Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board



Annual Report
2014 / 15

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 / 15

CONTENTS **PAGE**

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board Members and Staff	2
Chairman's Report	3
2015 Report	6
Fish Counter Results 2015	23
Scottish Government Wild Fisheries Review	26
Scottish Government Licence to Kill Salmon Proposals	29
Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013	31
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Proprietors 2014	33
Triennial Election of The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board 2014	36
Report of the Auditors to the Proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District	38
Tay Salmon Catch Graphs 1952 – 2015	44
Board Members Attendance 2014	45
Acknowledgements	45

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Chairman

William Jack (Mandatory for Viscount Stormont)

Members Elected by Upper Proprietors

S. Furniss (Mandatory for Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel)
C. Mercer Nairne
A. Riddell
E. Starke (Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare)

Members Elected by Lower Proprietors

D. Godfrey (Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fishing Company Ltd)
Councillor A. Munro (Mandatory for Perth and Kinross Council)

Co-opted Members

Representatives of Salmon Anglers

D. Brown
M. Brown (Tay Ghillies Association)
S. Mannion
I. McLaren
J. Wood

Observers

G. Clark (Scottish Natural Heritage)
B. Roxburgh (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)

Board Staff

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board, Site 6, Cromwellpark, Almondbank, Perth, PH1 3LW

Clerk	**Telephone**
Inga McGown	01738 583733, mobile 07786 361784 Email: ingamcgown@btconnect.com
Fisheries Director	
Dr David Summers	01738 583733, mobile 07974 360787 Email: d-summers@btconnect.com
Bailiff staff	
Craig Duncan	07748 338667
David Ross	07974 360789
Ron Whytock	07967 709457
Ross Pirie	07971 695115
Tom McGinn	07816 159183
Kelt Reconditioning Unit	
Steve Keay	01738 583755

Website
www.tdsfb.org

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015

As the Director has described in some detail, the 2015 season was one of mixed fortunes. A slow start, an excellent middle for many beats and a poor back end, salvaged only in part by a better grilse run than we have seen in recent years.

Much of the Board's time was taken up by the Wild Fisheries Review. Whilst there are many aspects of the review which the Board supports, we had concerns over the conservation proposals, particularly carcass tagging and the allocation of licences to kill. We considered these aspects to be impractical, unworkable and potentially damaging.

We made written submissions to Scottish Ministers outlining our objections. We lobbied through the Association of Salmon Fisheries Boards. We put our case, both in writing and face to face with politicians. We held meetings with angling groups whom we felt would be most affected by the proposals and encouraged them to make representations to MSPs.

I would like to thank all anglers and angling clubs who participated and the Ghillies Association who supported the Board's efforts.

In the end, it was great credit to the Government who eventually recognised that the proposals were unlikely to be workable and announced in October that they were withdrawing both the carcass tagging and kill licence from their agenda.

It was replaced by a system of grading rivers which, as it stands, would see a 100% release requirement in place for the rivers Earn and Eden. We are now in the process of engaging with all relevant parties to understand the basis for this decision and to determine our response.

Regardless of the final outcome, it is clear that conservation of salmon stocks is going to be higher on the political agenda than it has ever been. With government determined to show that they comply with the European directives they have signed up to, particularly for rivers that are designated special areas of conservation, of which the Tay is one.

The Tay, as the Director's report shows, kills more spring salmon than any other river in Scotland. If we are to be left free to regulate ourselves, then we must make even greater efforts to encourage the release of spring fish and I, once again, urge those few within our river system who continue to kill these precious fish, to think again and to put the interests of the whole river before their own.

I wish to thank all the staff employed by the Board for their efforts during the year but would draw attention to the work on Wild Fisheries Review done by our Director, Dr David Summers, which must be deserving of our special appreciation.

My thanks to all of the Board whose support and input to our many consultation responses have been invaluable.

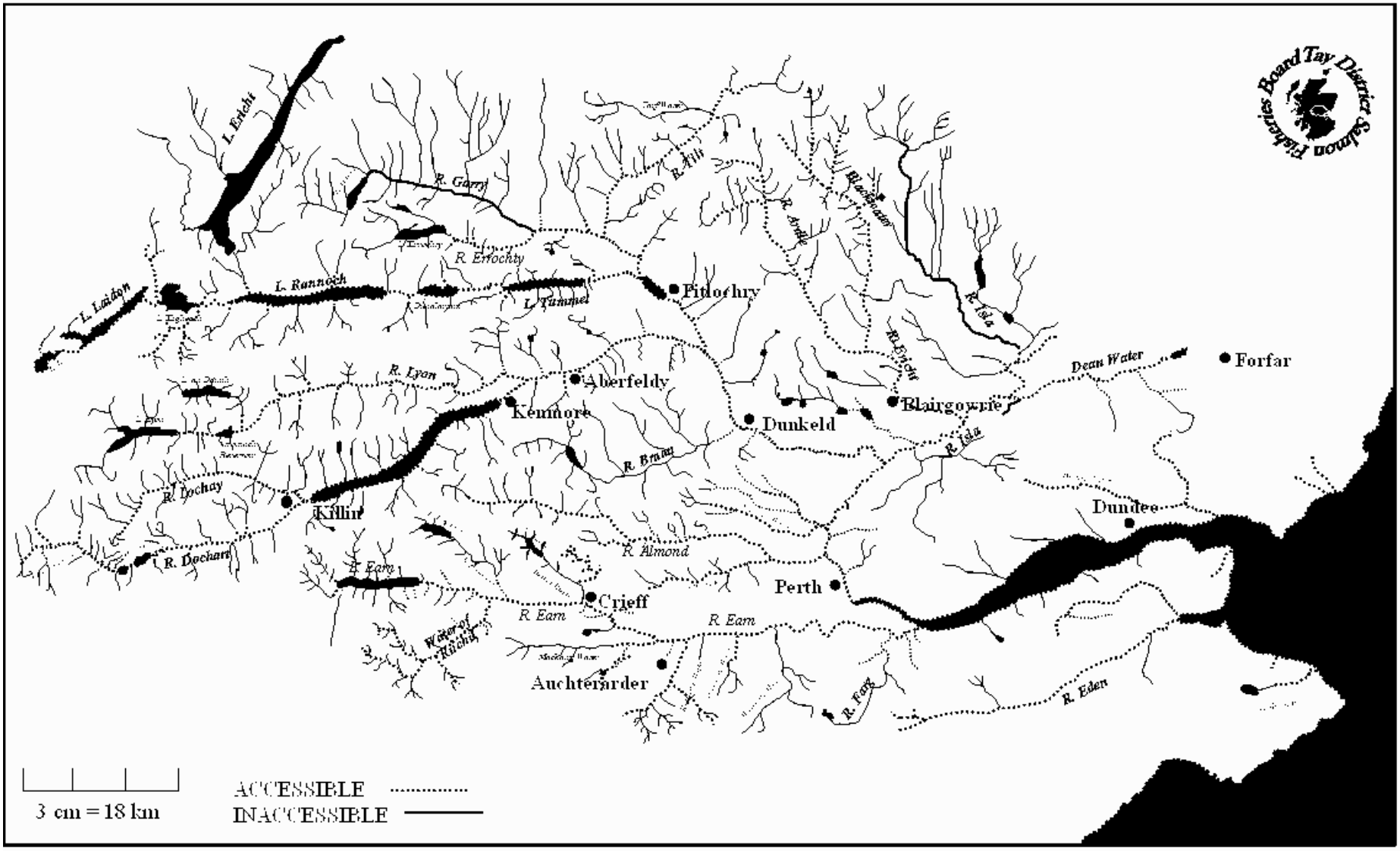
The Tay welcomes all anglers and provides quality fishing to suit all budgets. To those who choose to fish the Tay, I wish you a safe and successful 2016.

Yours sincerely



W H JACK
Chairman

Salmon Distribution within the Tay District



2015 REPORT

Season 2015

The 2015 Tay salmon season opened on Thursday 15 January, a wintry feeling day with the Tay running high, as it had done since the start of the year. Despite poor conditions, four springers were caught on the opening day, all in the Dunkeld-Kinnaird area. Although water levels did settle for a period, January ended with the river running high again, and catches reflected this. Only some 30 fish were reported on the fishtay website for the first two weeks, a little below the recent average, but conditions were not great on average.

The first half of February was generally frosty and saw relatively settled conditions, but catches remained modest. However, the second half was quite unsettled. With 81 fish reported on the website, things were again a little down on the recent average. Some fish were caught on Loch Tay, however.

In the first half of March the river generally ran very high and was very unsettled. Conditions were difficult for the main river, but some fish at least did push well through the system, with some more caught on Loch Tay but the Tummel was very quiet. Fortunately things improved in the second half when the level gradually fell away under drier, generally chilly, weather. 285 salmon were reported on the website for March, which was just under the recent average. However, about 200 of those were caught in the second half of the month after the floods subsided. Indeed, from mid March onwards the fishing was steady. The River Tummel also picked up, Loch Tay continued to produce fish and the Dunkeld area started to become something of a hotspot, as it would continue to be. A significant proportion of the fish reported appear to have been 3SW fish, with some bigger fish among them. For example, Taymount reported a 31 pounder and Cargill, one of 29 pounds.

April opened with the river running moderately high, but it basically then fell away for the rest of the month. The early part of the month was cool, but after a few unseasonably warm days the end of the month saw a return to cooler weather, even with snow on higher ground. Catches were quite reasonable, however. The 470 reported on the website, though not as good as April 2014 was better than the recent average. The Tay between approximately Murthly and Dunkeld fished relatively well as did the River Tummel. Notably, one angler had three fish to 32 pounds in one day on the Findynate beat on the upper Tay. Another of a similar size was caught on Loch Tay while one estimated at 35 pounds was caught on the Chesthill beat of the Lyon.

The first week of May saw wetter weather return and it was a wetter month for the most part. However, it proved to be a good month fishing wise. The 689 fish on the website was well ahead of the five year average (520), possibly making it one of the best Mays in recent times. In 2014 the fishing had been good in March and April but then crashed in May. That did not happen this year. The catches remained steady all month. In particular, beats in middle river did really well in May, especially between Murthly and Dunkeld. The Dunkeld House beat had 76 salmon for the month including one day on which 11 salmon were caught. The River Tummel also did well, perhaps aided by the fact it was the coolest May for a number of years meaning fish were slow to start ascending

Pitlochry Dam. Through May, catches on Loch Tay slowed down, where they appear to have been quite reasonable earlier.

June was also a good month. It opened with another spate but was essentially dry thereafter. Good catches continued throughout most of the month, again especially in the Murthly to Dunkeld area, only really faltering in the last week. This time it was the turn of the Murthly 2 beat to report 76 for the month but other beats in the area continued to fish well as they had for several months. Indeed, one angler fishing on the Dunkeld Angling Club water apparently had something like 30 salmon for the season to June. And not only did that area continue to do well, the Tummel also continued to do well and did not slow as it often does at that time of year. In total 634 salmon were reported on the fishtay website, compared to an average of 448 and only 237 in 2014. Of course the full catch including beats whish do not report on the website will have been even higher, making it one of the best Junes since official reporting started in 1952.

July started with relatively low water and warm weather and catches had fallen well back from the better days of June. However, the summer rapidly disappeared and the weather turned cooler and showery. Then on Friday 17 July there was torrential rain which saw the Tay rise to over 12 feet. Significant damage was caused in the village of Alyth where the burn there burst its banks. Thereafter the weather remained somewhat unsettled and unseasonably cool. While catches did improve from the start of the month, and there was overall a marked improvement over the very poor catch of 2014, with 447 on the website as opposed to 196, it was still under the recent average. The best catches continued to be in the Dunkeld area.

August saw a bit of a rise in the first week but with drier weather setting in it fell thereafter. Again catches were better than in 2014 (843 opposed to 682 on the website) but still below average. Once again, the main summer grilse run, that once came in early July, was well late. On the River Tummel at Pitlochry Dam, for example, the main influx of clean and small grilse did not appear until around mid August.

September was generally a dry month. Despite starting at about three feet, the Tay fell to less than a foot by the end of the month, with only a short lived rise in the middle. The month ended with levels really quite low for that time of year. Catches again reflected the pattern of August. Better than 2014 (1079 opposed to 778 on the website) but still well below even the recent five year average (1555). While more water would have helped, there did not appear to be a big head of larger fresh fish at least as might be hoped for at this time.

October started dry as September had ended but with about a week of the Tay season to go, there was a quick rise and fall, much too late to do anything for Tay fishing. On the River Earn, which remains open to 31 October, the first rise of over two feet since August only occurred on the 29th, again much too late to help. 651 fish were reported on the fishtay website for October, which was slightly less than for the same period last year (in 2014 of course there was a season extension) and well down on the five year average. Curiously, small fresh grilse were reported right to the end of the season.

