Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board



Annual Report
2008 / 09

ANNUAL REPORT 2008/ 09

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TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Chairman

John Milligan (Mandatory for Ballathie Timeshare)

Members Elected by Upper Proprietors

W. Lindsay (Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare), I. Davie (Mandatory for Stobhall Timeshare), R. Gardiner (Mandatory for Pitlochry Angling Club), D. Glass (Mandatory for Clayfield Investments), J. Young (Mandatory for Laird Securities), A. Riddell, Viscount Stormont (Mandatory for The Viscount Stormont's Trust Trustees), R. White (Mandatory for Mr A. Gifford), T. Steuart-Fothringham, S. Mercer-Nairne (Mandatory for Meikleour Hotels and Fishing), S. Furniss (Mandatory for Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel), M. Wedderburn, I. Massie, I. Wotherspoon, J. Tritton (Mandatory for Mrs C. C. Ward) and B. Reid (Mandatory for W Reid)

Members Elected by Lower Proprietors

D. Godfrey (Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fisheries Company Ltd)

Co-opted Members

Representatives of Salmon Anglers

D. Barwick (Tay Ghillies Association)
A. Stewart
J. Wood
C. Lowson

Clerk and administrator

Callum Towns, Strathtay M. S. Ltd, 5 Strathalmond Green, Edinburgh, EH4 8AG (Tel: 0131 4670092)

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

As I sit in my study here at Ballathie in the middle of November, the River Tay, which flows around our estate from Kercock through Meikleour and Islamouth to The Ballathie House Hotel beat, has actually risen 12 feet due to the recent torrential rain. Millions of tons of muddy, fast flowing water are hurtling down the main stem of The Tay on its way to The North Sea.

I wonder what these waters are doing to the survival of spawning fish and their eggs and what will be the consequences for the salmon population in 4 years?

2009 has been a disappointing season for the Tay Anglers. Every part of the season has been poor and with a few exceptions the catches have been 50% down.

The causes are multi various:-

- North Atlantic temperature increase causing the food chain to move north.
- Climate change causing heavy rains and constant high river levels allowing the fish to move up through the river without stopping on the lower beats.
- Commercial netting at Montrose, catching thousands of salmon before they reach the river.
- Seals at the mouth of River Tay feeding on the incoming salmon.
- Sawbill ducks gorging on smolts before they can reach the open sea.
- Extensive hydro electric development on the tributaries of The Tay.
- The almost complete abstraction of water on The River Garry has caused a complete environmental disaster and has destroyed what was once an important spawning river.
- Salmon farming on the West Coast of Scotland spreading disease to vulnerable wild migrating salmon and also farmed salmon escapees endangering wild salmon genetics.
- Rafting on the upper Tay in the Aberfeldy area has made salmon fishing almost an impossibility. This is an irresponsible act by commercial rafting companies who pay nothing for the environmental management of The Tay and appear to be oblivious to the fact that they are destroying another business and endangering the employment of the people associated with salmon fishing.

We need the rafting community to become responsible and negotiate an acceptable co-existence with salmon fishing.

However, in spite of our problems, we remain optimistic for the future. We have a new group of Board Members comprising experienced long-time serving members and an influx

of enthusiastic and knowledgeable new members combining to give the TDSFB a committed team focused on improving The River Tay salmon fishing environment.

Our strategic objective is to give the maximum number of salmon the best possible chance of spawning and developing into smolts before heading for the feeding grounds of the North Atlantic. Finally, we hope that these salmon will come back to The Tay in future years in abundant numbers and provide anglers with good sport

Quite naturally anglers compare the catches on The Tay with what they think are the catches on The Dee, The Spey and The Tweed. Regretfully catches on these great rivers were down in 2009 and let me say that direct comparisons are a bit unfair.

Both The Dee and The Spey need plenty of water and our recent wet summers have given them ideal conditions, whereas The Tay, especially in the lower beats, needs lower water to hold the salmon.

When considering The Tweed's annual catches we must always remember that they have a season which is six weeks longer than The Tay and they do not have the same concentration of hydro stations and river obstructions.

This year has seen significant improvement to the TDSFB facilities at Almondbank. These improvements were achieved due to the generosity of John Apthorp, who is a keen angler on The Tay and was a long term member of The Board and we should also acknowledge the important contribution made by The Ghillies Association.

The Board have sanctioned a comprehensive Project Plan, developed by The Fisheries Director. Our intention is to complete Stage I in the 2010 season. The successful implementation necessitates the recruitment of a project biologist and we hope to make an appointment in the next two months. Copies of the Project Plan can be obtained from the Fisheries Director.

The Board's Catch and Release Code for 2009 was very largely supported by both Ghillies and anglers. There are, however, one or two persistent non-compliant beats.

We earnestly ask these non-compliant beats to comply with the Catch and Release Code or we will be forced to take positive action against them.

We regretfully have to report the loss of an angler's life, due to drowning. The Board, anglers and Ghillies would like to express their sincere condolences to the angler's family.

The TDSFB had a successful Conservation Dinner in 2009 and we realised a net surplus of approximately £12K. The 2010 Dinner will be held at the Dunkeld Hilton House Hotel and we would encourage anglers to support this event.

The Board are also having an "Opening Day" ceremony at Dunkeld on the 15th January 2010 and we need anglers to attend this potentially enjoyable event.

Our finances remain stretched and we have needed some financial help for project work from The Tay Foundation to correct this deficit. This is a situation that cannot continue and we will have to review our overheads and the Board is recommending a significant percentage increase in the annual levy.

At the start of this report, I listed some of the problems we face in the management of salmon on The Tay. We should not despair. We can implement environment and stocking improvements, as other Scottish rivers have done.

A combination of environmental improvements, adherence to the Catch and Release Code and realistic expectations will lead to continual enjoyment and pleasure for anglers and secure employment for Ghillies.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by The TDSFB Management Team, the Bailiffs, the Ghillies and The TDSFB Board Members.

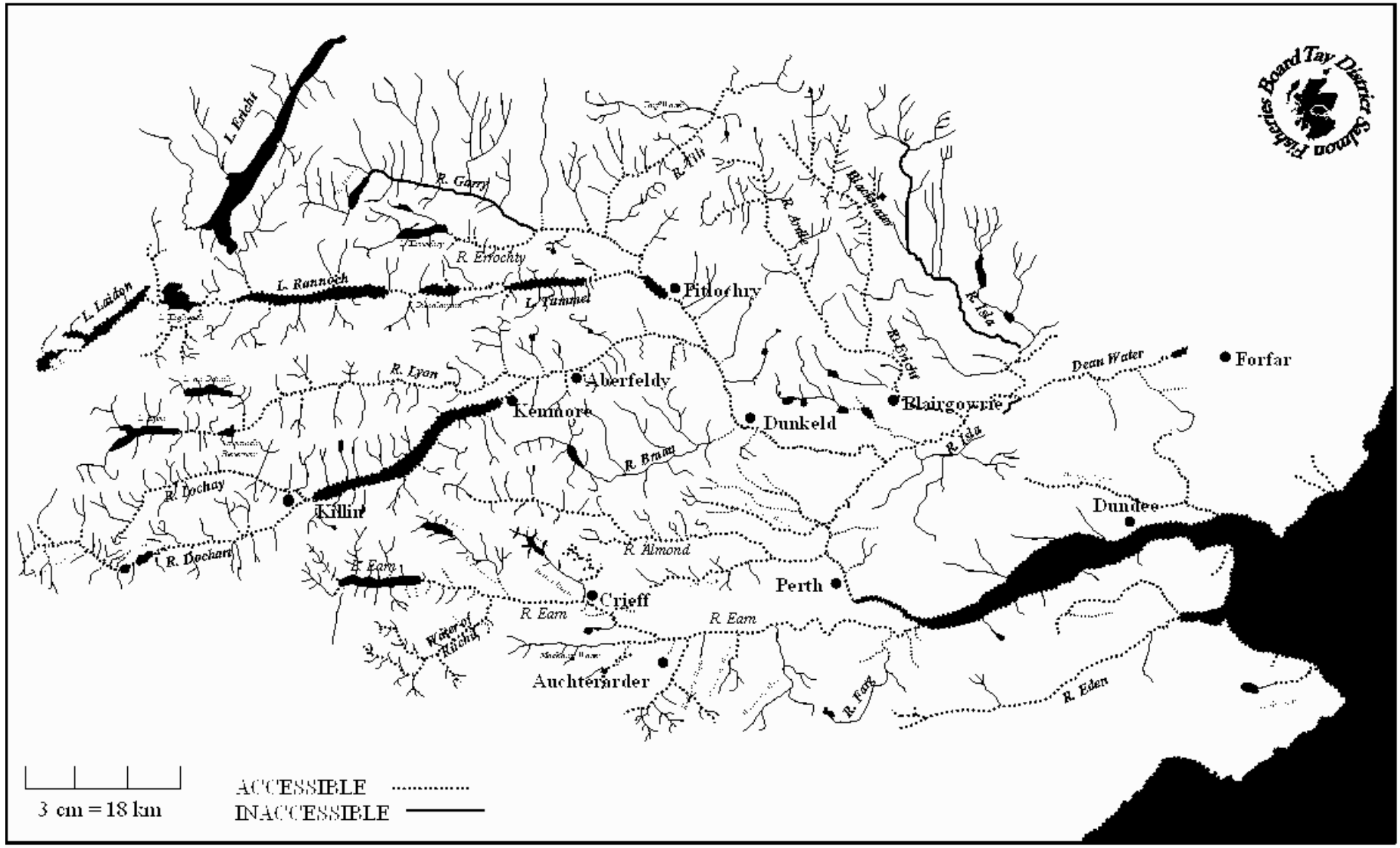
May I conclude by wishing all anglers on the The Tay a successful season in 2010.

Yours sincerely,



John R Milligan
Chairman

Salmon Distribution within the Tay District



2009 REPORT

Season 2009

The 2009 season was one which started with good news. Despite the fact that conditions were not ideal and fishing effort was generally low 52 spring salmon were reported on the fishtay website in the two weeks to the end of January. As the average catch reported to the government for the previous ten years was only 27, and that not all beats report to the website (the real catch for January is more likely to be around 70) this was very encouraging. Even if there had been a slight misreporting of unspent fish as springers, there had not been a better January (86) since 1995 and it had not been substantially better (150) since the mid 80s. A significant proportion of the catch was made up of fish in the high teens of pounds, showing that like 2008, there was again a better run of 3SW fish. A number of these were caught on Loch Tay.

February started in much the same vein and there was considerable optimism as to what the remainder of the spring might bring. But it was not to be. Catches started to fall below expectations in the second half of the month, although the total catch reported to fishtay for the month (89) was slightly up on the previous five year average (63).

Salmon catches in March and April then proved very disappointing. 199 fish were reported to fishtay in March as opposed to a five year average of 258[1] and in April only 286 were reported against an average of 426. It was clear that although there had been some more 3SW fish (which tend to run earliest) the 2SW run was weaker. However, this was not unique to the Tay. Other rivers also experienced this, of which more later.

On the whole, May continued to disappoint. Only 281 fish were reported to fishtay as opposed to an average of 389. As a result of these low catches the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards took the unprecedented step of issuing a call to all district salmon fishery boards to ask for 100% catch and release on their rivers (more later).

However, in June, which is usually a less good month, catches suddenly improved. 400 fish were reported to fishtay as opposed to an average of 322. At that time of year temperatures are such that fish run quickly therefore it was beats like Islamouth and especially Coupar Grange which saw the best of the sport. There were also a number of rises on the Ericht and this resulted in better fishing than for several years on some beats, notably the Blairgowrie AC water. By the end of the month the Ericht fish counter stood at 3211, one of the best counts there has been for this time of year (page 33) and the Pitlochry fish counter had reached near average levels (page 29). As most of the fish caught in June were salmon, unlike a few years back when grilse would have been more prominent, it appeared that the spring run may have just been delayed to some extent rather having experienced catastrophic mortality as had been feared earlier.

