



Kyle News

Issue No: 4

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fisheries Board
Kyle of Sutherland Fishery Trust

Spring 2012

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Kyle News combining the interests of the Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fisheries Board and the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust. The joint newsletter helps to reinforce the message that the organisations working in fishery management within the Kyle District are operating with the same purpose to achieve common objectives.

Chairman of the Kyle Board

The 2011 season could hardly have been more different than the previous one. This was not necessarily a negative assessment as catches across the Kyle region continued to perform well. What was unusual in 2011 was the timing of fish runs and the comparatively small run of grilse. After a glorious spell of weather from late March until the end of May leading to very low water conditions the "springers" were understandably late in arriving but when they did come they were in good numbers and provided some terrific sport well into July when large MSW fish were still arriving fresh into the Kyle. The low water conditions along with higher than normal temperatures created a resurgence in fungal diseases and most rivers were reporting fish with the tell-tale signs of stress and Furunculosis. Despite good water conditions for most of July grilse numbers were well down on 2010. They did however continue to trickle in right up to the end of the season.

Following up on a number of meetings in 2010 the Board altered the bailiffing presence to increase security for the valuable MSW fishing which are so vulnerable to illegal exploitation, especially in low water conditions, and this is something that we plan to continue with, looking forward.

On other project work I am pleased to say that we have again made good progress on some fronts but remain frustrated on others. In conjunction with the Kyle Trust and Highland Leader funding we have placed 3 Rotary Screw Traps (RST's) on the Upper Shin tributaries in an attempt to better understand the smolt numbers in this heavily Hydro-modified system. Initial results were surprising on two fronts. Firstly it demonstrated that there still remains a discreet but very fragile population of wild salmon on the Fiag and Merkland tributaries – something that has been in dispute with SSE for some time – and secondly that a number of smolts (particularly in the Merkland/Corriekinloch rivers) appear to come from non-native origin. Whilst it is still early in this project to draw conclusions, this information will play an increasingly important role in forming the Board strategy in dealing with both SSE and the Fish Farming interests on Loch Shin. One other surprising outcome is that the wild fish and aquaculture interests in the Shin catchment have begun a useful dialogue to find common ground on which to build an improved future working relationship.

Our work on assessing an extension to the Evelix season has now completed its third year and is progressing well.

Progress in opening up Glen Beag on the Carron and allowing free passage of fish up and down the Shin system remains frustratingly slow, however, negotiations and discussions with SSE and SEPA are still on-going and where there is the will to talk there remains the opportunity for a successful outcome.

The Board's focus in 2012 will be on completing the purchase of the netting rights at Bonar Bridge which it has leased from Corriemulzie estate for the last 17 years and continuing to forge a strong relationship with SEPA who will ultimately assist in decisions to resolve the future of the Glen Beag and River Shin issues.

Robbie Douglas Miller

The aims of the Trust are to support research, conservation and public education initiatives that will benefit the freshwater fish resources and associated fisheries of the Kyle of Sutherland and to preserve for future generations a valuable part of Scotland's natural heritage.

Trout and the value of small burns

Moray Firth Sea Trout Project

Project Officer: Marcus Walters **Mob:** 07500 602 216 **Email:** walters.mfstp@googlemail.com

The Moray Firth Sea Trout Project (MFSTP) has now been running for 3.5 years and is continuing to improve our understanding and management of sea trout populations around the Moray Firth.

Sea trout and brown trout are the same species, *Salmo trutta*, and are both very important components in the complex and variable life history that sea trout adopt in different locations and environments. After the last glaciers retreated, Scotland's waterways were re-colonised by trout from the sea and as result all trout have tendency to return to sea in their genes. However, many have adapted to life purely in freshwater or have become trapped behind natural and manmade barriers to form resident brown trout populations. In areas where access to the sea remains the trout population normally consists of a mixture of resident brown trout (majority males) and anadromous sea trout (majority female). Sea trout migrate to sea to feed and the majority are females as they have the most to gain from the plentiful food supply; they grow larger, can carry more eggs and dig better redds. When they return from sea they will breed with a mixture of small resident brown trout males and a few larger male sea trout.



