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THE DEVERON FLYER

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Newsletter 31, spring 2016

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'.

Opening winner



The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board & Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust are delighted to announce the opening of the river

Deveron salmon season and the presentation of the Morison Trophy. The trophy will be presented at the river opening ceremony on 11th February at 10am, Turriff AA lodge, Turriff. The river opening ceremony in association with The Deveron (Single Malt) will follow. The Morison Trophy will be officially presented by special guest and golfer, Mr Paul Lawrie MBE (pictured). Mr Lawrie was winner of The Open in 1999 and a member of Team Europe who famously won the Ryder Cup in 2012. Mr Lawrie has also been given the honour of blessing the river with a dram of Deveron 18 y/o, where, thereafter, the first cast of the season will be taken by Mr Craig Wyness, winner of the Morison Trophy for 2015.



What a catch!

Mr Craig Wyness from Peterhead has been awarded the Morison Trophy for 2015. This is the second time Mr Wyness has secured the trophy after previously winning in 2012. The award was given for his fly-caught 30.5lbs salmon from Upper Netherdale. In winning the trophy, Mr Wyness will also be presented with a Vision salmon fly-rod, sponsored by Turriff Tackle and Trophies (www.fishingthedeveron.co.uk) for releasing the fish, a limited edition fly box and bottle of The Deveron (single malt), courtesy of John Dewar & Sons Ltd.

Smolt tracking project 2016

The River Deveron DSFB (RDevDSFB) & Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (DBIT), in partnership with the Moray Firth Trout Initiative (MFTI) are to undertake a salmon smolt tracking project this spring. Smolts is the name given to young salmon (1-4 yrs old) moving down river to sea. The project will investigate the degree of smolt mortality between the upper Deveron and the estuary.



Working with Marcus Walters from the MFTI and Matt Newton from Glasgow University, the DBIT & RDevDSFB will embark on a smolt tracking project this

spring (2016). Using rotary screw traps operated in the upper Deveron, 50 smolts will be caught and tagged with acoustic ID tags. Each tag emits a unique high frequency pulse, identifying the specific fish when detected by a receiver. Eleven receivers will be deployed along the length of the Deveron to track the downstream migration of the smolts through the river as far as the estuary at Banff.

This project will provide a huge amount of information to the DBIT and RDevDSFB on the migration and survival of smolts and should ultimately help to ensure Deveron smolts have an improved passage to sea. The project will quantify the proportion of salmon smolts making it out to sea. Measure the speed of downstream migrating smolts and identify any bottlenecks that are either delaying the smolt migration or specific locations that are resulting in smolt mortality.

At the 2015 RAFTS Conference Matt Newton (Glasgow University IBIS PhD candidate) gave an alarming presentation that found more than 85% of the smolts from the rivers Finn

and Mourne, on the Northern Irish border, never made it beyond Lough Foyle and out to sea. Although previous studies on the Tweed have found high levels of smolt mortality (44%) at river barriers, Matt Newton's study found very little impact from in river barriers but significant levels of mortality once the smolts reached the estuary.

Given the current poor numbers of Atlantic salmon returning to Scottish rivers to spawn, this level of smolt mortality is potentially very significant. The low numbers of salmon returning to our rivers is most likely driven by high levels of marine mortality which is often attributed to poor marine feeding, the Greenland fishery and pelagic trawlers. Previously the DBIT & RDevDSFB had felt there was very little that they could do about these far off marine pressures. However, if the level of smolt mortality seen in the Foyle or Tweed is potentially taking place in the river Deveron and immediate marine environment, then there may be management measures that the DBIT & RDevDSFB can deploy to ease their passage and improve the survival of smolts leaving the river.

The RDevDSFB & DBIT membership have kindly sponsored 40 tags and Muireisk Fishings have sponsored an additional 10 tags. The tags are very costly so the DBIT & MFTI would like to thank all supporters for funding this ambitious and ground breaking project.



Wild about salmon

The Scottish Government has now confirmed a number of changes to regulate the killing of wild salmon in Scotland. Following further consideration, Scottish Ministers have now confirmed that they will be progressing with the below salmon regulations from 1st April 2016:

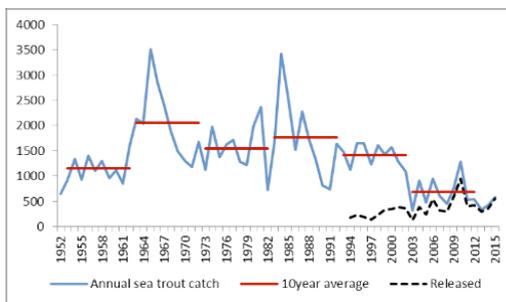
- Killing outwith estuary limits by net fisheries will be prohibited for a period of three years due to the mixed stock nature of the fishery and the limited data on the stock composition of the catch. This will be reviewed after three years.
- The killing of Atlantic salmon will be managed on an

annual basis by categorising fishery districts in relation to their conservation status and with accompanying guidance and/or regulation.

