

## AWPR and ADAA

The first involvement with the AWPR project was back in 2003 when I had a meeting with the project design team in Aberdeen. At that time, they were simply contacting owners of property likely to be affected by the proposed development and explained the way in which the matter would be progressed. The ADAA, as owners of the river banks on both sides of the river at Upper Parkhill were going to be affected at some point on the beat. At a subsequent meeting, the proposed route was shown with a bridge crossing over the River Don in the lower half of Cockers Pool. Comments were invited and the fact that the area of the proposed crossing was over one of the best catching areas on the pool, we made this known and expressed our concerns. At this point, the route was only a proposal so a site meeting on the banks of the river took place when we explained where the best catching area was towards the bottom end of the pool. We suggested a better crossing point from- an angling point of view, would be downriver in the faster flowing water below Cockers. This was all noted and when the proposed route was eventually published it was where we had suggested.



Later, as draft compulsory purchase orders were published, it was made known to us that Scottish Roads intended to acquire an area of land on both riverbanks. The intention was to extinguish the angling rights adjacent to the land to be purchased. At Parkhill however, we are both riparian owners and holders of the salmon fishing rights. Both of which are separate. We indicated that we were unhappy with any suggestion that our salmon fishings were to be interfered with. Ironically, as owners of the Salmon rights we automatically had trout rights as the superior title holder. The mere purchase of the banks, although it would extinguish our riparian trout rights, wouldn't affect our right to continue to fish for trout in the area affected unless they also purchased the salmon fishing rights. However, these were not required in the compulsory purchase order. Even though this was explained to the officials concerned, the penny never dropped and the compulsory purchase order was never amended. Discussions took place about the future of the riparian trout rights after the bridge project was >>

completed as obviously we didn't want others to be fishing the beat - albeit only for a very small stretch. The indications given were that in due course a permanent right would be devolved back to the Club for a peppercorn amount on completion of the work. Even though it was clear that, whatever happened our fishings were going to be affected, we did participate in the Public Enquiry held in 2008/2009 and lodged objections. Our objections were simply noted but at the end of the day ignored. The vesting date for the compulsory purchase was in December 2012. We were given a sum of money calculated by the regional assessor for 85% of the land value with the balance to be paid on completion of the roads project. Originally estimated to be a date in 2017. As you all know the scheme for a variety of reasons has been delayed.

Work commenced on the project in 2014 but in 2015 to 2016 the work at times, had a devastating impact on our fishings. Not only on the Don but also unexpectedly over at Loirston Loch. Due to two years of very heavy rainfall both the Don and Loirston were continually affected by heavy pollution caused by silt run off from the works. Over at Loirston, Stuart Fleming was continually monitoring the inlet burn and constantly calling out SEPA. A not too dissimilar scene on the Don with several burns from Lower Parkhill up to the Bogenjoss Burn at Fintray were continually affected. The Goval burn in particular was very badly affected as some of you will have seen. Again SEPA were constantly being called out.

The outcome of all this was that prosecution was considered. If found guilty, the AWPR would have simply been fined with the monies going to the Treasury. Instead a deal was brokered for any affected bodies to be given a cash payment direct in lieu of any fine being imposed. At the end of the saga, the ADAA received £20K in total. Originally the monies were intended to be for improvement projects but eventually this condition was dropped and the monies paid over without any conditions attached. Some of the monies have in fact been spent on bank improvements. Particularly on the North bank at Parkhill where the banks were levelled out and a pathway formed to make access easier for both members and the public. New grass cutting machinery was also purchased to help speed up the annual grass cutting.

