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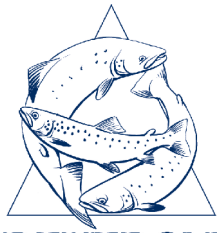
DEVERON BOGIE & ISLA

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20



Report by
RC Miller, MC Hay, M Walters, K Müller and S Roebuck

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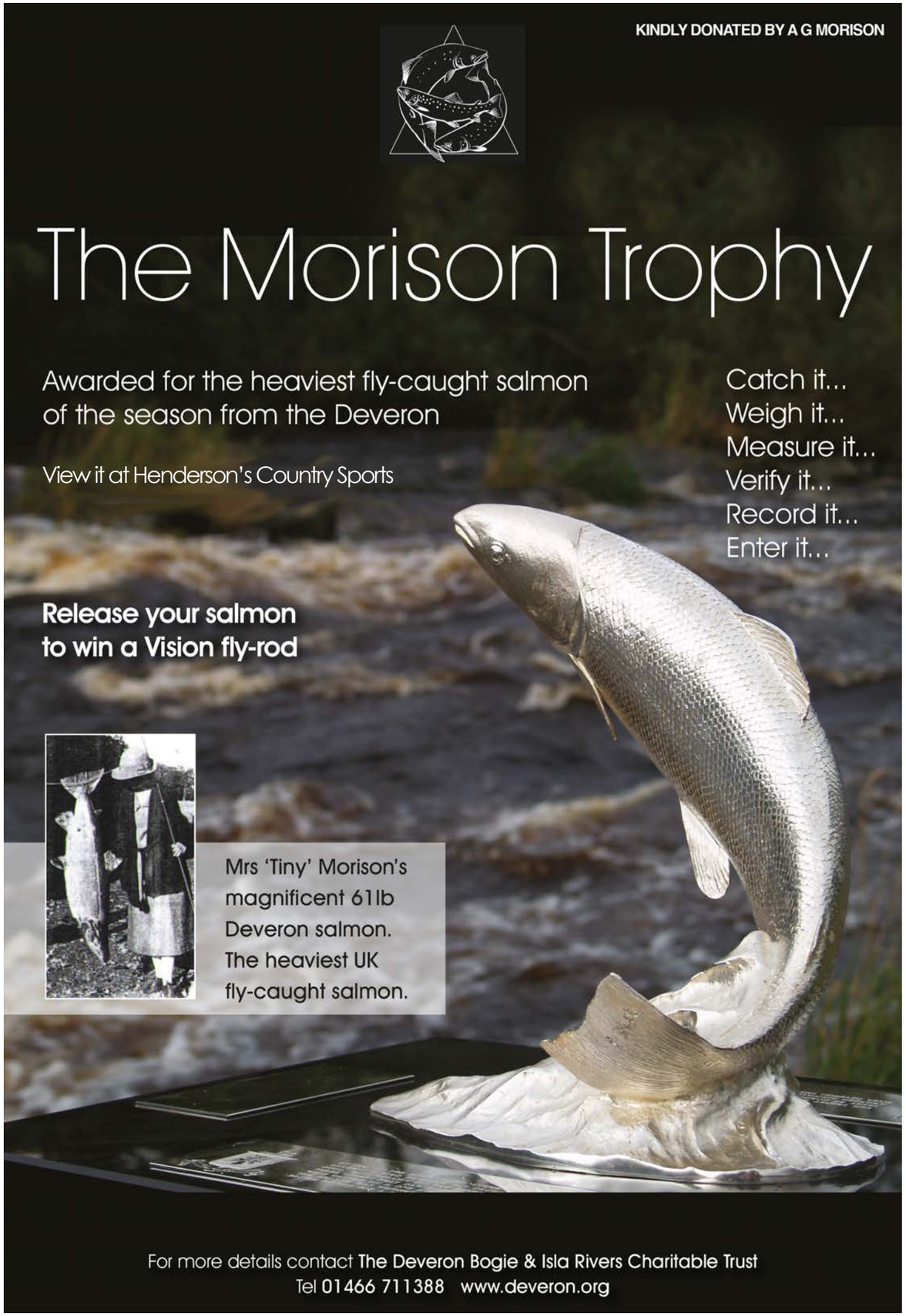

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Supporters and Funding

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board (RDevDSFB) and The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (DBIT) would like to take this opportunity to thank all its supporters and funding partners who have helped implement our district fisheries management programme during 2019/20.

The RDevDSFB and DBIT would like to thank the following:

Aberdeenshire Council
Bowlts Chartered Surveyors
Chivas Regal
DBIT members
Fisheries Management Scotland
Henderson's Country Sports
Heritage Lottery Fund
Huntly Fishings
John Dewar & Sons
Longcliffe Quarries
Loop Tackle Design
Marine Scotland Science
Robert McConnell
Scottish Natural Heritage
Tesco
The Atlantic Salmon Trus
The Nineveh Charitable Trust
Turriff Angling Association
University of Glasgow

Volunteers (River Champions)
We thank all volunteers who have given up their own time to help with projects such as the river opening ceremony, control of American mink, invasive plant control and piscivorous bird surveys.

Ghillies and Estate Workers
We thank all the Deveron Ghillies and Estate workers who have helped with many aspects of managing the fishery from assistance with piscivorous bird surveys, scale sampling, obstacle removal and biosecurity measures.

Officials and Staff

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board Members

Representatives of upper proprietors
M.C. Hay (Chairman), R.J.G. Shields, A.G. Morison, Mrs J.A. Player, R. Cooper, J.S. Cruickshank OBE, A. Allwood

Representatives of lower proprietors
C. R. Marsden, D. A. Galloway, M. C. R. Marsden

Representatives of salmon anglers
F. Henderson, R. Breakell, D. Borthwick

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Honorary Life President Prof D. W. Mackay OBE

Trustees J. S. Cruickshank OBE (Chairman), R. J. G. Shields, M. C. Hay, F. Henderson, D. Borthwick, R. Cooper

Trust Scientific Advisory Board Dr M. Stutter (The James Hutton Institute), G. Clark (SNH), P. Wright (SEPA Diffuse Pollution team), Professor R. Van Der Wal (Aberdeen University), Professor S. Martin (Aberdeen University), Professor C. Adams (Glasgow University), Dr A. Walker (Consultant), D. Roberts (GWCT), G. Pedley (Wild Trout Trust), C. Macadam (Buglife), Dr Colin Bull (AST)

Hon. Membership Secretary R. F. McConnell

Ghillies Representative N. Stephen

Team

Director	R.C. Miller, BSc MIFM
River Operations Manager	M. Walters, MSc BSc MIFM
Project Officer	Dr A. Reeve, PhD MRes BSc
Seasonal Volunteer Coordinator & Communications Officer	K. Müller, MSc BSc (Hons)
Clerk & Administrator	S. Roebuck, BA MICB
Field Assistant	C. Grant

Chairman's Report

Malcolm Hay, Chairman of the RDevDSFB

The total 2019 rod catch of 1,504 salmon, while mercifully up on the disastrous figure of 475 the previous year, remains considerably below the long-term average. Thus, there is no room for complacency on the part of your Board. Together with the Trust, we are constantly trying to improve the numbers of salmon, grilse and sea trout coming back to our river.

During the 2019 season, a creditable 89% of salmon and grilse caught were returned. The figure for spring fish, that is those caught up to the end of May, was 96%. This represents an enormous effort by anglers and a most encouraging "buy-in" of what we are all trying to achieve.

The total sea trout catch was 285 and, while a large increase over the 2018 figure of 206, is still rock bottom in terms of historic catch figures. Once again, a commendable 97% were returned, enabling these fish to spawn and hopefully help reverse the decline in catches of recent years.

The Deveron has become well known for its excellent trout fishing. According to some, it is the best in Europe. We are grateful to the 10 beats who returned their catches of trout, which totalled 1,167. Doubtless, many more were caught but went unrecorded.

The Deveron was re-classified as a category 2 river for the 2020 season, having dropped from a category 1 in the previous year. However, no major amendments needed to be made to our voluntary Angling Code as our anglers already exercise appropriate restraint in terms of the numbers of fish taken.

It is heartening to report that despite the ravages of COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed during "lock down", catches in June and July of this year (2020) have been encouraging, both locally on our own river as well as nationally. It will be most interesting to see how the rest of the season pans out. Meanwhile considerable progress has been made with regard to barriers to fish migration on the Isla. SEPA have finally classified the Glen Keith weir, by far the most problematic one for running fish, from "good" to "poor". This means that the owners are required by law to install a fish passage by 2024. We have been in discussion with the same company about the remaining obstacles in and around the Linn Pot with respect to improving fish passage. In addition, SEPA are investigating the ownership of a further unused weir downstream of the others.

The more spawning areas we can open up, the greater the recruitment of juvenile fish, leading to a larger number of adult fish returning to our river.

The smolt tracking and monitoring initiative continued in 2019 and is discussed in detail later in this report. However, sadly, and due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 program was postponed until 2021. We continue our research into and monitoring of water quality and flows. Recent water quality sampling has turned up some unexpected and unexplained results which we are investigating with SEPA. We are also in discussion with Scottish Water over the volume of water abstracted from the system, particularly during very dry periods. This has been highlighted by many anglers over recent years and is a major concern of your Board.

The control of invasive non-native species was extended in 2019 to include an additional hogweed control site using sheep and working with the Gordon family at the bottom of the catchment. Any one driving down the A96 or the bottom part of the Spey valley will appreciate the dedication and commitment of our team in keeping our catchment relatively free of this noxious plant.

River Deveron at the Cabrach

Longer term, we will be looking at further climate change mitigation through riparian tree planting and other mitigation measures enabled by funding from the various wind farm projects in the catchment.

I would like to pay tribute to the excellent work done by Dr Al Reeve who has moved on to pastures new. Not only was he an enthusiastic destroyer of Invasive non-native species in all forms, but his school projects were inspirational. I witnessed one of these first hand on the Markie, where children from Glass and Cairnie primary schools puddled about in the burn catching all manner of wee beasties from frogs to stone flies. Their eagerness to learn about the environment was a joy to watch and judging by the many charming thank you letters received, they had clearly enjoyed themselves tremendously. We are very lucky to have Karen Müller to take over from Al. Karen is already well versed in these activities as well as her wider and highly successful role in promoting our river and the angling on offer.

Our Sundown on the Deveron dinner and auction last September was a great success and it was particularly pleasing to have the opportunity to thank Robert McConnell, our long serving Trust Membership Secretary, for all his hard work and dedication. We will miss his gritty and amusing updates on the Trust's work which worked a treat in extracting much needed cash for our various projects.

It is hard to believe that I have been doing the job of Chairman of the Board for 15 years. It is clearly time that I went, and the emergence of a potential wind farm project here at Edinglassie has been the catalyst to make that happen. I have greatly enjoyed the Chairman's role and have been extremely fortunate not only in enjoying the consistently loyal support of proprietors, but also in working alongside an extremely professional and dedicated team in the Trust. I am happy to step down in the knowledge that their good work will continue and to hand over to Andrew Allwood who will bring both a finely tuned business acumen as well as a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for our efforts to improve our river and its fisheries.

Finally, I would like to thank our Clerk, Sarah Roebuck, whose tireless attention to detail has made my job so much easier, our River Operations Manager Marcus Walters and also Richie Miller, whose unceasing enthusiasm has been an inspiration. Our Board/Trust combination and its effective partnership is the envy of many other rivers. I am confident that we have an extremely strong and able team in place to look after the interests of our river for many years to come. I am sure that you will give Andrew the same solid support that I have enjoyed from all of you over the past several years.

Deveron Salmon - Historical

The total annual salmon rod & line catch for the Deveron District was stable from 1952 (when records began) until the end of the 1980s, with the 10-year average consistently sitting at just over 2000 fish per year. There was a record low catch in 1989 before catches improved with the 10-year average increasing to just over 3000 (1993-2002) and again to an average of 3418 from 2003-2012. Since then catches have fallen steeply, with 2018 being the lowest rod catch on record followed by a slight improvement in 2019.

Catch and release records began in 1994 and the practice has increased from 22% of salmon returned in 1994 to 89% returned in 2019. The procedure was adopted in the river as a voluntary conservation measure to preserve fragile stocks and has been particularly encouraged by the RDevDSFB for the spring component of the salmon catch (Feb- May) and for sea trout.

