Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board



Annual Report
2019 / 20

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 / 20

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TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Convener

Iain McLaren (Mandatory for Kinnaird)

Members Elected by Upper Proprietors

S. Furniss (Mandatory for Clayfield Investments)
C. Mercer Nairne
J. Perrett (Mandatory for River Earn Improvement Association)
A. Riddell

Members Elected by Lower Proprietors

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

Co-opted Members

Representatives of Salmon Anglers

D. Brown
S. Mannion
R. Mason (Tay Ghillies Association)
T. Monaghan
A. Stewart
A. Wallace

Observers

N. MacIntyre (NatureScot)
C. McGregor (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)

Board Staff

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CONVENER'S REPORT 2020

When I watched Dougie MacLean making the first cast of a new decade on Opening Day this year, I just hoped it would be better than the disappointments of the last couple of years. I had no idea what was actually in store!

This has been a year like no other. After a slow start to the season, the unprecedented lockdown was difficult and very uncertain. Nobody knew when they might expect to get any money in. The whole season could have been a write-off. We had to take difficult decisions, but we were really helped by the Government's furlough scheme and once again by the inestimable generosity of John Apthorp CBE for underwriting the running costs of the hatchery. Instead of sending out bills for the previously budgeted assessment, we were able to bill the minimum required to maintain basic administrative functions and keep our priority hatchery broodfish alive. I am grateful for proprietors for supporting us through this, despite the difficulties of having no income.

We were relieved when lockdown was eventually relaxed for angling and even more so at the catches. I was fortunate to land 7 myself on the first day! For a start I assumed this was just because we were fishing for fish that had never been fished for before, but when some beats kept on reporting fish that was just the shot in the arm we needed. Lockdown didn't end a day too soon and we were glad to see anglers back.

This encouraging summer meant we could take staff back off furlough to address concerns about poaching and to complete much needed work, like demonstrating how much our hatchery work has benefited the River Garry. This did require us to bill proprietors again for more of the assessment, but with reduced staff costs in spring, and two members of staff retiring, we have tried our best to keep bills down, only charging 75% of our original budget. I know this has been difficult for many proprietors, as it has been for us, and I appreciate all the support you have shown.

The back end of the season continues to see a lack of fresh fish, but we are not alone in that. But this summer's better run was widespread too. Maybe we are seeing a shift in the season from autumn to summer. If that is how it is going to be, perhaps the summer fishing will continue to improve. Hopefully that will be something we can look forward to.

This is my last message of this session of the Board, after three years as Convener. In December we are due to have an election. I have enjoyed much of it. Some aspects involved a steep learning curve and we have had some major achievements, notably the restoring of the River Garry. For most of my time based at Pitlochry, this was something I could hardly have envisaged until a few years back. And without our unique kelt reconditioning hatchery, salmon would not have been in a position to recover so quickly.

Sometimes chairing the Board has had challenges that I didn't foresee. The last few years have been the most challenging ever for owners, ghillies and anglers. As someone who ghillies myself I get the frustration that creeps up when the fishing is poor. I think we could have done more over the last few

years and we can do more going forward, but we must have a board that is united in its purpose and supported on the river. Crucially if we are to progress we cannot operate in isolation. We have to work constructively with and be taken seriously by other organisations like SEPA and Marine Scotland. The Scottish Government have started the process of producing a Wild Salmon Strategy which should make the plight of the salmon more urgent and see some projects on the agenda that might not otherwise. But this will not be achieved by allowing our hearts to run before our heads. Proprietors need to choose wisely in the forthcoming election.

I wish to emphasise that the Board and its employees are a team, or should be a team. I am grateful for the support of Board members through the last three years, especially those who have put in that extra effort when the going hasn't always been smooth. Of course, I also wish to thank the Board's staff, all of them, who do a lot for the river, although this is not always appreciated. They also do a lot to maintain the Board's credibility with others we are dependent on.

I especially want to say thanks to Ronnie Whytock and Steve Keay who retired this year. Ronnie had been a stalwart fisheries officer for 20 years. Steve, of course, was our renowned hatchery manager. He developed the kelt reconditioning process when he worked for Marine Scotland Science and came to work for the Board in 2011 when we took over the Almondbank facility. Now it has been built up to capacity, Steve has handed over the reins to Craig Duncan who he has been training. Steve has made an inestimable contribution to the river, but has left his baby in good hands. Thank you Steve.

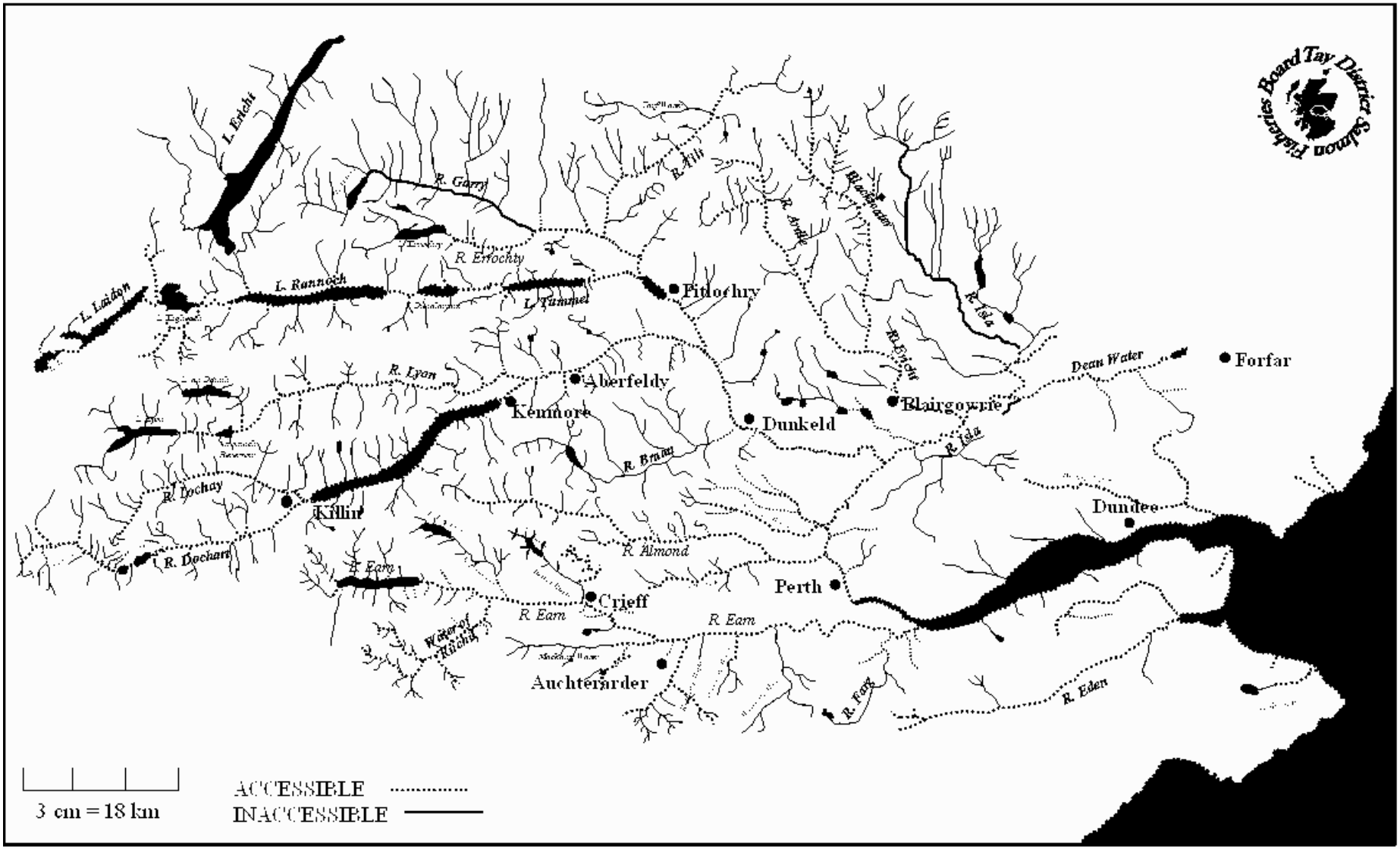
Finally, I hope that in 2021 we will get back to normal again if the reports about Covid vaccines are true. When it does, I'm sure there will be a lot of people wanting to catch up on fishing.

With best wishes to the new board and 2021.

Yours sincerely

Iain McLaren

Salmon Distribution within the Tay District



2020 REPORT

Season 2020

Prior to the opening of the 2020 Tay season on 15 January, there had been high water and mild weather. Any spring salmon present could have been well spread. On opening day itself, the Tay was over 7 feet, a bit high, but steadily falling and clear, although fishing had to be cancelled on Loch Tay due to high winds. However, only two salmon were caught, a 9 pounder in the Linn Pool at Taymount and a 12 pounder from Findynate on the upper Tay.

Further rain saw the river rise again on the 17th and catches ground to a halt. Then, for about a week, there was a slow trickle, before becoming more difficult at the month's end. Despite adverse conditions for much of the time, with about a dozen springers, this January was still slightly better than January 2019. Almost all were caught in the Linn Pool, shared between Stobhall and Taymount, or well up river. There was nothing in between.

With the river still running quite high, the start of February continued to be a struggle. Then, in mid-month, rain from "Storm Dennis" pushed the Tay up over 10 feet. This was followed by successive rises making the river unfishable for more than a week. Only a very modest 23 fish were reported on the Fishtay website for the whole of February, more than half from the Stanley area. Over half were also caught in the last week of the month once levels eventually started to fall due to colder weather and hill snow.

The first week of March was more settled and almost as many springers were reported in that week than all February. A mild snowmelt spate disrupted things, but after about 10 March, drier / cooler conditions returned, levels started to settle and the fishing improved. That was until 23 March, when fishing was suspended on all beats because of the unprecedented coronavirus lockdown.

About half the reported March catch came from the Stanley area. There was also a smaller concentration from Loch Tay with the remainder scattered thinly along most of the river. However, the trajectory suggested that, had fishing continued, the full catch for March might have been down on recent years, but the quality of fish caught was good. Many were 3SW fish in the high teens of pounds or even larger, even though the 2019 2SW run had appeared down.

There was no fishing at all during April and most of May due to the national coronavirus lockdown. There is, therefore, no information on the strength of runs during those crucial spring salmon months. However, during most of this closed period it was very dry. The Tay fell well back and smaller tributaries were approaching drought level.

When the national lockdown was partially lifted on Friday 29 May allowing local travel only, some beats opened to local anglers but others waited. 48 fish were reported on the Fishtay website for that first day, all from beats upstream of Islamouth. Local anglers fishing the Pitlochry Angling Club waters on the Tummel, for example, had something like 20. It was clear from photos that many of those fish had been in for a few weeks, as might have been expected.

Fishing in June continued to be subject to a requirement that travel should remain local. A proportion of beats chose to remain closed therefore. However, for those that did open, the weather became more favourable. There were a few modest rises, although the average level remained relatively low until more significant rain in the last week. Overall, most beats that fished, if they were fished enough, had a better June than for several years, particularly those that hold fish in low water. Notably, this included some beats in the Scone area that normally catch very little in June. Some middle Tay beats had a good June too. Despite a number of beats not fishing or being underfished, the overall catch was well up on 2019. Many of the fish caught were good quality fresh salmon.

Fishing conditions were relatively good for July. The Tay ran at several feet for the first week of the month, falling away slowly thereafter, until another rise near the end of the month. The overall catch for July was well up on recent years; nearly twice the five year average on the fishtay website and probably the best since 2012. But, despite levels being above summer low, the best of the catches were still made on beats low down the river, particularly just upstream of Scone. Several beats in that area had their best July in years. Since those beats have not tended to catch that much in early summer, this year's increase cannot be put down to a build-up of fish during lockdown. While not by the same margins, most lower Tay beats exceeded recent expectations, if they were fished enough. However, Islamouth was something of an exception. It did not start fishing until 13 July, yet more than doubled its recent average and the neighbouring Meikleour beat had over five times its recent average. But, while better catches were generally still seen upstream of there, where fished enough, the level of improvement was less.

Again, many of the fish reported in July, especially early on, were salmon rather than grilse, often fish in the teens of pounds, but grilse figured more as the month went on.

Fishing conditions were reasonably good for most of August. A few days were lost to poor conditions, either because the weather was too warm or the water dirty. There was a good spate towards the end of the first week and another a week later, due to a torrential night time thunderstorm centred over the lower river. From mid month, there was a week of steadily falling water, then several dirty lifts over the last ten days.

As in July, the overall catch was up on the five year average, but not to the same degree. Beats around Scone continued their good run, with more grilse in catches, exceeding their recent averages by two or three-fold. With 190, Almondmouth, for example, had the highest monthly catch of any beat for the season. Beats from around Stanley to the Isla generally caught a little above the average, while average catches prevailed upstream.

Relative to expectations, catches cooled further in September. While marginally better than 2019, they were less overall than the recent average. This was partly due to a drying up of fresh fish and to weather putting off the older fish resident in most beats on which catches depended. Most of the first half of the month was dry and the level stable or very slightly falling. While there was a lift in mid month, there was a return to unseasonably warm and sunny weather which put the fish off again. Catches only started to increase again towards the end of the month when cooler weather set in.

As in July and August the best catches were skewed towards the lower river. The lowest beats' catches were around average or just above, while immediately above Stanley they tended to be average or slightly lower. Above the Isla, they were generally down.

A couple of bouts of rainfall at the start of October saw the Tay peak at over 10 feet on the 4th which give fish a chance to redistribute and run smaller tributaries like the River Almond. Thereafter, until the close of the Tay season on 15 October, the weather was generally dry and levels gradually settled back.

October Tay catches were, overall, like September, slightly ahead of 2019 but less than the recent average. Again, there was an almost complete dearth of fresh run fish. But, despite that, the highest catches were still made lower down, with beats immediately upstream of Scone continuing to have the highest catches relative to their recent October averages. Most beats upstream were either a little above or a little below their recent averages although some beats far upstream did much better in October than in August or September, suggesting some upstream movement of fish, although many clearly did not move from the lower river, even after early October rise.

While there may have been less fishing in the summer to prove the point, it seems a similar run pattern may have prevailed in the River Earn too, with most fish caught in the traditionally productive back-end weeks being coloured.

