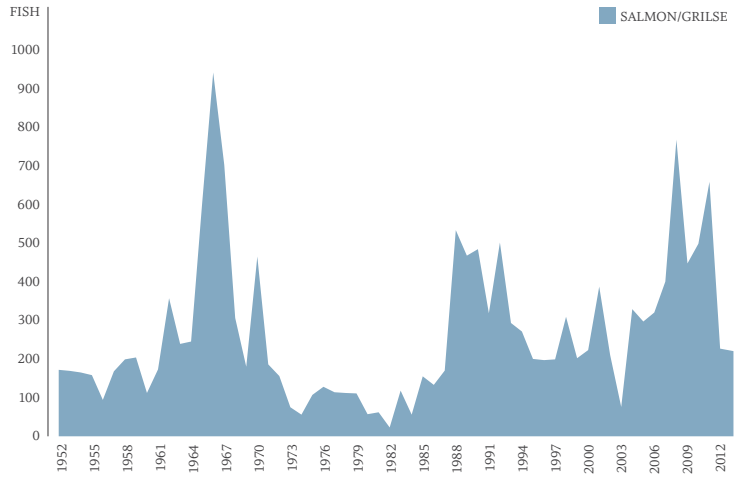
Girvan

Stuart Brabbs - *Ayrshire Rivers Trust*

The Girvan again produced Ayrshire's first salmon of the season, in March, and hopes were high that 2014 would be an improvement on 2013. However, the river was low from late spring to the end of the season, as the driest summer for years took hold. There were good numbers of sea trout and a few salmon in the system in July when a disastrous event unfolded, killing thousands of juvenile and adult fish. High water temperatures and low oxygen levels are thought to be responsible and the Fish Health Inspectorate was in attendance, ruling out any more sinister notifiable diseases. Strangely, the River Stinchar just a few miles away suffered a very similar event at the same time. On both rivers, the impact was confined to the lower reaches and it is hoped that stocks will recover quickly as the affected stretches repopulate from upstream. Diffuse pollution from agriculture continues to be the main pressure on the Water of Girvan but at a lower level that further North in Ayrshire. Juvenile numbers are excellent with some areas being as productive as anywhere in Ayrshire. This bodes well for the future and, despite two bad angling seasons back to back, we can look forward to better if the weather permits.

	2014 total	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	208	n/a	529	80%	n/a
Sea Trout	93	n/a	n/a	98%	n/a

Season dates: 25 Feb – 31 Oct.



GIRVAN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - AYRSHIRE RIVERS TRUST

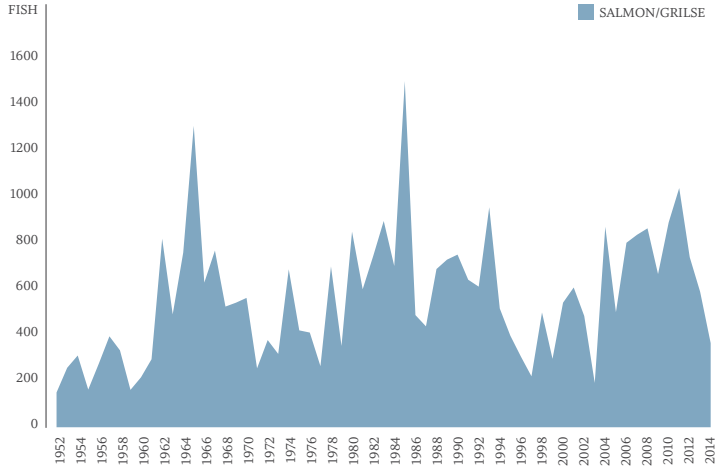
Stinchar

Stuart Brabbs - *Ayrshire Rivers Trust*

The driest summer for years left the river on its bare bones from late spring onwards, keeping many anglers away. At the start of July a massive fish kill occurred in the lower reaches. Approximately 10 -12 km of river was affected and thousands of salmon fry and parr were lost. Sea trout and finnock were similarly affected in large numbers, as were a few adult salmon. The Fish Health Inspectorate were informed but the incident was largely over by the time of their arrival and they concentrated efforts on the nearby Water of Girvan which was experiencing a very similar incident. Both rivers had had a small rise in levels the week before and the inspectors attributed these incidents to elevated silt loading in the spate causing irritation to the gills and the already stressed fish then struggled when water temperatures peaked and oxygen levels declined. August produced a few fish but September was poor as the river shrank once again. October provided the best sport of the season but many fish ran straight through the lower river without stopping. The river was reported to be full of fish at spawning time but constant high water brought with it some concerns over redd washout.

