



# Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

**MINUTES FROM THE PROPRIETORS' OPEN SESSION  
AT RIVER OFFICE, MILL OF DINNET  
18:00 HRS, WEDNESDAY 16 JUNE 2010**

**PROPRIETORS/  
MANDATES:**

Richard Allan - Garthdee  
Guy Bentink – Dess  
Lucy & Melfort Campbell - Altries  
Dave Gordon - RDT  
Alastair Hume - DDSFB  
John Lewis - Garthdee  
David Macdonald – Stonehaven Angling Association  
Julian McHardy – Woodend  
Iain Morrison - RDT  
Ian Murray – Glenmuick, Monaltrie & Lower Invercauld  
John Pirie - Culter  
Alistair Thomson – Banchory

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Scott, Chairman  
Board & Trust Staff

The Chairman opened the second of a series of informal sessions which had been arranged to update and discuss the work of the Board and Trust. This second session centred round the Trial Season Extension monitoring and the floor was then opened for items or questions from Proprietors.

Lorraine Hawkins of the River Dee Trust outlined the background to the Season Extension licence application which had been granted by Government in 2008 to extend its rod and line fishing season from 30 September to 15 October for a trial period of three years from 2008-2010. A condition of which was it should be monitored to determine its sustainability. A presentation followed (*copy attached*) on the season extension monitoring programme which included rod catch analysis, scale sampling, radio tracking and redd count surveys and reflected the collated data for 2008 and 2009.

The format of the evening was well received with some further complimentary comments on the quality of the work and the interesting information it produced.

A question and answer session followed with the main items being:

**Q1: Is commencement of spawning dependent on the water temperature? Are you collecting temperature readings? (this data is the actual geography of fish that are spawning)**

A1: Currently we do not do temperature readings at spawning as it might have proved an unnecessary expense, as the period of spawning is spread over an extended time. However, recording the water temperature in the Upper Dee is currently being examined in partnership with Marine Scotland Science.

**Q2: Is there any reason why the lower river is spawning earlier than the middle?**

A2: The presentation showed that spawning generally took place earlier further up the catchment and progressed downstream.

**Q3: Of the sample radio-tagged fish, what was the breakdown of clean, silver coloured, etc? Would it be worthwhile doing a sample on the clean fish?**

A3: The sample reflected the rod catch and the programme was designed not to bias one particular component. There is the potential to look at a particular component in more detail and, as this would incur additional cost, would be examined by the Board at their forthcoming meeting.

**Q4: Do you receive feedback from fishers or ghillies about the October coloured fish?**

A4: Comments have been many, some for and some against, but mainly positive on the basis that a percentage would be coloured. For the lower river the October fish colour was exactly the same as September. FishDee website is the source for fishers' comments.

**Q5: If the fish survive being caught and released it would be beneficial to advertise this and make people aware?**

A5: A 2 page leaflet in fishing huts was suggested and agreed upon – Lorraine Hawkins will action.

**Q6: Were all of the 933 fish in the October extension in the same condition as those tagged (ie only 1 in 30)?**

A6: 30 tagged fish per month is a good enough sample statistically to compare the behaviour and fate of fish caught in September with those caught in October. The size of the tagging programme was agreed as part of the licence conditions. In addition information on the condition of fish was recorded by ghillies on the river and represented 63% of the total rod catch in October.

**Q7: If kelts had been caught, would you have detected them?**

A7: It is likely that the ghillies would have recorded the presence of kelts.

**Q8: Is there a plan to do a study at the start of the season?**

A8: We are currently working up a proposal with Marine Scotland Science to examine the numbers and behaviour of spring salmon next year.

**Q9: Is it acknowledged that the spring run is getting later?**

A9: The scale surveys show that fresh fish that are biologically springers are caught up to the first half of June. As this information only goes back three years it is difficult to make a comparison.

**Q10: Do you need to use a much longer term for making comparisons about fish runs?**

A10: The analysis involved in the Stock Component Review examined net catches as far back as the 1780s.

**Q11: What do you think will be the migratory habit of fish that run the Culter burn?**

A11: We expect fish to quickly migrate up and colonise the area upstream of the dam, as they have done on the Coy which has a similar fish pass. Our programme of work also includes removal of obstructions from weirs on the Gairn, Tanar & Coy.