Overall, then, because of better Tay catches in July and August and to a lesser extent June, it is anticipated that the total district catch for the season will probably be the best since 2016, perhaps in the region of 5,500 fish or even more, as illustrated on page 47. That is with the Covid-19 lockdown which may have cost another 500 to 1,000 fish.

Catch and Release

Following poor catches in 2019, the Board recommended, for the first time ever, 100% catch-and-release of all salmon and grilse for the entire 2020 season. Previously the Board had only advocated 100% catch and release to the end of May and keeping the occasional grilse thereafter.

As of November 2020, the latest catch returns available to assess compliance with catch and release are for the 2019 season. In 2019, spring return rates continued very high, though a few fish were killed in April and May despite the long held policy. Overall, the rest of the season had the highest rates ever with approximately 90% or above in all months. But, because this was only a slight increase on 2018, it suggested that a call for 100% release made mid season 2019 wasn't heeded by all (Figure 1).

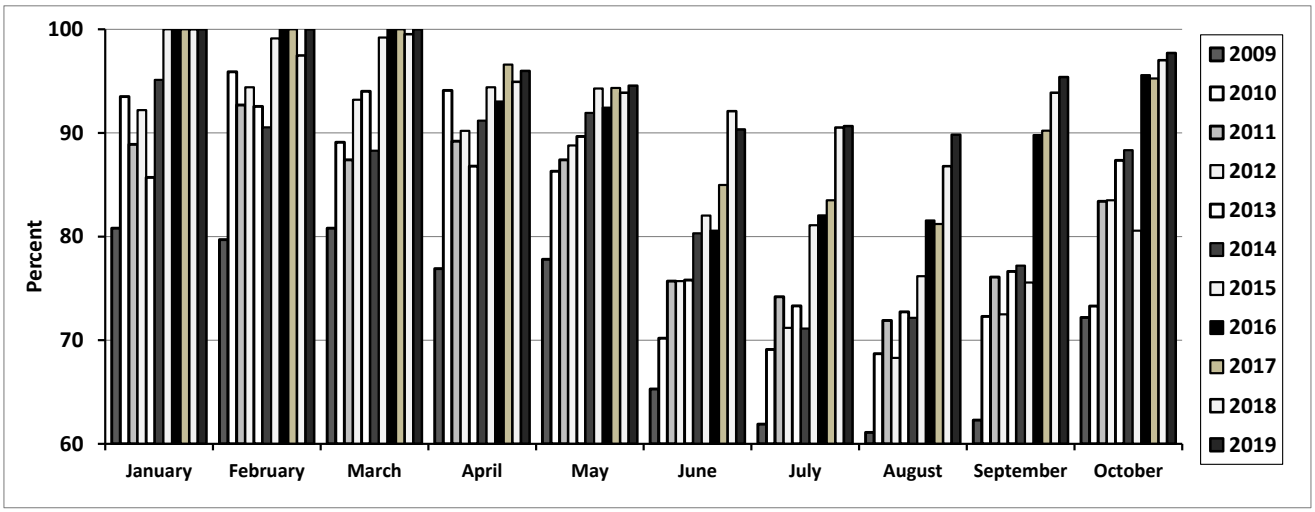


Figure 1. *Percentage of the Tay district salmon and grilse catch released by month in each year from 2009 to 2019. The data used in this graph are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.*

In 2019, the Tay did not have the highest spring salmon catch of any Scottish district but slightly more were reported killed than anywhere else (Figure 2), albeit, the percentage killed was very small.

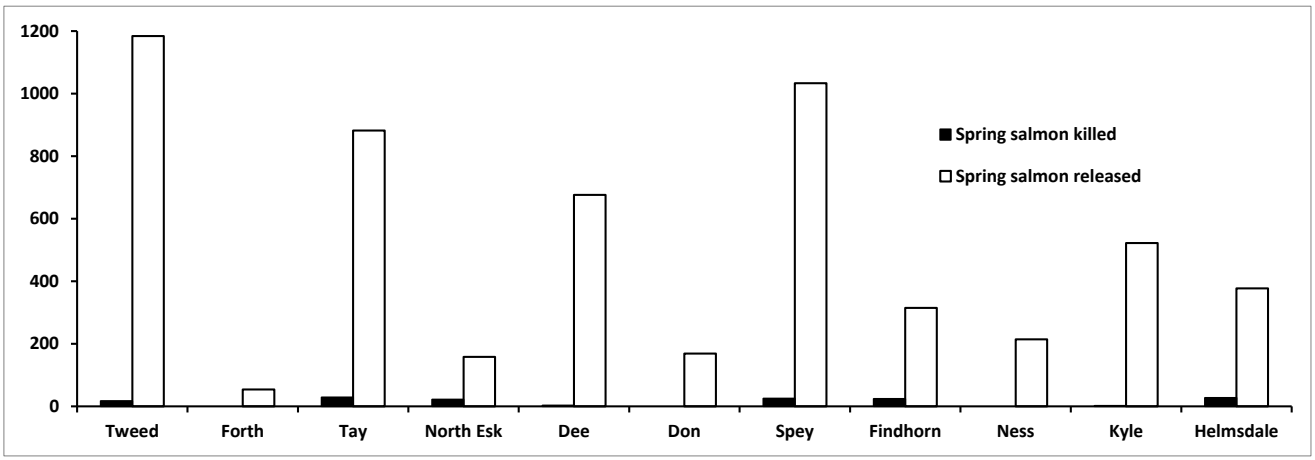


Figure 2. *Numbers of salmon killed and released by anglers to 31 May 2019 on Scotland's major spring salmon rivers. Data from Marine Scotland Science.*

Catch and Release Rates in Different Parts of the District in 2019

From Figure 3 it can be seen that, in 2019, that although percentages of retained fish were generally low, there was some variation in levels across the catchment. The higher rates of reported retention tended to be in smaller tributaries. However, the absolute numbers killed in these smaller tributaries was very low. The highest numbers of both spring fish and later fish killed continues to be on the lower Tay where overall catches are highest (Figures 4 & 5).

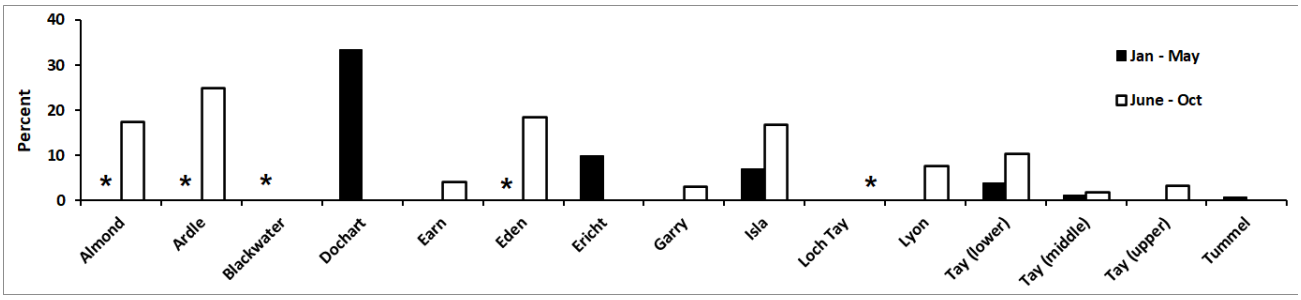


Figure 3. *Percentages of salmon retained in different parts of the Tay district during the periods January – May 2019 and June – October 2019. Tributaries which did not produce any fish are marked with *.*

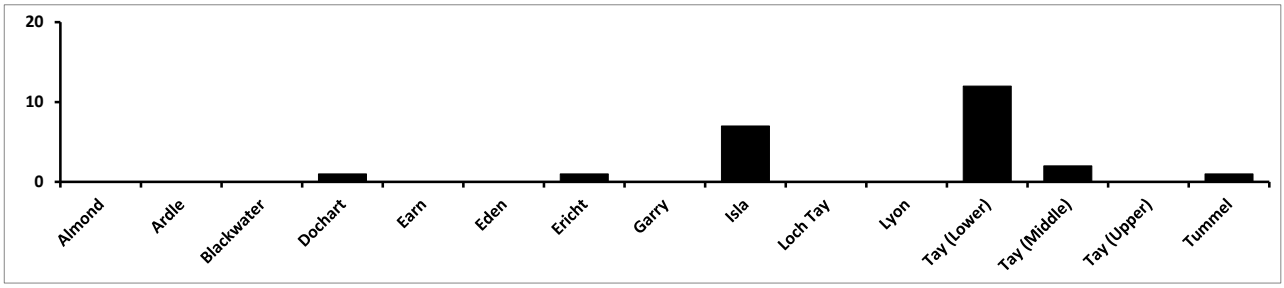


Figure 4. *Numbers of reported retained salmon from different parts of the Tay district, Jan – May 2019.*

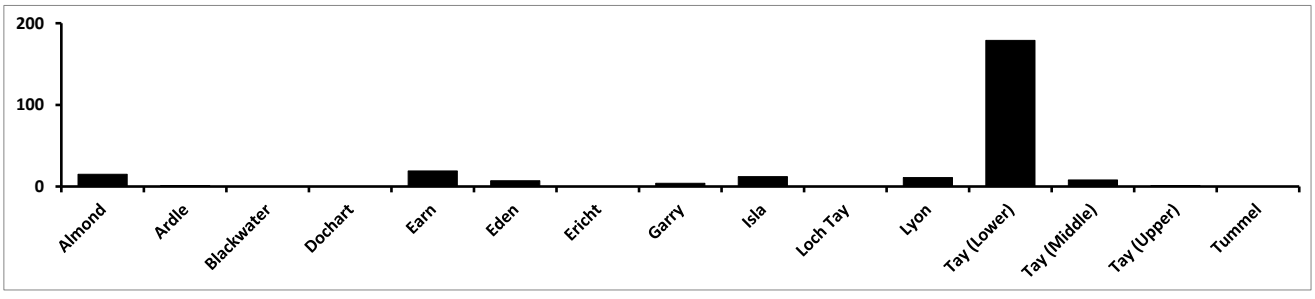


Figure 5. *Numbers of reported retained salmon from different parts of the Tay district, June – October 2019.*

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 continued to be released (Figure 6). In 2019, sea trout catches were up again compared to 2018, and the release rate was the second highest yet seen.

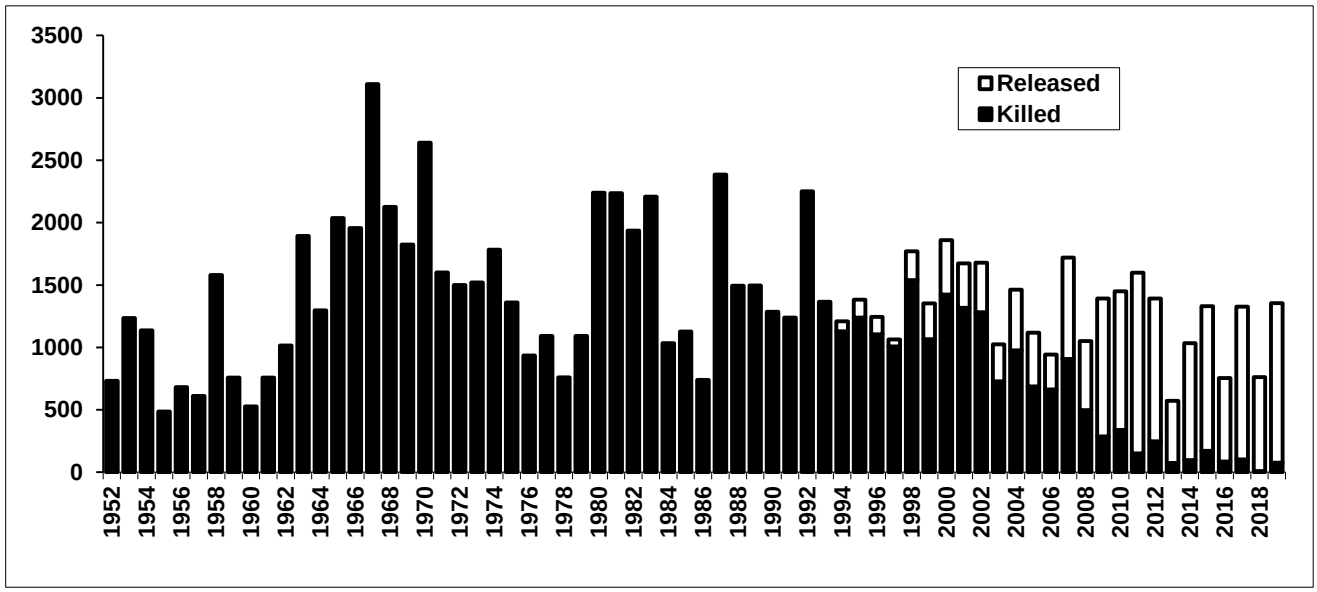


Figure 6. *Tay District rod & line catch of sea trout, 1952 – 2019. (Data obtained from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches)*

Mandatory Spring Catch and Release Regulations

2020 was the sixth year of regulations introduced by Scottish Ministers requiring the mandatory release of all salmon caught up to the end of March. As shown in Figure 1, the measures continue to have a significant impact on the overall spring release rate since 2015. The measures will continue in 2021.

Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions

The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on both salmon angling in the Tay district and the Board's work in 2020. It was the dominating issue of the year.

When non-essential activity was locked down, all angling ceased from 24 March. Lockdown was lifted on low risk activities like angling on 29 May but travel was restricted to local areas. This meant that only local anglers could fish. Anglers could not travel from a distance until 10 July. Therefore, all fisheries did not open immediately on 29 May, particularly those with higher overheads. Ghillies could be kept on the Government furlough scheme rather than making a loss. All the fisheries which reported catches on Fishtay on 29 May were upstream of the Isla confluence. Thereafter, the fishing

did progressively open up, but it was not until mid-July that all fisheries were open. Thereafter, angling was not restricted up to the end of the angling season.

Prior to the lockdown on non essential activity coming into force the Board's staff had deployed smolt traps on the River Garry and the Errochty Water. After 23 March, as their operation was not considered essential, along with practice on other rivers, the traps were closed and then removed from the river when it was clear there would be no possibility of operation until after the smolt run had passed. All the remaining eyed ova in the hatchery were stocked out. None would be brought on to the fry stage and the hatchery incubators were closed down.