The Don bridge was very late in starting but when work commenced there were two large tower cranes erected on either side of the river. Unfortunately for the developers, the amount of land purchased was only wide enough for the actual bridge so the cranes both impinged onto our adjoining land and the arc of the cranes was also above our air space. With the assistance of Andrew Robertson from Bidwells, a licence was negotiated for the cranes to operate over our property. Initially the licence was from September 2017 to March 2018 but an extension was then requested until the end of August 2018. As you all are aware, the Don Bridge has had serious problems and has been badly delayed. Because of this, yet another extension was agreed until the end of December 2018. For the latest extension, we said enough is enough because we have been prevented getting access to fish the North side of Cocksers for two years. We upped the ante and negotiated and increase in the monthly charges. So far, we have benefitted to the tune of a further £46K. Good you might all say but when you see our current financial position with severely reduced income due to a decline in membership, this one off payment simply makes up for the shortfall in our income stream.

At the time of writing, the AWPR is about to open for use except for the Don crossing. They are saying the bridge will be ready for the end of December but only time will tell.

**Bob Dey**

**ADAA President**

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# Garthdee/Banchory Devenick 2018 Season Report

The low water favored the beat again in 2018 and there was quite a build-up of salmon present in the Pumphouse Pool throughout the summer as a result. A lift in water levels in early August moved a lot of these resident fish on but there were still fresh fish entering the pool daily.

Garthdee recorded 20 salmon/grilse and Banchory Devenick recorded 37 which wasn't too bad a return. Although, not as prolific as in 2013, catches were steady but angling effort being much lower this year as in previous years may be part of the reason why. Brown Trout numbered 7 for both beats combined and the Finnock catch reported was 37. Sea Trout numbers were steady with 27 reported with the biggest being an absolute cracker from the Pumphouse Pool which was estimated at 6lb.

There has been a lot of work done on the Banchory Devenick beat this year with large

areas of overgrown bushes cut back by the beat convener and a band of dedicated volunteers to make the Beltie Pool a bit less enclosed. This should make fishing the beat more accessible in places and allow an ease of access to the water for those less abled.

## Tight lines! Benny Smart



*Photo: Michal Ostrowski.*

## On-line Rod (and boat) Booking Arrangements

### Introduction

In early 2018 The Association was given the chance of a four- year agreement to fish the River Dee, Culter beat. Part of the agreement was a restriction on the number of rods that could fish the beat. The Management Committee decided that the fairest way of doing this for its 900 plus members was to invest in an on-line booking system that would work in a similar way to the existing on-line boat booking system. The four- year agreement was entered into and the on-line booking system went live on Monday 19 March 2018. In May 2018 it was also decided to use the system to replace the old booking arrangement of members having to go to Somers Fishing Tackle shop to book a rod at the River Dee, Banchory Devenick beat.

### How it works

Go to the Associations website home page [www.adaa.org.uk](http://www.adaa.org.uk) , click on the Members Only Bookings link and navigate from there. When you get to the calendar click on a date and you will see the rods/ boats available that day.

Click on the rod/boat you want to book and enter your email address, surname, and 4-digit pin number (membership number as

per your ID card).

An email will automatically be sent to you with details of any booking made, i.e., this is your permit to print off or show on your mobile if requested to.

You are also encouraged to self-cancel a booking if for any reason you are unable to fish a pre-booked session or leave early. To do this just go to my bookings: <http://www.adaasales.co.uk/bookings/viewbookings.asp>

For any member who has not already advised us of their email address, if you enter a valid email address, the system will harvest that address for the Associations records and future reference. Unfortunately, if there is no email address the system will not accept a booking. The system is designed so that only current members can use the system and the public will not be able to input fake bookings. This however means any member without an email address will be unable to make a booking.

Booking conditions are as per the rules: Members must fish a pre-booked session before they may pre-book another session for that beat. Please note that the booking system is closely monitored and failure to >>

comply with the booking conditions will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence.

There is also a page on the website where you will find further guidance and FAQs on the above:

<https://www.adaa.org.uk/river-dee-culter>

### **How it has gone so far?**

It has been a success with many bookings made by numerous members. There have been some comments from members that they have turned up for a session when all the rods are booked and have not seen anyone else fishing. It is suspected however this is due to members fishing at different times during the session.

