



DEVERON
BOGIE
& ISLA

The River Deveron District
Salmon Fishery Board

The Deveron, Bogie
and Isla Rivers
Charitable Trust

**Annual Report and Accounts
2024/25**



Report by

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www.deveron.org

KINDLY DONATED BY A G MORISON



The Morison Trophy

Awarded for the heaviest fly-caught salmon
of the season from the Deveron

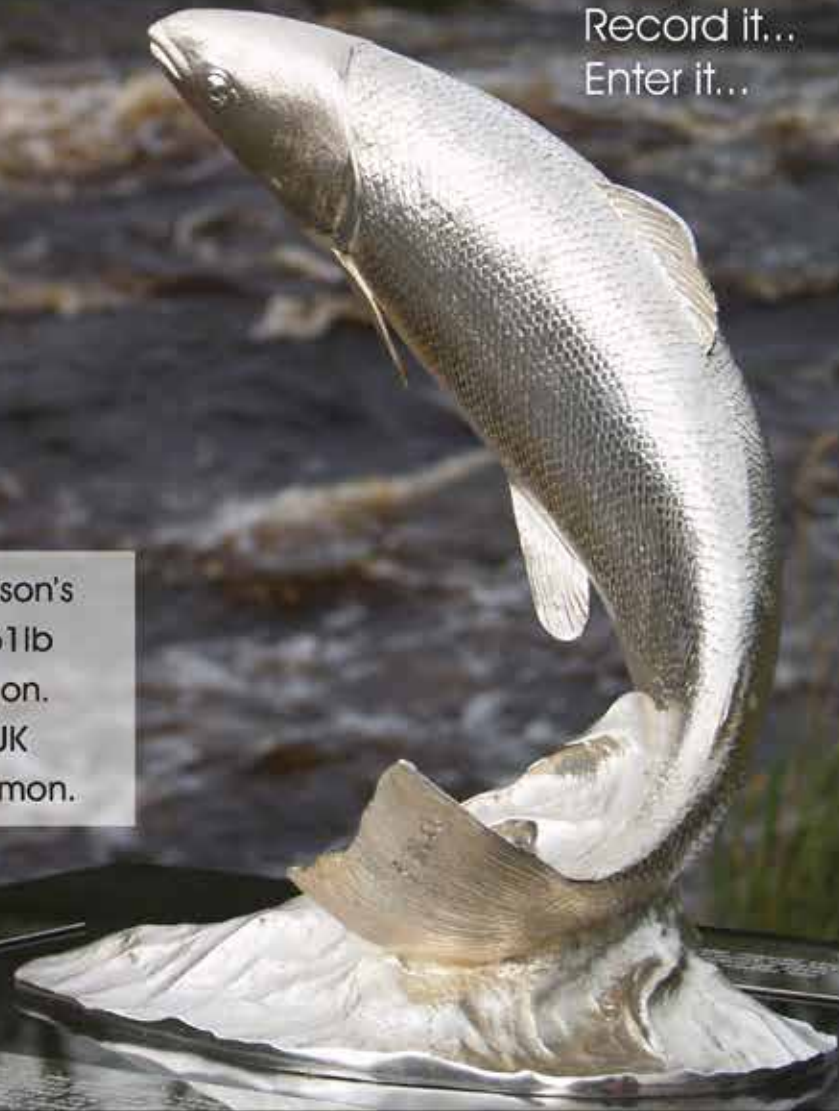
View it at Henderson's Country Sports

Catch it...
Weigh it...
Measure it...
Verify it...
Record it...
Enter it...

Release your salmon
to win a Vision fly-rod



Mrs 'Tiny' Morison's
magnificent 61lb
Deveron salmon.
The heaviest UK
fly-caught salmon.



For more details contact The Deveron Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust
Tel 01466 711388 www.deveron.org

Contents

05

Supporters and Funding
Officials and Staff

09

Chairman's Report

10

Deveron Salmon

11

Deveron Sea Trout

13

Deveron District - 2024 Catches

13

Conservation Code
and Statutory Regulations

14

Management Report
Fish Eating Birds
Fish Passage Isla
Onshore and Offshore Windfarms
Seal Management
Fishery Protection
Project Deveron - Phase II
Willow Spiling in the Cabrach
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

24

Angler's Map of the River Deveron
2025/26 Priorities
Water Temperature and Water Scarcity 2024
Wild Salmon Strategy

26

Research and Monitoring
Project Deveron
Water Quality and Diffuse Pollution



Deveron Annual Report 2024/25



28

Deveron ARIS Sonar Summary 2024

32

Deveron PIT Tagging Project Update

34

Electrofishing 2024

35

Education and Community Outreach
Including Deveron Opening Presentation

40

"I Think He's Fairly Large!"
Richie Miller tells 'Tiny's' story

44

Good Governance

46

The DBIT Accounts

50

The RDDSFB Accounts

52

Deveron Angling Code for
Salmon and Trout 2025



FRONT COVER: Clementina 'Tiny' Morison's big catch in 1924



Home & dry

HANG THE BUG OUT TO DRY

Fishing or doing water sports abroad?

Just come back from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain or Sweden?

Ensure your equipment is not carrying the highly contagious Gs parasite which has the ability to wipe out freshwater salmon stocks.

What is the Gs Parasite?

The Gs parasite is a highly contagious bug that has devastated salmon stocks in Norway. We want to keep it out of Scotland's rivers.

Here's what you need to do

To ensure your equipment is not contaminated, please take one of the following precautionary measures:

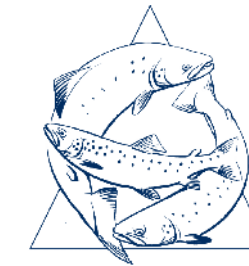
- Completely dry equipment (e.g. waders, fishing equipment, bags, canoes and windsurf gear) at the minimum temperature of 20° for at least 2 days **or**
- Heat for at least 1 hour at above 60°C **or**
- Deep freeze for at least 1 day **or**
- Immerse in a Gs killing solution for min 10 minutes



Gyrodactylus salaris parasite magnified



For more info call: 0131 244 6225 or go to: www.infoscotland.com/gsbug



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 2024/25.

The RDevDSFB and DBIT would like to thank the following:

BMF Group
Bowlts Chartered Surveyors
Chivas Brothers
DBIT members
European Open Rivers Programme
Fisheries Management Scotland
Henderson's Country Sports
John Dewar & Sons
Longcliffe Quarries
Loop Tackle Design
Marine Directorate
NatureScot
The Atlantic Salmon Trust
The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Turrieff Angling Association
TwinPeakes Fly Fishing

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 Gillies 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

A. G. Allwood (Chairman), R. J. G. Shields, A. G. Morison, A. Cheyne, Mrs J. A. Player, R. Cooper, J. S. Cruickshank OBE, A. Higgins

Representatives of lower proprietors

M. C. R. Marsden, R. Copland

Representatives of salmon anglers

F. Henderson, R. Breakell, D. Borthwick

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Trustees J. S. Cruickshank OBE (Chairman), R. J. G. Shields, F. Henderson, D. Borthwick, R. Cooper, A. Allwood

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 (Stirling University)

Team

Director	R. Miller, BSc MIFM
River Operations Manager	M. Walters, MSc BSc MIFM
Project Officers	L. Barr, BSc (Hons)
	R. Paylor, BSc
Clerk and Administrator	S. Roebuck, BA MICB
Field Assistant	C. Grant
Project Deveron Catchment	
Restoration Manager (AST)	J. Gordon, MA (Hons), MSc, MEnvSc, CEnv



Chairman's Report

Andrew Allwood, Chairman of the RDevDSFB



The Deveron at Avochie

2024 was a memorable year. Looking out of the window now it is hard to believe conditions could be so different. That year was marked by great gatherings by the riverbank, vivid stories of fish being caught or lost, unnoticed holes in nets which seemed so small with fish so large, wild tales of backing lines being run to the bitter end. Yes, it was truly a year to remember. It was such a joy to walk to the river and think, whatever happens, I've got a chance. I suppose one of the joys of living in the British Isles is the immense variety of countryside and weather. It was certainly kind to the fish that year which demonstrated their resilience by appearing in numbers not seen for over a decade. How different now in 2025 with hardly a wet day since the winter and record low water. Still, we must be grateful for all we are given and make the most of it.

It was a busy year in so many ways. The sonar fish counter recorded a 54% increase in salmon and grilse entering the catchment, which was mirrored by the rod catch more than doubling. It should be noted that 99% of all the salmon and sea trout caught were released successfully to continue their journey, details of which are in the following pages. However, worryingly, sea trout numbers were the lowest on record. Hopefully the sand eel fishing ban remains in force, and this can only be a good thing for all coastal creatures.

The operation of the sonar fish counter represents a huge amount of work for all concerned. It is the flag ship counter for Scotland, with the Marine Directorate, Atlantic Salmon Trust, and our own dedicated Trust playing a vital part in producing the data we need to measure our stocks.

Great efforts in improving the habitat within the catchment are ongoing. There is a clear plan and a highly dedicated team working to make it happen. You can read all about it in the Project Deveron update. Please get involved in any way you can. You will not be alone. From small individual efforts often unseen to contributions from large organisations such as Chivas who are making substantial funds available as part of The River Within and also the Open Rivers programmes. All this means we are managing to make large restoration projects a reality. It is really heartening to see how much can be achieved if everyone gets behind a worthwhile movement. The King Edward dam removal project is a marvel to behold, it has opened up another 11km of the catchment area allowing salmon to regain long lost territory. There are good invasions and bad ones. This is a good one and will stand the test of time.

I do hope you will find the following pages of interest. I am sure you will appreciate the enormous amount of hard work from all of the team members who have contributed in so many different ways. It is by all of us working together that we can make this magical part of Scotland a joy for us and our legacy for the future.

Deveron Salmon - Historical

The total annual salmon rod & line catch for the Deveron District was relatively 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 gradually improved with the 10-year average increasing to just over 3000 (1993-2002) and increasing again to an average of 3418 for the 10 years from 2003-2012. Since then, catches have fallen steeply, with 2018 being the lowest rod catch on record followed by slightly improved catches in 2019 & 2020 before falling again 2021 - 2023. This is reflected in the latest 10-year average of 1208 (2013-2022).

Catch and release records began in 1994 and the practice has increased from 22% of salmon returned in 1994 to 99% returned in 2024. Catch & Release was originally adopted by the RDevDSFB as a voluntary conservation measure to preserve fragile stocks and in particular the spring salmon component (Feb-May).

Spring salmon

Spring salmon return to the river in the spring months and are available to the rod & line fishery from February 11th 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 in 2015 and has since remained relatively low. The Spring Catch in 2020 was the lowest on record but should be considered in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown and the limited angling effort as result. There was a slight improvement in 2021 when some travel restrictions were still in place but remained low in 2022-24 after restrictions had been eased.

The River Deveron Summer (June-Aug) and Autumn (Sep-Oct) Rod & Line catches have shown very different trends to the spring salmon (Figure 3). Both summer and Autumn catches steadily increased until the late 2000s but then both fell away sharply to a record low in 2018 and have remained relatively low since.

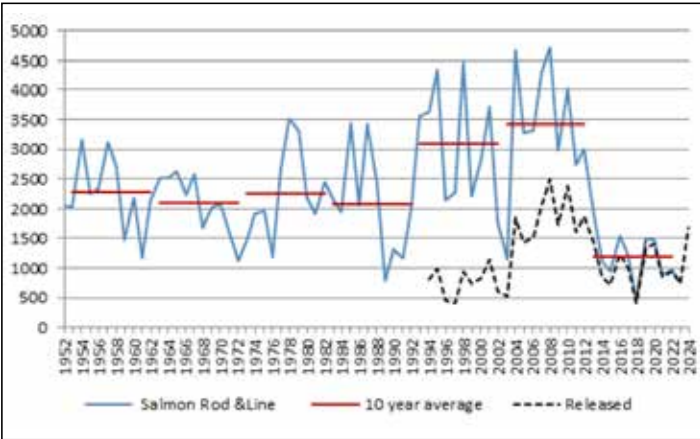


Figure 1

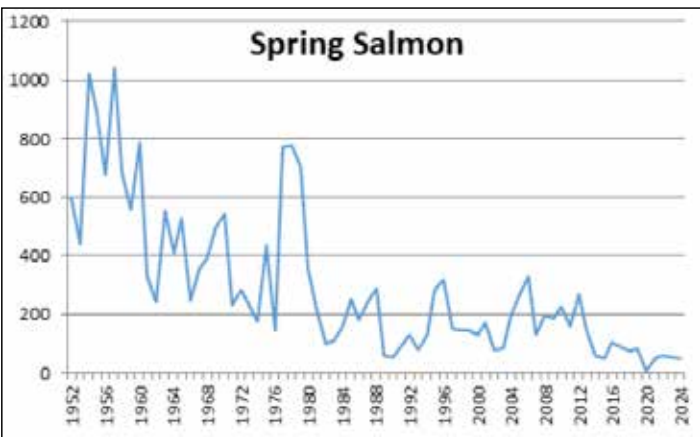


Figure 2

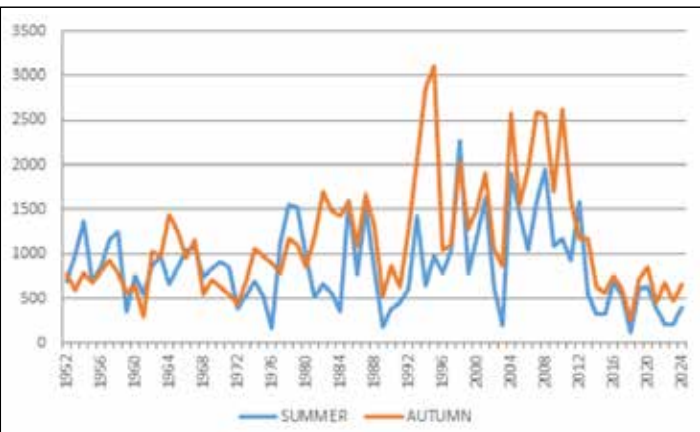
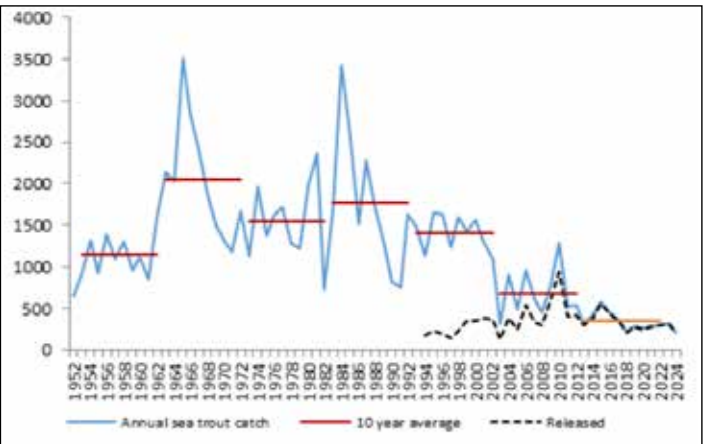