2015 was therefore something of a strange mix. A better grilse run than in 2014, albeit late and still not really that strong, and a decent mid to late spring run, particularly to western tributaries (the Ericht did not appear to do quite so well). As has been the trend for a few years, the spring run seems to have consisted of more 3SW fish than was the case up to a few years ago. At the end of the 2014 season, there were concerns as to what the very poor grilse run would mean for 2SW salmon in 2015. Had the fish all died at sea and would there be none to return in 2015? However, it is clearly the case that for 2SW spring fish, the 2015 run was not in proportion to the poor run of grilse in 2014. Maybe then, some of the fish that did not return as grilse in 2014 did come back instead as salmon in 2015.

Catch and release – spring salmon

In 2014 and 2015, the Board continued to recommend a policy of 100% catch-and-release of salmon up to the end of May. At the time of writing, the latest figures available are only for the 2014 season and these continued to show a compliance of 90% (Table 1). The release rate should be even closer to 100% in 2015 because of mandatory measures that were introduced in 2015 to 31 March.

Year	Number released	Number killed	Total caught	% released
1998	41	540	581	7
1999	108	831	939	12
2000	193	637	830	23
2001	415	739	1154	36
2002	271	524	795	34
2003	199	281	480	42
2004	301	684	985	31
2005	446	669	1115	40
2006	739	854	1593	46
2007	349	339	688	51
2008	861	247	1108	78
2009	667	179	846	80
2010	689	55	744	93
2011	953	118	1071	89
2012	946	82	1028	92
2013	1391	161	1552	90
2014	1279	141	1420	90

Table 1. *Numbers and percentages of rod-caught Tay district salmon released and killed before 30 April. Data from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches.*

The number of spring salmon killed in the Tay district in 2014 was again the highest in Scotland, albeit this once again partly reflected the fact that the Tay produced more spring salmon than any other river (Figure 1). However, the very low numbers killed on other rivers shows that those who continue to take spring salmon in the Tay district are now the exception of all Scotland.

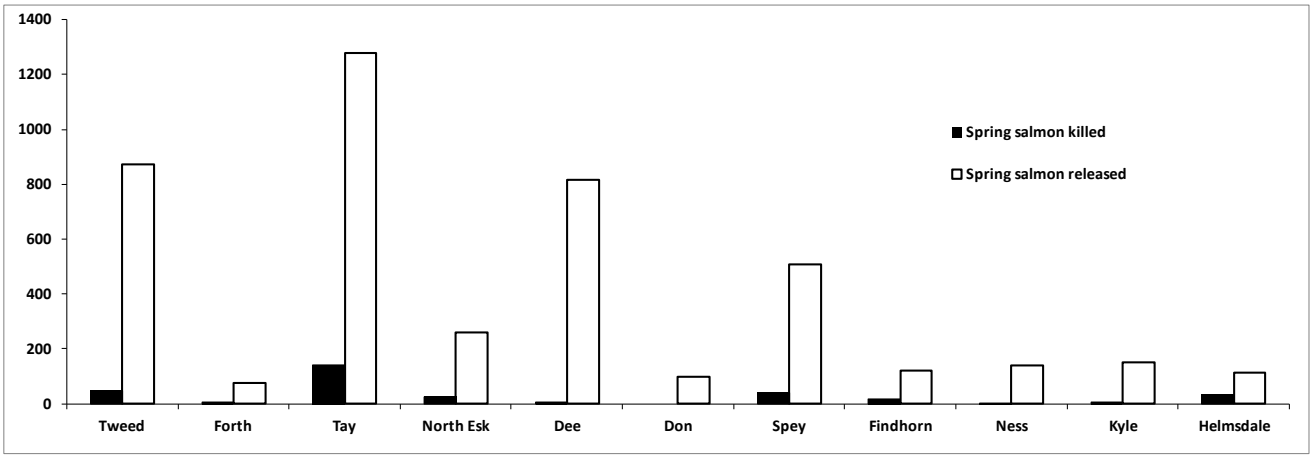


Figure 1. *Numbers of salmon killed and released by anglers to 30 April 2014 on Scotland's major spring salmon rivers. Data from Marine Scotland Science.*

Catch and release – summer

In addition to continuing the spring salmon policy, in 2014 and 2015, the Board continued the policy that, after May, all female fish should be released and no more than one male fish should be kept per day, which should be clean and, where possible, weigh less than 10 pounds (i.e. clean male grilse). While 2015 data are not yet available, 2014 data show that the catch and release rate post-May is now stable or continuing to edge upwards since the policy was introduced in 2010 (Figure 2).

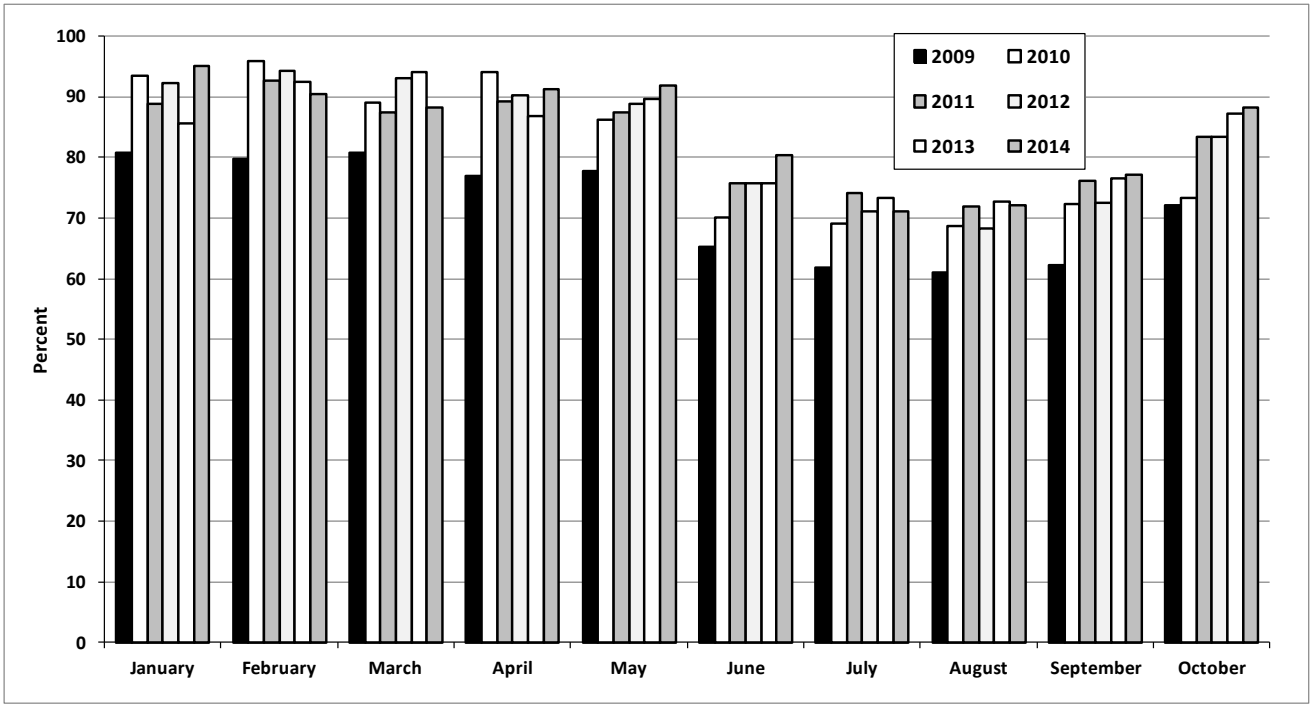


Figure 2. *Percentage of the Tay district salmon and grilse catch released by month in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.*

Catch and release rates in different parts of the district

While the statistics shown above are based on long standing Scottish Government catch returns, the Board has also collected catch statistics in the last few years. This has been particularly valuable in providing a breakdown of catches within the district, which was not available formerly.

It can be seen that, in 2014, the most recent year for which we have data, the highest rates of retention of fish up to end April continue to be in the River Dochart and Loch Tay (Figure 3). However, in terms of absolute numbers, by far the largest numbers of spring salmon killed in 2014 were on the lower Tay with Loch Tay not too far behind (Figure 4). The Dochart is of much less significance in this regard. This all assumes, of course, that all proprietors and tenants submit accurate returns.

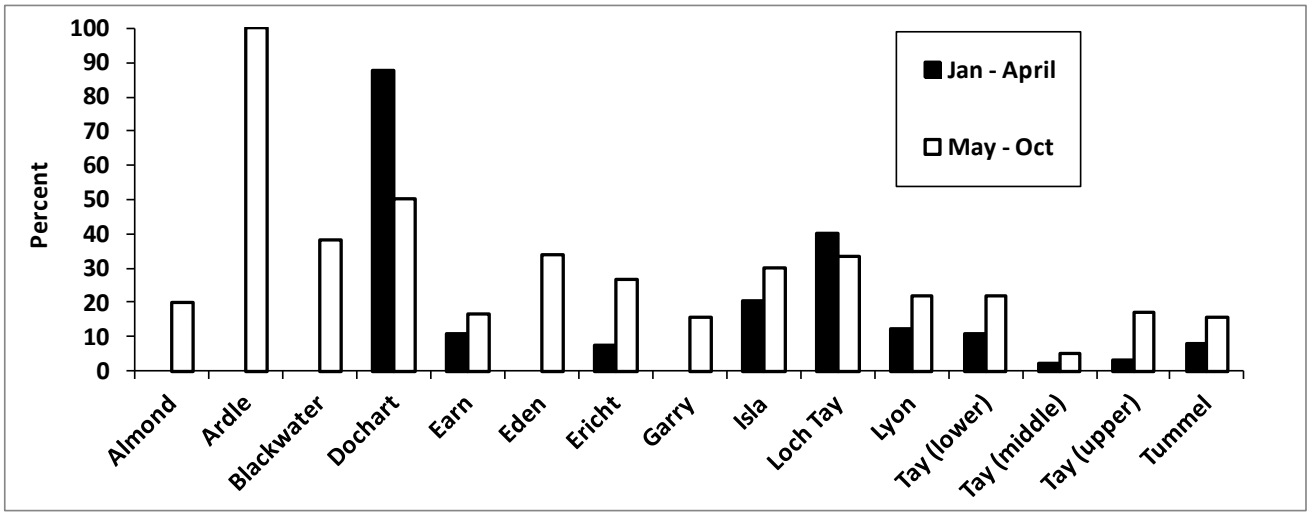


Figure 3. *Percentages of salmon retained in different parts of the Tay district during the periods January – April 2014 and May – October 2014. Note, some of the smaller tributaries did not produce any spring fish and are blank therefore.*

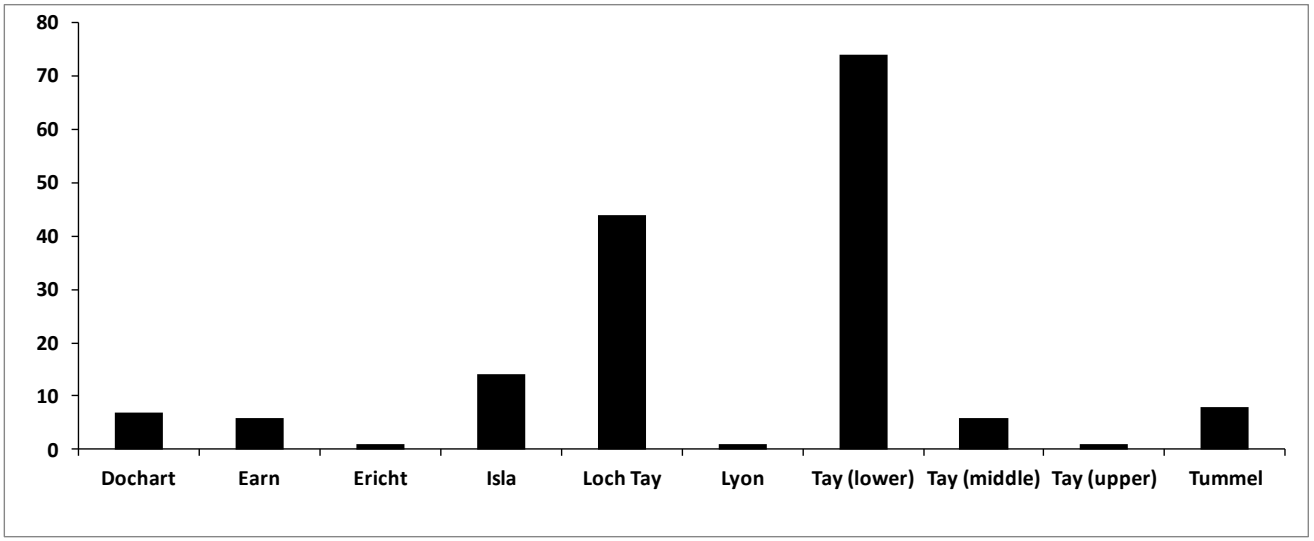


Figure 4. *Numbers of reported retained salmon from different parts of the Tay district, Jan – April 2014.*

Sea trout conservation

In 2009 the Board first recommended that, following a long decline in their numbers, all sea trout should be released without exception. This policy has been maintained thereafter. Since the introduction of the policy, the great majority of the catch has been released (Figure 5). It was encouraging to see something of a recovery in 2014 following the very dramatic fall in 2013. Clearly the catch and release policy must continue until there is a sustained recovery.