	2014 total	total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	356	n/a	720	68%	n/a
Sea Trout	78	n/a	n/a	96%	n/a

Season dates: 25 Feb – 31 Oct



STINCHAR ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - AYRSHIRE RIVERS TRUST

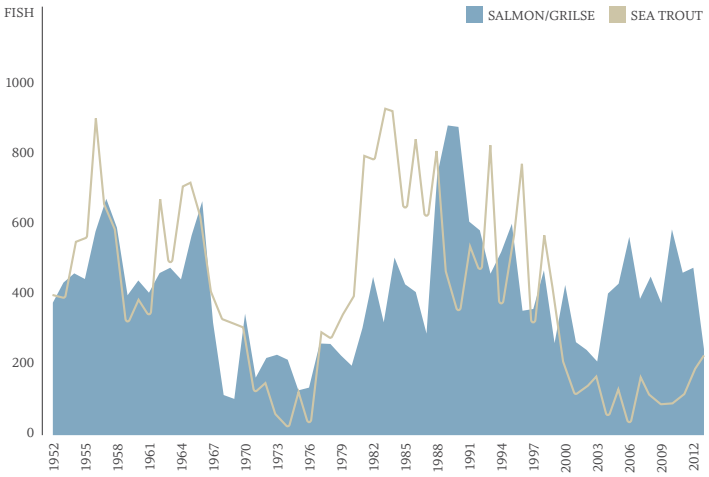
Cree

Terence Flanagan – *Chairman, Cree DSFB*

Although full catch returns are not to hand, it appears that the rod catch for 2014 was even worse than the previous year – which had itself been billed as "the worst ever" – with approximately 200 salmon caught compared to 244 in 2013. Very few spring fish were caught, perhaps not surprisingly, given the low water levels that persisted for virtually the whole of the season. Catches picked up in August on the lower beats after a couple of small spates, but the general dearth of fish (and water) continued until just before the close of the season. Heavy rains arrived as the season was drawing to a close, too late to make a major impact on catches, but bringing good numbers of fish into the system and the River Cree Hatchery and Habitat Trust found greater numbers of fish than usual when they came to capture broodstock. Sea trout numbers were encouraging. A programme of habitat improvements continues on the Cree and the spawning burns. Acidification remains the main environmental concern. The River Cree DSFB promulgates a conservation code providing for all salmon caught before 1st June to be returned and with restrictions on fishing methods and numbers of fish to be taken.

	2013 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	244	31	213	47	n/a	94/61/65%	17.5lb
Sea Trout	239	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	88%	5lb

Season dates: 1 Mar – 14 Oct.



CREE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2013
SOURCE - GALLOWAY FISHERIES TRUST