Figure 3

Figure 1. Annual Salmon 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) Salmon Rod & Line Catch.
Figure 3. River Deveron Summer (June-Aug) & Autumn (Sep-Oct) Salmon Rod & Line Catch.

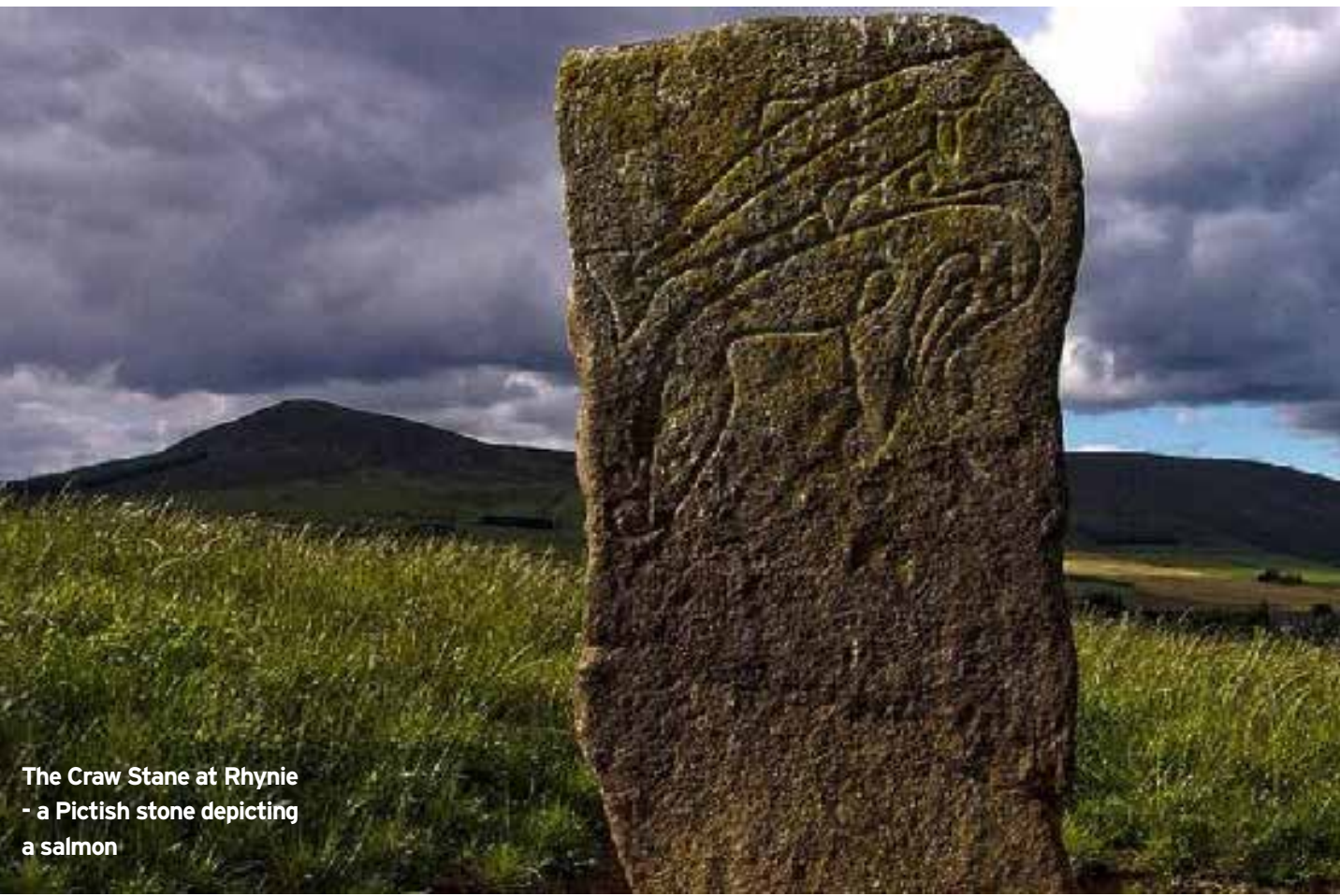
Deveron Sea Trout - Historical

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 falling to 685 fish during 2003-2012 and 348 fish during 2013-2022. 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 98% of the total sea trout catch in 2022. 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.



The Crow Stane at Rhynie - a Pictish stone depicting a salmon

RIVER **DEVERON** Mrs Clementina "Tiny" Morison Edition **HANDCRAFTED GIN**



A JOURNEY FROM HILL TO FIRTH...

Rising in Banffshire's remote Cabrach, the River Deveron flows for sixty one miles, carving a winding path through some of the most beautiful countryside in Scotland.

Over countless millennia, the Deveron has influenced and supported those who have lived and worked near its banks. Rich in salmon and trout, the river remains a vital artery for surrounding communities.

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust was formed to protect this magnificent resource for future generations.

Our gin uses botanicals found growing on the banks of the river, with wild angelica, common bilberry and heather blossom truly capturing the Deveron's essence.

70cl

41% vol

Proceeds from sales support The Deveron, Bogie and isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Deveron District - 2024 Catches

Rod and line

The 2024 salmon and grilse rod catch of 1711 was a significant improvement on the 2023 catch of 766 and the highest since 2013 when 1925 were caught. Although an improvement the rod catch is still well below the long-term average of 2384 salmon per annum (1952-2020) but an improvement on the latest 10-year average of 1208 (2013-2022). Of the 1711 salmon and grilse caught, 99% were returned. Spring salmon catches were still very low with only 46 spring salmon caught which is the lowest on record apart from the 2020 season that was limited by Covid restrictions. All spring salmon were returned to the river aided by the RDevDSFB angler reward scheme. The sea trout catch was the slowest on record with only 207 recorded and is well below the long-term average (1952-2020) of 1257 of which 99% were returned to spawn.

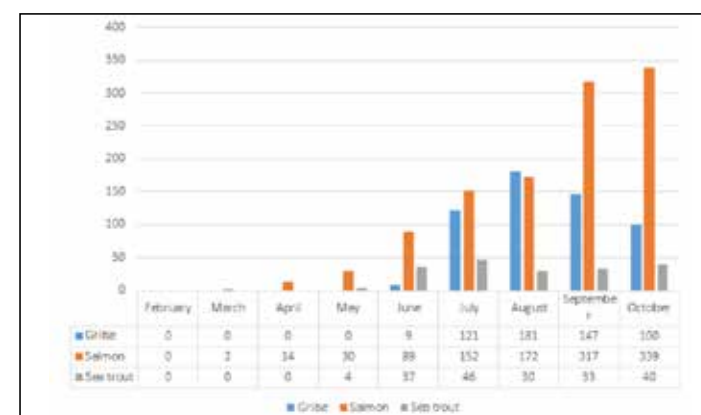


Figure 5: Rod and Line Monthly Catches 2024

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 Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Times and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 made it illegal to kill wild Atlantic salmon caught before 1st April each year. The RDevDSFB conservation code imposed additional protection of this fragile stock and recommended that all salmon were released until 31st May. This is due to our local data showing spring salmon still make up a significant percentage of the catch during May. The code also outlines measures for conservation of sea trout, recommending 100% catch and release until stocks are shown to recover. Low exploitation of resident brown trout is also encouraged to maintain the sustainability of this popular fishery.

For the 2025 Angling season, the Scottish Government has classified the river Deveron as a Category 2 river having been category 1 in 2019 and category 2 in 2018, 2020-2024. However, due to the sustained low catches the RDevDSFB has adopted a 100% catch and release policy for the 2024 and 2025 seasons and is implementing additional management measures to protect juvenile salmon during their river phase. 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 2025 season.

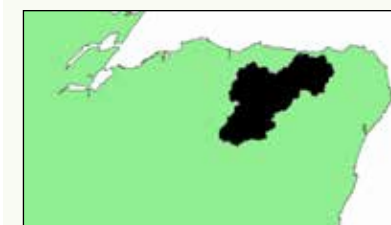


Figure 6: River Deveron Catchment - now Grade 2

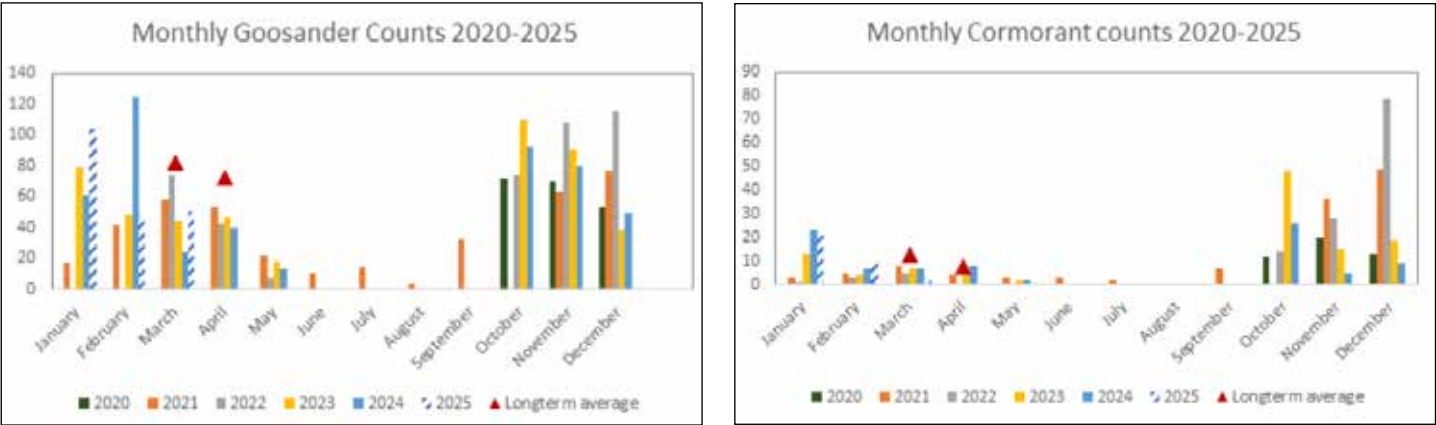
Eggs required (m ²) ^a	Area (m ²) ^a	Total egg requirement ^a	Percentage chance meeting requirement					Overall	Grade
			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
3.14	3,345,000	10,466,000	79.3	85.91	66.34	65.54	64.7	0.72358	2

^a Figures presented are median values

Management Report

Fish Eating Birds

The RDevDSFB continues to monitor the number of fish-eating birds along the River Deveron by conducting a bird count from Huntly to Banff using the DBIT team, ghillies and beat owners. The count helps DBIT understand the potential impact of fish-eating birds on juvenile salmon and trout but is also an essential step in securing the annual licence from NatureScot to shoot as an aid to scaring. Historically the count was only conducted in March and April when numbers were expected to peak in advance of the smolt run. However, with increasing numbers of fish-eating birds being observed during the Autumn and Winter the count has been conducted monthly (October - May) since October 2020. The count has also been extended upstream to Huntly and when resources allow as far upstream as Edinglassie as well as the lower Isla and Bogie tributaries. This has improved our understanding of avian predator numbers and their potential impact throughout the calendar year and the entire catchment.



Above left: Graph showing the number of Goosanders counted each month from October 2020 to March 2025 from Huntly to Banff. As comparison, the average counts from the long-term March and April counts (2010-2019) are shown by the red triangles. Above right: Graph showing the number of Cormorants counted each month from October 2020 to March 2025 from Huntly to Banff. As comparison, the average counts from the long-term March and April counts (2010-2019) are shown by the red triangles.



