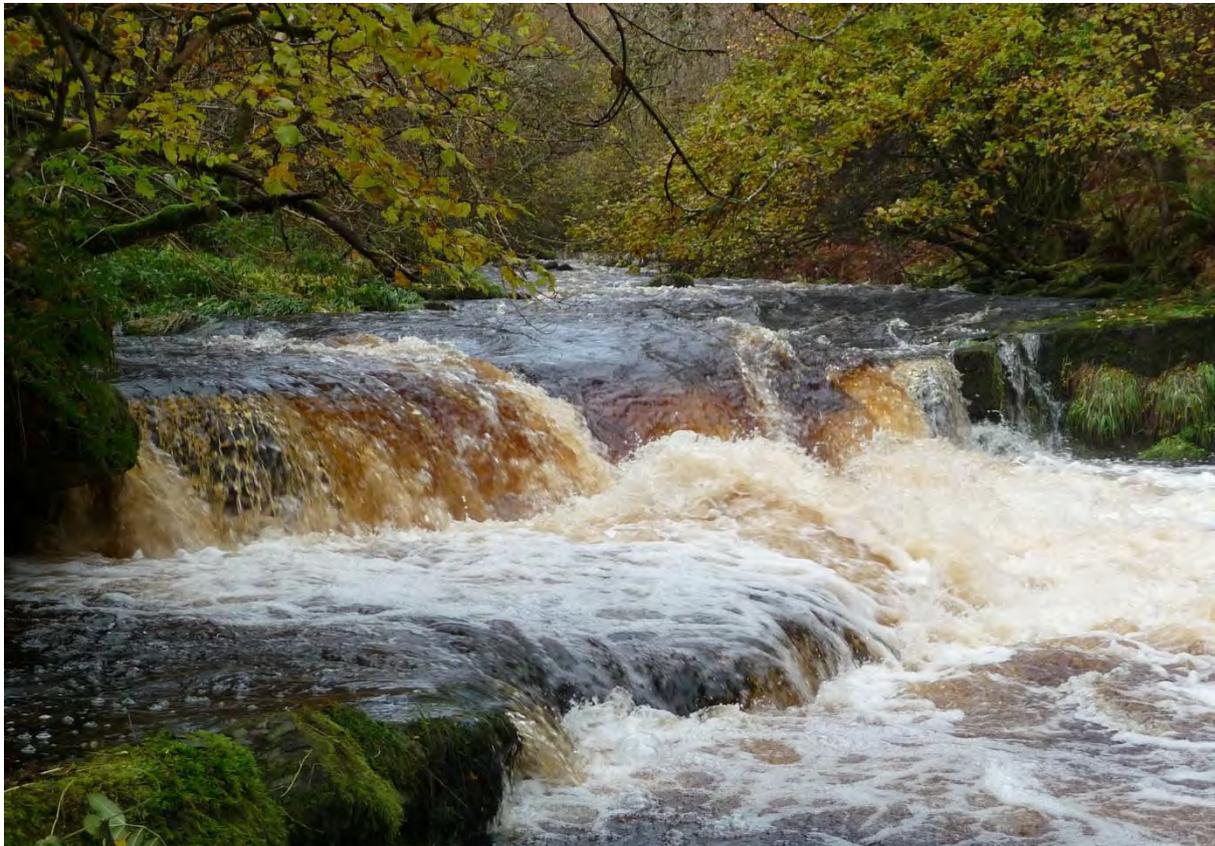


**THE  
FORTH DISTRICT  
SALMON FISHERY  
BOARD**

**Annual Report**



**2010**

# The Forth District Salmon Fishery Board

## **MEMBERS ELECTED BY UPPER PROPRIETORS**

(Chairman) J.M.B. Baillie-Hamilton – Cambusmore

(Vice-Chairman) D.A.J. Dickson – Lanrick

Mrs. F. Simpson – Mandatory for the Crown Estates

G.A. Cameron – Leny

## **MEMBERS ELECTED BY LOWER PROPRIETORS**

D. Jones – Mandatory for Stirling Council

J. McGarvie – Airth

## **CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

H. Shaw – Salmon Anglers' Representative

F. Howieson – Salmon Anglers' Representative

## **DIRECTOR & CLERK**

Patrick Fotheringham: The Lagg Aberfeldy, Perthshire, PH15 2EE

Tel: 07788 416788

## **SUPERINTENDENT**

Bill Cunningham

Tel: 01786 842122 or Mob: 07887 835549

**[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)**

# Chairman's Report

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

**Mike Baillie-Hamilton** – Chairman FDSFB & Vice-Chairman RFFT

The biggest news to report this year is to do with the River Forth Fisheries Trust which has expanded faster than we might have hoped when we created it. The Board is delighted with the progress that has been made under Patrick Fotheringham's direction and we are very pleased that core funding from the Board is beginning to lever in fresh money on several Trust projects.

Whilst the Board and Trust remain legally separate and different beasts, the shared Director and overlapping board/trustee membership means that the two have worked most effectively together and I am convinced the proprietors have had good value out of the support the Board has provided to the Trust. The same structure is used in most board/trust areas in Scotland and the combined Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB) and Rivers and Fisheries Trust Scotland (RAFTS) annual report also tells the same story of co-operation reaping rewards nationally. Their joint report contains a wealth of interesting articles covering genetic research to legal action and is well worth reading. Any proprietor wishing a copy should contact our Director.

Whilst the early part of the economic recession led to a slight rise in illegal fishing activity, the continuation of quiet economic times appears to have had a more significant effect and Bill Cunningham and his assistants have had a noticeably busier year on the fisheries protection front. The Board is particularly grateful to the volunteers who form an important part of our team. We continue to work more closely with the police and this has proved very effective in helping us tackle poaching more effectively.

Patrick Fotheringham has dealt with a wide variety of issues during the year in a way which has allowed us to make excellent progress and take very significant steps forward. However, given the vast scale of the task in front of us, there inevitably remain areas where we will be seeking to make further progress and I would like to highlight two examples that show both where we have made strides forward and where we have been frustrated. Despite the recession SEPA has found money in its Restoration Fund to help us to carry out work in easing, passing or removing barriers to fish passage. This is of fundamental importance in improving and restoring salmon and sea trout runs in the District and during the year several professional studies of barriers were conducted. These should soon result in concrete action on barriers across the District. However, in contrast, in the summer of 2010, a significant number of small even-sized rainbow trout were caught in the vicinity of Callander. We reported this to the Scottish Government as a fish farm escape. However, despite there being only one plausible source of these fish, Marine Scotland was unable to pinpoint blame, which was both surprising and frustrating. This is one example of the many pressures exerted on fish stocks within the District and we will continue to do all we can to mitigate the risks they pose in the future.

The year saw the first use of the new five-yearly valuations and, although we reduced the poundage and some proprietors have paid smaller levies, a few larger proprietors have had steep rises. This has fed through to the overall Board's income rising. Our accounts show a modest deficit of approximately £3,000 on a turnover of £141,000 for the year. Both figures are marginally better than budgeted. Overall your Board consider both the annual financial result and the reserves to be satisfactory.