Spring salmon

Spring salmon return to the river in the spring months and are available to the rod & line fishery from February onwards. They are typically Multiple Sea Winter fish, which have spent at least 2 years feeding at sea. Figure 2 shows that the spring salmon catch (Feb-May) has declined significantly since 1952. There was a steep decline in the late 1960s before a brief recovery in the late 1970s. The catch continued to decline to record low levels in the early 1990s but despite a slight recovery in the 2000s, fell again to the lowest ever spring catch on record in 2015.

The River Deveron Summer (June-Aug) and Autumn (Sep-Oct) Rod & Line catches showed a very different trend (Figure 3), steadily increasing until the late 2000s but have since fallen away steeply.

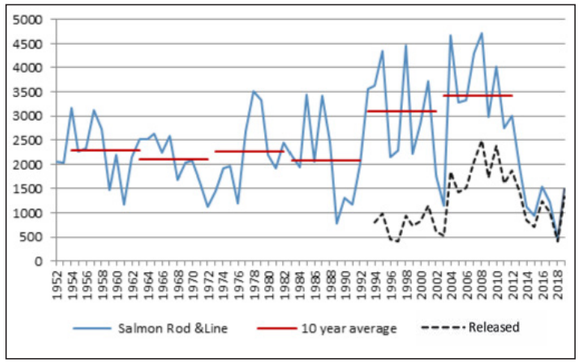


Figure 1

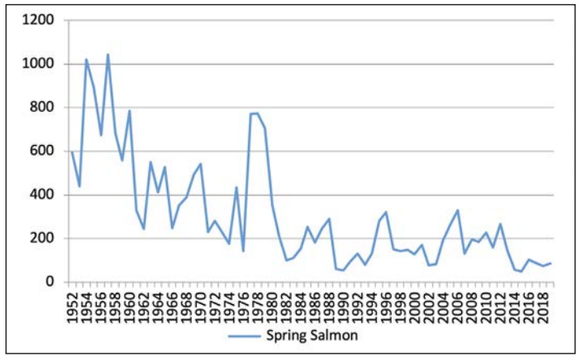


Figure 2

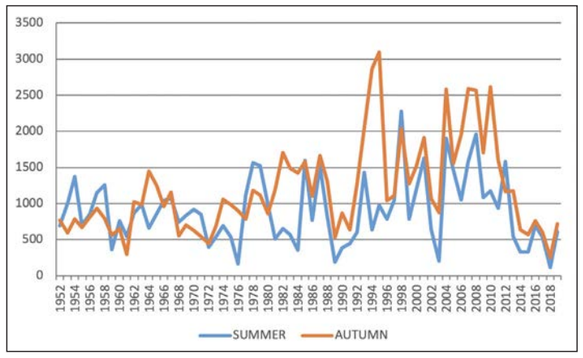
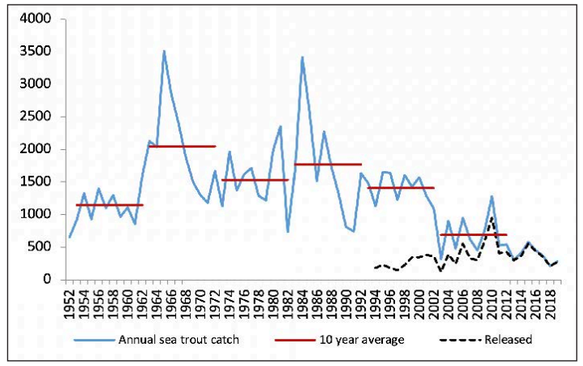


Figure 3

Figure 1: annual Rod & Line Catch for the River Deveron District showing 10 year averages and the numbers released since 1994.
Figure 2: river Deveron spring (Feb-May) Rod & Line catch.
Figure 3: River Deveron Summer (June-Aug) & Autumn (Sep-Oct) Rod & Line Catch.

Deveron Sea Trout - Historical

The Deveron sea trout Rod & Line catch (Figure 4) has shown annual variations from 1952 with two significant peaks of nearly 3500 fish. The 10-year average was consistently between 1000 and 2100 fish until 2003 when catches fell to the second lowest catch on record of 317 fish. Since then catches have remained low with the 10-year average from 2003-2012 falling to 685 fish and from 2013-2016 to 485.
A similar decline has been seen across the Moray Firth region and many Scottish Rivers.



Catch and release records began in 1994 and the practice has gradually increased from 16% in 1994 to 97% of the total catch in 2019. In response to the clear decline in stocks the RDevDSFB adopted a 100% catch and release policy for sea trout in 2013.

Figure 4: annual sea trout Rod & Line Catch for the River Deveron District showing 10 year averages and the numbers released since 1994.

Conservation Code and Statutory Regulations

To assist in protecting and improving fish stocks the RDevDSFB launched a conservation code in 2003, outlining local policy and statutory regulations. Local and visiting anglers are asked annually to observe the code to help conserve local fish stocks, ensure a sustainable fishery and stop biosecurity threats such as *Gyrodactylus salaris*. The code aims to achieve a high release rate (>80%) of salmon and grilse (particularly female fish) and to protect stocks of multi-sea winter spring salmon which have declined considerably.

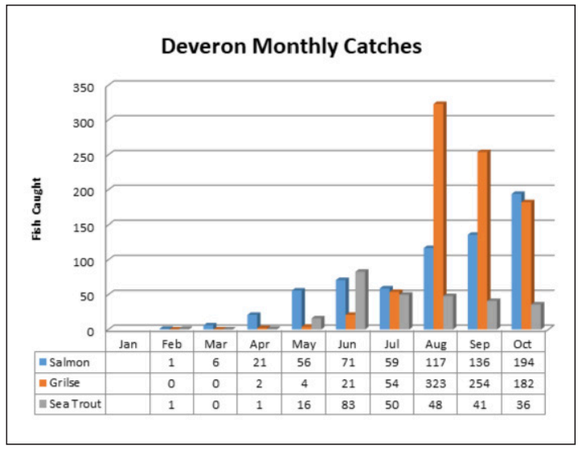
The Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Times and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations came into force on 9th January 2015 and made it illegal to kill wild Atlantic salmon caught before 1st April each year. The RDevDSFB conservation code recommends additional protection of this fragile stock and recommends that all salmon are released until 31st May, due to our local data showing spring salmon still make up a notable percentage of the May catch. The code also outlines measures for conservation of sea trout, recommending 100% catch and release until stocks are shown to recover. Low exploitation of brown trout is also encouraged to maintain the sustainability of this popular fishery.

For the 2020 Angling season, the Scottish Government has classified the river Deveron as a Category 2 river having been category 1 in 2019., whereby management action is deemed necessary to reduce exploitation: catch and release should be promoted strongly in the first instance. The need for mandatory catch and release will also be reviewed annually. The Water of Philorth (coastal) has been classified as a Category 3 river again, which requires all salmon to be returned by law throughout the 2020 season.

Deveron District - 2019 Catches

Rod and line

The 2019 salmon and grilse rod catch of 1,504 was significantly better than the record low catch of 2018 when only 446 salmon and grilse were caught. Although this is a significant improvement it is still well below the long-term average of 2411 salmon and sea trout per annum (1952-2019). Of the 1,504 salmon and grilse caught, 89% were returned. Spring salmon catches showed a slight improvement compared to 2018, with 84 salmon caught by the end of May compared to 75 in 2018. 96% of the spring salmon were returned to the river, aided by the RDevDSFB angler reward scheme. A notable spring salmon of 25lbs was successfully caught and released in March which secured the Morison Trophy. The sea trout catch increased by 36% to a total of 285 sea trout, which is still well below the long term average (1952-2018) of 1329, of which 97% were returned.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Salmon		1	6	21	56	71	59	117	136	194
Grilse		0	0	2	4	21	54	323	254	182
Sea Trout		1	0	1	16	83	50	48	41	36

Figure 5: Rod & Line Monthly Catches 2019

The Deveron at Avochie

Management Report

Moray Firth Seal Management Plan

The Moray Firth Seal Management Plan (MFSMP) continued in 2019. The plan commenced in 2005, with the joint aim of protecting wild salmon and sea trout stocks, whilst also maintaining the conservation status of the Dornoch Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) for common seals. The Plan includes the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland, the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) from St Andrew's University, Scottish Natural Heritage, all of the District Salmon Fishery Boards from the River Deveron around the Moray Firth to the River Helmsdale and previously a limited number of salmon net fisheries. Overall, it provides for seal management for 16 rivers and 5 netting stations throughout the Moray Firth region.

The MFSMP provides seal management for 16 rivers throughout the region

Since 2013, the Spey Fishery Board (SFB) has coordinated the Plan's licence application. A 12-month licence was successfully granted for 2019. The licence again permitted the shooting of 18 Grey seals and 0 Common seals within the plans geographic area, between 1st Feb 2019 and the 31st January 2020. Nominated and qualified marksmen carried out the licence conditions on behalf of the plans partners.

Sawbill Duck and Cormorant Management

During 2017 the RDevDSFB joined the Moray Firth Sawbill Licence Group. The group is coordinated by Roger Knight of the Spey DSFB and submits a licence application to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) on behalf of the Spey, Conon, Ness, Beauly, Kyle of Sutherland, Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie River boards.

During 2019 the DBIT continued the coordination of the local Piscivorous (fish-eating) bird counts, required for the licence application. Two counts were carried out along the Deveron (Coniecleugh to Estuary) in March & April by DBIT personnel, Ghillies and Volunteers. Counts were undertaken during the annual smolt run. The licence was successfully granted and permitted the shooting, as an aid to scaring, of 13 Goosanders and 2 Cormorants between the 1st October 2019 to 31st May 2020 (This licence does not permit the shooting of cormorant and/or female goosanders after 30th April).

Fishery Protection

Protecting Deveron fish stocks from illegal activity, such as poaching, is enforced by the RDevDSFB. Fishery protection is essential in combating both damage to local fish stocks and the economy and is an ongoing priority.

During 2019 the RDevDSFB continued to work closely with Police Scotland, and in particular, carried out a number of joint-patrols at various locations throughout the Deveron catchment. The Spey Fishery Board was also contracted in 2019 to undertake a coastal patrol to search for and seize any illegal nets, although it was unable to proceed due to poor weather conditions.

Policing the Deveron

Wild Fisheries Reform - update

Marine Scotland (MS) in collaboration with Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS), continued to develop a Fishery Management Plan template during 2019, which will facilitate a consistent approach to be taken by local DSFBs and Trusts across Scotland. It will also inform the development of the National Wild Fisheries Strategy and allow Scottish Ministers to identify, quantify and prioritise action to mitigate effects on damage to wild fish and fisheries in Scotland.

To facilitate this, the National Electrofishing Programme Scotland (NEPS), which assesses juvenile salmonid populations across 27 regions, under contract from MS, continued for its second year in 2019. The NEPS programme provided vital data for a future juvenile assessment to complement the Scottish Government's existing adult model, as provided by the Conservation Regulations.

An online mapping based pressures tool will be rolled-out nationally in 2020 and facilitated through MS funding. This online tool focusses on forty pressures across twelve priority themes that may affect fisheries and will enable individual DSFBs to illustrate the severity and status of each of these pressures across their management areas. This, in turn, will provide a national and local picture which will inform the Scottish Government. The twelve pressures include:

- Exploitation
- Predation
- Fish Health
- Genetic Introgression
- Invasive Non-Native Species
- Habitat – Water Quality; Water Quantity; Thermal; Instream and Riparian
- Barriers to Migration
- Coastal and Marine.

Scottish Government measures to control the killing of Wild Salmon

Atlantic Salmon face a number of pressures during their life cycle. These include but are not limited to:

- Predation
- Poor water quality
- Disease and parasites
- Barriers to migration
- Poor physical habitat quality
- Food availability
- Factors affecting survival issues while at sea (including the challenge of warming seas)

The pressures on Atlantic Wild Salmon are immense

The Scottish Government has introduced a range of measures designed to improve the conservation status of salmon by managing the pressure of exploitation through fishing within Scotland's domestic waters. They are designed to complement, not replace, other management activities being undertaken at local, national and international level in the interests of conservation. The objective of the measures is to ensure harvesting in Scottish domestic waters is sustainable and that fishing does not damage vulnerable stocks or cause damage to the network of Special Areas of Conservation in place across Scotland.

