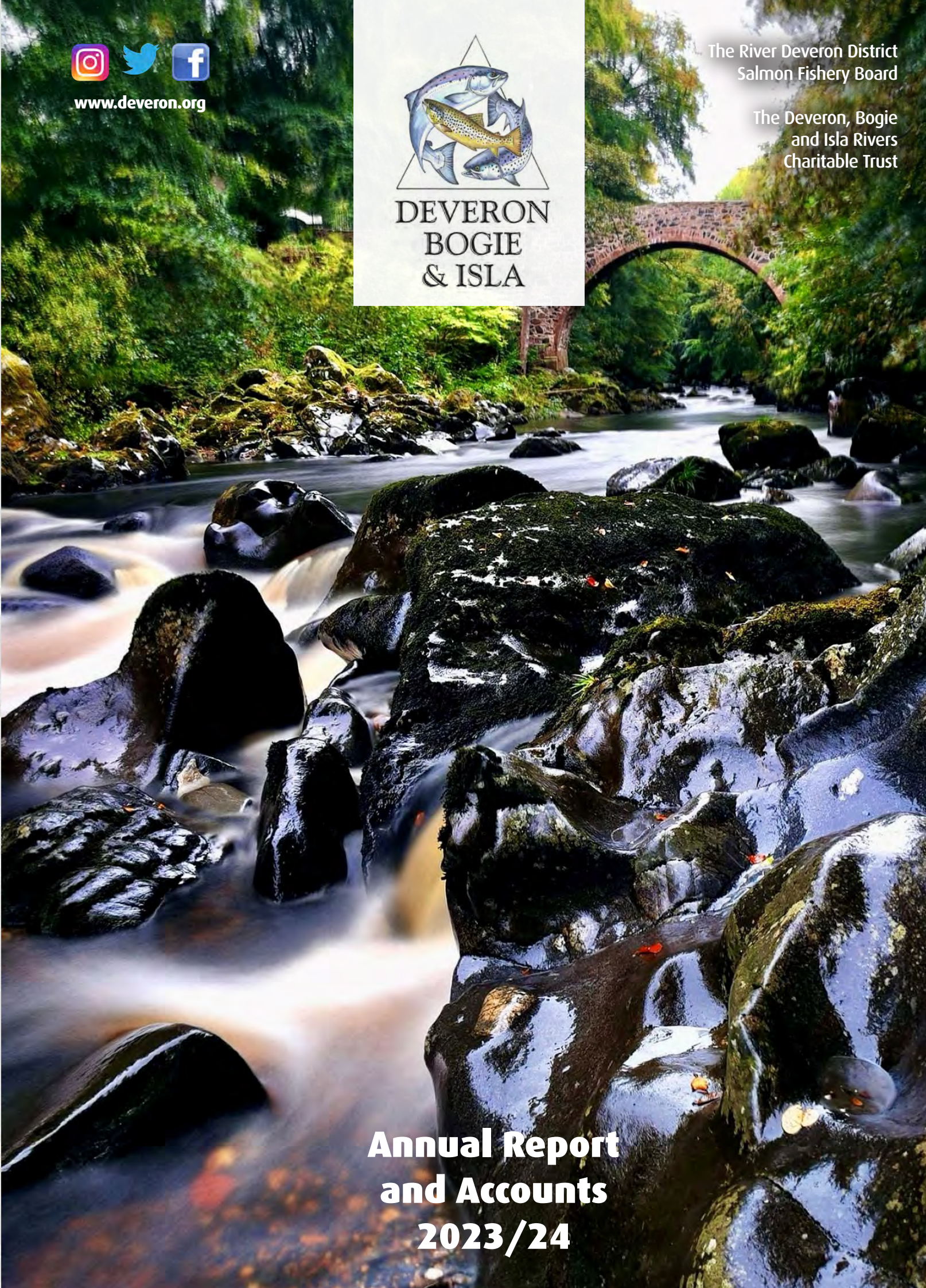

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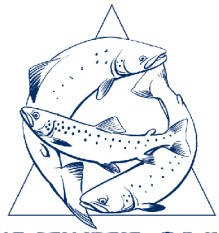
DEVERON
BOGIE
& ISLA

The River Deveron District
Salmon Fishery Board

The Deveron, Bogie
and Isla Rivers
Charitable Trust

Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24



Report by
A. Allwood, R. Miller, M. Walters, L. Barr and S. Roebuck

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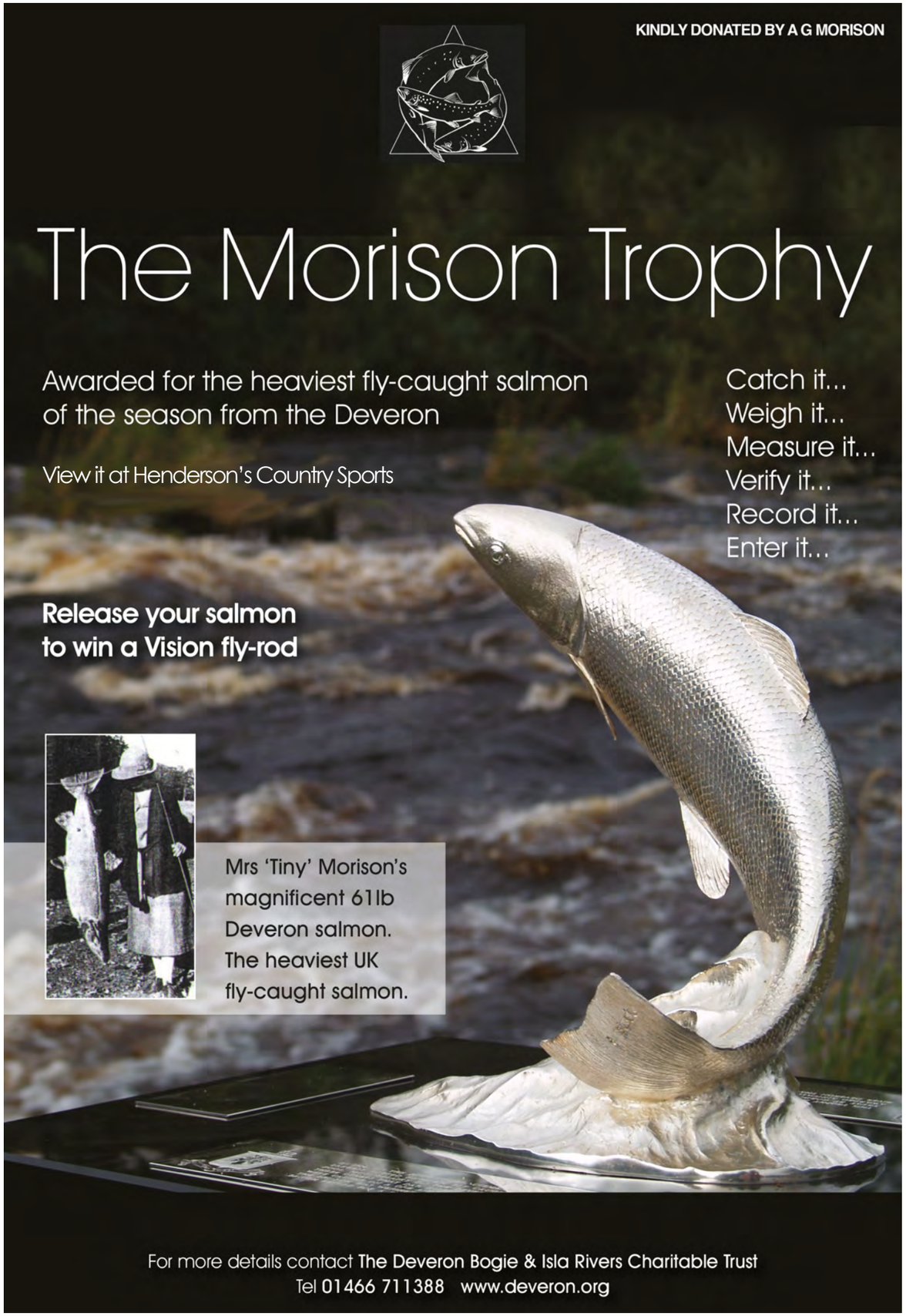

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by Colin Grant

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river_deveron

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Right: DBIT's Richie Miller and Robson Green with the Morison Trophy

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 2023/24.

