

DEVERON FLYER



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The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Special Edition



100
years

Clementina "Tiny" Morison - Centenary Dinner

A lively crowd of 200 gathered at the Banff Springs Hotel on Friday, September 6th, for an unforgettable evening celebrating the legendary Clementina "Tiny" Morison and the centennial anniversary of her remarkable 61lb fly-caught salmon. The atmosphere was electric as an incredible £32,944 was raised for the Deveron, Bogie, and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, ensuring the continued conservation of the river and its precious fish stocks.



A heartfelt thank you to our esteemed guests, including James Murray, Dominic West, and Ian Gordon, for making the night so special. We owe a special thanks to Bowlt's Chartered Surveyors for sponsoring the event, Bacardi for treating us to some exquisite malt whisky, and to our generous auction donors. Last but certainly not least, a big round of applause to the Banff Springs Hotel team for their impeccable hospitality.

We're already looking forward to making more memories at our next dinner auction in 2026. See you there!

Fundraising ideas

Support the preservation of our rivers and their surrounding ecosystems with our exclusive range of limited edition gifts. Each purchase helps fund the essential conservation work of the Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust. Choose from our 8oz flask for £15.50, a luxurious 6oz flask in a silk box with a funnel for £16.60, or a



set of four elegant coasters for £22 (prices include VAT but exclude P&P). To order email admin@deveron.org today.

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

Project Deveron achieves first ever returning adult salmon count



Since 2016 the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, supported by the Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board, has been trialling different sites and technologies to scientifically establish a complete river count for returning adult wild Atlantic salmon. This ambition was realised in

2023 with the launch of Project Deveron, a partnership between the Atlantic Salmon Trust and the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, supported by the Marine Directorate. The 10-year project aims to achieve large-scale restoration of salmon and their wider environment through a work programme of catchment-scale habitat restoration combined with cutting-edge salmon population and wider environmental monitoring.

Its aim is to demonstrate the success of restoration efforts over time upon the wild salmon population and wider biodiversity in the catchment.

As part of its monitoring programme, an ARIS (Adaptive Resolution Imaging Sonar) sonar imaging fish counter was deployed in the river Deveron on the Montcoffer beat towards the lower end of the river in 2023, with weather and river conditions enabling it to operate from 24th February to 19th October. This state-of-the-art counter uses sonar technology to generate video footage of passing fish, enabling the team to build a picture of the total run size of returning wild Atlantic salmon and has started to create a baseline on which to assess how the population responds to restoration efforts over the long term. Unlike conventional video camera counters, sonar counters will also work in coloured and cloudy water too, as well as in the dark.

The video footage generated by the ARIS sonar counter is continuously recorded and must undergo subsequent analysis to identify and count fish. This is conducted manually using specialist software allowing the footage to be reviewed and saved. Differentiating between trout and salmon is an important task, and fortunately the ARIS sonar counter provides the team with the high-resolution imaging necessary to take a measurement of each individual fish which has passed by.

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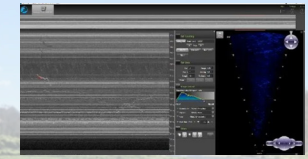
Initially the team has proceeded on the basis of fish over 55cm being regarded as salmon. This measurement is based on scale readings taken from angler-caught fish and, while this measurement might exclude the smallest salmon and include some larger brown trout and sea trout, the team is working on developing a model that will better estimate the degree of overlap between the length of salmon and trout.

Between 24th February and 19th October 2023, 5,775 fish

'This state-of-the-art counter uses sonar technology to generate video footage of passing fish'

(>55cm length) were counted moving upstream and 1,101 fish (>55cm length) were counted moving downstream, equating to a net count of 4,674 salmon migrating upstream past the ARIS counter. This should be considered a minimum count as some fish will have been missed during the 25 days when there was no footage due to floods and power supply issues and the 3 partial days when the image was obscured.