Socially distanced enforcement operations continued for a period, but because proprietors were no longer receiving income and would not be for the forseeable future, four of the Fisheries Officer staff, the Operations Manager and the Fisheries Director were put on furlough on 6 April under the Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The only activity that was considered essential was to keep the captive reconditioned kelt broodstock alive, therefore the part-time Hatchery Manager and the full time Hatchery Assistant / Fisheries Officer, along with the Clerk, also part time, were not furloughed.

The 2020 Assessment rate had been set at 46% at the February Board Meeting, but as the bills had not been sent out this was reviewed in light of the unprecedented circumstances. It was decided instead to bill proprietors for only 40% of the budgeted amount which would provide the Board with sufficient cash to operate for the immediate future with a reduced wage bill. This was further aided by an extremely kind and generous donation by John Apthorp CBE to underwrite the hatchery costs.

One of the staff operating the hatchery then went on furlough on 15 May but owing to the increase in activity on the river after the partial lifting of lockdown at the end of May, two Fisheries Officers were taken off furlough on 25 May. From 1 July, furlough rules changed to allow employees to be furloughed part-time and the Fisheries Director was taken back part time. Another fisheries officer returned on 27 July and two of the remaining fisheries officers and the Operations Manager were taken off furlough on 17 August and normal operations resumed subject to social distancing, for example there was no vehicle sharing undertaken.

In view of the increased wage requirement, it was decided on 13 August that a further assessment bill would be sent to proprietors bringing the total billed to 75% of the original budget.

The restoration of staff in the summer allowed activities such as enforcement, juvenile salmon electrofishing surveys and hatchery broodstock fishing to be undertaken. However, the period of lockdown / furlough meant that a year's Tummel smolt tagging was lost as was the monitoring of smolts passing Westmill Fish Farm on the Blairgowrie Lade. Nationally, a year of the Scottish Government funded National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland was also lost. A number of areas of the Board's work were also delayed.

Enforcement

Possibly as a consequence of the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, 2020 proved to be the busiest summer and autumn in enforcement terms for years. Over the period between the first Fisheries Officers returning to work in May until the end of the Tay season, there were of the order of 42 call outs, 26 incidents or evidence of incidents of various types detected by Fisheries Officers and 4 reports of illegal activity that didn't warrant a call-out but required subsequent monitoring. Four incidents required Police involvement, of which three should result in reports being sent to the Procurator Fiscal by Police Scotland. Fisheries Officers also received abusive hoax calls.

There were, in addition, numerous permit checks. A private hydro scheme suspected of taking too much of the flow was reported to SEPA.

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. As described in the 2018 *Annual Report*, the Board concluded a major health and safety review in 2017, therefore no major changes were required in 2020. Health and safety training which had been anticipated for 2020, which included refresher first aid courses, were cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation. The Covid-19 situation required specific risk assessments to be produced for those essential activities that continued.

At the time of writing (November 2020), no incidents have been reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

Staff Changes

In the summer / autumn of 2020 two of the Board's staff retired. Ron Whytock was the Board's longest serving fisheries officer, joining the Board first for the summer of 2000 and on a full time basis from 2002.

The other was Steve Keay, the hatchery manager. Steve previously worked for Marine Scotland at its Almondbank fish rearing unit where he perfected the kelt reconditioning process. He joined the Board's staff in 2011 when the Board took over the unit which was scheduled for closure. Since then Steve led the expansion of the kelt reconditioning project. He also trained Craig Duncan in the operation of the facility who has taken over responsibility for its running on Steve's retirement.

TDSFB Annual Public Meeting 2020

The Board had planned to hold its 2020 Annual Public Meeting on 18 March. However, because that coincided with Covid-19 closures, the meeting was cancelled. It was not rescheduled during 2020 because of the ongoing Covid 19 situation.

Fisheries Management Scotland

Fisheries Management Scotland is the representative body of Scotland's DSFBs and fisheries trusts. The Board's Fisheries Director, David Summers, holds one of the six positions for elected representatives of DSFBs on the FMS Board. Detailed information on the work of Fisheries Management Scotland can be found on its website *www.fms.scot*. The minutes of its regular meetings can be found at *http://fms.scot/board/*.

Proposed Conservation Regulations 2021

In August 2020, Marine Scotland published the proposed conservation categories for 2021. The Tay SAC (that is the Tay and all its tributaries above the mouth of the Earn) remains CAT 1. The rivers Earn and Eden remained CAT 3. Low catches feeding into Marine Scotland's model from 2019 helped ensure those rivers remained in CAT 3.

Representation was made to the effect there are still outstanding issues with the methodology used by Marine Scotland to estimate these categories which have been raised previously. It was also pointed out that, since SSE counters have probably been undercounting since 2018, and that three SSE counters (Awe, Beauly and Pitlochry) feed into the methodology, this will potentially lead to a false downgrading of rivers. However, it would seem unlikely that the Earn and Eden will rise from category 3 until there is a marked pick up in catches, unless the methodology is radically changed.

If the Statutory Instrument enacting these proposals is voted through by the appropriate committee of the Scottish Parliament in early 2021, the Earn and Eden will have compulsory catch and release for the full season 2021.

Hatchery Report 2019/20

As described in recent *Annual Reports*, the Board's stocking activities are now centered around the Kelt Reconditioning Project which it has run since taking over the former Marine Scotland Science hatchery at Almondbank in 2011. Kelt reconditioning entails the keeping and feeding of captive salmon kelts following stripping. Such fish can live in captivity for several years on average, producing eggs each year with the great advantage of not impacting on the source population. Every year some new fish do have to be taken from the wild to top up the captive stock, but on their first stripping, the eggs are returned to the native tributary. Thereafter, reconditioned eggs might be stocked elsewhere.

In order to take broodstock, the Board requires an annual licence from Marine Scotland. In 2019, Marine Scotland introduced a new stocking policy by which such licence applications would be judged. For the autumn of 2019, the Board was licenced to take a quota of salmon from the River Tilt, the lower River Garry and the Errochty Water for reconditioning in order to stock the restored River Garry. However, a licence was denied for taking salmon from the Fillan Water to produce reconditioned kelts for stocking the Cononish Water and River Lochay, as had been previous practice. Stocking those waters was not considered to be "restoration" or "mitigation" stocking. However, licence was granted to take broodstock from the Ruchill Water (River Earn) and the River Eden for similar projects, the

difference being the Earn and Eden are not part of the River Tay Special Area of Conservation. A licence was also obtained to catch broodstock from the mainstem of the Earn for the purpose of obtaining fecundity data (numbers of eggs contained by females) to help more accurately calibrate Marine Scotland's annual categorization model for the River Earn. In the event, no broodstock were caught in the mainstem of the Earn or in the Eden.

Partly because of these restrictions, the number of eggs produced in early 2020 from new broodstock was reduced compared to the previous few years. However, the number of eggs from reconditioned fish reached a record, meaning the total production remained over 1 million (Table 1).

	2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**
Eggs from new broodstock			300,211	189,021	312,421	436,787	622,458	449,065	273,885
Eggs from reconditioned broodstock			354,722	421,379	316,204	222,810	425,936	668,899	727,094
Total	779,000	582,000	654,933	610,400	629,225	659,597	1,048,394	1,117,964	1,000,979

Table 1. *Numbers of eyed ova produced annually by the kelt reconditioning facility since 2011. Note, no split between "new" and "reconditioned" eggs is available for the first two years.*

While, normally, most of the hatchery production is stocked out as eyed ova, a proportion also goes out as unfed fry and a smaller proportion as fed parr. However, because of the spring Covid-19 lockdown, the decision was taken to stock out all the 2020 produce of the hatchery as eyed ova. This was completed by late March. No fry or parr were kept in the hatchery in 2020.

The numbers of eyed-ova stocked out are given in Table 2 according to tributary.

Tributary stocked	**Eyed ova**
River Tilt	139,755
River Garry (restored section)	255,971
River Garry (below Struan)	106,647
Allt Glas Choire	326,875
Errochty Water	27,483
Ruchill Water (upper reaches)	144,248
Totals	**1,000,979**

Table 2. *Numbers of salmon eggs stocked in spring 2020 according to tributary.*

Broodstock Collection Application 2020

In early 2020, Marine Scotland indicated that they might hold a consultation on their salmon stocking policy, as there had been criticism that it had been introduced in 2019 without any consultation of stakeholders. The Board hoped this would have been conducted and completed in time to inform the 2020 broodstock application. In the event, perhaps because of Covid-19, this had still to happen, an application to collect broodstock for the hatchery in autumn 2020 was made to Marine Scotland in summer 2020. The rivers from which fish were sought were the same as in the 2019 application. However, a stronger case was made for stocking the Cononish and the Lochay, particularly the latter which the Board believes it proved to be mitigation stocking. The application was again successful for all other rivers but was again turned down on the Cononish, but allowed on the Lochay. However, it was noted that the Lochay proposal did not fully align with Marine Scotland's current policy. Also, Marine Scotland informed the Board that as "the stocking policy is still under review any further removal of broodstock for this project will be dependent on the outcome of the review and any future policy position."

Additionally, in 2020, the Board applied to Marine Scotland to take broodstock from the River Lyon for the purposes of stocking ova of reconditioned kelts into tributaries of the River Lyon that are naturally inaccessible to salmon because of waterfalls. Marine Scotland informed that an application would also have to be made for a licence from NatureScot (formerly SNH) to introduce salmon outwith their native range and that a Marine Scotland licence would be conditional on this. This application was rejected on the basis that NatureScot has "a presumption against the stocking of Atlantic salmon above naturally impassable falls" and because "by using domesticated fish" the "proposal may inadvertently lead to long-term damage of wild populations of salmon".

It is also still not clear when Marine Scotland's review of its hatchery policy will be complete. The Scottish Gamekeepers Association Fishing Group, headed by Bob White from Stanley Fishings, submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petition's Committee seeking Marine Scotland to conduct a full consultation on its stocking policy. The committee discussed it on 29 October and agreed to write to Marine Scotland and in the meantime keep the petition open.

River Garry Flow Restoration Monitoring

As described in previous *Annual Reports*, flow was restored to the formerly dry part of the River Garry in 2017. An adaptive management plan for the restoration of salmon has been put in place between the SEPA, SSE and the Board. A central part of the plan is to pump-prime the salmon population by stocking from the Board's hatchery. A parallel monitoring plan has also been agreed to determine the effect of stocking and establish whether natural colonization then occurs.

In 2020 one of the two main monitoring activities that was completed post-lockdown was electrofishing of 11 regular sites that were chosen to be representative of the main river and the Allt Glas Choire tributary. Four of the sites on the main river, that is from School House rightwards on Figures 7 & 8, and all on the Anndier / Glas Choire are stocked. Only the sites at Struan, Clunes and Dalnamein were not directly stocked, but may receive stocked fish dispersing from upstream.

In 2020 salmon parr densities reached their highest levels yet in all of the stocked sites except at the site close to Garry Intake. This was also the case at Dalnamein, the most upstream of the unstocked sites (Figure 8). However, in the main stem sites (Struan to Garry Intake), salmon fry densities were a bit reduced where parr densities were high but higher at Garry Intake where the parr density had gone down. This might suggest juvenile densities in the stocked area had reached such a level that competitive interactions between year classes is now occurring. This might also have been the case at the lowest Glas Choire site, but at another Glas Choire site and on the lower Anndier 2020 saw record densities of both fry and parr (Figures 7 & 8). No fry were found at the upper Glas Choire site in 2020 because it proved impossible to stock ova there in March 2020 before lockdown because of snow.

The Clunes site which has a higher likelihood of being populated by purely wild spawned fish had a very low parr density in 2020, following a very low fry density in 2019. That followed from what is suspected to have been a very low number of wild spawners in 2018 following the combination of a poor run and protracted drought in 2018. That fry numbers picked up again in 2020 might reflect more wild spawners in 2019.

In 2018 and 2019 a rotary screw smolt trap was operated in the River Garry to provide a mark-recapture estimate of smolt numbers. This was not operated in 2020 because of Covid-19 (see page 11) but in 2019 a run of approximately 7,000 smolts was estimated. Given parr densities have increased markedly since 2018, a much greater migration might be anticipated in 2021. A migration of 20,000 smolts experiencing a 5% survival rate (see page 28) might see a return of 1,000 adults between 2022 and 2023.