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
Turriff 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 Ghillies 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, 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, M. C. Hay, 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 (AST)

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

The Deveron at Banff

Chairman's Report

Andrew Allwood, Chairman of the RDevDSFB

We must endeavour to persevere. These were the immortal words spoken by Lone Watie describing the conference before the Texas-Indian war of the late 19th Century. I know this is true because I heard it in Clint Eastwood's film *The Outlaw Josie Wales*.

The Deveron Fishery Board and River Trust are certainly endeavouring. An enormous amount of work is taking place throughout the catchment, details of which are included in the following pages. At last, thanks to investments in technology we are beginning to quantify the crisis. The fish counter has produced virtually a full season's data, carefully analysed in real time by Marcus Walters, the Trust Operations Manager, an heroic effort considering the huge task involved. The PIT tag arrays are beginning to welcome back as adults some of the salmon parr tagged in previous years, what an astounding journey these creatures have had.

Predation has been an ongoing issue. There was an alarming rise in the number of cormorants compared to recent years. Annoyingly two seals were also detected swimming well up the river system in the Autumn of 2023, we are helpless to do anything about these unwelcome visitors as our seal management license application was rejected by the Scottish Government along with many Scottish rivers. We have although recently obtained a seal scarer device via funding from the Marine Fund, let's hope it works.

'From the care of insects to the destruction of dams and weirs - every aspect of our wonderful river system is being acted upon'

Richard Miller the Trust Director has been working with Jamie Gordon of the Atlantic Salmon Trust to turn the restoration plans in the catchment into reality. This work along with the River Within Partnership will undoubtedly allow the habitat to thrive over the next few years. Conversely Lewis Barr and Robert Paylor of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative have been making sure that priority invasive plants and mink are not thriving. The efforts of both teams are making a visible difference to the natural beauty of our catchment and will continue to do so.

There is no lack of perseverance. The short-term plan addresses the work to be undertaken over the next 5 years. From the care of little insects to the destruction of dams and weirs every conceivable aspect of our wonderful river system is being considered and acted upon. Some of the projects will take time, but we must do what we can while we wait for the science to reveal why our fish are not surviving out in the ocean. The rod catch was 766 salmon and 308 sea trout, a figure which reflects the ongoing decline of these wonderful creatures.

We remember John Player who sadly passed away earlier this year, he loved fishing at Inverichnie and is greatly missed.

2024 marks the centenary of Mrs. Tiny Morison's amazing 61lb salmon. She must have been a very accomplished angler to bring such a monster to the bank. The photograph shows a fish nearly as long as she was tall! You can toast her success with a glass of specially produced gin made with botanicals picked at the location of the great event all those years ago.

There are folks all over the world who hold fond memories of Deveronside close to their hearts. I am sure the draw of this magical part of Scotland will continue, and welcome you back, with or without a rod.

The Deveron at Rothiemay

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 97% returned in 2023. The procedure was adopted in the river as a voluntary conservation measure to preserve fragile stocks and has been particularly encouraged by the RDevDSFB for the spring component of the salmon catch (Feb- May) and sea trout.

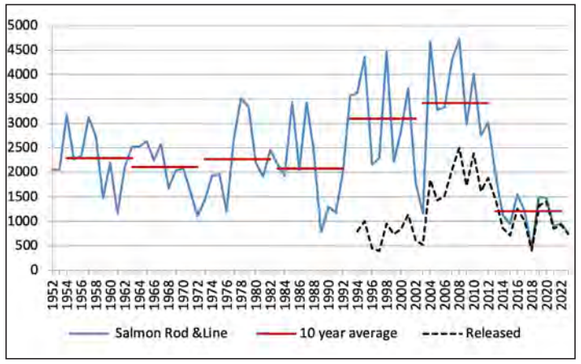


Figure 1

Spring salmon

Spring salmon return to the river in the spring months and are available to the rod & line fishery from February 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 2022-23 after restrictions had eased.

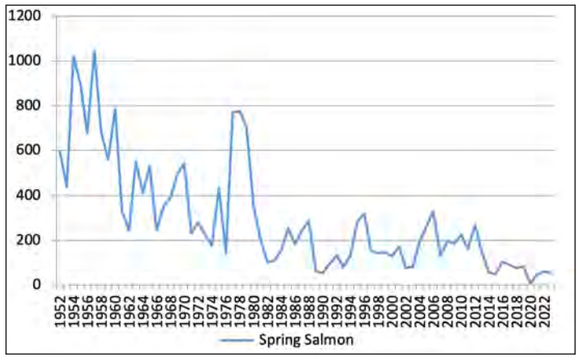


Figure 2

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.

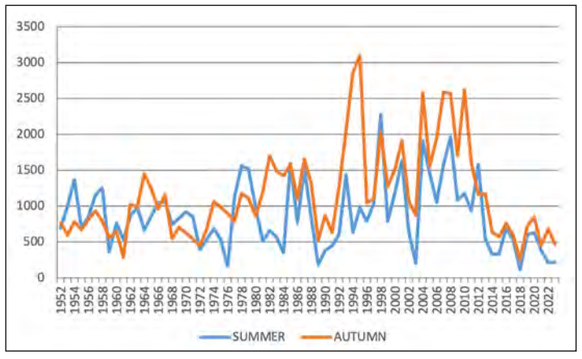
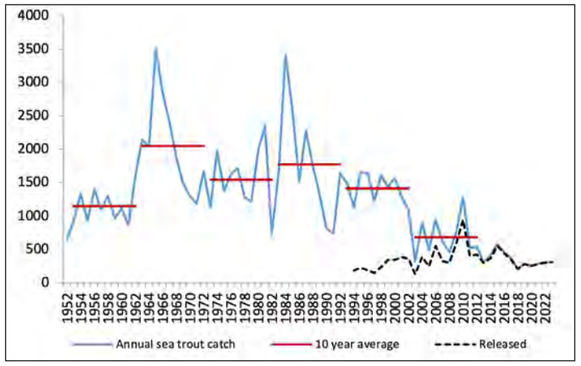