Unfortunately, there have been some members who have booked another session on the same beat without fishing their existing session first. We are currently seeing if there is a technical solution that will prevent this. We have accepted that these are genuine errors as the arrangements are new, however like any other breach of the Associations rules disciplinary action will be considered if necessary.

## **Upper Fintry 2018 Season Report**

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2018 saw high water in early Spring, with Winter extending its grip well in to the year, followed by another very dry summer with sustained low water levels making for challenging angling conditions. Since Storm Frank the river topography of some of the beat has changed, with silt build up and shallowing of previously productive water along with some bank erosion that has widened the river on some sections of the beat. However, as anglers we have to 'fish what is in front of us' and nature will at some point hopefully hit the reset button.

Upper Fintry returned 4 Salmon and 1 Grilse for 2018, an improvement on no Salmon or Grilse for 2017 and only 2 for 2016. The Salmon were all caught from August to October, the biggest fish an 18 pounder. These figures are comparable with 2015 season. Sea Trout numbered 8 for the season, again an improvement on 2017 where none were reported, and again a similar number to 2015. No finnock were reported from the beat in 2018.

Regarding Brown Trout only 10 fish were recorded for the entire season, well down on what would be expected for this beat and perhaps a reflection of less effort (and reporting?). The club competition on 1st July

### **Potential other uses**

As members will be aware there are already several pools on various beats with rod restrictions (for example, River Dee, Garthdee, Pumphouse Pool, River Don, Lower Fintray, Manse Pool, River Don, Cruives, Snuffies and Benzies Pools). The Garthdee beat has now been added to the booking system for the 2019 season. Currently if a member turns up at these pools and all rods are being fished they can choose to queue up and wait or try somewhere else. Would members prefer if for all or for some of these it would be better if you could pre-book? Further in the past beats have come up for lease that the Association have been interested in but have had number of rod restrictions on them. They were ruled out because of the associated administrative arrangements needed to be put in place. In the future, this will be one less barrier when considering such opportunities.

### **Paul Toseland**

*Secretary/ Treasurer*

saw only 12 fish caught, less than half the total of the same competition over the last 4 seasons (and we have several experienced Scottish International capped anglers participating in our club events!). Low levels make for challenging conditions but fish still have to feed and like other beats on the Don, summer evening hatches of Blue-winged Olives and Sedge have been either sporadic, very curtailed and at times non-existent – this does not help the dry fly angler, and particularly so at a beat like Upper Fintray. It is about being at the right place at the right time and with persistence decent fish can still be picked up if the effort is made and I know at least one of our new members enjoyed many nights in pursuit of such trout on the beat. Overall this season our beats seemed to be proliferated with large numbers of juvenile brown trout in the 6 to 10 oz class but the normally plentiful numbers of 1.5 to 2 lb trout were definitely down. Things should improve in season 2019 and 2020 as these juvenile fish mature. Wishing everyone well for 2019, let's get out there and make it happen!

### **Lindsay Cargill**

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# Cruives/Netherdon 2018 Season Report

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Despite the persistent low water conditions, the Cruives and Netherdon catches on the beats didn't materialise on what should be good conditions for the lower river. At combined total of 19 salmon/grilse and 2 sea trout for the two beats probably reflects a lack of angling effort as many of the popular pools on the beats were nowhere near as busy as in previous years. The first salmon off the beat for the year was a lovely sea liced springer caught in May. Most of the other fish were all caught in September and October.

## Exchange Permits

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Being a member of the ADAA not only offers some excellent fishings on our own waters but also enables us to access some fantastic angling opportunities on rivers and lochs further afield. The ADAA has a Permit Exchange system in place with three other angling associations and clubs. The Inverness Angling Club offers our members excellent salmon fishing on three miles of the river Ness whereas the Beaully Angling club, by way of our permit exchange system enables members to fish seven miles of the river Beaully from Lovat bridge down to the estuary. For members wishing to experience

## Xmas Fly Fest

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On the 16th of December, the ADAA jointly hosted an event in conjunction with Loop Tackle at the Bothy on the banks of the River Dee. The weather gods were smiling upon us as we were blessed with bright sun for large parts of the day. As a result, a good crowd of around 100 people attended the day and to meet some of the biggest names in our sport. There were many in attendance who travelled from far and wide to be involved and to support the Club which was great to see.