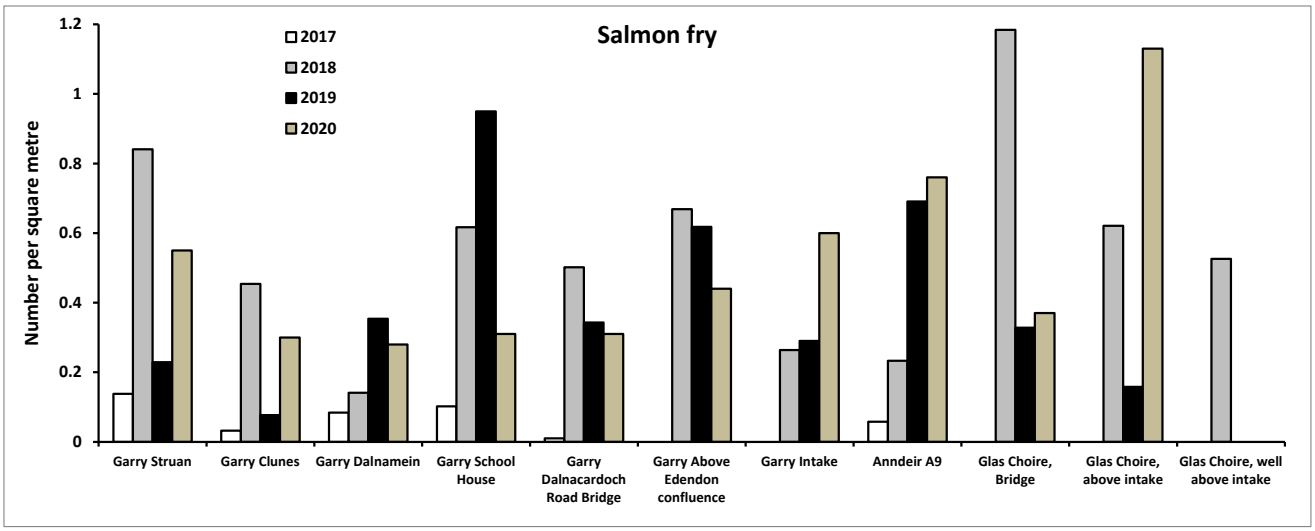


Figure 7. *Densities of age 0+ salmon fry found by quantitative electrofishing at standard sites in the River Garry, 2017 – 2020. Note upper Glas Choire site could not be fished in 2019.*

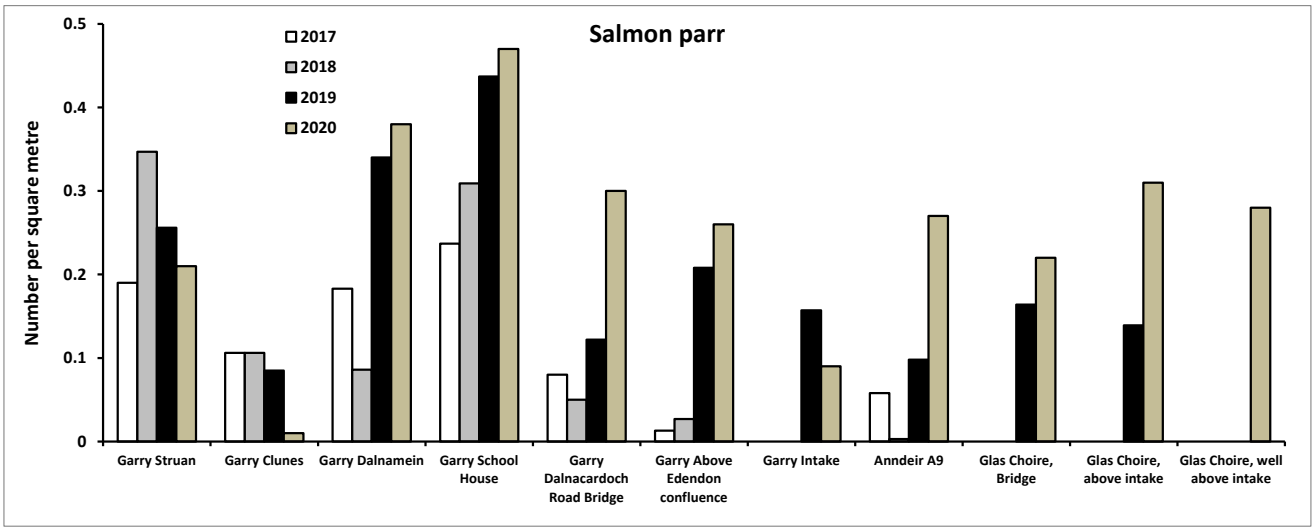


Figure 8. *Densities of age 1+ salmon parr found by quantitative electrofishing at standard sites in the River Garry, 2017 – 2020. Note upper Glas Choire site could not be fished in 2019.*

While it is encouraging that there is now a widespread juvenile salmon population in the Garry and to have proven the restored Garry can indeed support one, further work is being conducted to estimate the proportions of hatchery fish and wild spawned fish in the river. As in the previous two years, using a more mobile form of electrofishing, juvenile salmon were caught at intervals of approximately every 15 metres along the river and a small sliver of fin tissue obtained from each. Approximately 800 samples will have DNA extracted by the Rivers and Lochs Institute of the University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness. Each will then be compared with the DNA signature of the hatchery broodstock fish, also sampled. This will then allow stocked fish and wild born fish to be differentiated. It will also tell how many family units of wild fish are present. This work is being funded by SSE plc and a report on the first two years' results is expected soon.

Mill of Ross Weir, River Earn

Mill of Ross weir on the River Earn diverted water into the former Drummond trout farm / fishery near Comrie. The fish farm is now owned by Dawnfresh but has not operated for some time. However, during a large spate this spring, a breach formed in the bank at the end of the weir and blew out, creating a new channel for the river around the weir. The weir was left dry.

Dawnfresh have applied to SEPA to reinstate the weir. The weir had a steel baffle fish pass on it and it was proposed to leave it as was, with replaced baffles. While we know that some fish at least ascended the weir previously, because of juveniles immediately upstream, there has never been any assessment of just how efficient the pass was. Since we have found low numbers of juvenile salmon in tributaries of Loch Earn, then potentially any inefficiency in passage in this part of the Earn (there are several other passes upstream too), might be contributing to that. What has been observed is that when operating previously there was a tendency for water to flow over the weir as well as going down the pass, which was quite narrow. Therefore, there might be a possibility of fish having difficulty in finding the pass entrance under certain flows.

The Board objected to the application on the basis that insufficient detail had been provided on the operation of the fish pass. Had this been a new application from scratch there would have been a requirement for a detailed hydraulic plan on how the pass would operate under different flows, according to well known fish pass design criteria. It was argued that such an approach needed to be taken in this case too.

As a result of the Board's representation, a technical fish pass consultancy was engaged to advise. It has recommended installing a new fish pass, twice the width of the previous. At the time of writing, details are still being refined.

Pitlochry Dam Outage Due to A9 Dualling Project

The Board was informed that, as part of the A9 dualling project, the power export cable from Pitlochry Dam power station will have to be cut and replaced in some way. This will require the power station to stop generating for a period, probably in 2021. That will mean the flow will have to be passed via the ground sluice and spillage over the dam instead of passing through the turbines. When flow is passed by the ground sluice, salmon are attracted away from the fish pass. Smolts might also be killed by the ground sluice. There is, therefore, a timing issue regarding salmon passage with late autumn / winter perhaps being the best option. Following a teleconference of concerned parties, SSE are to work up options based on these concerns.

Signal Crayfish Range Expansion

It has been known for some time that there are several populations of non native North American signal crayfish in the Tay catchment. For the most part, up to now, these have been localized. However, the population in the Blackwater has been gradually spreading since its discovery in 2006. But, in summer 2020 several reports were received of crayfish being observed / caught in the lower Blackwater, lower Ardle and the Ericht below the Blackwater / Ardle confluence. There have also been reports of crayfish at various locations in the River Eden, where again previously they had only been observed in a tributary.

Signal crayfish are omnivorous and do eat invertebrate larvae and fish. It has long been feared they may have an impact on juvenile salmon but it is not clear how bad this might be. A recent study in upland Teeside demonstrated a severe impact on bullheads (a small fish not present this far north) with perhaps some effect on salmonid fry but not older salmonids. There were also changes in the invertebrate community, particularly on certain caddis larvae.

Understandably, there were enquiries about how to control crayfish. Trapping of signal crayfish is illegal without a licence from NatureScot (formerly SNH) but these are not generally issued for control. This is because there is evidence that a) attempts at control are ultimately ineffective and b) encouraging fishing for crayfish leads to people introducing crayfish into new waters for fishing. In effect, there is no current effective control.

Red Skin Disease

As in 2019, there were again some reports in 2020 from different rivers in Scotland, and elsewhere, in the early summer of adult salmon presenting haemorrhaging on the belly. Some were seen on the Tay too. The cause of this "red skin disease" has yet to be determined despite some international effort. A summary of existing knowledge has been provided by Fisheries Management Scotland and Marine Scotland at *http://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/201001-Atlantic-salmon-skin-issues-Q-A-FINAL.pdf*

Beaver Issues

Beaver impacts continue to require monitoring and management from Board staff. This has now become a significant part of the Fisheries Officers' work. As described in last year's report, regular oversight has been required at a fish pass on the Shochie Burn which beavers regularly block. Beavers were also found to block a fish pass on the mainstem of the upper River Earn.

Because of lockdown, it is not known whether beaver damming may have blocked smolt migration from some streams during the very dry weather that prevailed in April / May 2020. This was a concern during that period and will be a key management concern for any river with beavers in future.

River Ericht Abstraction

As described in the previous *Annual Report*, SEPA initiated a variation in the abstraction licence of Westmill Fish Farm, Blairgowrie, in 2019. Because of concerns that smolts may have difficulty passing the fish farm entrance, underwater footage of smolts was obtained in the spring of 2019. Following discussions with SEPA, a final version of the report was submitted to SEPA in early 2020. Of particular concern to the Board was that the smolt bypass near the intake screens did not appear very effective and suggestions for a better design were made. The fish farm operator made some amendments prior to the main smolt run, although the Board continued to make representation to SEPA that these did not go far enough. It was intended again to use cameras to investigate the effectiveness of these changes but this was prevented due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

Hatchery / Office Site Purchased by the Tay Rivers Trust

Both the hatchery building, including store and offices, currently occupied by the Board and the site of the neighbouring former hatchery building at Almondbank were leased from Scottish Ministers who were the landowners. However, as Scottish Ministers no longer have any interest in the site they intimated in early 2019 that they might be willing to dispose of the site. It was explained that if the Tay Rivers Trust was willing, as a charity, ownership could be transferred to it as an asset transfer under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for a nominal fee. Otherwise, the Board would have to pay the market rate. This was agreed between all parties over the course of 2019 and 2020 and the Tay Rivers Trust took over the ownership of the site and the access road in February 2020. The Board is now a tenant of the Tay Rivers Trust instead of Scottish Ministers under a lease that expires in 2021. A new lease will be negotiated in 2021.

The Board, of course, works closely with the Tay Rivers Trust. It was explained in last year's *Annual Report* that proposals for the better alignment of the two organisations were under consideration, but this process has slowed in 2020 because of the Covid-19 situation.

Problems with Access Road to the Hatchery

As reported in last year's *Annual Report*, a short section of the access road to the hatchery, which was owned by Scottish Ministers, is affected by subsidence and requires repair. As part of the agreement to sell the site and road to the Tay Rivers Trust, Scottish Ministers agreed that accrued rent that Scottish Ministers had never invoiced the Board for could be used for road repairs instead. As a condition of the sale, the Board has been bound to spend this money on the road.

A firm of consulting engineers was hired to advise on engineering solutions. A preferred option has been identified and a project manager is in the process of being engaged to take the job to fruition. Discussions are also ongoing with a neighbouring landowner. Covid-19 has delayed the process but it is hoped the work can be completed early in 2021.

Mapping Atlantic Salmon Pressures

Marine Scotland and the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (now part of Fisheries Management Scotland) have developed an online map-based tool to aid the identification and quantification of the pressures that salmon face across Scotland. This will highlight local management priorities to policy makers, particularly in light of a national Salmon Strategy which is to be developed by Sottish Ministers. This will increase the chances of getting co-odinated national management action by policy makers. The Board was paid to populate the tool with information in early 2020.

Tay Rivers Trust River Lyon Genetics Study

In 2017 Board staff collected tissue samples from randomly collected juvenile salmon at three locations in the River Lyon. In a joint project led by the Tay Rivers Trust and funded by the Tay Rivers Trust and Lyon proprietors, DNA from the samples was analysed by the Rivers and Lochs Institute of the University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness. After new processing facilities were installed, this was finally completed in late 2019 and a report issued in 2020.

The analyses found no juvenile siblings present on either side of the dam, indicating that juveniles hatched above the dam did not move down and populate the river immediately below the dam and *vice versa*. There was also a degree of genetic differentiation between salmon above Stronuich Dam and those immediately below, indicating these were two partially separate spawning populations. In fact the fish above the dam appeared to be split into a number of genetically identifiable population units while those immediately below were not. This may have been related to the fact that there are numerous spawning bars between the dams and thus may demonstrate that adult salmon can actually home back not only to their native stretch, but to individual natal spawning fords.

There had been concerns over the viability of the salmon population between the dams, but for such population differentiation to be maintained there clearly had to be a viable number of smolts going to sea and adults returning. While the area above Stronuich Dam might be less productive than below, it still contributes an additional number of salmon to the River Lyon.

This information, when combined with long term electrofishing data, indicates that the juvenile salmon population in the upper Lyon, immediately below Stronuich Dam at least, is about or at its carrying capacity and even though spawning habitat looks relatively scarce, there must still be enough. However, growth rates are particularly low and so the most likely method of enhancing this population would be by increasing food availability and not stocking, for example.

North East England Net Fisheries

It has long been known that some Tay salmon were caught in net fisheries that operated along the coast from Northumberland and northern Yorkshire. These fisheries have been greatly scaled back in recent years. Taking salmon with drift nets and fixed inshore T and J nets was finally banned in December 2018, but sea trout could still be taken in the latter. In January 2020 the Environment Agency consulted on extending the sea trout netting season to help mitigate the fishermen's losses. The Board responded to this consultation, objecting to any increase in the season, because the Board believes it is not possible to catch then release salmon that have been meshed in a monofilament or multi-monofilament nylon net without causing damage that could later lead to fungal infection etc.

In March, following the consultation, the Environment Agency decided not to recommend any extension of the sea trout netting season after all.

Dunalastair Outage

SSE had to close Tummel Bridge power station for some weeks in the autumn to conduct essential repairs on the aqueduct from Dunalastair Dam. This resulted in the full Tummel flow passing through the dam's flood gates and down the natural river channel. There were concerns that adult salmon could be attracted towards the dam rather than to the fish pass entrance. SSE regularly monitored the work for fish presence at the dam which may have required the flow to be temporarily cut back or even for fish to be electrofished out by TDSFB staff as has happened in the past. In the event, neither was found to be required.

Juvenile Electrofishing Surveys

In the previous two summers, Board staff have participated in Marine Scotland's National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS), for which the Board received payment. This was scheduled for a third season in 2020, but had to be cancelled because of Covid-19. The results for 2019 can be found at *https://data.marine.gov.scot/dataset/national-electrofishing-programme-scotland-neps-2019* . However, Board staff did manage to repeat a number of long standing juvenile electrofishing sites throughout the catchment. These will be reported separately in due course.

Meetings Attended

During the course of 2020, Board staff attended numerous meetings in addition to any previously mentioned.