By the end of June the pulse of salmon had died down and only small numbers of grilse followed. July catches were well down. Only 390 were reported to fishtay, as opposed to an average of 556, which is itself well down on what would have been expected before 2005 when the timing of the grilse run shifted. This was very disappointing.

[1] Please note, the five year averages cited here are for those beats which did report catches to fishtay in 2009. The five year averages displayed on the "Season so Far" page on fishtay include some beats which did not report in 2009 and so are not strictly comparable with 2009 figures.

In August it was hoped there would be a sudden rush of grilse, as has happened in some recent years, but this did not happen either. Grilse numbers did gradually build up during the month but there were never large catches. It was clear that the grilse run was yet again late, but the overall catch was well down. Only 621 fish were reported to fishtay as opposed to a recent average of 1252. Results from the Ericht and Pitlochry fish counters showed that the peak grilse numbers did run in August but the Ericht grilse count was substantially reduced although the Pitlochry count was not much down compared to the reduction in main river catches (page 29). A major problem was that August was a wet month. There were something like nine separate rises during the month and average daily flows were the third highest in SEPA's 50 year record for the river (page 25).

September started with high flows and a very large spate on the 4th affected fishing for some days, but as the month progressed the weather dried up and water levels fell. Catches began to pick up accordingly but never to the extent expected by the end of September. A total of 984 fish were reported to fishtay as opposed to a recent average of 1708. The story was much the same in October. In the last two weeks of the Tay season catches continued to improve and some beats ended the season on a relatively good note. 779 were reported for the half month on fishtay, making it the best part of the season, against a recent average of 1079. The Earn and Eden continued to fish on until 31 October, but by all accounts there appears to have been no major upswing in catches during that late period.

Catch and release – Spring

Despite the fact that the spring of 2008 saw a better run of fish than 2007, the Board recognised at the start of the 2009 season that salmon are still faced with significant difficulties in terms of marine survival and that it is imperative to maintain spawning stocks at as high a level as can be achieved. In order to do this the Board has, over the last ten years, encouraged anglers to release an increasing proportion of the salmon they catch over the last ten years. In 2009 the Board continued to recommend the same policy as in 2008, namely that the first spring salmon caught each day should be returned and that only a maximum of one spring fish may be kept per day thereafter.

This policy resulted in 78% of reported spring fish being returned in 2008, which represents a huge change in practice from what it had been ten years previously (Table 1). Figures are not yet available, but it is expected that the spring catch and release rate for 2009 will again be high. Most beats appear to adhere to good practice, although there are always rumours of some who do not, but these are becoming fewer. Consequently the proportion of spring fish being released on the Tay is now on a par with most of the other major salmon rivers (Figure 1) which was not the case only a few years ago.

The Board is highly appreciative of all anglers, ghillies and proprietors who have made this possible and in recognition of their particular and invaluable contribution to this the Tay Ghillies Association was awarded the Tay Salmon Conservation Award for 2009 (see page 21).

However, it became increasingly apparent as spring 2009 unfolded that marine survival of the 2SW salmon might be extremely poor as river after river appeared to experience record low catches. If restraint is ever needed it is in such circumstances, as each spawner really does count then. Consequently after consultation with the Tay and other boards the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards took the unprecedented step on 29 April of advising

all boards to consider implementing a 100% catch and release regime until the problem abated.
The Tay Board supported the ASFB's stance and requested that all proprietors should recommend 100% catch and release on their beats until the end of May when the policy would be reviewed. Many did so.

Fortunately, in June, runs did pick up and it appeared that a delay in the run may have been partly responsible for the poorer catches so the Board took the decision to return to the Board's agreed summer policy, i.e. that female salmon and large male salmon should be returned. Despite the fact that the total run may have ended up rather stronger than initially feared, the Board considers that the ASFB's precautionary stance was indeed correct at the time.

Year	Number released	Number killed	Total caught	% released
1998	41	540	581	7
1999	108	831	939	12
2000	193	637	830	23
2001	415	739	1154	36
2002	271	524	795	34
2003	199	281	480	42
2004	301	684	985	31
2005	446	669	1115	40
2006	739	854	1593	46
2007	349	339	688	51
2008	861	247	1108	78

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

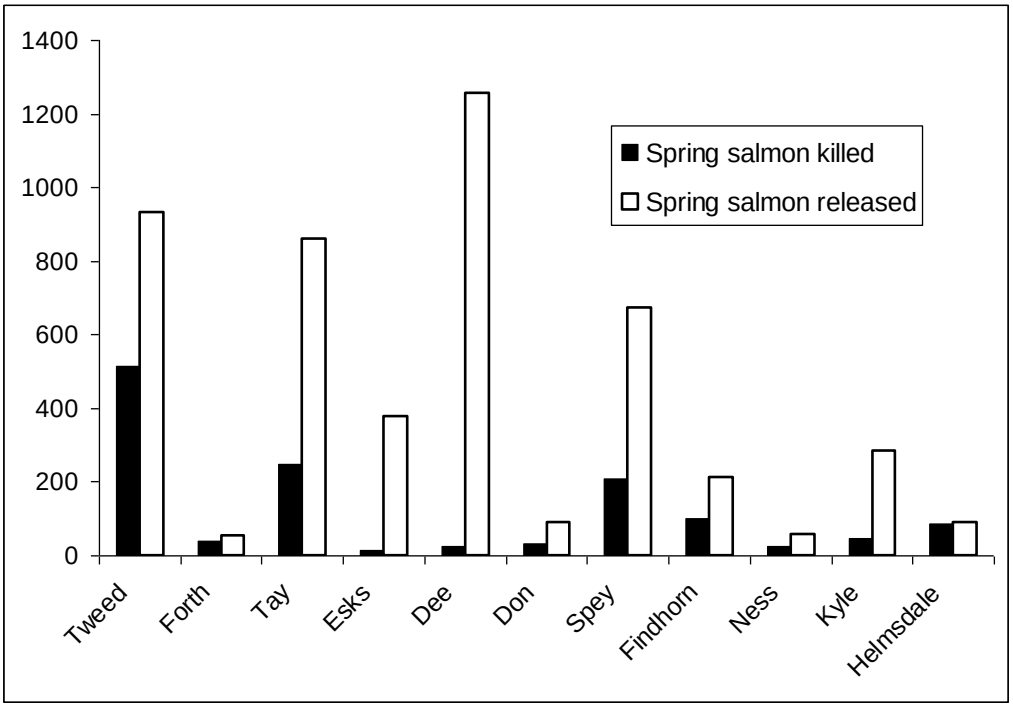


Figure 1. Numbers of salmon killed and released by anglers to 30 April 2008 on Scotland's major spring salmon rivers. Data from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletin; Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches 2008.

Catch and release –summers 2008 and 2009

In 2008 the Board also tightened up the catch and release code for the summer and autumn and requested that anglers release all female fish, all males over 15 pounds and all coloured and gravid fish. This again resulted in more fish being returned, although not to the extent of the spring. 3406 salmon and grilse were killed between June and October 2008 and 4962 were released, a huge change from only a few years ago.

The Board continued to recommend the same policy in 2009, and although figures are not yet available, it is clear that catch and release is increasingly becoming the norm.

Catch and release – 2010

As a result of the mixed spring and poorer grilse run in 2009 the Board took the view that yet more could and should be done to conserve salmon. Therefore the Board decided that **for 2010 there should be a policy of 100% catch and release until the end of May**. Thereafter all females should continue to be released, as should all males over 10 pounds, but significantly, no more than one clean male under ten pounds should be kept per day.

Sea trout conservation

During the 2008 season it was felt that, following a long decline, sea trout catches had reached their lowest ever levels. The official returns backed this up when they became available (Figure 2). While it is accepted that major problems affecting sea trout lie at sea it is essential that as many sea trout as possible are allowed to spawn during this difficult period. Therefore in the 2009 season the Board promoted 100% catch and release of sea trout caught throughout the Tay district. The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards also promoted the idea more widely that sea trout conservation should be higher up the agenda.

In the event, 2009 proved to be better for sea trout in the Tay and neighboring districts suggesting that marine conditions were more favourable. While this is encouraging, the Board considers that problems may still continue to occur and that full catch and release of sea trout should continue until catches show a sustained recovery.

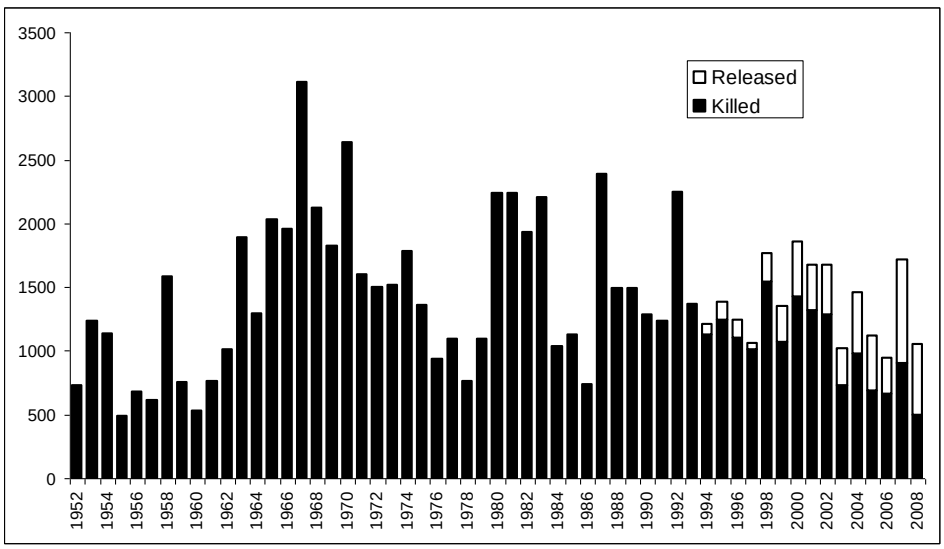


Figure 2. Tay District rod & line catch of sea trout, 1952 – 2008. (Data obtained from Marine Scotland's Statistical Bulletins of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Catches)

Enforcement

The spring of 2009 saw more poaching activity than for several years. Two monofilament nets and two fish traps were recovered from the vicinity of the River Ericht. It was feared the recession may encourage more poaching, but because of high water and a poorer run of fish there were fewer incidents reported in the summer and autumn. One man was charged for poaching on the Ericht. The case went to trial but unfortunately the case was rejected at the last minute because of a technical error, of no fault of the Board, much to the disappointment of the Board's staff involved. No other incidents were reported to the Procurator Fiscal in the year.

The Board is once again indebted to Tayside Police, especially Alan Stewart, Wildlife Liaison Officer, who were again extremely helpful. 2009 saw even greater cooperation with the Police and it is hoped this will continue.

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.

Having employed an officer manager with significant experience of health and safety issues 2009 was deemed to be an appropriate time to review the Board's health and safety policy. Greens of Haddington were contracted to review and update the policy, taking into account new activities, operations and facilities since the previous review.

No accidents reportable under RIDDOR occurred in 2009.

Staff changes

In January the Board took a major new step in employing a Development Manager, Lorna Bromley-Martin. The Development Manager's role is primarily to raise funds for the Board and Tay Foundation, to carry out marketing and events and to promote the Board's work.

In the summer, a bailiff, William Tritton, left the Board's employment and was replaced by a new bailiff, Ross Pirie.

In November, Lee Fisher, who had previously had been the Board's Hatchery Manager was appointed as Head Bailiff with responsibilities of day to day management and direction of the bailiff staff.

