

# Spey Fishery Board Strategy & Management Plan 2022

**Mission Statement:** In response to the Atlantic salmon crisis, affecting all our rivers, the Spey Fishery Board's mission is to maximise the number of Atlantic salmon and sea trout smolts reaching the sea from the River Spey.

**Strategy:** The Spey Fishery Board's statutory responsibilities have always been at the heart of all that we do. We will work tirelessly to implement the Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy, in order to enhance, conserve and protect Atlantic salmon and sea trout stocks throughout the River Spey Catchment.

**Predation Control:** We are working with the Scottish Government and their advisers to improve the management system for reducing the impacts of fish-eating birds, such as Goosanders, Mergansers & Cormorants, including a review of General Licenses. We shall also work to mitigate predation by other fish and continue our work to actively manage the impacts of seals in the River Spey.

**Stocking:** The SFB will continue to fulfil its statutory duty to consider stocking and to undertake mitigation stocking above man-made barriers. We have maximised the capacity of our hatchery and seek to give the natural population a helping hand wherever we are allowed to. In due course, we may also need a programme of restoration stocking above Spey Dam.

**Protection and Law Enforcement:** In concert with Police Scotland, our Fisheries Officers will continue to vigorously deter and prevent illegal fishing within the River Spey, its tributaries and along its coastline, including the use of technology, to protect our iconic fish.

**Water Quantity & Quality:** We are committed to maximising the quantity & quality of water throughout the Spey catchment and to reducing the significant water diversions made from it for the generation of hydroelectricity through our "Release the Spey" campaign. This will make flows in the River Spey more sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

**Barriers to Salmonid Migration:** We are committed to opening-up new spawning opportunities by removing or mitigating barriers to fish passage, including the removal of dams, thereby restoring natural river processes and improving in-river and bankside habitat.

**Education:** We will continue to work to promote greater understanding of the issues affecting salmon, its value to the local economy, of what we do and why we do it and, in particular, via digital channels. We shall also aim to develop introductions to angling to recruit and retain new anglers.

**Lobbying:** In close collaboration with Fisheries Management Scotland, we shall continue to robustly represent our views to the Scottish Government.

**Habitat Enhancement:** Working with our local partners in the Spey Catchment Initiative, we see the adoption of a holistic approach to river restoration and more habitat enhancement projects as central elements in bringing about landscape-scale changes, without cost to the Assessment. These will ensure the sustainability and resilience of the River Spey to the climate and biodiversity crises confronting us.

**Invasive Species Removal:** We will continue to work to establish a sustainable means of identifying and removing invasive non-native species, without cost to the Assessment. These species de-stabilise river banks and reduce fly life if left in place. These invasive species include American Mink, plants such as Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, White Butterbur and Ranunculus and, more recently, Pacific Salmon.

**Scientific Research & Monitoring:** We shall continue to develop our knowledge of the in-river and coastal migration undertaken by Spey smolts and our understanding of invertebrates. We shall seek to enhance our knowledge of water quality issues and check the health of the river by monitoring the young fish populations. This will highlight areas that need help, provide the scientific evidence we need to inform the Government's regulators and help protect the river from harmful developments.