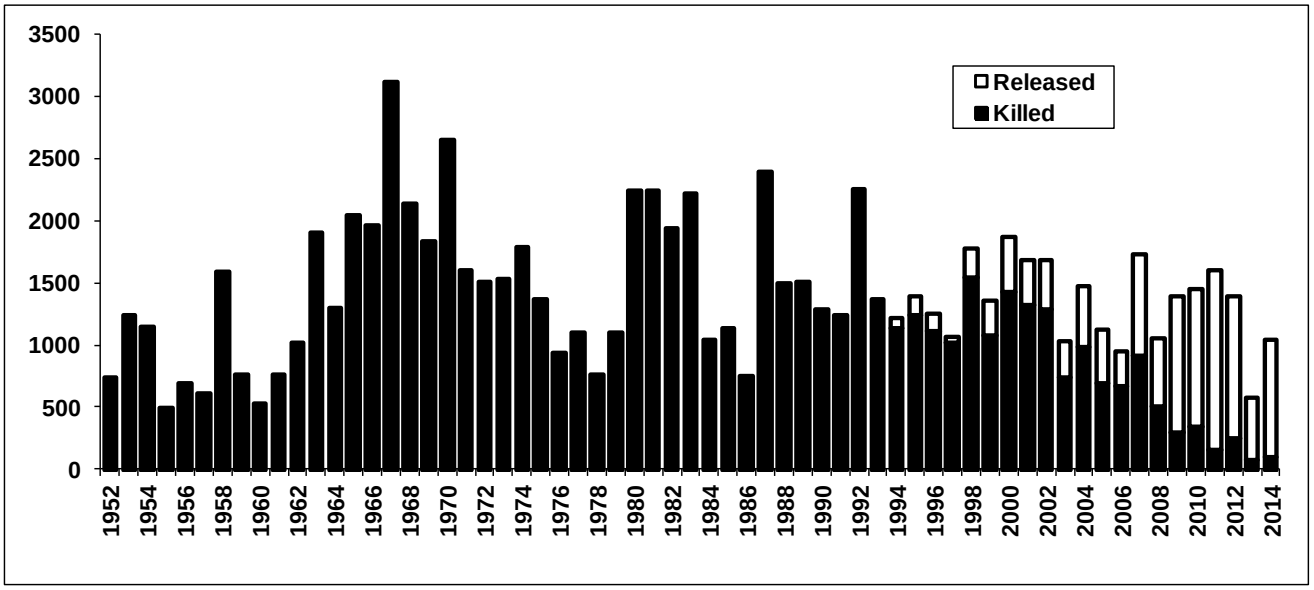


Figure 5. *Tay District rod & line catch of sea trout, 1952 – 2014. (Data obtained from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches)*

New Mandatory Catch and Release Regulations, 2015

As mentioned in last year's *Annual Report*, in the autumn of 2014 Scottish Ministers proposed introducing a national ban on killing salmon up to 31 March (30 April in the Esk district). This was duly introduced and meant all fish caught by rod and line in the Tay district up to 31 March had to be released. The measures are to be in place for a period of five years, but will be reviewed annually.

The Board wrote to all proprietors to ensure awareness of the measures which were not publicized otherwise. Flyers were also circulated by bailiffs in areas where there are few regular ghillies. The measures were welcomed by most, but perhaps not all, since most anglers release all the spring fish they catch anyway. Indeed, many wanted to see this period extended for longer. Bailiffs made regular patrols in areas to maintain awareness. This was a significant change because little enforcement activity is normally required at that time of year and bailiffs normally are involved in other duties. Bailiffs had to be diverted from other tasks therefore. Fortunately no examples of non compliance occurred, to our knowledge.

Staff Changes

There was only one change to Board staff in 2014/15. In April the operations manager, resigned from the Board's employment and has since taken up the position of superintendent of the Forth DSFB. The operations manager post is due to be filled in January 2016.

Enforcement

2015 proved to be a relatively quiet year in terms of enforcement. Only one incident was reported to the Procurator Fiscal. Two anglers fishing on the River Eden without written permission out of season each received a "Fiscal's fine" of £150.

Once again, the Board wishes to express its thanks to Police Scotland, particularly local offices, who have, as always, been extremely helpful.

Health and Safety at Work

Health and safety at work is a major consideration for the Board. The Board's staff are frequently required to work in situations where potential hazards are present. Therefore the Board is insistent that health and safety provision is of the highest standard. The Board's Health and Safety policy is regularly reviewed. A new review was initiated in 2015 and is underway.

In 2015 eight members of staff had successfully completed an Association of First Aiders Qualifications Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work.

At the time of writing, no incidents have been reported to the HSE under RIDDOR in 2015.

Staff training

The Board promotes the continuous professional development of its staff and in 2015 a number of staff participated in various training initiatives. Two bailiffs attended "team leader" courses in electrofishing and others attended the Introductory to Electric Fishing course, held at Inverness College. All the bailiff staff have now completed at least the introductory course. Two bailiffs attended a training course on illegal netting methods organised by the Tweed Commission and one attended a course on fish habitat surveying and also the National Bailiff Development Group.

Board Salmon Netting Rights

In light of the possible abolition of DSFBs in the next few years, the Board considered it should develop a policy on the salmon fishing rights, mainly estuarine and coastal netting rights, it owns. As a first step it was decided to have the fishings valued and this was done by C K G Galbraith. However, since that time Scottish Ministers have announced a cessation of coastal netting for three years to be followed by a review. Given most of the fishings are along the coasts of Angus and Fife, it may now transpire that they might never be exercisable anyway. While no decisions have been made, the issue will be kept under review, awaiting any further developments.

Review of Board Priorities

After electing a new board in 2015, a priority was to review and revise the long term strategy which had been agreed by the previous Board in 2012. A sub-committee was set up for the purpose.

The aim was to decide priorities and consider the current staff and funding and whether they meet the needs of these priorities. One issue identified was a need for a broader range of skills within the team which is currently heavily weighted towards enforcement. The subcommittee came to the view that the departure of the Operations Manager had given rise to an opportunity to revisit the skills mix and that the future operations manager's role should be a more multi purpose biologist/head bailiff role, rather than largely concentrating on enforcement. Accordingly, a job description was produced and a new Operations Manager position was advertised. It is also envisaged that the role of the bailiff should become more multifunctional, expanding their roles into other areas in addition to bailiffing.

Proposed River Tummel Smolt PIT Tagging Project

There has for several years been an aspiration between the Board, the Tay Foundation and Marine Scotland Science to set up a project on the River Tummel whereby salmon smolts would be caught and tagged with individually identifiable "PIT" tags. Tags in returning adult fish would be identified by a detector in the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam, assuming the site suitable. This would provide year by year information on marine survival rates and, with some adaptation, an ability to investigate survival of smolts passing through turbines at Pitlochry Dam for example.

The Tay Foundation had some years ago received funding from Marine Scotland to pay for the capital equipment required, but a main difficulty had been insufficient resources to cover running costs. However, it was felt that on altering the balance of staff skills this project should become a priority for implementation and discussions between the Board, Tay Foundation, Marine Scotland Science and SSE have begun.

River Ericht Court Case

In 2014 an angler commenced proceedings against the Board for damages for being charged in September 2013 for taking unseasonable salmon on the River Ericht, a charge that was later dropped by the Procurator Fiscal. The angler argued that Board staff involved ought to have known that no prosecution could have resulted because of a precedent set in a previous case on the River Dee in the 1990s. A date was set for a hearing at Perth Sheriff Court but the case was settled out of court prior to the hearing.

Tay Ghillies Association Donation of Surveillance Equipment

The Tay Ghillies Association donated £4,500 raised by selling calendars towards funding the purchase of new bailiff equipment including night sights, trailcams and video equipment. The Board is extremely grateful to the TGA for this very helpful donation.



Board chairman, Bill Jack, accepts anti poaching surveillance equipment from members of the Tay Ghillies Association (photo courtesy of Bob White).

Tay Ghillies Association Monthly Prize

During 2015 the Tay Ghillies Association ran a fish of the month award to encourage good catch and release practice on the Tay. Each month the winner received two personalised crystal whisky glasses and was entered into a fish of the year competition for a crystal engraved decanter.

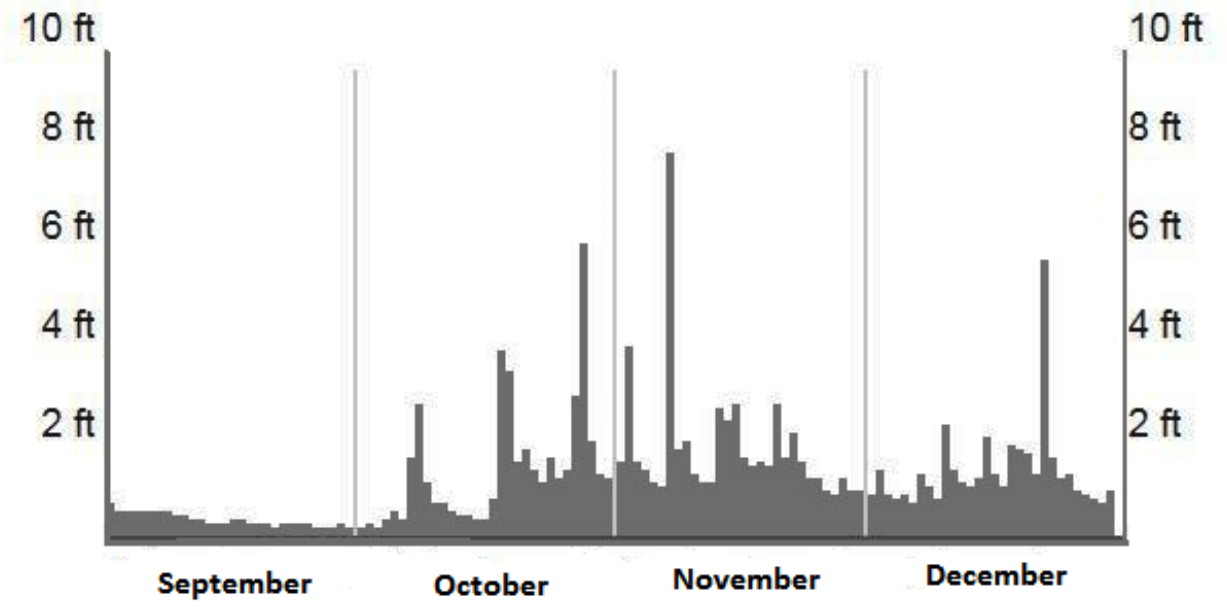
TDSFB Annual Public Meeting 2015

The Board held its second Annual Public Meeting on 24 March 2015. The meeting was held in the Birnam Institute and attracted a good attendance of both proprietors and anglers. Presentations on the work of the Board were given by the Chairman and the Fisheries Director with questions and answers following. The minutes of the meeting and a copy of the presentation can be found at www.tdsfb.org/minutes.htm.

Another open meeting will be held at a similar time in 2016. The exact date will be publicised in due course.

Hatchery report 2014/15

As described in recent *Annual Reports*, the Board's stocking activities are now centered around the Kelt Reconditioning Project. In 2014/15, most of the eggs incubated came from reconditioned salmon kelts. The reconditioned stock was particularly valuable this year because continuous high water conditions during the broodstock catching up season (late October / early November) meant it was impossible to catch "top up" broodstock from some tributaries in 2014. This had the effect of reducing the total number of eggs / fry stocked in 2015 and slowed our plans to build up the stock of reconditioned fish.



Continuous high water during the mid October to mid November period in 2014, shown here with daily water heights at SEPA's gauging station on the River Garry at Killiecrankie, set back "top up" broodstock collection in 2014.

In spring 2015, most fish were stocked either as eyed ova or unfed fry. These were stocked out into areas close to where the broodstock were originally sourced, i.e. either the same tributary or smaller tributaries close to the source area. For the fifth year in a row, some 28,475 fish were stocked experimentally in October 2015 as fed-on parr.

The following numbers were released in different areas in 2015.