Kelt reconditioning

The kelt reconditioning project is a collaborative project between Marine Scotland Science (MSS) and the Board which has been running for well over ten years. Spring salmon caught in headwater spawning areas by Board staff are kept in captivity at the MSS experimental fish farm at Almondbank and are successfully fed on to spawn in subsequent years. This facility produces eggs from spring females which would otherwise have died. 2008 / 09 was

again a successful year. The problems which occurred after the ban on malachite green have been overcome and over 800,000 eggs were produced from fish originally sourced in the Fillan, Tilt, Lyon, Garry, Errochty and Shee waters.

Hatchery report

Broodstock for the hatchery are obtained by netting spring salmon in upper tributaries and by angling for autumn salmon in the main stem Tay and larger tributaries. However, the 2008 / 09 winter did not prove as good a year for the hatchery as the previous one had been. High water persisted throughout much of late October and early November so the number of early spawning spring salmon caught was down on the record number caught in the previous year.

Including reconditioned kelt eggs, approximately 1.5 million eggs were incubated. One very encouraging aspect was that there was a relatively low incidence of fungus in the adult holding tanks, especially among the more silvery autumn fish which are particularly at risk of infection. It would appear that a new water supply system which was installed in autumn 2008 had helped a lot.

The incubation went smoothly and eyed ova and fry were successfully stocked out from the hatchery in spring. Ova and fry are stocked out into areas close to where the broodstock were sourced from, i.e. either the same tributary or a smaller tributary close to the source area.

The following numbers were released:

River Tilt (mainstem, Lochain Burn, Tarf Water, Fealar Burn, Glen More Burn)	280,000
River Lyon (upper)	50,000
River Lyon (lower)	40,000
Banvie Burn (Garry)	80,000
Errochty Water	195,000
River Lochay (Corrycharmaig to Kenknock)	90,000
Auchtertyre Burn (Fillan)	60,000
Auchreoch Burn (Fillan)	30,000
Cononish	20,000
Allt Essan (Dochart)	50,000
Benmore Burn (Dochart)	10,000
Turret Burn and Shaggie Burn (Earn)	50,000
Machany Water (Earn)	30,000
Upper Earn tributaries	20,000
River Almond (headwaters)	60,000
River Braan	170,000
Keithick Burn (Isla)	80,000
Tullimet Burn (Tay)	80,000
Dowie Burn (Tay)	30,000
Shochie Burn (Tay)	20000
Dowally Burn (Tay)	40,000
Total	**1,485,000**

Table 2. Estimated numbers of eyed ova / unfed fry stocked out into respective tributaries in the spring of 2009.

One problem which did arise in early 2009 was frost. 2008 / 09 was the hardest winter since adult holding tanks were installed at the hatchery at Almondbank. It became apparent that some parts of the system were vulnerable to frost damage. As a result of this the Tay Ghillies Association have donated money, and obtained a grant of £10,000 from the Awards for All, for the erection of a shed over the tanks. This is under construction in November 2009 and is due for completion in December.





Left, new hatchery roof under construction, November 2009. This was almost entirely funded by the great efforts of the Tay Ghillies Association (photo courtesy of Ken Bell).

Cononish egg hatching trial

An article in the 2007 / 08 *Annual Report* showed how stocking of fry in the Cononish Water (the headwaters of the River Dochart) has resulted in a big increase in the juvenile population. Given there were few juveniles before stocking started, even in years when natural redds were observed, there is a possibility that eggs may fail to incubate successfully. This can arise either from redd washout by big floods or in some rivers because of too much acidity. If the pH is too low at a critical time in the hatching process salmon eggs will simply fail to hatch. While there is no other obvious evidence of acidification problems in the Cononish (indeed the areas of poorest fish numbers are in fact upstream, not downstream of coniferous plantations which are usually blamed for exacerbating acidity) this is something which can easily be tested and is a natural extension of the stocking experiments we have been conducting.

To do this locally sourced eyed ova (from reconditioned kelts of River Fillan stock) were planted in sealed fine mesh canisters and placed in shallow artificial redds in the Cononish in February 2009. These were then recovered ten weeks later and found to be full of a similar number of healthy looking fry. There was therefore no evidence of any problems in terms of egg hatching, at least in 2009.

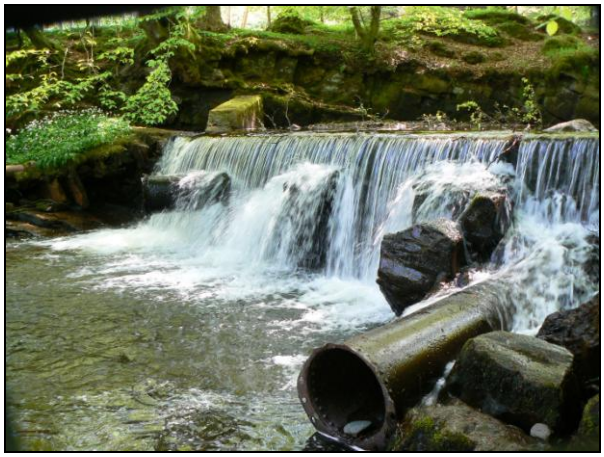


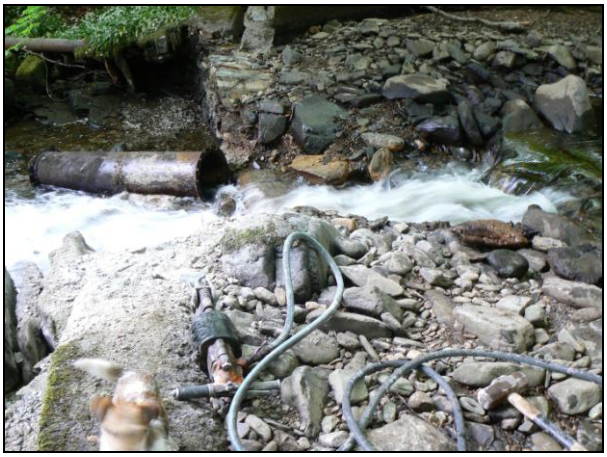


Eyed ova were planted in sealed mesh containers in the Cononish to find out whether eggs had a problem hatching or not

Removal of Urlar Burn Weir

In a project performed in conjunction with the Tay Ghillies Association it had been intended to remove a derelict weir from the Urlar Burn near Aberfeldy in 2008. However, suitable conditions did not occur until summer 2009 and the weir was then demolished by Tim Childs. The removal of this weir has opened up another 1.5km of this significant tributary to salmon in an area where accessible tributary habitat is very limited.





This weir on the Urlar Burn at the Birks of Aberfeldy was a major problem for salmon passage (left) but it has now been removed (right).

New hydro stations

Interest in new run-of-river hydro stations continued to burgeon in 2009. The process is now moving on from the permission seeking stage and a number of schemes were under construction in 2009, especially in Glen Lyon. However, new proposals are still appearing and the Scottish Government is actively seeking to expand this sector. In order to convey an impression of the scale of this issue, the sites of the various proposed and approved schemes have been plotted on Figure 3. Pre-existing Scottish & Southern Energy abstraction points are also shown in order to demonstrate that few tributaries are now unaffected by hydropower in the western part of the Tay catchment.

New hydro schemes require approval from both SEPA and the relevant planning authority. The Board is always consulted on these but more usually by the developers at the pre-application stage. This has created extra work for Board staff, although most of the schemes which have been proposed affect high gradient tributaries, most of the length of which is inaccessible to salmon. However, as the high head sites become exhausted there is a real concern that more and more interest will be shown in areas where salmon are present. The first of these has now arisen and concerns the proposed installation of an Archimedes screw turbine in the River Ericht at Blairgowrie (see below).

When new hydro schemes are proposed it is a condition of application that fish surveys are conducted to determine what might be impacted by the scheme. This has led to a significant amount of fisheries survey work being conducted in the district, mainly by fisheries consultants. While in some cases it may be inappropriate for the Board to do this work, the Board did in fact decide to perform a survey for a developer in 2008 and performed two others in 2009 (the Crannach Burn in Glenfernate and the Glamis Burn).

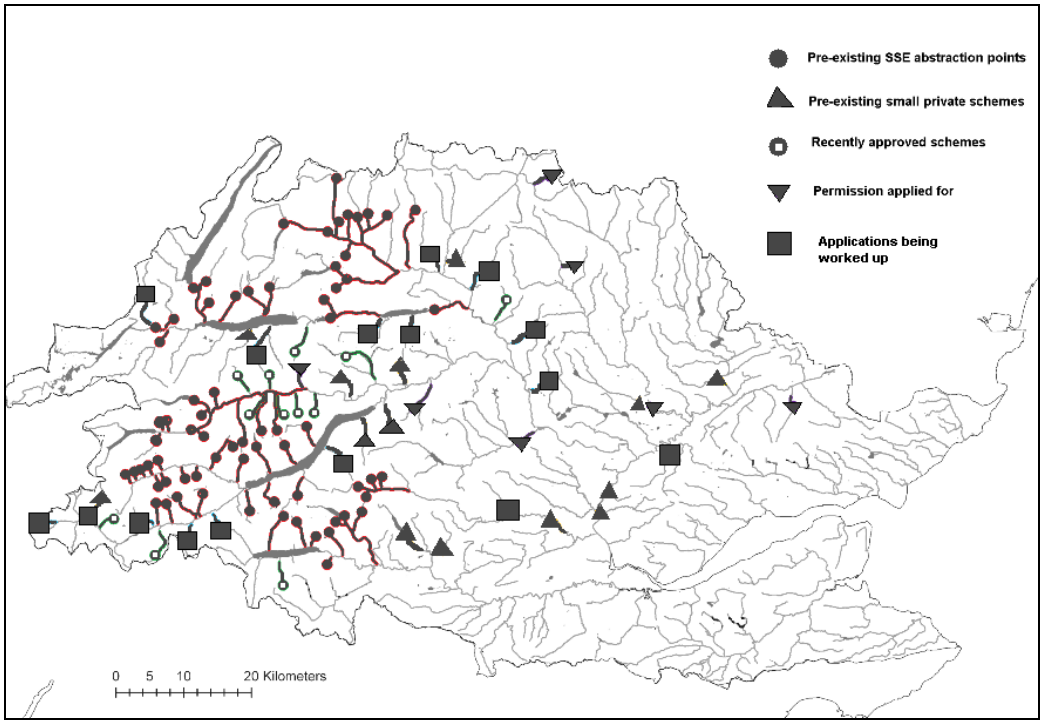


Figure 3. Locations of existing and new hydro abstraction points in the Tay district, as far as is known November 2009. Some recent proposals may have been overlooked.

Proposed Ericht Hydro Station

An organization called the Blairgowrie and Rattray Regeneration Committee (BARRC) wish to install a community based hydro scheme on the River Ericht at Blairgowrie to generate income for local good causes. Various options were considered and they finally agreed early in 2009 to apply for permission to install an Archimedes screw turbine at Keathbank Weir, on the northern outskirts of Blairgowrie. An application was made in the early summer.

An Archimedes screw turbine was chosen because this is a new type of turbine which is claimed to not harm migrating smolts and thus does not require costly screening etc. The idea is to draw water off the Ericht immediately upstream of the present fish pass on Keathbank Weir and pass it through the turbine and return it to the Ericht several tens of

metres downstream of the exit of the fish pass, although detailed engineering drawings and surveys of the river morphology have not been provided. It was proposed that the turbine would commence operation when flows were still quite low and ramp up to a maximum abstraction rate of four cumecs when the total flow in the river just exceeded six cumecs. That would have meant that the flow from the turbine tailrace would be twice as great as that left to pass down the fish pass or over the weir.