In general terms the Regulations:

- Prohibit the retention of salmon caught in coastal waters
- Permit the killing of salmon within inland waters where stocks are above a defined conservation limit
- Require mandatory catch and release of salmon in areas which fall below their defined
- Conservation limit following the assessment of salmon stocks

For the 2020 season, the Scottish Government has classified the river Deveron as a Category 2 river, whereby local management action is necessary to reduce exploitation: catch and release should be promoted strongly in the first instance. The need for mandatory catch and release will be reviewed annually. The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations 2016 introduced legislation to protect declining salmon stocks by, amongst other things, prohibiting the retention of salmon caught in coastal waters. Compensation was paid to those active coastal fishermen who have been unable to fish for salmon due to the prohibition, for a 3-year period from 2016 to 2018 inclusive, while further research was undertaken to assess the long term position. The Scottish Government paid £567,806.43 per annum in these three years.

Following the assessment of the research done, and of the status of salmon stocks for 2019, the Scottish Government has determined that the prohibition on retaining salmon caught in coastal nets should remain in place.

Invasive Non-Native Species & Biosecurity Programme

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) project started in March 2018, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage. The project has completed its second year and Project Officers Al Reeve and Karen Müller have been strategically working on Giant Hogweed control across the Deveron, Ythan and Ugie catchments. With the help of multiple volunteers, contractors, ghillies, farmers and landowners – the hogweed across the catchments were tackled.

Find out more about the SISI project and the invasive species we are controlling at www.invasivespecies.scot/

Tackling Giant Hogweed

To help control hogweed over the next few years, funding from the SISI project has continued to pay for a number of volunteers to be enrolled on the knapsack herbicide spraying course, which allows them to help us control hogweed (and knotweed) along the river banks in the future. This will enable us to cover the initial hogweed and enable us to re-treat some of the worst affected areas.

The successful sheep-trial site at Auldtown continues and we have also added sheep to a new site at Kirkside Farm, Macduff to assist in the control of a heavily infested area of hogweed, in 2019. In its second year now, the results are promising and over the next few years we hope to see a big change in the density of hogweed.

We have also been getting to grips with Himalayan balsam, which provided opportunities for larger volunteer groups, corporations and people of all ages to get involved in invasive species control. Japanese knotweed control was completed in 2019 and previously infested areas showed much improvement from 2018.

American Mink trapping efforts have continued and increased, with 17 mink caught over the last year. The majority were caught in

coastal areas where they appear to be thriving. Over the past two years we have been building up a network of volunteers to monitor mink traps along the coast, as well as the rest of the catchments, and help us to begin controlling their numbers in these difficult locations.

For 2020 we will continue to control invasive species and encourage and support local landowners, communities and volunteers to do the same.

Crooksmill Burn

Typical of many agricultural rivers in Scotland, the Crooksmill Burn has undergone significant change over recent decades such as channel dredging, embankment raising and channel straightening. The river also has a naturally high sediment load which has resulted in extensive gravel deposits throughout the river system.

We are currently working with CBEC, landowners and all key stakeholders to explore opportunities to take forward restoration proposals originally developed in 2013. We recently held a workshop in Keith with SEPA, CBEC, Moray Council, Bear Scotland to discuss proposals. The current state of the burn has recently (Feb 2020) been re-assessed by CBEC (fluvial audit) for changes since 2013. We will now meet with the individual landowners and identify options to take forward. DBIT successfully secured a grant of £3960 from the Hill of Towie Windfarm Fund (RES) to meet the costs of the fluvial update.

Crookmill Burn

Salmon caught at Laithers

Markie Water Restoration Project

The Markie Water is a high energy burn with a relatively steep gradient in the Upper Catchment that is highly productive for salmon and trout. However lateral erosion on the outside of a meander bend was causing the burn to undermine an estate track. Working with Edinglassie Estate the DBIRT helped deliver a green bank engineering solution that protected the estate track while also improving habitat and bankside cover for juvenile fish.

Having ruled out doing nothing as the track was essential for access and could not be moved the restoration options were discussed with the estate and land manager. This left either a hard engineered solution with rock armour or green bank engineering. Although rock armour would have protected the track it was excluded as it would have increased the risk of erosion downstream and would have provided no habitat or cover for salmon and trout. The final solution was green bank engineering using large woody debris to create a log jam to protect the bank. This option simulates the natural processes that would happen naturally when undermined trees end up in the channel. This was achieved by installing whole large conifers along the foot of the eroding section of bank. The branches and brash were left on to slow the flow, helping to reduce erosion and encourage the stream to drop its sediment load and restore the bank. The installation of large woody debris will also improve instream habitat for fish and invertebrates.

As well as designing the final solution the DBIRT conducted a pre-works walkover survey to check for signs of otter, water voles and freshwater pearl mussel and got all necessary consents and approvals from SNH and SEPA. The works were conducted under SEPA General Binding Rule 25 and according to the SEPA Good Practice Guide. The project was funded by the Scottish Rural Development Programme via Edinglassie Estate.

Top: Markie Water restoration site
Above: Markie site at ground level

Fish Passage Isla

The Isla tributary flows over three weirs and a steep rock ramp all within a short 400m section in the town of Keith. These structures are cumulatively restricting the upstream migration of salmon and trout to spawn. The worst obstacle is the Glen Keith Weir which has caused adult salmon to become trapped in the past which have subsequently had to be rescued by DBIRT.

SEPA has changed the classification of the Isla from "good" to "poor" due to the Glenkeith Weir being downgraded to impassable/high impact. This will be illustrated in the 2019 River Baisin Management Planning classification scheduled to be released in the summer of 2020. Chivas have now been issued with a letter by SEPA informing them that they have a legal requirement to install fish passage on the Glenkeith weir by 2024 in order to demonstrate the ecological improvement to achieve Good Status for fish ecology and fish barrier assessment by 2027.

Moray Offshore East Cable Route (MORL)

VolkerInfra have been laying the onshore cable for the Moray Offshore windfarm from where it comes ashore at Inverboyndie to the substation at New Deer. The underground cable is being horizontally drilled under the Deveron at Inverichnie and any other significant waterways and tributaries. Following consultation with DBIT smaller ditches are being crossed using an open cut method. Where required, DBIT have conducted fish rescues to remove fish before excavation takes place.

Water Quality Monitoring

Following concerns being raised about water quality in the River Deveron the RDevDSFB & DBIT have developed a routine water monitoring strategy for the catchment working with the James Hutton Institute (JHI) in Aberdeen.

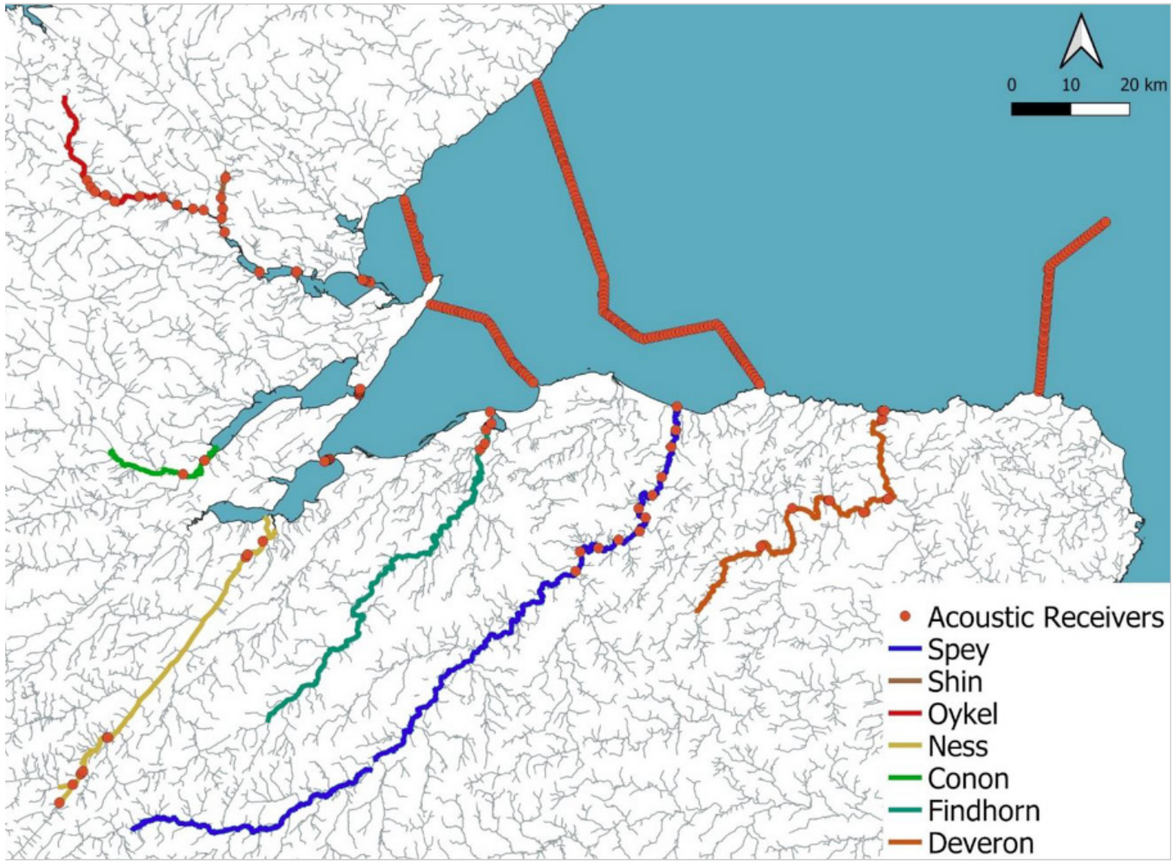
Water samples were initially collected at the 3 sites on the Deveron Mainstem (upper, middle and lower) but this has now been increased to 8 sites to include the 5 major tributaries (Bogie, Isla, Forgue, Turriff and King Edward). The samples are collected when run off is high (after heavy rain) and the risk of contaminants entering the river is considered to be at its highest. The samples are analysed by the JHI for; dissolved nutrients (nitrate, ammonium, phosphate), acidity, suspended sediment, dissolved oxygen and a range of pesticides including metaldehyde. Analysis of the initial samples showed moderate dissolved oxygen concentration, from a low-ish alkalinity river with no issues for pH or oxygen demand (biological oxygen demand is an indicator of organic pollution). The major elements didn't suggest any issues with metals like Zinc or Copper that would relate to toxicity and were at natural levels associated with the geology. Reactive Phosphorous (as phosphate, PO4) was low and Nitrate (NO3) which can leak out of farmland, was moderate, but not of concern.

What is of more concern is the range of pesticides that have been detected in many of the samples and appear to be routinely entering the river during high rainfall events (Table 1). This data needs to be viewed with the caveat that it is from a limited number of samples, however, it is still concerning that these chemicals are being routinely detected even if in very low concentrations. A longer term study is required to fully understand seasonal fluctuations and potential sources. Using methods developed from a longer term study on the River Ugie, the James Hutton Institute have compared the Deveron data to a system of ecotoxicological thresholds and applied categories of risk (Low, Medium and High). Despite being banned since 2016 Clorpyrifos has routinely shown up in samples at Medium Risk levels, Epoxicnazole at low levels, Permethrin at low to medium levels and of most concern, Cypermethrin, which has been detected frequently at medium levels and in October 2018 at High Risk levels. As a result, SEPA have begun their own investigations and the RDevDSFB will continue its own monitoring working with the JHI and begin a campaign to raise awareness of the presence of these chemicals and the damage they can potentially cause to the freshwater environment.

Table 1: Highest Observed Eco-toxicology assessment using a Risk Quotient analysis by JHI. (The risk quotient RQ is determined as the observed concentration / PNEC (Predicted no-effect concentration) as explained in Zhang et al. 2016)

	Chlorpyrifos pesticide	**Epoxicanazole** fungicide	**Permethrin** insecticide	**Cypermethrin** insecticide
Jun 17 3 sites	**Minimal**	**Minimal**	**Minimal**	**Medium**
Oct 18 3 sites	**Medium**	**N/A**	**Medium**	**HIGH**
Apr 19 3 sites	**Medium**	**N/A**	**Medium**	**Medium**
Oct 19 5 sites	**Medium**	**Low**	**Medium**	**Low or better**

Atlantic Salmon Trust Missing Salmon Project 2019



Locations of the acoustic receivers across the Missing Salmon Project

In the spring of 2019, The Deveron took part in the largest acoustic telemetry project in Europe, the Moray Firth "Missing Salmon Project". The Moray Firth project partnership, led by the AST, comprises Glasgow University, the six District Salmon Fishery Boards / Fishery Trusts in the Moray Firth and Marine Scotland. Over 340 acoustic receivers were deployed from the headwaters of the rivers out into the open sea within the Moray Firth. Fish were captured in seven river systems (Deveron, Spey, Findhorn, Ness, Conon, Oykel, Shin) which all flow into the Moray Firth. Three tagging teams successfully captured and tagged 850 migrating smolts. The core aim of the project was to: 1) Identify how successfully smolts move down the main stem and into the transitional waters of the estuary and 2) Identify the marine migration routes.

