



The River Dee Brief

March 2010

Scale sampling and genetic sampling plans

2009 was the second year of the scale sampling programme on the River Dee. This involves ghillies and angling club representatives taking 2-3 scales from individual salmon and sea trout caught on their beats. The scales are 'read' by the River Dee Trust, as the scales provide information on the number of years the fish has spent in the river and at sea and whether it has spawned previously. In 2009, nearly 10% of the Dee rod catch was sampled.

*“one salmon sampled that
had spent three winters at sea”*

The Summer/Autumn 2009 rod catch was dominated by salmon that had spent two winters at Sea (2 SW fish) but grilse (salmon that have spent one winter at sea) also comprised 44% of the sample. There was also one salmon sampled that had spent three winters at sea. The grilse ranged in size from 2 - 9 lb and the 2 SW salmon from 6 - 24 lb. Whilst only 1.5% of the salmon sampled to date had spawned previously (i.e. had entered the river previously to spawn, been back out to sea and then come back into the river in 2009 to spawn for a second time), 12% of the sea trout sampled had spawned either once or twice previously.

The scale sampling is continuing in 2010. In addition, the River Dee Trust is starting to collect genetic samples of the salmon caught on the Dee. This involves ghillies and angling club representatives taking a small 'hole punch' of tissue from the tail of salmon. These samples are analysed by Marine Scotland and will, in future, provide insight into the structuring of the salmon population on the Dee. This will help us to identify problems with salmon productivity in any part of the catchment and failures in any of the fish runs returning from sea.



*From the good old days to now...
River Bailiffs working through the years.*



Pictures from DDSFB

www.deedram.com



The fundraising initiative to raise funds for the River Dee Trust through the sale of Dee Dram whisky is gathering tremendous momentum. Of the 600 cases that were produced by the Dalmore Distillery there has been over 300 cases sold and distributed in the last 4 weeks. This has been a tremendous success and thanks go to Whyte & Mackay for providing the whisky for the River Dee Trust and George Strachan of Aboyne for handling the retail operation and distribution. The Dee Dram has been spotted on E- Bay where it is being promoted by speculators. Fear not about paying over the odds however as it is still available to purchase from George Strachan at £32 per bottle. For all enquiries go to www.deedram.com

To book fishing log onto
www.fishdee.co.uk

FishDee News

We have developed the FishDee website further to add value for our visitors by adding pages about flies to use, three new accommodation providers' pages to enable larger advertorials and a page for instruction and guides to provide a broad base of advice and support for visiting anglers.

The traffic to FishDee is running at a very high rate with over 261,000 page views in the month of February alone. Website traffic since last May has seen over 1.6 million pages viewed by visitors to the site. This indicates quite clearly that the website is providing great value for readers and advertisers. If anyone wishes to provide any views on how we could develop the site even further then please write to ken@riverdee.org who would be delighted to hear from you. You can visit the site at www.fishdee.co.uk.

Interview with...

David MacKinnon, Grampian Police Wildlife Officer

Is poaching of Salmon a Wildlife Crime? - Yes. Poaching is a UK Wildlife Crime priority and that takes in Deer, Salmon and includes Hare Coursing. The Scottish Police services are very aware of this through their network of Wildlife Crime Officers. Any illegal act connected with Salmon be that poaching, trading in or illegal methods of taking should be reported to the Police and will be investigated.

What can the fishing community do to assist? - This is our eyes and ears. We need bailiffs, ghillies, fishermen, proprietors and everyone else living in and around river systems to be vigilant and report incidents or information to us. This is

best to do via our service centre 0845 6005700 requesting that the Wildlife Crime Unit is informed. We will also make use of these people's skills and knowledge about the river and about illegal activity.

What are the poaching techniques used by criminals? -This ranges from illegal coastal netting of fish before they enter the river to ripping using treble hooks, fishing without legal right and netting pools within the river.

What are the benefits of working in partnership? - Partnership working has been used most effectively in other areas of Policing and is no different in the area of Wildlife Crime. Alone the Police would have limited success but with a co-ordinated joined up approach the potential for successful outcomes is greatly improved. It is all about pulling together in the right direction, communication and making use of various skills.

What other crimes are connected with or associated with the river? - Salmon poaching obviously stands out but our rivers in Grampian hold valuable populations of fresh water pearl mussels a species of high conservation status which still, on occasions, is targeted for the pearls within. They are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. We also have a healthy population of Otters again protected species of European status. We should not forget other criminal activity that can be connected to our rivers including vandalism, theft and general anti social behaviour. Above all please tell us about criminal activity thus giving us the opportunity to help.



Did You Know? - Facts about the Law & Salmon

- Since 2002 it has been an offence to sell salmon and sea trout which have been caught by rod and line.
- Any person in possession of salmon which have been illegally taken, killed or landed may be guilty of an offence and if convicted fined up to £2,000 or imprisoned for up to 3 months.
- It is an offence for an unauthorised person to remove dead salmon or trout from the river.
- Salmon like all wild animals belong to no one until they are captured and then they belong to the person by whom they are taken or killed.