Despite assurances that the tailrace would be engineered to dissipate the flow to deter fish from being attracted to it (although, as stated, detailed information was not provided) the Board was concerned that ascending adult salmon might accumulate downstream of the tailrace rather than pushing on through into the zone of reduced flow towards the fish pass. There is a particular risk of this happening because a flow of 6 cumecs is about the optimum flow at which grilse ascend the Cargill's Leap waterfall which is just downstream of Keathbank Weir. A similar problem had in fact occurred when a similar turbine was installed at Newe on the River Don in 2008. Salmon accumulated in the lade downstream of the turbine when the flow from the it proved more attractive than the flow in the main river.

Therefore the Board objected to the application on the basis that the proportion of the flow to be abstracted was too high at critical levels of flow for salmon migration. In fact a more sensible solution might have been to install a larger turbine which would not operate at all at lower flows but might abstract a greater quantity of water at really high flows. However, the proposed turbine is just under 50KW capacity (in fact a very small generator), which is a threshold below which a greater financial incentive is provided under the Renewables Obligation (Scotland). Thus, a scheme designed to encourage renewable energy may actually be limiting the size of the turbine and potentially creating greater ecological risk.

Thereafter, negotiations between SEPA, BARRC, the Electricity Fisheries Committee and the Board continued and BARRC has now agreed to abstract no more than 50% of the flow in the river during the period salmon are running and have accepted the principle that adult salmon should be screened out of the tailrace. However, the Board has continued to insist that detailed plans of the layout of the tailrace and screens should be provided, as none have been provided so far. Because of an error in the original application process SEPA had to re-advertise the application in November 2009 providing a further opportunity for public comment. The matter has, therefore, still to be resolved.





It is proposed that an Archimedes screw turbine be installed in the lade (visible on right hand edge of photo) adjacent to Keathbank Weir, River Ericht. Flow will then bypass the weir and fishpass and be returned to the Ericht well downstream.

Fisheries Management Planning

For the three financial years commencing with 2008 / 09, the Scottish Government has made available a sum of £300,000 per year to support fisheries trusts. This money is distributed equally between the 20+ fisheries trusts in Scotland (including the Tay Foundation) via the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS), the umbrella body which looks after the interests of all fishery trusts. Money is paid to trusts on the delivery of projects or work agreed by RAFTS / Scottish Government. The first of these projects, which was requested of all fisheries trusts, was to produce an all species fisheries management plan. The Tay plan was produced by TDSFB staff for the Tay Foundation. This was published on the Board's website in March 2009 and comments were sought from the public and other organizations. The plan was finally submitted and accepted by RAFTS in June.

Since this was the first time that such a document had been produced for the Tay, much of this plan must be regarded as aspirational. However, it identified many issues which the Board or others may wish to take forward. Since then the Board has been distilling these into its own prioritized business / work plan looking forward into the future. This process is well advanced.

Media and Public Relations

In 2009 the Board continued to try to maintain a good media profile, despite the difficulties of the season. Andrew Graham Stewart continued to be used as PR consultant and worked extensively with the Development Manager and Fisheries Director to publicize issues of relevance.

The Board was also contacted by BBC Scotland's *Landward* programme who did two excellent pieces early in the year on egg stocking and on the work of the bailiffs. The Board was also able to assist the BBC's *Autumnwatch* programme which made extensive use of the Board's facilities when they did a piece on salmon at Marine Scotland's hatchery at Almondbank.





Left, Dougie Vipond of BBC Scotland's Landward show assists Lee Fisher to plant salmon eggs in the Cononish Water. Right, Mike Miles from the Marine Scotland Science hatchery, Almondbank, helps Simon King of BBC Autumnwatch to strip one of the female salmon brought in for kelt reconditioning by TDSFB staff.

Salmon in the classroom

In 2009 the Board again contributed to the Salmon in the Classroom project, an initiative which also involves Scottish Natural Heritage, the Esk Board, Perth and Kinross Council Ranger Services, Angus Council Ranger Services, Atholl Estates Ranger Services and Scottish and Southern Energy. It is intended to raise awareness of the river environment and salmon in particular among school children in the locality.

In 2009 the participating schools included Pitlochry High School and Straloch (near Kirkmichael), Dunning, St Madoes, Carlogie (Carnoustie) and Seaview (Monifieth) primary schools. The Board supplied each with approximately 50 eyed salmon eggs from the hatchery and these were kept in the schools in small tanks in small clear fronted fridges (wine chillers) to keep them at approximately 4 degrees. These were generously donated by Mr John Apthorp. On hatching the fry were released into local streams and Fisheries Board staff later electrofished the streams to show the pupils how the fish had survived. The schools also visited the Marine Scotland Science hatchery at Almondbank which has always proved highly popular.

However, after 2009, the current Scottish Natural Heritage funding for this project is to terminate but the TDSFB Development Manager has successfully applied to SNH for new money to allow the project to continue for at least another two years. The Tay Foundation, as opposed to SNH, will now lead the project and it is intended that it will expand to encompass more work with secondary schools.

New Office

In 2009 the Board's rudimentary office which was situated within the hatchery building was replaced by a new purpose built office and meeting room suite adjacent to the hatchery building. The building comprises of two stand alone office rooms and a third office / meeting which is capable of holding 15 – 20 persons. This new facility will allow the Board to conduct its work more efficiently and to have its own meeting and educational facility. The Board is very grateful to John Apthorp for a generous donation towards this project.



2009 saw the construction of a new purpose built office for Board staff adjacent to the existing hatchery building.

Genetic Fingerprinting Project

It has been widely found that salmon in the different tributaries of rivers like the Tay comprise distinct sub populations which return with considerable precision to the specific areas of their birth. Such sub populations hardly interbreed. This allows fish in different tributaries to develop different genetic traits, for example run timing. Modern genetic techniques have reached a sufficient degree of sophistication that it is now possible to "fingerprint" the salmon population in each major tributary or in some cases parts of tributaries.

The ability to do this is valuable for a number of reasons. For example, it can allow fishery managers to be able to identify the origin of a fish caught at sea or on its migration back upstream as an adult. It is then possible to determine the origin of fish being caught in different fisheries and identify whether vulnerable stocks are being overexploited.

Therefore, as part of the Scottish Government grant to fisheries trusts, RAFTS in conjunction with Marine Scotland Science and the Atlantic Salmon Trust, have set up a project, known as FASMOP (Focusing Atlantic Salmon Management on Populations), which aims to fingerprint the major salmon populations within the Scottish fisheries trust areas. This initiative is working in partnership with a major international project called Salsea Merge, which is being managed by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) and seeks to unravel the factors causing the current high levels of mortality at sea. Salmon populations are being fingerprinted round the entire North Atlantic rim and these results will be compared with the results of salmon caught in trawls at sea in order to identify those areas in the ocean where fish from different countries, or even rivers and parts of rivers, go to feed.

Such a project was previously constrained because the capacity did not exist to process the necessary number of samples. However, RAFTS have been able to employ several specialist research scientists who are based at the Freshwater Laboratory in Pitlochry and they will process the samples from the participating rivers. TDSFB has been participating in this project by collecting tissue samples from juvenile salmon in various tributaries of the Tay. The results should be available in 2010 / 2011.

Invasive weed spraying

In the spring of 2009 all of the Board's bailiff staff and some volunteers, mainly from the River Earn, were trained in knapsack sprayer weed control. The course was paid for by the Tay Foundation through a grant obtained from the Esme Fairbairn Foundation as part of an all Scotland invasive plants control progamme led by RAFTS. Permission was also obtained to allow the bailiffs to use herbicide (Roundup Biactive) on Japanese knotweed close to watercourses. A major effort is planned for spring 2010 to start controlling this pernicious plant, which along the River Earn especially is reaching nuisance proportions.

Errochty Coppicing Project – phase 2

In 2008 the Board's bailiffs thinned out densely shading alder trees along 4km of the Errochty Water, an important spring salmon stream which enters the River Garry near the House of Bruar. This was done to increase light and temperature in this very shaded stream which has the added problem of suppressed springtime temperatures because of a hydro dam upstream. The funding for that work had been obtained as part of the Conservation of

Atlantic Salmon in Scotland EU LIFE project which came to an end in 2008. However, in 2009, it proved possible to continue the work on another 2km of the Errochty because the Tay Foundation kindly covered the costs of contractors who assisted the bailiffs with some of the Tay Foundation's grant from Scottish Government / RAFTS. This means that two thirds of the length of the Errochty Water have now been completely transformed and conditions should be more productive for juvenile salmon.





In 2009, Board staff completed 2km of tree thinning work on the Errochty Water in addition to the 4km completed in 2008. The photo on the right shows the same site before work was done.

SAVILLS MALLOCH TROPHY

Prior to the year 2000 the Malloch Trophy was awarded by PD Malloch Ltd of Perth to the captor of the largest fly caught salmon in Scotland. But with declining runs and an increasing emphasis on catch and release it was not felt appropriate to continue the competition after 1999. The trophy was then largely forgotten.

However, now that catch and release is widespread practice, the Board felt that it might be appropriate to try and resurrect this competition for the largest fly caught salmon which is released in Scotland. Therefore in late 2008 the Board tracked down the Malloch Challenge Trophy and succeeded in purchasing it. It has since become the property of the Tay Foundation.



The most coveted prize in Scottish salmon angling, the Savills Malloch Trophy, is back after a ten year absence.

The Malloch Challenge was reinstated for the 2009 season, under new rules, and is overseen by a committee with representatives from different rivers and chaired by Robert Rattray. The Board's Development Manager has since secured sponsorship for the competition from Savills for a three year period and a partnership with House of Bruar where the Trophy will be displayed throughout the year. It will henceforth be known as the Savills Malloch Trophy and be awarded each year at the Annual River Tay Dinner.

THE RIVER TAY CONSERVATION AND AWARDS DINNER

The 4th River Tay Conservation and Awards Dinner was held at Ballathie House Hotel on Thursday 11 June 2009. The format of the dinner differed from the previous three as, in addition to the presentation of the annual Tay Salmon Conservation Award, it was expanded to include the presentation of the Redford Trophy for the largest salmon caught and released on the Tay on Opening Day and long service awards to retired ghillies. Also, for the first time, an auction and prize draw was held in aid of Tay Foundation projects.



The Ballathie Trophy, which is presented for an outstanding contribution to the conservation of salmon in the Tay, was awarded to The Tay Ghillies Association for the vital contribution which all ghillies made to the big increase in numbers of released salmon in 2008.





Long service awards were inaugurated in 2009 and were presented by Roddy Willis of the sponsors Savills to Dennis Buchan (left), recently retired from the Kercock beat and Willie MacGregor (right), recently retired from Atholl Estates. Jimmy Barret from Upper Scone also received an award but was unable to attend.



The Redford Trophy, for the largest spring salmon caught and released on the Tay on Opening Day was presented to William Manning by Arnot McWhinnie. Mr Manning caught a 14.5 pound fish on Islamouth.



The guest speaker for the evening was well known comedian, but not so well known angler, Jim Davidson.

The highlight of the evening was some extremely humorous entertainment from well known comedian, Jim Davidson. Jim is in fact a very keen coarse fisherman but while on the Tay his appetite for salmon fishing was well and truly whetted. A new convert hopefully!

The evening was then concluded by an auction conducted by local auctioneer and keen angler David Leggat. Some excellent prizes had been donated and this alone raised an impressive £14,000. Adding on the income from a prize draw and donations, over £20,000 was raised for the Tay Foundation as a result of the evening. An excellent evening all round.

WHY WERE CATCHES LOW IN THE TAY IN AUTUMN 2009?

In August 2009 the catch reported to the fishtay website was only 50% of the average of the previous five years and that for September only 58%. Almost all of the beats reporting on fishtay experienced this drop. There were few exceptions.

Catches on other rivers

However the Tay was not alone in having a relatively poor autumn.