Figure 3

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

Deveron Sea Trout - Historical

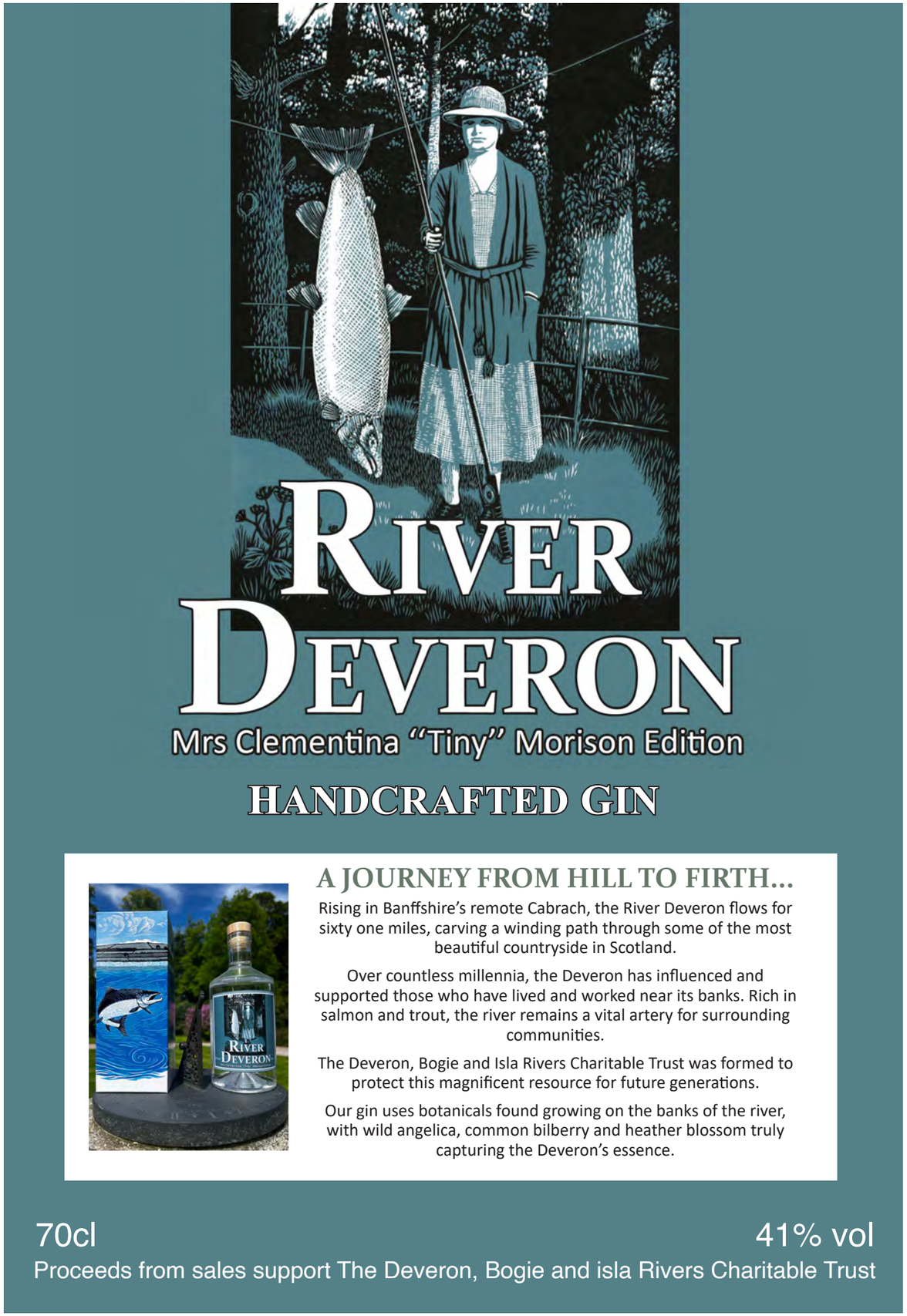
The Deveron sea trout Rod & Line catch (Figure 4) has shown annual variations from 1952 with two significant peaks of nearly 3500 fish. The 10-year average was consistently between 1000 and 2100 fish until 2003 when catches fell to the second lowest catch on record of 317 fish. Since then, catches have 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. 99% of fish were returned in 2023.



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.

Deveron salmon caught at Mayen Estate

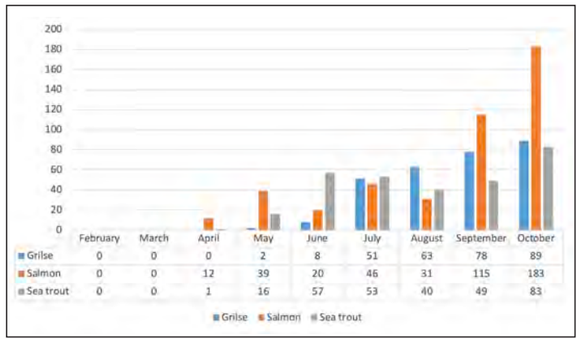


Deveron District - 2023 Catches

Rod and line

The 2023 salmon and grilse rod catch of 766 was slightly lower than the 902 in 2021 and 963 in 2022 but significantly lower than the 1483 caught in 2020. This is well below the long-term average of 2384 salmon per annum (1952-2020) and below the latest 10-year average of 1208 (2013-2022). Of the 766 salmon and grilse caught, 97% were returned. Spring salmon catches were still very low with only 53 spring salmon caught but very much in line with 2021 (47) and 2022 (60). All of the spring salmon were returned to the river, aided by the RDevDSFB angler reward scheme. The sea trout catch increased slightly to 308 sea trout but is well below the long term average (1952-2020) of 1257, of which 99% were returned.

Figure 5: Rod and Line Monthly Catches 2023



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 code aims to achieve a high release rate (>95%) of salmon and grilse (particularly female fish) and to protect stocks of multi-sea winter spring salmon which have declined considerably.

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 recommends additional protection of this fragile stock and recommends that all salmon are 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 2024 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, 2020-2023. However, due to the sustained low catches the RDevDSFB has adopted a 100% catch and release policy for the 2024 season 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 2024 season.

Figure 6: River Deveron Catchment - now Grade 2

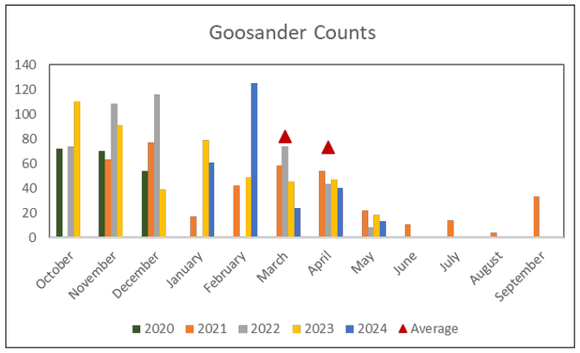
Eggs required (m^2)[a]	Area (m^2)[a]	Total egg requirement[a]	Percentage chance meeting requirement						
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Overall	Grade
3.14	3,345,000	10,466,000	48.62	79.3	85.93	66.34	65.53	0.69144	2

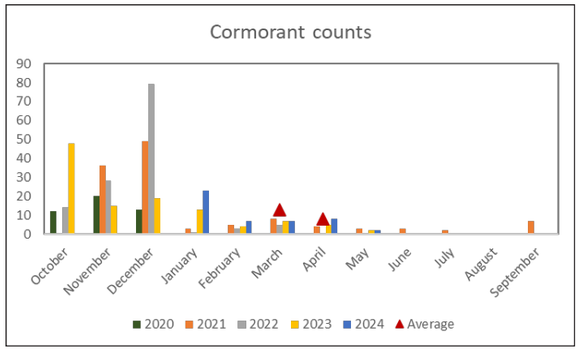
[a] Figures presented are median values

Management Report

Fish Eating Birds

The RDevDSFB continue to monitor the number of fish-eating birds along the River Deveron by conducting a bird count from Huntly to Banff using 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 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 2024 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 2024 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 (October – December) but also remaining quite high in March and April 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 and trout to spawn. Electrofishing data collected by DBIRT and independent SEPA surveys show that the number of salmon fry upstream of Keith is significantly less than found during downstream surveys. The worst 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 DBIRT. 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 DBIRT 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 Glenkeith 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 have now been issued with a letter by SEPA informing them that they have a legal requirement to install fish passage on the Glenkeith weir by 2024 to demonstrate the ecological improvement to achieve Good Status for fish ecology and fish barrier assessment by 2027.

Chivas have produced a high-level options document to determine best solution for easing fish passage over Glen Keith weir. Although the Trust have been contributing to this process there have been significant delays in Chivas securing suitable civil and fish pass specialist contractors resulting in the SEPA deadline being pushed back to 2025. It is a complex site with very limited space and various historic and protected 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. Build cost is projected between £80-150k.

Glenkeith Weir, River isla

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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 along the coast before connecting to substations near Keith and New Deer.

- **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.
- **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.

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 impact needs to be considered as a cumulative impact on the migration routes of salmon and sea trout.

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 current status. The DBIT and Deveron DSFB 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. The DBIT 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 – 105.6MW** - Originally consented in 2013 this project is has undergone a redesign and is at the permitting stage.
- **Clashindarroch 2 – Vatenfall – 14 turbines – 77MW** – Went to Public Enquiry with a case report submitted in March 2023 and now consented. Construction likely to begin in 2025.

- **Clashindarroch Extension – Clashindaroch Windfarm Extension Ltd - 22 turbines - 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 - 11 turbines - 72.6MW** to the Scottish government in June 2022.
- **Garbet Hill – Energiekontor - 7 turbines - 46.2MW plus an electricity storage facility of 3MW.** Planning was refused by Moray Council but subsequently granted by Scottish Governmen 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.

Dorenell Extension Wind Farm and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

Galileo is developing proposals for a wind farm and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan on land within the Cabrach and Glenfiddich Estates, approximately 10km south of Dufftown.