River Garry	308,593
River Lochay	4,540
Fillan tributaries	37,994
Cononish	48,792
Lyon tributaries	17,500
River Braan	39,334
Errochty Water	104,765
Ruchill Water (Earn tributary)	48,882
Total	**610,400**

The reason so many of the eggs / fry were stocked in the River Garry is in attempt to kick start salmon production in the upper Garry in advance of the long awaited restoration of flow to this river. Despite total water abstraction at certain points, most of the main stem of the river always has a small flow, sufficient to hold some juvenile salmon. In September, Board staff electrofished two sites on the Garry, one above Dalnamein Lodge and another at Clunes Lodge. A single pass "semi quantitative" survey produced an estimate of 3.1 salmon fry per metre length of river at the upper site and 3.4 at the lower site. Growth rates had been high, fry averaging 63.4mm at the upper

site and 63.2mm at the lower. If these results are typical, then over the 10km of river potentially affected by stocking, over 30,000 fry may have survived. In fact, the number could even be significantly higher because all the fish present would not have been caught. Indeed, some were seen but not caught. As a result of the stocking, several thousand smolts may be expected to emanate from this area in 2017.

Trial Extension of the Tay Salmon Angling Season

As explained in previous Annual Reports, a trial season extension was undertaken on the lower and middle Tay from 2011 to 2014. A concluding vote was taken at the Annual Meeting of Proprietors on 12 December 2014 to determine whether to seek to make the extension permanent (with a proportion of rents received being donated to the Tay Foundation) or otherwise. "No" won the vote with 56% of the votes cast. 49% of all proprietors voted (234 votes). It was decided therefore not to continue with the extension.

Salmon in the Classroom

Salmon in the classroom is a joint project which is now headed by the Tay Foundation, although delivery is largely conducted by other partners which include Perth and Kinross Council Ranger Services, Angus Council Ranger Services, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Ranger Services, Atholl Estates Ranger Services and the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board.

In 2015, salmon eggs were provided from the Board's hatchery at Almondbank to seven primary schools: Alyth, Kirkmichael, Craigie (Perth), Moncrieffe (Perth), Pitlochry, Crianlarich and Isla. In the spring, most of the participating classes visited the Board's hatchery and were given talks and demonstrations on the salmon life cycle and its conservation, the process of the hatchery and the fisheries on the River Tay. Later in the year, Board staff performed electrofishing demonstrations in the streams where the alevins or fry had been released by the pupils. Schools were also invited to submit a project record to a competition. The project received financial support from Vaillant Group which particularly enabled transport to be available for site visits.

Beaver Issues

In 2014 / 15 the Board was involved in contributing to several groups set up to inform Scottish Ministers regarding beavers in the Tay catchment and more widely.

One was the Beaver Salmonid Working Group, the purpose of which was to produce a report on the potential effects of beaver reintroduction on salmonid fish for a body called the Species Reintroduction Forum. The published report can be found at http://snh.presscentre.com/News-Releases/New-report-on-beaver-effects-on-salmon-and-trout-167.aspx.

The second was the Tayside Beaver Study Group. This was set up in 2012 by Scottish Natural Heritage to gain information on beavers in Tayside following the decision of the then environment minister that the Tay population should be tolerated until the end of an official trial beaver

introduction in Knapdale in 2015. The TBSG reported in April 2015. The report can be found at http://taysidebeaverstudygroup.org.uk/download/i/mark_dl/u/4011561352/4620526027/Tayside%20Beaver%20Study%20Group%20Final%20Report%202015%20(A1608732).pdf

On 20 April, under the auspices of the Tayside Beaver Study Group, the Fisheries Director attended a field visit on beaver issues with the environment minister, Dr Aileen MacLeod. The visit was arranged by SLE/NFU and was focused on two farms in the Isla catchment.

In light of the experience of feral beavers at large in Tayside, the Knapdale trial etc, in June 2015 SNH submitted a report to Scottish Ministers to help inform their decision on the future of beavers in Scotland. The report can be found at http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/beavers/. We understand that Scottish Ministers are to make a decision on the future of beavers in Scotland later in 2015.

Proposed Archimedes Turbine at Ashgrove Mill, Blairgowrie

SEPA consulted on an application for a screw turbine on the Blairgowrie Lade, upstream of the existing fish farm on the outskirts of Blairgowrie. The turbine will use part of the existing flow of the lade and will not result in more flow being abstracted into the lade at its entrance just upstream of the main road bridge in the centre of Blairgowrie. However, SEPA answered that as part of the fish farm's CAR licence review, the flow in the lade will be reduced in coming years and this has apparently been factored in. The Board also initially objected to the proposal on the grounds there was no provision for kelts passing the facility, given that in winter it has been practice to lift the trash screens at the top and bottom of the lade.

A provision has now been made for screening of the turbine with a bypass flow. SEPA are making it a condition that there has to be a fish monitoring programme and that changes will have to be made should issues be found. On that basis the objection was eventually withdrawn.

A9 Dualling Project

Planning for the proposed complete dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness has entered a more detailed stage with among other things detailed consideration now being given to river crossings, road drainage etc. The Board is particularly concerned that the right decision is taken with respect to the proposed widening of the bridge over the Garry just above Killiecrankie. The Board's preference is for the new carriageway to be built to the south of the existing. Construction to the north would place a carriageway over perhaps the most important salmon holding pool in the area. A decision has yet to be taken on options for this bridge and representations will continue to be made when opportunities arise.

Replacement Smolt Screens at Stronuich Dam, River Lyon

At Stronuich Dam on the upper Lyon, most of the flow is diverted into a tunnel which leads to Lochay Power Station at Killin and then into Loch Tay. In order to prevent smolts being entrained in

the tunnel and killed at the power station, mesh screens are placed over the intake trash screens during spring and summer. They are removed for the winter. These aluminium mesh screens need replacing. Furthermore the removal of debris from these screens is an issue for SSE.

SSE propose replacing these screens with vertical bar screens as opposed to mesh. This will allow the screens to be cleaned by an automated cleaning system. The screens will also be kept in all year round. They propose to do this in 2016.

There are some challenges involved in doing this work. The water level in Stronuich Dam will have to be drawn well down and, during that period, adult fish will not be able to ascend the fish pass through the dam. Also, with the reservoir level very low upstream and mud banks exposed, there are concerns that should it rain heavily there might be release of silty water.

A number of options are being considered therefore. This will include maintaining the usual compensation flow and freshets from Stronuich Dam but, if needs be, freshets could be released from Giorra Dam if they are found to stir up sediment.

Ordie Burn Fish Kill

In September an extensive fish kill occurred in the Ordie Burn, near Bankfoot, commencing well up the burn. SEPA were quickly on the scene gathering evidence. It is hoped that a successful prosecution will result and that such an incident does not happen again in future.

SEPA Consultation of Second Scotland River Basin Management Plan

The European Water Framework Directive is a critically important issue for river management and requires member states to restore the ecological status of degraded water courses. It is this that requires the restoration of flow to the River Garry, for example. Restoration works to be conducted are detailed in “river basin management plans” which are produced every six years. The first plan was produced in 2009 and detailed work that was supposed to be done by the end of 2015. The first plan included the restoration of the River Garry.

SEPA have been preparing the 2015 plan which should be published in December for implementation by 2021. Based on a consultation issued earlier in the year the priority areas for action seem likely to be

- Rural diffuse pollution
- Urban diffuse pollution and land contamination
- Degraded “morphology” of waterbodies
- Barriers to fish movement
- Impacts of hydro generation
- Invasive non-native species

The Board responded to the consultation, particularly supporting enhanced work on rural diffuse pollution, barriers to fish movement and hydro impacts such as abstraction. However, we cautioned that "morphological" restoration of historically straightened streams in arable areas of eastern Scotland, where a large proportion of the identified waterbodies are, might bring little benefit to salmonid fish. It turns out that the classification of such streams as failing has largely been done on the basis of a tool that only considers physical attributes of streams, not on actual ecological data. There is evidence that many such streams do in fact hold good numbers of trout and salmon, partly because the historic straightening results in faster flows and coarser substrates preferred by salmon especially. It is the Board's view that ecological information must be taken into account. Re-meandering such streams, with a resulting loss in gradient, might only end up in them becoming more silty and even worse for fish.

River Tummel, Flooding and Erosion Issues

In early January 2015 SNH organised a workshop entitled *the Tay & Tummel – what do we want from the River and how should it be managed?* Principally, the meeting concerned the issues of erosion and flooding in the Kinnaird area and lower Tummel. Representatives from agencies, landowners and fishery owners attended. Since then SNH, SEPA and Perth & Kinross Council have been considering the idea of a management forum for this section of the Tay / Tummel. This is likely to result in more engagement to further raise awareness in the community of the type of issues which the management of the river and its floodplain brings up, how these could be tackled more strategically, and what some possible solutions could look like.

Survey of Burns Abstracted by SSE

A SEPA consultation on the second Water Framework Directive Scotland River Basin Plan listed a number of streams and rivers in the Tay district from which water is abstracted by SSE but should be "restored" by 2027. These are additional to the River Garry, which was supposed to be restored under the first plan (2009 – 2015). At least one of the waterbodies due to be restored might significantly benefit salmon, but the Board has assumed that most of the others would not. This is because most of these streams are steeply sloping. It was already known that some did have impassable waterfalls in their lower reaches but in others it was only assumed.

As both the Board and SSE had a joint interest in ascertaining the likely value of these streams for salmon and indeed migratory sea or river / loch trout, the Board was contracted by SSE to walk these burns and identify barriers. It was found that in all but one of 11 burns surveyed salmon only had limited access because of the presence of large natural waterfalls. Some of these proved quite impressive. Therefore few of these streams, if restored, will have much of a fisheries benefit.

Fungus Outbreak in River Ericht

In the latter part of May significant numbers of diseased fish became apparent in parts of the River Ericht, particularly in the lower Craighall area. Such fish are often seen in that area at that time of year, but 2015 appeared the worst for several years at least. Similar reports were received from

some other rivers, for example, the North Esk. Low water and a relatively low temperature holding up fish may have been a factor. However, the fungus outbreak did provide an opportunity for an ASFB led PhD study into UDN and fungus at the Institute of Aquaculture, Stirling, to obtain samples. Some 12 dying fish were sampled and should hopefully reveal the precise species of *Saprolegnia* fungus involved.

Suspected Blockage in the River Ericht

In June 2015 concerns were raised by proprietors and anglers on the River Ericht that there appeared to be less fish than usual in the river for the time of year upstream of a part of the river called Craighall Gorge. Craighall Gorge is a spectacular narrow gorge with steep cliff sides that is physically difficult for people to access. Within the gorge there is a particular flow constriction and there were concerns that this might have been blocked by debris brought down in a large flood the previous winter.

The bailiff team had never previously accessed this difficult to reach area. However, with appropriate equipment this was done and some embedded trees and root wads were cut up, though not all were recent. There was some discussion as to whether the lack of fish upstream was wholly due to this debris or another factor such as low temperature delaying migration. It was nevertheless an instructive experience.

Forth and Tay Regional Advisory Group

The Board is now a member of the Forth and Tay Regional Advisory Group, a group which is concerned with proposed offshore windfarms which may be built off the mouth of the Tay. This group and a similar one for the Moray Firth, has been set up to advise developers on ecological monitoring and research with respect to windfarm construction and eventual operational activities. Constructional work (e.g. potential years of piling) could have an impact on salmon migration, for example. It is clearly in the Board's interest to participate in such initiatives.

Restoration of Flow to the River Garry

In the first Scotland EU Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plan, the Scottish Government signed up to restoring the upper River Garry, currently almost dry, to something called Good Ecological Potential by the end of 2015. The Scottish Government has agreed this means restoring something called a "Q96" base flow (effectively the expected natural flow on the 15th driest day of an average year) plus some migration and spawning freshets.

While SEPA leads this process, at a practical level SSE had been invited to make proposals in an application to vary its abstraction licence, which it did in 2010. As mentioned in last year's *Annual Report*, things appeared to be progressing towards a conclusion during the summer of 2014, but then in autumn 2014 SSE withdrew its application. This meant that the initiative for reviewing SSE's licence was back in SEPA's court. However, as of November 2015, no new formal proposal has been made by any party. The River Garry will not, therefore, be restored to GEP by 31 December 2015.

Opening Day celebrations at Dunkeld

In 2015, the Board once again lent its support to the opening day celebration organised by the Dunkeld and Birnam Tourist Association, the Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel and Perthshire Chamber of Commerce. The invited guest of honour was the well known actor and angler Paul Young. Following an entertaining speech at the opening day breakfast, he conducted the traditional blessing of the first boat with a quaich of whisky and had the first cast of the day.

Paul Young and Board chairman, Bill Jack performing the traditional blessing of the first boat with a Quaich of whisky at Dunkeld House (opposite) and Paul making the first cast of the season on a bitterly cold opening day below.





FISH COUNTER RESULTS 2015

Pitlochry Dam

The total count for 2015 showed an increase over the poorer year of 2014, and though not as good the three years before that, it was still one of the better years in the last decade or so (Figure 6). The notably low count in May probably resulted from low temperatures delaying migration, then resulting a better count in June (Figure 7). There was a higher count in August than for a few years, perhaps reflecting a better grilse run. The main grilse run this year seemed to appear about mid August at Pitlochry.