Informative talks from Al Peake, Lorraine Hawkins and our very own Paul Toseland were all well received. The amazing films on show in the Committee Room were also big draw. Some of the footage was first class and the guys from Loop are keen to do something similar for the ADAA to continue their support and promotion of our Club. Fly tying demos from some of the best in the business; including local tier Ross MacDonald also went

The brown trout fishing was slow and the total reported catch for both beats was just 14 trout to 2lb in weight. The low, warm water maybe put the fish off the take as river temperature were above 20C for much of the season.

Bank repairs are ongoing at Snuffies with much of the hole left by Storm Frank filled in. There is still a bit to do but it looks much better than before so hopefully we'll have it back to near as normal in due course.

**Nicky**

loch fishing, the Loch Achonachie AC offer superb trout fishing from either bank or boat on three highland lochs as well as stretches of the rivers Blackwater and Conon. Feedback from members who have taken advantage of this facility is very positive with some enjoying angling holidays at no further expense than their membership subscription. To obtain an exchange permit to fish any of these waters could not be simpler. All you have to do is follow the instructions on the ADAA web site and a permit can be passed on for any of the fishings mentioned above.

down well as they passed on their tips and advice on how to tie a better fly. The pike flies were so life like, it's no wonder the fish can't resist them!

A huge thanks to Loop Tackle and Twin Peakes Fly Fishing for setting up and promoting the event and to all those who helped out on the day. The good turnout was just reward for the hard work that goes into hosting events like this. Thank you to all who came along. We are all looking forward to the next one. **CF**



# Large Woody Structures (LWS)

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In recent years the reintroduction of Large Woody Structures to rivers has captured the worldwide attention of practitioners, anglers, engineers, flood risk managers and conservationists. It is becoming increasingly recognised as an important management tool for accelerating the rehabilitation of degraded watercourses by providing habitat for fish – LWS helps provide shelter from high velocity flows, shade, feeding, spawning and nursery sites, as well as refuges from predators. Creating diverse habitats, by adding complexity to the channel and helping to create pools and gravel beds also supports higher numbers of invertebrates by trapping nutrients for key species groups such as mayflies, stoneflies and caddis species.



Practically all of Scotland's upland rivers would have once flowed through extensive areas of woodland, these woodlands helped to create ideal habitat for salmon, by regulating temperature and flows, by providing shade and nutrients, but also by the trees falling into the river creating pools, spawning gravels, cover and a range of flow conditions which suited the complex habitat requirements of all life stages of salmon. Deforestation of our upland streams has resulted in the rivers becoming around 30% wider and shallower. Rivers like the Gairn often now reach peak summer water temperatures of over 20°C and this summer water temperature in the upper Gairn reached 27.5°C (81.5°F), the lethal limit for juvenile salmon is often given as 27.5°C. In order to offset these dangerously high summer temperatures the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and the River Dee Trust have, with the help of various funding schemes, planted over 140,000 native riparian trees in the upper Dee catchment,

this is just the start of an ongoing project and much more needs to be done in the future.

These newly planted trees will take decades before they grow large enough to fall into the river and create the habitat improvements that salmon require. In order to kick start the process the Board created 24 large woody structures on the river Gairn this autumn. Over 70 large windblown scots pine trees were transported to the upper Gairn from the nearest woodland around 8 miles away. These trees were then securely dug into the bank or bed of the river to mimic natural woody structures. Each structure was located to enhance river processes which will lead to narrowing and speeding up of the stream. Establishing riparian woodland and restoring the instream habitat of our upland spring fish producing catchments is key, not only to protect our salmon but also to increase the numbers of fit healthy smolts these streams produce each year. Recent studies have shown that "fitter" smolts have a much higher chance of surviving at sea and returning as adults.