- Catches reported by most of the beats on fishtweed were also significantly down in August and September.
- The River Tyne has apparently fished less well and a poorer run has been recorded by the Environment Agency's fish counter.
- While detailed catch data are not available, the general reports are that the Spey and other neighbouring rivers had poorer catches from July onwards.
- Poorer catches have also been experienced on the west coast of Scotland. For example, SSE's fish counter on the River Awe has registered one of its lowest ever counts, with grilse especially being scarce. The Lochy has had a poor season, against expectations. Grimersta, the flagship Hebridean fishery, was also well down according to catches reported on Fishhebrides.
- Even Ireland did not escape. For example, at the Delphi fishery in Co. Mayo some 111 fish were caught during the months of July – September (five year average 279), of which probably no more than 90 were grilse, which equates to about one grilse per day over what is now the prime grilse period.

The notable exception was the Aberdeenshire Dee. In both August and September, total catches reported to fishdee were slightly above the recent average. However, on closer inspection, beats downstream of Banchory fished poorly in September. It was only because beats in the middle / upper Dee did better that the overall catch was pulled up (Fig 1).

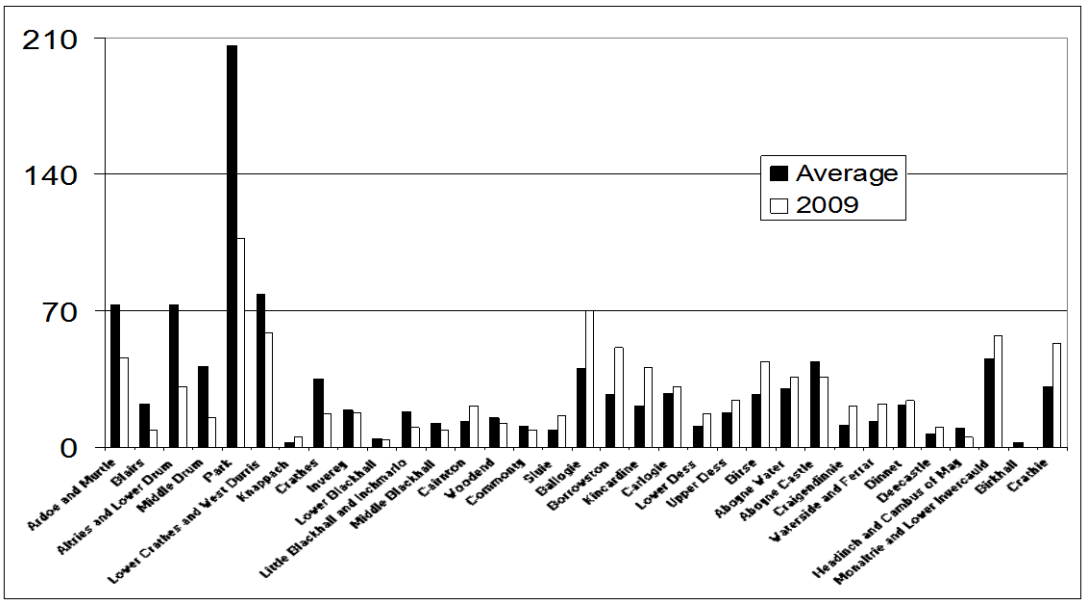


Figure 1. Catches reported in September 2009 to fishdee by participating beats on the River Dee compared with the average of the previous five years.

From accounts of fish caught in the middle Dee during the Dee's early October experimental extension, it seems likely that most of the fish caught in September in the middle / upper Dee were older fish. As the true "autumn" run of the Dee is normally a feature of the lower Dee, then it appears that like other rivers, the Dee may not have had good catches of true autumn fish at all.

Poor sea survival

The fact that both the summer grilse run and the early autumn grilse run appears to have been poorer throughout the British Isles suggests there was poor survival of the smolts which went to sea in 2008, unless they returned very late or are going to return as salmon next year.

It is in fact well accepted that the survival of salmon in the sea has been at an historic low point for some years. It should come as no surprise that the 2008 smolt run continues in this trend.

Figure 2 shows marine survival data up to the 2007 smolt year (i.e. for grilse which returned in 2008) from a number of "index" rivers where the smolt to adult survival is monitored by tagging schemes conducted by scientists from the various governments concerned. In recent years survival has been at an historic low in Scotland, England, Ireland and Norway. The exception to this is Iceland where the survival rate of smolts from the River Elliðaár was markedly higher in 2007, and resulted in big catches in Iceland in 2008.

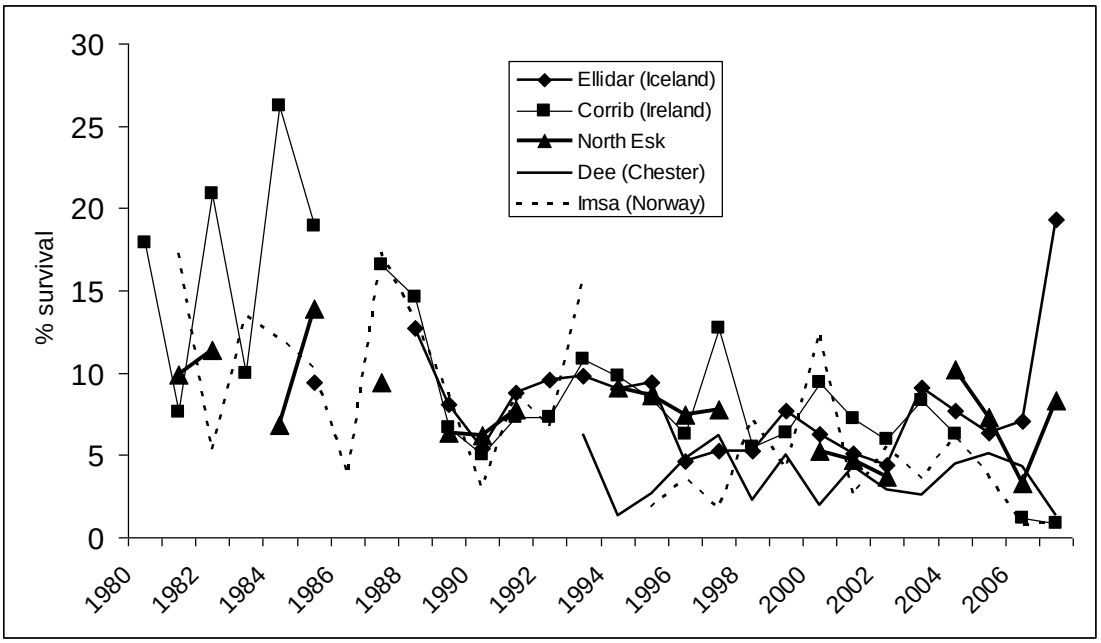


Figure 2. Percentage survival between smolt and grilse stages for "index" rivers monitored by government scientists from Scotland, England, Ireland, Iceland and Norway. (Data from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea)

Angling conditions

On the Tay adverse angling conditions are likely to have contributed to the lower catches, especially in August and early September. Figure 3 shows that the average daily flow in

August was the third highest on record. In fact it was the third of three wet Augusts and all have seen catches dip. The Tay fishes better in a drier August.

However, on the Dee, which has also had three wet Augusts in a row (Figure 4), higher August flows improve fishing conditions in the middle and upper river, hence the fact that that part of the Dee has fished well in late summer during the last three years, but in contrast the Aberdeen and District Angling Association's catches have been at rock bottom during the same years after having record catches in 2003 – 2006. Those catches are not reported on fishdee and therefore do not pull down the fishdee average during a wet year.

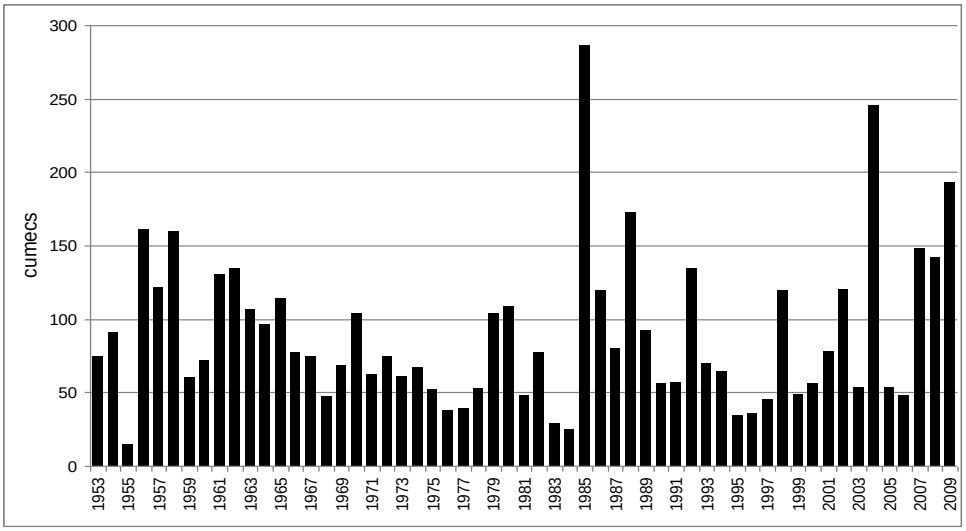


Figure 3. Average daily flow for August measured by the Ballathie gauging station, 1953 – 2009. Data courtesy of SEPA.

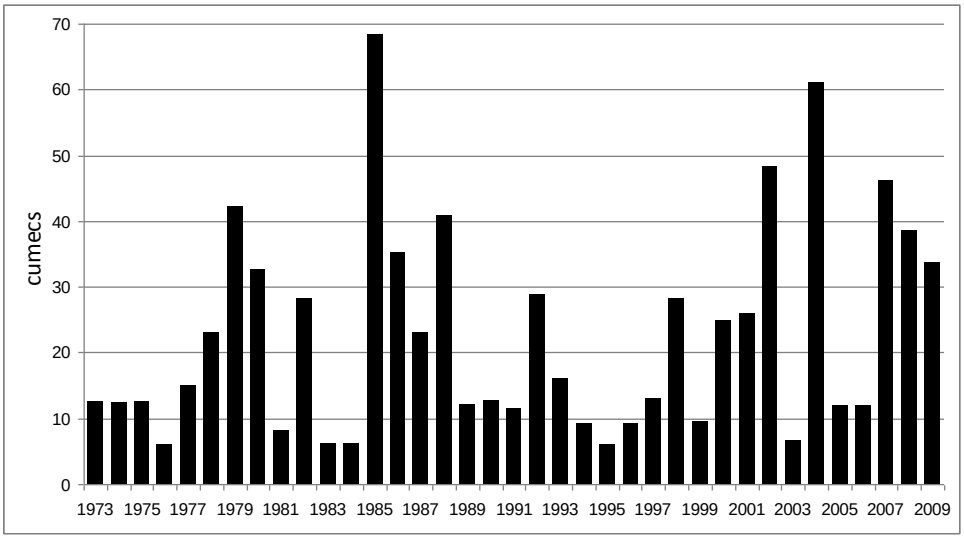


Figure 4. Average daily flow for August measured by the Park gauging station, River Dee, 1973 – 2009. Data courtesy of SEPA.

Conclusion

Taking the effect of conditions into account the Tay did no worse than other rivers in 2009. Poor runs are likely to have been caused by low sea survival to grilse. The main problems clearly lie at sea.

EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE – HELP ON ITS WAY FOR ABSTRACTED RIVERS?

Water abstraction for hydro power is one of the most significant impacts on the Tay and for many decades there was no remedy. However, the European Water Framework Directive provides the first genuine opportunity in 50 years to restore some of this damage. SEPA are the lead agency and have been tasked by Government to produce a plan of work every six years, the first of which is to be published on 22 December 2009.