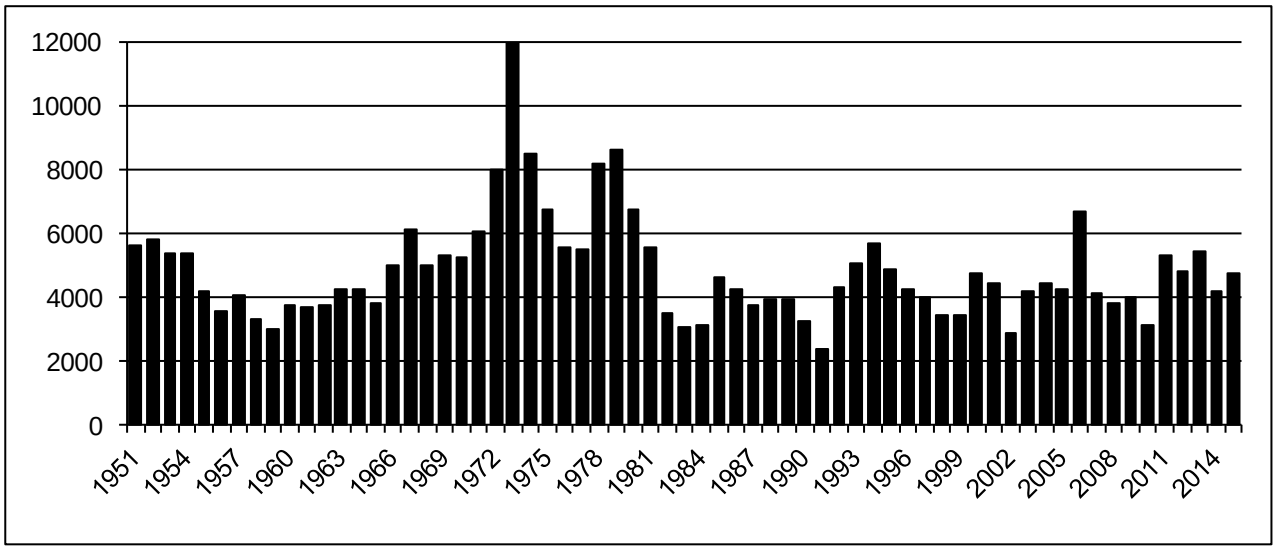


Figure 6. *Annual net upstream counts (that is down counts are subtracted from up-counts on a daily basis) through Pitlochry Dam fish ladder, 1951 – 2015. (Data courtesy of SSE)*

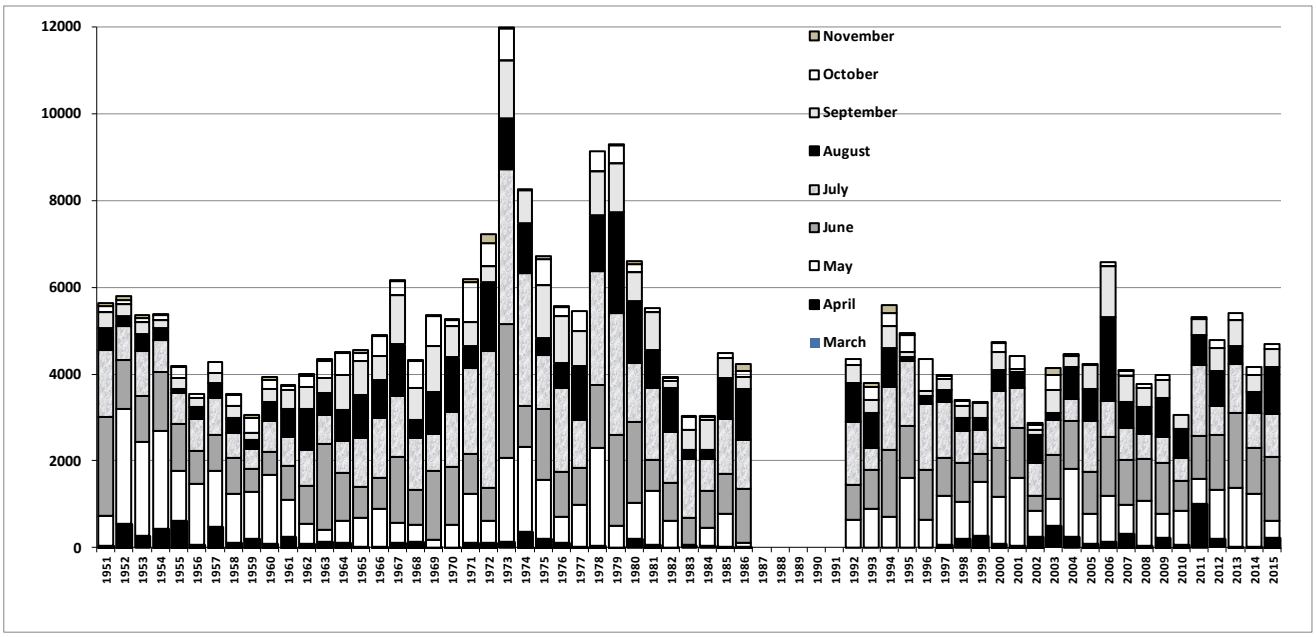


Figure 7. *Monthly net upstream counts, Pitlochry Dam, 1951 to 2015. (Data courtesy of the late Michael Gardner, David Stewart, Ross Gardiner and SSE)*

Clunie Dam

The total count at Clunie Dam on the River Tummel in 2015 was again amongst the highest historically recorded (Figure 8). The most notable feature was the relatively low June count but high July and August counts. Perhaps again, like Pitlochry, this represents an MSW salmon run delayed by cold weather being followed by a better grilse run. Neither in this year or last has there been any obvious negative effect of a smolt kill at Dunalastair Dam in 2013.

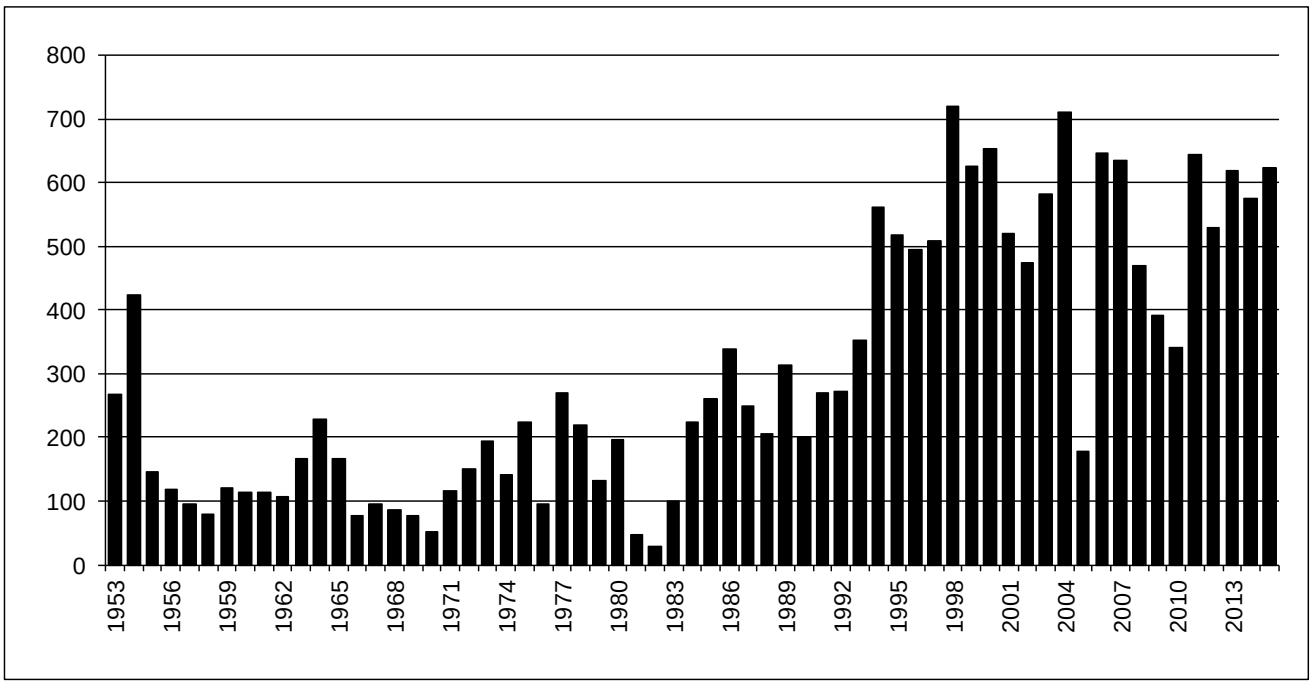


Figure 8. *Net annual upstream counts through Clunie Dam fish ladder, 1953 to 2015. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2005). (Data courtesy of SSE)*

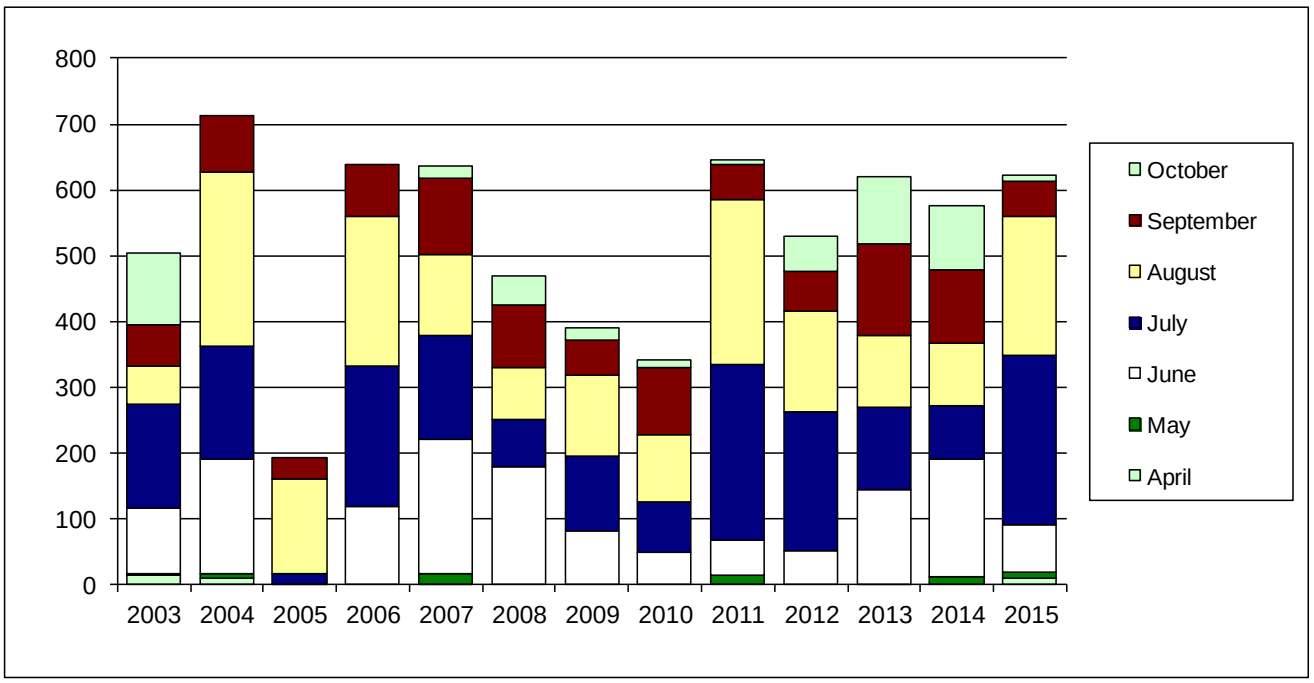


Figure 9. *Monthly net upstream counts, Clunie Dam fish ladder, 2003 – 2015. (Data courtesy of SSE)*

Lochay Falls

The Lochay Falls are a naturally insurmountable barrier to salmon on the lower reaches of the River Lochay near Killin. As compensation for the loss of former spawning areas on the Lyon, the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board installed a Borland fish lift to allow salmon access to the Lochay. SSE now operate a fish counter on the upstream exit of the fish pass. The 2015 count was the highest in almost 20 years, the third of three better years (Figure 10). Notably, 2015 saw the best ever late summer count. Perhaps this partly reflects weather or perhaps there was a good grilse run on this tributary. It is hoped that this improvement may be the result of stocking and fish passage improvements which have taken place (see page 21 of www.tdsfb.org/documents/TayTributariesElectrofishingSurveyReport.pdf).