# The River Forth Fisheries Trust

## Chairman's Report

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

**Dennis Toon** – Chairman RFFT

Following its formation in 2008 the Trust is now very active across the District. Its relationship with the Forth District Salmon Fisheries Board is excellent and the two organisations are working closely together in the interests of the District's fisheries and fish stocks.

Joanna Girvan joined the team as the Trust's Biologist in September. She brings with her considerable expertise. Joanna's knowledge, application and commitment are making a substantial contribution to Trust activity. She is accredited for electro-fishing and can now be supported by volunteers as may be required when conducting surveys as twelve volunteers from various organisations have also received formal electro-fishing training. Additionally, Ben Tyser who spent time with the Trust last year is now working with us again, in conjunction with RAFTS working on plans to control the spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), a rapidly developing threat to our rivers. Through our close, productive and co-operative relationship with the Stirling Council Fisheries Team we are jointly training a Fisheries Apprentice who in due course will further strengthen our collective resource. Sub-catchment management groups are now established representing the fisheries interests for each of the District's rivers and are tasked with implementing the Fishery Management Plan for their particular river. These groups are the primary interface between angling organisations and the Trust.

The Calair Burn has been subject of a detailed survey in the year and for 2011 it will be a Trust priority to set in progress a long awaited project to enhance fish passage through/over the Calair Falls, thus enabling exploitation of upstream habitat by salmon.

In association with SEPA and a number of angling organisations within the District, our Director Patrick Fotheringham is making excellent progress in planning, developing river restoration programmes and pursuing grant funding. These plans will result in either removal of obstructions in several of the rivers or the addition of fish passes where removal is not a practical option. These are major high value programmes and once established the active participation of management groups from the angling organisations will be essential.

Ben Tyser has produced an excellent management plan for the control of INNS. This plan was widely distributed for consultation and the consultation phase has been completed. Ben, on behalf of the Trust, is now working with RAFTS to secure the necessary grant funding to implement the plan across the District. Early work by way of a pilot programme is expected to commence on the Avon shortly. Separately, through funding and under management by the Ochils Landscape Partnership programme, a three year control project will be carried out over part of the River Devon, starting within the next twelve months.

Joanna Girvan led the educational programme 'Fish in the Classroom' during the first quarter of 2011 in nine Clackmannanshire and two Stirling Primary Schools. This very popular programme, much enjoyed by the children, is now being presented by the Trust at the request of Clackmannanshire Council Education Department. In addition to funds from the Trust, contributions were made by Clackmannan(shire?) Council, the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership and The Devon Angling

Association. The Trust is actively seeking long term funding for the programme with the prospect of running it annually in Clackmannanshire and extending it into a number of Stirling and Falkirk Primary Schools.

Funding of the Trust's activities in the current financial climate is difficult and it remains essential that we continue to develop strong partnerships with grant funding bodies such as SNH, SEPA, LEADER etc. Developing these partnerships will enable access to funds on a project-by-project basis. This process can be very time consuming with no guarantee of a successful outcome. It is therefore important to focus on specific activities and not to over-commit the physical resource to which we currently have access.

From the fishing perspective 2010 was a good year across all of our rivers and for salmon in particular. Most had excellent autumn runs and the Trust is pleased that an increasing number of salmon fishermen in the District are supporting the salmon and sea trout conservation measures.

## **Director's Report**

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

### **Patrick Fotheringham – Director FDSFB & RFFT**

The year to 31st Jan 2011 has been an extremely busy one and this report is filled with snippets of information concerning a large number of issues and projects that are going on in the ten sub-catchments of what is Scotland's third largest fisheries District. Inevitably, there is far too little space to go into any level of detail in these pages. If proprietors would like further information then please feel free to contact the Board's office at any time and we will do our best to fill you in - it would also be good to hear ideas, suggestions and views as to how we should take projects forward in the future. Additionally, there is a wealth of more detailed information on various web sites and I refer you to the web addresses at the top of each of the articles where you will find a great deal of material.

Given that most of the project work carried out by both the Board and the Trust is highlighted elsewhere in this report, I will confine myself to discussing the re-organisation and expansion of the Board/Trust set-up as the platform that we now operate from is very different to that of a year or two ago.

The various pieces in this joint report are evidence that the Board and the River Forth Fisheries Trust are working very closely together to deliver integrated, all-species freshwater fisheries management across the District. The support that the Board has given the fledgling Trust has allowed it to grow rapidly and 2010 we were able to take on both a Biologist in Dr. Joanna Girvan, and an Invasive Species Officer in Ben Tyser. Both of them have hit the ground running and are doing a superb job in getting things moving with regard to project delivery. In last year's report I highlighted the need for a scientific, evidence-based approach to fisheries management and this is the underpinning philosophy on which all of our activities are built.

The third leg of the Forth fisheries management "tripod" is supplied by the District's biggest proprietor, namely, Stirling Council. While in the past relations between the Board and the Council have at times been strained, we currently enjoy a close symbiotic partnership that is delivering great benefits to both parties. You will see in the Forth and Teith report that the Council's fisheries team has taken huge strides in improving the way it runs its fishery. In addition, it has offered excellent support by providing office accommodation and various other benefits to the Trust's new staff. The fact that our Biologist and

Invasive Species Officer have been given desks within Stirling Council's Fisheries Team means that the Trust and Council are now well equipped to pull together towards common goals and this is now happening and the Board and Trust would like to thank the Council for their exceptional support. The Trust and the Council have jointly taken on a fisheries management apprentice who is helping with numerous aspects of the Trust and Council's work and is providing excellent support for the biologist by way of an extra pair of hands for field work.

The relationship between the Board and the Trust is at the heart of everything we are trying to do. The Board, as it must do, is retaining its statutory fisheries protection role and has retained the role of Bill Cunningham the Superintendent who bailiffs the fisheries of the District. He does this, ably supported by his volunteer bailiffs and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for the work they do throughout the year. However, the Board has passed its wider fisheries management role to the new Trust and makes a substantial financial contribution so that that part of its remit is covered effectively. The Trust is better placed to provide science led fisheries management and I believe the Board gets great value for money through this contribution.

We have already touched on how important the role of volunteers is on the bailiffing front. However, this is mirrored on the fisheries management front with groups of volunteers on each of the District's sub-catchments providing close linkage to river-specific issues on the ground. As the management groups grow in stature it is hoped that they will take on a more and more important role in fisheries management planning and delivery.

The final piece in the matrix is made up of the external agencies and partner organisations who contribute either financially or in-kind to what we are trying to do. These range from Marine Scotland, SEPA and SNH, to the umbrella fisheries management organisations the Association of Salmon Fisheries Boards (ASFB) and the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS). We cannot hope to be effective without building strong relationships with these partners and we would like to thank them for the contributions they make.

Finally, I should say a word or two about the way forward. There are three key areas that we want to drive forward in 2011. The first is to continue to tackle the many obstacles and barriers to fish migration on the District's rivers. It has repeatedly been shown that the best bang-for-buck in terms of stock restoration and enhancement is through opening up habitat and giving salmon and sea trout access to areas of catchments that have been closed to them by the erection of barriers. We will be working closely with SEPA and RAFTS to take this forward and it is likely that the first physical works in this program will commence in 2011.

