SEPA Fish Ecology Team update

An overview of our work over the past year

Cyber attack

24th Dec 2020…

- Lost access to SEPA systems and access to data
- Ransom wasn't paid
- Systems have to be rebuilt
- Recovery is making good progress to date
- But still don't have access to a lot of information and data – much remains offline
- Last year was a difficult period – Covid-19 + cyber attack
- However SEPA was still responding to incidents throughout

Report incidents via online form or 24 hour pollution hotline 0800 80 70 60

HEP licence reviews

- 3rd cycle of RBMP (2021 to 2027)
- Review of many hydro licences
- Seeking to deliver environmental improvements on waterbodies highlighted as failing for flows or fish barrier measures

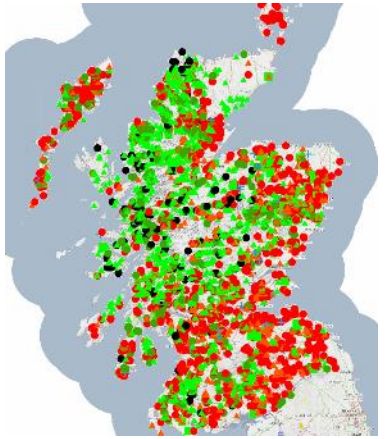
- Previously: Individual schemes (e.g. R. Garry)
- Now: Common approach to screening and scoping

- Big project, many disciplines involved: Water unit, Ecology, Fish ecology, Hydromorphology, Hydrology, Permitting

- Cannot have significant impact on generation loss (2% cap)
- Need to take forward measures that deliver significant improvement

- Fish team: site visits, habitat appraisals, data provision/collection, provision of advice and local knowledge
- Important working relationship with SFCC members – info/data, knowledge and views

Barrier work



- 3rd cycle of RBMP
- Over 200 barriers under investigation
- Individual barriers or catchment approach
- All barriers require visits and upstream habitat appraisal

- Fish ecology:
  - Desk based assessments
  - Site visits and surveys
  - Providing data
  - Reporting results and FE views to RBMP barrier delivery group on addressing barriers

Do you have any barriers that are not on SE web? If so, we'd love to hear from you!
https://map.environment.gov.scot/sewebmap/

Water Environment Fund work

- A number of projects at various stages delayed - Covid-19 & cyber attack
- Ongoing projects include:
  - Dowie's Mill (Lothian Almond) - Fish passage
  - Mid Calder (Lothian Almond) – Fish passage
  - Garrel Burn (Clyde) – Geomorphology and Fish passage
  - Levern Water (Clyde) primarily Geomorphology and Fish passage
  - North & South Esk (Lothian) – Fish passage
  - Lynn Burn (Fife) - Geomorphology
  - Tyne (Lothian) – Fish passage
  - Gateside Mill – Eden (Fife) – Fish passage
  - Moffat Water (Annan) – Geomorphology/Fish passage
  - Clachan Burn (Kintyre) – Fish passage

- Plus a host of barriers on various tributaries
- Also input to geomorphology projects (u/s impassable barriers)
  - Tollcross Burn (Clyde)

- Working with various partners across all projects

Drought plan work

- 2021: Dry summer and autumn
- Scottish Water concerned about water resources

- Permitting team received Regulation 18 fast track CAR applications to reduce comp flows

- Various locations, especially from central & south west areas

- Fish ecology:
  - Working with the permitting and local teams
  - Review applications
  - Provide data and/or advice on flows
  - And then it rained

The Leven Programme, Fife

- Catchment-wide partnership project to deliver environmental improvements whilst maximising social and economic opportunities by 2030

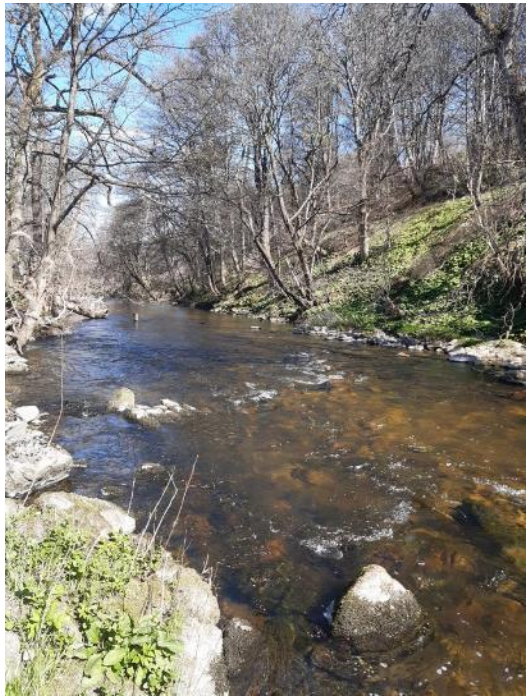
- River Leven - multiple pressures
- Aim: Remove barriers to fish migration, improve water quality and physical modifications to the river (INNS – issue to protect Loch Leven) and create a more natural river

- Partnership working through a Sustainable Growth Agreement with Forth Rivers Trust and other organisations
- Within SEPA many disciplines involved including WEF, Fish ecology, hydromorphology

www.theleven.org

Ongoing case work

- Providing fish ecology advice to other teams in SEPA
- Planning consultations
- HEP: new schemes, variation of existing schemes
- CAR work: in-river work, engineering works, emergency works
- Providing support, data and advice for regulatory staff
  - Enforcement and investigative
- Construction projects, flood prevention schemes
- Information requests



Sea lice Framework

- Fish ecology worked closely with colleagues in SEPA and MS to help develop a proposed framework for managing interaction between sea lice from fin fish farm developments and wild salmon
- Framework currently out for consultation
- Head of SEPA Ecology, will present on this tomorrow

SEPA
Scottish Environment Protection Agency