# Loirston Loch 2018 Season Report

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In 2018 Loirston Loch has without doubt had many issues that have had a direct effect on both angling effort and fish.

Run-off from the AWPR has been an issue even as far back as 2016 and has continued into 2018. Unfortunately, the AWPR is a massive project and we cannot stop progress. The committee have held several meetings with the environmental agency SEPA and the AWPR environmental departments to try and ease the problems and we have seen some progress this year. Unfortunately, the heavy rain has a direct influence on the feeder burn which runs right through all the major earth works at Charleston which has caused the loch to be very dirty at times, but the fish don't seem to be affected too much.

The annual weed problem has returned, and Stuart & Nicky have tried their best to cut the weed when the conditions were right.

Next year, the committee have agreed some much needing funding for help in tackling the issue of weed at the loch, the committee have agreed to fund an outside contractor with specialised weed cutting machinery to spend a couple to days at the loch cutting

## Loop Aktiv Initiative

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A few months ago, an application to Loop Fishing Tackle was posted answering a request to get in touch to say what you do to encourage people to take up fishing. It was sent it off without giving it a second thought, but I was taken completely by surprise when an email dropped into my inbox from them only a matter of hours later saying my application to receive starter fly fishing kits had been successful!

Ater a very productive meeting with the guys from Loop, the ADAA have now been in receipt of 9 rods with matching reels and lines. The 9ft 6in rods are great bits of kit even for the more experienced anglers so they will come in real handy for when we host various Junior Days next year. Loop are very keen to help the ADAA in various other ways to promote and advertise what the club has to offer during these challenging times for our sport in an attempt to encourage people to take up or come back to angling. They will also be purchasing 2 memberships for the 2019 season.

and removing the weed in the most popular fishing areas, this will start once the weed has started growing in May/June.

We had 3 larger the usual stocking this year and these fish are the best quality available. Many of our members have continued to have some great sport throughout the season and should continue into the winter months if they can brave the elements. We have also met with the owners who have given their insurance that the ADAA will continue with the lease for the foreseeable future. The owner has advised that they intend to start work in the area in spring 2019 and building work will begin early summer once the access road and utilities are in place. The owners will also be building a second carpark at the West side of the loch to allow easy access to the loch Inch side, there will be room for 6 cars. The committee will keep members up to date as things progress at the loch and will continue to work closely with the owner and all the contractors to gain access to the farm side in 2019.

**Kenny Riddell**

This initiative can only be a good thing for the ADAA and hopefully we will reap the benefits of this free advertisement and support from Loop in the coming years. Keep an eye on our Social Media pages and Website for details nearer the time. Exciting times ahead!

**CF**



# Lower Fintray 2018 Season Report

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The past season was another difficult one on the Lower Fintray beat where yet again, we had to endure long periods of low water. Despite the lowest river levels for many a year, catches on the beat were up on the previous year with a total of 12 salmon/grilse and 5 sea trout reported. Not spectacular by any means but on the positive side, any improvement is better than none. The Brown trout fishing on the usually prolific Manse Pool was also slow and the total reported catch for the beat was only 11. The good runs of fish entering the Don in late Spring seemed to bomb right through the beat and we missed out as these fish took advantage of the good water levels. Summer and into the early Autumn were also slow on the salmon front as the levels failed to reach above -6" on the Parkhill gauge. Beats further down were doing well but the pools on Lower Fintray were relatively quiet.

I think the catches reflect the low angling effort we see right across our waters but later in the season, when you would expect the effort to pick up, many of the pools were left unfished. I recall fishing with my father on the September Aberdeen holiday Monday and we had the entire beat to ourselves. There was not a sole to be seen from the top of the beat right down to the Cothal. Once upon a time, not so long ago, you would have had to queue just to get in the car park on such a day! Having said that, the anglers who were willing to take a chance seemed to benefit from the lack of angling pressure as most of the reported catches were caught by just a handful of dedicated rods.