The DBIT captured the smolts on the Allt Deveron and Blackwater before handing them over to the team from Glasgow University for tagging. Smolts were tagged with Vemco V7 Acoustic Transmitters and were allowed to fully recover following tagging. The smolts were released a minimum of 45 minutes post- tagging. The tags used have a battery life in excess of 90 days.

The Salmon Missing Project team with Marcus Walters

Overall, year 1 of the project proved very successful with ~95 % of the receivers successfully recovered and 15million detections downloaded. The first year of the project has provided information on where fish losses in the seven rivers occurred as well as during the first part of their ocean migration. From these initial analyses, it is clear that salmon migration through freshwater habitats during the migration of the salmon is risky. On average, across all seven river systems, confirmed escapement (fish detected leaving the river, including Oykel and Shin tidal environments), was 49.2%. with a range of 9%-79%. Overall, for the Deveron, loss rate in freshwater was 0.75 % per km. This is well within the range of other rivers in the study, from 0.52% (Shin) to 5.95 % (Findhorn) fish per km.

Future analysis of the 2019 results will aim to better understand the factors governing the smolt migration, including variables such as environment, genetics and morphology. This project was due to be repeated in 2020 but has had to be postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19.

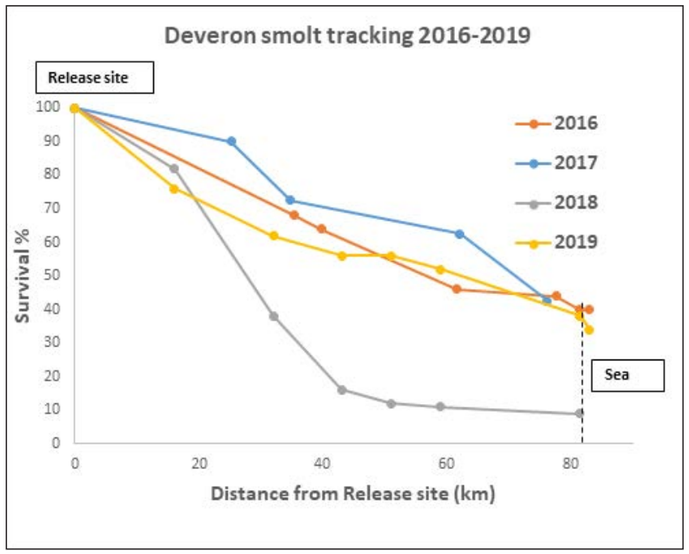


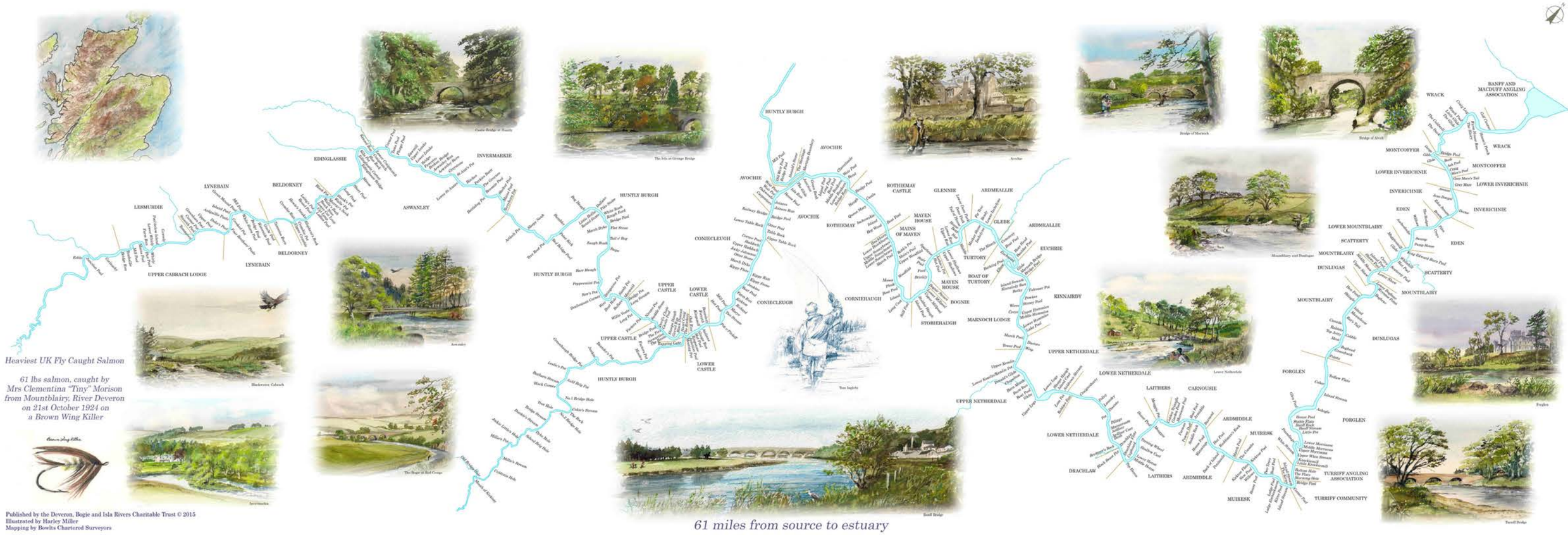
Figure 6: smolt tracking results from tracking on the Deveron 2016-2018 and Moray Firth Missing Salmon Project 2019. In all years smolts have been tracked from the Allt Deveron and Blackwater at least as far as Banff. The higher losses observed in 2018 were due to the extreme low water during the smolt migration.

Right: Deveron river mouth at Banff

River Deveron highlights

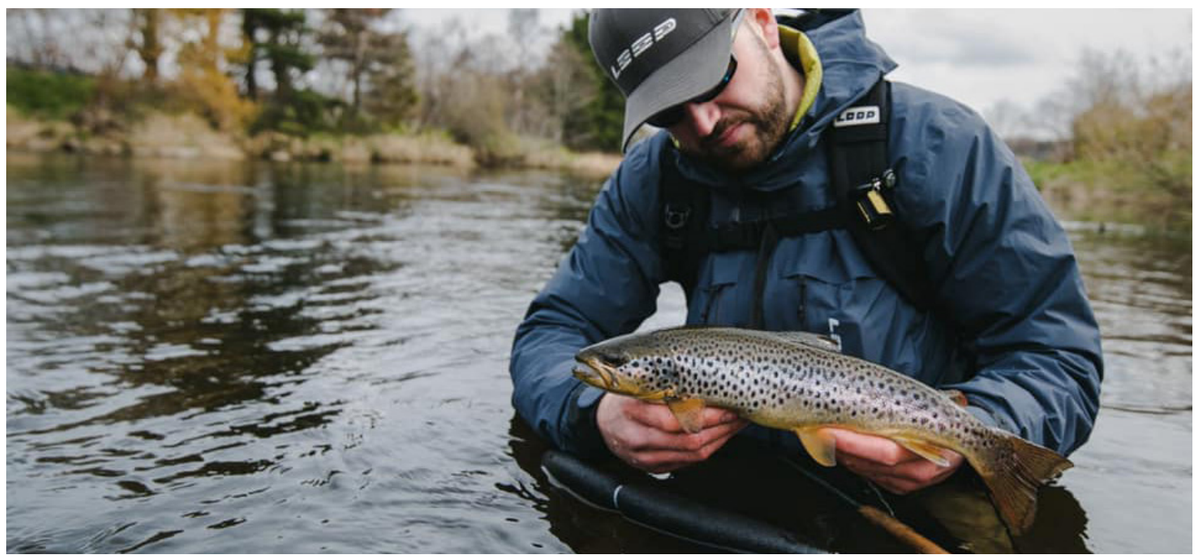
- Throughout the smolt run, a total of 125 smolts; 100 salmon smolts and 25 sea trout were tagged with acoustic tags (Vemco V7) over a 17-day period (13/4/19 to 30/4/19).
- Of the salmon tagged, 75 were standard acoustic tags and 25 predator tags.
- The Atlantic salmon smolts had a mean fork length of 133.6 mm and a mean weight 23.5 g.
- The mean tag burden (% of body weight) was 6.8%. The sea trout smolts sampled had a mean fork length of 162.1 mm and a mean weight 4313 g. The mean tag burden (% of body weight) was 3.94% (SD ✣ 0.98).
- Of the 100 salmon smolts, 38 smolts were estimated to have reached the furthest downstream receivers at the river mouth and 34 smolts reached the receivers in Banff Bay, giving a confirmed survival rate of 38% to the mouth and 34% to the sea.
- Overall, freshwater loss rate was 0.75 %/km. The loss rate varied between 0.12%/km (Bridge of Marnoch – Lower Netherdale) to 1.2%/km (Release - Huntly Receiver).
- Freshwater receiver efficiency (proportion of the total number of tagged fish correctly detected at a receiver) averaged 99.4%. Six of the receivers operated at over 98% efficiency.
- The median ground speed for confirmed successful migrant was 0.05 m/s for river travel, 0.39 m/s for the travel to the Banff Bay, and 0.28 m/s for the travel to the Fraserburgh array.
- Confirmed successful migrant smolts took a median of 15.5 days to travel from the release site to the most downstream river receiver and 0.04 day from the most downstream receiver to the Banff Bay. They took 1.8 days to reach the Fraserburgh array from Banff Bay.
- Upon entering the sea, the salmon smolts showed strong directional movement, heading east, north east.

Angler's Map of the River Deveron - Tom Ingleby Edition



2020/21 PRIORITIES

- Continue to collaborate with the Atlantic Salmon Trust (AST) on the The Missing Salmon Project (Tag 100 salmon smolts) and the Likely Suspects Framework.
- Continue Smolt Shepherding Programme to maximise number of smolt successfully entering the sea.
- Expand Water Quality Monitoring Programme to investigate pesticide intrusion and use the scientific evidence to lobby regulatory authorities and Scottish Government.
- Continue Invasive Non-Native species control through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) Project.
- Commission Fluvial Audit of Crooksmill Burn (Isla)



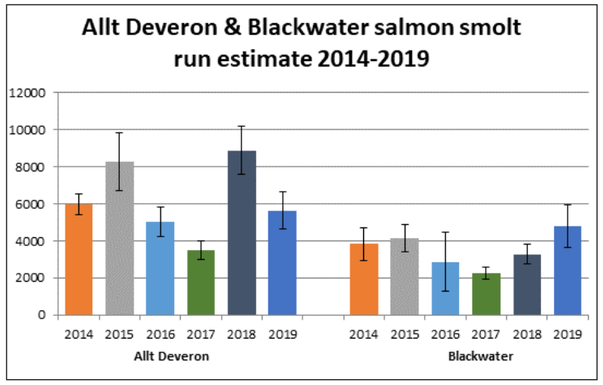
Copies of the Angler's Map of River Deveron are available to buy.

The cost of the print is £35 (plus £6 p&p). It is printed on matt, coated 180gsm; print size is 100cm x 35cm. Please email office@deveron.org or call the DBIT on 01466 711 388 for further information.

Research and Monitoring

Smolt Monitoring – Dorenell Windfarm 2019

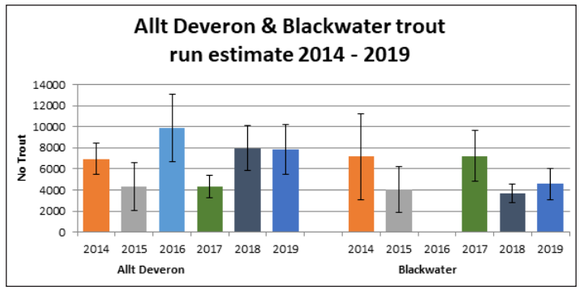
The Dorenell Fishery Management Plan continued into the post-construction monitoring phase. This plan includes baseline water quality monitoring, fish surveys, habitat and invertebrate surveys of the Blackwater and Fiddich (Spey) that drain through the windfarm site but also includes the Allt Deveron as a suitable control site out with the wind farm area.



