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THE DEVERON FLYER

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Newsletter 36, winter 2019

Welcome to the 36th newsletter of the Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust.

The 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'.

Greeting the season

Opening Ceremony
10am, February 11th
Turriff Angling Association

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board (RDevDSFB) and The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (DBIT) are delighted to announce the opening of the Deveron salmon season in association with The Deveron (Single Malt).

The Morison Trophy will be presented at the river opening ceremony on the 11th February at 10am, Turriff Angling Association lodge (by kind permission of Turriff Angling Association) and the opening ceremony will follow thereafter.

Special guest, Mr James Stokoe (right, centre) will present the Morison Trophy and officially open the salmon season with a dram of 18y/o Deveron malt. James is no stranger to big fish or indeed trophies as winner of the BBC's fishing programme, Earth's Wildest Waters – The Big Fish/Big Catch. James is also well known for successfully guiding anglers on the River Tyne to many salmon and is currently working on a new film project called Britain's Iconic Fish.



Mr Richard Breakell, winner of the Morison Trophy for 2018; will make the first cast of the season. Mr Breakell secured the trophy by landing a 22 lbs spring salmon (pictured) from

Muireisk Fishings. Thanks goes to Henderson's Country Sports for sponsoring the salmon rod that will be presented to Richard for carefully releasing the winning salmon.

2019 - International Year of the Salmon

The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) is an initiative of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. It aims to inform and stimulate outreach and research that aspires to establish the conditions necessary to ensure the resilience of salmon and people throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Over the coming year the collaboration will bring people together, share and develop knowledge, raise awareness and take action.

The extraordinary life histories of salmon in the Northern Hemisphere exposes them to many environmental and human-caused factors influencing their health and abundance. Partners will raise awareness of what humans can do to ensure salmon and their habitats are conserved and restored.



The IYS aims to:

- develop a better understanding of the factors driving salmon abundance and the challenges facing them;
- encourage scientists, decision-makers and the public to work towards solutions that overcome the challenges salmon face;
- support conservation and restoration strategies to help manage salmon in the face of climate change;
- enable collaboration among organisations and

researchers in countries throughout the Northern Hemisphere;

- inspire and support a new generation of researchers and managers, and conservationists;
- help create a greater awareness of the ecological, social, cultural and economic value of salmon; and
- support research and conservation of salmon species and their environments throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

2019 is the focal year of the International Year of the Salmon with the intention that outreach and research will continue through to 2022.

Please visit: www.yearofthesalmon.org to find out more.

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) - Update

The sunny weather of 2018 was good for invasive plants but also enabled all known areas of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed to be treated, with a follow up treatment where necessary. Both these plants can be found within the catchment but problem areas are few and far between thanks to the control efforts of the DBIT, proprietors, ghillies, angling clubs and volunteers over the past decade. Good effort was made with Himalayan Balsam, including a very successful Corporate Social Responsibility day with Chivas Regal staff at Forglen. In total, a mammoth 87 volunteers (including proprietors and ghillies) helped with invasive species control contributing to around 1170 hours of invasive species control between May and November.

On the American Mink front, 27 were caught and dispatched with the majority of those from coastal areas between Macduff and New Aberdour. Across the northeast we had a total of 66 mink rafts adopted by 39 volunteers who contributed roughly 1800 hours monitoring rafts or traps between April and November.

Outreach and education has been successful with 14



Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped with invasive species control in 2018. If you would like to help out with invasive species work – by reporting sightings, volunteering, adopting a mink raft/trap, helping at outreach events or some other way – please drop Al a line: alreeve@deveron.org

events and shows attended and we have been developing partnerships with numerous groups such as Branching Out, Turning Point and Alcohol and Drug Action. We have also organised pesticide application training (PA1 and PA6AW) for 17 volunteers who will help with hogweed and knotweed control in future years.

