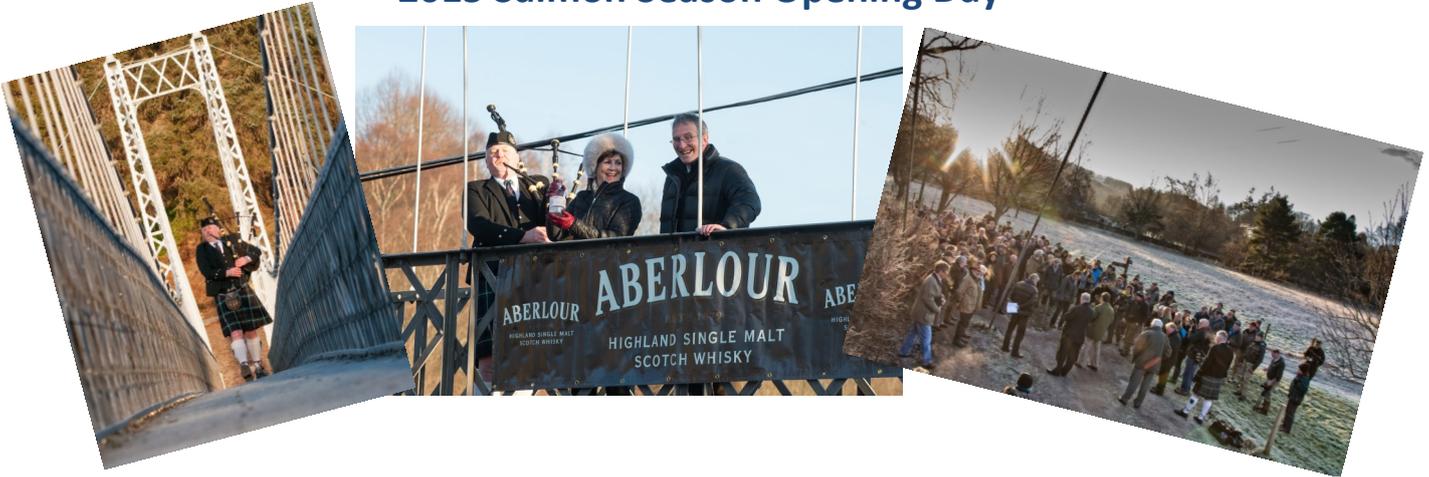


February 2015

www.speyfisheryboard.com

2015 Salmon Season Opening Day



This year our honorary guest speaker for the opening of the River Spey Salmon Fishing Season on Wednesday 11th February 2015 was Duncan Bryden, Convener for the Cairngorm National Park Authority.

The traditional opening ceremony took place at Penny Bridge, Alice Little Park in Aberlour at 9:00am with the pouring of a bottle of Aberlour 12 Year Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky by last year's winner of the Anniversary Quaich, Mrs Anne Cameron, into the fast flowing waters of the River Spey – a toast to bring luck to all those in pursuit of the elusive Spring Salmon. To complete the ceremony Rev. Bob Anderson, Minister for Rothes and Knockando, blessed the river accompanied by Alan Sinclair on the bagpipes. We were also delighted that the BBC were there to film the opening ceremony as part of a new television series, which will be broadcasted in 2016 titled, 'Highlands: Scotland's Wild Heart'.

Anglers were invited to attend the opening ceremony before starting on their quest to catch their first Spring Salmon of the season.

To help celebrate the start of the 2014 season, drams of Aberlour 12 Year Old Single Malt Whisky and samples of Walkers Shortbread were offered during the opening ceremony. The Spey Fishery Board is grateful to the Aberlour distillery and Walkers Shortbread for their continued generous sponsorship of this event.



Photos (Courtesy of Alex Mitchell for Chivas Brothers) TOP: Piper Alan Sinclair, the crowd gathered by Penny Bridge and 2014 Anniversary Quaich Winner, Anne Cameron with Duncan Bryden (Convener Cairngorm National Park Authority).

BELOW LEFT: SFB Chairman, Brian Doran presents the Anniversary Quaich to Ballindalloch Ghillie Steve Brand on behalf of George Michie. BELOW RIGHT: SFB Director presents Heaviest Catch prizes to Warren Gain and Ghillie, Kevin Greenshill at Orton.

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BRIEFING - February 2015

2014 Season Report

In common with many other Scottish salmon rivers, 2014 was a particularly challenging year for anglers. Despite a promising start, catches slowed from mid-April during another prolonged period of low water and warm temperatures. Reported rod catches for the Spey amounted to **4,563** Salmon and Grilse caught.

The early part of the 2014 season produced a spring catch (between 11th February and 30th April) of 578 fish, which was an improvement on the 437 caught for the same period in 2013. A further 457 fish were caught in May and 649 in June. This brought the catch for February - June to a total of 1,684. The prevailing low water conditions ensured that catches in July were also disappointing, at 591. A significant spate on the 11th August, which saw the River reach its highest level since 1970, saw catches for that month climb to 1,448 and a further 840 fish caught in September.

The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations for 2015

Following a consultation in November 2014, the **Scottish Government announced that as from the 9th January 2015 it is mandatory for all rod caught salmon across Scotland to be released back into the river until the 1st April**, (with the exception of the River South Esk, which would be until 1st May), offering increased protection during the early-running of the spring salmon.