Upper Tain. Straightened and heavily influenced by forestry. Photograph courtesy of MFSTP



The Tain Burn. Full of juvenile trout but lacking the habitat for larger trout. Photograph courtesy of MFSTP

The balance of brown trout to sea trout and the mixture of males and females that go to sea is highly variable and has usually evolved to adapt to the local environment or river. To ensure our local rivers continue to produce healthy and productive migrating sea trout populations we have to ensure the freshwater habitat is available to support spawning redds, juvenile fry and parr as well adult brown trout and returning sea trout. Through electrofishing surveys the MFSTP has highlighted the importance of the smaller burns that despite often looking insignificant actually support fantastic numbers of juvenile trout. Cumulatively they provide a substantial component of the sea trout smolts that are the basis of our sea trout runs. However, these smaller burns especially along the coast and in agricultural areas are very vulnerable to damage from poor land use practices and the MFSTP has identified it a key area of work to protect and restore these small burns through a programme of education, awareness raising and restorative work. Many burns have been degraded through blocked access, sediment rich run off, dredging and straightening. The small waterways are now much better protected under the Water Frame-

work Directive and if you intend to do any work which may affect Scotland's water environment you must be authorised to do so under the Controlled Activity Regulations (More info at www.sepa.org.uk).

How you can help with MFSTP research and management:

Anglers & ghillies collect sea trout scales – you don't have to kill the fish to collect scales and they are hugely valuable in improving our understanding of local populations. Contact the Project Officer for more information.

Anglers & ghillies, fill in an angler's logbook: - With declining numbers of sea trout anglers it is really important we get as much data from those that do still fish as possible. Contact the Project Officer for more information.

Restoration:

If you have an idea for a river or burn habitat restoration project please contact the Project Officer

Marcus Walters, Project Officer
www.mfstp.co.uk



A juvenile trout parr from the Tain. Photograph courtesy of MFSTP

Moray Firth Sea Trout is supported by:



Upper Shin System - Restoration of Wild Salmon Population

The smolt catching and transporting project begun in Spring 2011 has been highly successful.

Ground and in-river works were completed in March for the placement of the four smolt traps in the Corriekinloch Burn and in the rivers Ghriama, Fiag and Tirry. Traps were purchased from Canada (least expensive option) and arrived according to plan.

They were operated from early April till the end of May. Conditions were quite extreme, ranging from exceptionally high flood levels to exceptionally dry conditions. In the driest periods wooden traps were substituted for the normal traps as there was insufficient water flow to operate the revolving traps. There were two incidences of traps being damaged by floodwater but they were repaired and put back into use within a few days.

A number of non native fish were trapped on the Corriekinloch Burn and on the Ghriama. Subsequent DNA testing has confirmed this. Where they were identified as non-native they were destroyed rather than transported.

Catch numbers were as follows:

Corriekinloch:	Non-native – 8	Wild – 9
Ghriama:	Non-native – 230	Wild – 185
Fiag:	Non-native – 3	Wild – 1873
Tirry:	Non-native – 0	Wild – >1500

The most surprising element of this was the large number of wild fish caught on the Fiag.

All fish caught on the Tirry were tagged with PIT tags and returned to the river downstream of the trap. These will be monitored as they pass through the dam (or not as the case may be) on their downward migration and, after a few years of data collection, will demonstrate the usefulness, or otherwise, of the recently installed smolt curtain leading to the dam outlet and the altered flow regime. This is a necessary part of SSE's involvement in the project. It is important not to draw too many conclusions from the first year's data.

Funding has been forthcoming from all parties as planned and the Trustees are most grateful to all those who have contributed – without whom there would have been no chance of getting this important project off the ground. The project will continue into the next phase in March of 2012.

