



DEVERON FLYER



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The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

CREDIT: JAMES STOKOE



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The Trust objective is to 'conserve, protect and to rehabilitate salmon, sea trout and trout and other indigenous species of animal, bird, insect and plant life and more generally to promote the ecological cycle for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Deveron'.

➔ **Special guests**
Robson Green
and Zoila Short

Opening of Deveron Salmon Season 2023

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board (RDevDSFB) and The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (DBIT) are delighted to announce the opening of the Deveron salmon season in association with The Deveron Single Malt Whisky (Bacardi). The Morison Trophy will be presented at the opening ceremony on the 11th of February (10am) at Turriff Angling Association lodge and the opening ceremony will follow thereafter.

Special guests, Robson Green and partner Zoila will present the Morison Trophy and officially open the salmon season with a dram of Deveron whisky from Macduff. Robson has fronted shows such as Extreme Fishing and Extreme Fishing Challenge. He presented many series of Tales from Northumberland a place he is still very proud to call home. Robson currently plays Detective Inspector Geordie Keating on ITV's Grantchester. Both Robson and Zoila are enthusiastic anglers and are extremely passionate about the conservation of Atlantic Salmon.

Mr Gavin Hepburn, winner of the Morison Trophy for 2022 will make the first cast of the season. Mr Hepburn secured the trophy by landing a 22lbs salmon from Lower Netherdale. Thanks goes to Henderson's Country Sports (Turriff) for sponsoring the Greys salmon rod that will be presented to Gavin for carefully releasing the winning salmon.

Richie Miller, River Director said "We are very much looking forward to the season ahead. The prolonged low water conditions during 2022 made it a tough season for fish and anglers and we hope for more favourable conditions this coming season. We are delighted to have Robson and Zoila join us to open the salmon season and I wish all our angler's tight lines for the season ahead".

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

UPDATE

Since 2018, we have been part of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI), a 5-year partnership project which aims to work with local organisations and volunteers to sustainably embed control of invasive non-native species along riversides in Northern Scotland into local communities and with land managers, for the benefit of our native wildlife and communities. SISI is led by NatureScot and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, NatureScot and by in-kind support from project partners and volunteers.

2022 was our fifth year of Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and American mink control across the Deveron catchment, as part of SISI. Last year the SISI project was granted a 5-month extension and will now be running until end of March 2023. An application for further funding has been submitted to the Nature Restoration Fund.

In early 2022, project officer Karen was joined by PhD student Peter Stewart for a placement and later by seasonal project officer Tom Humphries to tackle our target species across the catchment. Land managers, ghillies, contractors and volunteers also stepped into control hogweed, balsam and knotweed throughout the growing season. Altogether, our fantastic volunteers and stakeholders put in over 400 hours of

control in 2022, in at times challenging conditions of dense and high vegetation and soaring temperatures. Once again, a big thank you is due to you all!

We are very proud to say that giant hogweed control was completed catchment wide once again, some areas of Himalayan balsam are showing improvement and our known Japanese knotweed stands generally require only very little annual mop up at this point after 5 years of control.

Our project officers have been working with local land managers on securing 'Voluntary Landowner Agreements' – with land managers signing up to deliver future control with the project on a voluntary basis - to ensure a sustainable, long-term future of INNS control across the catchment. We have also offered pesticide training courses to a further 6 volunteers and land managers in 2022.

The Rosy burn landowner partnership to control hogweed continued, as well as our fourth year of our sheep grazing trial at Macduff. BBC Out of Doors came out to the site in November for an interview about this innovative management approach. Our best practice guidance document for land managers interested in exploring sheep as an alternative method of hogweed control is set to be published in the coming month – you can keep up with



'Our project officers have been working with local land managers signing up to deliver future control...'

this trial here: www.invasivespecies.scot/giant-hogweed-and-sheep-trial. We also published our case study on the 'Giant hogweed seedling emergence study' and you can read up on it here: www.invasivespecies.scot/index.php/when-do-giant-hogweed-plants-emerge-scotland.

American mink control was continued by our volunteers, with catches predominantly from along the coastline and the middle Deveron – with a total of 12 mink dispatched in 2022.

To keep up the good work, we would ask everyone to keep their eyes peeled and continue to report sightings.

Throughout 2022, our project officers attended a number of outreach events at Macduff Aquarium and Wild About Aden. We delivered talks to SRUC and had education days on the river with Cairney and Glass primary schools and Keith Grammar school.