The second area where we hope to make progress is on tackling the District's problems with invasive species. Ben Tyser is has now produced a District-wide Invasive Species Plan and the challenge for 2011 is to put the plan into action. This is no small task and the sums of money that must be raised if action is to make a difference will be extremely large. However, we are some way down the road of pulling this huge project together and through working with RAFTS are optimistic that we can deliver.

Finally, it is of paramount importance that the District's sub-catchment fisheries management plans are completed and that the river-specific issues that come out of them will be brought into prioritised lists for action. This process will be completed in 2011.

I feel I should take this opportunity to wish you luck in your fishing exploits in the season ahead. Let's hope that 2011 will show that the upturn in the Forth's catches in 2010 can be sustained.

# Biologist's Report

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

**Dr. Joanna Girvan – Biologist RFFT**

## *Fish in the Classroom*

In early 2011, the new Trust biologist carried out the Fish in the Classroom project for 12 primary classes in Clackmannanshire, two in Stirling, Doune Primary School and Cramond Primary School. The biologist was supported by Stirling Council in sourcing equipment and setting tanks up in the classrooms.

The project commenced with a colourful presentation to each class covering the salmon and sea trout life cycle, different kinds of fish (native and introduced), predators and prey. Then the eggs (250) were introduced to the tank and the teachers and children shown how to look after them. The tanks were divided in two with a pump circulating water between each side. The children had to replace ice bottles in the back half of the tanks to keep the temperature low enough for the eggs in the front as well as using a pipette provided to remove dead eggs. The biologist also produced workbooks for the children, following up on the information in the presentation and including a trout diary where drawings and notes could be used to track the development of the alevins. Some classes made murals of the life cycle and put these on the wall next to the tanks.

The biologist kept in contact with the classes and was able to deal with any problems as they arose. The teachers kept the biologist informed as to the progress of the alevins and the disappearance of the yolk sacs. Survival rates were extremely good, most of the classes releasing over 200 of the original 250 eggs. Once the yolk sacs had disappeared, the fry were taken to a nearby stream or loch and released. The sites were all within walking distance of the schools and the fry were allowed to make their own way out of the buckets to cheers from the children. One class even performed a song they had written in honour of their fry. A licence application was made to Marine Scotland for all of the release sites.

Since the success of the project, there has been a large amount of interest from other parts of the district to roll out the project to a greater number of schools. Tyne, Avon, Almond and Allan Water anglers are interested in bringing the project to schools in their catchments next year to help raise awareness of conservation and the importance of catch and release!

The project brought in enough revenue to the Trust in 2011 to purchase a new generator electro-fishing kit.

## *Planned electro-fishing for 2011*

While there will be some core and spatial electro-fishing monitoring carried out across the District, there will be a strong focus on project related survey. Discussions are taking place with the various angling groups to determine suitable sites; so far there has been emphasis on including sites and controls to determine the impact of barriers (Almond, Tyne, Bannockburn, Allan Water, Esk, Biel Water), siltation (Allan Water) and flood alleviation schemes (Avon) on fish distribution - particularly juvenile salmonids.

All of the sub-catchments in the district will have some coverage of electro-fishing, with around three days being allocated to each river between June and September. Depending on the type of survey used, it is anticipated that four to seven sites may be covered per day.

### *Fisheries Management Plans*

The initial drafts of the Fisheries Management Plans will be completed by the end of May. Each will follow the same template, but there is a lot of variation in the amount of information available for each sub-catchment. Some groups have already completed comprehensive plans (Almond, Water of Leith, Carron); others are now being commenced with the help of the appropriate management groups (Tyne, Forth and Teith). Following a summer season of electro-fishing and site visits, the Trust biologist will be much better placed to produce final versions of each plan in the autumn. The Trust has acquired a functioning GIS which means that mapping of the District and sub-catchments is now possible to a high specification.

### *Commercial activities*

Scottish Natural Heritage has asked the Trusts to carry out routine electro-fishing monitoring of SACs designated for fish species. With the help of Stirling Council, the Trust biologist will carry out an estimated seven days of electro-fishing for this purpose on the River Teith SAC. There is also the possibility of further work for the Trust from this contract in the form of a co-ordinating role and/or adult fish monitoring role.

The Trust has been contracted to carry out a baseline electro-fishing survey on the Annet Burn in support of a mini hydro scheme proposed for the site. The Trust does not have any concerns for the impact of the proposed scheme on migratory fish.

A similar sized contract has been awarded to the Trust to electrofish the main stem of the River Teith and a small side channel to help monitor and reduce the impact of a pond level lowering project by Cambusmore quarries.

Another quote for electro-fishing work has been provided to a wind farm company but has not yet been awarded.

### *Mini hydro schemes*

The number of mini hydro schemes being proposed for small rivers within the Forth District is set to rise rapidly. The Trust biologist has attended site visits for four proposed schemes recently. These are the Muckle Burn, Calair Burn, Inverlochlarig Burn and Annet Burn. The Annet Burn and Inverlochlarig Burn are not considered to be problematic as the depleted reaches are above the limit of salmonid migration. The Muckle Burn is a worry as this is an important spawning burn for migratory salmonids and we really do not know what the impact is likely to be – especially with reference to wetted area of stream bed. The Trust has objected to the mini hydro proposed for the Calair Burn because the environmental report did not seem to consider the salmon population or assess the impact of the scheme in reducing the area of prime spring salmon spawning and juvenile habitat available. The Trust has also been consulted regarding a proposed hydro scheme for the Bannockburn.

### *Barrier assessment training*

SEPA has devised a Barrier Assessment Methodology that provides a standardised way of determining how passable an obstacle is likely to be for different sizes and species of fish at low flows. SEPA restoration funding will shortly no longer be available to work on barriers that have not been assessed using this protocol. It is intended that the Trusts will undertake these assessments (rather than commercial companies). The Trust biologist attended a three-day training course in April 2011 and is now competent in using the assessment methodology. In addition to this method supporting barrier easement applications, it can also be used to help with other management decisions such as the difficult task of

improving appropriate access on the Calair Burn. The weir on the Calair Burn is likely to be passable to small fish, but less passable to large fish such as spring salmon. The high falls above the weir, however, is unlikely to be passable to all but the largest salmon. If the weir could be made passable to large fish, we could see a higher number of returning spring salmon in the upper burn. If the barrier assessment were carried out and could confirm this, more weight and justification could be lent to this particular management decision.

#### *Riverfly training*

Several angling clubs in the District have organised riverfly training courses with the help of SEPA and the Riverfly Partnership. The Almond was the most recent, taking place on 4th April and was very well attended. Carron and Slammanan anglers have also run the course. There is considerable interest in other areas of the district to carry out this training (Tyne and Allan Water). Club members each undertake to carry out monthly sampling throughout the year at one site that is convenient to them. Sampling involves one three-minute kick sample and identification of invertebrates belonging to eight easily identifiable groups leading to the awarding of a score. If a pre-determined lower score threshold level is reached, then the club contacts SEPA to warn of possible water quality issues. Spatial sampling by several members throughout a river means that the source of any pollution is likely to be identified.

#### *Electro-fishing team leader training*

The Trust biologist will attend the SFCC Managing electro-fishing Course in June 2011.