One important outcome has been that, due to the large and unexpected number of non-native fish caught at the top end of Loch Shin, the Trust has brokered a meeting with the fish farmers within the Loch. Scottish Sea Farms and Migdale Smolts both willingly attended a meeting with members of the Trust and the Board and we are now planning a programme of very much greater co-operation to serve our mutual interests. This will begin by inviting a visiting speaker from Migdale Smolts to address a meeting of wild salmon interests during 2012 and by them in return, opening one of their installations in Loch Shin to an invitation open day for Board Members and Trustees.

It is very much hoped, indeed it is essential, that this spirit of co-operation will be positively built upon by both the aquaculture and wild fish interests.

A report will be made available towards the end of the 2012 season on this year's progress.

Pete Campbell



Wooden letterbox trap in use during period of low water on the River Tirry - Photo Hugh Mackenzie



A cheerful volunteer on the River Fiag - Photo Hugh Mackenzie

Shin Smolt Dam Passage

In an article in this newsletter in Spring 2011 the positive input of the KoSDSFB and Trust to the river basin planning process was highlighted. This positive engagement has continued throughout 2011. This has led to useful discussions between SEPA, KoSDSFB and SSE, particularly in relation to smolt passage downstream through Lairg dam on the River Shin. SEPA is of the view that the KoSDSFB is well prepared to engage in the preparation and objective setting process for the second river basin management plan, which will be published in 2015.

Following discussions early in 2011 it was agreed to carry out a further tagging trial of smolts trapped on the river Tirry to determine the rate of escape through Lairg Dam. Previous work carried out by SSE, in conjunction with the Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust, at Orrin Dam had demonstrated the effectiveness of the use of a 'smolt curtain' to direct smolts towards the exit from the dam. Consequently SSE installed a similar curtain on loch Shin in April, May and June 2011. It was also anticipated that the turbine at Lairg dam would be run as much as possible in an attempt to increase the draw of water out of the loch, and make it easier and more attractive for smolts trying to exit the loch. However, the results of this trial were very disappointing and less than 5% (4.22%) of the smolts trapped and tagged on the Tirry were detected downstream of Lairg dam, at the Shin diversion dam.



Example of Smolt PIT tagging

The reasons for this poor result are not entirely clear. However, what is clear is that the very dry weather during the spring of 2011 contributed to a lack of water to run the turbine at Lairg dam during the most critical time of year for smolt escape. On the positive side, this negative result has made it clear that, for this theory to be tested thoroughly i.e. that smolts can be attracted to the dam by increasing the water flow through it, water must be stored as far as practical to ensure the turbine can be operated during the peak periods of the smolt migration. To this end the various parties are discussing a revised operating protocol for Lairg dam for 2012, which will seek to:

- Retain water in the Spring for generation during the critical migration window (the first few weeks of May)
- Generate at the most favourable time of day (likely to be predominantly during the hours of darkness), and
- Target generation using the trap and tag data to determine the average transit time from Tirry to Shin diversion dam.

Concerns have been expressed about the effectiveness of the screens at the diversion dam and a previous trial investigating this had not been successfully completed due to equipment failure. Therefore, it is proposed that 500 river Fiag smolts will be tagged and then released upstream of the diversion dam to determine whether they are successfully getting downstream and are not being entrained on the screens.

All of this work is being carried out collaboratively between the various parties. This will hopefully show whether the careful management of flow and generation patterns/at Lairg dam can provide a long-term sustainable solution to the problem of poor downstream passage for smolts. This is exactly the work that would be carried out to inform the review of the CAR licence at Shin to meet the RBMP objectives by 2027. Consequently it is clear that the process of joint working and positive engagement means that this work is currently underway well ahead of the time scale envisaged in the plan and this is in no small part due to the way in which the KoSDSFB has grasped the opportunity to engage.