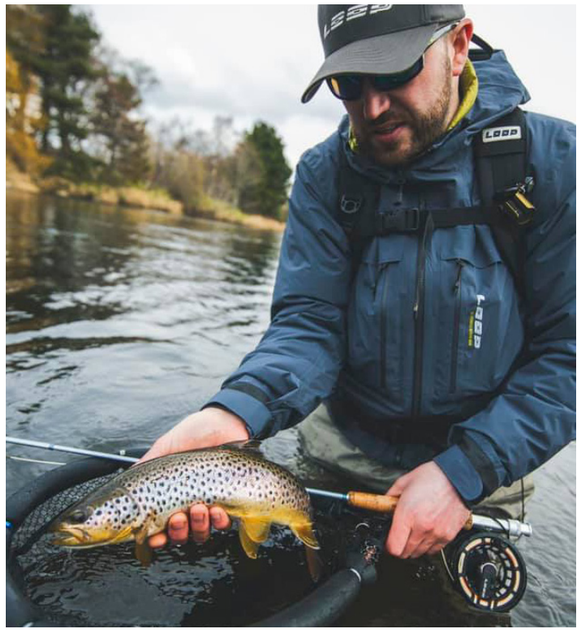
Allt Deveron & Blackwater salmon smolt run estimate 2014-2019 with 95% confidence intervals shown.

The surveys have established a preconstruction baseline against which further monitoring during construction, and for 2 years post construction, can be compared. The fishery management plan includes the monitoring of smolt output from the Allt Deveron (control) and Blackwater catchments through the deployment of rotary screw traps. The graph here summarises the estimated salmon smolt production from the Allt Deveron and Blackwater for 2014-2019. Despite significant variation in river conditions, the estimated smolt output over the 5 years is relatively consistent especially for the Blackwater. The smolt production estimate for the Blackwater in 2019 was the highest since monitoring began in 2014. The graph on page 25 illustrates the estimated trout parr production for the Allt Deveron and Blackwater catchments 2014-2019. The trout estimate is considerably more variable than for salmon and is more complicated to understand, as it will include sea trout and brown trout juveniles of many different ages. This high in the catchment sea trout smolts are not fully developed and cannot yet be clearly defined as such.

Smolt trapping at The Cabrach



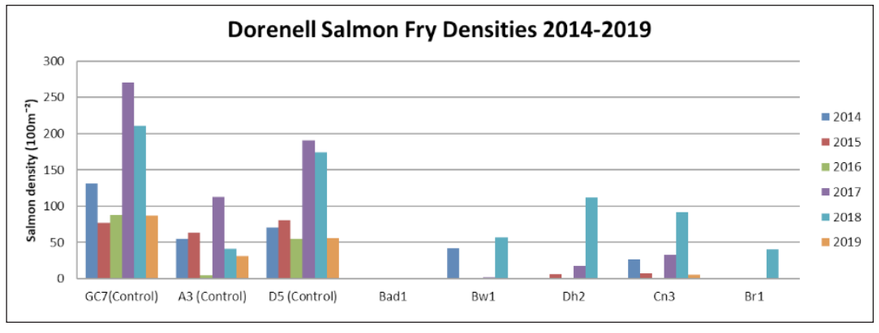
Allt Deveron & Blackwater trout parr run estimate 2014-2019 with 95% confidence intervals shown. A trout parr estimate was not possible in 2016 due to lack of recaptures.

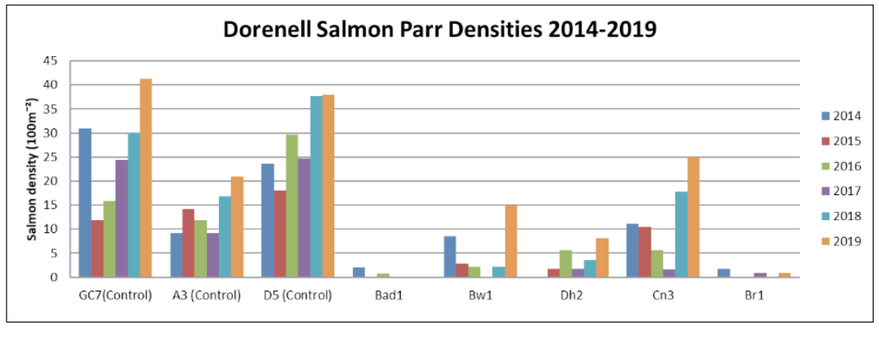


Trout at Avochie

Electrofishing surveys – 2019

The DBIRT conducted juvenile electrofishing surveys at forty five sites within the Deveron catchment in 2019; ten Dorenell Windfarm monitoring sites, thirty National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) sites and five new main stem timed fry index sites.





The survey data from 2014-2019 highlights the riverine habitat within the windfarm and control sites are heavily and consistently used by adult trout and salmon for spawning. Poor salmon fry numbers in 2016 were reflected in low salmon parr in 2017 but have since recovered in 2018 and 2019. After good fry numbers being observed in 2017 and 2018 numbers were much less in 2019. This was seen across the entire Deveron catchment and is reflective of the poor spawning in 2018 as result of the extreme high temperatures and low water levels. Salmon appear to be more dominant in the Upper Deveron and trout more dominant in the Blackwater. The habitat not only supports spawning but is also an important nursey for juvenile salmon and trout that are then monitored as migrating smolts and parr each spring (See Dorenell smolt report).

Top: Comparison of salmon fry salmon at quantitative sites. Above: Comparison of salmon parr at quantitative sites

Salmon smolt

National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS).

The National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) provides data to carry out an annual assessment of the status of Scotland's salmon stocks using electrofishing data. The first national survey was carried out in 2018 funded by Marine Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and repeated in 2019 funded by Marine Scotland and the Crown Estate for Scotland. The survey is designed, managed and analysed by scientists at Marine Scotland Science (MSS). Data is collected by local fisheries managers (DBIRT) according to protocols developed by MSS in consultation with the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (SFCC).

A report has been prepared using data collected from the second year of NEPS in 2019 that shows how these data can be used in combination with an assessment benchmark to assess the status of juvenile salmon populations. The NEPS data can be visualised at a range of spatial scales using the NEPS R Shiny Application.

Deveron Results

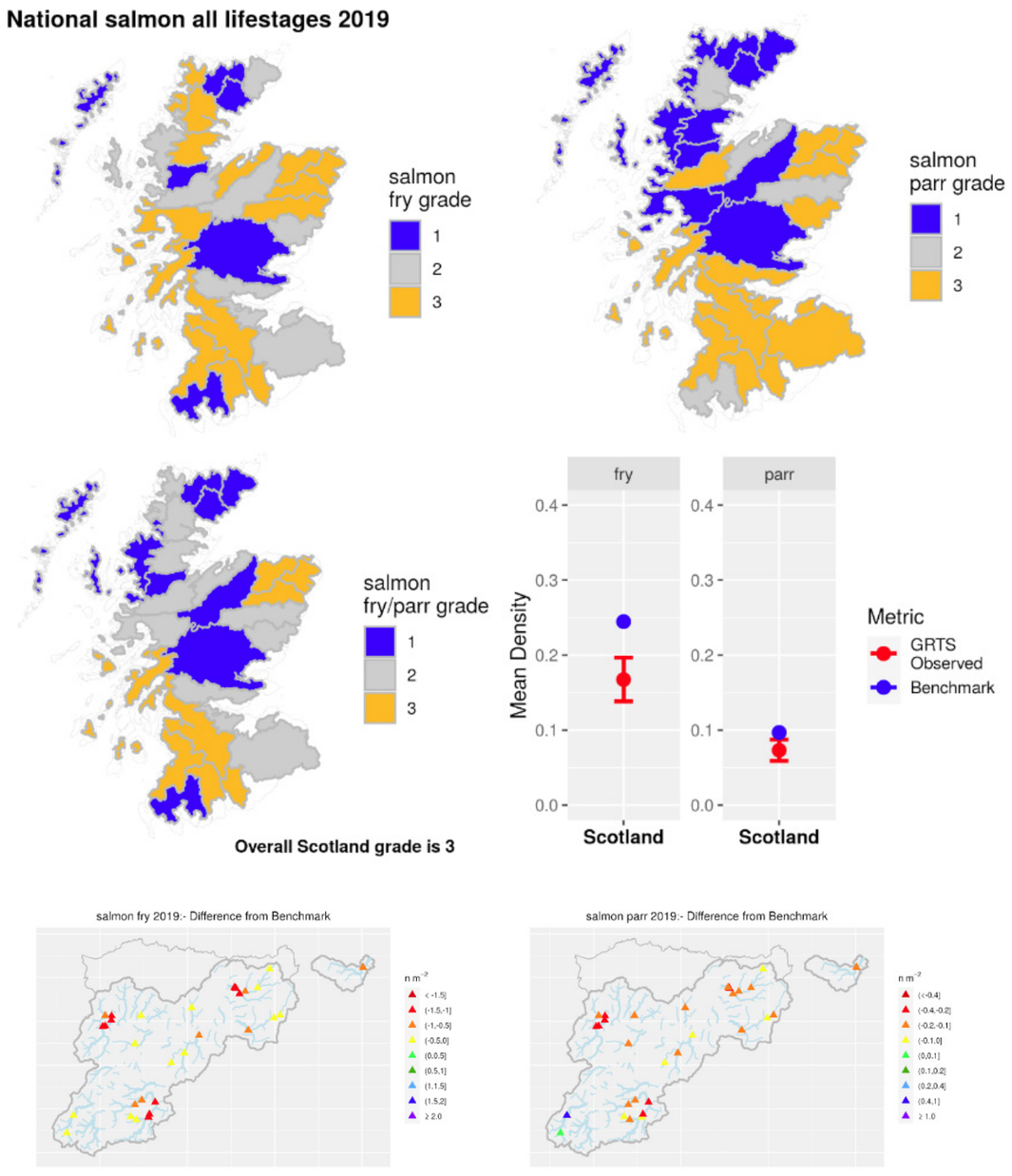
By comparing regional or national estimates of mean salmon density obtained from GRTS sampling with benchmark estimates, each region is given a grading (1 - 3) for fry and parr separately. A region with a grading of 1 is coloured blue, a grading of 2 as grey and 3 as orange.

Grades were obtained for each lifestage using the following rules:

Category 1: The estimate of mean observed density exceeds the benchmark
Category 2: The benchmark is within the confidence limits of mean observed density
Category 3: The upper 95% confidence limit of the mean observed density is below the benchmark

Next, the grades for the two life stages are combined to provide a single overall (fry/parr) grade for the juvenile salmon assessment using the following rule-based system:
Following the NEPS survey 2019 the Deveron was assessed as a category 3 for salmon fry, Category 3 for parr and a category 3 overall (see map below). The NEPS survey is designed as such that sites are chosen at random. Although numbers were lower than expected at some sites, those that had no salmon were nearly all in small channels with no habitat suitable for salmon. The poor fry numbers reflected the poor spawning due to the extreme hot and dry conditions in 2018.

Right: the juveniles survey team

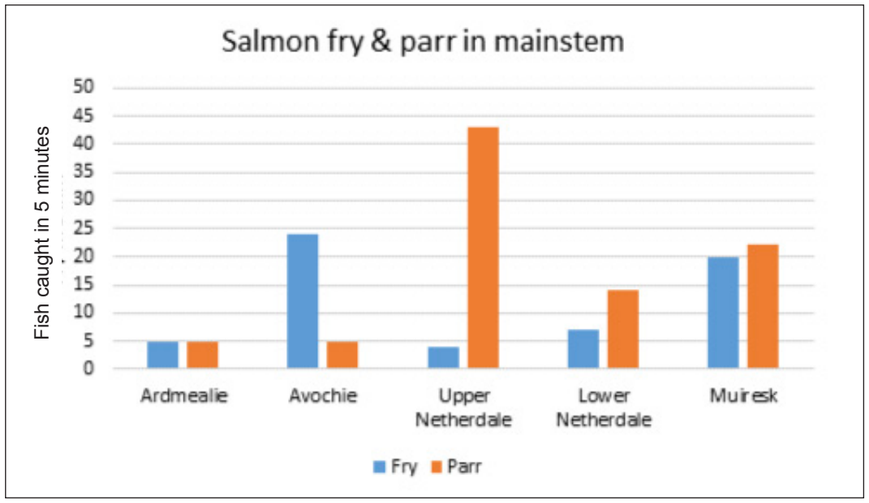


Electrofishing – Mainstem fry index sites

In 2019, for the first time, the DBIRT conducted fry index surveys in the mainstem of the Deveron. Due to the width of the river stop nets cannot be installed to seal off a section in the river as is required to achieve a fully quantitative assessment. Instead a section of riffle is fished for a set time (5 minutes) and the number of fry and parr per minute provides a qualitative assessment of abundance. All sites had both salmon fry and parr although some were better suited to fry (Avochie) while others were better suited to Parr (Upper Netherdale). Given the poor spawning and recruitment in 2018, as illustrated by the poor fry results elsewhere, the number of salmon fry in the mainstem was encouraging.

