

Trout and Salmon Report

River Tay

10 April 2024

“Ben Lui”

Following a wet February, levels at last dropped down to about three feet a week or more into March. However, that was not to last and, by 13 March, it was back up around four feet and up further to nearly five feet by mid-month. Though not quite steady, the Tay remained around that level for around week, and about a foot less over the next. There was another rise to around 5 feet on the 28th, dropping only inches by the month's end. So, basically, March was a month mainly of relatively steady highish water, giving fish plenty opportunity to spread out.

So, turning to catches, there was again little activity in the lowest beats on the river. Catholes, for example, had one springer for the month, a 16 pounder for Bob White, and Upper Scone similarly. Following some encouraging days in February, Burnmouth had one for March. Fish were no longer being held up at the Linn Pool, so even Taymount also only had one, while Stobhall had two, which included a nice fish for Neil Mitchell.

Higher water doesn't tend to help so much on Ballathie and Cargill, but Ballathie had two for the month; a sea liced 9 pounder for Kevin Bryan and a 7 pounder for a member of Kenny Fletcher's party. Cargill had five, which included a lovely sea liced 8 pounder for Dylan Dunbar on a pearly pink Tomic, and others for John Macgowan and Stewart Scott. But, probably most chuffed of all, was Ian Heay, who caught his first ever salmon, after 6 years of trying! Fish didn't really have cause to stop much at Islamouth either, which reported 8 for the month. The successful anglers there were Angus Chisholm, James Holden, Greg Tustin, Iain Wood, Stuart McArthur, Farquhar Murray and Stuart Lang, who had two. The Meikleour and Upper Islamouth beat had five, which included a 12 pounder for Derek Brynes and a 12 pounder for Alan Cockburn.

Kercock then reported one for March, caught by John Dewar. Glendelvine had four, and the two Murthly beats had two apiece, including a first ever for Jordan Fielding. Stenton had one. However, moving up, there was a wee bit more success. Newtyle, of example, had 7, which included two in two days for Hari Formston. Kieran Spencer caught his first ever salmon, while Sandy Datta, Ray Higney, Chris Robertson and Dave Maxwell all had a fish each.

The Dunkeld House beat had five for March, which included a 24 pounder. Dalmarnock, then, had two, caught by Eric Neil and Alan Grant, but Lower Kinnaird had 6, its best March for some years. The same was true of the Upper Kinnaird beat, which had four. However,

three of those, including a 27 pounder, were played by 12 year old Joshua Shooshani, out with his dad in a day. A day he'll never forget I'm sure!

There continued a thin smattering fish on the upper Tay, with lower Farleyer reporting one and upper Farleyer four. I haven't heard of much off the Loch yet though, with perhaps four to the end of March.

During the early part of the month, things were quiet on the Isla / Ericht, but fish started appearing there later in the month. Five spanking fresh fish were caught between the Blairgowrie AC and West Grange in the last week of the month. Overall, West Grange had five for March and one was reported by on the Isla Keithick Streams beat on the Isla.

As good fishing as was had anywhere in March was found on the Tummel, where East Haugh had 9 and Pitlochry Angling Club had 7 from their dam beat, There, Alan Hayes had a 10 pounder on the fly, Les Dargie and Martin Timmins both had 14 pounders, Callum Imray had one of 12 pounds and, as mentioned last time, Steve Watt had one of 15 pounds. Steve Watt also had the first of the season from the Sawmill beat, an 8 pounder.

But to sum up, while February was an encouraging month, March overall has been a disappointment in terms of numbers. The total catch was probably little over 100 and, with higher water and only a few episodes of cold weather, the distribution of catches has also been more like April than March, which didn't help. However, the quality of the fish has been excellent in terms of freshness, but by the end of the month, the bigger three sea winter fish in the high teens of pounds were getting less noticeable and the average size getting less. However, I can say that things have improved in the first week of April, but the weather is a bit unsettled again and we shall just have to see how it pans out. I'll let you know next time!

Of course, in the mean time you can keep up to date with real time information including fishing availability on www.fishtay.co.uk.

Tight lines

Ben Lui