Rotary Screw Smolt Trap. Photograph courtesy of Hugh MacKenzie

Whilst the main focus of discussions between the various parties has centred on Shin dam, we have also considered the Glen Beag diversion. The Abhainn a Ghlinne Mhoir/Bhig is designated as a Heavily Modified Water Body (HMWB) due to the impacts of the hydro diversion. This is currently classified as being at Moderate Ecological Potential and has an object to reach good by 31 December 2026 and a reporting date of 31 December 2027. As with all of the designations, classifications and objectives set out in the first river basin management plan, this will be reviewed for the second plan which is due to be published by 20 December 2015. The process and time scales for the preparation of the second plan are detailed in the table on the following page.

Shin Smolt Dam Passage (cont...)

Table 1: Timetable and work programme for the development of the second river basin management plan

RBMP publication	Purpose	Publication date	Consultation
Getting involved in developing the second river basin plan	Explains how people can get involved in river basin planning.	28 August 2012	Yes Aug 2012 -Feb 2013
Current condition	Risk assessment and significant water management issues to provide evidence base for reviewing objectives and programme of measures and re-prioritising efforts in second plan period.	22 December 2013	Yes 22 Dec 2013 – 22 June 2014
Current condition Consultation on changes to heavily modified water bodies	Proposal on changes to the existing list of heavily modified water bodies	22 December 2013	Yes 22 Dec 2013 – 22 June 2014
Second river basin management plan	Presents the strategy for meeting WFD objectives and the priorities for the water environment between 2015 and 2021.	22 December 2015	No

In preparation for this process of prioritisation and objective setting, the Kyle Board is well placed to present the necessary evidence relating to the Glen Beag diversion to allow an informed decision to be made.

Regardless of any decision on the prioritisation and objectives for the Shin water bodies, SEPA, KoSDSFB and SSE will continue to work together to find a sustainable long-term solution to the issues of fish passage.

Richard Fyfe, SEPA

Exhibition Panels

In co-operation with Balnagown Estates the Trust has created a static exhibition of information panels at Falls of Shin, showing the significance of salmon within the local economy and highlighting some of the work of the Trust and the Board and their relationship within the catchment.

This has been successfully received and Balnagown are currently looking at ways to commercialise the exhibition. If that is successful the Trust will take a part of the proceeds.

Funding for this was provided in partnership with Balnagown. We are extremely grateful to Balnagown and the exhibition design artists who have made a most constructive effort in producing this valuable piece to promote access to public information.



Sea Mammal Research Unit

Seal deterrent trial at Bonar Bridge

The knowledge that there are individual, identifiable seals that return to the Kyle of Sutherland each winter to feed on salmon kelts provided us with an opportunity to study long-term effectiveness of acoustic deterrents as barriers to seals moving upriver.

Seal scarers produce loud sounds that become painful to seals that approach too close, but are outside the hearing range of salmon. However some believe that over time seals learn to tolerate and finally ignore the sounds, rendering them useless. The Sea Mammal Research Unit together with the Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board installed two devices on opposite banks at Bonar



A harbour seal, feeding on a salmon kelt, showing the markings on the seal that are unique to this animal

Bridge backed-up by 'mains' power. The trial consisted of a number of periods when the seal scarers were either switched 'on' or 'off' and the number of seals in the river during these times was recorded. Natural markings on the seals allowed individuals to be identified and their distance from the barrier recorded. The acoustic barrier significantly reduced the number of seals seen and this effect was consistent over the study (3 years). A total of 80 seal sightings were recorded upriver during 'off' periods and 9 seal sightings were recorded upriver during 'on' periods. Analysis suggests that the barrier was capable of reducing seals in the river by 88% implying this type of seal scarer was an effective seal deterrent over the three winters of this study. Further to this, the identification of individuals that returned every winter but were never seen to pass the barrier during 'on' periods suggests that long-term use of the barrier may not be compromised by seals gradually increasing tolerance to the barrier. These data provide encouraging results for this practical non-lethal method of controlling seal predation in rivers.