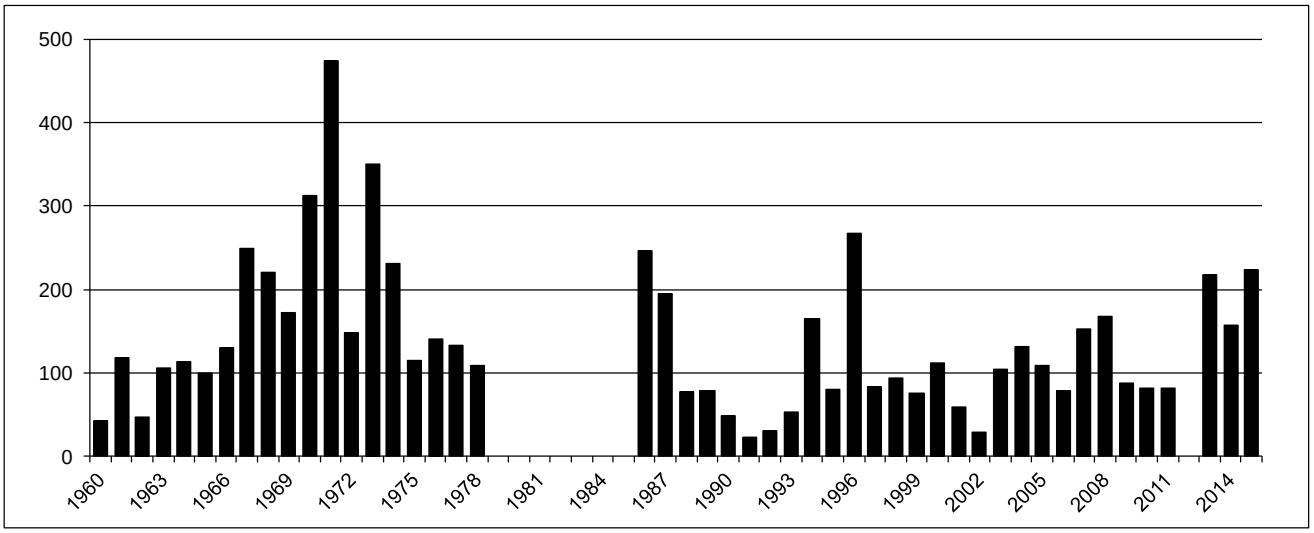


Figure 10. *Net annual upstream counts through Lochay Falls Fish Pass, 1960 to 2015. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2012). (Data courtesy of SSE)*

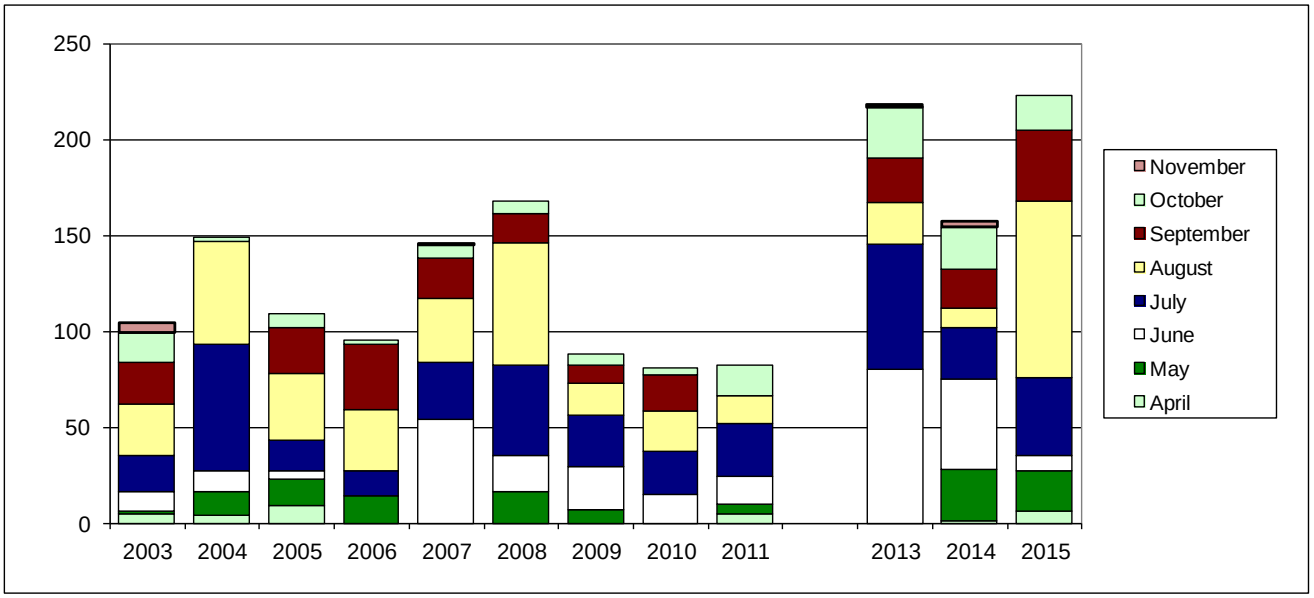


Figure 11. *Monthly net upstream counts, Lochay Falls Fish Pass, 2003 – 2015. (Data courtesy of SSE)*

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WILD FISHERIES REVIEW

A major issue overshadowing the Board's considerations in 2015 was the Scottish Government's Wild Fisheries Review. As described in last year's *Annual Report*, in 2014, the Scottish Government commissioned a review of salmon and freshwater fisheries management from Andrew Thin, former chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage. Andrew Thin reported in October 2014. Then in May 2015, Scottish Ministers published their response to the recommendations of the review.

The response from Scottish Ministers makes it clear they envisage major changes in the structures delivering fisheries management in Scotland. This will mean the replacement of district salmon fisheries boards, for example.

Proposed New Fisheries Management Structures

While Scottish Ministers' thinking on what new structures might replace DSFBs does not appear to be fully formed, in any new structure, Scottish Ministers say they wish to retain key elements of the existing system such as local knowledge and enthusiasm, the ability to determine local priorities and to develop innovative local delivery. However, they also consider there should be some form of national coordination to ensure a balance between national and local level issues across the whole of Scotland.

Therefore, working under such a national unit, Scottish Ministers seem to envisage a network of local Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs) delivering both a national strategy and a range of agreed local fishery management objectives. In terms of composition, Scottish Ministers seem to believe that FMO membership should include interests in wild fisheries and their management, including local authority and other public sector interests as well as owners and users of fishing rights. FMOs should have a model constitution to ensure appropriate governance and balance of interests. They might also be charitable bodies, for Scottish Ministers considered that charitable status is compatible with the delivery of local fishery management functions, including enforcement functions. Scottish Ministers also envisage that FMOs would be approved by a national unit to provide assurance of their capacity, competence, accountability etc.

Scottish Ministers did not express views on numbers of FMOs, but considered they will need to be of sufficient size and capacity to deliver the functions expected of them and achieve economies of scale, but not so big as lose local focus. Scottish Ministers proposed that they should develop proposals for a network of FMOs and following discussion with stakeholders, they would suggest boundaries.

As far as funding is concerned, Scottish Ministers appear to believe it is appropriate to continue with some form of salmon levy system. However, the Wild Fisheries Review recommended that consideration should be given to imposing levies on all commercial fisheries, for trout and coarse fish as well as salmon. Scottish Ministers consider that the costs and benefits of such a levy on all fisheries should be explored.

They also suggested that responsibility for collecting levies should rest with a national unit and it would then be distributed to FMOs. Crucially, "collection at the centre would bring the ability, if necessary, to redistribute funding to ensure consistent delivery of fisheries management across the country" (i.e. for example to take money raised on the Tay and give it to rivers elsewhere). It was also stressed that there is no intention that a levy should replace public sector project funding available to the sector. Instead, by being constituted as charitable bodies, they hope that FMOs should be able to harness voluntary and charitable support.

Protection Orders

Scottish Ministers question whether protection orders are necessary. They state that they "consider that the structure of a new fisheries management system could be sufficient in itself to secure responsible access to sustainable fishing for non-salmonid species." In terms of what that means in practice, we understand it may mean that they may introduce protection for all species of fish (i.e. by making it a criminal offence to fish for any type of fish without permission) but it seems less clear what the *quid pro quo* in terms of access to fishing might be.

Enforcement

Scottish Ministers say they agree that the system of enforcement through water bailiffs should be retained but there should be centralised warranting rather than by local bodies. However, they consider that bailiffs should continue to be employed at a local level.

Angling Development

Scottish Ministers would like the main Scottish angling membership bodies to reach agreement on a single formal lead body to speak on behalf of recreational fishing in Scotland. They believe that such leadership could provide a foundation for widening opportunities and access to angling which they consider to be one of the fundamental principles of the proposed new management system. Scottish Ministers contracted an independent company to establish the value of all wild fisheries in Scotland. The work was scheduled to be completed early in the summer.

Scottish Ministers also noted that the Wild Fisheries Review report recommended that funding for an Angling for All programme would come from a rod licence. However, they also said that Scottish Ministers have an existing policy not to introduce rod licensing in Scotland but also noted that a consistent view is that, if one were ever to be introduced, funding from a rod licence should be transparently used for a clear purpose, and it should be designed in a way which does not discourage participation in the sport, particularly from young people.

The Scottish Government is also to develop a new national strategy for wild fisheries which will include a research and data strategy. Actions to promote opportunities and access to fishing are apparently to be a key theme of the forthcoming national strategy for wild fisheries.

The Board's View

The response from Scottish Ministers also posed a number of questions as a consultation. The Board provided a detailed response to most of these. Our main observations / concerns could be summarised as.

1) A Fisheries and Data Strategy should have been published before the WFR process got to this stage. The consultation would have been much more meaningful had there been a clear view of the work Scottish Ministers consider needs to be done.
2) Future fisheries management organisations, whatever form they take, must have a significant input from salmon proprietors and salmon anglers, particularly if they are having to pay for the system.
3) While the Board is content that salmon proprietors should continue to pay for local salmon management work, it did not agree that they should pay for other species management, non local (i.e. government only) priorities or subsidies to other FMO areas. Otherwise there is a distinct possibility of cutbacks in other aspects of angling businesses in Tayside, e.g. losses of ghillies' jobs.
4) Scottish Ministers must ensure that Rateable Values of fishings are set consistently across the whole country, taking into account the cost of running fisheries.
5) The Board perceived there will be a greater requirement for enforcement functions in future as a result of the various measures being proposed. It questioned how this could be funded if salmon levies from a river like the Tay were to be used to pay for new functions and redistribution to other areas.
6) The Board does not agree with imposition of rod licences, which would essentially be a "poll tax" on anglers. As for salmon, there is a levy already in existence which is a relatively "progressive" form of taxation. In this case there is no sensible reason to add an additional form of taxation which will be more "regressive" in its effect.

What happens now?

It is our understanding that Scottish Ministers are now considering the responses to the consultation. Scottish Ministers then hope to issue a further consultation in early 2016 on the contents of a draft bill and fisheries strategy. By that time their intentions should be much clearer. However, it would appear there may still be fundamental issues to be resolved, not least of which is the issue of funding. Thereafter, depending particularly on the result of the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2016, it is understood that a Bill may be introduced to the Scottish Parliament at some point from autumn 2016 onwards. This would mean that, at the earliest, a phased implementation of a new system might start to take place from the latter part of 2017 onwards.

Further information from the Scottish Government website can be found at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LICENCE TO KILL SALMON PROPOSALS

While the 2014 Wild Fisheries Review concentrated primarily on fisheries management structures, it did also consider how salmon exploitation might be controlled in future. It recommended that salmon exploitation should be regulated by quotas based on an estimate of each river's "harvestable surplus" of salmon and that quotas should be enforced by using carcass tags. This needed to be done urgently apparently.

Accordingly, in February 2015, Scottish Ministers issued a consultation on a proposed licensing system for killing wild salmon in Scotland. It proposed that owners of salmon fishing rights should have to apply annually to Scottish Ministers for quotas if they wished to kill any salmon in the forthcoming season, otherwise they would have to fish on a catch and release basis only. Licences / quotas would be issued to proprietors in association with individually numbered tags which would be required to be attached to any fish killed. There would be a cost associated with each application. Scottish Ministers would also develop proposals on specific types of angling equipment which would be prohibited due to a perceived higher potential of some methods to cause damage to fish.

In response to that consultation, the Board did not agree that Scottish Ministers require to introduce such measures. This is because, among other things, conservation objectives are probably already being met in this catchment (most fish are already being released). Furthermore, a licence might be seen as target to be taken meaning more fish might actually be killed. The proposed measures would in practice be unworkable, particularly for clubs and syndicates, and might hit less affluent anglers most. There might be a negative impact on tourism and, anyway, Scottish Ministers already have sufficient existing powers to control exploitation should they wish to.

In July Scottish Ministers published more detailed information and another round of consultation. Little changed from the original consultation except that the suggestion of method restrictions had been put aside. However, it was proposed that, from 2016

1) All salmon netting in the sea outwith estuary limits would be stopped.
2) Net and coble fisheries could continue within estuary limits but would be subject to a quota system with carcass tags.
3) The killing of salmon by anglers would be regulated by a quota system and carcass tags.