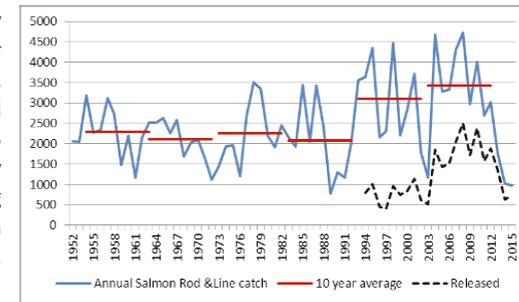
For the 2016 season the Scottish Government has classified the Deveron as a Category 1 river, whereby current levels of salmon exploitation are thought to be sustainable. The River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board aims to preserve this classification and ask that the River Deveron Conservation Code 2016 be adhered to by all anglers. See back page for the full Code or go to www.deveron.org.

Salmon and grilse 2015 catches influenced by river flow

The 2015 salmon and grilse rod catch was down from 1021 in the previous year to 980, making it the second lowest salmon rod catch since records began and well below the long-term average of 2468. Of the 980 salmon and grilse caught, 75% were returned. Spring salmon catches decreased from the previous year to 44 salmon by end of May, with 72% returned to the river, aided by the Chivas Regal spring salmon conservation scheme. The Deveron salmon and grilse rod catch has been shown in a study by Marine Scotland (2005), to be



particularly influenced by river flow and this has certainly been a major factor in the low spring and summer catches experienced locally over the last three years. The sea trout catch increased by 41% from 412 to a total of 584, of which 95% were returned. A total of 1036 salmon and grilse, and 204 sea trout were landed by the coastal net-fishery. From 2016 onwards net fishing out-with estuary limits will be prohibited by the Scottish Government for a period of three years due to the mixed stock nature of the fishery.





Spring salmon reward scheme

Help conserve Deveron spring salmon by returning your catch to the river and claim* a bottle of Chivas Regal 12 year old Scotch whisky (70cl). To claim call the trust on 01466 711388 or visit Turriff Tackle and Trophies.



Chivas Brothers Ltd have again very generously sponsored our spring salmon reward scheme for 2016. Any angler safely returning a salmon caught between 1st April and the 31st May, can follow the set claim procedure below and receive a bottle of Chivas Regal 12-year-old Scotch whisky (70cl). Strictly over 18s only – limited to one bottle per angler.

To claim call **01466 711388**

Claim Procedure

1. Take a scale sample (6-10 scales from behind and below dorsal fin) from salmon, place in scale packet/dry envelope and record details of fish to allow fish to be verified.
2. Take photo of fish (If possible)
3. Return salmon to river unharmed.

River Deveron Conservation Code for salmon and trout 2016

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 guidelines during the forthcoming season:



Salmon & Grilse

- From 11th February to 31st May (Inclusive) all salmon to be returned.
Under the Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Time and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 no person may retain any salmon caught by rod and line between 11th February and 31st March (inclusive).
In conjunction with Chivas Brothers, The DBI Rivers Charitable Trust will donate one bottle of Chivas Regal 12 Year Old Scotch Whisky (70cl) per angler, for safely returning a spring salmon between the 1st April and 31st May (Follow set claim procedure and Call 01466 711 388 to claim) (Strictly over 18s only).
- From 1st June to 31st October (Inclusive), anglers may retain one salmon or grilse per rod per day with a maximum of two fish per rod per week
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 for a minimum of three years or 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 2 brown trout per rod per week to be retained
- *Release all stale and unseasonable fish (Gravid fish, Kelts, Smolts, over wintered finnock).*
- *All foul hooked fish to be returned.*
- *Only knotless landing nets to be used - no gaffs or tailers.*
- *It is illegal to fish with prawns, shrimps or salmon roe throughout the district 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 fish 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 Gillie/Manager/Agent.*

For further information please contact us at:

The Offices, Avochie, Rothiemay, Huntly, Aberdeenshire AB54 7YY Telephone/fax: 01466 711388; email: richiemiller@deveron.org or visit the Trust's website www.deveron.org
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