The additional monthly Goosander counts have illustrated that they are present on the river all year round with the highest numbers present during the autumn and winter months but also remaining quite high in the Spring around the smolt run. This is important when assessing the impact of Goosanders on the Deveron salmonid populations as it demonstrates predation is taking place all year round and not just during the smolt migration. Incidental sightings and reports upstream of Huntly have also confirmed that Goosanders use the Upper Deveron and broods are often seen in this section in the Spring.

The monthly Cormorant counts showed that they are present all year round but in significantly higher numbers in the Autumn and Winter. The winter increase in Cormorant numbers from October-January was seen as far upstream as Huntly. Given the voracious feeding behaviour of Cormorants, the potential impact of their predation on salmonids over the winter is significant.

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, lamprey and trout to spawn. Electrofishing data collected by DBIT and independent SEPA surveys show that the number of salmon fry upstream of Keith is significantly less than found during downstream surveys. The most significant obstacle is the Glen Keith Weir which has caused adult salmon to become trapped in the past and have subsequently had to be rescued by DBIT. In the Autumn of 2020 significant numbers of salmon succeeded in climbing the rock ramp at the Linn Pot but then became trapped at the Glen Keith Weir. This area is often targeted by poachers and these fish are very vulnerable to illegal fishing methods. The DBIT were poised to conduct a fish rescue before a fortunately timed flood overtopped the weir and allowed the salmon to move upstream to spawn.

After a Fish Barrier Assessment conducted by SEPA Fish Ecologists in 2019 the Glen Keith Weir has been downgraded to impassable to salmon and trout. This new classification is reflected in the 2019 River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 - 2027 that has reclassified the Isla upstream of Keith as poor. Chivas were issued with a letter by SEPA informing them that they have a legal requirement to install fish passage on the Glen Keith weir by 2024 to demonstrate the ecological improvement to achieve Good Status for fish ecology and fish barrier assessment by 2027.



The weir at Glen Keith

Chivas have now proposed a preferred pass option using pre-barrages to improve fish passage over the weir. The project has been significantly delayed due to the complex nature of the site with very limited space and historic monuments in proximity which will inevitably complicate the process of getting a solution agreed by all stakeholders. We are working with Chivas to identify monitoring options to assess the effectiveness of the final solution but now expect construction to be completed in 2026.

Onshore Windfarms

With the Scottish Governments ongoing commitment to renewable energy production more windfarm plans continue to be forthcoming within the Deveron Catchment. The below list provides a summary of the various projects and their status. The DBIT and RDevDSFB respond to all windfarm consultations within the catchment. Where there is a potential risk to the water environment a monitoring plan is requested that should include monitoring of fish, invertebrates and water quality before, during and after construction. We also encourage a habitat management plan to restore and improve the ecological functionality and diversity of the site. This will often include peatland restoration and native deciduous tree planting where appropriate.

- **Aultmore - Vatenfall - 16 turbines - 105.6 MW** Originally consented in 2013 this project has undergone a redesign and In March 2024 Vattenfall submitted a Section 36 application for consent to the Scottish Government for the Wind Farm scheme on the Isla.
- **Clashindarroch 2 - Vatenfall - 14 turbines - 77MW** Went to Public Enquiry with a case report submitted in March 2023 and has now been consented. Construction expected to begin in 2025.
- **Clashindarroch Extension** Clashindarroch Windfarm Extension Ltd consists of 22 turbines with a capacity of 195MW plus a battery storage facility - In January 2023 Infinergy submitted a Section 36 application to the Energy Consents Unit of the Scottish Government. Moray Council raised concerns in June 2023.
- **Craig Watch** Statkraft submitted plans for 11 turbines with a capacity 72.6MW to the Scottish government in June 2022. Since then, there has been a submission of Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) to the Energy Consents Unit in November 2024.
- **Garbet Hill** Energiekontor proposed seven turbines with a capacity of 46.2MW plus an electricity storage facility of 3MW. Planning was refused by Moray Council but subsequently granted by Scottish Government in September 2022 subject to 19 conditions. These included the requirement for a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) with DBIT on the steering group. The Habitat Management Plan needs to include a fishery management plan specifying additional baseline electrofishing and invertebrate kick sampling to commence 2 years before and continue 2 years post construction. The HMP also must include a peat management plan. Construction will begin in 2025.
- **Dorenell Extension** Galileo Empower are currently undergoing scoping for a new windfarm to the south and east of the existing Dorenell windfarm. The revised proposal is for 68 turbines with tip heights of 150-200m producing in excess of 50MW. The proposal also includes a battery storage system and 840 hectares of peatland restoration.

Offshore Windfarms

There is an increasingly rapid expansion of offshore windfarms in the Moray Firth and off the Aberdeenshire coast with subsea cables coming ashore at several locations. In achieving the Scottish Governments commitment to net zero however, there remain some significant potential threats to salmon and sea trout in the marine environment.

Current Moray Firth developments

- **BOWL (Beatrice)** is fully operational with 84 turbines producing a maximum capacity of 588MW. The subsea cable comes ashore at Portgordon and is connected via an underground cable to the National grid at the Blackhillock Substation near Keith.



- **Moray East** has completed construction and consists of 100 turbines with a capacity of 950MW which are connected to the grid at a substation in New Deer via a cable that comes ashore at Banff and passes under the Deveron at Inverichnie.
- **Moray West** is under construction with the first offshore substation installed in December 2023. Set to be first producing power in 2024 the project upon completion will consist of 60 turbines with a capacity for 882 MW. The subsea cable will come ashore in Sandend and is connected via underground cable (passing under the Isla at Grange) to a new substation at Whitehillock near Blackhillock at Keith. Due to be completed in 2025.
- **Caledonia Windfarm** - is a 2GW Ocean Wind development that is planned to be operational in 2030 and will double the Moray Firth's offshore wind energy production.

The orange shapes show existing or planned offshore windfarm locations and the pins the locations of wild smolt samples courtesy of the Marine Directorate (Scottish Government). Contains information from the Crown Estate Scotland licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Following the ScotWind Leasing Auction in January 2022 a further 17 projects around Scotland's coastline have been chosen to generate another 25GW of offshore wind. These will be developed over the coming years as they go through the licencing, planning and EIA process. Although these projects are further offshore and not close to the mouth of the Deveron their potential impact needs to be considered as a cumulative impact on the migration routes of salmon and sea trout. DBIT is currently working with FMS to respond to developments with direct potential interaction with Deveron populations and also contributing towards more generic responses for further afield developments due to the wider cumulative impacts.

DBIT are currently working with PhD researcher Michael Bevins Cameron at the University of Essex. Michael is looking to develop a multi-marker assignment tool using a combination of post-smolt eye lenses, earstones and genetics to develop baseline data highlighting migration routes and possible interactions between Deveron smolts and offshore wind developments.

Seal Management

We now have possession of an Acoustic Deterrent Device (ADD's) that was funded by the Marine Fund through a collective grant secured by FMS. There is a standard operating procedure should the ADD be required. Three in river seal sightings were reported in 2023 and 8 sightings in 2024. Several of the seal reports for 2023 & 2024 have been made possible due to the analysis of footage from our ARIS sonar device that detected seals passing Montcoffer during the night that would otherwise not have been observed. Please get in touch with any in-river seal sightings.



Seal eating trout

Members of Fisheries Management Scotland were recently invited, for the first time, to contribute information to the statutory review of the seal licensing system. Alan Wells had a very useful meeting with the seal policy team to discuss the early findings of the review. Officials will provide a summary of their thinking for circulation towards the end of May 2025 (the review will conclude in September '25). It is understood that a number of changes to the seal licence application process are under consideration.

Fisheries Management Scotland have received an early copy of the scientific advice report developed by the NERC Special Committee on Seals. It includes the latest population estimates for both species of seal and associated figures for Potential Biological Removal. Several questions are considered relating to the behaviour of seals entering rivers, which will be of interest to FMS members.

Fisheries Management Scotland will continue to engage with the Scottish Government and relevant agencies with a view to better protecting wild salmon and sea trout from predation. Means of doing so will be considered at the next meeting of the Wild Salmon Strategy Science and Evidence Board.

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 2024 the RDevDSFB Water Bailiffs continued to carry out patrols and work closely with Police Scotland. Ten LM2 Spy point cameras (with signage) were deployed through the catchment at high risk areas to aid the monitoring effort. Our sincere thanks to BMF Group for providing the funding for the cameras.

There were a number of incidents of people fishing without permits in 2024. On the 20th of July two males were observed fishing illegally from a Kayak at Forglen and recorded on CCTV fishing at Montcoffer. Descriptions of the males, CCTV footage of them fishing and the vehicle registration and photo were passed to Police. On the 25th of July two males were observed fishing illegally at Laithers and asked to leave by angler. On the 8th of August two males entered the Deveron at Turriff in a kayak and proceeded to fish illegally and move on downstream. Descriptions of the males and vehicle registration were passed to Police. On the 20th of August two males were reported to the bailiff for fishing on the Avochie beat illegally near Rothiemay bridge. Descriptions of the males, witness details and vehicle registration and photo were passed to Police.

On Monday 26th of August a bailiff and two local banff police officers responded to reports of two males fishing below Banff bridge without written permission. Police talked to and warned one male who was asked to leave and stopped two other males from starting to fish without permission. Bailiff informed all where to buy the relevant required permits.



Salmon redds
pictured from above
at Avochie Fishings

Project Deveron - Phase II

Phase II of Project Deveron marks a significant step forward in our long-term ambition to restore the ecological health of the Deveron catchment. Now in its third year of partnership working and building on the groundwork laid during Phase I (Fish Monitoring), this year has focused on habitat restoration, water quality improvement, community engagement, and the development of a strategic framework to guide the next several years of action.

The Deveron system remains under pressure from a range of challenges, including diffuse pollution, rising water temperatures, historic modifications, and habitat fragmentation. However, it also offers major opportunities for catchment-scale recovery through nature-based solutions, farmer-led initiatives, and collaborative partnership projects. These approaches will not only improve the health of the river but also deliver wider environmental and community benefits.

A key area of focus has been the preparation of the Deveron Catchment Restoration Plan, which divided the river system into discrete management units. This structure allows for targeted, place-based interventions that address the specific pressures within each sub-catchment. Extensive surveying via landowner discussions, drone mapping, desktop analysis, and on-the-ground walkovers has been carried out across priority tributaries. This work has pinpointed where riparian planting, habitat restoration, barrier removal, changes to land management practices, and in-stream enhancements will deliver the greatest benefit.

Water quality monitoring has also advanced this year. Funding has been secured from the Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation for 30 new temperature loggers, scheduled for installation in late summer 2025. Alongside this, work is progressing to expand the catchment's water quality monitoring network, with detailed plans in place to seek funding for sensors to provide real-time data across the river system. An enhanced monitoring network will improve our capacity to identify sources of point source and diffuse pollution and to engage more effectively with land managers and regulators. In parallel, we are exploring innovative approaches such as nature-friendly farming initiatives to address some of these pressures on the ground.

At the time of writing, a major milestone is underway with the King Edward Dam removal project, the largest barrier removal to date in the catchment. Once complete, this will fully reconnect upstream spawning grounds for the first time since the 1870s and restore natural sediment transport and flow processes. Funding for the removal has been confirmed from the Open Rivers Programme, with additional support applied for through Chivas' The River Within fund. Full coverage of this landmark project will follow in the 2026 annual report.

Partnership working has remained central to Project Deveron. We have collaborated closely with estates, landowners, business and community stakeholders to develop new restoration schemes, including projects on the Edinglassie Burn, Haughs Burn and the Isla at Drummur Estate. Engagement has included extensive consultation around the King Edward dam removal and participation in a multi-catchment workshop with partners from the Spey, Findhorn, and Cromarty catchments to explore future collaborative working.

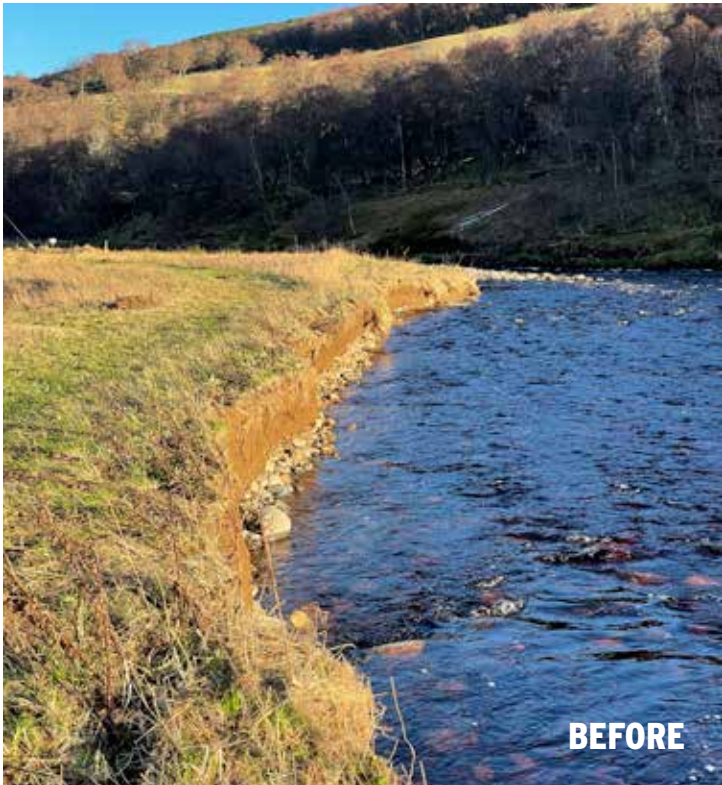


The Deveron at Coniecleugh

Project Deveron - next steps

The next phase of Project Deveron will shift focus from planning to delivery, with upcoming priorities including:

- The launch of the Catchment Restoration Plan setting out a pipeline of targeted restoration projects across the catchment.
- Establishment of a local farming cluster pilot scheme, encouraging collaborative land management approaches within a priority sub-catchment.
- Recruitment of a dedicated agri-environment officer to lead farmer engagement and support nature-based solutions.
- Expansion of community engagement activities and events, strengthening public involvement in the project.
- Development of a comprehensive water quality monitoring framework to inform targeted interventions and long-term ecological tracking.
- The roll-out of an invertebrate monitoring network, enabling local volunteers to contribute to water quality and biodiversity monitoring.