- Up to 74 turbines – 61 with a maximum tip height of 200 metres and 13 with a maximum tip height of 180 metres;
- A battery energy storage system.
- 870 hectares of peatland enhancement and restoration, equivalent to more than 1,200 football pitches.

King Edward Dam situated close to Mill of Eden

Lower Tributaries Project – King Edward

Priority sections for restoration has now been assessed and prioritised. This information was used to successfully apply to the European Open Rivers Programme (EORP) in 2023. The Trust secured €36,071.00 to contract CBEC to carry out the required surveys, designs and secure the SEPA licence to remove the King Edward Dam which is now complete. We have now submitted a 2nd application to the EORP and other partners for the funding to carry out the dam removal and bank stabilisaiton. We aim to remove the King Edward Dam by early summer 2025. We would like to thank all local landowners for their support with this project to date.

Seal Management

Acoustic deterrant device

We received confirmation on 7th of June 2022 that MS-LOT would not be granting a licence to kill or take seals on the river Deveron. On the 20th of June 2022 we received information we requested under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs) which included responses from Marine Scotland and NatureScot in relation to our application. After reading the responses we concluded that the decision taken by MS-LOT was unreasonable and we formally appealed the decision on 11th of July. On the 29th of November we received the following update from MS-LOT "Unfortunately due to resource it has taken longer than anticipated to review all seal license appeals received this year. We are now in the final stages of the review process and are going through internal checks with the panel prior to issuing letters of response." On the 16th of December we received a letter informing us that the review panel had upheld the original decision and rejected our appeal. A new Seal Licence application was submitted in January 2023. On the 24th of July we received a reply from MS-LOT refusing our application due to documented grey seal predation being minimal and the lack of use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADD's).

The RDevDSFB was a partner in a bid to the Marine Fund in collaboration with FMS to purchase a mobile ADD in July 2023 and the board recently signed an agreement with FMS to take ownership of a mobile seal deterrent device. We now have possession of the Acoustic Deterrent Device and there is a standard operating procedure should the ADD be required. A seal was detected on the Deveron ARIS Sonar (fish counter) in September 2023. Please get in touch with our team with any in-river seal sightings.

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 2023 the RDevDSFB Water Bailiffs continued to carry out patrols and work closely with Police Scotland.

In anticipation of the new angling season the RDevSDSFB commissioned signage for the lower Deveron (Banff & Macduff AA & Wrack) to direct anglers where to buy permits. It is hoped the new signage will reduce illegal fishing in that area and help support cases against individuals who continue to fish illegally.

On the 13th of August (14:25) x3 males were observed fishing without written permission downstream of Rothiemay bridge. Descriptions of the males and vehicle details were noted and passed to Police Scotland. The same x3 males returned on 16th august (20:05) and were asked to leave river. RDevDSFB bailiff noted vehicle details and descriptions and passed details to a local wildlife crime liaison officer. CCTV footage has since been collected from the incident by the liaison officer and 2 of the males have now been contacted by Police Scotland.

We purchased x10 LM2 Spy point cameras in July to assist in fishery protection monitoring of the catchment. Our sincere thanks to BMF Group for providing the funding for the cameras.

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) project started in March 2018, with a five year Phase 1 funded by Heritage Lottery fund and NatureScot. Phase 2 began in 2023 which is now solely funded by The Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) until March 2026. Throughout 2023 project officers Mirella Toth and Rachel Turner carried out strategic invasive non-native species control across the Deveron, Ythan and Ugie catchments. Together with the help of volunteers, land managers, contractors, and ghillies they were able to carry out catchment wide control. Since January 2024 two new project officers have replaced Mirella and Rachel, Lewis Barr on the Deveron catchment, and Robert Paylor on the Ythan & Ugie catchments.

Giant Hogweed was controlled in all areas across the Deveron, Ythan, and Ugie catchments in 2023. There are several locations with large infestations but with the help and hard work from volunteers we were able to limit the spread from these areas. Across the majority of sites there has been significant improvement in the abundance of plants growing, with less treatment required each year.

The sheep trial site at Kirkside Farm, Macduff, was once again grazed by sheep last year and continues to show gradual improvement. With the combination of grazing and other control techniques from our project officers we hope to have another successful control year at this site.

Control of Himalayan Balsam has also continued across catchments. In the past we have run volunteer days for Balsam, as it provides a great opportunity for a variety of volunteers such as local groups, corporations, and people of any age to get involved. This is something we hope to do again this year to tackle some priority areas with large infestations.

There are several locations of Japanese Knotweed across the catchments which were controlled last year. Work will continue in these locations to reduce Japanese knotweed plants.

American mink control continues with a dependable network of 49 volunteers monitoring 65 mink rafts and traps across the catchments. In 2023, 16 Mink were caught and so far this year there has been 4 caught, all within the Deveron catchment. We are constantly striving to improve our mink volunteer network and are hoping to get new rafts and traps out in areas where coverage is limited.

In 2024 our new SISI project officers will continue invasive non-native species control across the catchments. Starting with Giant Hogweed (pictured) in May and moving onto Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed in the later summer months. Mink trapping will continue year-round, with focus during months of high mink activity (e.g. breeding season) and only stopping periodically when water levels become too high in winter months.

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

The River Within

During March 2024 Chivas Brothers launched new sustainability partnership to give back to the rivers that help make its Scotch.

Chivas Brothers, the Scotch whisky business of Pernod Ricard and maker of global Scotch whisky brands including The Glenlivet and Aberlour, today unveiled a new, long-term programme to preserve, protect and improve the health of some of Scotland's iconic rivers and waterways.

The partnership, called 'The River Within', is a collaboration between Chivas Brothers and The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Rivers Trust, and the Spey Catchment Initiative. Chivas Brothers' investment will help protect and restore the select waterways within the Trusts' combined catchment areas in North-East Scotland – a total of 5,566 km2, some of which flows through Chivas Brothers-owned land – by focusing on enhancing biodiversity, limiting rises to water temperature from climate change and strengthening the longer-term resilience of the rivers.

This partnership is important not just for Scotland's natural landscapes, but also its heritage industries. Currently 34% of Scotland's rivers are in compromised ecological health, meaning by the end of this century as a result of climate change, they could face three times as many droughts and up to 40% more flooding, threatening the diversity of life in and around the waterways. Yet waterways are a vital source of life for Scotland's rich wildlife, as well as a key component and ingredient of whisky making, which depends on the health of the nation's rivers, banks, burns and springs.

Julie Gallacher, Head of Sustainability & Responsibility at Chivas Brothers, said: ''Scotland's waterways are the lifeblood of whisky production, so while we use this precious resource responsibly, returning 96% of what we use to its source, we like to think there's a 'river within' each bottle. Many of our distilleries are built on the banks of treasured Scottish rivers and it's from these waters that our renowned whiskies are endowed with their unique spirit, essence and even their names.

''Just as we rely on the rivers, the rivers rely on us. The art of whisky making is a delicate balance, so too is the Scottish landscape in which we craft it. That is why we are proud to launch this partnership with the three River Trusts to protect and build a resilient network of Scottish rivers and riverbanks that support biodiversity for generations to come.''

Richard Miller, Director at The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, commented:

''Many of the species Scotland is known for and their habitats are currently facing unprecedented challenges. One of these is the Atlantic Salmon which was recently reclassified by the IUCN from 'least concern' to 'endangered' in Great Britain.

''We are delighted to be a partner in 'The River Within' programme which will provide essential resources to ensure Deveron fish stocks have free access to cold, clean, water. This will be achieved by removing obstacles to fish passage, creation of 3D buffer strips along field margins, riparian planting, fish refuge creation and habitat restoration. We very much look forward to working with Chivas Brothers on this new and exciting project.''

A range of specific waterway projects are currently being developed in close partnership with the three River Trusts, to commence later this year. These will focus on direct activity along riverbanks and waterways designed to help increase biodiversity and overall health of the river ecosystem. This in turn will help limit the rise of water temperatures, restore floodplain resilience and increase river security. For example, simple practical interventions such as planting new trees along rivers can provide additional shade that helps limit river temperature rises and strengthen riverbanks.

