

May 2017

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SMOLT RUN WELL UNDERWAY!

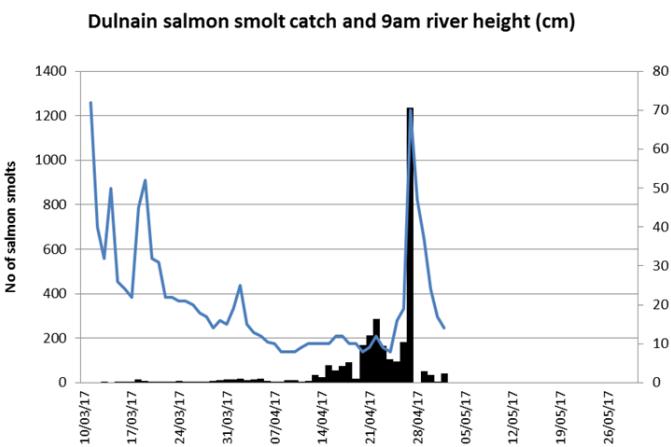
A six foot diameter rotary screw trap was placed in the River Dulnain on the 10th March 2017. This is the first year we have operated a smolt trap in the Dulnain, a further step towards our goal of collecting data on the smolt run from our major tributaries, as well as in the Spey mainstem.



Above: Smolt Trap on the Dulnain

An excellent site was found for the trap in the low gradient section between Balnaan and Carrbridge. River levels were initially low, however, from mid-April the smolt run increased, rising to over 300 fish on the 22nd April. The 24th and 25th April were very cold with snow, followed by rain on the 27th. In the rising water on the 27th April we caught more than 1,200 salmon smolts and over 200 trout. Unfortunately the trap was out of action on the 28th April due to the high water.

The graph below left shows the number of smolts/pre-smolts caught to date.



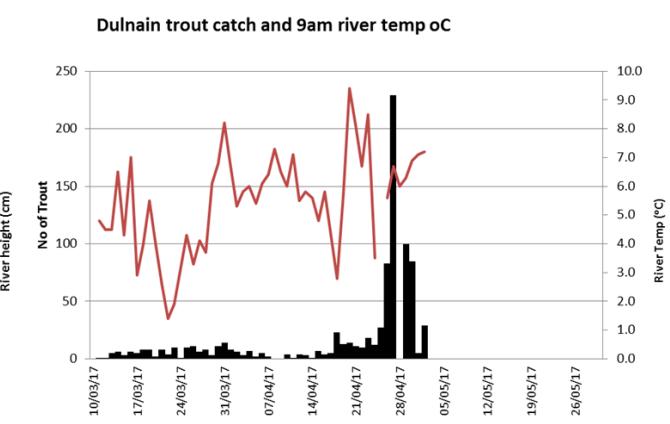
As of the 2nd May the total catch recorded was 3,200 salmon smolts. Our mark/re-capture trials show that less than 1 in 5 of the salmon migrating downstream are being caught.



Above: Tommore Burn Trap in high water.

The Tommore Burn smolt run was late, probably due to the low water. The total number of salmon smolts as of the 2nd May 2017 was 260, half of which were captured on the 27th April. This was lower than the number recorded at the same date in 2015/16, however, the smolt run may not be over yet in the Tommore. A full report with the overall results will be published in due course.

The graph below right shows the total trout catch to date in the River Dulnain. As the run progressed the proportion of pre-smolts and smolts has increased.



BRIEFING - May 2017

PUPILS INSPIRED BY HAVING THEIR OWN SALMON HATCHERY

The 'Salmon Go To School' project, led by the Spey Foundation and the Spey Fishery Board, gives pupils a fascinating insight into the ecology of salmon and other fish species. It also explains the importance of fishing to the local community, through a range of hands-on practical projects.

This year the Primary schools which participated were Grantown, Newtonmore and Kingussie. The pupils at each school received an illustrated talk by John Trodden, a retired Head Teacher of Millbank Primary School in Buckie and also a member of the River Spey Anglers Association, who kindly volunteered to deliver this project.

The pupils took charge of a classroom hatchery with around 250 salmon eggs, assisted by Spey Foundation Assistant Biologist, Steve Burns. Each school successfully hatched their valuable offspring and studied their development from salmon egg to fry, when they were ready to be released back into their natural environment in the local burn.



Top Left: John Trodden gives Newtonmore pupils a presentation. **Top Right:** Salmon fry ready to be released.



Middle left: Kingussie pupils holding their fry ready to release . **Middle Right** Newtonmore pupils release their fry.