The Board's Fisheries Director attended:

- Two Fisheries Management Scotland Board Meetings.
- The Annual General Meeting of Fisheries Management Scotland.
- Three meetings of Fisheries Management Scotland Finance and Strategy Group.
- A meeting of the Forth and Tay offshore windfarm advisory group (http://www.marine.gov.scot/ml/forth-tay-regional-advisory-group-ftrag). Included was consideration of the requirement for offshore wind farm developers to monitor diadromous fish (e.g. salmon).
- Two meetings with representatives of other east coast boards and trusts and FMS in areas with active or proposed offshore windfarms to help develop FMS policy regarding diadromous fish monitoring clauses in licences, for FMS to take to a national monitoring steering group.
- Two day Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre's annual biologists' conference.
- Meeting of the River Garry Technical Group.
- Attended three meetings with representatives of other boards, trusts and FMS (one meeting also with SEPA) to develop an approach for how DSFBs, trusts and SEPA could be better aligned.
- Meeting of the Scottish Beaver Forum plus a meeting of the Riparian Woodland technical subgroup and Burrowing sub group.
- Meeting with representatives from Fisheries Management Scotland and other DSFBs and Castabroad Media who are to produce information films on salmon management.
- Scottish Invasives Species Initiative Steering Group meeting.
- Meeting of SEPA's Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group.
- Scottish Parliament Salmon Summit held on 7 January at Holyrood. The Board's Fisheries Director was one of several DSFB representatively to give a presentation to MSPs.

Craig Duncan attended two meetings of Fisheries Management Scotland's Enforcement Committee.

Opening Day 2020 Celebrations At Meikleour

In 2020 the Board once again supported the opening day ceremony at Meikleour. The event was organized by Board member, Claire Mercer Nairne, and supported by Perthshire Chamber of Commerce.

Following an address by Iain McLaren, the Board's Convener and a rendition of *Caledonia* by well known local folk singer, Dougie MacLean, Provost Dennis Melloy performed the time honoured Blessing of the Boat. Dougie MacLean then made the first cast, the signal for the season to commence.











FISH COUNTER RESULTS 2020

There are three operational fish counters in the district currently, operated by SSE, the most prominent of which is at Pitlochry Dam on the River Tummel. However, in last year's *Annual Report*, the Board suggested there may have been an issue with the Pitlochry counter's accuracy. Accordingly, during a period of significant migration in 2020, Covid-19 issues allowing, SSE conducted some verification by comparing counts with visual observations of fish in the viewing chamber. This suggested that approximately one third of ascending fish may have been missed by the counter during the period of observation. It was not clear why or whether this is consistent all year. However, whatever the problem is, it seems to be related to an upgrade that was performed on SSE's counters in 2018. It seems likely, therefore, that poorer counts since mid 2018 on all three of the local counters may have resulted, in part if not in whole, from this problem.

The following data should be considered in this context.

Pitlochry Dam

The total counts at Pitlochry for the period 2018 to 2020 have been the lowest yet recorded, but because the counter is now known to have not been fully functional, these low counts can be disregarded, other than to say, at least the improvement in the count in 2020 seems to accord with anglers' observations of fish upstream and an increase in salmon return rates from the Tummel Smolt Tagging Project (Table 3).

The break down of counts across the months was at least relatively typical and gives good accordance with the timing of returns of PIT tagged salmon and grilse, that is May and June for salmon and August for grilse (Table 4, page 32).

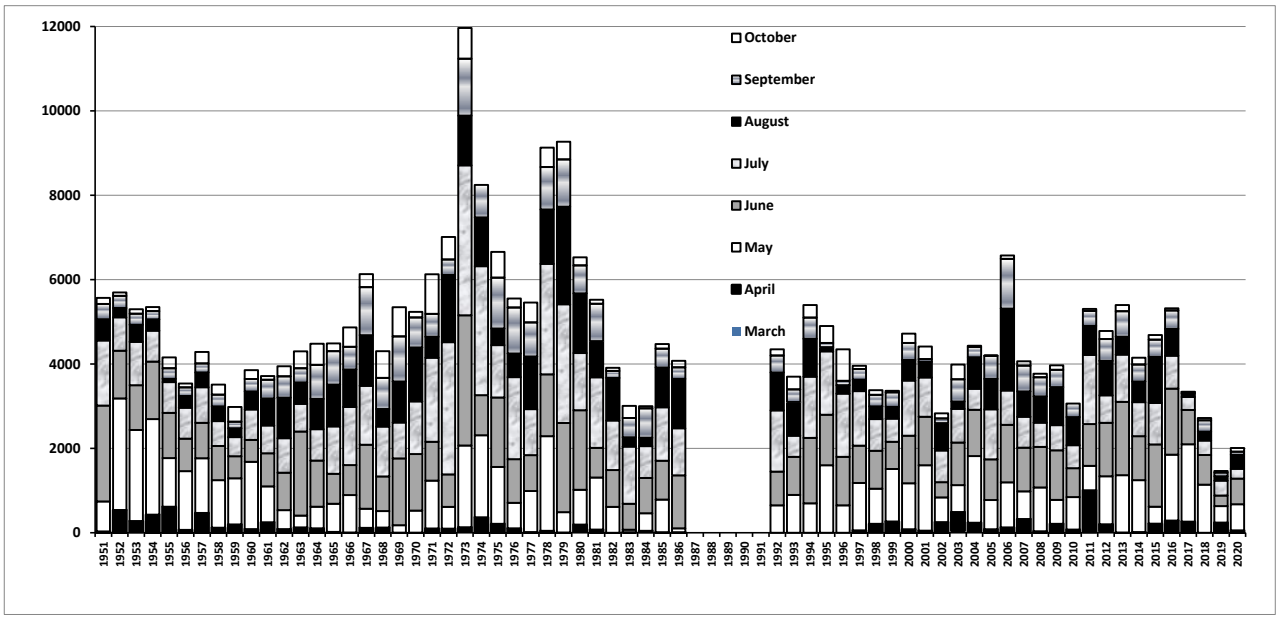


Figure 9. *Monthly net upstream counts, Pitlochry Dam, 1951 to 2020. (Data courtesy of the late Michael Gardner, David Stewart, Ross Gardiner and SSE)*

Clunie Dam

There have been no accuracy tests conducted at the Clunie Dam counter, but it is assumed that accuracy issues may apply here too. Therefore, not too much should be read into the poor total counts of the last three years, except that as at Pitlochry, 2020 was a better year than 2019.

However, if the level of inaccuracy is the same throughout the year, then the seasonal breakdown of the counts is interesting. The count for May 2020 was exceptionally high for May, although the distribution over the rest of the year was fairly standard. The count for May was also the highest of any month downstream at Pitlochry, suggesting that under the relatively warm weather at that time fish ran faster than normal.

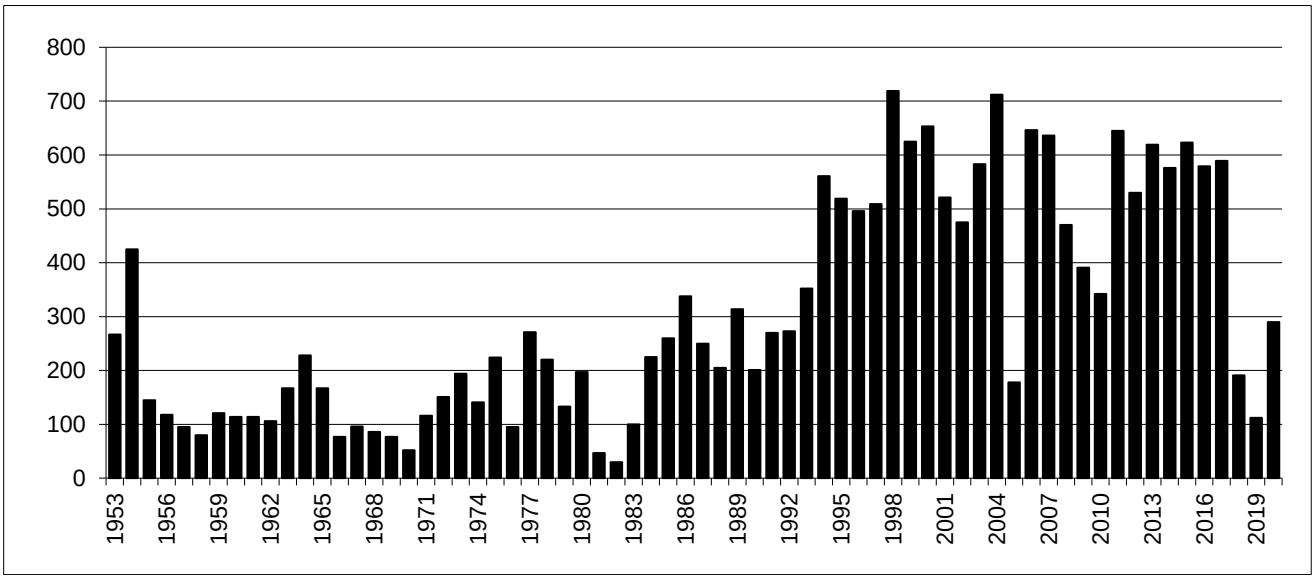


Figure 10. *Net annual upstream counts through Clunie Dam fish ladder, 1953 to 2020. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2005). (Data courtesy of SSE)*

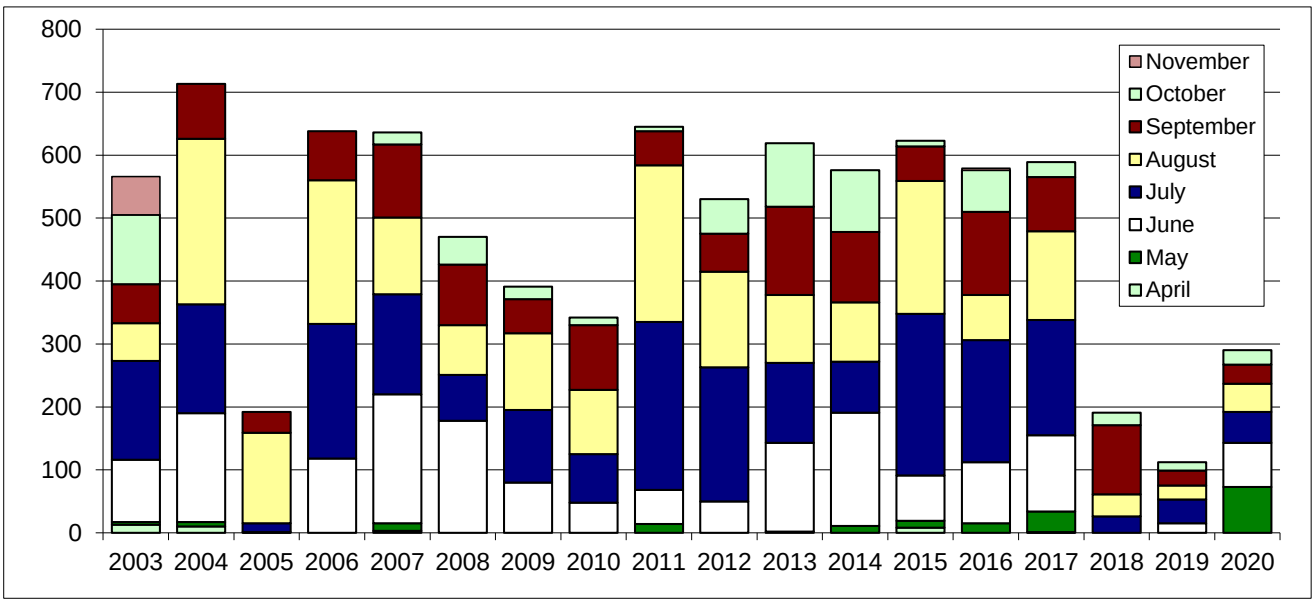


Figure 11. *Monthly net upstream counts, Clunie Dam fish ladder, 2003 – 2020. (Data courtesy of SSE)*

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. Again, counts have been low since the counter was altered in 2018, and much should not be made of that other than it is encouraging that the count here was also up in 2020 over 2019 (Figures 12 & 13).

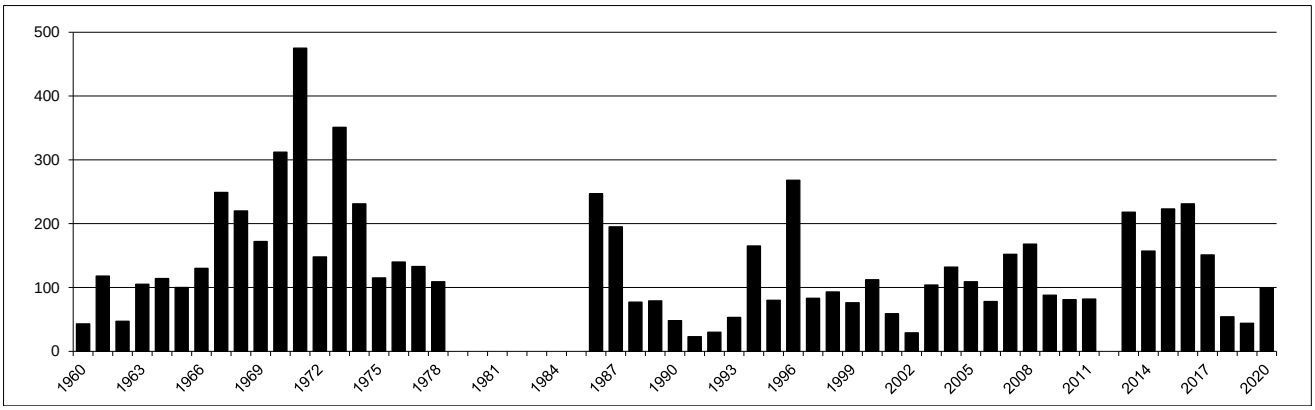


Figure 12. *Net annual upstream counts through Lochay Falls Fish Pass, 1960 to 2020. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2012). (Data courtesy of SSE)*