Water stewardship is a critical part of Chivas Brothers' vision to shape the future of sustainable Scotch. In line with its commitment to preserving and restoring water resources, the company continually monitors water consumption and implements new solutions such as water-cooling technology throughout its operations to prevent waste.

To learn more about the threats facing our waterways, please visit www.chivasbrothers.com/theriverwithin.

The River Deveron at Eden

Working With Rivers Graduate Placement Scheme

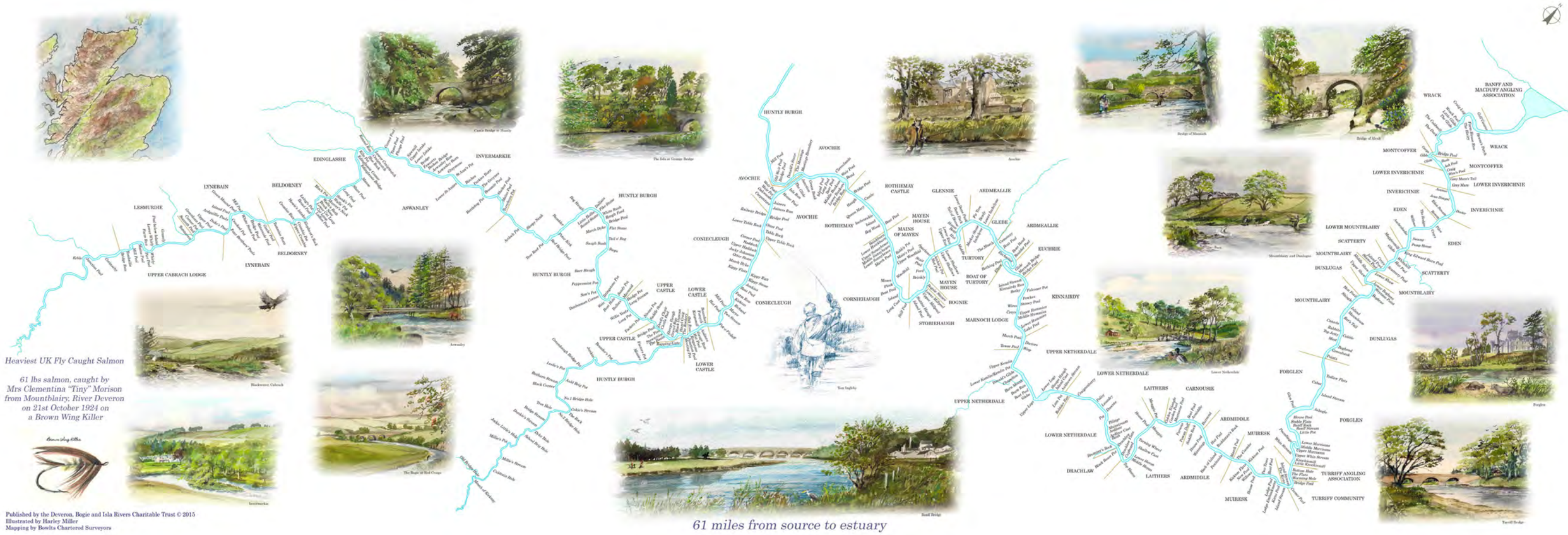
During 2023 NatureScot partnered with the Graduate Career Advantage Scheme and Fisheries Management Scotland to offer a second round of paid placements on the Working with Rivers scheme which first ran in 2022 when we recruited Russell Baker. The DBIT was again successful with our bid to host another trainee for 6 months and we recruited Mohammad Hafiyuddin Harpan. Mohammad was mentored by our team and worked on Invasive Species Control, Data entry and analysis, Electrofishing, Fish Counter and Pit Tagging operations.

Wild salmon strategy: implementation plan 2023 to 2028

The Scottish Governments 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.

For latest information, please visit www.gov.scot/publications/wild-salmon-strategy-implementation-plan-progress-report-2023-2024/

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



2024/25 PRIORITIES

- **Project Deveron – Operation of Aris Sonar (Fish Counter) and Pit Tag Arrays in collaboration with the Marine Directorate and Atlantic Salmon Trust.**
- **Project Deveron Phase II – Continue catchment restoration priority actions such as a catchment audit, 3D buffer strip creation, peatland restoration, riparian planting, fish refuge creation and barrier removal.**
- **Smolt Shepherding Programme- Continue to maximise number of smolts successfully entering the sea.**
- **Water Quality - Continue regular dialogue with SEPA to improve water quality within the catchment.**
- **Invasive Non-Native species - Continue control through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) Project.**
- **Mrs Clementina "Tiny" Morison's Deveron Salmon (100th anniversary) – Centenary celebrations will include a special edition bottle of Deveron Gin, Dinner & Charitable Auction, Article in Trout & Salmon Magazine and Fieldsports magazines and Ladies angling days.**

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 2023

Warm and drought conditions put the river and fish populations under stress through June and September 2023. On the 15th of June (River temp 19°C) and 8th of September (River temp 19°C) the RDevDSFB released statements on the current river conditions and the following guidance below for anglers to follow:

- Cease fishing when river water temperature exceeds 18°C
- Use strong tackle
- Play the fish quickly
- Always use a knotless net
- Keep the fish in the water at all times
- Use long-nosed forceps or a hook releasing tool to gently remove the hook

Research and Monitoring

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.

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.

Biomark PIT Arrays

As part of Project Deveron PIT arrays have been installed in the upper catchment on the Allt Deveron and the middle river at Avochie. These arrays will detect PIT tagged fish and allow us to not only monitor smolts leaving the river each year but also monitor how many make it backs 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; the tags are passive so they do not have a battery which means they will work for the life of the fish, they are much smaller so can be inserted with minimal stress to the fish and they are far cheaper so far more fish can be tagged.

The uppermost array just downstream of the Blackwater confluence acts as the first detection point as smolts begin their downstream migration. The furthest downstream array is at Avochie where a double array has been installed and is the final detection point as smolts head for the sea. All the arrays can be monitored remotely to check performance and monitor tag detections.

Each Autumn DBIT and AST tag 2000 parr from the Allt Deveron and Blackwater. When they begin their smolt migration the following spring they will be detected on the Allt Deveron and Avochie arrays as they head to the sea. This will help us monitor freshwater smolt survival on an annual basis. If those smolts survive their marine migration and return to the river after a year or more at sea they will be logged again as they migrate upstream past the arrays to their spawning grounds. This will allow us to calculate how many are surviving the marine phase. In 2023 we detected the first grilse to return from the 2021 tagging cohort that left the river in the spring of 2022.

The combination of the full river count and the smolt and marine survival estimates will be invaluable in helping us to understand where the losses are taking place for Deveron salmon and what management measures can be implemented to protect stocks in the future.

Deveron ARIS Sonar Summary 2023

Deployment

Location

The ARIS Imaging Sonar (1800 Explorer) was deployed in the river Deveron from 24th February 2023 until 19th October 2023. The ARIS is located upstream of the tidal limit on the Montcoffer beat where the river is 25m wide. The site has a flatbed that slopes away to the far left bank ensuring the SONAR beam has an uninterrupted view across the entire channel. A fish fence has been installed for 2024 to stop fish swimming under the SONAR beam or behind the ARIS unit on the right bank.

Deployment structure

For the entire 2023 deployment duration the camera was deployed on a temporary scaffolding frame but for the 2024 season DBIT commissioned a new structure that provides more protection and allows adjustment of the camera position from the river bank. The camera is suspended on the AR2 Rotator Arm that allows remote adjustment of the Sonar beam angle both vertically and horizontally. This is crucial to the fine tuning of the field of view and maximising image quality.

Power and security

During the 2023 deployment the ARIS Sonar was powered by a battery bank charged by 3 solar panels but this proved unreliable especially during low light conditions. From 2024 onwards a mains supply has been installed by DBIT that ensures a stable and predictable power supply. This has allowed security cameras and an independent internet connection to be installed that ensures 24h security and monitoring of the equipment and site. Being able to remotely check on the camera is very important to ensure that the camera is orientated correctly and not disrupted by weed, silt or flood debris. This greatly reduces staff time required to visit the site and ensures continuity of SONAR video recording.