BEFORE



AFTER

Willow Spiling in the Cabrach

During November the Cabrach Trust along with assistance from our team, EDF Dorenell Ranger Service, Atlantic Salmon Trust, and Highlands Rewilding restored 60 metres of the River Deveron's eroded bank at Inverharroch using willow spiling, a sustainable method of weaving willow between posts to create a living wall. This approach strengthens over time, provides vital riparian habitat, shades the river for fish health, and naturally rebuilds the bank. The project was completed fully in spring 2025 with help from volunteers and partners. Part of wider regeneration efforts, the initiative supports wildlife, local skills training, and nature recovery, inspiring other river restoration projects across Scotland while enhancing community and environmental wellbeing.



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) project started in March 2018 with a goal to manage invasive non-native species alongside rivers and watercourses in northern Scotland. In 2024 we had two new project officers join the team, Lewis Barr who is responsible for the Deveron catchment, and Robert Paylor who is responsible for the Ugie and Ythan catchments. Together with the help of volunteers, land managers, contractors, and ghillies they were able to carry out catchment wide strategic invasive species control.

Over the summer months from April to August the team tackled Giant hogweed, an invasive species introduced from the Caucasus region (specifically Georgia, Armenia, and southern Russia) in the 19th century. This species is present across all three catchments and must be controlled to stop the spread of seed, as one single flowering plant can produce over 10,000 seeds which can lay dormant in the soil for over 10 years. Although infestations are large in some places, our team managed to control all known infestations from source to sea, with many sites showing significant improvement over previous years.

Once Giant hogweed control was finished, there was a small window of time to manage Himalayan Balsam before it set seed. We carry out top-down control to tackle Himalayan balsam, starting from its source and working downstream. Many years of control will be required to make an impact on Himalayan balsam, however it is very easy for volunteers and land owners to get involved with control as it requires no special training.

There are several known locations of Japanese knotweed across the catchments, we were able to treat all these areas in 2024 and aim to do the same in 2025.

Lewis and Robert have spent a great deal of time expanding the Mink trapping network, and have increased the number of rafts from 65 at the start of 2024 to 110 now, and have welcomed 35 new volunteers. In 2024, 14 Mink were caught, 11 from Deveron, 2 from the Ythan, and 1 from the Ugie. A similar number of Mink may be caught this year as we expect Mink populations are small in these catchments due to years of persistent trapping.

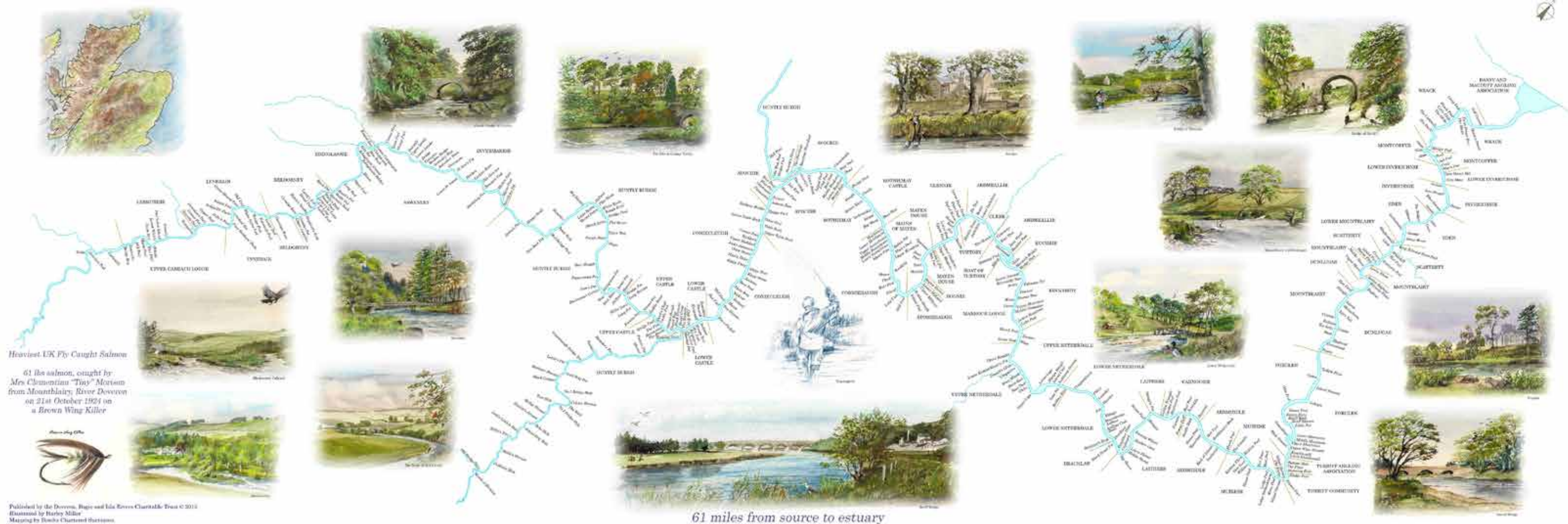
We'd like to say thank you again to everyone who plays a part in control of invasive non-native species, without your contribution we would not be seeing the same great progress that we are.

You can find out more about the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative, the work we do, and how to get involved at our website: www.invasivespecies.scot



Salmon caught at Muireisk Fishings

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



2025/26 PRIORITIES

- **Project Deveron - Operation of ARIS camera (Fish Counter) and Pit Tag Arrays in collaboration with the Atlantic Salmon Trust and Marine Directorate.**
- **Project Deveron Phase II - Continue catchment restoration priority actions such as removal of King Edward Dam and development of a comprehensive water quality and water temperature monitoring framework.**
- **Farm & Estate Engagement - Attend Turriff Agricultural Show to discuss collaborative and funding opportunities with local farming and estate stakeholders. Seek funding for dedicated Agri-Environment officer to lead farmer and landowner engagement and support nature-based solutions.**
- **Invasive Non-Native species - Continue control through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) Project.**
- **Smolt Shepherding Programme & Fish Eating Bird Licence - Continue to maximise number of smolts successfully entering the sea.**

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.

Water Temperature and Water Scarcity 2024

Compared to the warm and drought conditions of the previous year, 2024 benefited from good groundwater levels and frequent rain throughout the season. Combined with relatively cool temperatures the river was in excellent condition for angling and the rod catch benefited as result.

Wild salmon strategy: implementation plan 2023 to 2028

The Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy published in January 2022 sets out their vision, objectives, and priority themes for action to ensure the protection and recovery of wild Atlantic salmon populations in Scotland. The accompanying Implementation Plan published in February 2023, set out in detail over sixty actions to be taken over a five-year period to achieve this vision.

For latest information, please visit: www.gov.scot/groups/wild-salmon-strategy-implementation-plan-delivery-group

Research and Monitoring

Project Deveron

Launched in autumn 2023, Project Deveron is the second ‘Core River’ programme from the Atlantic Salmon Trust, acting as the sister project to Project Laxford and introduces another important new monitored river system for Scotland. In partnership with the Atlantic Salmon Trust and with support from the Marine Directorate, the 10-year project aims to achieve large-scale restoration of salmon and their wider environment through a work programme of habitat improvement and cutting-edge environmental monitoring. The focus of the work is on building resilience back into the landscape so salmon can be protected against the impacts of climate change, as well as actively restoring biodiversity to benefit salmon and all other species.

Why Deveron?

The River Deveron is one of the most iconic and famous salmon rivers in Scotland, and the rich history of its communities and the settlements along its banks is inexorably linked with salmon. In recent years however, the Deveron, like many other rivers across the wild Atlantic salmon’s range, has suffered a considerable decline in its salmon population.

The Deveron is a highly varied catchment and, as the river flows from source to sea and from uplands to lowlands, it encounters a number of issues including forestry, agriculture, abstraction, barriers to migration and human settlement. Its salmon therefore face a number of pressures from a variety of land and water uses and, by using the Deveron as a Core River, the lessons learned here can be applied to other catchments with a similar set of issues.

An Ecosystem Approach

Project Deveron is about more than just salmon. Rather salmon are the key to achieving the wider environmental restoration that they, and all other species, need to survive. The Project will take a holistic approach to habitat restoration, ensuring that plants, fish, invertebrates, birds, mammals and people can have a thriving future in a restored environment.

Over the coming years, management actions are likely to include the removal of barriers to migration to open up historically important salmon spawning areas, the introduction of 3D buffer strips between agricultural land and the river channel to improve water quality, and the strategic replanting of native riparian woodland to provide thermal refuge for juvenile fish and better in-river feeding.

Another new index river for Scotland – How we measure success

Through a sophisticated programme of monitoring, including PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tagging of salmon parr to measure changes in the salmon population in response to management actions over time, an ARIS (Adaptive Resolution Imaging Software) sonar fish counter, as well as eDNA analysis, the Project aims to establish itself as a new index river for Scotland, linking with Project Laxford in the northwest. These monitored river systems will provide an important insight into the marine survival of salmon, the size of fish populations and, critically, how they respond to our restoration efforts in the catchment. Linking with a network of similar rivers across Europe and North America, ranging from the south of England to the northeast coast of Iceland, the index river network aims to provide valuable information and lessons for river managers and policymakers everywhere.



Sunset over the Deveron at Upper Inverichnie

Water Quality and Diffuse Pollution

DBIT representatives now meet with the SEPA Rural Land Unit on a regular basis to discuss ongoing water quality concerns. This is a good opportunity to share information, discuss concerns and maintain good lines of communication. However, despite ongoing communication and the Deveron catchment being designated a priority catchment for diffuse pollution since 2010 the river continues to suffer from severe sediment in-put, diffuse pollution, pesticide intrusion and no significant improvement in water quality. This is particularly evident in the spring when fields are bare and vulnerable to run off during heavy rain and thunderstorms. This sediment is not only damaging to the river ecology and fish populations but also often stops angling for days at a time. With these severe rain and thunderstorm events becoming more frequent it is essential that the guidance and regulations designed to protect soil and reduce run off are more effective and better enforced.

The DBIT will continue to report incidents of pollution to SEPA and campaign for stricter regulations and more effective incentives to improve land management practices. Under Project Deveron Phase II the Atlantic Salmon Trust and DBIT are developing a restoration plan for the catchment and looking for opportunities with landowners to improve the management of the riparian zone to reduce run off and improve water quality.



The quantity of sediment being washed down the river is well illustrated by the build of silt inside the ARIS SONAR fish counter at Montcoffer. This occurred over just a couple of days following heavy thunderstorms and severe run off.

Deveron ARIS Sonar Summary 2024

Methods

The ARIS Imaging Sonar (1800 Explorer) was deployed for the second year in the Deveron from 5th March to 28th November 2024. The sonar beam is pointing horizontally across the river and continually records a sonar video image across the river. This video is subsequently analysed to identify and count migrating salmon and sea trout.

A suitable site was chosen near the bottom of the Deveron on the Montcoffer beat to ensure as much of the river and salmon population was included in the count. The site has a flatbed and slopes slowly away to the far (left) bank ensuring that there are no shadows or deep spots where fish cannot be seen and missed. Following trials at other sites this location was found to be particularly good because most salmon were running upstream and very few were found to be milling or dropping back again. Both of which make the counting process take longer and increase the risk of inaccuracies.

For the entire 2024 season the camera was deployed from the new galvanised arm that is mounted on the riverbank and allows the height of the camera to be adjusted without the operator getting into the river. The arm is designed to fold into the bank if it is struck by large debris and the camera itself is inside a protective box to deflect debris. A fish fence has been installed to ensure fish cannot pass behind the camera on the right bank or under the beam near the camera. Finer adjustments can also be made to the pan and tilt of the camera using the AR2 rotator arm that can be controlled remotely. This remote adjustment of the Sonar beam is essential to the fine tuning of the field of view to maximise image quality. Throughout 2024 the camera performed well during both very low flows and during significant bank over topping floods.

Throughout 2024 the ARIS sonar was powered by a new mains connection that has made the operation of the camera far more reliable than the previous solar system. This has also allowed the installation of an internet connection and cctv system that has greatly enhanced the security and remote operation of the site and ARIS camera.