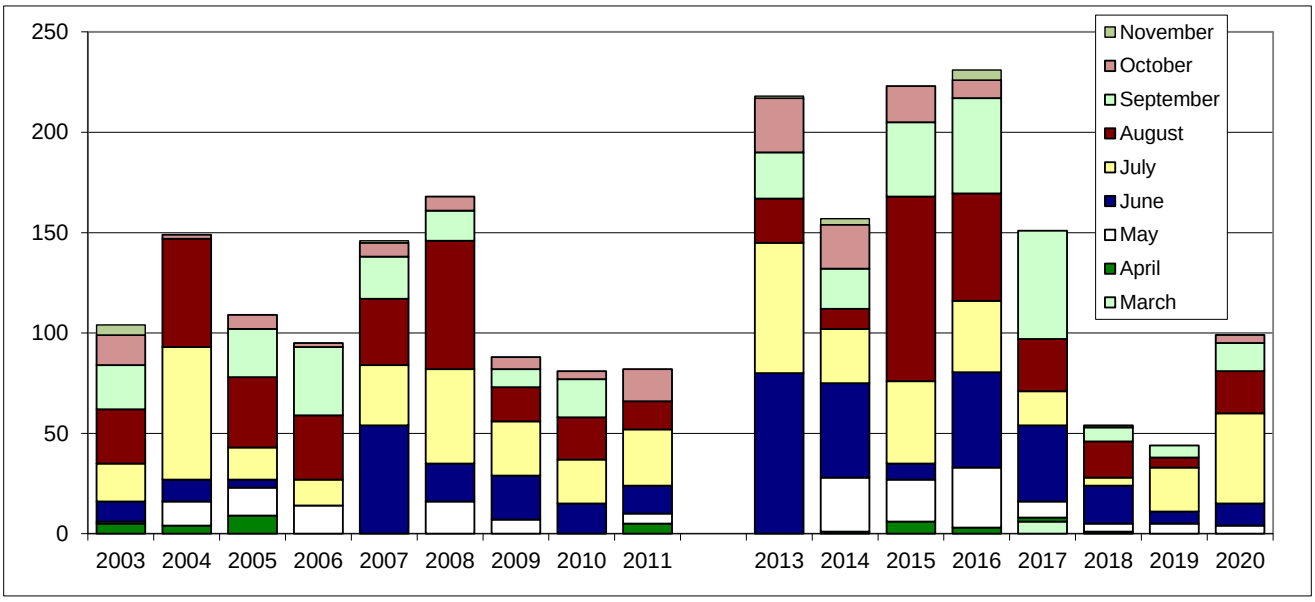


Figure 13. *Monthly net upstream counts, Lochay Falls Fish Pass, 2003 – 2020. (Data courtesy of SSE)*

RIVER TUMMEL SMOLT TAGGING PROJECT

The River Tummel smolt project was set up to provide a) annual estimates of the survival rate of salmon between migrating as smolts and returning as adults to the River Tummel and b) to determine whether Pitlochry Dam poses a problem for migrating smolts. 2019/20 was the fourth year of the project, but the second to provide meaningful return data.

Smolts were captured upstream of Pitlochry Dam in rotary screw traps. One has been deployed in the Errochty Water each spring since 2016. A second was deployed in the lower Garry in 2017 but, because of limited success there, it was shifted to the restored part of the Garry at Struan in 2018 to sample smolts from stocking upstream (see page 16). The smolts were tagged with Passive Inductive Transformer (PIT) tags, tiny "chips" inserted into the body cavity through very small incisions. Each PIT tag is coded with a unique number which can be read by a detector located in the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam, if and when the fish returns as an adult salmon.

In both the Errochty and Garry, a proportion of tagged smolts were released some distance upstream of the traps to allow trapping efficiency to be estimated through recapture rates. Others were released immediately upstream and downstream of Pitlochry Dam to test for any difference in adult return of smolts that had to pass through the turbines.

Adult return rates

The numbers of adults detected from each tagging year are summarized in Table 3. The return rate in 2020 of 1SW (grilse) from smolts tagged on the Errochty in 2019 was the poorest yet, but the 2SW return from Errochty 2018 smolts was the best of any Errochty return yet. That followed a better 1SW return in 2019 from the 2018 smolts. Although upper Garry smolts have only been tagged for two years, they consistently outperformed Errochty smolts in those years. A return rate of 4.54% for 1SW and 2SW combined from the 2018 release is by far the best achieved overall. It is also particularly notable that the return rate of Garry 2SW from the 2018 cohort was nearly 3 times that of Garry 1SW. As recently as the 2000s, 1SW far outnumbered 2SW. Indeed, even that Errochty 1SW and 2SW were near parity, is significant too. This switch away from grilse dominance, which has been happening over some years and reported in previous *Annual Reports*, could have significant ramifications for egg deposition, for example.

It is a matter of speculation why upper Garry returns have been better than Errochty returns. The Garry smolts are likely to have been largely derived from stocked eggs from reconditioned kelts and they were significantly larger than Errochty smolts (mean lengths: Errochty 2018 - 108mm, Garry 2018 - 111.9mm, Errochty 2019 - 110.8mm and Garry 2019 - 117.5mm), partly because there were fewer parr and less competition in the Garry. Perhaps the larger Garry smolts had a survival advantage over Errochty smolts.

Smolt year	**2016**	**2017**		**2018**		**2019**	
Trap site	Errochty	Errochty	Lower Garry	Errochty	Upper Garry	Errochty	Upper Garry
No. smolts tagged	388	1647	293	1491	729	1256	1552
Number (and %) detected as 1SW	3 (0.77%)	13 (0.79)	1 (0.34%)	15 (1.01%)	9 (1.24%)	4 (0.32%)	12 (0.77%)
Number (and %) detected as 2SW	3 (0.77%)	8 (0.49%)	4 (1.37%)	14 (0.94%)	24 (3.3%)	-	-
Number (and %) detected as 3SW	1 (0.26%)	0	0	-	-	-	-
Overall % return	1.8%	1.28%	1.71%	1.95%	4.54%	0.32%	0.77%

Table 3. *Numbers of adults detected at Pitlochry Dam from each year's smolt tagging, by sea-age.*

Also, why should the return from the 2018 smolt run have been so much better, particularly compared to 2019? Was it related to the wider abundance of late spring / early summer 2SW salmon in Scotland in 2020? If so, perhaps it reflects some factor or factors at sea. Or was it related to something closer to home? One possibility might have been the flow at smolt time. In 2018, the main pulses of smolts caught on both the Errochty and the Garry coincided with spells of higher flow, which may have speeded the smolts along (Figure 14). But, in 2019, April and most of May were very dry. In fact, the lowest flow recorded in April or May in SEPA's gauging record for Pitlochry, commencing in 1973, was in 2019, second to 2017. The main smolt movements on both the Errochty and Garry took place later in 2019 under low flows (Figure 14). Indeed, shoals of delayed smolts were seen milling around above Pitlochry Dam in May and SSE made changes to the generation regime to try to encourage them out of the loch.

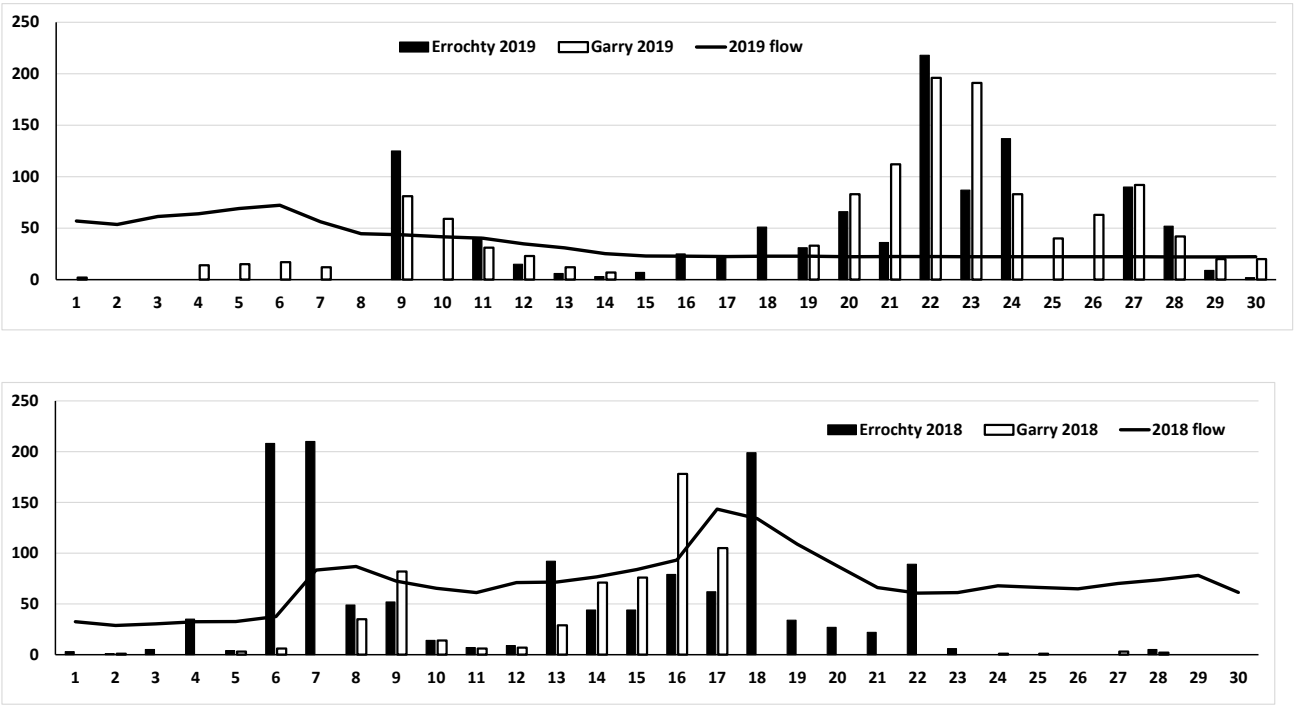


Figure 14. *Numbers of smolts caught and PIT tagged on a daily basis in April 2018 (lower graph) and April 2019 (top graph) from the Errochty and Garry and the average daily flow (cumecs) at SEPA's gauging station on the River Tummel downstream of Pitlochry Dam.*

Effect of release locations

If ease of movement is important to smolt migration, then perhaps some effect might be expected if smolts are released at different locations. The results above relate to overall numbers, but tagged smolts were actually released at three different locations. Some were released in the vicinity of the trap sites, usually for mark recapture testing of trap efficiency. Some were also transported downstream and released immediately above and below Pitlochry Dam, in order to test whether passing Pitlochry Dam had any effect on returns.

In the two years that upper Garry smolts were tagged (2018 and 2019), there has, so far, been a consistent pattern of an increasing rate of return moving downstream (Figure 15), albeit based on small numbers. The best returns have been from Garry smolts released immediately below the dam at Portnacraig. The return rate from the 2018 release there was approximately 6.5% for 1SW and 2SW combined.

However, the experience of Errochty smolts has been equivocal. Indeed, from the 2018 cohort, release at the trap site gave the best return. Releases of Errochty smolts below the dam have given much lower returns than Garry smolts. For example, during the higher flow period of 13 to 19 April 2018, 156 Garry smolts released below the dam gave a return of 7.7%, but 313 Errochty smolts only gave a return of 1.3%. But, curiously, in all but one case, the poorest Errochty returns came from releases immediately above the dam (Figure 15).

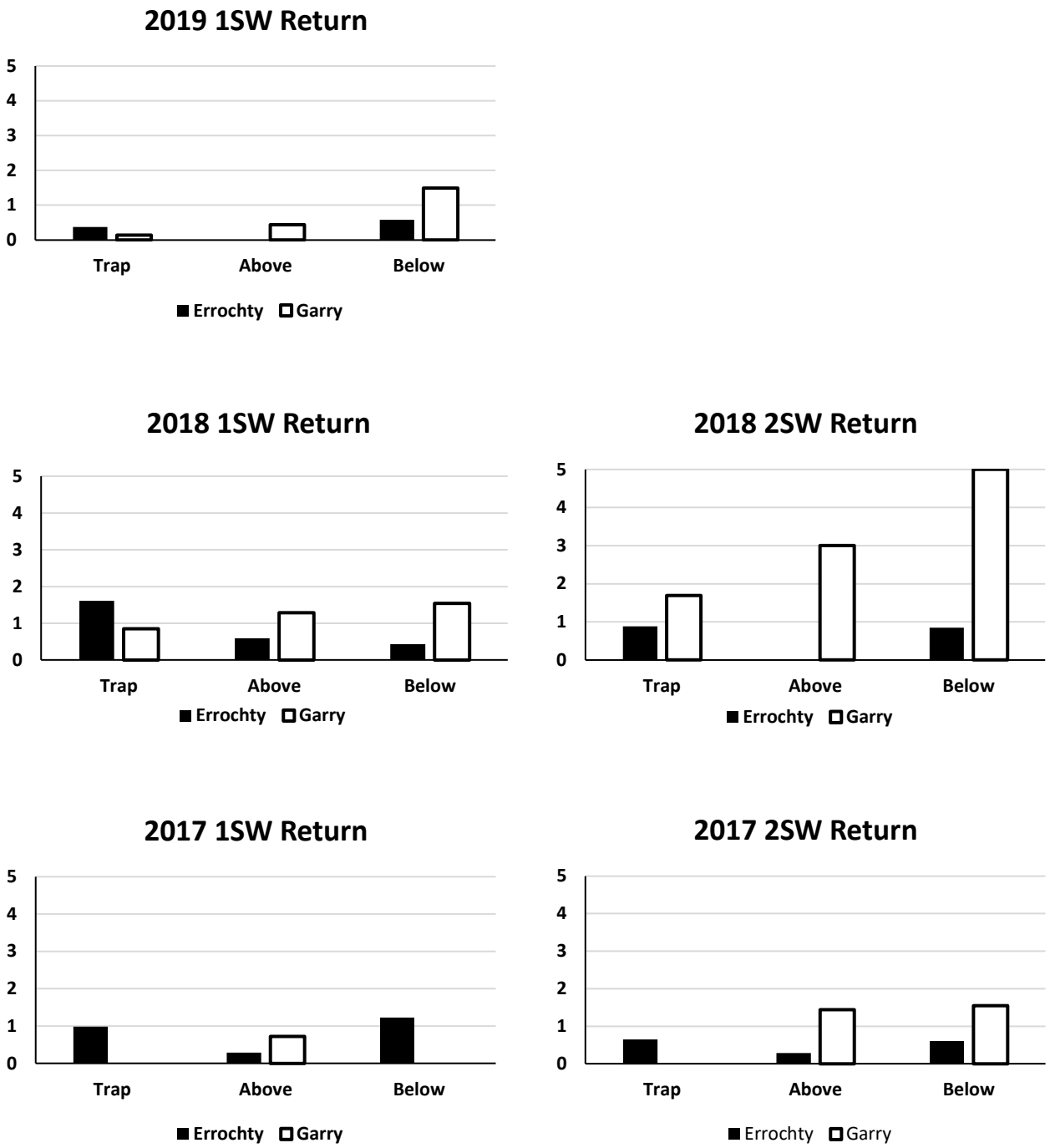


Figure 15. *Return rates (percentages) by sea-age of smolts released at three locations (by trap, above Pitlochry Dam or below Pitlochry Dam) for smolts years 2017, 2018 and 2019.*

Timing of adults at Pitlochry Dam

Table 4 breaks down the 2020 adult returns by the month in which they were detected in the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam.