Methods

Deployment

The aim was to deploy the Deveron ARIS for the entire Deveron salmon fishing season, however, due to the ARIS being on a temporary structure during 2023 it had to be retrieved during flood conditions and was only deployed from 24th February to 19th October. During that time there were also a number of days that the ARIS was not operational due to power issues, flood risk and periods of time when the camera was blocked or partially obscured by weed. All footage is recorded on hard drives to be processed at a later date.

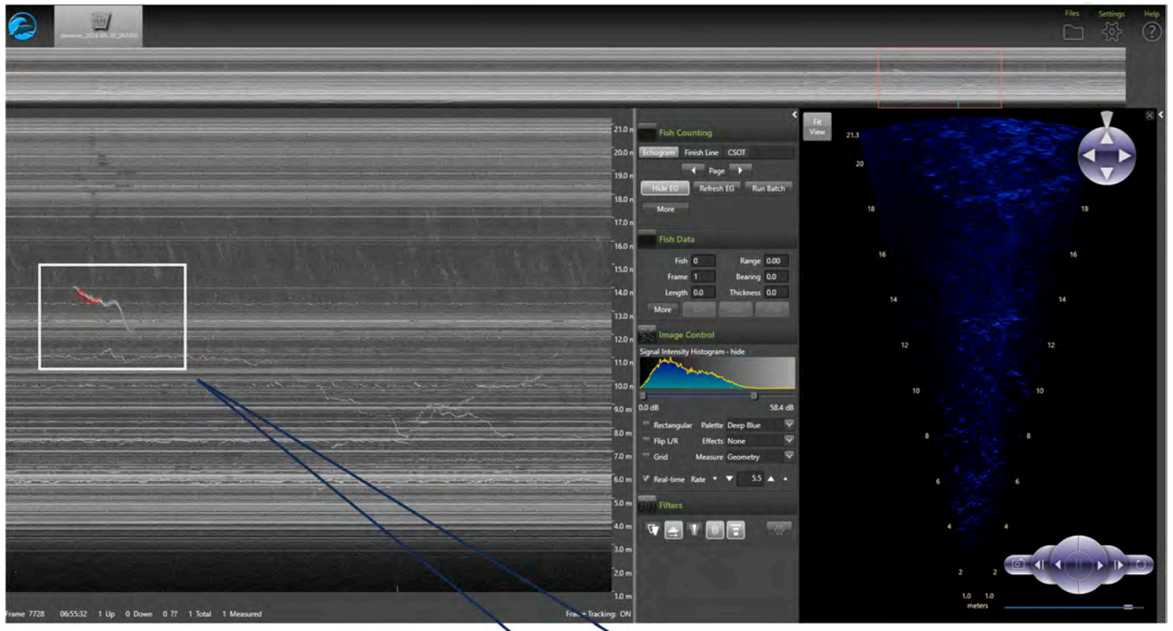
Processing SONAR footage

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 facilitates the footage to be reviewed and played back with a built-in system that allows for fish events to be captured fish measured and saved.

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.

View downstream with the ARIS deployment frame on the right bank immediately upstream of historic croy.

Left: The ARIS 1800 suspended from the temporary scaffolding frame with the AR2 rotator arm that allows remote adjustment of camera both vertically and horizontally.
Right: The ARIS deployed in the river on the scaffolding frame with water level approximately 20cm over the Sonar camera.
Below Left: The new ARIS SONAR deployment structure. The height of the ARIS can be adjusted from the river bank and is designed to swing into the bank if struck by very large debris during a flood.
Right: The ARIS SONAR 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 in the foreground is designed to push fish off the right bank and out from under the ARIS unit into the SONAR beam to ensure they are not missed during the count.



A snap shot of the Aris Fish software interface used for processing the SONAR footage. Highlighted in the callout box is the typical echogram signature of a 74cm salmon and below it a small stationary trout.

Recording fish

When the sonar video footage is reviewed each fish seen passing through the ARIS SONAR beam is logged, measured and their behaviour classified as either Up, Down or Undefined if they don't fully pass up or down through the beam.

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 a precise measurement to be taken of each fish target. 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 a rough estimate that probably excludes the smallest salmon but also includes some larger brown and sea trout. We are working on developing a model that will better estimate the degree of overlap between salmon and trout lengths.

To produce an estimate 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 3. 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 24th February and 19th October 5775 fish (>55cm length) were counted moving upstream and 1101 fish (>55cm length) counted moving downstream which equates to a net count of 4674 salmon migrating upstream past the ARIS SONAR. This should be considered a minimum count as some fish will have been missed, there was no SONAR footage for 25 days and only partial footage on 30 days due to power, weed and silt issues.

Subsequently a model has been developed to estimate the number of salmon that would have been expected to have been counted on those days when the counter was offline or was only partially effective. This increased the total count to 5600 with a range of 5464 -5753. This figure will be used in Scottish Government's assessment of the status of the Deveron salmon stock. Using this run estimate the 2023 rod catch of 766 salmon would equate to a rod exploitation rate of 14%.

The number of fish passing upstream of the ARIS SONAR site slowly increased during April, May and June before falling back and then peaking in July after some rain and rise in river. Numbers then slowly dropped off during August and September before the camera was removed in October. 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 2023 deployment of ARIS Sonar camera in the Deveron has been a success. The ARIS Sonar has produced SONAR footage that has allowed the first 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 issues with days of Sonar footage lost due to power, weed, flood and hard drive issues but most of these have already been resolved with the installation of mains power and the new deployment structure.

Further work needs to be done to develop a sizing model to refine the level of overlap between small salmon and large trout based on length. Also, further work and data on the relative age and length of salmon is required to enable an estimate of salmon and grilse numbers rather than the total salmon run presented here.

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

Electrofishing - 2023

In August 2023 we conducted more than 52 electrofishing sites across the Deveron catchment. This included 30 sites for the NEPS (National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland) funded survey. The NEPS survey provides the data necessary to carry out an annual assessment of the status of Scotland's salmon stocks using electrofishing data. The first national survey was carried out in 2018 and this was be repeated in 2019 and 2021. The survey is designed, managed and analysed by scientists at the Scottish Government Marine Directorate. Data is collected by local fisheries managers according to protocols developed by MSS in consultation with the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (SFCC).

The data has been entered into the Marine Directorate database but we have not yet received the results of the analysis and sitewise comparison against the predicted baseline. The table below provides a qualitative summary of the results as observed in the field along with all other surveys.

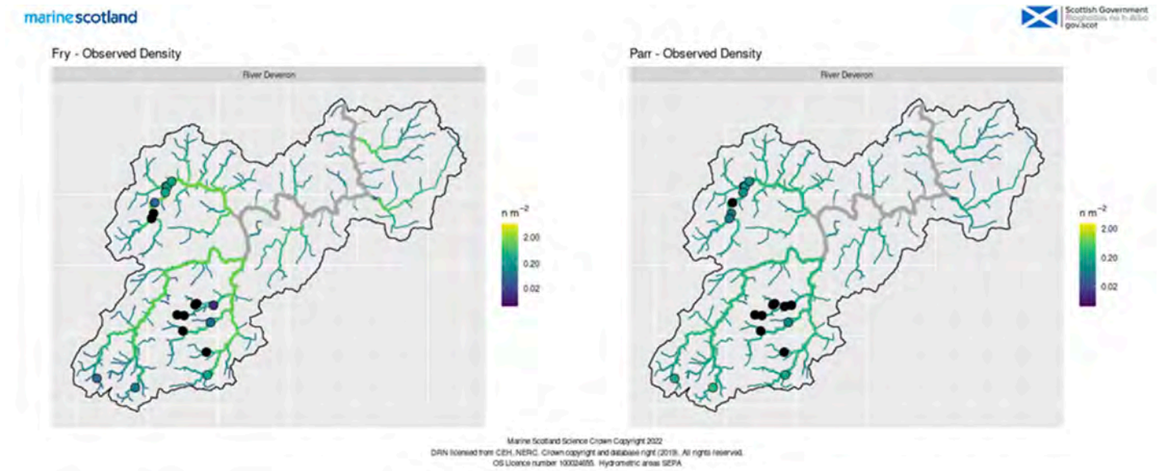
In addition to the NEPS survey 15 sites were conducted at the top of the Blackwater and Allt Deveron for the Dorenell Extension windfarm scoping. Seven sites were also conducted on the Isla for the Glenkeith Barrier removal project and ten sites on the Bogie tributaries for the Clashindarroch II preconstruction survey.