Looking forward to 2019 we are beginning our preparations for hogweed control and have a few exciting developments in the pipeline! We have been forming a couple of landowner partnerships in the Deveron and Ythan

catchments with the aim of landowners collaborating to fund a contractor to tackle Giant Hogweed along individual burns. We will also be expanding the hogweed-eating sheep approach to a new and visible site on the Deveron – more details in the next newsletter!

On top of the invasive species control we will also be doing some education sessions at local schools, an introduction to angling event at Artloch Fishery (May 11th) and attending a number of local events. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for information on any events!

2018 catches

The total salmon rod catch at 486 was down 64% from 1,345 in the previous year and once again below the long-term average of 2,437. Of the 486 salmon and grilse caught, 90% were returned. Spring salmon catches (to the end of May) were 88, a decrease of 1% from the previous year.

The sea trout catch was 207, a decrease of 46% from the 386 caught in 2017. A commendable 99% were returned by rods in line with the Deveron Angling Code. 15 beats recorded brown trout totaling 737. The fixed engine (nets) stations did not operate during 2018.

Conservation Status Assessment for the 2019 Angling Season

Following significant changes to the Scottish Governments salmon conservation assessment model, the River Deveron has been reclassified as Category 1 for the 2019 season. The new classification states that exploitation is currently thought to be sustainable, therefore no additional management action by government is currently required and recognises the effectiveness of existing non-statutory local management interventions.

In line with the new categorisation, the RDevDSFB has reviewed the Deveron Angling Code for salmon and trout and have recommended the code be unchanged, to reflect the poor catches experienced in recent years.

It is again important to highlight that it is illegal to take any salmon from 11th February to 31st March (inclusive). Anglers should use appropriate tackle to ensure the quick and safe release of any salmon caught, e.g. spinning lures used should have one single set of hooks with a maximum size 4 crimped or barbless.

The Water of Philorth (coastal) has been classified as a Category 3 river, which requires all salmon to be returned by law throughout the 2019 season.



Peatland Restoration – Upper Deveron

The Dorenell wind farm has completed the restoration of over 100 ha of blanket bog in the Upper Deveron, as part of its habitat management plan commitments, which has involved the insertion of over 2000 peat dams. The re-watering effects have shown immediate benefits and will restore an area of what was highly drained peat into ecologically important blanket bog. Peat bogs act like giant sponges, absorbing precipitation and storing water, which reduces peak floods and help maintains more steady, prolonged flows in the headwaters and main stem. The restoration work will help provide more favorable conditions for juvenile fish and also angling.

There are grants available from SNH Peat Action for landowners who are interested in peatland restoration.

The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board

Deveron Angling Code for Salmon and Trout 2019

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

- From 11th February to 31st May (inclusive) **all** salmon to be returned. It is illegal to take any salmon (dead or alive) from 11th February to 31st March (inclusive). *The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board will donate one bottle of Scotch Whisky per angler, for safely returning a spring salmon between the 1st April and 31st May (Follow set claim procedure and Call 01466 711388 to claim)*
Strictly over 18s only.
- From 1st June to 31st October (Inclusive), weekly rods may retain one salmon or grilse per rod per week. Day rods to return all salmon. *Anglers are asked to observe the Board's aspiration that all hen fish, and any cock salmon over 10lbs be returned.*
Therefore, the Board requests that only male fish under 10lbs be retained.

Sea Trout

- All sea trout to be returned throughout the season. *The guidance on sea trout will be in place until stocks recover to acceptable levels.*

Brown Trout

- From 15th March to 6th October (Inclusive), all Brown Trout under 10 inches in length to be returned. No more than two brown trout per rod per week to be retained

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.

Spinning lures should have only one single set of hooks with a maximum-sized four crimped or barbless.

Anglers are reminded that it is illegal to sell rod-caught salmon or sea trout.

Injured or damaged fish out with the above limits should be handed to the proprietor.

*All farmed salmon and pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorboscha*) **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 711388) or your beat ghillie/manager/agent.

For further information please contact:

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The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust is a registered charity. No. SC 032131