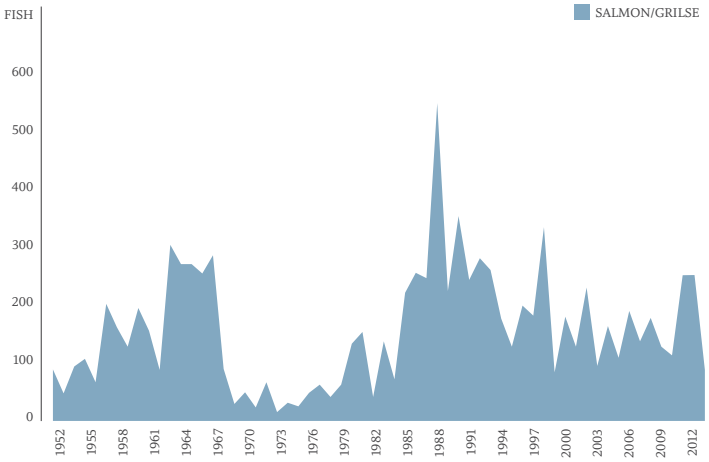
Bladnoch

Galloway Fisheries Trust

The full 2014 returns are not available at the time of writing, but although the first springer was landed in the first week of the season, catches were few and far between during the spring months. In June, fresh fish only entered the lower river and by mid-month, the river had fallen away to summer low-flows and salmon found higher up the system were coloured and notoriously hard to catch. Rain returned in August and catches became more widespread with Clugston's first salmon of the season being recorded on 5th August. In September, river levels dropped once more to summer low and returns were again poor, except for within the tidal beats. All hope was not lost and some very good water across the first weekend of October led to catches well into double figures the following week. Sadly catches quickly fell away again with only a handful of salmon added by closing day. Work to remove Sitka spruce and restore peatlands in the headwaters is planned to improve water quality and return salmon to these areas. In addition to the legal requirement to return all salmon caught up to 1st April the river's rules state that all salmon should be released up to the 1st June, while all hens should be released throughout October.

	2013 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	83	8	75	n/a	159	100/77/80%	16lb
Sea Trout	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a

Season dates: 11 Feb – 31 Oct.



BLADNOCH ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2013
SOURCE - GALLOWAY FISHERIES TRUST

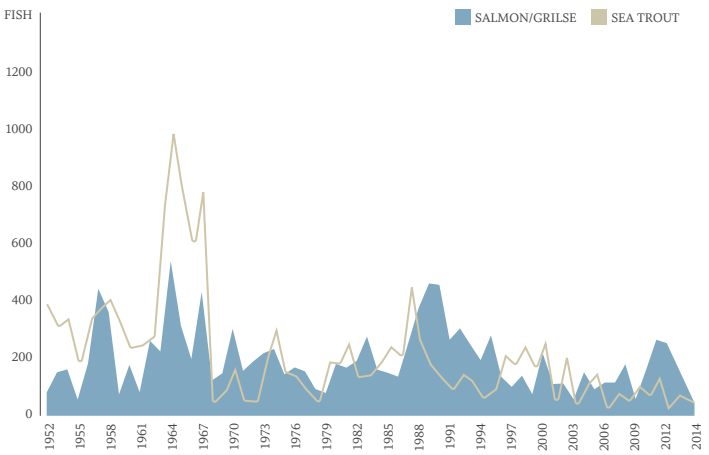
Luce

Galloway Fisheries Trust

Although the Luce is known to be one of the later salmon runs in Galloway, it didn't record its first salmon until September. The river suffered from very low water conditions throughout most of the season which was reflected in the catches, with most salmon being recorded in October. In common with most Scottish rivers there did not seem to be many salmon even when flows finally rose towards the end of the season. Indeed, the annual salmon catch was a fifth of the 5-year average, while the sea trout return was only 40% of the 5-year average. Control of Japanese knotweed continues across the lower and mid river, where this problematic plant used to be a major problem, causing bank erosion and limiting angler access, and less than 10% compared to pre-treatment levels remains. Sea trout benefitted from the removal of a weir on an upper Cross Water of Luce tributary and young trout are now present upstream of this previously impassable barrier. A hatchery programme continues and various habitat works are completed annually.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	41	0	41	n/a	142	93%	18lb
Sea Trout	43	n/a	n/a	n/a	94	88%	5lb

Season dates: 25 Feb – 31 Oct.



LUCE ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - GALLOWAY FISHERIES TRUST

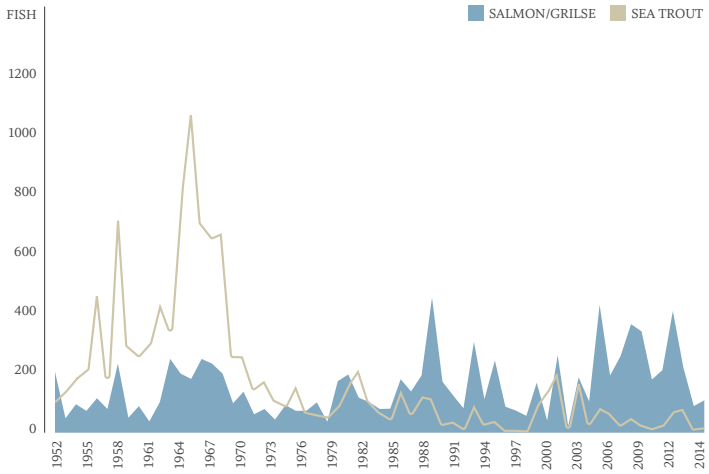
Urr

Richard Bellamy - *Secretary, Dalbeattie Angling Association*
Kenny Irving - *Chairman, Castle Douglas Angling Association*