Data derived from I A Malcolm, K J Millidine, F L Jackson, R S Glover and R J Fryer. (2020). The National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) 2019. Scottish Marine and Freshwater Science Vol 11 No 9. Crown Copyright 2020

Salmon fry and parr caught in 5 minutes at mainstem sites



Trout Tagging – Blackwater

Previous studies by the DBIRT have highlighted the significant population of brown trout that originate in the Blackwater tributary in the headwaters of the Deveron catchment. Tagging has shown that these outstandingly large trout migrate throughout the entire Deveron catchment over the year to feed. One individual female was even tracked migrating downstream as far as the Bridge of Alvah before returning all the way back to the Blackwater to spawn. Every year the DBIRT head up to the Blackwater headwaters to monitor this population and tag a number of individual fish with visible floy tags. The floy tag has a unique ID and a telephone number so if an angler is lucky enough to catch one of these majestic fish they can report the capture, take a scale sample (right) and claim a reward. The information provided by these tag recaptures helps the DBIRT not only understand how these trout use the Deveron catchment but also reveals important information about age and growth rates of this population.

Pink Salmon

One pink salmon was caught and retained at the Wrack in July 2019. It was reported to FMS, sampled and weighed. Across Scotland the number of Pink Salmon reported was significantly fewer than in 2017.

Pink Salmon

Fish Counter

A presentation was given by sonar experts Peter Clabburn and Richard Davies of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) at the September board meeting. The presentation outlined the use of Sonar technology in Wales to estimate fish numbers and the pros and cons of the method and also the different manufacturers in the sector. The ARIS sonar, made by Sound Metrics, is currently the device that NRW use and is thought to be the most developed and best suited to fish counting in a riverine environment. NRW have also completed trials with a Tritech device this year. It was concluded from the NRW trials and our own on the Deveron, that Tritech need to carry out significant development and improvements to the device and software before it could be considered seriously for deployment in a fish counting context.

The ARIS sonar is currently now the main option available. The ARIS is extremely expensive at around £78k (+ VAT) and around £8k for ancillary equipment required. The ARIS would also take a period of time to set-up initially and then operate.

During 2020 the DBIT will aim to identify academic and funding partners to move the project forward in a sustainable way for the future.

The Deveron at Mains of Mayen

Education and Community Outreach

Deveron Trout Festival - May 4/5th 2019

Another highly successful trout angling weekend was held on the Deveron over the weekend of the 4/5th of May including an informal fly tying evening in Turriff. 28 rods fished a mixture of beats over the two days and an impressive number of trout up to 5lbs in weight were landed. Thanks goes to Henderson's Country Sports and Mr Allan Liddle for organising and running the weekend..

Ghillies Evening

The annual ghillies evening was held on the 14th of September (2019) in Turriff. Many interesting current topics and any issues were covered and an action plan has been drawn up by the DBIT to tackle all matters raised.

Newsletters and social media

Three editions of the Deveron Flyer were produced during 2019/20 and distributed to keep all DBIT members and interested parties updated on the work of the RDevDSFB & DBIT and current fisheries news. The website of the RDevDSFB & DBIT (www.deveron.org) was updated regularly with latest board meeting minutes, news and announcements.

The Trust social media has grown considerably and platforms such as Twitter (@DBIRCT), Instagram (river_deveron) and Facebook (DeveronBogieIsla) were updated regularly by the DBIT, with latest local and national news, angling catches and opportunities, and local conservation initiatives. Summary below:

- Instagram: 0 (Oct 2018) to 1110 (March 2020) followers
- Facebook: 902 (Oct 2018) to 1565 (March 2020) followers
- Twitter: 934 (Oct 2018) to 1154 (March 2020) followers

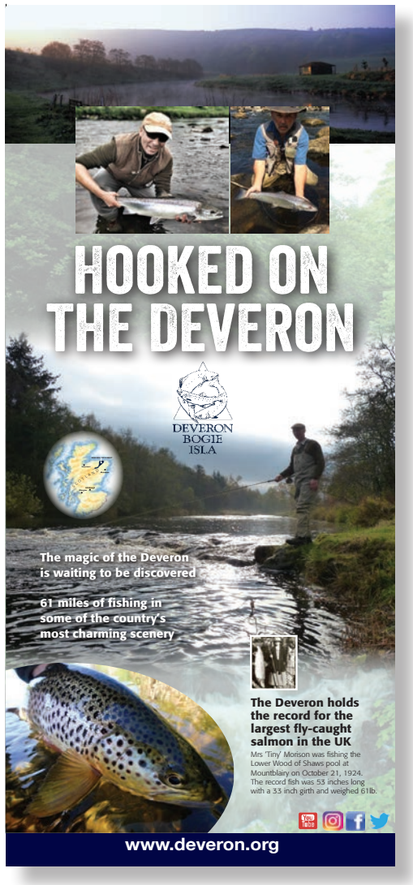
Media coverage and communications

Our Communications officer, Karen Müller visited EWF 2019 in April in Germany - Europe's biggest fly fishing fair. 4000 visitors attended the event, of which around 350-400 were actively engaged about fishing the Deveron.

Many of the anglers had an interest in trying out salmon fishing but were also very enthusiastic about the prospect of fishing for wild brown trout in a natural habitat. Interested parties included anglers/groups (13) which had fished on the Deveron in the past, expressed interest in doing so in the future (211) or even went as far as suggesting they would book fishing (3).

The main groups were anglers considering an exclusive fishing holiday, either on their own (94) or as a group (36), families looking to combine fishing with a holiday (27), and lone anglers or groups (54) travelling through Scotland and looking to book a day or two on the river rather than an exclusive week.

The overall 'Scotland experience' appeared to be an important aspect in enticing anglers to the Deveron. Landscapes, culture, whiskey distilleries, etc were well received and an important part of why Scotland would be a destination of choice. Commonly asked questions included availability of accommodation (shown off in both PowerPoint and leaflets to take away) and ghillies to ease the experience on a new river.



Our fly fishing fair banner

The DBIT also attended the The River Spey Angling Association Fly Fair and Scottish Fly Fair (Stirling), with Henderson's Country Sports – notably, 40 sponsored fly-tyers donated one or more flies to the Deveron Trust for the benefit of our auction in September 2019.

Local press has continued to cover our projects such as invasive non-native species control and educational work. SNH, STV, BBC Radio 2 and BBC News Scotland, produced coverage of projects such as the river opening ceremony, smolt tracking project and giant hogweed grazing.

The International Year of the Salmon

The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) was an initiative of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. It aims to inform and stimulate outreach and research that aspires to establish the conditions necessary to ensure the resilience of salmon and people throughout the Northern Hemisphere. 2019 was the focal year of the International Year of the Salmon with the intention that outreach and research will continue through to 2022. To celebrate the IYS we held and participated in the three events below:

Super Salmon!

A special one-day event held at and in conjunction with the Macduff aquarium. The DBIT team gave talks on salmon biology and other species and it gave children, anglers and the wider general public the opportunity to chat to fisheries scientists and managers and discover what lives in the river Deveron.

Swimming Upstream

An evening event was held at and in conjunction with the Macduff aquarium to explore Scotland's salmon: past, present and future. There was the chance to talk with local salmon experts, learn about the rich history of Scottish salmon fishing, current conservation practices, and see exciting footage of rarely seen salmon behaviours filmed by Chris Conroy from the Ness DSFB.

Sundown on the Deveron 2019 – sponsored by BOWLTS Chartered Surveyors

The DBIT held a dinner auction at the Banff Springs Hotel on the 14th of September. The evening proved to be very successful raising £14,343. A huge thank you to all donors, sponsors and guests.

Public Presentations

Presentations were given by DBIT staff at the following events during 2019/20:

- The RDevDSFB & DBIT AGM, Huntly
- Deveron Ghillies Evening, Turriff
- x16 separate Outreach and Educational events including school visits and training events delivered within the Deveron catchment as part of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) project

River educational days

Family fly fishing fun day at Artloch Fishery

Young Angler and Family Fishing Days

The DBIT held a successful Family Fly Fishing day at Artloch fishery with around 30 participants including 16 youngsters in May. Another successful young angler's day was held in October, this time at Delgatie Castle Trout Fishery. This event booked up within a few days of being advertised and could have been filled again with the people waiting on the reserve list. Despite some awful conditions (the fishery flooded the week before the event) the day was a success and we'll look at holding more events in the future.

Deveron Opening Ceremony and Morison Trophy

The Morison Family and DBIT were delighted to announce the 2018 winner of the Morison Trophy at the river opening ceremony held in February 2019. The Morison Trophy, awarded for the heaviest fly-caught salmon of the season from the Deveron, was won by local angler, Mr Richard Breakell. The trophy was presented by special guest and well known angler, James Stokoe. The award was given for a fly-caught 22 lbs spring salmon from the Muiresk beat. In winning the trophy. Mr Breakell was also presented with a Vision salmon fly-rod, courtesy of Henderson's Country Sports for releasing the fish, a limited edition 'Morisons' Fly box and bottle of, The Deveron malt whisky courtesy of John Dewar & Sons Ltd. Mr Stokoe was also given the honour of opening the Deveron salmon season and 'blessed' the river with a dram of 18 y/o Deveron malt, thereafter, Mr Breakell made the first cast of the season.

Andrew Tennant: Salmon fisher and conservationist

by Michael Wigan

Andrew Tennant

Over time I have met quite a few anglers and salmon enthusiasts. None of them knew quite so much as Andrew Tennant. Most of what he gleaned was direct from experience. His school was the river not the library. Thereby many of the nostrums cherished by biologists and salmon academics he had no faith in. If he didn't see it, chances are he didn't credit it.

Andrew Tennant had one inestimable advantage. He was of a generation which had fished everywhere, before some salmon destinations were even recognised as having salmon. He was in Russia on the Kola Peninsular only a little after the reindeer herders had been chased off. Murmansk airport in those days was a chaotic maelstrom. He bumped down the roads to Iceland's rivers when they were volcanic larva.

He fished Scottish rivers, often on the best beats, for year after year. His fishing companion was John Ashley-Cooper who wrote the great salmon book of its time. The two of them sometimes caught 50 in a morning. They fished Rothes, Delphi, and Orton together. Andrew Tennant kept no fishing diary but whenever I mentioned a beat, he knew it. Sometimes he had a story about his time there. In the 1960s and the 1970s when the North Sea was swarming with cod and haddock and also salmon, a period scientists call 'the gadoid outburst', he was fishing hard and long days.

Fishing alongside Ashley-Cooper it was necessary to cast a good line. Andrew Tennant's casting was a joy to behold. Indeed, many people covertly or otherwise sneaked a peep at him beautifully throwing a long, straight, precision-angled line which landed like thistledown.

One time on the Deveron, where he owned the Muiresk beat and had a share in the river's most revered beat, Forglen, I saw him casting on a pool below a short cliff, hidden in the trees. But from above there was a place you could see the pool and what was happening. Here, a small crowd of people was assembled. Below, unaware of the spectators, was Andrew Tennant looping line over the pool and advancing a step between casts. From above we could see the fish stacked at the shallower end where the pool ran out. As the angler moved down most casts attracted a rise, fish just lazily coming up from below to look at the fly and then sink gently back down again.

The pool was completed without any salmon taking. The angler said afterwards he had seen nothing at all. None of the slow rises had produced a single movement on the tranquil surface. The fly had been dead-on the right arc but no salmon was inclined to address it.

I think of this scene often. I imagine in the quiet passages of the fishing day a similar thing, fish rising to the fly without my ever knowing. The audience that time was there to witness indolent salmon studiously ignoring the angler but also a demonstration of virtuoso casting. The Spey roll was delivered with the angler maintaining a completely ramrod profile, just exerting a slight whip of the right shoulder as the line uncoiled. It didn't need a fisherman to see how good it was, anyone could. Wind made no difference. I saw him on the Helmsdale in a storm of upriver sleet. The ghillie, maybe partly in jest, said '30 yards out, sir, that should do it'. It was virtually impossible to open ones eyes in the biting snow pellets but out went the line into the whiteness – where it got lost. Until suddenly, to the stupefaction of angler and ghillie a salmon took it and was duly landed.