Sonar footage was recorded continuously from 5th March till the 28th of November with no failures or dropouts. There were occasions when the camera was temporarily obscured by weed but this was quickly identified via the remote connection and subsequently cleared.

The video footage generated by the ARIS counter must undergo subsequent analysis to identify and count fish. This has to been done manually using ARIS Fish software that allows the user to review the footage, pick out fish tracks and classify fish as either migrating up or downstream. Every fish is then measured and recorded to a database.

Reviewing the ARIS video footage and recording all the fish is a time-consuming process requiring significant time commitment from staff. As a rough guide it takes approximately 1-4 hours to process each day of ARIS Sonar footage. The amount of time required is dependent on the number of fish recorded in the footage.



Figure 1



River Operations Manager Marcus Walters
deploying Sonar Camera



Figure 2

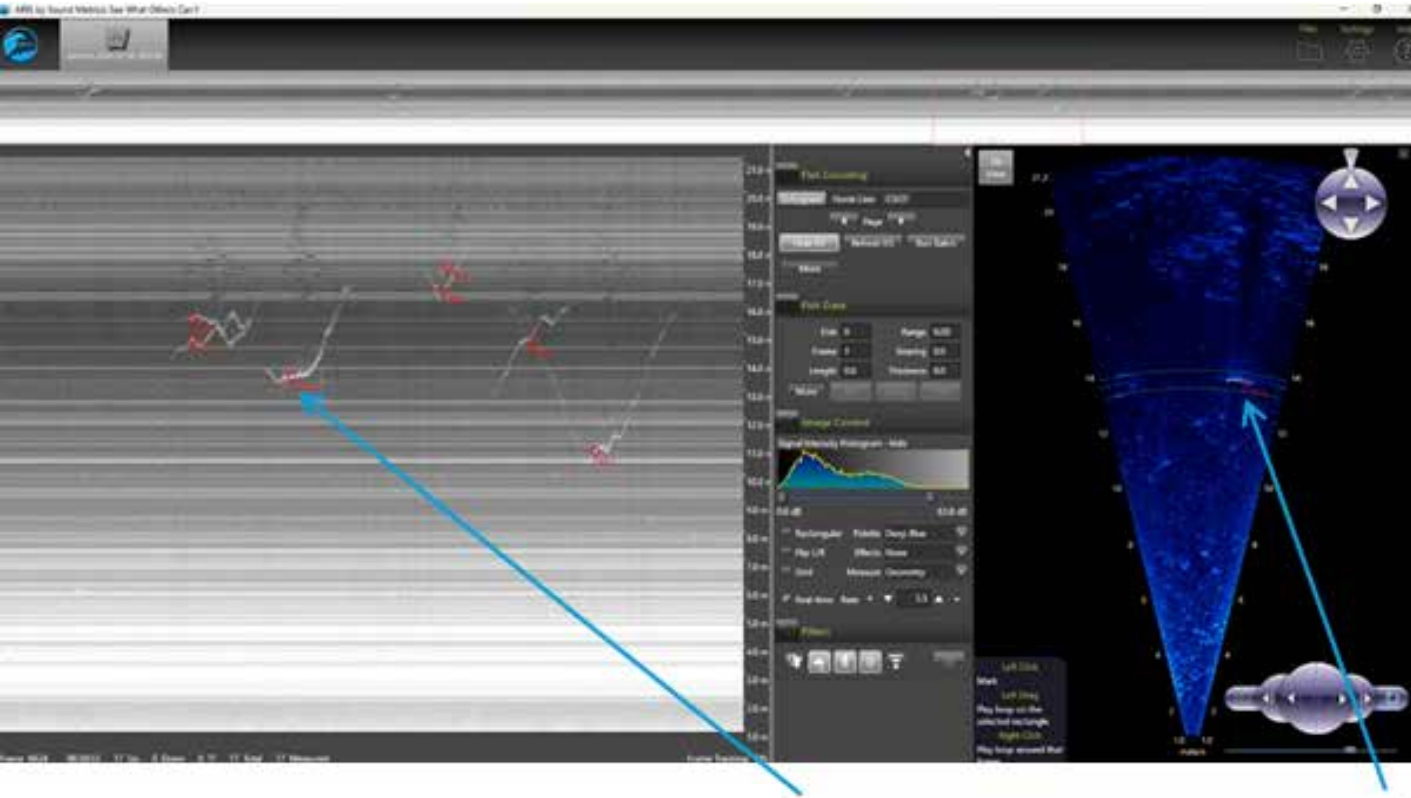


Figure 3

Fig 1. View upstream with the ARIS deployed from the right bank on adjustable protection arm.

Fig 2. The ARIS SONAR lifted out of the water for cleaning. The camera unit is inside a protective box on the end of the arm that can be adjusted for height according to river conditions. The fish fence to the left is designed to push fish away from the right bank and out from under the ARIS unit into the SONAR beam to ensure they are not missed during the count.

Fig 3. The ARIS 1800 removed for cleaning. The rotator arm can be controlled remotely to pan the camera on both the vertical and horizontal axes. The outer box provides protection from flood debris.



A five minute frame from the Aris Fish software interface used for processing the SONAR footage from the 28th July 2024. The echogram signatures of seven Atlantic salmon can be seen on the left. The call out box shows the sonar echogram and corresponding image of a 91cm salmon.

The ARIS SONAR footage does not provide a detailed image adequate to differentiate fish species according to appearance, but other animals can be differentiated according to other cues including swimming pattern, body shape and the presence of entrained air (see table).

To differentiate between trout and salmon requires each fish to be measured accurately using the built in software tools. At this stage the primary purpose of the ARIS is to count salmon and consequently most smaller fish (<30cm) are not measured or recorded to reduce processing time. Initially DBIT assumed that any fish greater than 55cm was a salmon. This was based on scale readings taken from angler caught fish and is an estimate that may exclude the smallest salmon but also includes some larger brown and sea trout.

To produce a daily count of the net number of salmon migrating upstream each day, the daily down count is subtracted from the daily up fish count. Milling fish that neither crossed the beam fully up or down were recorded as Undefined and given a count of “zero”.

Table 1. The different cues used to differentiate species from the ARIS Sonar footage.

Species	Cue ID
Fish (smolt, minnow, trout, sea trout, salmon)	Distinguished by size although there will be overlap between species, Swimming pattern.
Lamprey, Eel	Swimming pattern and body position. Thinner than fish
Otter	Size, shape, presence of legs and trail of entrained air
Diving birds	Size, shape and entrained air
Seal	Size and tail flippers

Results

Between 5th March and 28th November, 10165 fish (>55cm length) were counted moving upstream and 1759 fish (>55cm length) counted moving downstream. This equates to a net upstream count of 8406 salmon using the simple length cut off of 55cm to differentiate salmon and sea trout. This should be considered a minimum count as some fish might have been missed when there was weed obscuring the camera or debris reducing the image quality.

Subsequently the Marine Directorate (Scottish Government) has developed a model to estimate the number of salmon that would have been expected to have been counted on those days when the counter is offline (0 days in 2024) or was only partially effective. A further model has been developed that assigns a probability of each fish being a trout or salmon based on its length and the month of year. Using these two models the net upstream 2024 count for the Deveron was estimated to be 8724-8874 (90% CI range), median = 8797. This equates to 55% increase on the equivalent count for 2023. This figure will be used in Scottish Government’s assessment of the status of the Deveron salmon stock. The rod catch rate on the Deveron varied between 2023 & 2024 with significantly better angling conditions in 2024 resulting a larger proportion of the total salmon run being caught. Figures show that 748 salmon were caught by anglers on the river in 2023, representing a 13% rod catch rate. The rod catch for 2024 was reported as 1682, representing a rod catch rate of 19%.

The data clearly shows that the upstream movement of salmon was primarily during the hours of darkness and often associated with increased river levels.

Conclusions

In conclusion the 2024 deployment of ARIS Sonar camera in the Deveron has been a success. The ARIS Sonar has produced SONAR footage that has allowed the second ever salmon count for the River Deveron and will be used by the Scottish Government to calculate the Conservation Regulations River Gradings for 2025. The location is working well with the balance of fish behaviour being primarily dominated by upstream migrating fish and minimal milling and downstream migrating fish. There were far less issues associated with power outages now that the system is on mains supply. The remote access and cctv system also enabled more frequent monitoring and meant issues with visibility due to weed were resolved quicker. The new arm was also far easier to adjust and allowed the camera to stay in the river during numerous floods that would have previously required its removal. Significant steps have been taken with modelling the data to improve the count and help with improving the estimate of salmon versus trout.

We thank the Marine Directorate and the Atlantic Salmon Trust for their support on this project.

Deveron PIT tagging project update

As part of the Project Deveron collaboration with the AST a series of PIT tag detecting arrays have been installed in the Allt Deveron in the Cabrach and at Avochie Estate. Funded by the Scottish Government’s Marine Directorate, the arrays are operated and maintained locally by the DBIT team. These arrays will detect any fish with a PIT tag and will allow us to monitor mortality of smolts on their downstream migration, subsequent survival at sea, and to determine which individuals make it back as adults from their marine migration. The PIT tags used for this work have three significant advantages over the acoustic tags that we have previously used for smolt tagging: PIT tags do not have a battery which means they will work indefinitely; they are much smaller so can be inserted with minimal stress to the fish and they are significantly cheaper, so many more fish can be tagged.

From 2021 onwards 2000 salmon parr have been tagged every Autumn from the Allt Deveron and Blackwater upstream of the uppermost array. When the tagged parr begin their smolt migration the following year their progress downstream is logged first on the Cabrach array and then on the Avochie arrays before they reach the sea. If and when they return after a year or more at sea, they will be logged again as they migrate upstream past the arrays to return to their spawning grounds in the Cabrach and Blackwater.

This information will allow us to optimise management actions in freshwater as measures to improve the overall survival of salmon. The combination of the full river count and the smolt and marine survival estimates will help all project partners to understand where the losses of salmon occur and what management measures can be implemented to protect stocks in the future.



Bottom left: Deveron PIT Array at Avochie in low water. All PIT tagged fish passing over the array are automatically logged as they migrate downstream as Smolts and as returning adults on the way to spawn. Bottom right: A parr tagged in the Autumn recaptured the following spring Opposite: DBIT & AST PIT tagging team at the top of the Blackwater..



This is a long-term project and it will take multiple years to build up a quality data set from which we can begin to make conclusions about smolt and marine survival. However, we are already getting some really encouraging results about individual fish and the incredible journey they make from the Cabrach to the NE Atlantic and back again.

Pit Tag Detection Examples

Salmon Parr - Example 1: Tagged on the 20th September 2022 as a 125mm parr in the Blackwater and migrated to sea in Spring of 2023. It spent a year feeding at sea before returning to the Deveron in the summer of 2024 as a Grilse, migrating past Avochie and up to the Cabrach in July before being detected leaving the Cabrach as a Kelt in December 2024.

Salmon Parr - Example 2: Tagged in October 2021 in the Blackwater as a 96mm parr and migrated to sea in 2022. It then returned to the river as a multi sea winter salmon in the spring of 2024, passing Avochie moving upstream in May and reaching the Cabrach in September.

Since running this project, we have identified the need for a third PIT detecting array at the bottom of the Deveron near the counter site. This is important to help with the increased detection and monitoring of smolts for the entire length of their outward freshwater migration. It is also important to be able to identify returning adults soon after they enter the river so we can monitor survival and migration success in reaching the upper catchment to spawn.

Right: location map showing pit array and sonar locations along Deveron catchment.



Electrofishing - 2024

In August 2024 we conducted 40 electrofishing sites across the Deveron catchment. We did not receive funding for the Scottish Government NEPS survey programme that we had originally planned for. Our team conducted our own priority and contract surveys, and we outline some highlights below from the survey data.

- Markie Water (Deveron) survey completed for Garbet Hill windfarm - salmon fry present in moderate numbers in the mid and lower Markie Water.
- Bogie catchment - Clashindarroch II pre-construction monitoring. Salmon fry present in the uppermost section of the Kirkney system which has not been observed for several years. Unfortunately, very low salmon numbers were recorded in the Ness Bogie and Priest Water system.
- Good numbers of salmon fry in Allt Deveron.
- Encouraging numbers of salmon & trout fry through Isla system and notably above the two barrier easement projects on the Davidston burn.
- Salmon present in the middle reaches of the Auchintoul burn above historical barrier removal project.
- Good salmon parr numbers found in Forgue burn but low fry numbers at the site chosen.
- Salmon fry recorded in the Turriff burn more than 10km from Deveron confluence.



Pink Salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)

In 2017, unprecedented numbers of Pink Salmon were captured in Scotland. A similar situation was observed in 2019 and 2021, and in the same years Pink salmon were also reported in Norway, Finland, Iceland, Denmark and Germany. Pink salmon are not native to Scotland and are likely to have 'strayed' from some of the rivers in northern Norway or Russia. 6 pink salmon reported caught in Scottish rivers during 2024. No reports were received of Pink Salmon caught from Deveron.