The predominant month for grilse passage was August, for both stocks, while May and June saw most 2SW fish, again true of both stocks.

Sea-age	1SW		2SW	
Tagging site.	Errochty	Garry	Errochty	Garry
March				
April				1
May			6	10
June			5	12
July	1	3	3	
August	3	7		
September		2		1

Table 4. *Numbers of PIT tagged adult salmon, by sea-age, detected in each month at Pitlochry, 2020.*

Concluding remarks

In terms of one of the primary objectives of this work, differing returns from immediately above and below Pitlochry Dam suggest there may be an effect of the presence of the dam on smolt survival, albeit based on small numbers. However, because the Garry data also indicate losses between the tagging site and the dam, it is not possible to conclude that losses near the dam occurred because of effects of passing through turbines rather than some other impact such as delay or mortality from being in an impoundment (Loch Faskally). Flow would also seem to be important, with low flows resulting in delay which may also result in losses irrespective of the turbines. The 2SW returns in 2021 from the 2019 smolt run will be interesting in this regard.

Interestingly, these findings seem to fit with a number of other recent studies based on implanting acoustic transmitters within smolts, which have reported surprisingly high mortality before smolts reach the sea.

But there are also things that do not quite ring true. For example, there is the issue of Errochty smolts doing worse when released at Fonab, just above the dam, compared to near the trap. This project has also shown a high variability in returns between batches of smolts and year to year, which contrasts with the adult counts at Pitlochry Dam which are much more stable in the short-term (Figure 9).

Perhaps the procedures themselves have some unforeseen negative effect, despite being widely applied on salmon in both the Atlantic and Pacific spheres. Further analyses will be conducted on the data to determine whether any inconsistencies might be observed that could be due to process. There will then be review of what the next steps in the project should be.

There are also wider questions that the review will consider. For example, why might there be such an inconsistency between wild Errochty smolts and Garry smolts derived from stocked eggs? The Errochty smolts have not given such good returns, they have shown no advantage in being “trapped and trucked” and they also produce a greater proportion of grilse.

WHY WAS THERE A BETTER LATE SPRING / SUMMER RUN IN 2020?

This was a question on many anglers' minds back in the summer of 2020.

That it wasn't unique to the Tay suggests something at sea. The Tummel smolt tagging, if representative of the wider river, narrows it to a better return of 2SW fish. The Garry smolts from 2018 returned many more 2SW salmon than grilse last year. This is really significant because grilse have dominated returns since the 1960s. But it wasn't always so. A similar switch like the present one happened around 1920.

Back then, it was early spring rather than early summer salmon that increased most, but autumn fish also disappeared, just as has happened since 2016. Could the two be related? Are autumn fish being replaced with earlier salmon? For this to happen, either some altered experience is just causing fish to return from sea earlier in the year or there is some selection effect. There are proven inherited aspects to sea-age and run timing. Autumn fish were a distinct group, spawning in the main River Tay and lower tributaries, the Earn and the Eden. Perhaps a part of their life strategy no longer works, but that of a type of summer running fish does. If either of these possibilities is true, or both combined, these summer fish might be expected to behave more like "autumn" fish than early summer fish we have been used to. That these fish seemed to stick around the lowest beats of the river until the end of the season, just like autumn fish, is exactly this.

If an element of selection is involved, it may be that summer salmon numbers will continue to ramp up, so long as the underlying driver continues, of course. Those 2SW salmon that came back this year would mainly have been derived from main river spawners which spawned in 2015, the last year with a distinct autumn run. This year's grilse and next year's 2SW fish will be the offspring of 2016 spawners, the first year back end catches were dominated by coloured fish.

As to what might be driving this, previous *Annual Reports* have shown that growth rates of grilse have decreased while there has been a major northward ecological shift in the seas around and to the north of Scotland. The most productive feeding grounds may be further away, beyond waters that are now less productive, with abundant competing species like mackerel. This would suit fish with older maturing traits that do not require as high a food intake in their early sea life. The switch after WW1 also coincided with an episode of North Atlantic warming and similar mechanisms have been suggested then too.

There is, therefore, nothing that should be a surprise in these changes. Past events tell us that change is something that salmon do. Better summer runs might become the new normal. This should be revealed in the next few years.

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) It is assumed the same areas of work described in this report will continue in 2021 with additional projects being developed. Future priority areas identified in 2020 were to challenge Marine Scotland's stocking policy, ensure the future of hatchery, ensure safe passage of adults/smolts past dams/weirs, be more effective on bird predation, investigate increasing nutrient levels in headwaters and install new parr tanks in the hatchery. However, it will be for the new board to be elected in December 2020 to determine whether these are developed or other issues.

Regarding point 3), as of the time of writing (November 2020), no complaints were received in 2020.

New governance requirements

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

Meetings

Only one meeting of the Board was open to the public as observers prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. Subsequent Board Meetings were held over Zoom with no public invitation. However, the virtual Annual Meeting of Proprietors will be open to the public over Zoom by prior arrangement with the Clerk. Members of the public will also be able to attend Board meetings by Zoom hereafter by arrangement with the Clerk, although some items of business at Board meetings may be taken in private. This will continue until such time as normal meetings resume when members of the public will be able to attend as observers as before.

There was no annual public meeting in 2020 owing to the Covid-19 situation. One will be held in 2021 either virtually by Zoom or as a normal public meeting if the Covid-19 situation allows.

The dates and details of forthcoming meetings can also be found at *www.tdsfb.org/reports.html*.

Once approved at the next meeting, the minutes of Board meetings are published at *www.tdsfb.org/reports.html* 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 2018/19 was published at *www.tdsfb.org/reports.html* and hard copies were sent to all qualified proprietors in the district and a copy sent to Scottish Ministers. 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.html*.

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

DRAFT

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 Tuesday, 10th December 2019.

Present:	Iain McLaren (Convener)
	Simon Furniss
	David Godfrey
	Claire Mercer Nairne
	Jim Perrett
	Alastair Riddell
	Mike Smith
	Edward Eadie
	John Lessels
	Duncan Twigg
	Simon Wright
	Gordon Nichol (Pitlochry Angling Club)
In Attendance:	Dr. David Summers, Fisheries Director
	Inga MacGillivray, Clerk to the Board
	David Brown
	Mike Brown
	Stephen Mannion
	Cohn O'Dea
	Mark Purrman Charles (SISI officer)
	Alex Stewart
	Allister Wallace
	Charlie Bond
	Ross Gardiner (press)
	Phil Hannah
	Gary Harkin
	Jim Henderson
	Davie Seaton
	Michael Smith Jnr
	Geordie Stewart
	Bob White
Apologies:	Tom Monaghan
	Andrew Parrott

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating it had been another difficult season, with disappointing catches. He pointed out that the Board were somewhat limited by external constraints

but that they continued to do their utmost and were passionate about the river and salmon. He also stated that questions and interruptions would be welcome during the presentation.

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Proprietors held on 12th December 2018:

The Minutes of the 2018 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 Brown, and seconded by Simon Furniss, were approved.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2018

The Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018, 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. 2018 saw a small loss of £619.
There were no questions, and on a proposal from Allister Wallace, and seconded by Jim Perrett, the Accounts were approved.

Annual Report 2018/9

The *Annual Report* 2018/9 had been previously circulated and was taken as read and on a proposal by Allister Wallace and seconded by David Brown was approved.

Presentation on Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)
Mark Purrman Charles gave a presentation on the SISI project, explaining it had started in 2017 and would run until 2021 with Lottery funding from SNH. Its main aims were to expand the Scottish Mink Initiative, promote educational awareness and find effective solutions for invasive plants. He then explained the topics in more detail.

Allister Wallace asked if mink were predating on piscivorous birds, to which Mark replied they mainly predated on small mammals and ground-nesting birds but there was the opportunity for them to predate on piscivorous birds but he had no data to confirm this was the case.

The convener asked if the project had met with resistance from bee-keepers as Himalayan Balsam was popular with bees. Mark replied that he was aware that balsam was popular with bees, and the SISI project aimed to counter the balance of eradicating balsam by replanting the areas with native plant species.

Duncan Twigg stated that councils sprayed many areas with harmful herbicides, to which Mark replied that many council spaces were now being planted with native plants and were herbicide free.

Claire Mercer Nairne stated that the continent had put restrictions on certain pesticides and asked whether the SISI project was looking into this. Mark replied that the SISI project only used herbicides where it absolutely had to and did not use on balsam. Knotweed was stem injected.

Simon Wright stated that on the Earn they had been injecting knotweed for around 5 years on their bank but the opposite bank did not and it was still a problem. He wondered if Mark could help. Mark replied although this was not his geographical area, he would be happy to help by lobbying and fighting their case.

Bobby White asked if a broad leaf spray could be used on balsam to which Mark replied he wouldn't use it as the Government had advised against it.

Board Activities in 2019 and beyond

Dr. David Summers gave an overview of the events during 2019 highlighting catch statistics, a summary of main Board activities throughout 2019, and 2020 potential work.

Catches

Dr. Summers stated he did not have the current year catch figures but based on Fishpal figures, Spring catches appeared to be similar or slightly worse than 2018. However, the weight of Spring salmon seemed to be higher as they were taking longer to mature. He explained the latter part of the season was more positive than last year but that September was the exception to this. He summised that overall catches were similar to last year.

Fish Counts

Dr. Summers explained the lack of fish counter data in the *Annual Report* being due to the fact that SSE had installed a new counter at Pitlochry but the data had not all been collated yet and was showing unfeasibly low figures. He would discuss the problem with SSE in the near future with a view to fixing the problem.

He stated that Clunie Dam and Lochay counts were poor too. Adult salmon returning numbers were now at a historic low point with low sea survival, and the Board had now recommended 100% Catch and Release for the 2020 season.

Board Activities during the year 2019

Dr Summers listed the top ten Board objectives for 2019 which were bird predation (the Board will put more effort into counts and thanked the TGA for their contribution), water abstraction in both Ericht and Lochay, Shochie weir removal, beavers (building dams – Board staff check regularly for blockages), Hatchery, Lunan water riparian project (thinning out trees on Lunan – awaiting approval for works), monitoring Garry flow restoration, crayfish (especially in River Ericht) and Invasive plants.

Hatchery/Kelt Reconditioning Project

Dr. Summers explained the hatchery was doing very well with more eggs produced than ever before. He stated that the Board mostly stocked out eyed ova with some reared on parr for the areas in which this works best. The flume had now been removed.

Marine Scotland Stocking Policy

Dr. Summers explained that the Board applied to Marine Scotland every year for a licence to catch broodstock, but that Marine Scotland was against enhancement stocking although it appeared to support mitigation stocking.

Bob White interjected that he had lodged a petition with the Scottish Parliament for a full consultation on stocking and that it would be launched on 17th December 2019 and would last 6 weeks till roughly end of January 2020. He felt it was important for stakeholders to have an input into salmon stocking in rivers and urged the attendees to sign the petition.

Cohn O'Dea stated the Board would only really be allowed to stock the Garry, and Dr. Summers added that the licence was for broodstock fishing and not stocking. He explained that the Board licences itself with regards to stocking and undertakes Habitats Regulations Appraisals. He stated that Marine Scotland had allowed enhancement stocking in the Eden and Earn and had indeed allowed for fish to be caught from lower Earn for fecundity analysis because they were not part of the Tay Special Area of Conservation.

Claire Mercer Nairne asked if as a stakeholder, we could change the policy, to which Dr. Summers replied that it was a Marine Scotland policy and strictly may not have required consultation. He explained that a new Marine Scotland official had expressed an interest in meeting with the Board and this would be arranged as soon as possible.

Almondbank site road issue

Dr. Summers explained the road had been subject to some subsidence in recent months but plans had been made to repair.

Marine Scotland Alternative Projects

Dr. Summers explained that before the departure of the previous Marine Scotland official, they had been discussing Upper Tummel smolt issues as they have difficulty navigating the Clunie Dam. They also discussed the Braan regarding trapping and trucking smolts and Dr. Summers had submitted a paper on the topic. Other possible projects included supplying the Lyon with nutrients and Lochay abstraction negation.

Dr. Summers pointed out that all projects would require SEPA approval and that Scottish Government would be key in helping deliver projects. Indeed, he explained the Scottish Government had agreed to produce a wild salmon strategy before the official's departure.

Ericht Abstraction

Dr. Summers explained that a fish farm on the Ericht takes water from the river for its operations and was allowed to abstract what it required. Things had come to a head last year with the dry spell and SEPA had introduced a reviewed licence this year, bringing in new regulations. Dr. Summers still has concerns regarding the licence but SEPA have undertaken to review the licence. Interestingly, whilst the Board staff had been filming the smolts, they discovered footage of otters attacking the smolts.

Monitoring River Garry rewatering

Water had now been restored to the Garry and the Board staff had been conducting electrofishing surveys which showed stocked fish were doing well. Steve Keay, Hatchery manager had taken a small biopsy from each Garry broodstock fish and had sent these to the University of Highlands and Islands for analysis. The UHI perform a genotyping exercise and taking data from juvenile Garry fish can then determine by their genetics whether they originate from stocked or wild salmon. Each sample costs £20 and SSE is paying for this exercise.

Smolt Screwtrap Project

Dr. Summers explained that an estimated 7,000 smolts went to sea from the Garry, which has proven that the Garry work has been very successful.

Lyon Project

The Lyon has a big dam at its top end and the section of river below this is on generator flow and does not host many juveniles. 2-3 miles downriver is the Stronuich Dam and the area between the dams is not particularly good for salmon but fish do spawn there. Dr. Summers stated that the preliminary results of the project had proved that there were genetic differences in fish above the dam and that salmon were homing back to their own specific area.