Salmon Net Seal Deterrent

During two salmon netting seasons in the Moray Firth we installed a seal scarer on a salmon bag-net. The device was switched 'on' or 'off' at random and the number of seals seen at the net and the number of salmon caught was recorded. During 'on' periods significantly fewer seals were seen at the net and fish landings were significantly greater compared to "off" periods. On average approximately a third more fish per hour were landed when the seal scarer was 'on'. There was evidence that the increase in catches was a direct result of the reduction in the number of seals in the vicinity of the net. In addition, seals were found to have damaged fish in the net only when the seal scarer was 'off' although one seal damaged fish was found enmeshed in the 'leader' during an 'on' period. These findings support evidence from river trials that although effective at deterring seals, there are still some seals that are prepared to approach these devices. Predictions from the statistical model fitted to the data from these trials suggest that had the seal scarer been 'on' continuously during the two fishing seasons then the salmon catch at this site could have been increased by 61%.

Robert Harris, Sea Mammal Research Unit
www.smru.st-andrews.ac.uk

Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association

Once again the weather gods were not kind to Kyle anglers with high water levels not encouraging salmon and grilse to remain in our waters for anything other than a short time. Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association salmon and grilse catches remain at or close to historical lows. However, those fish that were caught were often notable for their quality with several large salmon captured including fish in excess of 20lb.

Despite low catches, it is encouraging to note that the percentage of salmon and grilse returned was in excess of sixty percent. Whilst there is no room for complacency, the return rate appears to be heading in the correct direction. Angling pressure in 2011 was a fraction of what is normally expected but the capture of over 800 sea trout and finnock suggests that locally we continue to buck the trend of depressed abundance of this stock within the Moray Firth area as a whole. For many angling clubs, including the Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association, sea trout represent an important resource. At the Association's AGM we welcomed Mr Marcus Walters of the Moray Firth Sea Trout Project to update members on progress made since the inception of the project. It is particularly heartening to see that the many scales, log book returns etc provided by members have contributed to the research element of the project and in turn a greater understanding of the local sea trout populations.

It is clear that many challenges lie ahead for angling clubs particularly in relation to the financial climate we are all experiencing. Balancing the books whilst simultaneously paying heed to the needs of the fish that support the fishery is not not easy, but is a worthwhile challenge to accept.

Dr Keith Williams, MIFM
Senior Biologist

The Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association
Email: secretary@kosaa.co.uk
www.kosaa.co.uk

Check our website for:
Local weather and tide information
Up to date catch records
Trout fishing, Fishing permits, Membership

Scottish Mink Initiative - Highland Update

Scottish Mink Initiative

Working with Communities to Protect Native Wildlife

Since the Scottish Mink Initiative (SMI) started in early April this year we have seen an increasing amount of sightings in the far north, which led to the Initiative's adapted effort in that particular area. The Cromarty Firth and the Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trusts are in the process of taking on their own mink control with the continuing support from the SMI. This has diverted my focus to increase the effort all the way to Durness and Bettyhill.

We have managed to increase the coverage by around 100 rafts and land based tunnels and reacted to about 40 reported sightings. The carcass which was found on the shores of Loch Eriboll and initially identified as a mink, turned out to be a ferret after all; and we know that there is a local population in the Durness area. This is good news but we still need to establish whether or not there are some individual mink roaming the area. After having received sightings in the Coigach area last year and early this year, it has got quiet there as well. However, almost 20 American mink have been caught on the west coast between the Isle of Skye and Gruinard Bay this year, so there is a real threat that there might be more on the way up. The catches in the east along the Blackwater, Conon and the Beaully confirm that this remains a gateway for mink moving north. Every animal caught there will make a difference in the NW Highlands.



Photograph courtesy of Kathryn Newton

In addition to the existing volunteer force we were happy to welcome more than 40 new volunteers from Durness and Tongue in the north, to Brora in the east, up the Kyle of Sutherland and into Assynt and Loch Broom. Given the vast expanse of the area however, there is still a need to get more people looking out for the invasive mink trying to sneak into the area.