As to how angling quotas might work, Marine Scotland Science would estimate the "harvestable surplus" by some means not then explained, although it would in some way involve a beat's five year average of catch. In rivers that are EU Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) (these include the Tay and its tributaries but not the Earn or the Eden) it explained that "even if there is a harvestable surplus, any licence will not be for more than the previous 5 year average of salmon killed in the SAC – so the licence would be for whichever is the lower – the harvestable surplus or the 5 year average". This appeared to mean that the quota for SAC rivers would be on a downward ratchet and, the more a river had volunteered to release fish, the less far it would need to ratchet down until complete catch and release.

While the Board supported the proposals for netting, it again objected to the proposals for angling for the same reasons as before plus the fact that the downward ratchet on quotas in SACs, even if salmon stocks increased, would be unacceptable. In conjunction with the Tay Ghillies Association, the Board also presented its concerns to the local constituency MSP, John Swinney.

Then in late September Scottish Ministers published a revised set of proposals with another consultation. The Board was please to see that the entire proposal for quotas and tags had been dropped. Instead, based on the estimation of stock levels over a five year period relative to a "conservation limit", rivers would be classified into one of three categories. For category 1 rivers no additional management action will be currently required. For category 2 rivers, management action will be considered necessary to reduce exploitation; there will be a requirement to produce a conservation plan in consultation with Marine Scotland. However, for rivers in category 3, mandatory catch and release will be required (to be reviewed annually) in addition to the production of a conservation plan.

An explanation of the categorization methodology and a map showing the results across Scotland were also published. That part of the Tay District that is within the SAC (i.e. basically everything upstream of Perth) is in category 1 but everything downstream (i.e. the rivers Earn and Eden) is in category 3.

The Board welcomed this change in tack and in principle supports the approach to conservation being proposed. In particular the Board welcomed the fact that Scottish Ministers had decided to abandon the unworkable quota/carcass tagging proposals which would have been applied to rivers with healthy as well as unhealthy stocks. The Board also supported the proposals insofar as they might apply to rivers that are clearly underperforming because of a demonstrated level of exploitation that is too high. Under such circumstances the measures proposed should be sufficient to control exploitation and are both workable and proportionate.

However, the Board has major concerns over the accuracy of the categorization methodology and particularly fears that there is potential for some rivers to be classified as category 3 when they should not be. The Board considers that this might be a particular danger for lowland rivers and fears the rivers Earn and Eden could have been wrongly classified. The Board has made representation to this effect to both Scottish Ministers and to some local politicians. Strong representation has also been made by the River Earn Improvement Association and proprietors and angling clubs in the Earn and Eden catchments.

At the time of writing Scottish Ministers' definitive proposals for 2016 are still awaited.

Further information from the Scottish Government website can be found at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence.

AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2013

The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013, placed a number of new duties on DSFBs relating to openness and accountability. It requires that the Annual Report should include:

1) A summary of what the board has done in carrying out its statutory functions during the year to which the report relates.
2) A summary of what the board propose to do in carrying out those functions in the following year.
3) Information about complaints made to the Board during the year, including: the number of complaints; and a statement of the nature of each complaint and how it was disposed of.
4) A statement as to how the Board have complied during the year with the good governance requirements and propose to comply with those requirements in the following year.

Point 1) has been covered by the main body of this report. 2) has partly been summarised by the main body of the report but might be further summarised by saying that the Board intends to continue to work on the same issues covered in 2014, but intends working with the Tay Foundation, Marine Scotland Science and SSE to develop a salmon smolt tagging programme on the River Tummel to monitor smolt survival.

Regarding point 3), as of the time of writing (November 2015), only one complaint was received in 2015. That complaint concerned an allegation about the behavior of a member of bailiff staff towards an angler fishing for species other than salmon. The Board's complaint process was then invoked.

New governance requirements

The Act placed a number of governance requirements on DSFBs, as indicated in point 4) above.

Meetings

All meetings of the Board, including Board meetings and the annual meeting of qualified proprietors, were open to the public as observers, and will continue to be so, although some items of business at Board meetings may be taken in private.

There was an annual public meeting on 24 March 2015, which was separate from the annual meeting of proprietors. Members of the public participated fully and minutes of the meeting and a copy of the presentation given can be found at www.tdsfb.org/minutes.htm. There will be another such meeting in 2016.

The dates and details of forthcoming meetings can be found at www.tdsfb.org/governance.htm.

The minutes of Board meetings have been published at www.tdsfb.org/minutes.htm, where they will continue to be published. Hard copies can also be obtained from the Clerk on request.

Annual Report and Accounts

The Annual Report with accounts for 2013/14 was published at www.tdsfb.org/annual-reports.htm and hard copies were sent to all qualified proprietors in the district and a copy sent to Scottish Ministers on 12 February 2015. This report and subsequent Annual Reports will also be published on the same basis and a copy will be sent to Scottish Ministers.

Complaints procedure

The Board has set up and maintains a complaints procedure which can be viewed at www.tdsfb.org/governance.htm.

Board members' interests

The Board has set up a register of members interests. This can be viewed on request at the Board's office. We have included a standing item at each Board meeting inviting Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Proprietors within the Tay District held in terms of Section 44(1) of the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 held at Birnam Institute, Birnam, Dunkeld at 11am on Friday, 12th December 2014.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Will Lindsay
Alastair Riddell
John Wood
Jack Coburn, P&KC
D R Milburn
Grant Tigwell
Claire Mercer Nairne
Mike Smith
Thomas Steuart Fothringham
Callum Towns
Eric Starke
David Godfrey
AM Stewart
Gary Harkin
Donald McLarty
Tim Atkinson
Mike Hay
Gordon Nichol
W Barbour
Edward Eadie
Peter MacDonald

In Attendance: Dr. David Summers, Fisheries Director
Inga McGown, Clerk to the Board
Lee Fisher, Operations Manager
Stephen Mannion
J W Wright
Rona Harkin
Geordie Stewart
Bob White
Calum McRoberts
S Godfrey

Apologies: William Jackson, Simon Furniss

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Proprietors held on 12th December 2013:

The Minutes of the 2013 Annual Meeting of Proprietors were previously circulated in the Annual Report and taken as read. There were no matters arising, and on a proposal by David Godfrey, and seconded by Alastair Riddell, were approved.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December, 2013

The Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2013, which were incorporated into the Annual Report, had been circulated and were taken as read.

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the accounts and the main variances year on year. 2013 saw a surplus of £39,841 due largely to a generous donation from John Apthorp which funded the refurbishment of the new offices and Board room at the Hatchery. The bank balance is a healthy £209k.

There was a question regarding the £9,335 spent on websites and its variance from last year, to which the Chairman replied that the website had been long overdue an overhaul and the money had been utilised to facilitate this.

There were no other questions, and on a proposal from Callum Towns, and seconded by Thomas Steuart Fothringham, the Accounts were approved.

Annual Report 2013/4

David Summers gave a brief review of the year, highlighting in particular, the catch figures for 2014, the trial season extension, the Hatchery, the River Garry, catch and release, Wild Fisheries Review, and proposed licences to kill salmon.

2014 had been a poor season compared to prior years, and David Summers explained some of the reasons as to why this may have come about.

He then went on to explain the history of the trial season extension, and that the data from the trial up to 2013 can be found on the TDSFB website. The outcome of the recent EGM regarding seeking to make the extension permanent would be discussed later in the meeting.

Dr. Summers then focused on the Hatchery, which has proved to be an invaluable asset in generating eggs from fragile spring salmon populations. The Board took over the facility in 2011, and have now signed a ten year lease. He urged all attendees to come and have a look at the facility as it really is impressive.

As to the River Garry, Dr. Summers gave a brief history, stating that the Garry was now dry due to abstraction by SSE. However, the EU Water Framework Directive has led to the Scottish Government signing up to restoring flow to the Garry by the end of 2015. SEPA had performed some flow trials in

2014, which appeared to have led to them to indicate the Garry required almost twice as much flow as SSE had originally proposed. SSE have now withdrawn their application. It is not clear what will happen next. SEPA have the power to initiate a review of the licence themselves, but no action has been taken in this regard, at least as yet.

The Board recommends 100% catch and release to 31st May 2015, as well as 100% catch and release of all female salmon and males over 10 pounds from 1st June 2015 to the end of the season. Dr. Summers informed the attendees that the Scottish Government has proposed making it an offence to kill any salmon before 31st March from 2015. These regulations were in the final stages of approval in Scottish Parliament. They will be in place initially for five years, with an annual review.

The Wild Fisheries Review was reported on 8th October 2014, and recommends many changes including abolishing Boards in favour of a different type of Fisheries Management Organisation. New funding arrangements have also been proposed. Dr. Summers informed the attendees that at present our levy at 53.2% is considerably lower than many other Boards, and that most likely the Tay Proprietors will have to pay more in future. The Scottish Ministers are yet to respond, but consultations are set to take place in 2015.

The Review also recommended that licences and carcass tags should be required for the killing of salmon. The Scottish Government has since intimated that it is considering implementing licensing and carcass tagging in 2016, with consultations in 2015. Dr Summers informed the meeting that a requirement for licences and quotas was actually required under the EU Habitats and Species Directive. Salmon are a protected species under that Directive and the River Tay is a Special Area of Conservation for salmon. Apparently, Scottish Government are under significant pressure from the EU to conform to this requirement. Some of this pressure may have been exacerbated by complaints which have been made to the EU by several bodies and this may have resulted in greater scrutiny of the workings of Scottish salmon fisheries.

The Chairman then pointed out a typo on page 39 of the report which should read Week 40, and not 48.

On a proposal by John Wood, and seconded by David Godfrey, the Annual Report was approved.

Season Extension

The Chairman gave a brief history of the extension, explaining that an EGM was held on 17th November, but that the vote on making the extension permanent had been inconclusive. A postal vote had since been conducted with the options of no extension, or an extension with participating beats paying 25% gross of letting income to the Tay Foundation. 56% of the votes had been for no extension, and therefore, the Board will not be applying for a permanent extension.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Triennial Election of The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board held under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 on 12th December, 2014 at The Birnam Institute, Dunkeld.

Present: Those proprietors present at the earlier Annual Meeting together with Mandatories.

In Attendance: Inga McGown as Clerk
Dr. David Summers, Fisheries Director
Lee Fisher, Operations Manager
Stephen Mannion
J W Wright
Rona Harkin
Geordie Stewart
Bob White
Calum McRoberts
S Godfrey

The Chairman of the outgoing Board, Bill Jack, explained that the existing Board would now all resign, and the new Board would be elected. He expressed sincere thanks to all who had served on the Board in the last three years, with a special mention to Will Lindsay who had served over thirty years.

He went on to explain that three years ago, the Board had been reduced from 22 members to 11. This included 1 Lower Proprietor representative, 5 Upper, and 5 Co-optees. He then asked the meeting whether there would be agreement to increasing the number of lower proprietors to two as he felt it would be beneficial to have Perth and Kinross Council on the Board. PKC is a lower proprietor but would fail to be elected should there be a vote for a single position. Those present all replied in the affirmative.

The Chairman and the Board then stepped down, and the Clerk chaired the meeting.

The Clerk welcomed the proprietors present to the Election under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. She said that the only business to be conducted at the meeting of proprietors was the election of representatives of proprietors. The outgoing Board had recommended a maximum of 2 Lower Proprietors and 5 Upper Proprietors. She asked whether all assembled were willing to accept this change in the make up of the Board, to which all agreed this was acceptable.

The Clerk then called for the Lower Proprietor candidates to make themselves known.
David Godfrey as Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fisheries Co Ltd was proposed by Viscount Stormont (Mandatory William Jack) and seconded by Perth and Kinross Council (Mandatory Jack Coburn).

Jack Coburn as Mandatory for Perth and Kinross Council was proposed by Tay Foundation (Mandatory John Wood) and seconded by Tay Salmon Fisheries Co Ltd (Mandatory David Godfrey).

There were no other potential candidates for election as Lower Proprietors.

The Clerk then called for the Upper Proprietor candidates to make themselves known.

Alastair Riddell was proposed by Will Lindsay (Mandatory for George Fleming) and seconded by Wattie Barbour (Mandatory for Loch Tay Central Salmon Fishings).

Eric Starke as Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare was proposed by Will Lindsay (Mandatory for George Fleming) and seconded by Callum Towns (Mandatory for Stobhall Timeshare).

Claire Mercer Nairne was proposed by Tay Salmon Fisheries Co Ltd (Mandatory David Godfrey) and seconded by Thomas Steuart Fothringham.

Simon Furniss as Mandatory for Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel was proposed by Will Lindsay (Mandatory for George Fleming) and seconded by Alastair Riddell.

Bill Jack as Mandatory for Viscount Stormont was proposed by David Godfrey (Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fisheries Co Ltd) and seconded by Alastair Riddell.

There were no other candidates for election.

With the two lower and five upper proprietor representatives agreed, there was no requirement for an election and the meeting was drawn to a close.

