Trout and Salmon Report

River Tay

5 August 2024

"Ben Lui"

Unfortunately, because of holidays coinciding with July's report deadline, this report has to be shorter than normal. However, that shouldn't detract from its significance. Following the relatively slow spring, July 2024, has been something of a real shot in the arm for fishing on the Tay. I should think this will have been the best July, certainly since 2012, if not even as far back as 2001!

Of course, what did help, was that we didn't really get any warm weather. We didn't get any big water either, which helped the lower part of the river. For example, the water held around two feet in the early part of the month, falling to just over a foot by the 20th though there was a quick small rise around the 16th. Thereafter, there was a double small rise to over a foot and a half, but from 25th the Tay was down to just under a foot and continued to fall away thereafter.

But while the weather helped, there was undoubtedly and encouraging run of fresh fish, particularly a lovely class of salmon earlier in the month, with more grilse showing later on.

The best of catches, then, were not just in the lower river, but throughout that whole stretch. While I don't have figures, I understand Almondmouth did quite well. Waulkmill, above, reported 42, compared to a recent July average of 30. However, the Luncarty beat is normally thought of as a higher water beat, but it produced 22, by far its best July in many years. Fishponds also had 22, which was again well above its recent average. Upper Redgorton, then, had 29, its best July in at least 15 years by my reckoning. Benchil's 26 was again its best July in some years, while Pitlochrie had 10. With 36, Upper Scone also had way over any July in the last 15 years. However, the water didn't suit Burnmouth, which reported one.

I have been writing about improving July catches on those beats just above Stanley for a few years now. So, it was good to see those beats continuing to do better too. Stobhall's 52 was again another best in at least 15 years, as each of the previous two good years had also been in their turn. That's been three years way above the average. Taymount's 50 was just a shade under their 56 for July 2022, but again both were way above anything in at least 15 years. Then with 54 and 63 respectively, both Ballathie and Cargill also had their best July in over 15 years. But, topping the charts once again, Islamouth had some really good days, bringing the month's total to 131, again its best July in years.

However, the lower water probably didn't suit the Meikleour and Upper Islamouth beat quite the same, and it finished the month with a just above average 27. Kercock, above, also

had 27, and both Burnbane and Glendelvine had 9. However, both Murthly beats had their best July in over 10 years in the case of Murthly 1 and 15 in the case of Murthly 2, with 27 and 61 respectively. Stenton also had its best for some time with 21. But, moving upstream, the beats may have wanted a bit more water to bring more new fish through. Nevertheless, Newtyle had an above average 14 and both Dunkeld House and Dalmarnock had 8 apiece. Dalguise, then had 6, but Lower Kinnaird had 24, which, for it, was as good as any in the last five. Upper Kinnaird had three.

On the upper Tay, Findynate had one, but Edradynate had 10, again another best for over five years. Lower Bolfracks had three, while Lower Farleyer had a best in over five years with 10 and Upper Farleyer had 12.

On the Tummel, however, July is usually a quiet month for the Tummel, and this year was no exception. East Haugh, for example, reported two, as did Pitlochry Angling Club's dam beat. On the Isla, the Keithick Mains beat reported four fish and Keithick Streams 8. But the lower water didn't help fishing on the Ericht, where West Grange reported three. However, fish were seen running on one of the quick lifts, but that wasn't sustained enough to spread the fishing bonanza.

So, what a month! The best July in years, with many real quality salmon. Let's hope the fish keep coming into August and that we get a bit of water to spread them out a bit! As ever, of course, you can keep up to date with catches, river levels and availability on the www.fishtay.co.uk website.

Tight lines

Ben Lui