**Q12: Do you have someone to alleviate concerns re the current work in Aberdeen Harbour?**

A12: Aberdeen City Council did not take our objections on board and granted planning permission for the works to go ahead. The work programme was challenged legally and it is now thought to have a minimal impact.

**Q13: What is the population of predator species for the harbour mouth?**

A13: Apart from piscivorous birds no information is collected on other predators such as dolphins. Proprietors should inform the Dee DSFB immediately if there is any issue with seals or damage.

An open invitation was again extended to all to visit the River Office at any time or to go out with the Dee DSFB and River Dee Trust personnel to see at firsthand what is happening on the River.

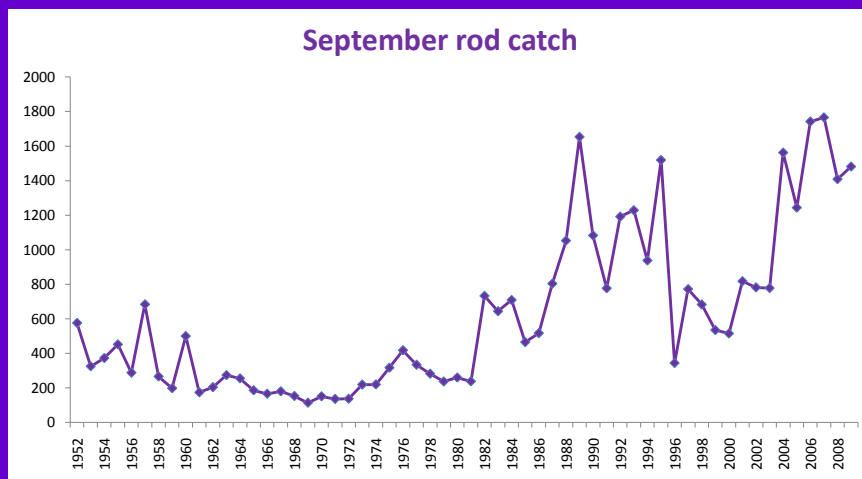
The final session in this series is to be held on 10 August when the main theme will be the **2011 Conservation Code** and we look forward to seeing you there.

**Ian G Scott**  
Chairman

## Season Extension Monitoring Year 2: The Lower Dee



## Changing run times



## Background

- DDSFB application to Scottish Government in 2007
- Application out to public consultation
- Application granted, under licence condition that trial extension would be monitored
- Presentation is based on first part of monitoring results

Trial limited to Lower and Middle Dee (below Aboyne bridge) to avoid targeting Spring salmon.

## Objectives

1. Assess whether fish caught in October have same chance of surviving to spawn as those caught in last 2 weeks in September
2. Determine whether Aboyne Bridge is the correct upstream limit of the season extension.
3. Determine what stocks are caught in October and if there is an impact on Spring salmon.

# Monitoring

## Rod catch analysis

Determine rod catch composition to advise viability of an October fishery.

## Scale sampling

Determine rod catch composition to understand what stocks could October fishing potentially impact on?

## Radio tracking

Determine impact of angling on fishes' subsequent survival and ability to migrate and spawn.

## Redd counts

Determine the spawning times for salmon throughout the Dee catchment to advise on upstream limit for Autumn fishing.

# Rod Catch Analysis

993 salmon and 66 sea trout caught in the October extension

Colour of fish recorded in September/October (63% of total Oct rod catch)



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# Scale Sampling

More MSW salmon (72%) than grilse (28%) in Lower Dee rod catch in October

More grilse in Lower Dee in September period (42%)



One quarter of September and October catch in Lower Dee were Spring salmon

## Radio Tracking: Experimental Design

**Yr 2 aim:** To determine if fish caught in first 2 wks of October show same ability to migrate and reach spawning grounds as fish caught in last 2 wks of September.

30 salmon tagged in September, 30 tagged in October.

Tagged fish reflect rod catch - no selection of fish: All colours, sizes

Equal females: males

Six Lower Dee beats:

Altries, M Drum,

U Drum & L Durris, Park,

L Crathes & W Durris, Crathes

Castle



## Tracking

Tracking: 18 Sep – 18 Dec, 8 – 29 Jan

Main stem Aberdeen – Aboyne,  
2 x per wk

Additional tracking in Nov and early  
Dec (tributaries)



Bank side data loggers deployed Sep – April.