The directive requires that rivers with hydropower, which are given the special designation of Heavily Modified Waterbodies (HMWB) should be restored to something called Good Ecological Potential (GEP), if they are not already achieving this. This basically means that all practical mitigation should be carried out without significantly impacting on electricity generation. Practical mitigation includes providing fishpasses in dams where there is significant salmon habitat upstream or permanent compensation flows below abstraction intakes.

The first step in the process is to classify the HMWBs according to their ecological potential. In order to assist SEPA in this process, hydro abstractors were invited to a meeting with SEPA in early 2008. That exercise identified some 34 HMWBs in the Tay district affected by Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE) as being at GEP and only four were considered to be at less than GEP. Some others had not been determined.

However on 22 April 2009 the Tay and other affected fishery boards and trusts were invited to a meeting in Aviemore to discuss these results with SEPA and SSE. As a result of the Board's representation at this meeting the classification of 13 of the GEP waterbodies was changed.

Since April SEPA have performed more work and in late 2009 produced a revised classification which has been submitted to Scottish Ministers for their approval. Now there are 24 rivers and streams in the Tay district affected by SSE which are not at GEP and only 10 that are. In the Tay district there are in fact more rivers and streams affected by SSE which require attention than in any of the other Scottish regions (Table 1).

SEPA Area	**Ecological Potential**				
	Good	Moderate	Poor	Bad	Total number of river HMWBs
Argyll	12	4	2	5	23
Clyde	2	0	1	4	7
North East	5	0	1	0	6
North Highland	33	8	2	7	50
Tay	10	9	5	10	34
West Highland	9	1	0	0	10

Table 1. Numbers of Heavily Modified Waterbodies (rivers and streams only, lochs not included) affected by Scottish & Southern Energy in different Ecological Potential classes according to SEPA districts, as recently submitted by SEPA to Scottish Ministers as part of the draft Scotland River Basin Management Plan.

The various Heavily Modified Waterbodies affected by SSE which failed the Good Ecological Potential test are shown in Table 2 along with their Ecological Potential Designation (this is of no great significance here, it is just important that they are at less than good) and the

date by which Good Ecological Potential must be achieved. It is disappointing that for most streams SEPA do not anticipate improvements being completed until 2027, the last date allowed under the Directive. However, many of these streams are steep and of relatively little significance for salmon.

Only the upper Garry and two Garry tributaries are projected to be restored under the first planning round (by 2015). The Board is particularly disappointed that the River Lochay has not been included in the first round as it is likely to yield the greatest environmental gain after the Garry. It is also noted that the Lednock Water, a tributary of the Earn is to be restored by 2021. At the present time SSE are duty bound to maintain a minimum level in the lower reaches of this burn, which they do by releasing water from Lednock Reservoir. In practice this means that in wet weather no flow is released from the dam and several kilometres of stream is practically dry. SSE have stated that they are considering maintaining a permanent compensation flow from the dam. This would be welcome.

It is also a disappointment that the River Lyon is considered to be at Good Ecological Potential. This is based on the fact that Lyon does already have a good compensation flow arrangement, but there is no recognition of the fact that flow regulation appears to have significantly impacted on this river by affecting other factors such as water temperature and chemistry. If the Lyon is considered to be at GEP it will not be one of SEPA's priorities.

However, once the next WFD planning cycle commences in 2010 it is hoped that there will be opportunity to change some of these designations and timings in the light of experience and increased knowledge.

Waterbody	Ecological Potential Classification	Year by which SEPA consider remedial work should be complete
Allt Anndeir (Garry tributary)	BAD	2015
Allt a Chreagain Odhair (Loch Rannoch tributary)	BAD	2027
Killichonan Burn (Loch Rannoch tributary)	BAD	2027
Allt Chaldar (River Gaur tributary)	BAD	2027
Ardeonaig Burn (Loch Tay tributary)	BAD	2027
River Lochay (Source to Allt Dhuin Croisg Confluence)	BAD	2027
Lednock Water (River Earn tributary)	BAD	2021
Beich Burn (Loch Earn tributary)	BAD	2027
River Garry from Garry Intake to Errochty Water confluence.	BAD	2027
River Garry from Loch Garry to Garry Intake	BAD	2015
Allt a Chobhair (Lyon tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Allt Gleann Da-Eig (Lyon tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Allt Bail a Mhuilinn (Lyon tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Allt Conait (Lyon tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Allt a'Mhoirneas (Loch Tay tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Allt Breaclaich (Loch Tay tributary)	MODERATE	2027
Auchlyne West Burn (Dochart tributary)	MODERATE	2027
River Tummel (Loch Faskally to River Tay)	MODERATE	2027
River Earn (Loch Earn to Water of Ruchill)	MODERATE	Not specified
Bruar Water (Garry tributary)	POOR	2027
Edendon Water (Garry tributary)	POOR	2015
River Ericht (Loch Ericht to Loch Rannoch)	POOR	2027
Lawers Burn (Loch Tay tributary)	POOR	2027
Tarken Burn (Loch Earn tributary)	POOR	2027

Table 2. The ecological potential designations of those HMWBs affected by Scottish & Southern Energy in the Tay district which are at less than good ecological potential and the dates by which good ecological potential should be achieved, as submitted by SEPA to Scottish Ministers as part of the draft Scotland River Basin Management Plan.

UPDATE ON THE RIVER GARRY – WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Appreciating that there would soon be a requirement to restore flow to the River Garry (see previous article) Scottish & Southern Energy made an informal proposal several years ago to restore a small flow to the dry part of the upper River Garry which would be matched by increased abstraction from a tributary of the Spey. The Tay Board considered that the amount of water being offered was insufficient to maintain a self-sustaining salmon population nor was it appropriate that more water should be abstracted from the River Spey. The Board then headed a campaign to promote public awareness of the issue which achieved considerable media coverage.

Since then things appear to have gone quiet but the issue is still in fact very much alive.

In the autumn of 2007 SEPA informed that Board that it intended to conduct its own review of the issue and produce its own proposals. However, this did not progress to completion and at some point SSE appear to have been invited by SEPA to make a formal application for a variation of their license conditions under The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005. This application was originally expected early in 2009. Then it was to be in the summer, then the autumn. It now appears unlikely until 2010.

What SSE's formal application will contain is not known. The Board hopes that many of its original concerns will have been taken on board, but that will not be known until the application is made.

When SSE do eventually make their application the following will occur.

There will be a formal public advertisement of the proposal and there will be a 28 day public consultation where anyone will be able to make their views known.

Following the consultation SEPA will determine the application. However, if the Board or any other third party still disagrees with whatever SEPA decides the Controlled Activities Regulations allow third parties the right of appeal to Scottish Ministers, although only those who responded to the initial consultation can do so. Thus, there will be considerable opportunity for the Board and interested parties to participate in this process before it is concluded.

It seems likely that this proposal will go to appeal. It will be Scottish Ministers who will ultimately decide whether there is a good future for salmon in the River Garry or not.



In the near future Scottish Ministers will have to decide on the future of the currently dry River Garry.

FISH COUNTER RESULTS 2009

Pitlochry Dam

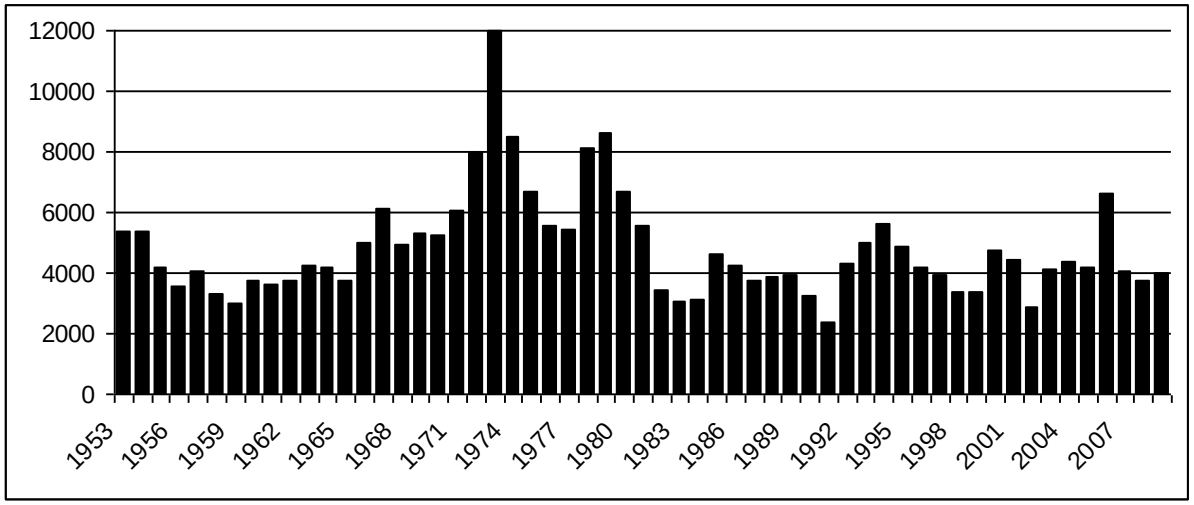


Figure 1. Annual net upstream counts (that is down counts are subtracted from up-counts on a daily basis) through Pitlochry Dam fish ladder, 1953 – 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

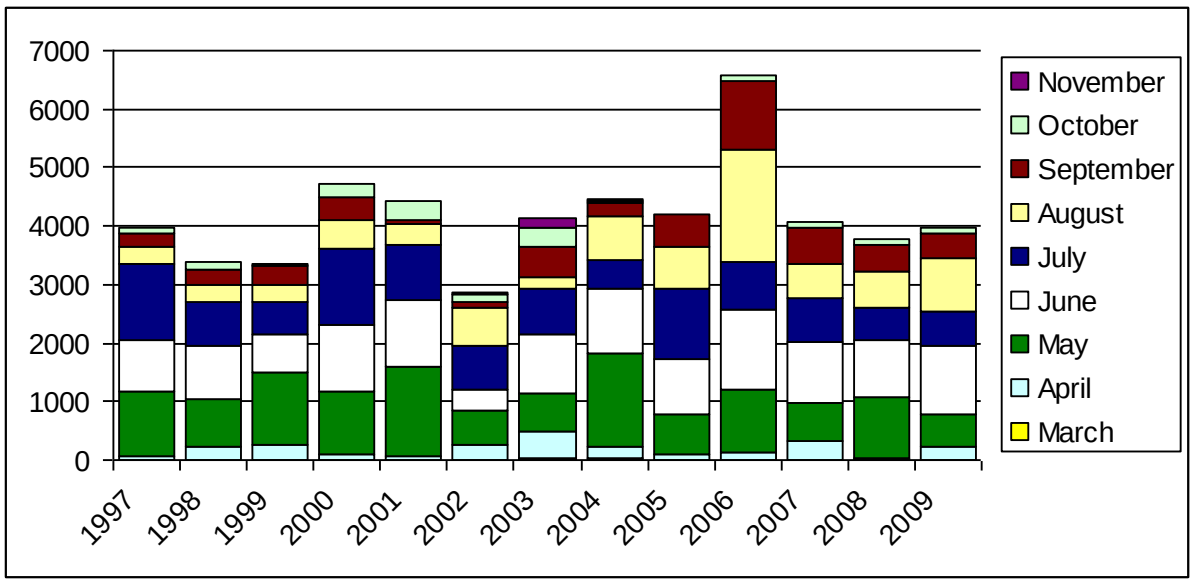


Figure 2. Monthly net upstream counts, Pitlochry Dam, 1997 to 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

The total count at SSE's fish counter in the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam was 3971 which is only a little below average for recent times but better than 2008. The count to the end of June, which should encompass the spring run, was only slightly below average despite the fact that spring salmon catches in 2009 had been some of the lowest ever. Summer counts (1 July onwards) amounted to 85% of the average of the previous five years while summer catches in the Tay were much lower. August was once again the peak grilse month, with the biggest count actually occurring in the last week of the month.