Photograph courtesy of Jamie Urquhart

Many landowners have given us permission to access their land and Ghillies and Keepers working the rivers, lochs and hills are keeping an eye out or trap for mink as part of their daily work. Fish farm operators are on the lookout and many Countryside rangers all over Ross-shire, Caithness and Sutherland have introduced raft monitoring to local schools and are checking them on a regular base. A lot of the tourism industry on the west coast is based on watching local wildlife and I would like to get them more involved in the year to come.

Meryl Norris from the Cromarty Fisheries Trust is looking after the lower Dornoch Firth area, east of Bonar bridge up to Loch Fleet and can be contacted at 07828 140 392 or merylnorris@gmail.com
Gunnar Scholtz, the Highland Mink Control Officer, is looking after the upper Oykel and Shin Systems and you can get in touch at 07825 184 080 or gunnar@rafts.org.uk

Folk who are out in remote areas every day, whether they are walking their dogs or showing bird colonies to enthusiastic bird watchers or patiently waiting for that fish of a lifetime, watch out for American mink presence.

Report any sightings, look after a raft or trap and make sure they get to where they belong: the freezers at Aberdeen University.

Gunnar Scholtz



Gillies Eye View

Oykel

Despite the UK experiencing another extremely cold and lengthy winter, the 2011 season got off to a very early start. George Ross decided to have a cast in the late afternoon of 19th January when a lovely strong 8lb fish took his 1.5-inch Black & Orange fly in the Narrows. This was our second January fish in three years, which can only be a positive sign, as January fish are a rarity in Scotland.

Most of February's fishing was lost to ice, but March provided some good sport with Springers coming into the system off most tides. The beginning of April was prolific before the spring heat wave struck the Highlands, resulting in everyone having to wait patiently for the weather to break.

The water eventually arrived on 16th May and what can only be described as exceptional spring fishing was experienced. We broke another long-standing catch record with 119 fish caught in a single spring week. This happened in spite of almost 2 days being lost on the lower beats due to high water levels. The Junction and Washerwoman pools on beat 1 were so full of aggressively taking fish that 2 rods landed 25 fish between them in a single afternoon. Rather impressively, 17 of these fish were caught in a thirty-yard section at the very tail of the Junction pool, which is only fishable in extremely high water. The total catch for the spring was 296, which included 6 weighing around 20 lbs. Only 3 fish had to be killed, resulting in 99% of our spring fish being returned, improving on last years figure of 98%.



Spring fish being released

The summer fishing got off to a slow start. However in June we caught 91 fish, twice the number of fish for the same period last season. The surprising statistic was that the vast majority were MSW (Multi Sea Winter) fish, several weighing between 15 & 20lbs.

Grilse started arriving more steadily in the early days of July, but in no way could it be compared with 2010. July produced only 98 salmon and grilse along with 45 sea trout, which was disappointing considering that we had a number of spates. In July, 30% of the fish caught were MSW and 20lb fish kept appearing, which was a nice consolation.

August was far more productive than in previous years with 265 salmon and 39 sea trout caught. The last time these figures were reached was in 2007 when 310 fish were caught. The total for the season was a very respectable 893. Taking into consideration



Photographs courtesy of Steven Mackenzie

the general lack of grilse in Scotland this year and the poor fishing conditions during April and July I am very pleased with this result. The largest fish was 23lbs taken from the Lower George on beat 4. The average weight of our MSW fish was 10.2lbs and the grilse average was 4.4lbs.

The new proprietors of the Upper Oykel Fishings can be very pleased with their first season. The previous 5-year average was surpassed by around 30 fish. June was lightly fished for the first time and I was pleasantly surprised by the catches. Lots of the spring salmon were lying in the deeper pools, waiting patiently for spawning to commence.

July, however was similar to the Lower Oykel, with lots of fish around but they were loathe to take a fly. Fishing in August and September was a different picture. September alone produced 185 fish and catches were evenly

spread throughout the 4 beats. The Upper Oykel finished with a total of 324 salmon/grilse and 53 sea trout.

