



## The International Day of Women in Science

Ruth Watts, Senior Biologist, Beaully Fishery Board



My job on the Beaully is to help protect and improve things for salmon and sea trout in the Beaully catchment. This involves a wide range of work, from monitoring juvenile salmonids to working with landowners, SSE, and wider stakeholders (including those who have spent their whole lives close to the river).

I have always cared about the environment and wanted to do a job where I felt I was making a difference. After finishing my ecology degree at Lancaster and working for CEH, I was lucky enough to be offered the Assistant Biologist position at Eden Rivers Trust (Cumbria) in 2009 after having volunteered with them. I was thrilled as I couldn't think of a more fascinating and fun job!

Since then, the majority of my working life has been working for SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) in the Highlands and Grampian as Assistant Ecologist and Ecologist organising and carrying out electro-fishing surveys across Scotland as well as broader freshwater ecology work (invertebrates, algae etc).

The urgency for action (declining salmon numbers, climate change) plus a desire to come back to the Highlands led me to join the Beaully Fishery Board (BFB) in summer 2020. I feel very privileged to be able to work with the local team trying to improve the prospects for salmon, sea trout and the wider freshwater environment of a single catchment. It is very satisfying trying to get the best for the river whilst also monitoring and reporting what's going on.

As with any industry wanting to achieve the best it can, having a diverse workforce is key. It's great to see more women coming into fisheries and

bringing their varied skills and perspectives to salmon conservation. [Find out more](#) about the organisation Ruth works with.