Trout and Salmon Report

River Tay

30 August 2024

"Ben Lui"

I concluded my last report, following what had been a really uplifting July, hoping that the good run of fish we had been experiencing continued into August. Well, I'm pleased to say it did! August has been another great month, well, in comparison to what we've been having in recent years.

The weather again has generally helped by not giving us drought and warm weather. August started with the Tay quite low, only around 6 inches. But, a few days in, the generally dry weather we'd been having changed and, thereafter, there were progressive uplifts throughout the month, peaking at around 6 feet on the 28th. Most of the rain has been in the far west, so Loch Tay rose, pushing up the base level with clear water. The fishing has been less affected therefore, than had the rain been from the east.

And so, catches have continued.

Near the bottom of the river, Waulkmill have had a very impressive 111 fish so far to the 29th, as I write. If they get one or two more in the last couple of days, this will be their best August in over 5 years. 39 of those fish, which have included lovely salmon and, more so than earlier, fresh grilse, were caught by the legendary Stevie Watt.

Luncarty has also had a better August with 12 and Upper Redgorton just above, 38. Across the water, Fishponds has had 44 so far. All above average scores. On Fishponds, Chris Bickerton, Mike Oakley and James Bedford caught their first ever salmon. And there were some good fish too. Sandy Datta had two in a day of 22 and 15 pounds, while Nick Howell and John Furniss landed a thumping 23 pounder after a tussle!

Benchil has also had a much better month with 30 so far and Pitlochrie 14. Across the water from them, Upper Scone's 51 so far, is already its best August in over 5 years. Conditions haven't so much suited Catholes, with four so far, and Burnmouth with two. But, then, with 67 so far, Stobhall has had its best August, in my reckoning, since 2011. However, their neighbours on Taymount have had 109 so far, which, if they catch a few more on the last two days, will be their best August since 2010 or even earlier!

It was a similar story with the next pair of beats above. Ballathie's 43 is already their best in 10 years and Cargill's 99, already its best since sometime before 2010! It seems every summer gets better for beats in this area. On Ballathie, young Ben Ibbotson and his grandmother Di, made it to the scoresheet. On Cargill, in addition to regulars like Neil French, Steve Curnow and Gavin Mason, it was nice to see some other names on the

scoreboard, such as Andrew Brundan, Frank Minoprio, Gregor Sands, Will Kerr, young Rex Long and his dad David, and finally, Henry Johnston who had the 200th fish of the season.

Even with higher water, Islamouth has continued to fish well in August. If they get a few more fish in the last couple of days to top the 109 they already have, their's will also be the best August in over 5 years. While Islamouth is considered a lower water beat, the higher water helped the Meikleour and Upper Islamouth beat, when it came. Meikleour did well with 68, again a best in over 5 years. With good numbers of fish about, there is, of course, more opportunity for new anglers to catch their 'first-evers'. And so, three of the Tyrrell party and three of the Collings party had their first evers. A Mr West also had a nice 12 pounder as his first ever, but promptly then followed it up with a 15 pounder. But even he was outdone. 15 year old Logan's first was 23 pounds and he followed it in short order with a mere tiddler of 17!

Moving up the Tay, the fishing was generally better, but more patchy than below. Kercock also had a very good month with 43, while Burnbane, had 7, which included a four pound grilse for Henry Bailey. Glendelvine then had three, while Murthly 1's 12 was its best in over five years and Stenton's 12 way up there. Murthly 2 also had a decent 35.

Newtyle too had a better August with 11. Most memorably, four anglers, Amelia Takken, Oscar Jowitt and Ed and Patrick Langford all caught their first ever salmon, on the very same day. Sandy Datta, Callum Richardson and Colin Innes were also among the successful.

Ronnie Blair and Garry Dawkins were among the captors of Dunkeld House's dozen so far. Dalmarnock has had 17, which like Dunkeld House, has had its best August in over five years. Dalguise also did better with 10. Robert Smellie, Callum Conner and William Dewar all scored there. Then, the lower Kinnaird beat has had 26 and upper Kinnaird 6, both again a best in over five years. However, things were a bit quieter upstream. Findynate, for example, has reported only one, while Edradynate has had five, Lower Bolfracks has had two and Upper Farleyer has had three.

The Tummel has also been quiet, fishing wise. Both East Haugh and Pitlochry Angling Club's dam beat have had two apiece for August. The club's fish were a 6 pounder for Gordon Stocks and a four pounder for Adam Joseph. Gordon Macdonald was also fishing the club's Ruan Ruarie beat and had three grilse in one morning. Although catches were low, as is often the case, there has been a better and continuing run of fish through the fish counter at Pitlochry Dam. As of 29 August, 3,375 had been counted, with around 500 of them ascending in the previous week or so, following water.

So, August 2024, following the success of July 2024, has seen the best Tay summer fishing in quite some time. More grilse have been reported, but bigger salmon continue to figure, some really cracking fish among them. Middle river fish generally now seem to have been around for a bit, but even towards the end of the month sea liced fish were being caught in

the lower river, though most look like they had come in earlier in the month or July. In some recent years fresh fish have stopped even by early August, but this year they seem to have continued longer. But will we see sea liced fish continue into September? We haven't seen that for 10 years now. But, even so, given the pattern of the last few years, these fish will still be in lower river beats, at least, through September and maybe even into October, so the fishing will go on and on as the weather cools. I look forward to telling you how we get on in a month's time!

Tight lines

Ben Lui