The table below shows a qualitative summary of the results as observed in the field along with all other surveys.

Summary of the results

Allt Deveron & Blackwater	**Good salmon fry and parr numbers apart from the smaller tributaries at the top of the catchment.**
Deveron Mainstem as far downstream as Huntly	**Excellent numbers of salmon fry and parr.**
Isla	**Salmon fry and parr present at varied numbers upstream of Keith but densities were higher downstream of Keith.**
Bogie	**The Clashindarroch sites were mainly in small burns so dominated by trout. The Upper Bogie had some good numbers of salmon fry and parr at some sites but most sites in the mainstem were lower than expected with poor habitat and heavy siltation.**
Forgue	**Both sites contained salmon fry and parr but in low densities.**
King Edward	**No salmon recorded in either site on the King Edward.**
Turriff	**Lower than expected salmon numbers at the one site surveyed.**

The results from the contract monitoring sites on the Allt Deveron, Clashindarroch and Isla are summarised below. This only includes the first pass results from quantitative sites and not timed electrofishing sites.



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. 47 pink salmon reported caught in Scottish rivers during 2023. 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

One edition of the Deveron Flyer was produced during 2023/24 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, and announcements. The Trust social media has grown considerably and platforms such as X (@DBIRCT), Instagram (river_deveron) and Facebook (DeveronBogieIsla) 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 2,457 (June 2024) followers
- Facebook: 902 (Oct 2018) to 2,800 (June 2024) followers
- Twitter: 934 (Oct 2018) to 1,400 (June 2024) followers

The McConnell Major Contribution Award - Mr Marcus Walter, MSc BSc MIFM

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 Marcus Walters as the 2023 winner. Marcus has been an integral member of the Trust team since joining in 2016 and has been involved with and led on many aspects of the Trust and Boards work including barrier removal, habitat restoration, fishery protection, fish tagging & tracking, Juvenile fish surveys and water quality monitoring. Marcus has more recently been involved in deploying and monitoring one of only two ARIS sonar (Fish Counter) in Scotland. The trophy was duly presented to Marcus by former rugby player and BBC presenter Mr John Beattie.

Left: Marcus Walters receiving The McConnell Major Contribution Award winner from BBC presenter John Beatie Below: The DBIT stand at Mayen estate Garden Scheme open day.

Project Deveron Launch Film: Cold, Clean Water - Restoring the River Deveron

To launch Project Deveron, the short film Cold, Clean Water was commissioned by The Atlantic Salmon Trust. The short film by Byron Pace follows actors Jim Murray and Dominic West (of Netflix show The Crown) as they head off the beaten track to journey through the Deveron catchment in an INEOS Grenadier, meeting with the team leading the project and delving into the extensive measures being planned, combining both landscape-scale habitat restoration and cutting-edge environmental monitoring techniques. The film was first showcased at the Curzon cinema in Mayfair, London In November 2023. It was a well-attended event with over 200 in the audience. The film is now available on YouTube. Thanks to INEOS Grenadier, Avochie Estate and Deveronside Fishings.

Scotland's Garden Scheme - Mayen Estate

The DBIT was delighted to have been chosen as the local charity to attend and benefit from the Open Garden at Mayen Estate in July 2023. The event was very successful, and our team had the chance to interact with many of the visitors during the day. Thanks goes to the Cheyne family and all at Mayen Estate for your valued support.

Deveron Opening Ceremony & Morison Trophy Presentation 2023

On the 11th February our special guest actor, presenter and Atlantic Salmon Trust ambassador Robson Green and partner Zoila Brozas presented the Morison Trophy and officially opened the 2023 salmon season. Mr Gavin Hepburn, winner of the Morison Trophy for 2022 made 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 salmon rod presented to Gavin for carefully releasing the winning salmon.

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 km^2 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.

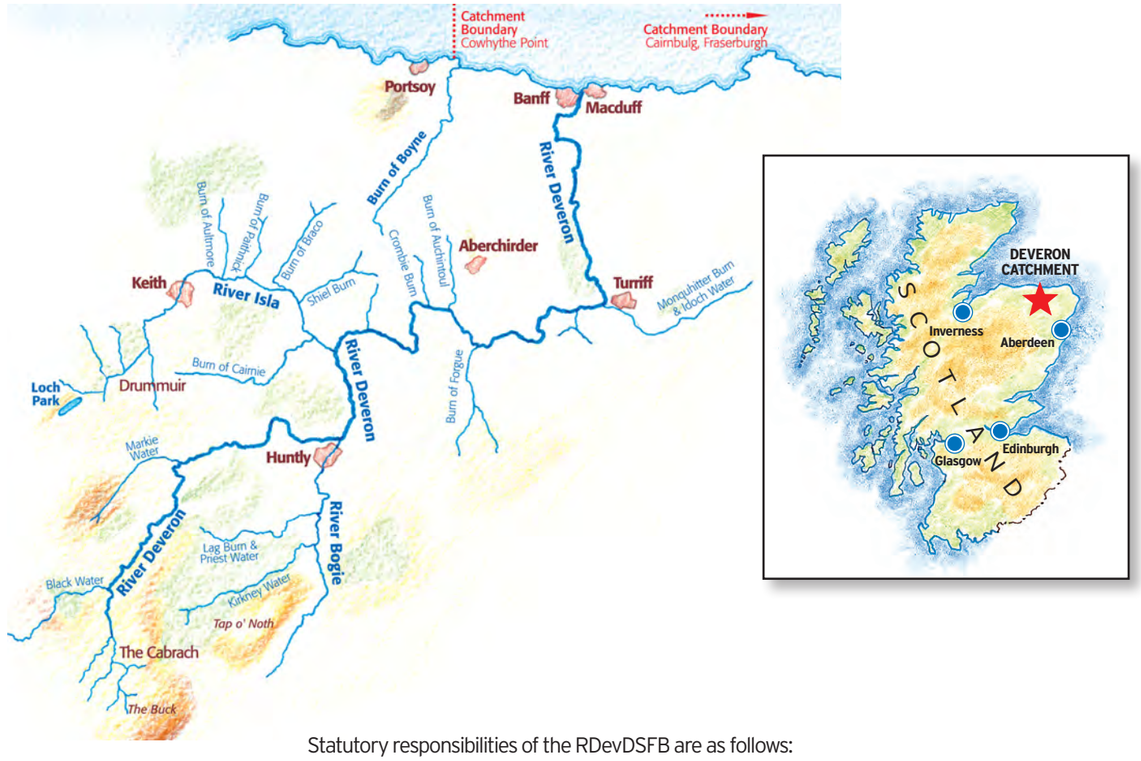
Meetings

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 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.24 Total funds	31.3.23 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	126,708	69,919	**196,627**	124,813
Charitable activities				
Monitoring, contract and services	57,301	7,544	**64,845**	78,268
Other trading activities	11,878	-	**11,878**	32,889
Investment income		4,428	**4,428**	3,637
Total	195,887	81,891	**277,778**	239,607
EXPENDITURE ON				
Raising funds	9,067	-	**9,067**	16,702
Charitable activities				
Monitoring, contract and services	185,929	84,731	**270,660**	209,382
Other	(2,847)	-	**(2,847)**	895
Total	192,149	84,731	**276,880**	226,979
Net gain/(losses) on investments	-	3,356	**3,356**	(3,959)
NET INCOME	3,738	516	**4,254**	8,669
	311	(311)	**-**	
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	164,376	162,467	**326,843**	318,174
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	168,425	162,467	**331,097**	326,843