#### *Health and Safety (H&S)*

The Trust biologist has taken on the role of H&S officer for the Trust and Board. An H&S manual has been produced along with generic and specific risk assessments and an incident report book. An H&S training evening has been planned for all of the voluntary bailiffs and Bill Cunningham has attended a First Aid course.

## **Superintendent's Report**

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

### **Bill Cunningham – Superintendent FDSFB**

Reports indicate that salmon catches for 2010 were up, some proprietors reporting a particularly good year, despite catches being below par during June, July and the start of August.

I received mixed reports about the 2010 grilse run, some of the District's rivers reporting a shortage of grilse, while most reported that it had been one of the best runs for years. On the up side, five fish of around 30lbs were caught and released and large numbers of fish ranging between 12lbs to 26lbs were also returned.

The opening of the 2011 season was heralded once again by a parade of anglers along Callander high street and a number of springers were caught on the opening day.

Fourteen arrests were made last year. It is an even split: Seven rod and line incidents ranging from fishing without legal right and fishing by illegal method, and seven gill netting incidents. All cases were submitted

to the Procurators Fiscal at Stirling, Haddington and Edinburgh and to date only three of these cases have come to court. Fines ranging from £500 to £800 were levied against those convicted. For one reason or another, rightly or wrongly, one Procurator Fiscal did not put some rod and line cases forward and warnings were given instead.

I do not need to remind anybody that we rely heavily on our voluntary bailiffs who work long hours on a totally unpaid basis and without that voluntary force it would be impossible to carry out anti-poaching operations. I am pleased to report that, in the last year, for the most part morale amongst the bailiffs has been high.

The board now has a very strong relationship with all the police forces within its district. This partnership has led to joint operations in 2010 and many more are planned in the forthcoming year. This will involve continuous covert foot patrols using both the wildlife crime officers and the board bailiffs. Boat patrols will be carried out on Loch Lubanig and Loch Voil to make sure that legislation is not being ignored. All burns and rivers in the upper reaches will be patrolled during November and December to try to protect the redds.

As I have said in the past there is an influx of many eastern Europeans into the area, most of whom have never had to obtain a permit to fish before; a problem could therefore arise through lack of local knowledge and understanding of the Scottish fishing laws. I have obtained a crib board printed in Polish as many of these anglers that I have encountered on the river have a very limited understanding of English. Copies are available for any proprietor who would like one.

Once again I would be most grateful if any proprietor who believes or suspects that illegal fishing is taking place would contact me on the number below. All calls will be treated in confidence and investigated. I would like to assure all proprietors that the rivers are patrolled on a regular basis. Although bailiffs are not always conspicuous it does not mean we are not there.

BILL CUNNINGHAM: - 07887 83554



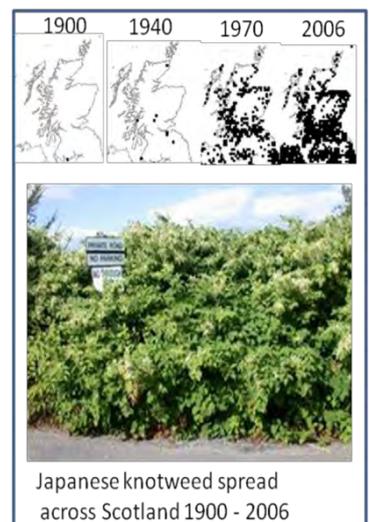
## Invasive Species Officer's Report

[www.fishforth.co.uk](http://www.fishforth.co.uk)

### Ben Tyser – Invasive Species Officer RFFT

The RFFT and biosecurity planning across Scotland

For years, control of invasive species in the Forth, particularly that of noxious riparian weeds, has been largely ad hoc and, crucially, government agencies have been unwilling or unable to tackle the problem head on. Much of the Forth is slowly recovering from centuries of detrimental human impact, the major legacies of which are point and diffuse sources of pollution, obstructions to fish

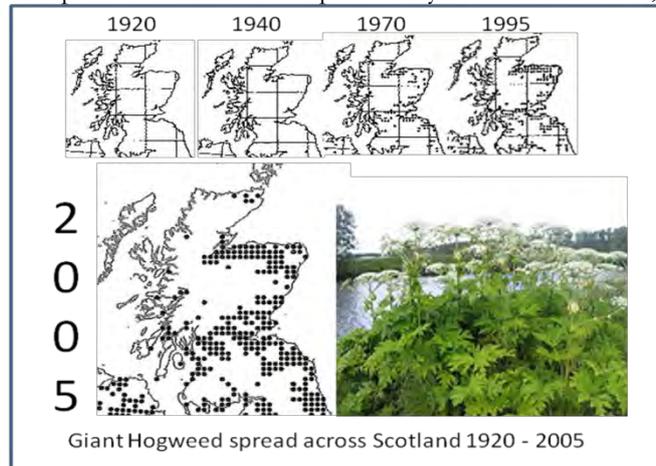


migration, alterations to natural water flow and physical alterations to river banks and beds. Invasive non native species (INNS) have proliferated within the Forth and threaten efforts to improve its previously degraded image, environment and landscape.

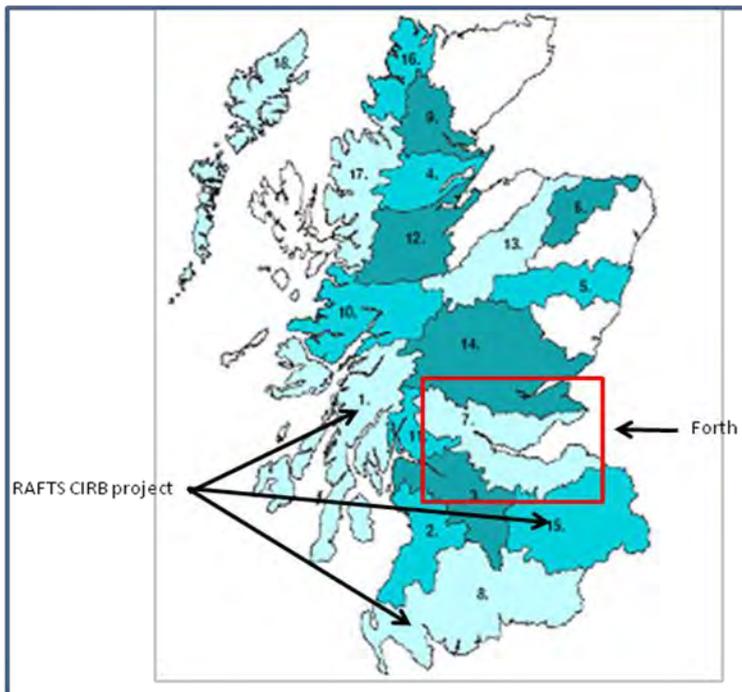
The Fisheries trusts, with their wide coverage of Scotland, are seen by government as an effective delivery mechanism for objectives such as the Water Framework Directive, and the control of invasive species is no exception.

The RFFT has become involved in the fight against invasive non-native species in Scotland; a fight which is gaining momentum as RAFTS has taken ownership of the issue for the past five years. Other Trusts, notably the Esks, Cromarty Firth and Galloway Fisheries Trusts formed 'phase 1' of RAFTS biosecurity programme, which aims to monitor, prevent the spread of and control invasive species.