# Results

57/60 (95%) tracked through until spawning

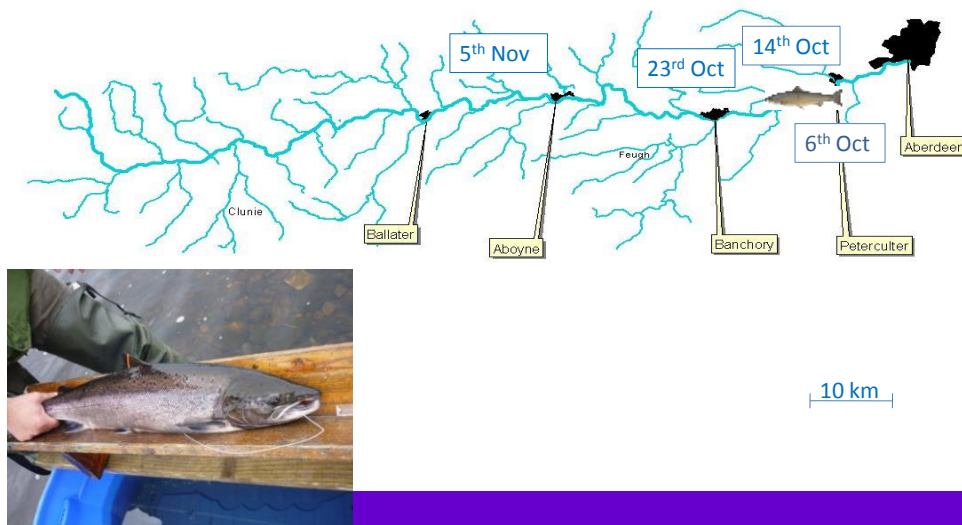
45 /60 (75%) tracked into January

Seven fish entered tributaries (although one fish left and carried on upstream)

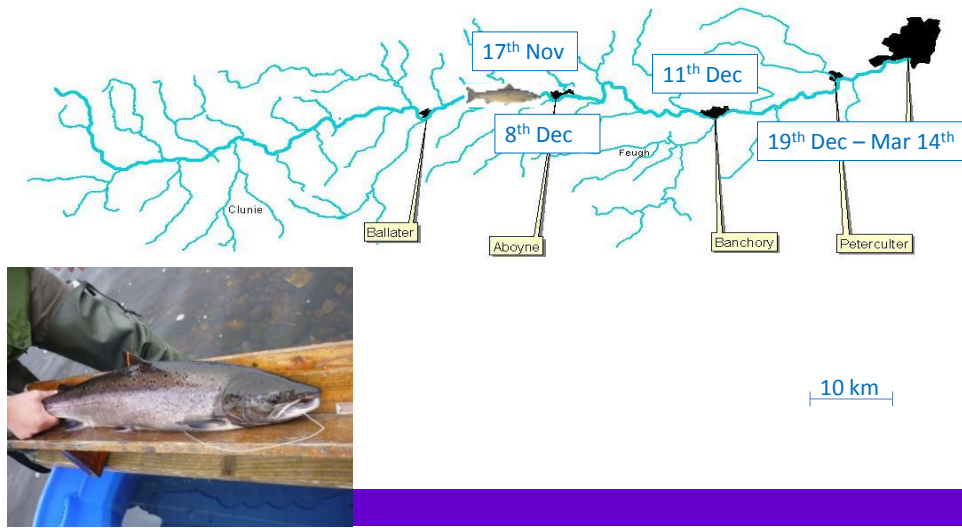
Eight fish (14%) migrated > 40 km/ 25 miles after tagging

Males showed significantly greater migrations (average 13 miles) than females (5 miles)