Here's hoping we get good water next in 2019 and catches continue to improve on the River Don. It surely can't be another year of missing out on the rainfall for the Don catchment? Hope to see you the bank sometime. Tight lines.

**Craig Fleming**

*Lower Fintray Convenor*

## Upper Parkhill, Lower Parkhill and Upper Stoneywood 2018 Season Report.

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2018, as we are all too aware, was again bedeviled by yet another "tropical" summer, which turned out even longer and hotter than that of 2017.

The salmon season started with low river levels with only a few kelts landed. Later in February and into March, when we had a few short periods of rain and prospects looked better but it was into April, on a higher, steadier flow before fresh run salmon made a welcome appearance.

As the year progressed into May, the river level began to shrink back again and stayed that way for most of the season with the summer breaking temperature and dryness records which was pleasing everyone but we fishers! Despite this, salmon were evident in the beats all season, with grilse a welcome addition from early June onwards and more diligent angling would certainly have resulted in higher returns. A few of the regular Parkhill rods did better than in the 2017 season and that trend is reflected in the river's overall catches. As is so often the case, from around mid-August to the season's end, increased angling effort was rewarded with more fish on

the bank.

The first fresh sea trout of the season was recorded at the end of March and they featured steadily through until the end of October. Although these shy creatures usually reward rods prepared to fish at "anti-social" times of the 24 hour cycle, some were tempted during broad daylight hours by anglers employing "fine and far off" tactics. One advantage the Don has over the Dee in this respect is the degree of weed cover which undoubtedly helps in stalking shy fish.

The drought conditions even seemed to result in brown trout anglers spending less time on the river. However, as always, *Salmo Fario* can be relied on to provide sport and, although conditions were difficult at times, both dry and wet fly anglers landed some good specimens.

To sum up therefore, despite the dry summer our catches have borne up well in comparison to recent seasons. Let us hope for even better times in the year ahead.

Tight lines to all our members.  
**John Stephen.** *Beat Convenor.*

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# Parkhill Fishery 2018 Season Report

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After stocking in the late spring some good sport was enjoyed by members although the fish were not as big as we usually have. The bulk of the fish were between 1lb and 1.5lb however 10 larger fish up to 6lb were in the batch.

The month of May saw unusually warm weather and that was the beginning of what turned out to be a very dry summer with consistently high temperatures. The very hot weather meant that fish were lying in the deeper areas close to the bottom and proved difficult to tempt.

Our normal stocking in early summer didn't take place because temperatures were too high for safely transporting the fish. Our supplier was not prepared to risk high mortalities in their transportation. It wasn't until September that we were able to get more fish and these were of a better size up to 2.5lb with ten fish up to 10lb in weight. Water levels in the fishery began to drop quite dramatically and large areas of the fishery had very little or no water. Not only did this affect angling it also made cutting of the weed in the water very difficult to allow the cutting machinery to operate correctly. The boat prop was also catching the bottom. A few members did complain about the weed not being cut but it wasn't without trying. Conditions were against us. There was still a reasonable flow coming in at the inlet and the only explanation for the water problem appeared to be that the ground surrounding the fishery was very dry and all the vegetation was absorbing large amounts of water. At the same time, we saw pictures of Ladybower Reservoir in England

showing the once flooded village was above water due to the lack of rainfall replenishing water levels. No other explanation could be found. Inspection of the Dam screen revealed no problems to explain the drop in levels. This became so serious that Parkhill became almost unfishable for a period of several weeks. The rains eventually came at the beginning of November and since then the Water levels have been slowly rising back to normal levels. Sport once again improved and some very good bags were caught with several fish up to 10lb accounted for especially fishing from the boats at the deeper end. According to the former owner a similar situation happened at the turn of the century when there was a similarly dry summer, so it looks like the problem was all down to natural conditions. Even on the rivers we saw exceptionally low levels at times. As I write, the water levels are almost back to normal so we hope next season is not so dry and rain free for such a prolonged period.