Marine Scotland Categorisation 2020

Dr. Summers stated that the Earn and Eden would both be category 3 for 2020 (Earn had previously been cat 2 and Eden cat 3). The Tay SAC was category 1, largely based on last 5 year average catches. Dr. Summers still has issues with the model used to categorise the catchment, but Marine Scotland was currently unwilling to revisit the model. Indeed, Marine Scotland have been developing the National Electrofishing Program Scotland (NEPS) whereby District Salmon Fisheries Boards are paid by Marine Scotland to carry out electrofishing surveys. Our Board staff carried out 30 such surveys throughout the district and Mike Brown, operations Manager collated the results. There are still developments to be made to the project in Dr. Summers's opinion but it was a major step forward.

Clunie Turbine

Dr. Summers explained that SSE had proposed a turbine at Clunie Dam which was a smaller generator and would kill smolts. He had objected on these grounds and the generator project was stopped.

Marine Scotland/Fisheries Management Scotland Pressure Tool

Dr. Summers explained that along with the NEPS initiative, the pressure tool had been designed to highlight issues facing salmon across the country.

Any Other Business

Sea Trout

Allister Wallace congratulated Dr. Summers on managing to get SSE to fund the Garry project for 4 years. He was also encouraged that the Earn in particular was showing good sea trout catches. Dr. Summers agreed that the Earn was one of the most significant sea trout rivers in the district.

Bird Predation

Mike Smith stated that the survival rates after smolting was a problem. He cited the Dee and Tweed having 50% bird predation issues and made the point that due to bird predation fewer smolts were making it to sea.

Dr. Summers replied that these studies were based on acoustic tagging and the cause of the losses had not actually been demonstrated. He had been at a talk on the Spey that had been part of an acoustic tagging project in Morayshire. They had found that over 50% of smolts had died between their release at Cromdale and Garmouth but there had been very few goosanders in that stretch at the time. A similar study found similar rate of loss in the Findhorn, but this time only between release at Forres and the sea. There were many other cases of significant early mortality rates in acoustically tagged fish. He cautioned this might just be an unintended consequence of the invasive tagging procedure. The Convener added that it was a mistake to use data designed for a behavioural study in a mortality study.

Catch & Release 2020

Bobby White expressed his surprise that more proprietors had not backed the 2020 mandatory C&R proposal, where the proprietors marginally voted for the motion, but the Board voted against.

The Convener explained that the vote from proprietors had been marginal and that the Board felt it did not have a strong enough majority to proceed. Coupled with this, when the subject had been discussed with a Marine Scotland official, he had stated that the Government would not back the move as it went against their scientific findings.

Board Staff Email Addresses

Michael Smith (junior) asked if Board email addresses could be more professional to which Dr. Summers replied this was already in hand.

Netting on Earn

Ted Eadie asked what the situation was regarding netting on the Earn, to which Dr. Summers replied it involved a private owner who could fish for sea trout but would require carcass tags to fish for salmon. No tags had been applied for. As to 2020, the Earn will be category 3 and therefore 100% catch and release will be in force.

Due to time pressures, the Convener asked if Mike Brown's presentation could be put in the newsletter and heard at a later date. There was no strong feeling from the floor, so this motion was carried.

There was no other business and the Convener closed the meeting.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT 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 of Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board (the 'Board') for the year ended 31 December 2019 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Board's 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

Section 44 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation)(Scotland) Act 2003 require the Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Board and of the income and expenditure of the Board for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Board's proprietors are required to:

if select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
ii make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
iii prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Board will continue in business.

The Board's proprietors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Board and to enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation)(Scotland) Act 2003. It has general responsibility for taking reasonable steps to safeguard the assets of the Board and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Board members; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the annual report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Board's affairs as at 31 December 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and

- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Alan Taylor (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Campbell Dallas Audit Services
Statutory Auditors
5 Whitefriars Crescent
Perth
Perthshire
PH2 0PA
December 2020

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

	NOTES	£	2019 £	2018 £
INCOME				
Fishery Assessments	2		485,247	505,489
Revaluation Appeals			(10,000)	10,255
Bad Debts, Changes to Provision for Doubtful Debts etc			(2,503)	(2,681)
			472,744	513,063
NEPS/Garry Project/Flume			60,785	-
Compensation Received (SSE)			7,444	6,000
Rent			-	10,602
Consultancy			(540)	10,677
SISI Project			582	371
			541,015	540,713
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries & National Insurance		219,469		239,880
Pension & Death in Service- Board's Contribution		27,514		28,365
Recruitment & Training		984		3,388
Employee/Board Expenses		219		-
Road Maintenance		21,500		4,813
Bank Charges		200		224
Motor Cars & Boats Running Costs, incl Insurance		27,366		30,232
Rent, Rates & General Insurance		46,987		52,997
Heat & Light		19,902		15,157
Repairs & Maintenance - General		7,384		13,503
Telephone & Communications		7,366		9,226
Printing, Stationery, Postage & Advertising		4,274		3,271
Annual Report Costs		706		581
Meetings & Other Statutory Costs		2,609		2,997
Ghillies Lunch & Meeting		709		1,062
Legal Fees		1,320		-
Audit & Accounts Fees		2,180		4,016
Depreciation		20,695		26,325
Subscriptions & Levies		17,125		19,094
IT Costs		1,942		702
Health & Safety Implementation incl Clothing		6,438		10,350
Hatchery Running Costs		77,487		65,858
Project Work		131		2,968
Websites		8,909		10,625
Opening Day		654		780
Garry Project		34,000		-
			558,070	546,413
			(17,055)	(5,700)
Gain on Sale of Fixed Assets			-	4,900
			(17,055)	(800)
Interest Received	3		677	181
			(16,378)	(619)
Surplus (Loss) for the year			(16,378)	(619)

The notes on pages 45 and 46 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

	NOTES	£	2019 £	2018 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets	4		84,174	101,316
			84,174	101,316
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & Prepayments		240,581		155,068
Cash at Bank & In Hand		399,065		414,563
		639,646		569,631
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Other Creditors & Accruals		261,344		192,093
Net Current Assets			378,302	377,538
NET ASSETS			462,476	478,854
Representing:				
Reserves	5		83,434	83,434
General Fund	6		379,042	395,420
			462,476	478,854

These accounts were approved on 8th December 2020

IAIN McLAREN
..... BOARD MEMBER

JIM PERRETT
..... BOARD MEMBER

The notes on pages 45 and 46 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and are in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. 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

	2019		2018
	Rateable Value	Assessment	Rateable Value	Assessment
	£	£	£	£
Upper Proprietors	1,045,280	480,288	1,092,465	501,649
Lower Proprietors	18,530	4,959	18,340	5,216
	1,063,810	485,247	1,110,805	506,865
Less River Shee		35		35
Estuarial Netting Stations		0		0
		485,212		506,830

The Assessments are based on 46% of Rateable Value (2018 – 46%)

3 INTEREST RECEIVED	2018	2018
	£	£
Bank Interest	677	181
	677	181

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (cont'd)
AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

4 FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Property	Motor Vehicles	Boats	Plant & Equipment	Office and Computer Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost:						
At 1 January 2019	191,468	106,168	42,671	203,182	25,456	568,945
Additions	-	-	-	1,788	1,765	3,553
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2019	191,468	106,168	42,671	204,970	27,221	572,498
Depreciation:						
At 1 January 2019	120,484	93,630	42,597	189,079	21,837	467,627
Charge for Year	7,099	6,163	20	5,016	2,398	20,696
Eliminated for Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2019	127,583	99,793	42,617	194,095	24,235	488,323
Net Book Amounts:						
At 31 December 2019	63,884	6,375	54	10,875	2,986	84,174
At 31 December 2018	70984	12,537	74	14,103	3,618	101,316

5 RESERVES

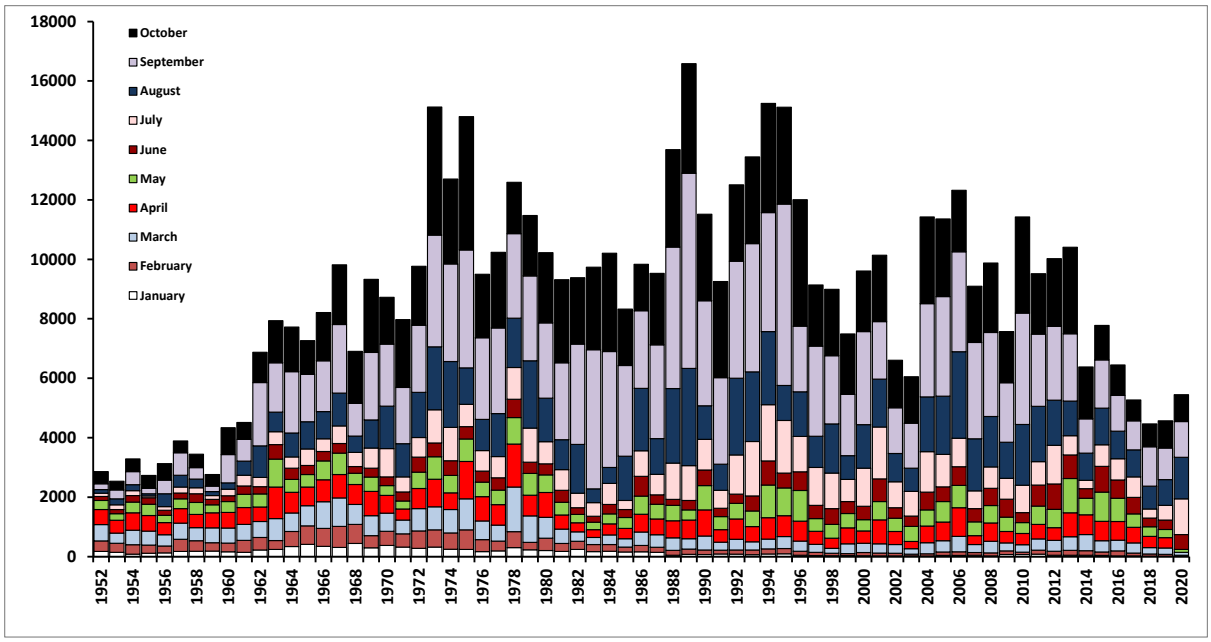
	GENERAL	NASF(UK)	TOTAL
	£	£	£
At 1 January 2019	83,434	-	83,434
Provision in Year	-	-	-
	83,434	-	83,434
Expenditure in Year	-	-	-
At 31 December 2019	83,434	-	83,434

6 GENERAL FUND

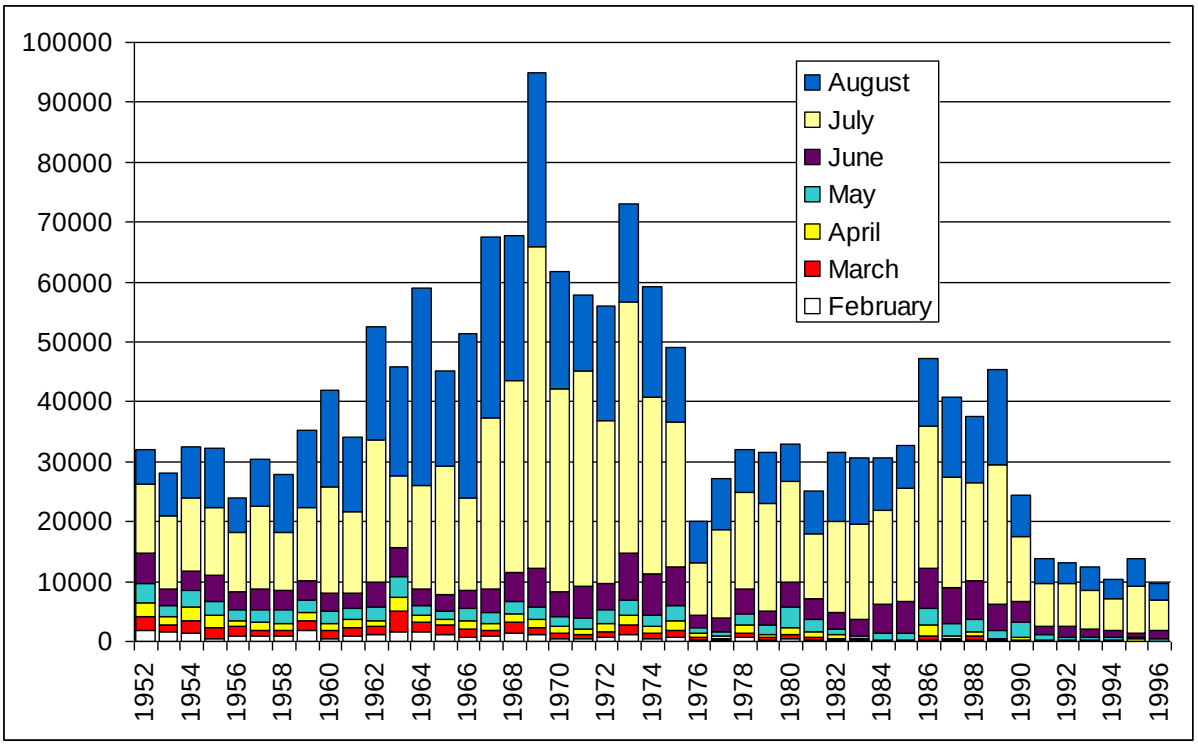
	2019	2018
	£	£
At 1 January 2019	395,420	396,039
Deficit for year	(13,964)	(620)
At 31 December 2018	381,456	395,420

7 CAPITAL COMMITMENT

There were no capital commitments as at 31st December 2019.



Monthly angling catch for the Tay District 1952 – 2020 (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 2019 data were collected by the Board and 2020 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 2019

	12 February	9 April	18 June	13 August	29 October	10 December
I. McLaren	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
A. Stewart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D. Godfrey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
M. Smith	✓	✓				
C. Mercer Nairne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S. Mannion	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
D. Brown	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
J. Perrett	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Alastair Riddell			-	✓	✓	✓
T. Monaghan	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
A Parrott		-	-	✓	-	-
C. O'Dea	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A. Wallace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S. Furniss	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ 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 in 2019 and 2020.

All Proprietors within the Tay District
John Apthorp CBE
All Ghillies and Boatmen
All Tay Board Staff
The Tay Ghillies Association
All Honorary Bailiffs
The Tay Rivers Trust
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
Fisheries Management Scotland
Rivers and Lochs Institute, UHI
Fishlegal
NatureScot
SSE plc
Police Scotland
Andrew Graham-Stewart