The CIRB (Controlling Priority Invasive Species and Restoring Native Biodiversity) project will target twelve Scottish catchments in Argyll, Ayrshire, Galloway and the Tweed valley, as well as rivers in Co. Londonderry and Co. Louth.



Implementing biosecurity measures in the Central belt, including the Clyde and the Forth, is a different proposition and implementing biosecurity in the Forth is the next stage in RAFTS Scotland-wide initiative.



Map 1: Fisheries Trust & Biosecurity plan areas

Work of the Trust

Stage 1 – Biosecurity Planning: The RFFT employed an invasive species officer in September 2010 to produce a biosecurity plan for the Forth District. The complexity of the Forth Fisheries District with 11 different local authorities and 13 sub-catchments meant that gathering the information required for his task was no easy feat. The plan went out for consultation on the 7th December and the consultation period ended on 12th January. The following organisations all inputted into the plan:

- Scottish Wildlife Trust, Stirling
- The Forth Estuary Forum
- Perth & Kinross Council
- Cramond Angling Club
- Forth Ports
- The River Carron Fisheries Management Group
- The Allan Water Angling Improvement Association
- The Water of Leith Conservation Trust
- The Trossachs Water Vole Reintroduction Project
- The River Avon Federation
- The East Lothian Angling Association
- British Waterways Scotland
- Falkirk Council
- West Lothian Council
- Buglife
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- SEPA
- Clackmannanshire & Stirling Environment Trust

The Plan is now available to view on the Trust website and will be continually reviewed and adapted. More importantly, the plan provides the Trust with a basis for implementation of the actions outlined in the plan and an opportunity to seek the resources and funding required, implementing control actions across the District.

River Almond Invasive Species Action Plan: In addition to the Biosecurity plan, the Trust was commissioned by West Lothian Council to produce a costed alien species action plan for the River Almond. This project was one of a suite of projects that West Lothian successfully applied for funding from the Central Scotland Green Network, and has been produced in anticipation of a future bid to control invasive species on the Almond. The plan was completed by 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and is a good example of the Trust's ability to collaborate with and deliver projects for councils. In addition, the role of the Trust and the Almond Fisheries Management group in bringing the plan together can be used as a template for other Rivers in the District.

The plan will incorporate control work done by Cramond Angling Club (see 'SEPA' bids) and can be integrated into an EU LEADER bid (see page 3).

Awareness campaigns: Awareness raising is a key objective of RAFTS biosecurity programme, not only to raise awareness of the insidious effects of invasive species but also to raise the profile of RAFTS' and the Trust's work.

Awareness-raising was started by the Trust publicising the Biosecurity plan at the River Carron expo in Grangemouth. The Trust has participated in two awareness campaigns, using a Plantlife & RAFTS awareness grant. Plantlife leaflets were produced and distributed to Dobbies garden centres in Musselburgh, Kinross, Stirling and Dunfermline. In addition a RAFTS grant allowed the Trust to distribute awareness materials to the Water of Leith Trust, the River Avon Federation, City of Edinburgh Council and Stirling Council fishings.



SEPA bids: The RFFT has submitted RAFTS SEPA restoration bids for the control of discrete populations of riparian non native invasive plant species in the following well-defined catchments:

The Allan Water, River Carron, River Tyne, River Almond and River Avon.

The grant will equip and train Fisheries management groups on these sub-catchments in spraying and stem injection of riparian plants such as giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. As well as building upon the local capacity of Fisheries management groups to deal with invasives, the work will fulfil implementation of the Biosecurity plan. It will build momentum towards and form match funding for another funding phase for the next stage of invasives control.

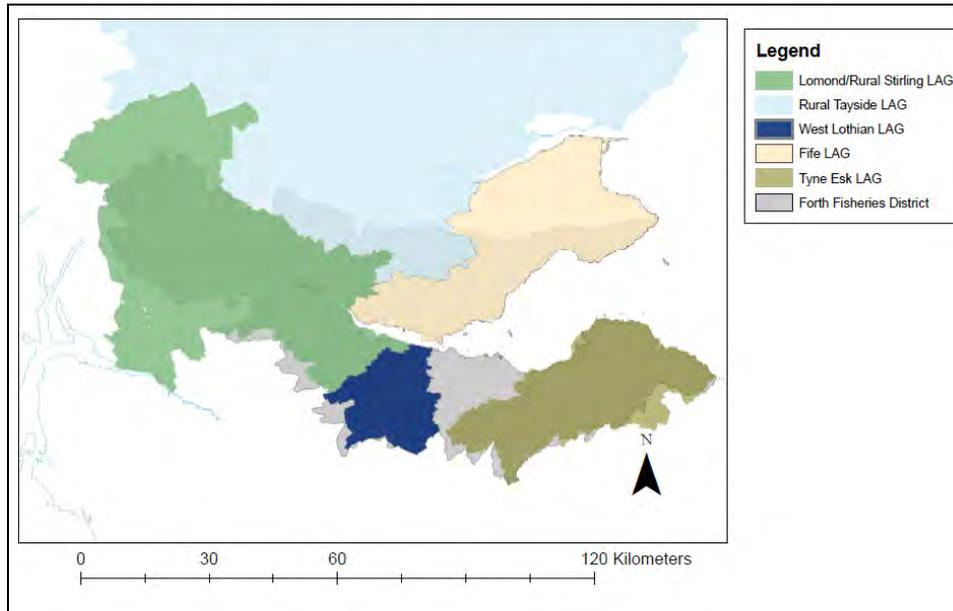
#### Further work & phase 2

Finding the resources that will enable the Trust to implement its plan over the whole District is the next stage in bringing a Forth-wide project together. The resources exist and there is a wide range of bodies that could potentially fund invasives control within or outside of the Forth including the SEPA restoration fund, Esmée Fairburn Foundation, Local Landfill tax Trusts and the Tubney Charitable Trust. Indeed, meshing together all the various organisations and funding opportunities in the District presents a substantial challenge.

The Trust has therefore brought in the services of Chris Horrill of RAFTS to help the Trust put together a funding package that will both cover the whole District and, importantly, allow this aspect of the Trust's work to be financially sustainable from the Trust's point of view.

Putting together a project of this size is a daunting prospect but is by no means new ground for RAFTS. Chris Horrill was instrumental in putting together the North of Scotland mink project (costing over £900,000). That project is lead by RAFTS and covers large areas of the Highlands, Aberdeenshire, Cairngorms, Moray and Tayside and is thought to be the largest control project of its kind in Europe.

Crucially, the wide coverage of the bid was enabled by successfully applying to five EU LEADER funding areas. LEADER is the EU funding body that funds rural projects in Europe; Local Action Group (LAG) areas distribute funding within their respective areas. A successful bid for the Forth District would also involve five LAG areas (Map 2).



Map 2 – Forth Invasives project area

Like the Mink project, a Forth-wide project would incorporate the following into its implementation strategy:

A community-based approach in establishing and maintaining control networks;

The utilisation of an adaptive management strategy;

The linkage between applied research and elements of the management strategy; and

The employment of a dedicated and co-ordinated project team to ensure the objectives, activities and implementation strategy are achieved.