On a recent visit it was noted that a life jacket was missing from the hut. This was later found lying in amongst trees at the far end of the fishery. Life Jackets are provided for your safety so please take more care. This season two jackets were activated with no reports made. If you do accidentally set off a jacket then please let the Secretary know so we can get the cylinders replaced as it could be a matter of life or death if someone was to fall in with a non-working lifejacket. You won't be charged with the repair cost.

All the best for 2019.

**Bob Dey**

## Direct Debit Membership 2019

Please remember that you do not have to do anything if you currently pay by Direct Debit. Payment for season 2019 will be taken at the same intervals as currently i.e. in 1 instalment or in 10 monthly instalments.

Please also make sure we have your current address and date of birth on our records, especially if you have recently moved or you think you may qualify for senior membership rates next season.

# River Bank Restoration

Anyone who fishes the river Don will be aware of major areas of bank erosion, leading to dangerous and unstable banks. In order to combat this and restore river habitat the Don Board have been involved in over 340m of bank repair and restoration work in 2018 using “green engineering” techniques.

Various designs of willow work to stabilize banks have been used, mainly either as roughly woven willow brush, or willow spilling.

This type of work halts excessive erosion and resulting sediment input. This prevents the river from becoming over wide, shallow and featureless. This type of bank work also provides cover, shade and a source of food for fish and other wildlife. Works can be carried out without the need for large machinery. So works can be relatively low cost, and unlike using rock to repair riverbanks, using green engineering requires a very low, and easy to obtain level of authorization from SEPA.



*Beidleston – two tier willow spilling*

Bank restoration at Beidleston on the lower Don was large project with over 230m of bank restoration, funded by SEPA as a demonstration project. This work has halted significant bank loss, and created refuge for wildlife.



Brux Before



Brux After

At Brux Don Board staff restored a badly eroding area of bank using willow brush.

All works involve prior consultation with the landowners and fishing interests. It is important to only use this technique where appropriate. Some types of fast growing willow could potentially restrict fishing access, so sites are chosen carefully.

Don staff plan to do further sections on the main river and in some of the spawning tributaries over the late winter and spring. Anyone wishing to get involved with this type of work please get in touch, [info@riverdon.org](mailto:info@riverdon.org) or call the Don Board Office 01467 642121.

# The Importance of Burns

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The burns and streams that drain a rivers catchment are the veins that supply the main stem with water makes them flow. Each one is very important to the ecology of the catchment in providing habit not only for fish but also for a wide range of plants, animals, birds and insects. It is surprising just how small a burn or stream can be that fish will spawn or live in. These burns and streams must be kept in the best possible health to sustain these populations and to maximise the chances of fish returning to spawn in them. Healthy tributaries with suitable spawning habitat are at a premium on River Don in recent years and given the lack of Salmon that seem to be returning to the river, it is more important than ever to make sure these water ways offer clean and free passage to migratory fish should they decide to run them again in future.

By spending a few hours walking these burns and streams every once in a while and keeping an eye out for blockages or reporting any signs of pollution whether by chemicals or cattle could make a big difference to the of that particular bit of water. Removing these blockages, picking up litter or clearing branches will allow the water to flow which is important during the smolt migration or when the adults are returning to spawn in the Autumn. Healthy burns mean healthy rivers which in turn will mean healthy fish numbers. This may kick start an upward trend in returning fish to the River Don in future. It's also very rewarding to get out there and give something back knowing you are making a difference. Keep an eye of the Social Media pages for arranged work parties in the coming year. **AF**

## Torryburn and Balbithan 2018 Season Report

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As we all know, this has been a very challenging season for us anglers. With low water conditions throughout the summer, Carrying on right through to the end of the season. The first grilse came off the beat in August along with an impressive 4lb sea trout. September seen only 1grilse being landed. October we managed 3 grilse and 1 salmon along with 2 sea trout. Low water and lack of angling effort certainly had a lot to play in the catch return on this beat. Brown trout started well with some large fish being landed early on in the season. April seen 4 fish for 9lb including one around the 4lb mark taken on a black and yellow salmon tube, on the 2nd of April by myself. 9 brown trout for 16lb were landed throughout the season. 100%catch and release was practiced on the beat for 2018. **MR**