The Spey Fishery Board are very grateful for the continued support by Anglers who responded well to the Spey Conservation Policy with a release rate in 2014 of 92%. In order to protect the integrity of the Spey stock and to maximise their spawning potential, the Spey Fishery Board's policy is that all fish caught up to and including the 31st May should be released alive.



Spey Conservation Policy 2015

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In order to protect the integrity of the Spey stock and to maximise their spawning potential, the Spey Fishery Board's policy is that all fish caught up to and including the 31st May should be released alive. From the 1st June the policy set out below will apply.

SEA TROUT



Release all finnock of 16oz / 35cm / 14" or less



Release all Sea Trout of 3lb / 50cm / 20" or above



Retain only 1 Sea Trout of takeable size per calendar day. Anglers are also encouraged to release their first fish and keep the second that is of takeable size



Release all stale or coloured fish



Release all unseasonable fish (smolts, kelts, over-wintered finnock)

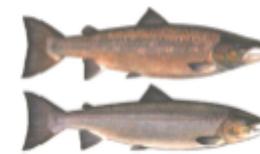
SALMON



Each angler must return the 1st, 3rd, 5th etc... cock fish caught



All hen salmon and hen grilse must be released



Throughout the season all stale or unseasonable fish must be released e.g. gravid, kelts



Escaped farmed salmon must be retained

'Opening Up Spey Burns' - Mackalea Burn Fish Pass

The Mackalea Burn is a tributary of the River Fiddich, one of the most productive spawning and nursery streams in the Spey catchment. A man-made obstacle, in this case a road culvert and steps, had rendered the burn impassable to salmon and sea trout, preventing them from reaching their breeding ground.



Above: Alasdair Donnelly (Moray Council), Duncan Ferguson (SFB Operations Manager) and Brian Davidson (RAFTS) assess the obstacle to fish passage on the Mackalea Burn.

The pass, which was created by removing a notch from the step and installing a sustainable timber chute, has allowed fish to journey to and from their breeding grounds more freely. This project opened up an additional 1.5km of high quality breeding grounds to encourage spawning under all flow conditions.



Timber ramp installed on the Mackalea Burn steps



Timber baulks to create depth on the formerly shallow concrete bridge apron on the downstream side of the culverts

The installation of the fish pass was made possible through the support of Moray Council and with the sponsorship by Speyburn Distillery as part of the whisky's two year partnership with the Spey Foundation to support ongoing conservation work along the River Spey. It forms part of the Foundation's wider initiative with Speyburn Distillery to 'open up Spey burns to wildlife' and protect and restore the catchment's natural features.

Since the works were completed, it is pleasing to report that 12 redds were found above the fish pass, including both sea trout and salmon. It will be interesting to see how many fry are found there in the summer!



Mark Strathdee Ltd. installing the timber modifications to the Mackalea Burn

Allt a'Mharcaidh Project Successful

The Allt a'Mharcaidh, a tributary of the River Feshie, flows through the Invereshie and Inshraich National Nature Reserve (NNR), close to the village of Kinraig. 1.2km of its lower reaches were artificially canalised in the early 1800s in order to float timber downstream and to power water driven saw mills. The project aimed to restore the burn to a more naturally functioning watercourse and improve its in-stream habitat.

Using environmentally friendly, low cost measures, woody debris features were introduced along the length of the reach, sediment sources were exposed and embankments lowered at key locations. In time this will lead to improved in-river conditions which should have a positive impact on salmonid species, aquatic features and biodiversity.



Above: The Allt A'Mharcaidh before and after the restoration work.

Tomintoul & Glenlivet secure

Heritage Lottery Funding

It was recently confirmed that £2.5million of Heritage Lottery Funding has been earmarked for the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership which includes: a programme to protect and enhance the archeological history of the area; the natural heritage and make improvements to the water environment. A £171,000 development grant has been approved to enable detailed proposals for a wide range of projects over the 195km² of landscape partnership area to be developed. If successful, this will result in a total investment of £3.6m in the area between 2017-2020.

A package based around the water environment and led by the Spey Catchment Initiative, forms a significant element of the proposals. In the development phase it is planned to undertake a riparian walkover audit to ground truth the condition of the water margins. A fluvial audit will also be commissioned to understand how this dynamic river system works, so that water flows can be better managed in times of spate. This will then inform a prioritised scheme of restoration and enhancement works which will be developed and costed for delivery in 2017-20.



Dates for the Diary

Spey Fishery Board Meetings

To be held at 9:30 am at the Craigellachie Hotel, Victoria Street, Craigellachie, AB38 9SR on the following dates:

Friday 22nd May, Friday 28th August and Friday 20th November 2015.

Members of the public are invited to attend as observers, but are requested to give notice to the Board's Administrator, Sally Gross, by telephone on 01340-810841, or by email at admin@speyfisheryboard.com

2014 Annual Report

The latest Spey Fishery Board Annual Report is now available and can be downloaded from the website at www.speyfisheryboard.com.

The report provides a comprehensive summary of the work of the Spey Fishery Board and the Spey Foundation throughout 2014.