More information available here: <https://fms.scot/pink-salmon-in-scotland/>

Education and Community Outreach

Newsletters and Social Media

A special 'Tiny' Morison 100th Anniversary edition of the Deveron Flyer was produced during 2024/25 and distributed to keep all 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, accounts and announcements. The Trust social media has grown considerably and platforms such as X (@DBIRCT), Instagram (river_deveron), Facebook (DeveronBogielsla) and LinkedIn were updated regularly by the DBIT team, with latest local and national news, angling catches and opportunities, and local conservation initiatives. Summary below:

- Instagram: 0 (Oct 2018) to 2,620 (June 2025) followers
- Facebook: 902 (Oct 2018) to 3,100 (June 2025) followers
- X: 934 (Oct 2018) to 1,339 (June 2025) followers
- LinkedIn: 129 followers (June 2025)

The McConnell Major Contribution Award - Mr James Murray MBE

The McConnell Major Contribution Award was successfully launched in December 2020. The award commissioned by Mr. Robert McConnell (Hon. Membership Secretary, Retd.) and supported by the Trustees of the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, recognises major contributions to our Trust and river and is open to all Volunteers, Supporters, Employees, Partners and Professionals.

The Trustees were delighted to announce Mr James Murray MBE as the 2024 winner. Over the past 3 years James has helped greatly to bring the river Deveron and our Trust's conservation efforts to a wider audience through a variety of mediums and his important work with Activist Anglers, The Atlantic Salmon Trust and Fish Legal has raised much needed awareness of the plight of the Atlantic Salmon and the poor water quality of many UK rivers.

The trophy was duly presented by Trust Chairman, James Cruickshank OBE during the Wild Salmon Connections Conference in London.

Wild Salmon Connections

In January, the Missing Salmon Alliance (MSA) hosted a flagship three-day conference at Fishmongers' Hall in collaboration with the Atlantic Salmon Federation, Norwegian Salmon Rivers, Pacific Salmon Foundation and Long Live The Kings. The conference featured an incredible line-up of speakers including, Alastair



Deveron Flyer 'Special Edition' commemorating 'Tiny' Morison.

Fothergill OBE, Sir Dieter Helm and three Ministers from the Scottish, Norwegian and UK Governments. The conference brought together over 200 people each day and activated an urgent renewed international focus on wild salmon.

The MSA Policy Asks were launched and well received alongside a Declaration which has been signed by over 200 people and organisations and is helping drive support for the restoration of wild salmon.

More information can be found here: <https://www.missingsalmonalliance.org/wild-salmon-connections>.

Visit from Sam Heughan to River Deveron

During June we were delighted to welcome actor, author and philanthropist Sam Heughan to the Deveron to learn about our conservation initiatives and to fly fish. Mr Heughan was expertly guided on his trip by TwinPeakes Fly Fishing. Thank you to Sam for supporting our charitable auction.



Dominic West
and Jim Murray at
Lower Shaw Pool,
Mountblairy

Mrs 'Tiny' Morison's Record Salmon - Centenary Celebrations



- River Deveron Gin - Special 'Tiny' Morison Edition Label (x 250 bottles sold out).
- Trout and Salmon Magazine - An article was published in August covering the centenary story.
- Fieldsports Journal - An article was published in November covering the centenary story.
- Ladies Fly Fishing Day - An excellent Ladies Day was held at Deveronside Fishing's on 5th of June.
- Scottish Field Magazine - Centenary Dinner & Auction was covered in 'social scene'.
- Creatures of Light Exhibition London - Tiny's Brown Wing Killer - painted by Jim Murray MBE
- Film by YETI - A short film called Wild Atlantic Salmon - Restoring the Run was completed during 2024 and featured the river Deveron, our conservation work and the story of 'Tiny's' record salmon.



Clementina 'Tiny' Morison
- Centenary Dinner & Auction

A lively crowd of 200 gathered at the Banff Springs Hotel on Friday, September 6th, for an unforgettable evening celebrating the legendary Clementina "Tiny" Morison and the centennial anniversary of her remarkable 61lb fly-caught salmon. The atmosphere was electric as an incredible £32,944 was raised for the Deveron, Bogie, and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, ensuring the continued conservation of the river and its precious fish stocks. A heartfelt thank you to our esteemed guests, including James Murray, Dominic West, and Ian Gordon, for making the night so special. We owe a special thanks to Bowlts Chartered Surveyors for sponsoring the event, Bacardi for treating us to some exquisite malt whisky, and to all our generous auction donors. Last but certainly not least, a big round of applause to the Banff Springs Hotel team for their impeccable hospitality.



Left to right: Dominic West,
Richie Miller and Jim Murray
at the commemorative
dinner, Banff Springs Hotel.



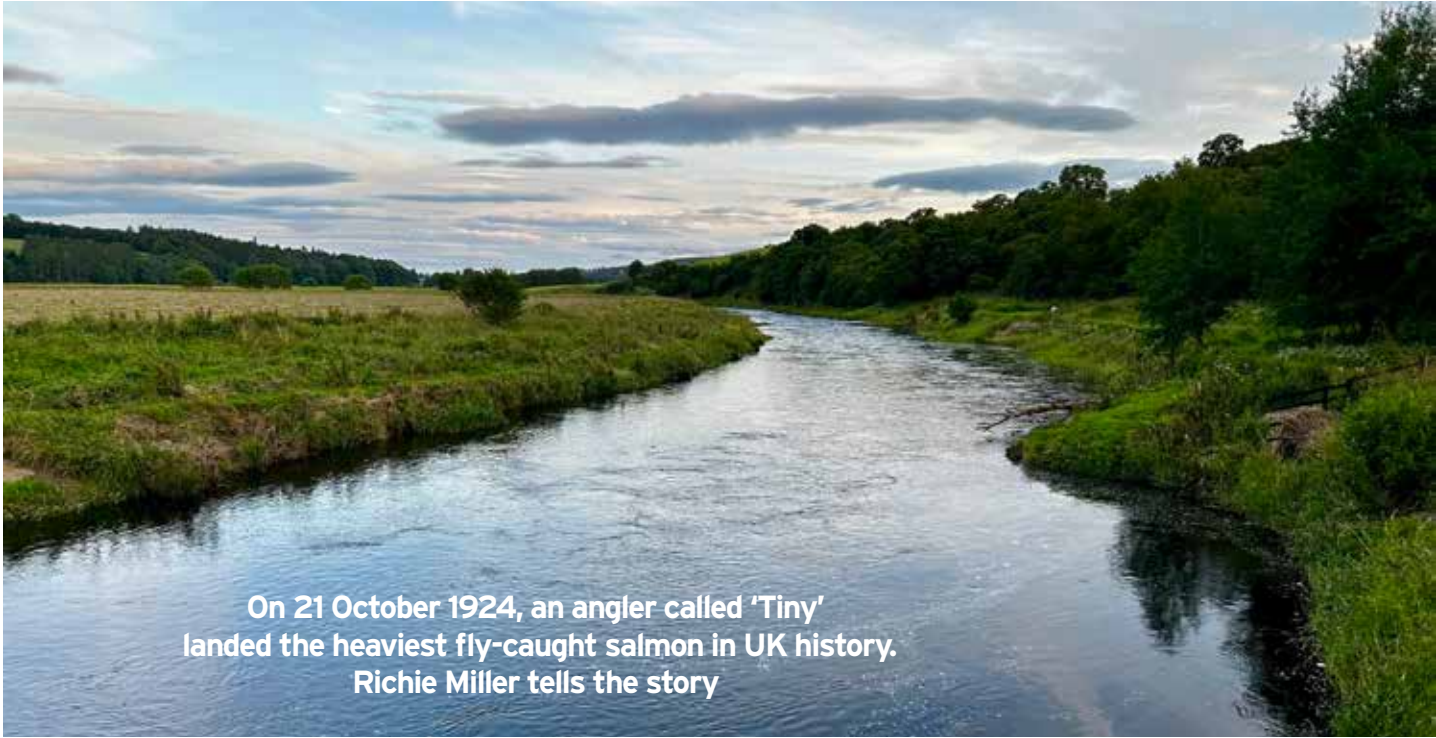
Deveron Opening Ceremony & Morison Trophy Presentation 2024

On the 11th February our special guest, former Scotland rugby player and broadcaster John Beattie presented the Morison Trophy and officially opened the 2024 salmon season. The 13th winner of the Morison Trophy was visiting angler Mr. Andrew MacGarvie who made the first ceremonial cast of the season. The winning salmon was landed in September after an epic battle at Upper Netherdale and witnessed by ghillie Mr. Carl Malpass. The winning salmon was accurately measured at 39" long (99cm). Thanks go to Henderson's Country Sports (Turrieff) for sponsoring the salmon rod presented to Andrew for carefully releasing the winning salmon.



Marina and Stephan Dombaj at Upper Netherdale

‘I think he’s fairly large’



On 21 October 1924, an angler called ‘Tiny’ landed the heaviest fly-caught salmon in UK history.
Richie Miller tells the story

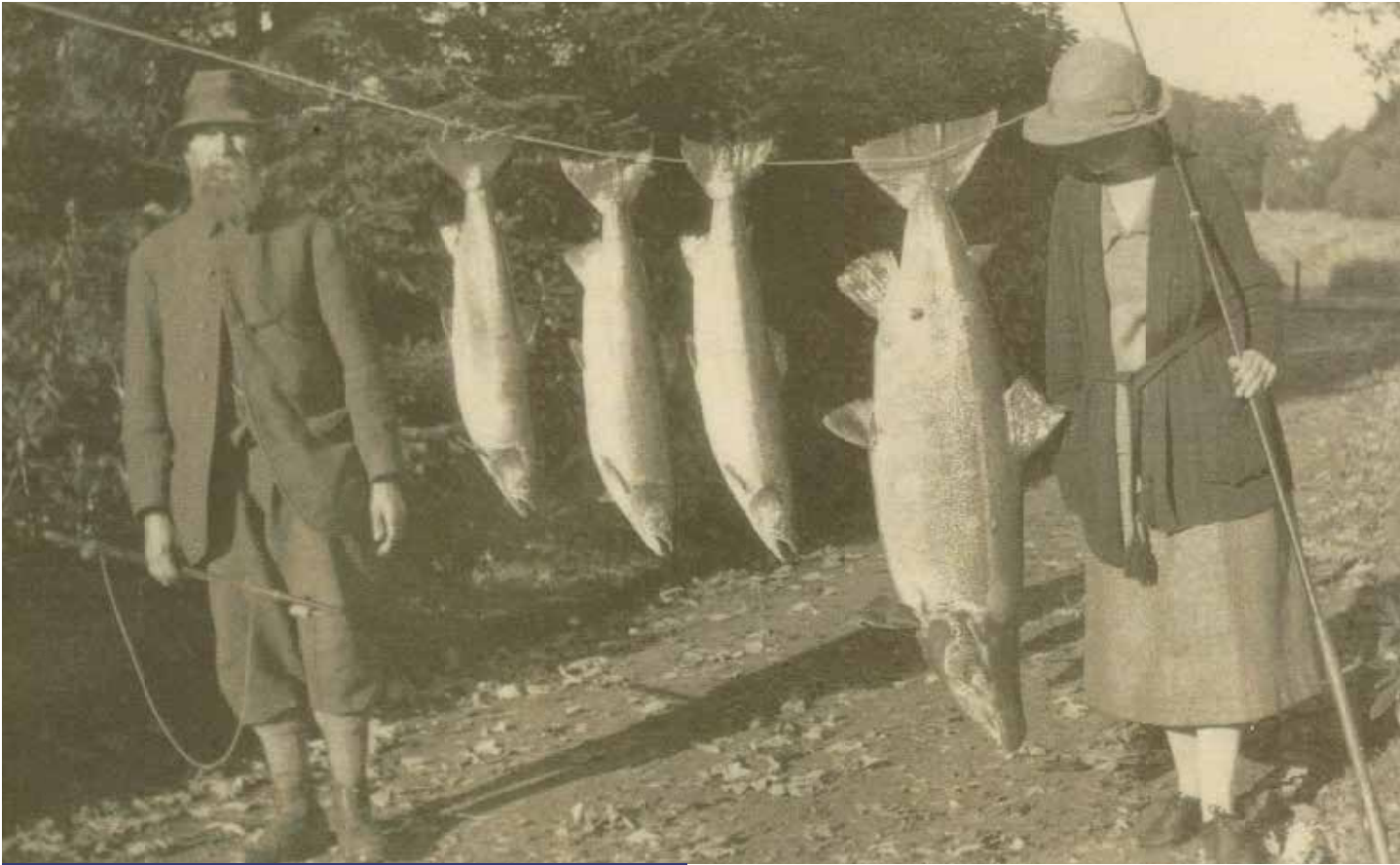
On a beautiful spring day in 2007, I was walking the banks of the river Deveron at Avochie. I had recently moved to the area and was exploring the river banks. As I approached the junction pool, where the rivers Deveron and Isla collide, I observed an angler expertly landing a salmon into a classic round net, which he had removed from his back seconds before. It was a superb bright salmon around 7 lbs. I enquired what fly had been successful, and he informed me it was “like a cascade” but jested “I should have been using a “brown wing killer “. It was this day I first learned of the now famous fly and of course the ‘big fish’.