Clunie Dam

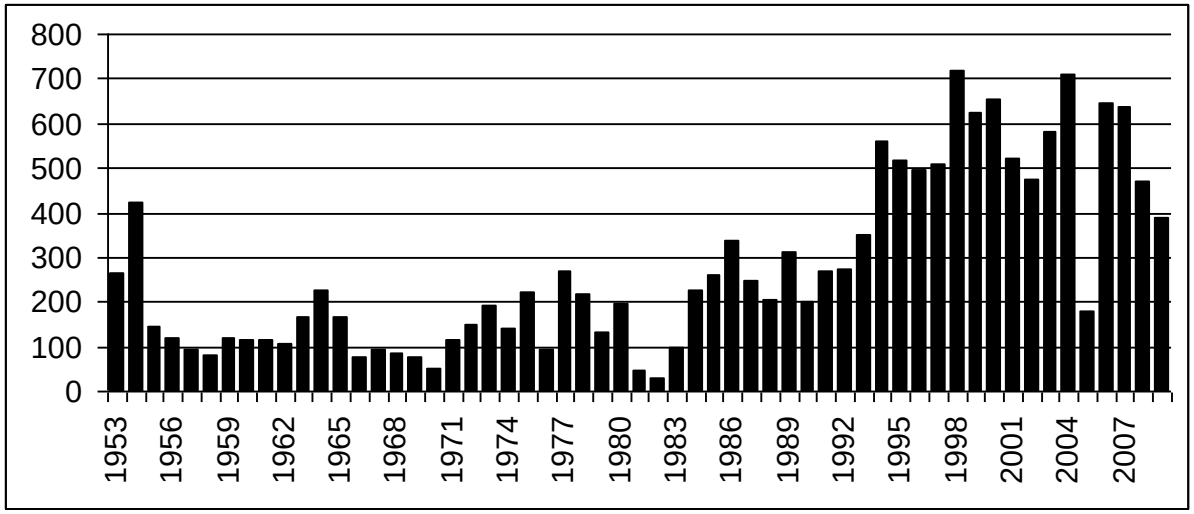


Figure 3. Net annual upstream counts through Clunie Dam fish ladder, 1953 to 2009. (Note: there was a malfunction in 2005). (Data courtesy of SSE)

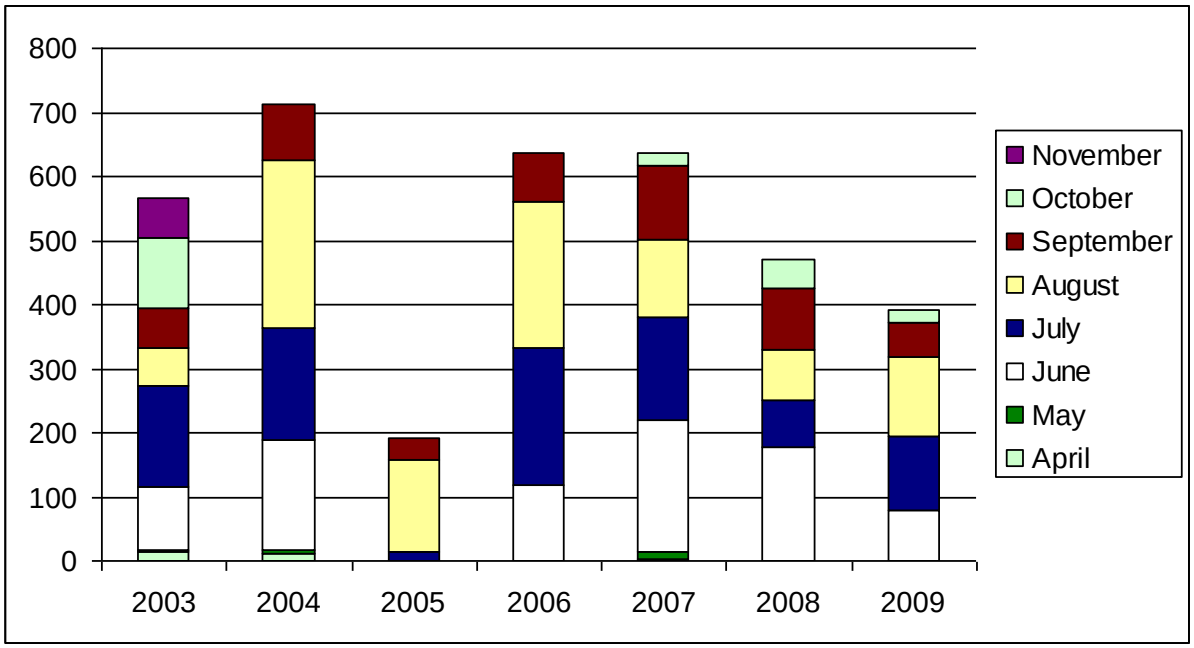


Figure 4. Monthly net upstream counts, Clunie Dam fish ladder, 2003 – 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

In 2009 there was a further fall in counts at SSE's fish counter in the fishpass at Clunie Dam on the upper River Tummel from a recent peak. Since the count downstream at Pitlochry has not fallen to the same extent it would appear that there might have been a local reduction in recent years. But it is not clear what could have caused this.

Lochay Falls

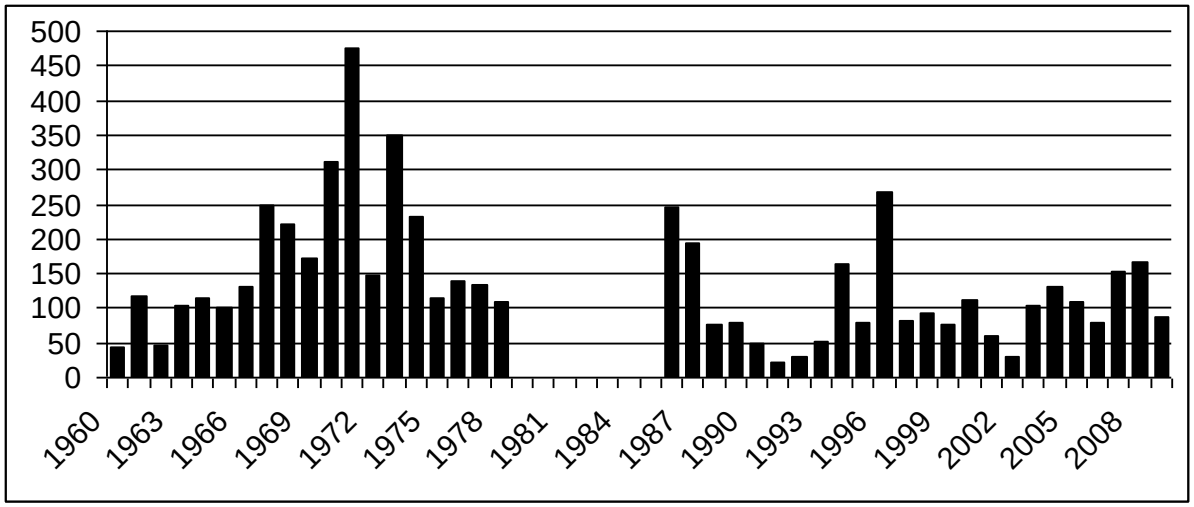


Figure 5. Net annual counts at Lochay Falls fish lift, 1960 to 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

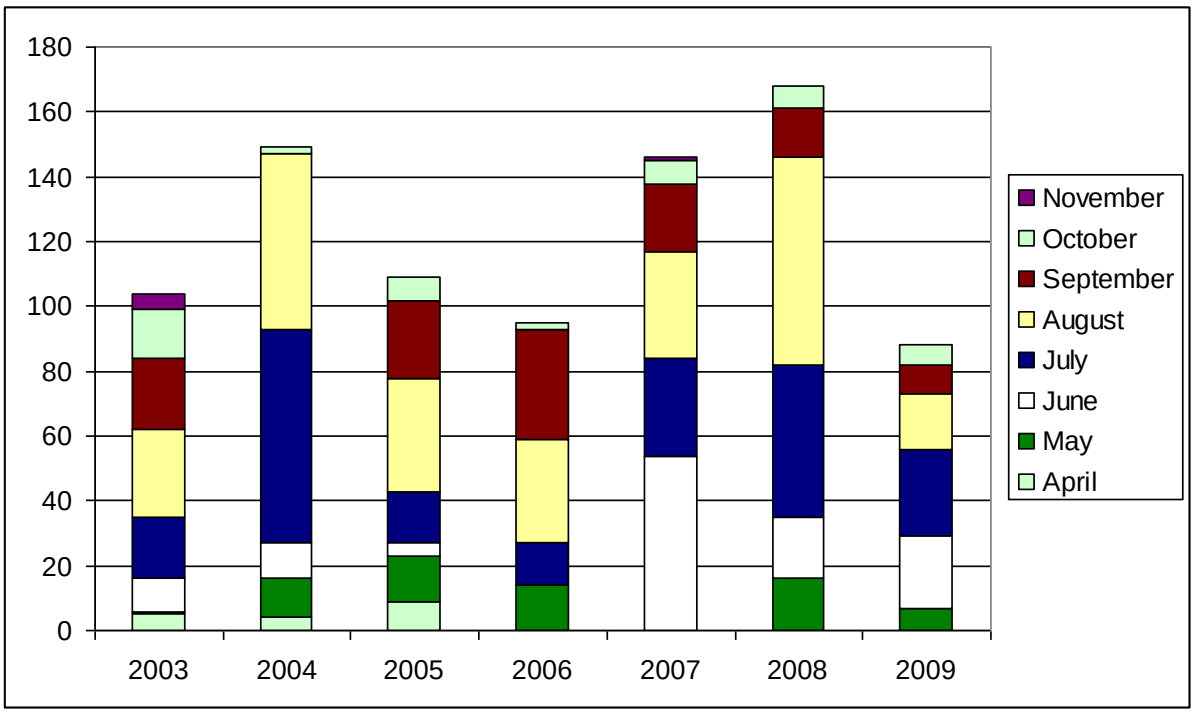


Figure 6. Net monthly upstream counts at Lochay Falls, 2003 to 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

The Lochay Falls are a naturally insurmountable barrier to salmon on the lower reaches of the River Lochay near Killin. As compensation for the loss of former spawning areas on the Lyon, the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board installed a Borland fish lift to allow salmon access to the Lochay. SSE now operate a fish counter on the upstream exit of the fish pass.

The count in 2009 was lower than the recent average. This is disappointing because improvements were made to the fish pass in 2006 / 07 and it was hoped the two better years of 2007 and 2008 were the start of real improvement in this tributary.