The Trust is hoping to submit a bid to the different LEADER LAGs by the end of the year when the various groups sit in December. This would allow the project to proceed in 2012.

## The River Leven

[www.fishleven.co.uk](http://www.fishleven.co.uk)

**Patrick Fotheringham** – Director FDSFB & RFFT

You will recall from last year's annual report that the River Leven Angling Club was formed in the autumn of 2009. The River Leven had been without an angling club for a number of years, so it was great that the club had got itself established. Whilst no formal contribution to this annual report has been received from the Leven group, I would refer you to the web address given above where details of the club's activities may be found.

Given the recent foundation of the club, progress is less well advanced on the Leven than in some areas of the District. However, in 2011 the Board will be working with representatives from the club to

produce a Fisheries Management Plan for the river. In addition, given Scottish Coal's plans for extracting millions of tonnes of coal from under Loch Fitty, there remains an opportunity to work with the company for the benefit of all fish species within the sub-catchment.

## The Rivers Devon and Black Devon

[www.clacksnet.org.uk/hosted/daa](http://www.clacksnet.org.uk/hosted/daa)

### **Dennis Toon** – Committee Member, Devon Angling Association

The Devon angling Association Committee members have made considerable effort during the year to keep access paths, stiles etc. in good order. The strimming of Himalayan balsam has had a good effect in those areas where it has been possible to cut two or three times. However, in some less accessible parts the density of this invasive non-native plant frustrates anglers trying to fish. Of greater concern is the extensive bank erosion it leads to. There is also a marked increase in pockets of Japanese knotweed along some parts of the river. The Association is pleased that the Ochils Landscape Partnership includes a programme to affect some control on these invasive species. The River Forth Fisheries Trust has now produced a long term Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management plan, and is working towards its implementation.

The Devon Angling Association (DAA) Committee has brought forward a change to its rules regarding bag limits for salmon and sea trout. Therefore Rule 2 in the Code of Practice will be amended to read: Bag limit to be set at a maximum of 1 salmon or 1 sea trout per day. Again this year, there was plenty of water for the September/ October salmon run; catch returns indicated a modern record for the Devon. A high proportion of these fish were grilse. 52.5% of salmon and 75% of sea trout were returned this year. The percentage return is an improving picture and the Committee is anxious to encourage this trend. The Association proposes making catch returns compulsory from the start of the 2012 season. Subsequent salmon permits thereafter will only be issued to a current member if a return is made for the previous season.

In general 2010 was also a good season for trout and many members reported excellent days on the river. There were also reports of several trout up to 5lb being caught.

Spate conditions in the river in January of 2011, following the heavy rainfall and snowmelt from the hills, caused severe damage to banks and abutments in some parts of the river. This was particularly bad in Fossoway downstream of the Smolt Farm. Above Rumbling Bridge a wooden bridge has been destroyed, and further downstream there is major damage to banks from Vicars Bridge to below Linnbank as well as to banks in the lower reaches below Dollar. In the main this resulted from the Castlehill dam over-spill, a situation that might have been avoided had Scottish Water progressively released water from the reservoir via the lower purging valves in the dam.

The River Black Devon remains unmanaged at the present time. Comment has been made relating to the Clackmannanshire Development Plan main issues report, suggesting that the development of adopted housing schemes at Forest Mill and Solgirth should include a mandate on developers to survey and carry out river restoration / biodiversity improvements along the stretch of river interconnecting these two sites. This would encourage its adoption for fishery use and thus the application of some management control on this particular river.

## **The Allan Water**

[www.allanwaterangling.co.uk](http://www.allanwaterangling.co.uk)

**Tom McKenzie** – Membership Convenor, Allan Water Improvement Association

Angling throughout 2010 was at times difficult with some brighter patches. The grilse run appeared to be stronger than the very poor runs of 2008 and 2009 with catches about 50% up. However, where much of the District experienced improved runs of sea trout there is still cause for concern with stocks on the Allan. The Allan sub-catchment management group intends to work with the Trust to establish causes for this apparent decline.

The Trust, with the aid of Government grant funding has commissioned a report on an obstruction on the Scouring burn which is due to be delivered shortly. It is hoped that remedial action can be put in place promptly to remove or bypass the barrier, opening up significant spawning habitat above.

The Allan Water sub-catchment management group will be working with the Trust to take action on invasive species. Spraying of hogweed will once more take place in 2011 and the group will play a key role in delivering the Trust's INNS plan on the Allan.

The Trust is now finalising the Allan Water Fisheries Management Plan which will be published on the Trust's website when complete and a series of potential projects will be drawn up, against which funding can be raised.

The Allan Water group will keep people informed of progress through the website above.

## **The Rivers Forth and Teith**

[www.stirling.gov.uk/fisheries](http://www.stirling.gov.uk/fisheries)

**Patrick Fotheringham** – Director FDSFB & RFFT

In 2010 the Teith had what must have been one of its best seasons. Though the spring run was once more disappointing, the grilse run, when it arrived, was both prolific and sustained. In addition, the sea trout run also seemed to be holding up well. We will not have exact figures until Marine Scotland publishes the official returns this coming autumn. However, if Stirling Council's fisheries are anything to go on, the scores will be impressive. Their fishery on the Forth caught more salmon and grilse (1,351 fish) than any other beat in Scotland in what was Scotland's all time record season with a national total catch in excess of 100,000 fish. Stirling's fisheries combined produced 1,534 salmon and 313 sea trout with catch and release rates of 68.5% and 78% respectively – a truly remarkable result. While the catch figures themselves are impressive, the catch and release rates are a huge improvement on past years and both anglers and Stirling Council's fisheries team are to be applauded for the responsible attitude they have taken. Elsewhere on the Teith, catches also seemed to hold up well.

As the Chairman informed you in his report, 2010 saw the introduction of framed rainbow trout into the Teith. After an intensive investigation, Marine Scotland was unable to demonstrate where the fish had come from and so no further action was taken. This unfortunate situation demonstrates the need for

good information gathering and constant vigilance. I would make a plea for any proprietors finding that they are catching farmed stock to contact the Board's office immediately so that investigations can be made.

In the 2009 report we were able to inform you about an exciting project to make the Calair Burn falls passable to migratory fish. The arrival of Dr. Joanna Girvan our Biologist has allowed excellent progress on this project and she has now completed a full survey on the upper Calair catchment and the Board has now received a report by a fish passage engineer on the site. Fish passage issues at these falls are highly complex, with high levels of uncertainty, and there is a long way to go before we can start taking any sort of physical action at the site. However, we will build on the progress we have made in 2011 and in next year's annual report we will, with luck, be able to inform you as to how we will be taking this project forward.

The Forth and Teith sub-catchment management group is now fully up and running under the chairmanship of David Jones (Stirling Council's fisheries officer) and it will be working with the Trust to finalise its fisheries management plan and the prioritised list of actions that will flow from it.

This report is a good opportunity for me to thank Stirling Council's fisheries team on behalf of the Board for the excellent way they have taken the management of their own fisheries forward, and for the sustained support they have given the Board and Trust in fostering such a close working relationship.