It was a very poor season with a 13% drop in catches compared to 2013, which in turn had been the worst year in decades. The timing of the runs (such as they were), was largely influenced by lack of water, especially pre-August and for the whole of September. A small run came in with the rise in water levels in mid-August, and another, again in high water, in the first half of October, but everything else was dribs and drabs. Very few big salmon were encountered although sea trout sizes were up. The river itself seems to be in very healthy condition, with decent densities of salmon fry from the winter 2013-4 spawning, although there are still big concerns over the presence of signal crayfish in Buittle Reservoir, from which there is a direct watercourse link to the river. A plan for containment or eradication is being worked on by the Fisheries Trust. Dalbeattie and Castle Douglas AAs are great examples of how education, rather than prescription, can achieve the highest standards of sensible conservation. We remain deeply sceptical about the probability of expensive and centralised 'lip service' towards conservation as outlined in the Wild Fisheries Review.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	104	0	104	n/a	143	88%	21lb
Sea Trout	22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	81%	3lb

Season dates: 25 Feb – 30 Nov.



URR ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - GALLOWAY FISHERIES TRUST

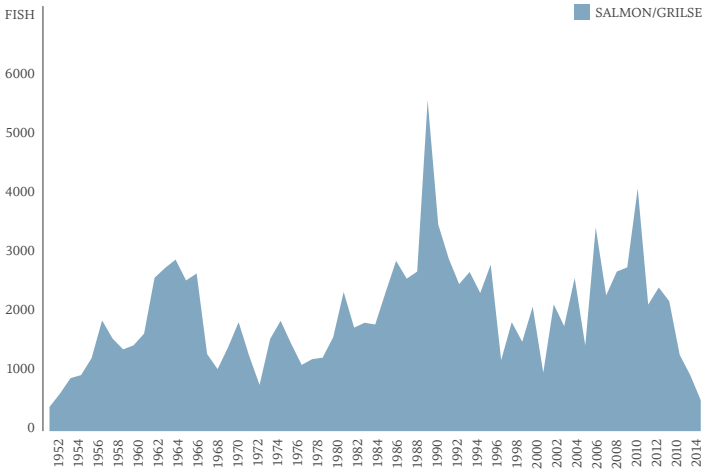
Nith

Jim Henderson - *Fishery Director, NDSFB*

The 2014 season was, to say the least, challenging. Like other rivers in the UK and in other countries bordering the North Atlantic we suffered from low numbers of returning salmon and grilse, which were then compounded by a prolonged period of drought that persisted over much of the early season. The few salmon that did appear ran earlier than usual and there was no big back end return. The drought conditions promoted better angling conditions at the lower end of the river. Sea trout catches were above the 10-year average and could have been much higher, but for the low angling turnout, with many fishers supposedly put off by the poor runs of sea trout that occurred over the previous 4-5 years.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	520	31	489	331	2,764	68/64/66%	32lb
Sea Trout	1,119	n/a	n/a	132	990	87%	n/a

Season dates: 25 Feb – 30 Nov.