A snap shot of the ARIS fish software interface used for processing the sonar footage. The area on the lefthand side of the image shows the echogram signature of a 74cm salmon and below it a small stationary trout.



View downstream showing the ARIS sonar counter location immediately upstream of an historic croy

To compensate for these inoperable periods, 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 estimated count to 5,600 returning adult salmon, with a range of 5,464 -5,753. Using this total run estimate, the 2023 rod catch of 766 salmon on the Deveron would equate to a rod catch rate of 14%.

The Project Deveron partnership is delighted with this early success in the programme, made possible by a great deal of hard work and collaboration by the teams involved, both out in the field and through desk-based data analysis. The ARIS counter deployment in 2023 has produced footage that has allowed the first ever accurately recorded returning adult salmon count for the River Deveron to be achieved, providing a key baseline against which the restoration programme can measure its impact and success over time. Other monitoring methods include PIT (passive integrated transponder) tagging of juvenile salmon to understand changing marine survival rates, as well as wider environmental monitoring and we will provide updates on these in the future.

As we look ahead, the team is confident that the technical



The ARIS sonar counter was given an upgraded power supply, support structure to better withstand floods, and improved internet connection in 2024.

issues have been rectified for the 2024 season, where the counter has been operating continually since 5th March, following improvements made to the power supply, support structure to better withstand floods, and an upgraded internet connection. We look forward to providing the 2024 returning adult count next year.

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative update

Over the past 6 years we have been part of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI), a partnership project funded through the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) and managed by NatureScot. This project aims to work with volunteers, land managers, and local communities to control invasive non-native species along riversides in northern Scotland.

As of January 2024, we have appointed two new project officers: Lewis Barr, covering the Deveron river catchment, and Robert Paylor, covering the Ugie and Ythan river catchments. With support from landowners and volunteers, they have been actively conducting seasonal treatment for Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, and Himalayan Balsam, alongside year-round monitoring and trapping of American Mink.

This year, treatment of Giant Hogweed began in late April. Throughout the summer months, we successfully covered all known areas across the Deveron, Ugie, and Ythan catchments. Although there were several locations with large infestations, the combined efforts of contractors and dedicated volunteers helped limit the spread. Across most sites, we have observed significant reductions in plant abundance, resulting in a reduced need for treatment each year.

The Giant Hogweed treatment along the Rosy Burn continues through the Rosy Burn Landowner Partnership, with further improvements seen in the burn. The grazing trial at Macduff has officially ended, but we continue to work with the landowner to manage the site through grazing and cutting.

Once all known areas of Giant



**Lewis Barr
on the Giant
Hogweed attack**



Hogweed were treated, project officers shifted focus to controlling Himalayan Balsam, allowing us to engage local communities. Himalayan Balsam removal is suitable for volunteers of all ages and abilities, and several large groups carried out top-down control efforts. Although not all areas were treated, we anticipate that this work will reduce the effort required next year.

Japanese Knotweed was treated in multiple locations across all catchments. Fortunately, our catchments are not heavily infested with Knotweed, so we were able to treat all known locations, with a marked reduction in plant presence from previous years.

American Mink trapping continues with a reliable network of 58 volunteers monitoring 79 mink rafts and traps across the catchments. In 2023, 16 mink were trapped, and as of September 2024, 12 mink have been captured. We are

consistently recruiting new volunteers to expand and strengthen our network. This year, we introduced electronic devices called 'Remotis' on many of our mink traps, which notify us when a trap is triggered, eliminating the need for daily checks. We aim to deploy more of these devices to support our mink eradication efforts.

As always, we extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in the control of invasive non-native species. Your contributions are essential to achieving the progress we're seeing, and we are grateful for your continued support.

If you'd like to find out more about the SISI project you can visit our website: www.invasivespecies.scot. Please report sightings of our target species to Lewis (07483 334133) or Robert (07483 319448).

**For further information please contact
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