Where he got his passion for fishing is unknown. Perhaps from his teenage spell on a trawler, insisted upon by his mother to toughen him up. He retained an interest in sea fishing, took his own boat out for mackerel, and was a keen sailor.

Andrew Tennant had various idiosyncratic foibles. His favourite fly was what he called a Thunder but his ghillies say was nearer a Munro Killer with long wings. He was happy to try new patterns and enjoyed some of the more tinselly accoutrements of modern flies, and especially favoured small cone-heads using tungsten. However, his natural inclination was towards classic flies. He paid considerable attention to fly size.

His lines were floaters, with a five foot sink tip often left on all season. His fly boxes 'left a lot to be desired', in the phrase of his friend and gamekeeper Neil Stephen. Hooks were re-tied, paying money for new flies going against the grain. He didn't believe in fancy tackle and used rods from the modest

> 'He knew the significance of the fact that salmon and sea-trout can hear and they can see. He always approached the water quietly and with care'

end of the range, but was given a Bogdan reel in America and loved it. Above all speed and depth of the fly determined much in his approach.

He had strong opinions about the approach. I do not mean the method of angling, I mean literally the approach to the water.

He knew the significance of the fact that salmon and sea-trout can hear and they can see. He always approached the water quietly and with care. One time in the glorious days of the big sea-trout runs on the Deveron I went to the river with him in summer gloaming. Wait, he said, we'll see where they are. We noticed some movements and the occasional splash on the far side. 'Tread carefully', he said, 'sea-trout are nervous people'. So often folk new to angling make the mistake of believing if they get closer to the fish they improve their chances. Andrew Tennant was of the school which maintained the opposite.

He had a fixed view, too, of light. He thought it fruitless to fish under a glaring sky in midsummer. As

time went on he picked his moments, watching cloud cover and the angle of the sun and knowing well what shade was afforded on pools he intended to visit as the sun tracked lower. He thought a few casts at the right time were worth more than a flurry of them with salmon sulked on the bottom. At the same time he regarded it as a duty to be there when it was right. Reluctant to be thee when conditions were wrong he was equally determined not to miss an opportunity if the conditions were good.

His individual attitude meant that he frequently confounded conventional wisdom. On the Deveron in late August there was a furious thunderstorm accompanied by lightning. No angler careful of his own skin would be out in such stuff, with the river rising fast. He begged to differ, fished for 24 hours and landed 28 salmon, mostly from one Muiresk pool.

Owning a Deveron beat gave him the privilege of fishing when he wanted. His fishing was let but there were usually corners he exploited when others had left. He encouraged his tenants, stirring them when conditions were right, and up to the end visited the river and the beat every day. The fishing on his beat was personal. Whoever was holding the rod didn't matter, the river must be used and used correctly.

Muiresk

In the later years he became worried at the Deveron's falling catches and smaller runs. After the 1984 catch of 600 sea-trout at Forglen the migration declined rapidly. A conservationist before the word meant much he had September hens returned on his beats, and eventually the sea-trout too. More interested in extending salmon habitat than artificial stocking, as chairman of the Deveron Board he was highly active in having weirs removed, obstructions demolished, and installing fish-passes. As chairman of Salmon and Trout Scotland he raised significant issues without hesitation. To him every part of the salmon's life cycle was important, everything that contributed to its survival and permanence.

The mass of seals at the mouth at Banff weighed on his mind. He had played a key witness role years before in the Deveron Enquiry establishing that netting the mouth of the river was damaging to the run. He did not appreciate watching seals replace nets as the main predators on his cherished salmon before they could even reach their homelands. He masterminded the Deveron nets buy-out ending a historical anachronism in an early example of a conservation mechanism afterwards adopted widely. Good at getting things done he persuaded the Aberdeenshire Council of the case for removing giant hogweed and helped the operation himself using a boat to tackle hogweed which land-based sprayers could not reach. Not averse to getting his hands dirty he acquired a digger and cleared obstructions in his salmon pools, and when you were still allowed to do so, made croys to create fish resting-places. When catch and release came into the picture he did not react overly at the start. But after witnessing the evidence of fragile runs with his own eyes he took action. Rappala and multiple hook fishing were stopped on his beats and eventually he made them fly-only.

Astonishingly, and maybe integral to his tough attitude and war-time warrior heritage, he paid no attention to aids and safety devices. He died in 2018 shortly before his ninetieth birthday yet used no

Forglen

wading-stick. Flotation aids? He just smiled, with a characteristic touch of sardonic grimness. Floating away would to him have been preferable.

He had a view on science. There was what he called useful science and there was scientific study for its own sake. He was apt to ask, 'Will it put more fish into the river?'

Those who fished with him will remember not only his flawless timing and touch with a fishing-rod but his sixth sense about where fish were and what would make them react. They will remember the way that for him the river was an alive place. It was a scene for drama and action. They recall a slim silver-haired figure walking down to the pool as one approaches a court of play. He understood what was beneath the water and for him more life was there than on the bank. He was totally engaged, concentrated and focussed.

He took his grandsons fishing hoping to imbue fishing discipline. One evening two of them were encouraged to get up next morning early as there were fresh salmon in. Having flown from Australia they burbled the night away and went to bed late. They descended to breakfast slightly behind the clock. There was a fresh salmon on the table. GrandPa's gentle hint was well understood!

PRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, SIR MICHAEL WIGAN, BT.

Good Governance

The RDevDSFB is established by Salmon Fisheries legislation consolidated by the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 2003 which from 16th September 2013 was amended by the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013. The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2007 also applies. The Board is empowered under the legislation to take such action as it considers expedient for the protection, enhancement and conservation of Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout stocks and their fisheries. The Deveron Catchment area covers 1,266 km^2 and the length of the river system is 96 km.

The coastline along the Moray Firth extends from Cowhythe Point to the Water of Philorth and 3 nautical miles out to sea. There are 53 rod fisheries within the main stream of the Deveron and Netting Stations at ex adverso Auchmeddan Estate and in the Sea, Aberdour (per Lands Valuation Roll).

The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 consists of several parts, the second of which relates to salmon and freshwater fisheries. The emphasis is on the duty of Boards to be open, transparent and accountable. This includes:

- a duty to publish and copy to Scottish Ministers the Annual Report and audited accounts;
- a duty to hold a minimum of one public meeting, with all Board or other meetings held in public unless there is a good reason for them to be held in private;
- a duty to deal with complaints and to maintain and keep procedures under review;
- a duty to maintain a register and declaration of relevant financial interests of Board Members and to review these at Board Meetings.

The RDevDSFB's Complaints' Procedure and Registration and Declaration of relevant financial interests are dealt with later in this report.

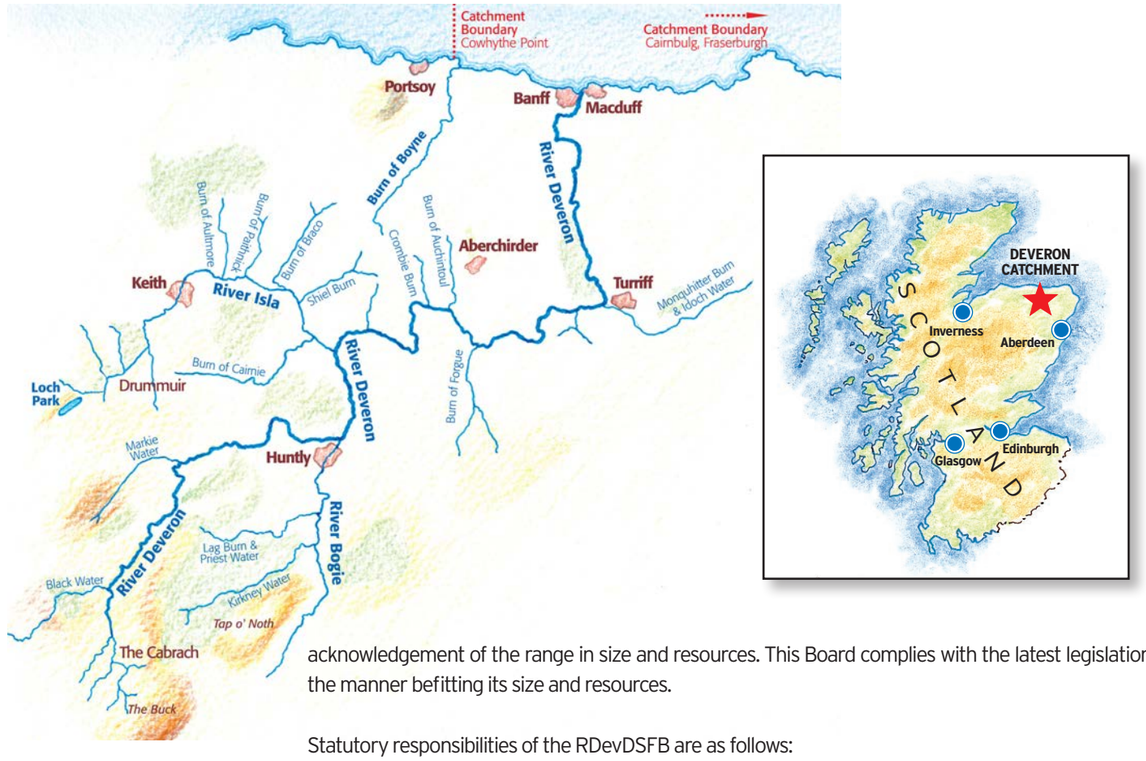
Meetings

Since the 2013 Act came into force meetings of the RDevDSFB are open to the public and the date, place and time of each meeting together with the likely agenda are published on **www.deveron.org** at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting.

The statutory Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors has, in accordance with Board policy over many years, been a Public Meeting although not publicised as such in the manner which is now required by the 2013 Act. Qualified Proprietors were advised to publicise the meetings which were well attended by ghillies, employees and generally members of the public, in particular anglers.

The Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors 2020 will incorporate a public meeting although further meetings will be held in open session and advertised on **www.deveron.org.** In the case of the Annual Meetings also in local newspapers to enable anglers and members of the public to attend and, at the Annual Meetings, to encourage participation (questions, comments, etc.). Board Members, the River Bailiffs and the Clerk make this information available to tenants, ghillies, employees, managers, Angling Associations, letting agents, a Tackle Shop and members of the public by personal contact.

It should be noted from the Guidance on Good Governance Obligations issued by the Scottish Government, that it is not the intention that the obligations imposed by the 2003 and 2013 Acts seek to micromanage the business of Boards – the provisions provide flexibility in terms of delivery and



acknowledgement of the range in size and resources. This Board complies with the latest legislation in the manner befitting its size and resources.

Statutory responsibilities of the RDevDSFB are as follows:

- fisheries protection (Bailiffs in co-operation with Police);
- confirm the salmon and sea trout rod fisheries season – 11th February to 31st October;
- ensure fishery closed times – midnight Saturday – midnight Sunday – are complied with (Bailiffs and Police);
- deal with the purchase and sale of illegally caught or unseasonable fish;
- ensure the free passage of fish, e.g., over obstructions, etc. (to knowingly prevent free passage is a criminal offence);
- protect spawning redds and juvenile fish (Bailiffs and Police);
- regulate the introduction of adults, juveniles and ova.

Note: Details of the RDevDSFB's powers and duties are also published on the website

Complaints Procedure

The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 amended the 2003 Act regarding openness and accountability. The 2013 Act, therefore, requires a Fishery Board to maintain and keep under review proper arrangements for dealing with complaints made to the Board about the way in which the Board have carried out or propose to carry out their functions under the Act or any other enactment.

The RDevDSFB complaints procedure can be found at
www.deveron.org/wb/media/pdfs/Complaints_Procedure_2013.pdf

Register of Board Members' Interests

Board Members have completed and signed declarations of relevant financial interests. These are recorded with the Clerk and available to inspect on reasonable notice at her office. This has been so intimated on **www.deveron.org**. The register is reviewed at each Board Meeting and a permanent item is on the agenda. Members are required to declare any change from the previous meeting.