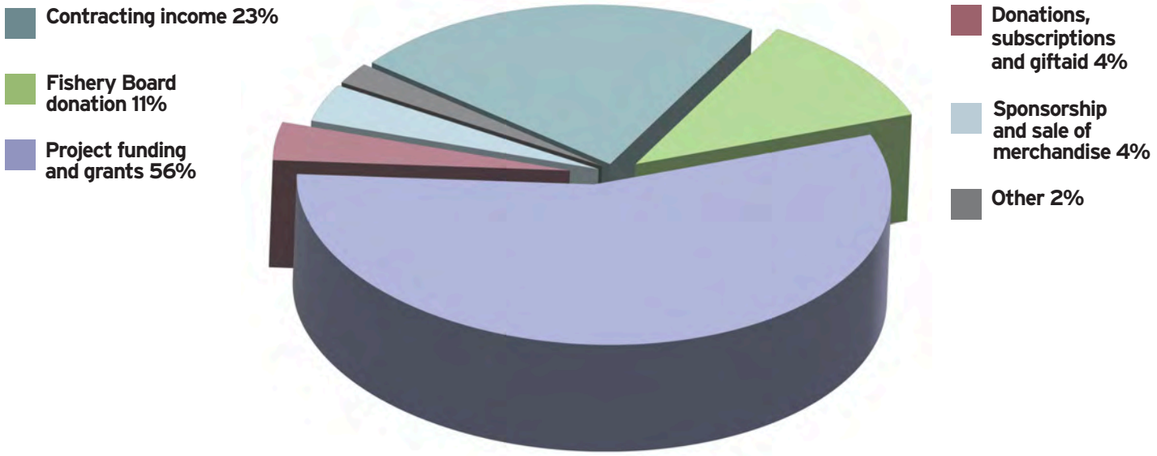
BALANCE SHEET

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.24 Total funds	31.3.23 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	45,740	-	**45,740**	22,853
Investments	-	162,550	**162,550**	154,766
	45,740	162,550	**208,290**	177,619
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stocks	2,067	-	**2,067**	3,294
Debtors	33,949	-	**33,949**	13,736
Cash at Bank	93,728	122	**93,850**	137,345
	129,744	122	**129,866**	154,375
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due within one year	(7,059)	-	**(7,059)**	(5,151)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	122,685	122	**122,807**	149,224
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	168,425	162,672	**331,097**	326,843
NET ASSETS	168,425	162,672	**331,097**	326,843
FUNDS				
Unrestricted funds			**168,425**	164,376
Restricted funds			**162,672**	162,467
TOTAL FUNDS			**331,097**	326,843

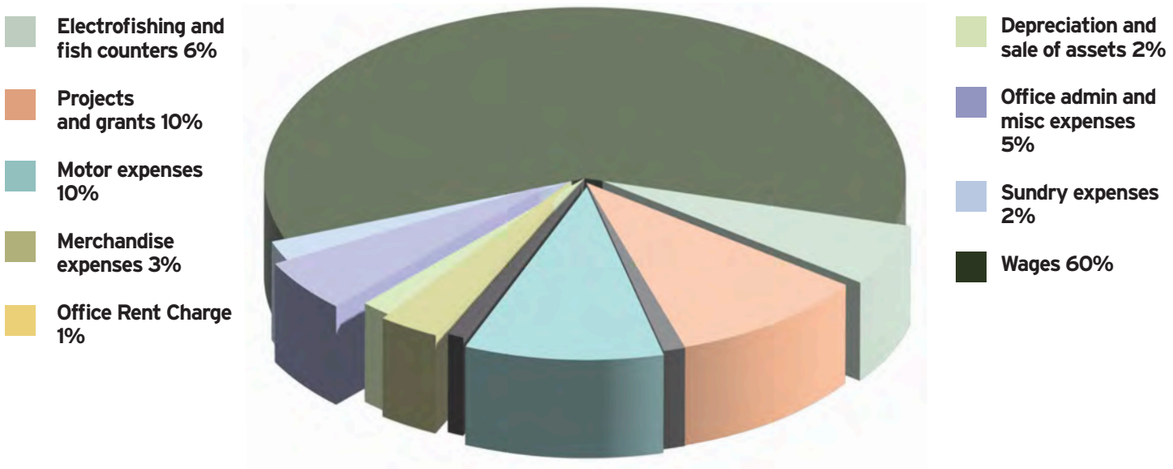
These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008). The above figures have been approved by the Trustees and will be presented as such at the Annual General Meeting. These are extracts from the full financial statements. . 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 2024

Income April 2023 - March 2024

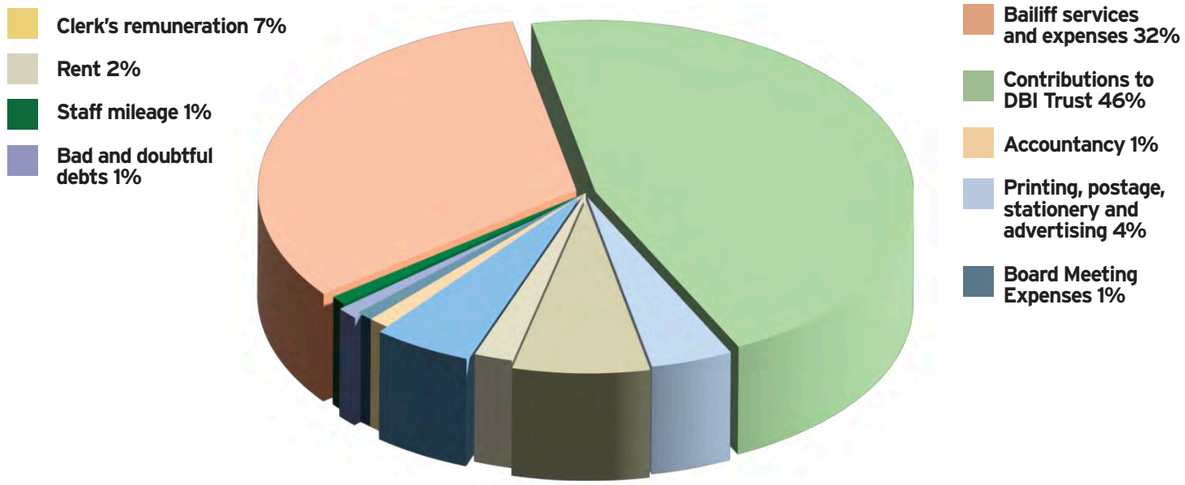


Expenditure April 2023 - March 2024



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board accounts Year ended 31st March 2024

Expenditure April 2023 - March 2024



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board accounts Year ended 31 March 2024

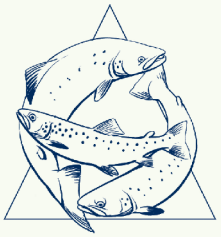
INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	2024	2023
INCOME		
Assessment Income (69p in £)	**64,984**	71,707
	64,984	71,707
EXPENDITURE		
Clerk's Remuneration	**4,722**	3,890
Office rental and service expenses	**1,105**	1,105
Board meeting expenses	**1,070**	615
Travelling and vehicle expenses ex DBI	**973**	1,570
Professional subscriptions	**-**	2,296
Bailiff services and expenses	**22,030**	23,758
Contribution to DBI Trust	**31,500**	31,500
Accountancy	**915**	887
Postage, Printing, Stationery, Advertising and Telephones	**2,579**	2,308
Sundry expenses	**3,247**	1,715
Bad and Doubtful Debts	**449**	389
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS ON GENERAL FUND	**68,590**	70,033
	(3,605)	1,674

BALANCE SHEET

	2024 £	2023 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank	**40,190**	42,880
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	**(1,805)**	(890)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	**38,385**	41,990
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	**38,385**	41,990
NET ASSETS	**38,385**	41,990
FUNDS		
General funds	**38,385**	41,990
TOTAL FUNDS	**38,385**	41,990

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 2024

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 gorbuscha) must be retained and notified to the RDevDSFB.

All visiting anglers must read, act upon and sign a Gyrodactylus salaris declaration form immediately prior to going fishing. If disinfectant is required, please contact RDevDSFB Office (01466 711 388) or your beat Ghillie/Manager/Agent.

The Offices
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