The Deveron is 61 miles long and is situated in northeast Scotland. This peaty river flows through the counties of Morayshire and Aberdeenshire before entering the North Sea at Banff. The Deveron is revered for its beauty, fish and wildlife but is undoubtedly best known for the achievements of one angler, Mrs Clementina “Tiny” Morison.

Clementina was the only daughter of Mr Alexander Stuart of Inchbreck, Kincardine and of Laithers, Turriff and of the Honourable Mrs Stuart, daughter of the Viscount Arbuthnott. Clementina married Mr Alex Edward Forbes Morison of Bognie and Mountblairy in 1897 and moved to India. After 14 years, Alex and Clementina returned to Scotland to take on responsibility of Bognie and Mountblairy estates after the passing of Alex’s father. Mountblairy offered excellent shooting and fishing opportunities over 3 miles, much to the delight of “Tiny” who adored both.

On the 21st of October 1924, the leaves would have been turning

Lower Shaw Pool where the giant fish was landed



The UK Record Fly-Caught Atlantic Salmon - 61lbs - Mrs Clementina ‘Tiny’ Morison Mountblairy , River Deveron 100th Anniversary (1924-2024)

‘Suddenly a huge tail was spotted and her line went tight’

golden on Deveronside. That morning Clementina and her husband Alex had decided to go for a cast on the shaw pools at Mountblairy with their head game keeper Mr Robert Sim. Clementina successfully landed a 16lbs salmon before lunch, another 16lbs salmon after lunch and Alex lost one. Around mid-afternoon, Clementina was fishing the lower shaw pool accompanied by Robert when suddenly a huge tail was spotted and her line went tight. A leviathan had been hooked!

In his excellent 1992 book, Mrs ‘Tiny’ Morison’s Deveron Salmon-The Definitive Account, Greg Dawson Allen quotes a letter from Clementina to Lt Col. Rollo describing the battle with her colossal salmon. She wrote “I saw a huge tail come up a bit and a boil and the line tighten close into the bank. He then showed for a little, and remained absolutely still, till Sim came to me and said, “is he big?” I said, “I think he is fairly large”. He behaved beautifully, and twice slowly went straight across the pool, and once a little way down, taking me across the fence and when out again turned over, when Sim said, “He’s a big chap, I think”. By this time Alick was fishing opposite and seeing me with a fish on came down. He then attempted a little run up. I was afraid he was off, but he caved in very quickly. I held on and went up and down the side once or twice and Sim took him the first chance he got. Then we realised how big he was. I saw that Sim couldn’t get him up the bank (he never moved the gaff luckily), so I rushed down and put my hand in his gills, and together we dragged him up the bank, he did not take half an hour to get out.” Clementina had emerged victorious.

As the sun set the monster salmon was taken back to Mountblairy house by horse and cart. The next morning (22nd October) the salmon was packed up and sent on a train to Aberdeen for the attention

One of two casts made of the celebrated fish



of Mr. Frank Harper. Mr. Harper was the owner of Wm. Brown & Co., Fishing Tackle Makers and had been asked by Alex Morison to officially weigh the fish, arrange for delivery to a smokehouse and to ensure a plaster cast of the fish was made. As promised Mr. Harper unloaded the giant salmon in Aberdeen, and it was immediately weighed in the train station approximately 24 hours after capture. Mr. Harper reported back to the Morison's that the salmon weighed an extraordinary 61lbs! The salmon measured 52 inches long and a girth of 32 inches.

That now famous day's fishing in autumn 1924 saw Clementina land 3 salmon weighing 16lb,16lbs and 61lbs. The 61lbs salmon making history as the heaviest Salmon to be caught on a fly in the UK and the 2nd heaviest salmon ever to be landed in the UK. The record being held by the legendary Miss Georgina Ballantine who caught a 64lbs salmon while harling on the river Tay in 1922. Scales from the carcass of the 61lbs salmon were sent to the headquarters of "The Field" magazine for extensive studies to be carried out on them. Mr. J. A. Milne reported back that the salmon had left the river after 2 years as a smolt and had spent 5 winters at sea before returning and being caught by Clementina during its 7th year.

Two beautifully painted plaster casts were commissioned of the celebrated salmon with one going to the Morison's at Mountblairy House and the other to Wm. Brown & Co., Fishing Tackle Makers for display inside. Both casts are still in existence to this day and held proudly on Deveronside.

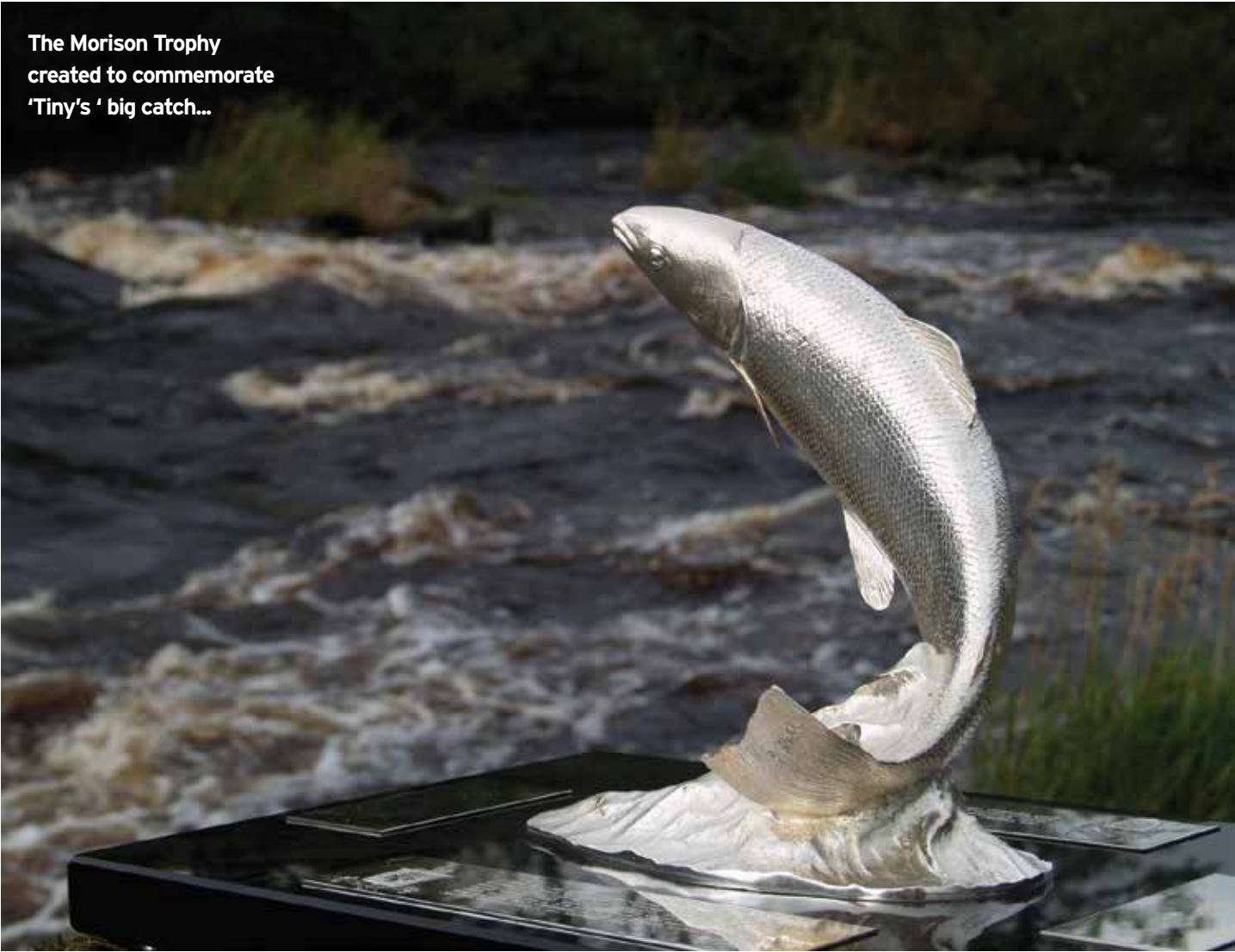
I return to the famous 1" "brown wing killer" fly which enticed the 61lbs salmon and many others. There has been some debate over the years about the original pattern which could vary. The "brown wing killer" is one of the lesser-known patterns which evolved in the mid to late 1800s. Research has shown it to be a local (Aberdeenshire) variation of a Tricolour, having a throat hackle of red golden pheasant breast feather instead of widgeon or teal. Dee Strip - Wing Flies, as the name suggests, originated on Deeside. They were generally tied on a slim section "long Dee" hook from 1" to 3" long, dressed lightly such that the fly would sink quickly. These flies were mainly used in the cold waters of spring and autumn.

In October 1932 Capt. Morison sadly passed away aged just 57 and was buried in the family mausoleum at Mountblairy. 34 years later in 1996, aged 91 years of age, Clementina "Tiny" Morison was lay to rest next to her beloved husband. Their two headstones overlooking their cherished river Deveron.

In 2011 the Morison family, together with the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust launched a memorial trophy in memory of "Tiny" to be awarded annually for the heaviest fly caught salmon from the river Deveron, that is witnessed and returned to the river alive. The Trophy is made of silver and black limestone and is the most valuable game angling award in Britain.

"Mr Harper unloaded the giant salmon in Aberdeen, and it was immediately weighed in the train station"

The Morison Trophy created to commemorate 'Tiny's ' big catch...



George Tarratt Ltd, of Leicester were commissioned to make the trophy, which resulted in the outstanding chased silver model of a leaping salmon upon a black belgium limestone plinth, to which are applied silver plates engraved with details of the original event, the gift of the trophy by the Morison family and their crests. The solid silver cast model stands some 9 -10 ins in height and depicts a finely detailed salmon in the act of leaping from a dark Deveron pool, which is set upon a worked silver 'wave' of disturbed water so that the Salmon is fully airborne! The idea of the shady pool is suggested by the black limestone plinth upon which the salmon is mounted. The original model of the Salmon was created by Wakely & Wheeler of London, who modelled it in wax prior to casting and then detailed chasing was applied to ensure the model was accurate. The final result was achieved after collaboration between Mr Robert Shields DL founding Chairman of for the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust and Mr Christopher Tarratt of George Tarratt Ltd. A combination of the ideas of a true sportsman and those of the silversmith.

This outstanding trophy which evokes the magic of a large Leaping Salmon in all its glory is a fitting memorial to a very special angler and of course salmon in the history of the sport of fly fishing. The trophy was kindly donated to the local rivers Trust by Mr. AG Morison of Mountblairy and Bognie Estates.

Next time you are sitting on the riverbank trying to decide what fly to use, why not try a "Brown Wing Killer" you just never know!

Try a 'brown wing killer' you just never know!



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 km² 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 (currently not in use) 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.