Above: Assistant Biologist, Steve Burns (Left) and John Trodden explain the lifecycle of the salmon to Kingussie pupils.



Bottom Left Newtonmore pupils with their fry.

Bottom Right: Grantown Pupils see their fry safely on their way in their local burn.



Grantown Primary School teacher, Patricia Brown said, "The children were very inspired by having a Salmon Hatchery in their classroom. They produced extra high quality work due to having direct hands-on experience looking after the fish." The Spey Fishery Board and The Spey Foundation are very grateful to John Trodden and the River Spey Anglers Association for their support and also to Walkers Shortbread for their continued support.



GIANT HOGWEED REMOVAL PROGRAMME 2017



Above left photo shows different ages of Giant Hogweed **Middle Photo:** Giant Hogweed growing within the Mulben Burn. **Right Photo:** Giant Hogweed starting to spread within lower Spey (in the foreground there are lots of Himalayan Balsam seeds spreading, which is another invasive)

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) was introduced into the UK in the 1800's as an ornamental garden plant. However, this Invasive Non Native species has now become resident in many river catchments across Scotland, including the River Spey. It is now well established in the lower River Spey, from Boat o'Brig downstream and in the Mulben Burn. There are also sporadic plants above the Mulben Burn, including as far upstream as Ballindalloch, but these are more readily controlled annually, either by the Spey Foundation or the respective land owner.

As with most invasive species Giant Hogweed is capable of out-competing and dominating native plant species to the detriment of native biodiversity. Individual plants can grow to over 12' high and in the final year of their life they produce the characteristic large white flower head which can result in up to 50,000 seeds. The seeds can remain viable for up to 10 years, so persistence is required in any control programme.

Giant Hogweed also presents a serious threat to human health, as contact with its sap can result in blistering of the skin. The sap reacts to sunlight and blistering of the skin can recur (photo-dermatitis) over a long period on exposure to the sun. Members of the public should avoid contact with the plant.



Above Photo: SFB Bailiff, Jason Hyser spraying Hogweed in the lower Spey

This year we are very grateful to The Crown Estate, Diageo, and local landowners for providing the funding to facilitate licenced herbicide treatment of Giant Hogweed along the lower Spey and, for the first time, throughout the entire Mulben Burn. The Spey Fishery Board staff and contractors have been spraying Hogweed at various sites within the control areas. In the lower Spey the control work has been targeted primarily at popular recreational and access areas. In the Mulben Burn it was interesting to observe how effective "Iron Age" pigs had been at clearing Hogweed. The pigs have been used by landowner William Mountain to clear Hogweed from within enclosures. Grazing animals are known to control Hogweed, but the pigs have the added benefit of rooting up the seeds, preventing germination and potentially reducing the duration of any control period. These pigs are worthy of further consideration as a sustainable control method for Hogweed.



Contractor Steve Turner controlling hogweed on the banks of the Mulben Burn under the watchful eye of the Iron Age Pigs.

SIDE CHANNEL RE-CONNECTED TO THE RIVER SPEY AFTER 50 YEARS

A 500 metre side channel has been re-connected to the River Spey at Aviemore, restoring instream habitat for a multitude of species.

The side channel was blocked off around 50 years ago, using rock armour to reduce flood and erosion risk to the adjacent properties on Dalfaber Road. Flow only entered the channel during spate conditions, when the main stem of the Spey overtopped the bank. At other times the channel water stagnated due to lack of continuous flow, leading to a loss of potential habitat for salmonids.



Above: Culvert pipe installed into rock armour bank

Over the last two years the SCI has been working with the Pearls in Peril project to re-introduce a flow into the channel. This culminated in the installation of a culvert into the rock armour in February and there is now a steady continuous flow through the length of the channel. It is hoped that as the in-stream ecosystems re-establish themselves, so the channel will become an excellent habitat for salmonids.



Above Left: Downstream view from inflow point before culvert installation. Above Right: Post culvert installation



Dates for the Diary

Spey Fishery Board Meetings

To be held at 10:00 am at the Craigellachie Hotel, Victoria Street, Craigellachie, AB38 9SR on the following dates:
Friday 19th May, Friday 18th August and Friday 24th November 2017.

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

Exhibition at Speyside Visitor Centre

This year the Spey Fishery Board and the Spey Foundation have teamed-up with the River Spey Anglers Association ,with information on display at the Speyside Visitor Centre at Aberlour. Entry is free and is open to all daily until the 30th September 2017.



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