Please report sightings of our target species to karenmuller@deveron.org, 07483 319448

Project Deveron



The number of Atlantic salmon returning to the Deveron has followed the current national trend and has crashed over the last 10 years. Despite the cessation of all commercial netting on the coast by the Scottish Government and the adoption of catch and release by anglers (currently over 93%) the number of salmon caught by rod & line in the Deveron has declined by 57%. Furthermore, 3 of the lowest annual catches on record have occurred in the last 7 years. It is vital now, more than ever, to gain a better understanding of the numbers of salmon smolts leaving the river and numbers of salmon and sea trout returning to the river to spawn.



Project Deveron is a partnership between the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, The Atlantic Salmon Trust, and Marine Scotland Science. The project will develop and apply electronic fish detecting systems to monitor juvenile and adult salmon in the river Deveron and provide information for designing management locally and nationally. The project is an extension to the Scottish Salmon Counter Network, part of a package of measures to support salmon conservation using funding announced by the Cabinet Secretary in October 2021. The project will apply two detecting systems, an acoustic camera to produce images of fish moving upstream, and a series of cross-river arrays for registering the passage of salmon tagged with miniature passive integrated transponders (PITs). Trials were conducted on the lower Deveron last summer to find a suitable location for permanent installation of the acoustic camera, which requires an appropriate riverbed profile. The

ultimate goal from applying this apparatus is to provide a count of Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout entering the river Deveron together with associated methods to differentiate between the species. Counts will contribute to national assessment of salmon conservation status and local monitoring of stocks.

Alongside the new counter, a series of PIT tag detecting arrays have been installed in the Allt Deveron in the Cabrach and at Avochie Estate. 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 also 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 far cheaper, so many more fish can be tagged. Up to 2000 salmon parr will be tagged each Autumn from the Allt Deveron and Blackwater and their progress downstream will then be logged on the Cabrach and Avochie arrays before they head to sea each spring. 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 their spawning grounds. It will be possible to relate down-river and marine survival to size and condition of smolts.

This information will allow us to optimise management actions in freshwater as measures to improve 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.



Grant Award from Stichting European Open Rivers Programme



We are delighted to announce that our Charity has been awarded funding from the Stichting European Open Rivers Programme. The

Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust has been awarded a grant of 36,071 euros over 12 months for the Detailed Design and SEPA Licence Application for the full removal of the Mill of Eden Weir (Dam). The removal of the weir will allow uninterrupted access for Atlantic salmon, sea trout, trout and the endangered European eel to over 11km of habitat.

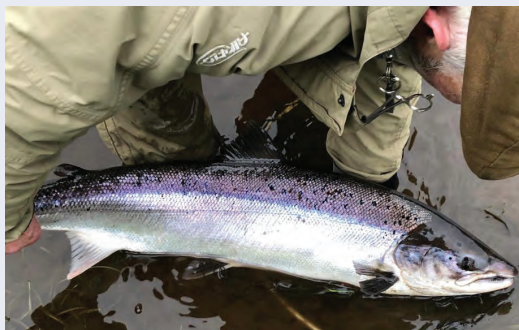
The removal of the weir is part of a much wider catchment restoration project where our team is currently working with local farmers to increase land buffer strips near the river to reduce diffuse pollution and also to increase tree planting to provide shade. It will also contribute to improving the classification of the watercourse under the EU Water Framework Directive.

www.openrivers.eu

2022 Rod Catch & 2023 Conservation Status

The provisional salmon rod and line catch reported to date is 964 salmon (~95% returned). Approximately 54% salmon and 45% grilse. Although well below the long-term average and the 5th lowest catch on record, the total is higher than the 2021 catch of 902. 300 sea trout were reported which is the highest reported catch since 2017. Record high temperatures, dry weather, and significant water scarcity adversely impacted catches between May and August. Angling was greatly helped by the rain and rise in water during September and October.

The river Deveron has been classified by Scottish Government as Category 2 river for the 2023 angling season. The classification requires that management action is necessary to reduce exploitation and catch and release should be promoted strongly. The need for mandatory catch and release will be reviewed annually. In line with the categorisation, the RDevDSFB has reviewed the Deveron Angling Code for Salmon and Trout and have recommended that all salmon & grilse be released during September and October. It is again important to highlight that it is illegal to take (kill) any salmon from 11th February to 31st March (inclusive). Anglers should always use appropriate tackle to ensure the quick and safe release of any salmon caught, e.g., spinning lures used should have one single set of hooks with a maximum size 4 crimped or barbless. We recommend that all anglers carry, or have access to, a knotless landing net to allow fish to be kept in the water after capture and released unharmed.



For further information please contact

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