One final point of which we can be proud – the Lower Oykel reached it's highest ever release rate of 90% and the Upper Oykel did even better with an overall release rate of 94%.

Steven Mackenzie

Gillies Eye View

Braelangwell, River Carron

Braelangwell kicked off its season on 4th February 2011 with a 12lb Salmon from the Morail, the first off the river Carron. To my knowledge this is the second earliest fish taken off the beat, certainly since the records began in the mid 1960's. Braelangwell caught another 2 in February and there were 7 in total off the river.

43 Salmon were caught off the Carron in March with 10 off Braelangwell. On the 31st March the river rose very quickly and as soon as it settled 3 Salmon were taken in the Morail. By Saturday night we had caught 7 and lost a further 4. Encouragingly we were also starting to see fresh fish.

The week of the 4th April produced 14 and it was evident that there were a lot of fish around. Unfortunately the weather turned hot and on Sunday 10th April the first lodge tenants arrived to see fish streaming over the Morail falls. By the end of April 71 Salmon were caught off the Carron, 27 of them off Braelangwell.

There then followed a heat wave until the night of Friday 13th May. The river rose on the Saturday and 3 Salmon were caught but it was very obvious there were fish around in numbers again. The week of the 16th May produced an all-time record day (13 landed) and week for the beat. 40 Salmon were landed, many weighing in their teens, and many others lost not far from the net. Strangely, the Wednesday only produced 1 fish for the day. Like everywhere else the Salmon were all in exceptional condition.

The following week produced 29 Salmon with again a good number being lost. There was a similar mystery to the previous week when despite perfect conditions the Saturday produced just one fish. Up until the end of May Braelangwell had caught 117 Salmon out of the 434 off the river.



Like a lot of the rivers we suffered from disease which was put down to Saprolegnia. As a precaution we killed a number of fish. Some of them were caught by tenants and some were removed from the river. We kept a fish so it could be sent to a lab in Aberdeen, it was a worrying time.. At Glencalvie falls more fish could be seen than had been seen for over 20 years and even although the Carron had a rise in water, here and there the disease was still present.

After mid-July we could not complain about water levels and in fact we probably could have done with 10 days or so of the river showing its bare bones which might have made the fish a bit more inclined to take the fly.

By the end of August it was becoming evident that the Grilse would not be coming in any numbers. Infuriatingly if we did see a run of fresh Grilse coming through the beat they were very reluctant to take. Even in late September when we had high water the Salmon never really came on. There was a bigger fish off the Carron but Braelangwell caught one of 27.5lbs, the biggest for a number of years.

The Carron ended the season with in excess of 1100 Salmon and Grilse with a return rate of 92%. Braelangwell ended with a combined total of 219 with a voluntary 95% Catch and Release.

Finlay McCulloch

River Shin

This seasons fishing saw us catching and returning quite a lot of large fish. Probably it was a better spring than we have had for possibly 10 or 12 years. Although July let us down, the remainder of the season for August and September was steady, with some big fish again being landed. So the last 4 seasons have shown improvements in the spring fishing.

Willie Pirritt



The Kyle Trust are building a working relationship with The European Nature Trust in order to develop the following project.

Carbon trap. Cistern. History classroom.



More than just a bog.

A serious business opportunity, in a vital sector,
in an unlikely place. Sutherland.

Here's how it works. We restore peatlands so they can lock up carbon more effectively. In doing so they acquire a commercial value to companies looking to offset their carbon emissions. We then match landowners with industrial interests wishing to sequester their carbon debt - in these peatlands. And here's the best bit: the restoration process dramatically improves the conditions for salmon in the catchment. How do you put a price on an outstanding day on the river?

Restoration involves blocking the hill peat drains that are responsible for drying out the bogs and feeding silt into the rivers. They allow a great deal of carbon previously locked in the peat to be lost to the atmosphere. Block the drains and you start the process of water-logging again that builds peat and locks away carbon.