## **The River Carron**

[www.rcfmfg.co.uk](http://www.rcfmfg.co.uk)

### **Patrick Fotheringham – Director FDSFB & RFFT**

It seems that there were reasonable numbers of fish in the Carron during 2010 but that the river did not experience the bonanzas that others did. This has been attributed to unfavourably low water for much of the season caused by dry weather and the fact that the Carron Valley reservoir came out of the winter with low water conditions. We may know more when detailed catch returns are given to us in the autumn of 2011.

The River Carron Fisheries Management Group (CFMG) is actively taking forward their draft fisheries management plan and the Trust will be working with the group to finalise the plan and draw up a list of priorities for action.

Action on the Carron is already being taken forward on three broad fronts. The first is to ensure that the weir at Fankerton is made passable to migratory fish; the second is a major river-wide clean-up operation run by the Communities Along The Carron Association (CATCA) but supported by the CFMG; and the third is a large-scale invasive species control project led by the Trust in partnership with CATCA and the CFMG.

Enabling the free passage of migratory fish at Fankerton weir has been a hot topic in Carron fisheries management circles for many years. However, at last it seems that there is likely to be progress and indeed it is probable that the weir will be made passable within the next couple of years. The Board, the Trust and the CFMG intend to stay in close communication with regulators to try to ensure that effective fish

passage is enabled. The Trust has a key role to play in carrying out monitoring associated with the project and this will include an electro-fishing program during the 2011 field-work season.

For information concerning the Big River Carron Clean-Up Project, I would refer you to the CATCA and CFMG web sites.

For information on the invasive project may I refer you to the Invasive Species Officer's Report earlier in this document.

## **The River Avon**

[www.l-a-c.co.uk](http://www.l-a-c.co.uk)

### **L. McFadzean – Chairman, River Avon Federation**

A Management Plan had been produced for the River Avon in June 2010 and agreed by the four Angling Clubs with interests in the Avon, with Falkirk Council and with FDSFB. Copies of the plan had been issued to West Lothian Council and SEPA.

An initial meeting of a River Avon Management Committee, comprising representatives of the angling interests was held in February 2011 to monitor progress against the Management Plan. To date 60% of the Priority Items identified in the Management Plan had commenced. A survey of invertebrates continued throughout the year along the full length of the River and a detailed survey of Invasive plant species is underway.

Contact had been established with Scottish Water and representatives of West Lothian Council to launch the upgrading programme for the Waste Water Treatment Works on the Avon that are within the WLC area.

May 2010 saw a significant run of sea trout smolts compared to previous years. This may have been reflected in the increased number of sea trout and finnock recorded by anglers later in the season. Whereas numbers were up by about 20% on 2009 and are virtually back to the catch of 2004/5, only a few dozen sea trout are caught every year. Unfortunately salmon were not present in any number a total of only three grilse being recorded and about the same number seen on redds on the upper river. Fortunately at least 70% of all migratory fish were returned.

Brown trout continue to thrive, the numbers stocked being significantly reduced to encourage natural regeneration. Trout average 9ins. but fish of over 2lbs. are caught every season. The upgrades to the WWTW along the Avon should bear fruit in future years as the water quality improves further.

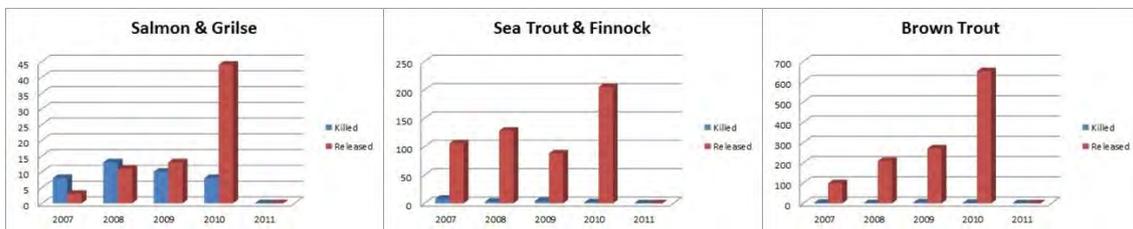
## **The River Almond**

[www.fishalmond.co.uk](http://www.fishalmond.co.uk)

### **Fen Howieson – Member, FDSFB & Vice-Chairman, Cramond AC**

The key theme for Cramond Angling Club and the River Almond for season 2010 was to launch and start to deliver our goals from the Five-Year Fishery Management Plan. High on the agenda were the barriers to fish migration, invasives and exploitation.

Adopting the Board’s conservation measures has never been a problem in the recent past and it is very pleasing to note the number of fish caught on the River, and, more importantly, the return rate achieved by our members. I have included the graphs demonstrating the improvements in our catches and the number of fish safely returned to the River. Our historic catch returns are quite poor when it comes down to recording, but having trawled the records from FRS we are very pleased with our record season and can only wait to see how the four-year cycle will benefit from this bumper season. The number of members submitting a return improved to 75% for season 2010 and I am forever hopeful that this trend will continue.



During the second quarter of 2010 the Sub Management Group carried out a survey of the entire catchment, reporting on the barriers to fish migration. This was very much a phase 1 exercise, building on a previous report by Dr Andy Walker. Our survey highlighted some 34 obstructions, including four that have been removed or washed away and five natural barriers. The report was adopted by SEPA and, with the help of the River Forth Fisheries Trust, funding was obtained for full engineering surveys on 10 key barriers. This project is being lead and project managed by SEPA, which contracted Atkins Global to carry out the surveys. The report is now in its final stages and should be made available to the public following consultation, at which stage we will have further information regarding the next stages and potential time-scales. As you can imagine, removal of weirs and the installation of fish passages will be costly and time consuming, not to mention the studies both before and after regarding fish populations and density. Our thanks again to the River Forth Fisheries Trust for assisting with the training of two of our members in electro-fishing as this will be invaluable when gathering information over the coming years.



The “Grotto”



Seafield Weir

Invasives were the next big ticket item to be investigated, so members of the Sub Management Group and Committee started to survey the main stem and several tributaries. Unfortunately, this was a far larger task than had been predicted and we never managed to complete the survey. However, the information that was gathered, along with historic information gathered by SNH and SEPA has been used to progress funding from West Lothian Council into invasive control training.

As you will have seen, 2010 was all about building up data regarding the entire catchment, then in order to target specific issues. This has already started again during 2011 and further work items will be developed throughout the year. The club has already been involved in dealing with fly tipping on one of our burns and improving access.

Cramond Angling Club as a whole has taken huge steps forward; our website has even more useful information and educational items available not only to our members, but the general public. The Club maintained a good membership, finishing the year with 231 members and a healthy 31 juniors, 12 of which were treated to a day's tuition from Paul Buchanan and fishing at Allandale Tarn. Building on our push to increase angling amongst children we held an open day for pupils from Linlithgow Academy, the children had a brilliant day and this is something we will develop over the coming years. Our congratulations go to Ali Brodie for making it into the Scottish Junior Team, hopefully the first of many!



Cramond Angling Club – Junior Day 2010

Monthly kick samplings are continuing and next year I will report on the Angler's Monitoring Initiative, as we now have 13 people trained and a far better coverage throughout the catchment, thanks to Awards for All Scotland. Understanding and monitoring the invertebrates in this way is an excellent indicator of water quality and is very like the "canary of the river". Sticking to the subject of water quality, a significant investment has been made on one of the sewage treatment works and my understanding is that further investment is likely, so we should continue to see improvements not only with the fishing, but the wildlife that uses and depends on this green corridor.