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust accounts Year ended 31st March 2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.20 Total funds	31.3.19 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:				
Donations and legacies	68,085	73,307	**141,392**	127,543
Charitable activities	89,846	-	**89,846**	92,716
Other trading activities	26,109	-	**26,109**	4,885
Investments	-	3,965	**3,965**	1,181
Other income	-	-	**-**	4,546
Total income	184,040	77,272	**261,312**	230,871
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Raising funds	12,179	-	**12,179**	2,425
Charitable activities	143,630	73,307	**216,937**	203,942
Other	756	-	**756**	553
Total Expenditure	156,565	73,307	**229,872**	206,920
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	27,475	3,965	**31,440**	23,951
Gross transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Net Income/(outgoing) resources	27,475	3,965	31,440	23,951
Other recognised gains and losses				
Revaluation of tangible fixed assets	-	(7,541)	(7,541)	6,600
Net movement in funds	27,475	(3,576)	23,899	30,551
Fund balances at 1st April 2019	154,166	124,687	**278,853**	248,302
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	**181,641**	**121,111**	**302,752**	**278,853**

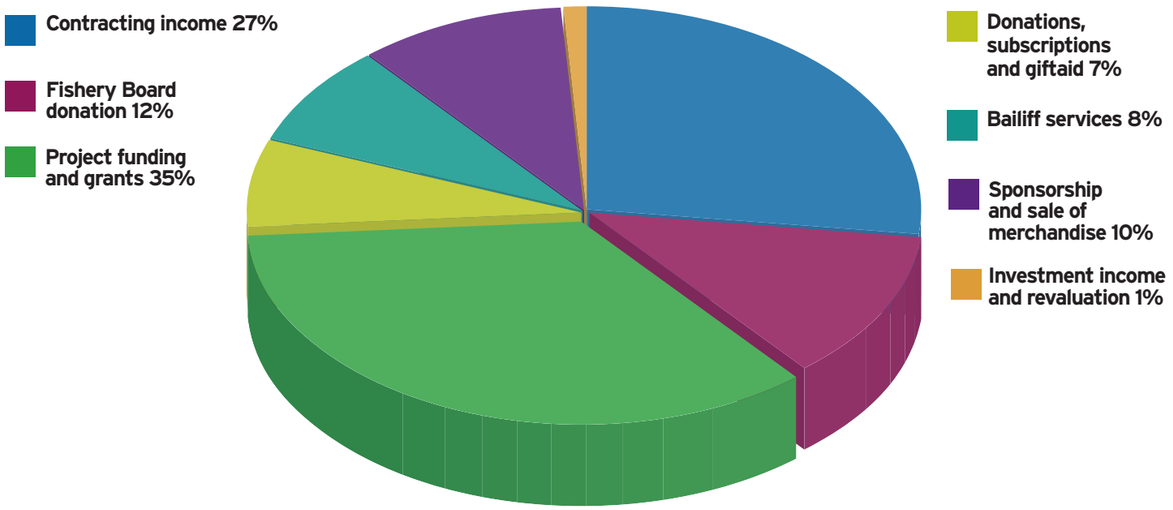
BALANCE SHEET

	31.3.20		31.3.19	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Property, plant and equipment		**43,737**		53,163
Investments		**121,111**		124,687
		164,848		177,850
CURRENT ASSETS				
Inventries	**7,941**		-	
Trade and other receivables	**18,415**		27,593	
Cash at bank	**125,006**		88,003	
	151,362		115,596	
Current liabilities	**(13,458)**		(14,593)	
Net Current liabilities		**137,904**		101,003
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**302,752**		278,853
Income funds				
Restricted funds		**121,111**		124,687
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds	**8,363**			
General unrestricted funds	**173,278**		154,166	
		181,641		154,166
TOTAL FUNDS		**302,752**		278,853

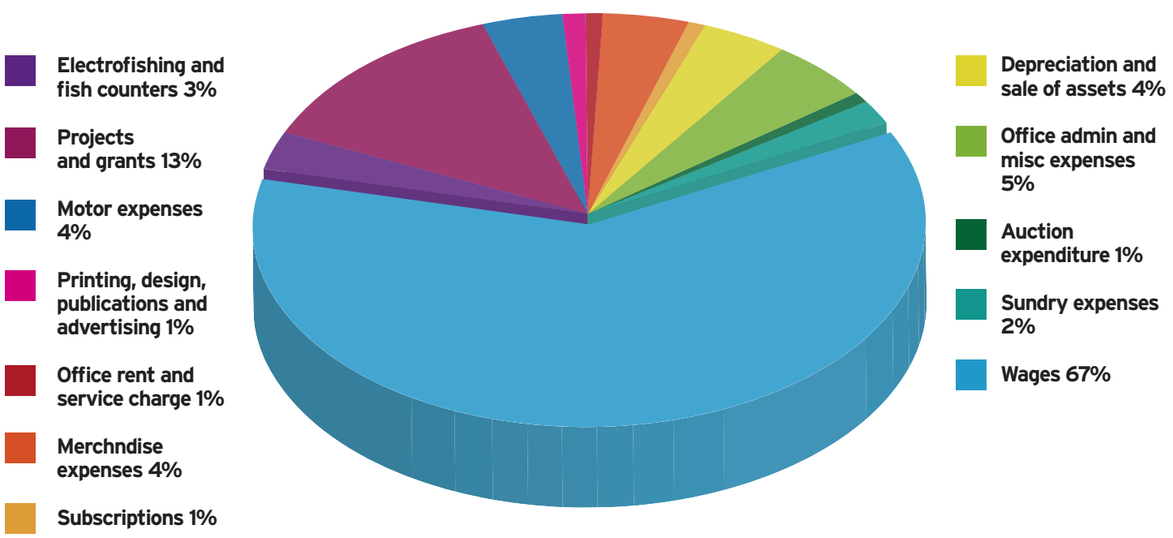
These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008). The above figures have been approved by the Trustees and will be presented as such at the Annual General Meeting. These are extracts from the full financial statements. . A copy of the Trust's full Financial Statements, together with explanatory notes, will be published on its website (www.deveron.org) following the Annual General Meeting.

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust accounts Year ended 31st March 2020

Income April 2019 - March 2020

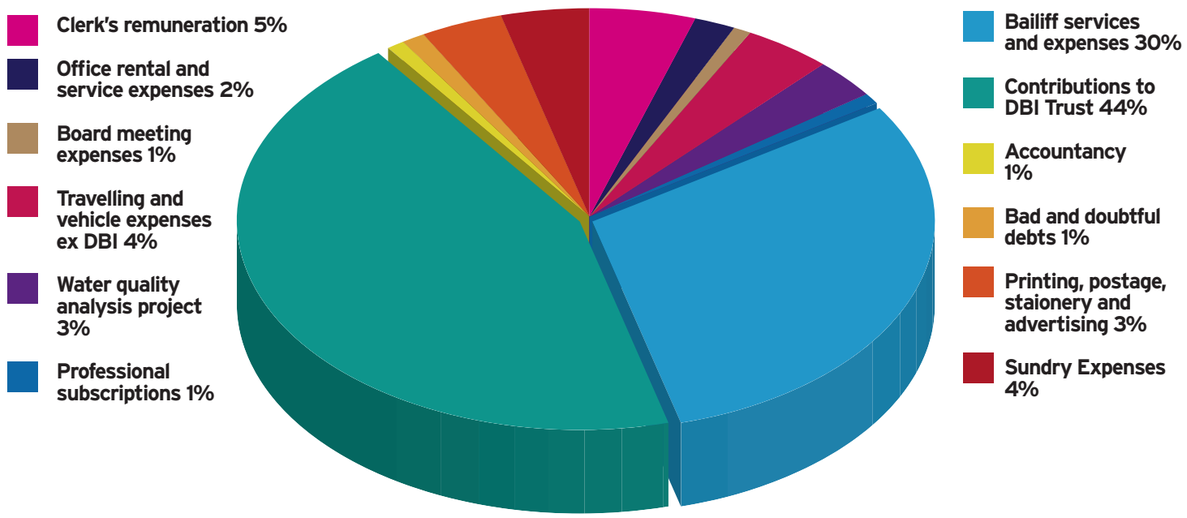


Expenditure April 2019 - March 2020



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board accounts Year ended 31st March 2020

Expenditure April 2019 - March 2020



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board accounts Year ended 31 March 2020

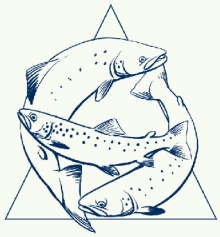
INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	2020	2019
INCOME		
Assessment Income (43p in £)	**73,540**	71,830
	73,540	71,830
EXPENDITURE		
Clerk's Remuneration	**3,853**	3,092
Communications officer	**-**	6,046
Office rental and service expenses	**1,105**	1,333
Board meeting expenses	**654**	815
Travelling and vehicle expenses ex DBI	**2,596**	2,386
Deveron management plan	**-**	3,792
Professional subscriptions	**615**	3,376
Bailiff services and expenses	**22,063**	21,525
Contribution to DBI Trust	**31,500**	26,500
Accountancy	**700**	660
Insurances	**-**	186
Postage, Printing, Stationery, Advertising and Telephones	**2,887**	2,243
Sundry expenses	**3,247**	4,657
Water quality analysis project	**2160**	-
Bad and doubtful debt	**786**	-
	72,166	76,611
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS ON GENERAL FUND	**1,374**	(4,781)

BALANCE SHEET

	2020 £	2020 £	2019 £	2019 £
CURRENT ASSETS				
Trade and other receivables	**-**		388	
Cash and cash equivalents	**35,766**		36,620	
	35,766		37,008	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	**(700)**		(3,316)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**35,066**		33,692
General Fund				
Balance brought forward		**33,692**		38,473
(Decrease)/Increase for the year		**1,374**		(4,781)
Total General Fund		**35,066**		33,692

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008). The above figures have been approved by the Board and will be presented as such at the Annual Meeting. These are extracts from the full financial statements. A copy of the Board's full Financial Statements, together with explanatory notes, will be published on its website (www.deveron.org) following the Annual Meeting.



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board
The Offices, The Stables, Avochie, Huntly, Aberdeenshire AB54 7YY Tel: 01466 711 388

Deveron Angling Code for Salmon and Trout 2020

Your Board remains extremely concerned over fragile levels of fish stocks in the river and in particular spring salmon and sea trout. Anglers are asked, therefore, to observe the following statutory regulations and guidelines throughout the season:

SALMON & GRILSE

From 11th February to 31st May (Inclusive) all salmon to be returned

It is illegal to take any salmon (dead or alive) from 11th February to 31st March (inclusive) each year

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board will donate one bottle of Scotch Whisky per angler, for safely returning a spring salmon between the 1st April and 31st May (Follow set claim procedure and Call **01466 711 388** to claim - strictly over 18s only).

From 1st June to 31st October (Inclusive), weekly rods may retain one salmon or grilse per rod per day with a maximum of one per rod per week. Day rods to return all salmon.

Anglers are asked to observe the Board's aspiration that all hen fish, and any cock salmon over 10lbs be returned Therefore, the Board requests that only male fish under 10lbs be retained.

SEA TROUT

All sea trout to be returned throughout the season

The guidance on sea trout will be in place until stocks recover to acceptable levels

BROWN TROUT

From 15th March to 6th October (Inclusive), all Brown Trout under 10 inches in length to be returned. No more than 2 brown trout per rod per week to be retained.

It is illegal to fish without legal right or written permission from the beat owner or representative

It is illegal to kill unclean or unseasonable fish (baggots, gravid fish, kelts)

It is illegal to sell or buy wild salmon roe

It is illegal to attempt to deliberately foul-hook fish

Only knotless landing nets to be used – it is illegal to use gaffs or tailers

It is illegal to fish with prawns, shrimps or salmon roe throughout the catchment and throughout the year

Fishing for salmon and/or sea trout on a Sunday is prohibited

Spinning lures should have only one single set of hooks with a maximum sized 4 crimped or barbless

Anglers are reminded that it is illegal to sell rod-caught salmon or sea trout

Injured or damaged fish outwith the above limits mustbe handed to the proprietor

All farmed salmon and pink salmon (Oncorhynchus gorbuscha) must be retained and notified to the RDevDSFB

All visiting anglers must read, act upon and sign a *Gyrodactylus salaris* declaration form immediately before fishing. If disinfectant is required, please contact the DBIT or your beat Ghillie/Manager/Agent.

The Offices
Avochie Stables
Avochie
Huntly
Aberdeenshire AB54 7YY
Tel: **01466 711 388**
email: **office@deveron.org**
www.deveron.org