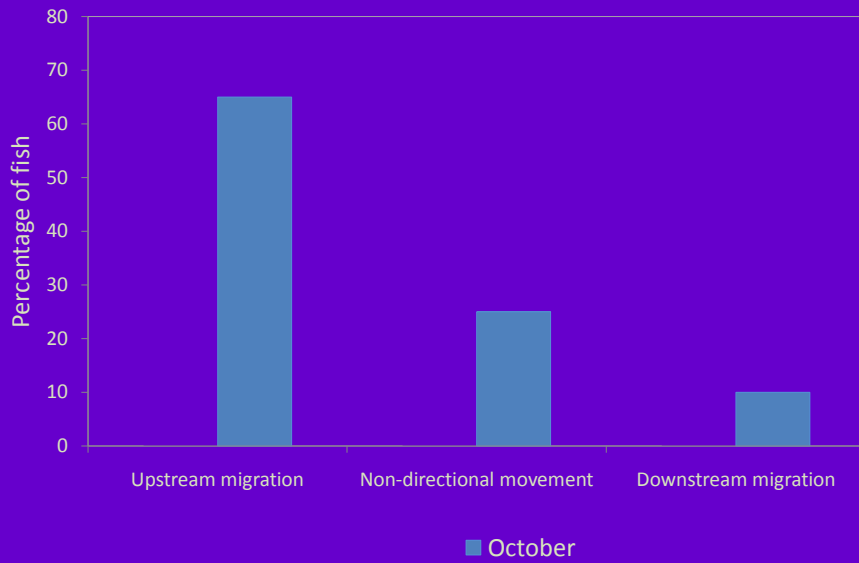
## Fish tracks



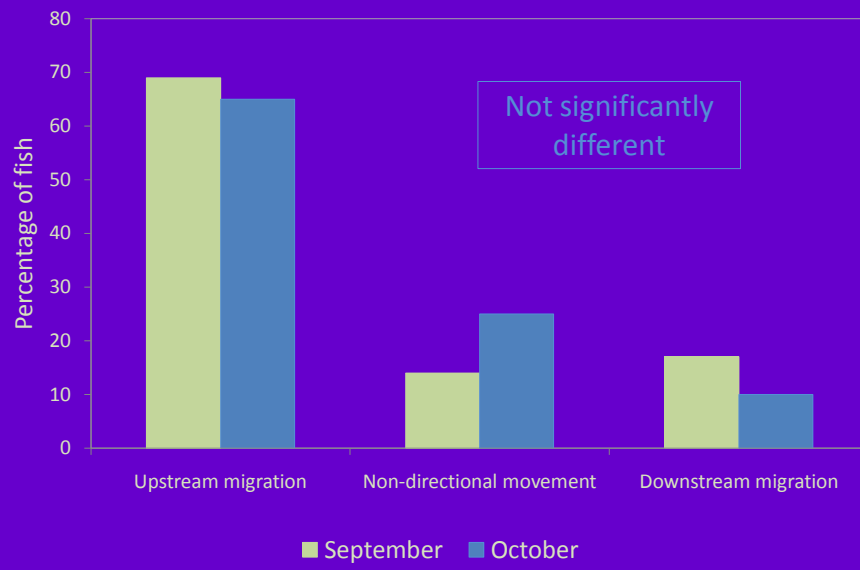
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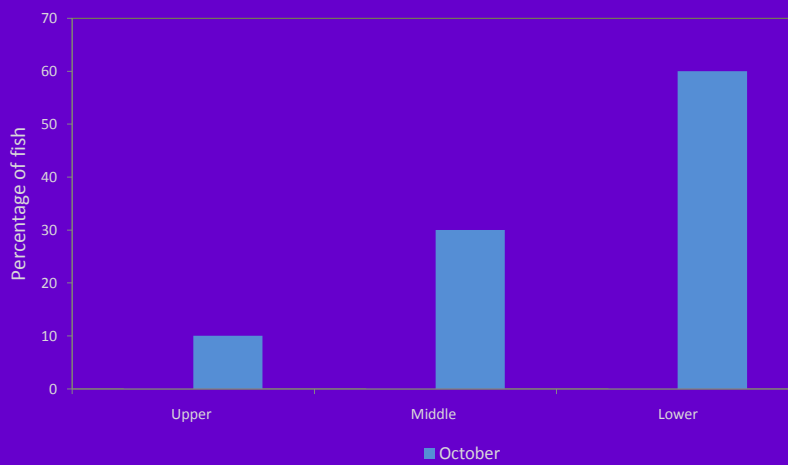
## Results