Call **Hugh Fullerton-Smith: 07701 026984**
or **Pete Campbell: 07770 831790** to discuss.

Peatlands Plus Ltd, working in collaboration with experts in the field, have developed a reliable methodology that quantifies the CO2 loss and sequestration capacity in a peatland, in doing so, creating a marketable service.

As well as the landowner, The Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust and Peatland Plus's parent organisation, The European Nature Trust, benefit from the transaction. That income is re-invested in further improving the quality of the river systems in the north of Scotland, supporting local employment and economic activity.

PEATLANDS⁺



Give Peat a Chance: Block it and Lock it.

Could you please encourage whatever appropriate contacts you may have to maintain interest and financial support for the Trust.

As members of the Trust and participants in the enjoyment of recreational fishing within the Kyle of Sutherland, that's really the most important contribution you can make.

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fisheries Board Conservation Policy

"Kyle fisheries – you hold the future"

Salmon. Aim to achieve:

- A 100% release rate catchment wide over the season.
- Definition; fish 65 cm (approximately 7 lbs) and over nose to the fork of the tail.

Grilse. Aim to achieve:

- All fish released before 15th June.
- A minimum of 80% release rate catchment wide over the season.

Sea Trout. Aim to achieve:

- All fish released before the 15th of June.
- All fish 50 cm (approximately 3 lbs) and over nose to the fork of the tail released.
- A minimum of 80% release rate catchment wide over the season.

Method.

- Fly only by statutory instrument.
- Treble hooks prohibited.
- Barbless hooks should be used as best practice.

Training and Education.

- The Board to provide education and training for anyone who requests it.
- Written leaflets and posters explaining the need for the Unified Conservation Policy (UCP) to be provided to all fishery interests.

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board
The Hatchery
Ardgay
Sutherland
IV24 3DP

Board Members:

Robbie Douglas Miller (Ch.)
Anthony Fraser John Green Nicky Griffiths
James Hall Michael Hasson Jonathon Mason
Willie Paterson Richard Sankey Keith Williams

Director: Iain McMyn
Clerk: Gordon Robertson

T: 01863 766 645 M: 07990 730 134
www.kylefisheries.org

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Dornoch Road
Bonar Bridge
Sutherland
IV24 3EB

Trustees:

Charlie Brooke (Ch.) Michael Brown
Stephen Gilchrist Tom Inglis Steven Mackenzie
Gregor MacLeod Iain McMyn Jonathan Mason
George Ross Jonny Shaw Keith Williams

Director: Iain McMyn
Finance & Project Director: Pete Campbell

T: 01863 766 536 M: 07770 831 790
admin@kylefisheries.org www.kylefisheries.org

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Membership and Gift Aid Declaration

A. Gift Aid Declaration:

Title: _____ Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

I would like the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust (Charity No: SC030207) to treat this as a Gift Aid Donation and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify the Trust otherwise.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notes:

- You must be a UK tax payer to make a gift eligible for Gift Aid. The total of income tax and capital gains tax payable by you in each year must be equal to the tax recoverable on all your gifts.
- For every £1 donated under Gift Aid the Kyle Trust can recover a further 20p.
- Higher rate tax relief can be claimed by you on Gift Aid Donations
- A Declaration can be cancelled at any time by notifying us. It must cease if you no longer pay tax.

B. Cash donation: Cheque enclosed made payable to Kyle Trust: £ _____

C. To make a series of donations for future years please complete the Banker's Order below.

Banker's Order

To: The Manager Bank: _____ Sort Code: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please pay to Royal Bank of Scotland, 19 High Street, Tain. IV19 1AD for the credit of:
Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust - Account No: 00209852 - Sort Code: 83-27-35 the sum of £ _____

On the _____ (date) and annually until otherwise instructed.

No. of account to be debited: _____

Account name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick this box if you do NOT want to receive mail, email or newsletters from the Kyle Trust.

Please return this completed document to KSFT, Dornoch Road, Bonar Bridge, Ardgay, IV24 3BR