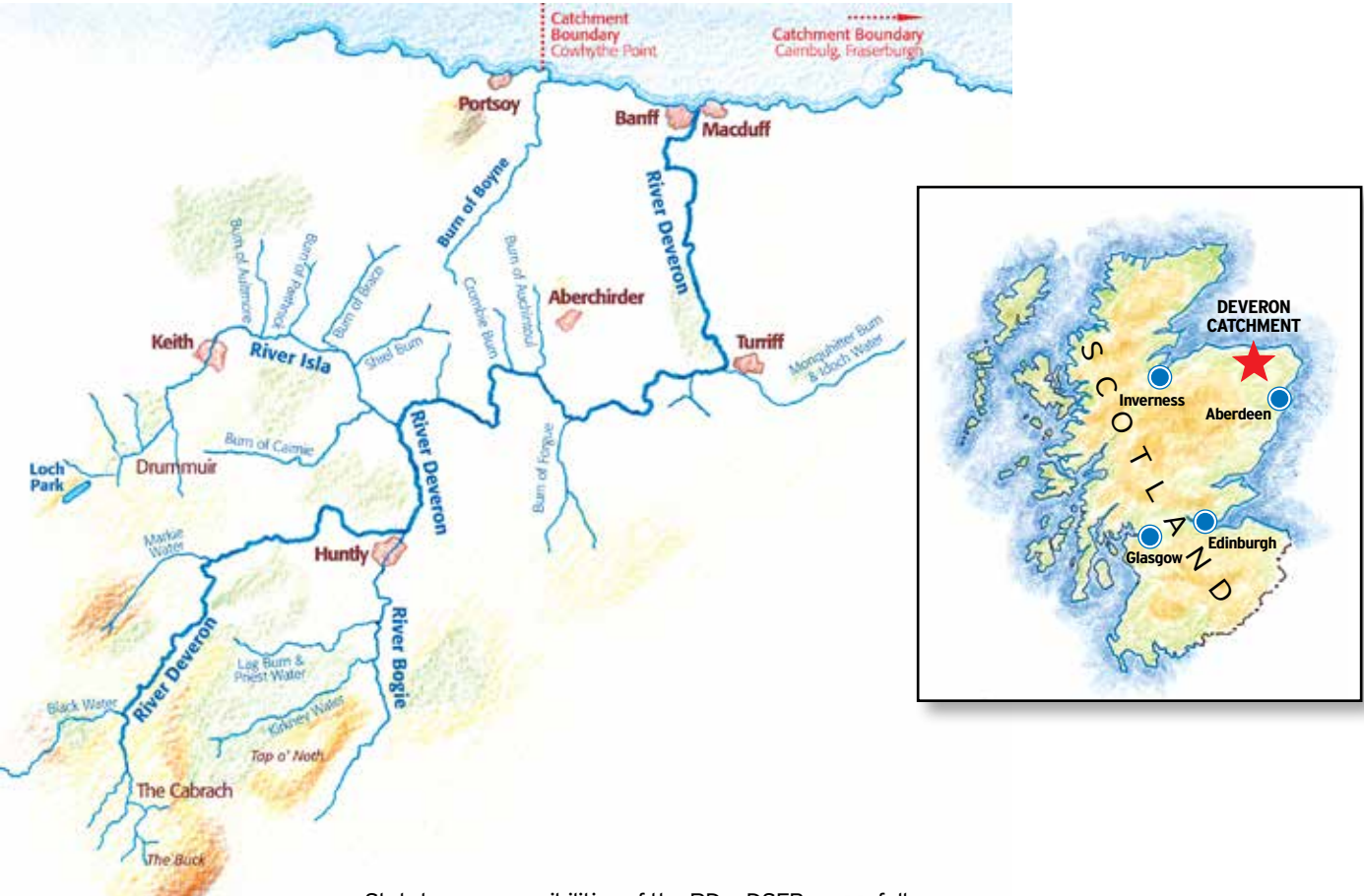
Meetings

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 2024 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 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.25 Total funds	31.3.24 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	124,054	95,056	219,110	196,627
Charitable activities				
Monitoring, contract and services	49,040	-	49,040	64,845
Other trading activities	53,080	-	53,080	11,878
Investment income		2,959	2,959	4,428
Total	226,174	98,015	324,189	277,778
EXPENDITURE ON				
Raising funds	18,289	-	18,289	9,067
Charitable activities				
Monitoring, contract and services	174,051	79,685	253,736	270,660
Other	-	-	-	(2,847)
Total	192,340	79,685	272,025	276,880
Net gain/(losses) on investments	-	453	453	3,356
NET INCOME	33,834	18,783	52,617	4,254
Transfers between funds	(14,290)	14,290	-	-
Net movement in funds	19,544	33,073	52,617	4,254
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	168,425	162,672	331,097	326,843
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	187,969	195,745	383,714	331,097

BALANCE SHEET

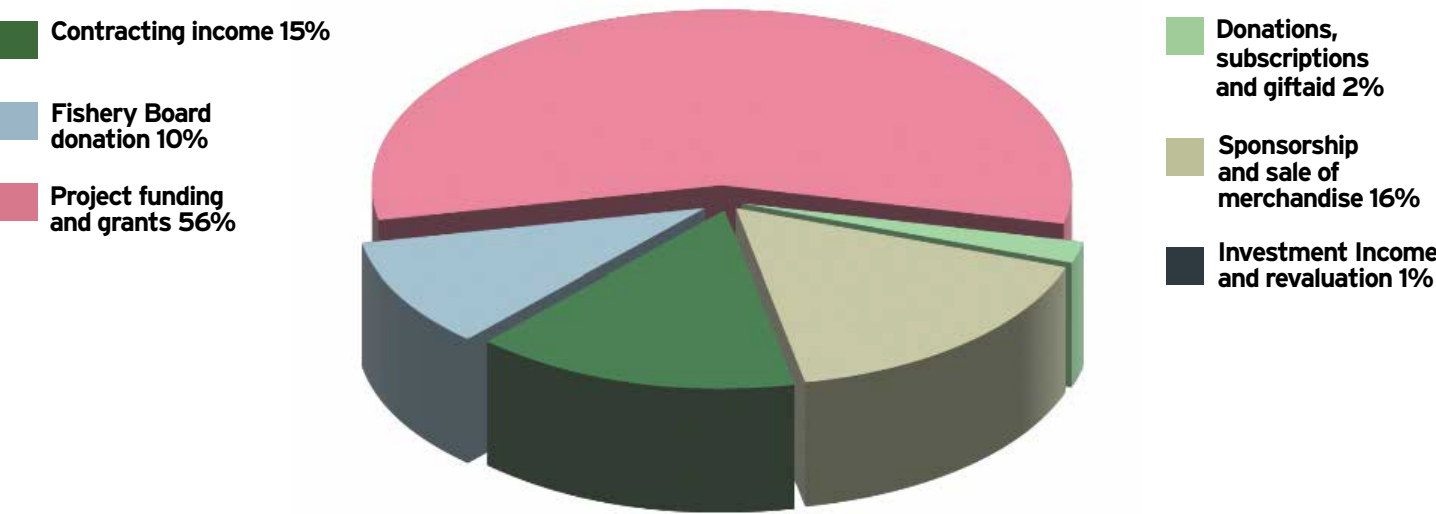
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.25 Total funds	31.3.24 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	54,600	-	54,600	45,740
Investments	-	165,962	165,962	162,550
	54,600	165,962	220,562	208,290
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stocks	894	-	894	2,067
Debtors	40,493	-	40,493	33,949
Cash at Bank	100,151	29,783	129,934	93,850
	141,538	29,783	171,321	129,866
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due within one year	(8,169)	-	(8,169)	(7,059)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	133,369	29,783	163,152	122,807
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	187,969	195,745	383,714	331,097
NET ASSETS	187,969	195,745	383,714	331,097
FUNDS				
Unrestricted funds			187,969	168,425
Restricted funds			195,745	162,672
TOTAL FUNDS			383,714	331,097

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.

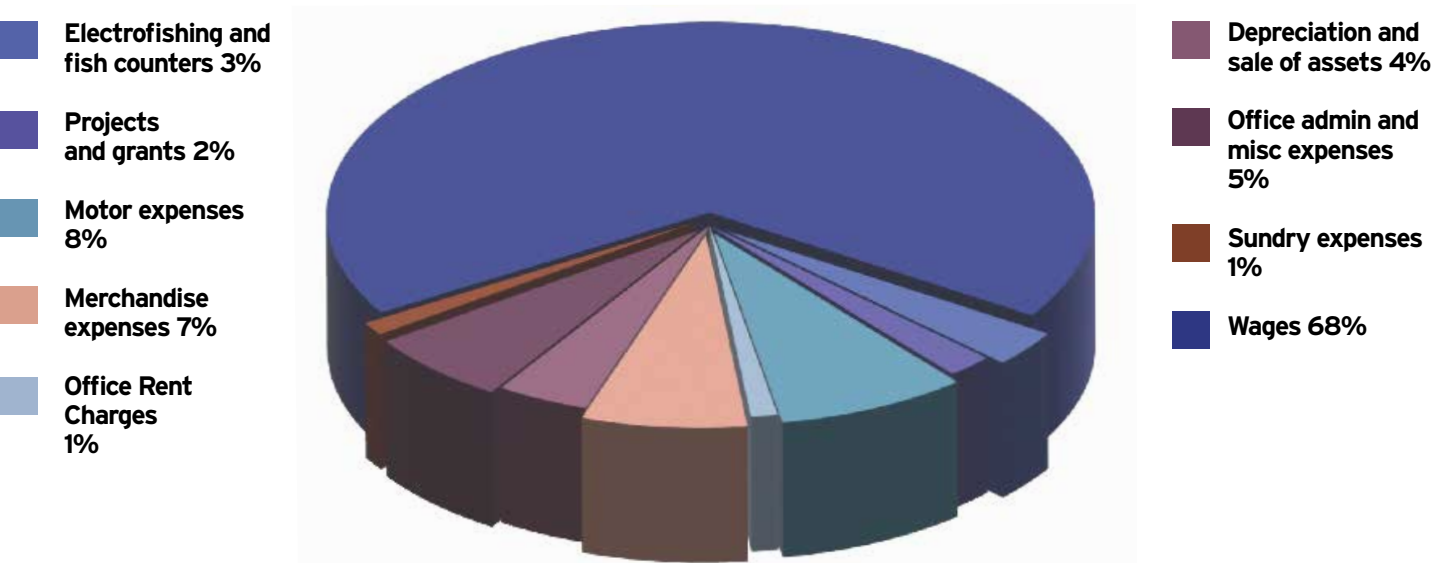
The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust accounts

Year ended 31st March 2025

Income April 2024 - March 2025



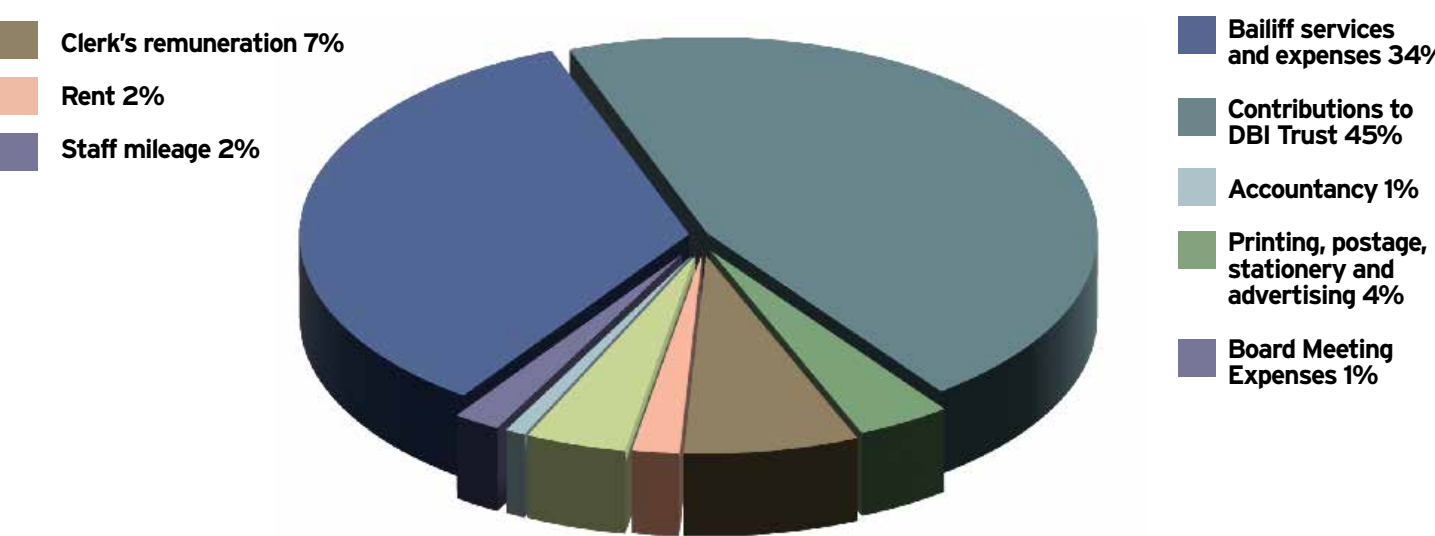
Expenditure April 2024 - March 2025



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board accounts

Year ended 31st March 2025

Expenditure April 2024 - March 2025



Ian Malpass
with his catch
at Laithers

The River Deveron District

Salmon Fishery Board accounts

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

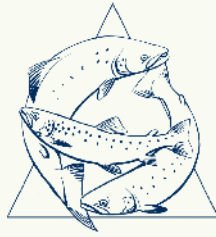
Year ended 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
INCOME		
Assessment Income (69p in £)	64,983	64,985
Donations	60	-
	65,043	64,985
EXPENDITURE		
Clerk's Remuneration	5,104	4,722
Office rental and service expenses	1,105	1,105
Board meeting expenses	823	1,070
Travelling and vehicle expenses ex DBI	1,045	973
Professional subscriptions	-	-
Bailiff services and expenses	23,572	22,030
Contribution to DBI Trust	31,500	31,500
Accountancy	760	915
Postage, Printing, Stationery, Advertising and Telephones	2,563	2,579
Sundry expenses	2,958	3,247
Bad and Doubtful Debts	-	449
	69,430	68,590
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS ON GENERAL FUND	(4,387)	(3,605)

BALANCE SHEET

	2025 £	2024 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	449	-
Cash at bank	34,429	40,190
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(880)	(1,805)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	33,998	38,385
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	33,998	38,385
NET ASSETS	33,998	38,385
FUNDS		
General funds	33,998	38,385
TOTAL FUNDS	33,998	38,385

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 711388

Deveron Angling Code for Salmon and Trout 2025

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

12th February to 31st October (Inclusive)

All salmon and grilse to be returned safely throughout the season.

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

SEA TROUT

12th February to 31st October (Inclusive)

All sea trout (including Finnock) to be returned safely throughout the season.

BROWN TROUT

From 15th March to 6th October (Inclusive), all Brown Trout under 10 inches in length to be returned safely.

No more than 4 brown trout per rod per week to be retained.

All fish should be played quickly and retained in the water whilst hook is removed.

The board recommends cease fishing altogether when river temperatures exceed 18°C.

Injured or damaged fish outwith the above limits must be handed to the proprietor.

On the beats where spinning is permitted; all lures should have one single set of hooks

with a maximum size 4 crimped or barbless.

NO WORM FISHING.

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.

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

All farmed salmon and pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorboscha*) must be retained and notified to the RDevDSFB.

All visiting anglers must read, act upon and sign a Gyrodactylus salaris declaration form immediately before going fishing.

If disinfectant is required, please contact RDevDSFB Office (01466 711 388) or your beat Ghillie/Manager/Agent.