NITH ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - NITH DSFB

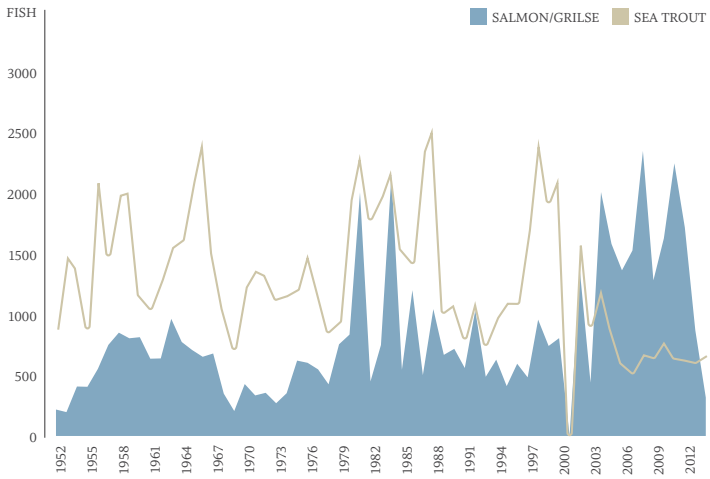
Annan

Nick Chisholm - *Director, Annan Board and Trust*

Few fish returned this year and those that did arrive did so during drought conditions – a combination that conspired to create one of the lowest ever angling returns. We are very concerned about the lack of fish but are also pretty confident that the low returns can at least partially be attributed to the lack of angling effort. On the upside there is clearly a large increase in the number of sea trout in the river. We have continued to implement an extensive INNS programme that has to date exceeded its initial project objectives by a factor of 7. We have been surveying barriers and hope to implement a barrier removal programme during 2015/16. We are also developing habitat improvement programmes that will be implemented in 2015/16. A mixture of education and peer pressure has meant that exploitation by anglers is now commendably negligible across all migratory fish stocks and further regulation of the rod and line fishery is probably not required. We are very concerned though that in this period of very low returns that the net fishery continues to operate largely untrammelled by conservation measures – there is a future for commercial netting in the catchment but not whilst stocks are so fragile.

	2014 total	pre Jun 1	post Jun 1	Total nets	10yr average	Release rate	Largest fish
Salmon	317	22	295	647	1,495	100/100/88%	25lb
Sea Trout	678	n/a	n/a	1,031	669	97%	8.5lb

Season dates: 15 Feb – 15 Nov.



ANNAN ROD CATCH STATISTICS 1952-2014
SOURCE - ANNAN DSFB

Fisheries management in Scotland – facts and figures

	2014	2013
Number of District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs)	41	41
Total revenue generated by DSFBs	£4,973,378	£4,473,418
Income from rod fishery	£3,771,093	£3,979,300
Income from net fishery	£61,137	£51,255
Expenditure incurred by DSFBs	£4,823,651	£4,747,119
Financial support provided to Trusts by DSFBs	£606,782	£622,657
Total rateable value of fisheries	£3,875,633	£3,758,215
DSFB staff (full time equivalents)	Remunerated - 86 Voluntary - 88	Remunerated - 87 Voluntary - 142
Number of accredited water bailiffs	400	370
Number of ghillies associated with salmon fishings	502	470
Number of Scottish charitable Fisheries Trusts	26	26
Revenue generated by Trusts	£2,916,177	£3,030,662
Expenditure incurred by Trusts	££3,120,234	£3,195,255
Trust staff (full time equivalents)	Remunerated - 53 Voluntary - 42	Remunerated - 56 Voluntary - 89
DSFBs & Trusts - Operational data		
Nets seized	154	152
Offences reported	164	106
Stocking consents granted	33	29
Offences reported	38	42
Hatchery outputs consented, by life stage:		
• *Ova*	1,910,000 (1.91M)	2,086,251 (2.1M)
• *Unfed fry*	2,355,751 (2.35M)	2,397,197 (2.4M)
• *Fed fry*	1,325,500 (1.3M)	1,234,563 (1,2M)
• *Smolts*	50,002	50,001
Numbers of surveys conducted 2014:		
• *Habitat*	915	603
• *Invertebrate*	169	434
• *Electro-fishing*	1572	1578
• *Invasive species*	35	58
Number of school projects	213	220
Other educational projects	80	224

	Cumulative to end 2014
Habitat restored/protected (km)	1179km
Riparian trees planted	492,829
Riparian fencing erected	719km
Cost of above schemes	£4,334,531
Man made barriers assessed and cost (£)	248 (£241,300)
Man made barriers eased and cost (£)	119 (£768,505)
Access gained above eased barriers (km)	2372km
Length of watercourses treated for invasive species	2573Km

Planning and development casework undertaken by Boards & Trusts (numbers of cases dealt with)		
Aquaculture	20	91
Terrestrial windfarms	48	70
Marine renewables	9	15
River hydro schemes	66	93
Controlled Activities Regulations	181	151
Other (forestry, flood alleviation, land use planning etc)	43	73

The representative bodies ASFB & RAFTS

ASFB turnover 2013 (2012)	£152,601 (£168,857)
RAFTS turnover 2013/14 (2012)	£781,391 (£1,237,952)