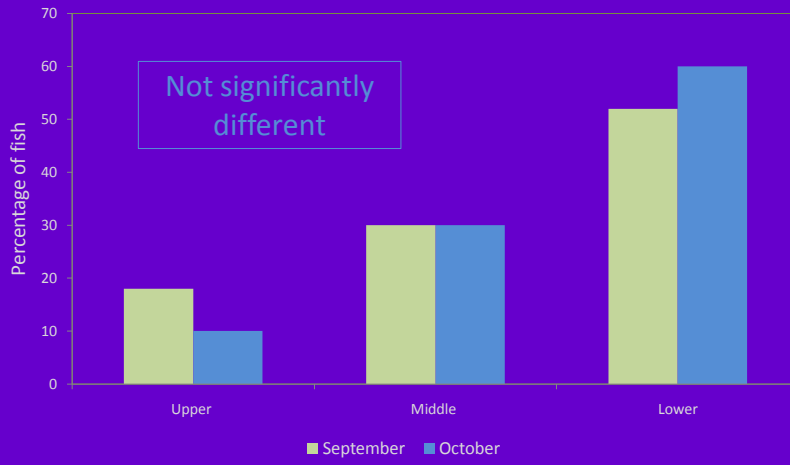
## Results



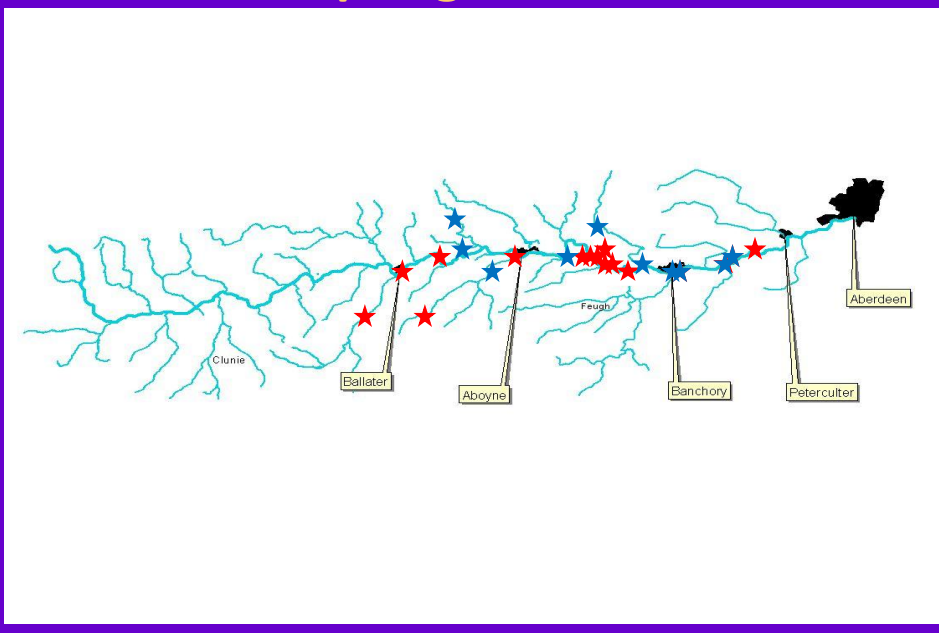
## Spawning Destination



# Spawning Destination



# Spring Salmon



## Spawning Times

Spawning started 4<sup>th</sup> wk of October in Upper Dee

Spawning started 2<sup>nd</sup> wk of November in Lower and Middle main stem, continued until at least 4<sup>th</sup> wk of December.

Spawning started 1<sup>st</sup> wk of November in Lower and Middle tributaries and finished by 1<sup>st</sup> wk of December.

Movements of tagged Spring salmon suggested spawning 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> wk of November



## Conclusion for Lower Dee

No evidence that fish captured in October are affected to a different extent than fish caught in September.

No evidence that vulnerable Spring salmon are more impacted by October fishing in the Lower Dee.

Rod catch composition shows little difference between September and October periods, within Lower Dee.



# 2010: Middle Dee

## Banchory Bridge – Aboyne Bridge

Radio tracking protocol as 2009, for Middle Dee

Scale sampling and rod catch data same as 2009

Redd counts: focused on critical boundary between Middle and Upper Dee, i.e. Birse - Ballater

## Acknowledgements

