



The River Dee Brief

August 2010

Breaking Down Walls

Salmon spawn throughout the Dee and its tributaries, wherever they have access. However, man-made obstructions, such as dams, weirs and poor road crossings, prevent salmon from reaching some areas where they could spawn.

The DDSFB and River Dee Trust have initiated a project to remove or ease man-made barriers to migrating fish. Since 2008, six of these barriers have been eased. On the Water of Dye two fish passes were installed on weirs in 2008, providing passage for adult salmon to ascend the Weirs. The following year, numbers of juvenile salmon found in surveys were significantly greater than they had been before.

A fish pass was also fitted on the Coy burn, at Crathes. This allowed adult salmon to ascend the dam for the first time in over 200 years. In the first year alone, 54 adult salmon and sea trout were recorded using the fish pass, and their offspring have since been found in numerous places in the Coy burn.

This year we plan to help salmon migration over four more obstructions, the largest being the Culter dam at Peterculter. This is a 5 meter high dam built for a previous paper mill. Fitting a fish pass to this dam will allow salmon access to 74 miles of stream above the dam.



What they cannot swim over, the salmon will try to leap over

Spring Salmon Catches 2010

The winter of 2009/10 was one of the hardest in recent memory, with three months of snow lying at low levels and prolonged periods of freezing temperatures. The river finally thawed during March and catches soon started to pick up.

But the question on a few people's lips is how the catches fared following a more "traditional" winter. The figures just in, indicate 2534 fish were caught, which was the best spring rod catch on the Dee for 19 years and nearly a quarter up on the five year average.

From the Trust's scale survey the spring run comprised of 77 % two sea winter salmon and 21% three winter salmon. A small proportion of the rod catch were fish that had previously spawned and were homing back to the river to spawn again. Out of the 257 fresh fish sampled only one of them was found to be an early running grilse.

Dee Dram

www.deedram.com



Following the remarkable success of the Dee Dram we are glad to announce that we are progressing well with Dee Dram project phase 2. We plan, in conjunction with the other major salmon rivers to launch a new exciting range of Dalmore fundraising whiskies this autumn or winter.

Proprietors Meetings

There are currently a number of open proprietors meetings taking place at the River Dee offices at Dinnet running until the end of August.

There are summaries of these meetings in the publications section of the River Dee website www.riverdee.org.

To book fishing log on to www.fishdee.co.uk

FishDee News

Fisheries development officer, Ken Reid, is currently working with accommodation providers and advertisers in FishDee to deliver a presentation about looking after anglers. This liaison helps proprietors obtain up to date information on anglers' needs, many of whom write to Ken about their experiences on Deeside. Ken is happy to visit proprietors and assist them at no cost.

Interview with...Shane Christie

Chairman, Ghillies Association

How important is it to maintain the bio security procedures where anglers fill in a Gyrodactylus Salaris declaration prior to fishing?

The bio security procedures are of the utmost importance. There are too many of us that hold the Dee close to our hearts to let it be devastated by the likes of GS because of complacency on our part. Anglers are impressed that we take the steps we have in this matter.

How can we encourage more youngsters to fish on the River Dee thus ensuring another generation of salmon anglers will fish the River?

On Middle Drum I greatly encourage my anglers to bring their children or grandchildren with them if possible. Ask any ghillie what is the best thing about our job and we would I'm sure all say to see the look on a youngsters face when they catch their first salmon.

You are one of the younger Ghillies working on the river and have been on your beat for many years. Like young anglers, we don't seem to have many young Ghillies coming to work on the river, would you like to see more?

We are very fortunate to have a fantastic team of ghillies on the Dee who are both enthusiastic and professional but it would be great to see more young people working on the river.



How old are Salmon?

The adult salmon in the Dee are generally between 3.5 and 6 years old. Older fish tend to be bigger.

Occasionally, salmon are caught that have already been in the river and spawned once before, gone to sea for a second time and then entered the river yet again. These fish are up to 8 years old (but not always very big). We know this because scales from the fish can be 'read', like the growth rings on tree trunks.

So to catch the older fish (5-6 years old; 3 Sea Winter fish), the best bet is to be fishing in February and March; after this time, 2 Sea Winter fish predominate.

Come July and the smaller grilse arrive (3 and 4 years old). The large fish that can be caught in the autumn are well-fed 2 Sea Winter fish.

CASS Life Award

In May the River Office was notified that the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon Scotland Life Project (CASS) was awarded the best of the best accolade from the European Life Project Team as one of the five best projects across the whole of Europe.

The CASS project on the Dee involved easing nine obstructions to salmon migration, installing 37 km of buffer strips to reduce diffuse pollution, coppicing 21km of riparian woodland to promote good parr populations, restructuring 65 hectares of coniferous woodland to allow light into spawning burns, restoring 25,000m² of parr habitat in agricultural burns and visiting eleven schools to encourage the next generation to care for the river and its tributaries.

A special thanks must go out to all local partners who were involved in the planning, funding and implementation of the CASS project on the Dee.

The upshot of the award is to encourage further similar projects on the Dee to help restore the fragile populations of Atlantic salmon for future generations.