ASFB & RAFTS Management & staff as at 1 January 2015

ASFB Management Committee

Alasdair Laing (Findhorn)
President: Andrew Douglas-Home (Tweed)
Management Committee:
Mark Bilsby (Dee)
Andrew Wallace (RAFTS)
Roger Knight (Spey)
Roger Brook (Argyll)
James Henderson (Nith)
Nick Yonge (Tweed)
Giles Curtis (Western Isles)
Anson MacAuslan (Caithness)

RAFTS management

Chairman: Andrew Wallace
Treasurer: Roger Brook
Board:
Roger Brook (Argyll Fisheries Trust)
Colin Adams (Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust)
Alasdair Laing (Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust)
Marshall Halliday (Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust)
Melanie Smith (Wester Ross Fisheries Trust)
Ron Woods (Co-opted member, Scottish Federation of Coarse Anglers)
Luke Comins (Co-opted member, Tweed Forum)
Jamie Ribbens (Biologist Representative) – Galloway Fisheries Trust
Lorraine Hawkins (Network Representative River Dee Trust)

ASFB staff

Policy & Planning Director: Alan Wells
Operations Director (with RAFTS): Brian Davidson
Press Officer (with RAFTS): Andrew Graham-Stewart
Legal Adviser: Fishlegal

RAFTS staff

Director: Chris Horrill
Operations Director (with ASFB): Brian Davidson
Project Management Officer: Rob Mitchell
Administrator: Linda Kelly
Legal Advisor: Fishlegal

Scottish Mink Initiative

Project Co-ordinator: Ann-Marie McMaster

Pearls in Peril LIFE+ Project

Project Officers:
Lorna Wilkie
Flora Grigor-Taylor/Steff Ferguson (job share)

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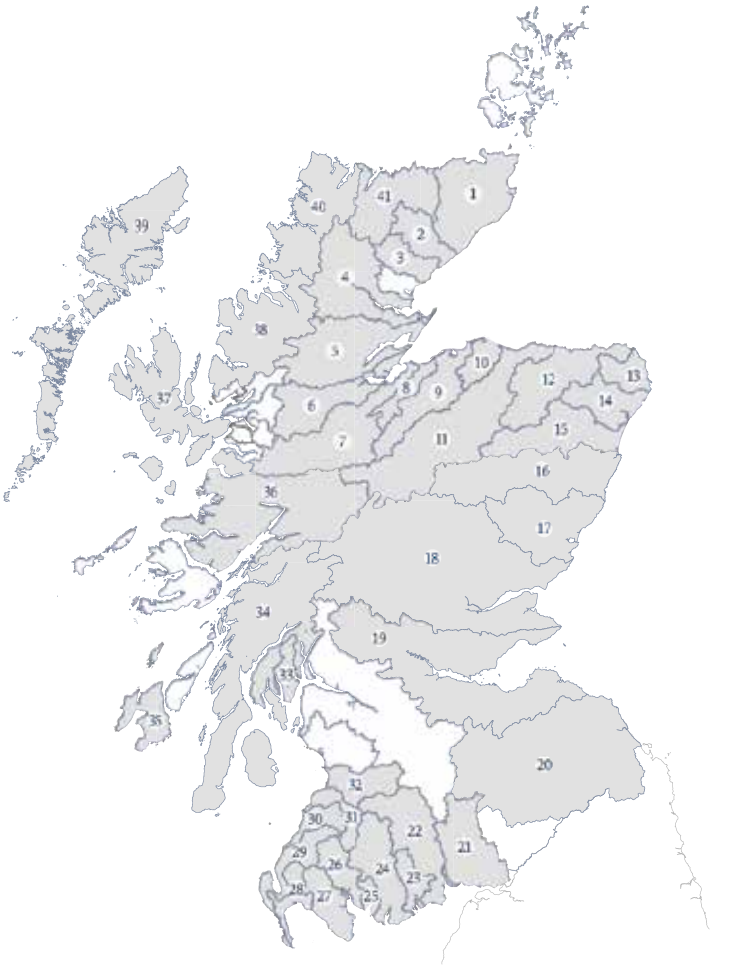
	2013				2012			
	Rod catch	Released overall	Released spring	Net catch	Rod catch	Released overall	Released spring	Net catch
Salmon & grilse	67,468	53,936 (80%)	5,474 (92%)	24,370	86,013	63,331 (74%)	4,855 (91%)	16,230
Sea trout	16,078	12,380 (77 %)	n/a	6,116	22,051	15,580 (71%)	n/a	5,115