### Scottish Anglers National Association Competition Committee

Scottish Anglers National Association Competition Committee (Sanacc) applied to the ADAA for permission to use the River Don, Upper & Lower Parkhill on Sunday 28th July to hold the 2019 Scottish River Final. This will comprise of the top 20 qualifiers from the four heats held on the River Tummel during 2019.

These top 20 anglers will then fish the final, the final will produce the top 6 angler who will then represent Scotland in the River International on Friday 19th June 2020, which will also be held on the River Don by kind permission of the ADAA Committee and adjoining land owners at Lower Parkhill.

The River International was last held on the River Don 3 years ago, which saw Team Scotland secure the Gold Medal, this event attracts anglers for England, Wales & Ireland and bring many benefits to the ADAA and local businesses.

We will also be looking for help with official controllers & Beat controllers which were supplied by ADAA member volunteers, so looking for the same help this time round. **KR**

## Contact us

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# Ythan 2018 Season Report

This is the last report I will be giving after 32 years as a Convener on the Ythan – old age and ill health are such that I can no longer walk the banks of Ardllethen and Methlick.

You may recall our disappointment that the new Ardllethen footbridge was not installed in 2017. The good news is that it was finally erected in March 2018. Unfortunately, our contractor went into administration without completing several significant “snagging” items.

The defects were rectified by the ADAA and the cost deducted from the final payment to the contractor’s administrator.

Currently we are investigating the best solution for replacing the fishing hut at the Machar Pool – hopefully this will be completed sometime in 2018. We do not own the ground the hut sits on, and this will have to be resolved with Auchmacoy Estate.

The water levels in the Ythan throughout this year have been the lowest and most prolonged I’ve ever seen, and angling activity has been sporadic

## Machar Pool

Sea trout catches, at 46, and finnock catches at 90 were both around the 10 year average – 1 grilse also recorded.

## Ardllethen

Sea trout and finnock catches at 5 and 7 respectively the worst we have ever recorded.

Salmon and grilse catches were, at 21, not good, but better than the 19 recorded in 2013.

From reports received, it appears that there were considerable numbers of salmon and grilse present at the back end but were easily spooked in the low clear water.

## Belmuir

Catches were poor at 1 sea trout, 4 finnock and no salmon or grilse landed but given the low water conditions not unexpected

## Methlick

1 sea trout, 12 finnock and no salmon or grilse recorded – poor, however this beat has always required high water levels to fish well.

## Return Rates

For all species, return rate was 100%.

## Not All Doom and Gloom

The Don Bailiffs, working on behalf of the Ythan Salmon Fishery Board, have, in the last few weeks, been carrying out salmon redd counts on selected sections of the Ythan and tributaries, and have found several redds. The work is not yet complete and has never been accurately recorded in the past, therefore we cannot give an opinion on how this compares with previous years.

The Scottish National Electrofishing Project carried out electrofishing surveys this summer at 16 randomly selected sites on the Ythan and tributaries – every site had trout present, indicating decent water quality, 10 sites had juvenile salmon – not really a bad result, 62.5% of randomly selected sites having salmon present.

## Marine Scotland Science Scotland. Salmon Scotland Regulations – Category Status.

As anticipated, the Ythan has again been classed as a category 3 river for salmon and grilse, meaning there will be mandatory catch and release for all salmon and grilse in 2019.

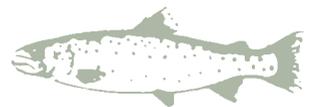
## Reporting of Catches.

**Please ensure each fish caught is recorded.**

Thank you.

**Alec Paterson.**

*Ythan Convener. 14/12/2018*



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