The club continues to run monthly work parties, dealing with fallen trees, debris in the river, ensuring the salmon passes remain clear, paths are clear, minor erosion issues and litter picking. It is disappointing to note that approximately 80 black bags of litter were removed from the river during the season, but thankfully very little could be considered angler-related. Going forward the committee are keeping a record of all the litter and adhoc tasks that are carried out, as we have recently used these figures to obtain funding for new equipment during 2011.

All in all 2010 was a memorable season, we have some new faces on the committee for 2011 and already I can see a big difference.

## **BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE CATCH AND RELEASE POLICY ON AN URBAN RIVER**

### **Millar Haxton Laing - Chairman Cramond Angling Club**

For many years the River Almond which runs through West Lothian and the outskirts of Edinburgh was considered one of the most polluted in Scotland. Due to the decline of the mining industry and the efforts of to name but a few, Cramond Angling Club, SEPA the FDSFB and the RFFT, the River is gradually regaining its health.

Cramond Angling Club holds the fishing leases from Kirkliston to the shoreline and we as a club have made every effort to help revitalise this river.

We have recently vigorously promoted a voluntary catch and release policy and, as of this season, we are now beginning to see the real benefits.

Our salmon, sea trout and brown trout figures are all up and encouragingly our kill rate is now almost insignificant. I do realise that many east coast rivers have shown healthy increases in their catch returns this season but we at C.A.C. believe that this seasons high made it all the more important to allow migratory fish to spawn. This will surely benefit the river in 5 years time.

Last season we reduced the number of Salmon to be kept on a season ticket from five down to two but, significantly, the vast majority of members still returned all their fish. The kill rate for Brown Trout has been almost zero for the past three years and this has resulted in a substantial rise in the numbers of fish recorded in the river. This too is a voluntary policy promoted by C.A.C. through word of mouth and a statement on the club website.

We also decided to change our river competition format where a catch and release rule was imposed (photographs and measuring sticks determining the winner). On our last open day held in conjunction with Linlithgow Academy we also promoted the importance of the C/R policy and the potential pollution issues that could affect the river. This was the first time the children had been fly fishing and the teaching of good practice whilst fishing for wild fish was high on the agenda. We as a club can only benefit from this in the future.

This season the club decided no longer to feature pictures of dead fish on the website; this policy will in our opinion strengthen the message we are trying to portray. A no kill policy was mooted for season 2011 but after the results of 2010 season (where the return rate for salmon was 85%, sea trout and finnock 99% and brown trout 100%) this was deemed unnecessary. We as a club are very fortunate in the fact that our membership are actively contributing to the well being of the river. Our next challenge is to grow our junior membership and increase the number of catch returns submitted by day ticket sales (a percentage that was rather disappointing).



# The Water of Leith

[www.waterofleith.org.uk](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk)

**Ben Tyser – RFFT**

The Water of Leith is perhaps the Forth's most urban catchment and, like the Esks, barriers prevent migratory fish access to about 90% of the catchment. Despite this, there is a considerable amount of fishing pressure on the Water of Leith, mainly for brown trout and eels, and the Water is policed by the honorary bailiffs of the Water of Leith on behalf of Edinburgh City Council, arguably the oldest organisation of its type in the world. A meeting between the bailiffs and the trust biologist highlighted the problems of barrier removal on the Water of Leith, due to the architectural & historical value attached to some of the weirs within Edinburgh, as well as the problems of removal in such an urbanized area and its implications for flood control (the lower catchment is currently undergoing flood control works which will be extended upstream to Balerno). However there are significant opportunities for the Trust to work with both the bailiffs and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust in carrying out and continuing electro-fishing and habitat surveys of the Water of Leith which have in the past been carried out by the Clyde River Foundation.

The RFFT attended the first ever stakeholder conference of the Water of Leith, which was hosted by the Water of Leith Conservation Trust. The Trust was the first river charity to be established in Scotland having been formed in 1988, and is a registered charity.

The Trust produced a management plan for the River funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and City of Edinburgh Council and this was published in July 2010. Many of the actions highlighted in the plan complement and fall within the objectives of fisheries management planning in the Forth District. A wide range of issues was discussed at the conference, ranging from fisheries matters to flood control, access and water quality. The Water of Leith Conservation Trust is in full support of the biosecurity plan; however health and safety concerns of this volunteer organisation precluded them in this instance from coming on board for the first round of restoration funding.

# The Rivers North and South Esk

[www.eskvalleytrust.org](http://www.eskvalleytrust.org)

**Ben Tyser – RFFT**

Ownership of the conservation issues of the Rivers Esks has been taken on by the Esk Valley Trust. The Esk Valley Trust was formed in April 2001 by groups of local people interested in the countryside of Midlothian and East Lothian and consists of several local community groups. Though not primarily concerned with fishing, its mission is to care for and support the environmental heritage of the Esks.

The only angling club on the Esks is the Musselburgh and District Angling Club which is on the lower reaches of the Esks. Indeed salmon can only reach as far as the old mill dam at Dalkeith on the South Esk and a natural fall just above Dalkeith on the North Esk. Fishing interests on the Esks are mainly concerned with brown trout angling. Poaching is a concern at the racecourse weir in the lower catchment, which presents a problem to fish passage at low water levels.

The RFFT biologist and invasive species officer met with the Esks Valley Trust on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to discuss issues affecting the river, though the meeting was mainly called to discuss invasive species problems on the Esks and was facilitated by SNH. SNH had carried out a survey of the Esks invasives species in 2004 although there had been no concerted follow up control. The Esks Valley Trust expressed a strong desire to have riparian plants controlled but cited a lack of resources as preventing them from doing so. This was a similar constraint in applying for restoration funding for the Esks to control invasives. However, the Esks Valley Trust is in full support of the biosecurity plan and its objectives, which will be valuable when going for funding to implement the plan.

## **The Rivers Tyne and Biel**

[www.fishing@elaa.co.uk](mailto:www.fishing@elaa.co.uk)

**Ben Tyser– RFFT**

The Tyne is currently the focus of a major barriers removal project with a scoping exercise of the obstructions on the River well underway. This is being carried out in conjunction with SEPA and the East Lothian Angling Association, which are very active on the Tyne. In addition, the East Lothian Angling Association is currently carrying out habitat mapping and surveys; there is an opportunity for this mapping to include an invasive species survey. Like the Esks the Tyne was mapped for invasive species extensively by SNH in 2004 but no significant control has followed up the initial mapping.

In spite of the already extensive commitments of the club (in the barriers project), the Association is applying for restoration funding through the RFFT to train and equip its members in herbicide spraying and stem injection and the Tyne is therefore part of the RFFT's bid to SEPA along with the Avon, Almond, Carron and Allan.

With regard to the Biel, the Board and Trust are in close communication with SEPA over the issue of fish passage at an impassable weir. The Board will press forward with this in 2011 and has already obtained engineering drawings of a potential fish passage solution. The harder task will now be to hold regulators and operators at the site to their obligations in order to open up the Biel to runs of migratory fish.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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