Salmon Fishery Districts

1 Caithness
2 Helmsdale
3 Brora
4 Kyle of Sutherland
5 Cromarty
6 Beauly
7 Ness
8 Nairn
9 Findhorn
10 Lossie
11 Spey
12 Deveron
13 Ugie
14 Ythan
15 Don
16 Dee (Aberdeen)
17 Esk
18 Tay
19 Forth
20 Tweed
21 Annan
22 Nith
23 Urr
24 Dee (Kircudbright)
25 Fleet (Kircudbright)
26 Cree
27 Bladnoch
28 Luce
29 Stinchar
30 Girvan
31 Doon
32 Ayr
33 Eachaig
34 Argyll
35 Laggan and Sorn
36 Lochaber
37 Skye
38 Wester Ross
39 Western Isles
40 North and West
41 Northern



Sources:

Salmon Fishery Districts - Scottish Government 2006.
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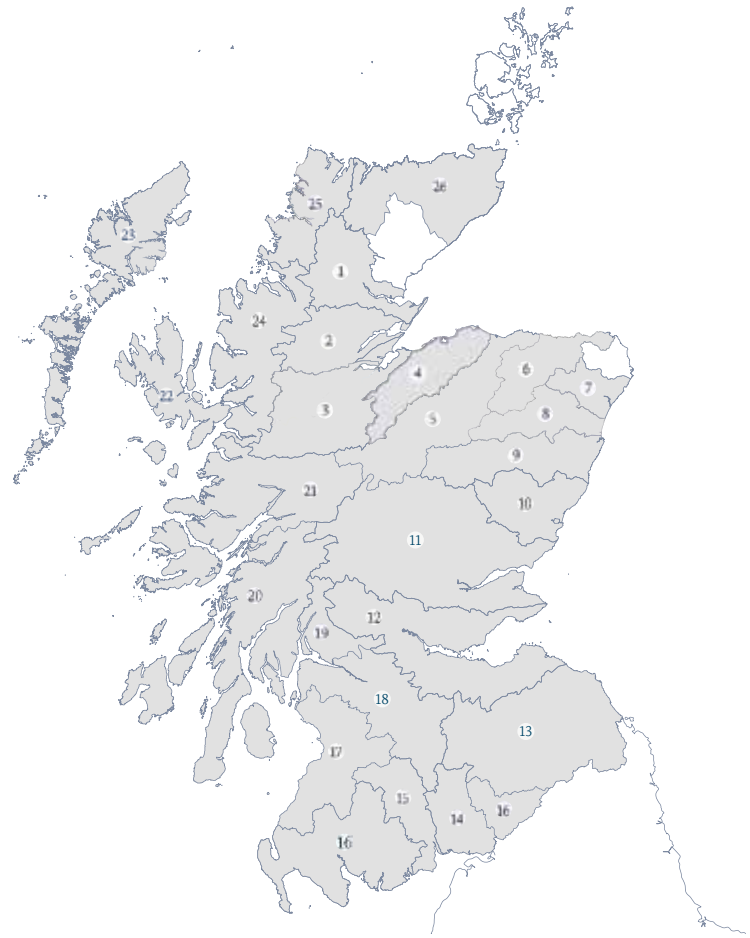
Scottish Government GI Science & Analysis Team - January 2009, Job 4528sn.

Fisheries Trusts

1. Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
2. Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust
3. Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust
4. Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Trust
5. Spey Foundation
6. Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust
7. River Ythan Trust
8. River Don Trust
9. River Dee Trust
10. The Esks Rivers Fisheries Trust
11. Tay Foundation
12. Forth Fisheries Trust
13. Tweed Foundation
14. River Annan Trust
15. Nith Catchment Fisheries Trust
16. Galloway Fisheries Trust
17. Ayrshire Rivers Trust
18. Clyde River Foundation
19. Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust
20. Argyll Fisheries Trust
21. Lochaber Fisheries Trust
22. Skye Fisheries Trust
23. Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust
24. Wester Ross Fisheries Trust
25. West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
26. Flow Country Trust



Sources:

Fisheries Trust Boundaries, SG MS and SEPA (2011).
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Scottish Government Marine Scotland GIS team, February 2012, gj0627.

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