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE PROPRIETORS OF SALMON FISHERIES IN THE TAY DISTRICT

In accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation)(Scotland) Act 2003, section 44, we have audited the financial statements on pages 39 to 43. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2007), under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 41.

This report is made solely to the proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the proprietors those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the proprietors for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of duly elected and duly co-opted board members and auditors
Section 44 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation)(Scotland) Act 2003 requires the Board to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Board and of the surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those accounts, the Board members are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Board will continue in operation.

The Board members are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Board. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Board and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. We also report to you whether in our opinion the information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition, we report to you if, in our opinion, the company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law is not disclosed.

We read the Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of Opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Board members in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion
In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to Smaller Entities of the state of the Board's affairs as at 31 December 2014, and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- the financials have been properly prepared in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Campbell Dallas LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
Perth
2 December 2015

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

	NOTES	£	2014 £	2013 £
INCOME				
Fishery assessments	2		468,133	439,491
Revaluation Appeals			30,000	(12,570)
Bad debts, changes to provision for doubtful debts etc			-	-
			498,133	426,921
Compensation Received (SSE)			6,791	6,614
Contributions from Tay Foundation(Hatchery)			-	24,067
Contributions from John Apthorp through TF (new offices)			-	32,000
Contribution from Tay Foundation (Invasives)			-	2,000
Rent			-	2,400
Consultancy			6,590	4,090
Other			1,766	-
			513,280	498,092
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries and National Insurance		203,761		197,328
Pension plus Death in Service- Board's contribution		12,890		10,346
LBM Consultancy Costs		800		4,823
Recruitment & Training		244		-
Road Maintenance		20,993		257
Bank Charges		181		9
Motor cars and boats running costs, incl insurance		29,103		32,907
Rent, rates and general insurance		29,737		24,527
Heat & light		19,114		4,315
Repairs&maintenance - General		10,694		5,330
Repairs&maintenance - Hatchery		-		296
Telephone & Communications		6,368		9,237
Printing, Stationery, Postage & Advertising		4,424		3,068
Annual Report Costs		600		569
Meetings and other statutory costs		2,788		3,327
Ghillies lunch and meeting		713		892
Administration costs		-		50
Legal fees		10,268		60
Audit and accounts fees		2,400		2,586
Depreciation		27,470		31,499
Subscriptions and levies		16,043		15,366
I T costs		475		713
Health & Safety implementation incl clothing		5,369		9,626
Hatchery Running Costs		53,055		90,816
Project Work		1,337		2,377
Websites		9,808		9,335
New Offices		9,197		-
Conservation Dinner		-		901
Gifts & Presentations		58		75
			477,890	460,635
			35,390	37,457
Gain on sale of fixed assets			-	-
			35,390	37,457
Interest received	3		367	2,384
			35,757	39,841
Transfers to reserves: NASF(UK)	5		-	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year			35,757	39,841

The notes on pages 41 to 43 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

	NOTES	£	2014 £	2013 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	4		127,500	154,970
			127,500	154,970
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & prepayments		52,018		112,601
Cash at Bank and in Hand		300,338		209,136
		352,356		321,737
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Other creditors & accruals		89,450		122,060
Net current assets			262,906	199,677
NET ASSETS			390,406	354,647
Representing:				
Reserves	5		83,434	83,434
General Fund	6		306,972	271,213
			390,406	354,647

These accounts were approved on 8th December 2015

WILLIAM JACK
..... BOARD MEMBER

SIMON FURNISS
..... BOARD MEMBER

The notes on pages 41 to 43 form part of these accounts.

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and are in accordance with applicable accounting standards. The following accounting policies have been applied:

Fixed assets and depreciation

The cost of fixed assets is stated at the net amount after deducting grants available. Donations relating to expenditure on fixed assets are credited to the Profit and Loss Account in the year of receipt, where there are no conditions attaching to the donation.
Depreciation is provided on all fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned as follows:

Hatchery	Over term of the lease
Motor vehicles	25% per annum straight line
Boats	25% per annum reducing balance
Plant and Equipment	25% per annum reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3 % straight line

Taxation

No taxation is provided due to the fact that HM Revenue and Customs has agreed that the Board is not liable for corporation tax.

Death in service scheme

Contributions to the Board's scheme are charged to the Income and Expenditure account in the year in which they become payable.

2 FISHERY ASSESSMENTS

	2014		2013	
	Rateable Value	Assessment	Rateable Value	Assessment
	£	£	£	£
Upper proprietors	881,825	469,131	889,735	437,301
Lower proprietors	4,425	2,354	4,425	2,190
	886,250	471,485	894,160	439,491
Less River Shee		93		-
Estuarial netting stations		3,259		-
		468,133		439,491

The assessments are based on 53.2% of Rateable Value (2013 – 49.5%)

3 INTEREST RECEIVED	2014	2013
	£	£
Bank interest	367	2,384
	367	2,384

4 FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Property	Motor VehiclesBoats	Equipment	Plant & Equipment	Office and Computer Total	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost:						
At 1 January 2014	191,468	77,938	42,671	186,517	20,028	518,622
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2014	191,468	77,938	42,671	186,517	20,028	518,622
Depreciation:						
At 1 January 2014	70,685	50,875	42,348	179,717	20,028	363,653
Charge for year	12,594	13,094	81	1,700	-	27,470
Eliminated for disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2014	83,279	63,969	42,429	181,417	20,028	391,123
Net book amounts:						
At 31 December 2014	108,189	13,969	242	5,100	-	127,500
At 31 December 2013	120,783	27,064	323	6,800	-	154,970

5 RESERVES

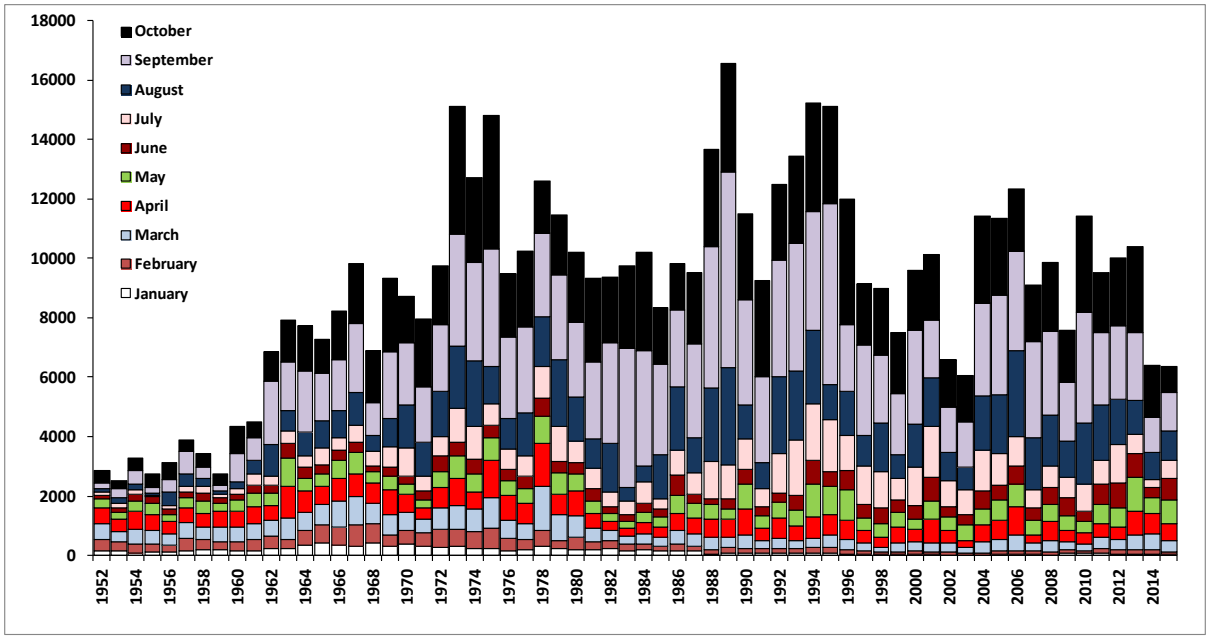
	GENERAL	NASF(UK)	TOTAL
	£	£	£
At 1 January 2014	83,434	-	83,434
Provision in year	-	-	-
	83,434	-	83,434
Expenditure in year	-	-	-
At 31 December 2014	83,434	-	83,434

6 GENERAL FUND

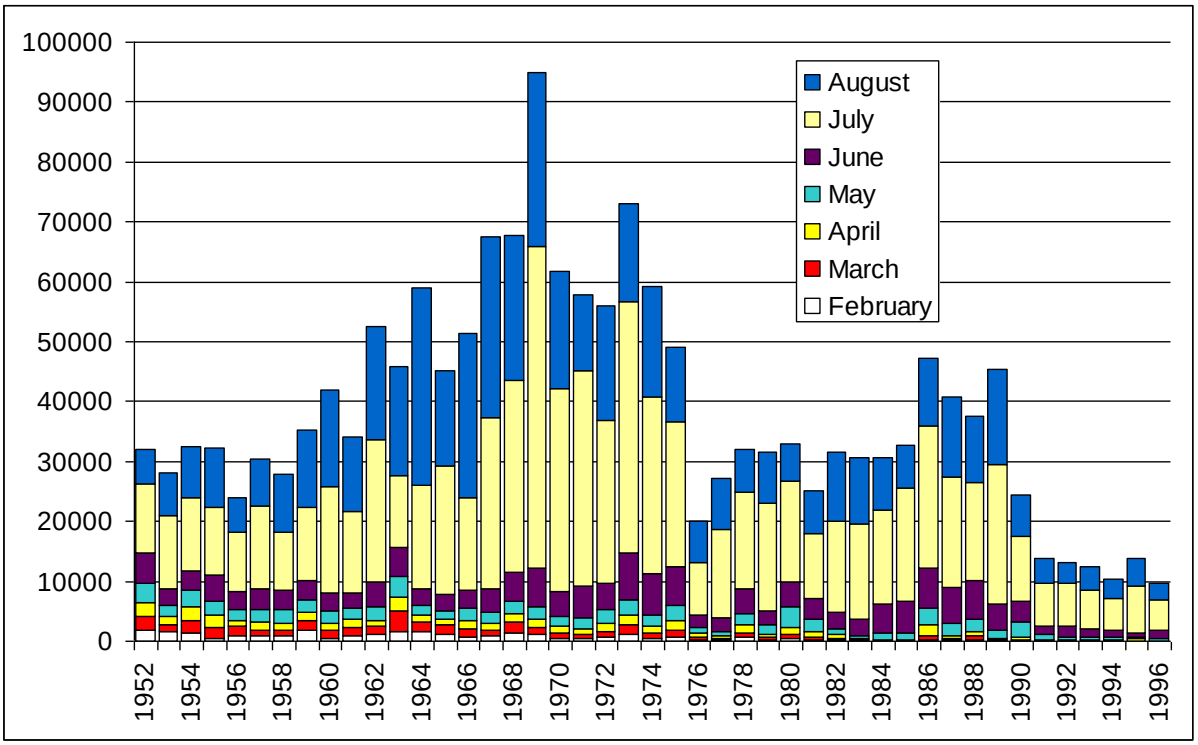
	2014	2013
	£	£
At 1 January 2014	271,213	231,373
(Deficit)/Surplus for year	35,759	39,840
At 31 December 2014	306,972	271,213

7. CAPITAL COMMITMENT

There were no capital commitments as at 31st December 2014.



Monthly angling catch for the Tay District 1952 – 2015 (including released fish). The 1952 – 2010 data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science, Aberdeen. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties. 2011 to 2014 data were collected by the Board and 2015 is based on a preliminary analysis of www.fishtay.co.uk catches.



Monthly net and coble catch, Tay District 1952 – 1996 (netting largely ceased in 1996). The data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science, Aberdeen. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE FOR 2014

	11 February	15 April	3 June	12 August	7 October	12 December
W. Jack	X	X	X	X	X	X
S. Furniss	X	-	X	X	X	-
D. Godfrey	X	X	-	X	-	X
W. Lindsay	-	X	X	X	-	X
W. Jackson	X	-	X	-	-	-
S. Mannion	X	-	X	X	X	X
D. Brown	X	X	X	X	-	-
A. Riddell	X	-	-	X	-	X
T. Steuart Fothringham	X	X	-	-	X	X
J. M. Wood	X	X	X	X	X	X
J. Young	X	-	-	-	-	-

X Present
\- Apologised for non-attendance

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board wishes to acknowledge the following people, organisations and companies for their very kind assistance and support throughout 2014 and 2015.

All Proprietors within the Tay District
Andrew Graham-Stewart
All Honorary Bailiffs
All Ghillies and Boatmen
All Tay Board staff
The Tay Ghillies Association
The Tay Foundation
The River Earn Improvement Association
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
The staff of Marine Scotland at:
Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry
Montrose Research Station
The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
The River and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland
Fishlegal
Scottish Natural Heritage
SSE plc
Police Scotland