Stronuich Dam

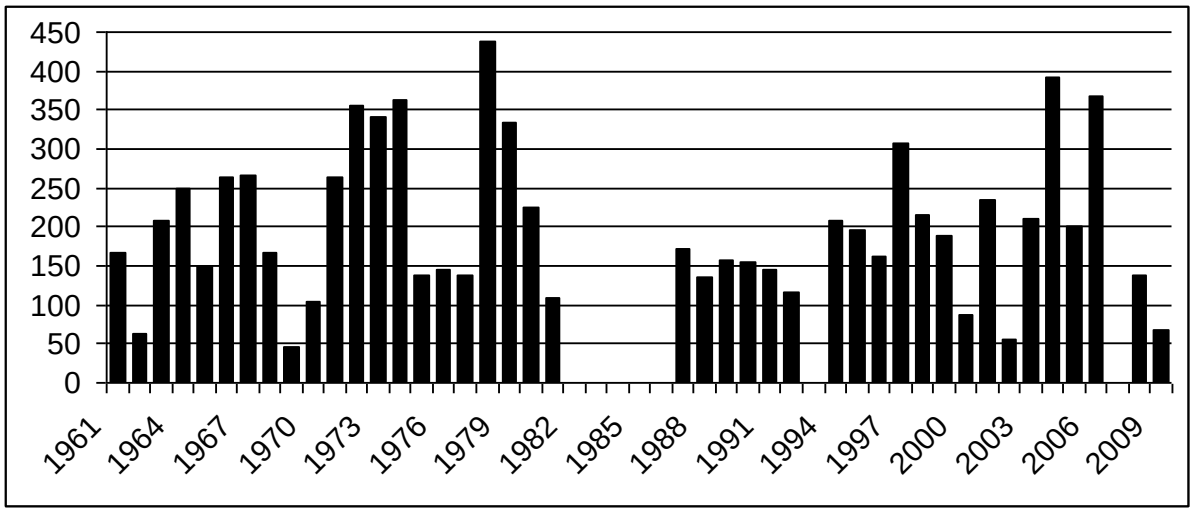


Figure 7. Net annual counts at Stronuich Dam, 1961 to 2009. (Note: there are no data for 2007). (Data courtesy of SSE)

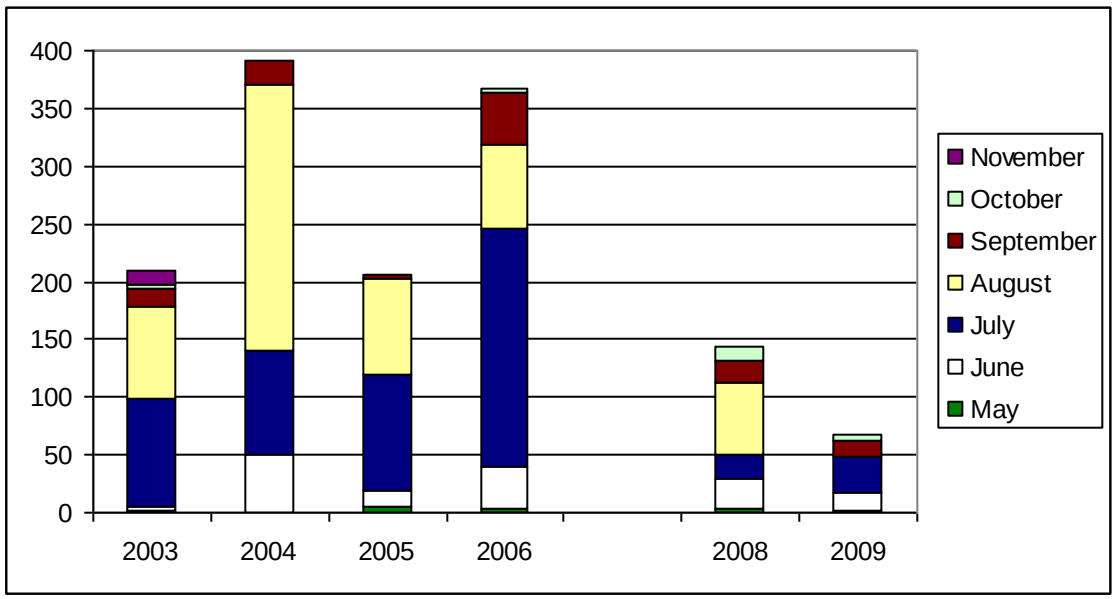


Figure 8. Net monthly upstream counts at Stronuich Dam, 2003 to 2009. (Data courtesy of SSE)

Stronuich Dam is situated on the headwaters of the River Lyon. It has a Borland lift fish pass to allow salmon access to about two miles of river up to the impassable Lubreoch Dam. Prior to 2007 the counter was situated on a gauging weir several hundred metres downstream from the dam and, in theory, not all fish counted would have actually ascended the Borland lift. In 2006 / 07 the lift was refurbished by Scottish and Southern Energy and the fish counter was reinstalled at the point where the fish exit into the reservoir upstream. Unfortunately no counts are available for 2007, the first year of the new counter. However, in both 2008 and even more so in 2009 counts have declined. It is not yet known whether this represents a genuinely poorer run or whether there are issues concerning the new counter. Certainly if it is the former then the poor count of 2009 does not bode well for the Lyon.

River Ericht

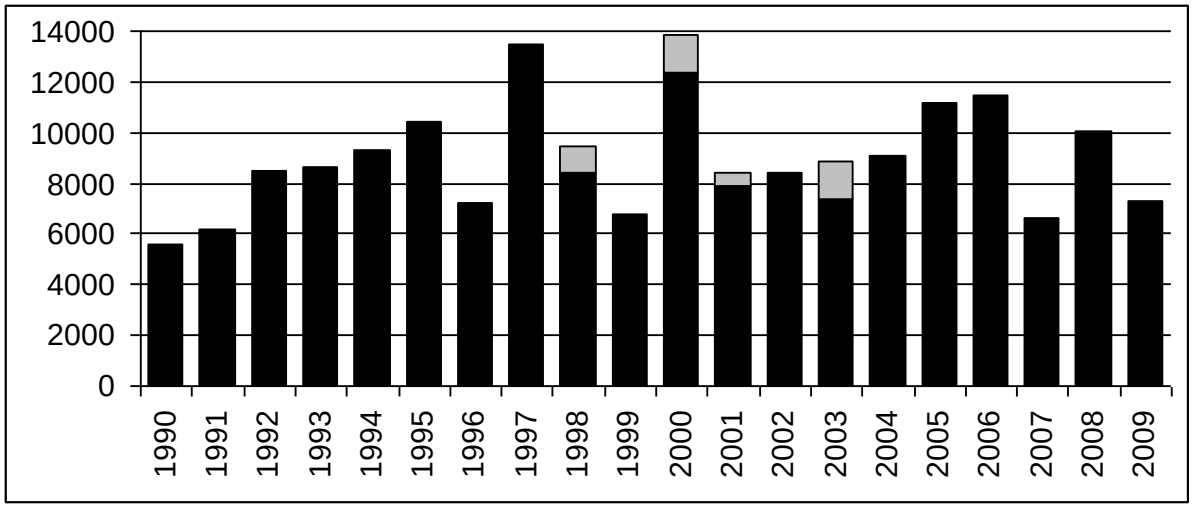


Figure 9. Annual upstream counts at the Blairgowrie fish counter, River Ericht 1990 – 2009. The grey areas give indication of possible extra counts which might be added in years of malfunctions or when fish were trapped below the counter.

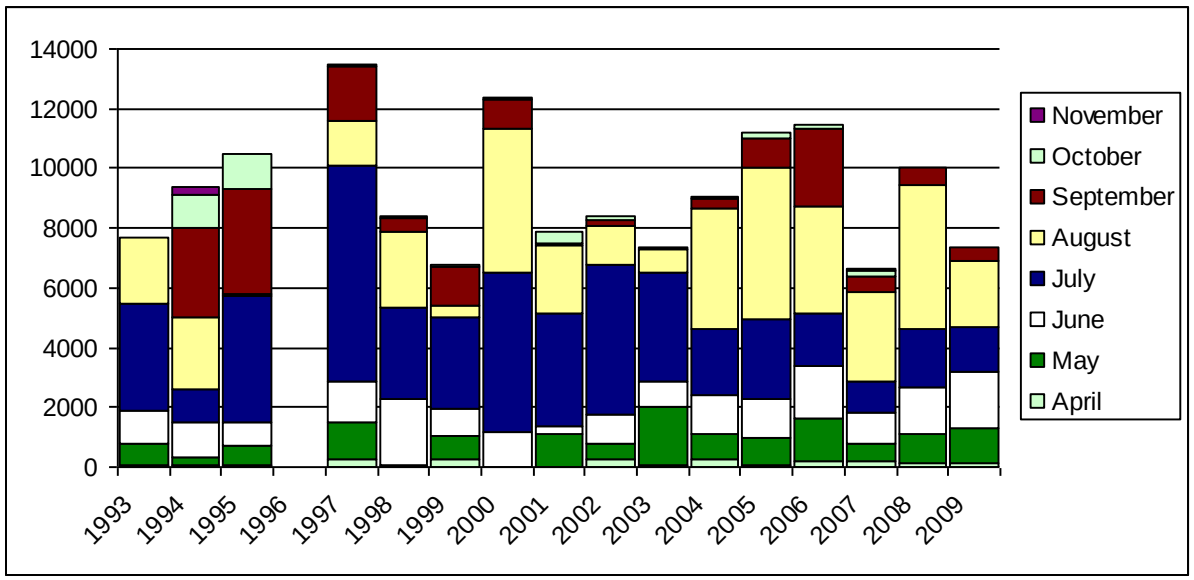


Figure 10. Monthly upstream counts at the Blairgowrie fish counter, River Ericht, 1993 to 2009. Note: data are not available for 1996 nor the springs of 1998 and 2000.

The fifth fish counter in the district is situated in a fishpass at Keathbank Weir on the River Ericht on the outskirts of Blairgowrie and is operated by the Board.

Despite the apparently poor spring catches in the Tay, the count to the end of June 2009 was the second highest in the years for which data are available. This is even more significant considering the number of grilse ascending in June was probably particularly low in 2009. These counts are also supported by good catches in the Isla and lower Ericht in June. However the post 1 July count, which represents the main grilse run, was the poorest yet. August continues to be the main month for grilse counts, in contrast to only a few years ago.

Minute of the 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 the Birnam Institute, Birnam, Dunkeld at 11am on 1st December, 2008.

Present:	John Milligan (Chairman)
	Duncan Glass
	John Young
	Jim Tritton
	Patrick Gordon
	Ross Gardiner
	Robert White
	Christopher Dunphie
	John Wood
	John Apthorp
	William Lindsay
	Robert Rattray
	Alastair Riddell
	David Godfrey
	Viscount Stormont
	A B M Stewart
	C D Lowson
	Bruce Reid
	Ian Marsden
	Gary Harkin
	I Massie
	Peter MacDonald
	Charlotte Gifford
	Suzanne Urquart
	Hugh Law
	Jock Monteith
	Simon Furniss
	Wattie Barbour
	D A Colville
	George Fleming
	Michael Wedderburn
	Iain Wotherspoon
	Ian Dalglish
	Sir William McPherson of Cluny
	J C C Taylor
	Jock Tait
	D Barwick
	D Seaton
	Thomas Steuart Fothringham
	Deirdre Stewart
In Attendance:	Dr. David Summers
	Callum Towns, Clerk
	J Murray Smith, Administration Manager
	Victor Clements
Apologies:	Patrick Steuart Fothringham
	Jane Mercer-Nairne

Lord Ogilvie
Elaine Whewell

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 3rd December, 2007.

The Minutes of the 2007 Annual Meeting were taken as read and, on a proposal by Charlotte Gifford and seconded by William Lindsay, were approved.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December, 2007

The Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2007 which were incorporated in the Annual Report had been circulated and were taken as read.

Ian Dalglish requested that the Accounts include a commentary in future years and also queried the delay in publishing the Accounts. The Chairman agreed to ensure any item of note was reported and stated that the Board had considered it preferable to have the AGM after the end of the season although this meant a delay in producing the Accounts.

Colin Lowson asked what the Board's strategy on funding was. The Chairman explained that the regular running costs of the Board were financed via Assessments and that the Board sought to fund projects externally. He added that the Board had agreed to appoint a fundraiser in 2009.

On a proposal by John Apthorp and seconded by William Lindsay, the Accounts were approved.

Annual Report 2007/8

The Annual Report was taken as read and the Chairman asked for questions.

The Chairman made comment on the 2008 season. The Spring had done well with a number of large fish reported. The summer and autumn runs had been disappointing, not helped by the high rainfall with the associated Hydro effect. He also referred to the effect of Climate change which when producing regular high rainfall had a detrimental effect on spawning areas. He suggested that comparison with other rivers should take into account different seasons and conditions.

He stated that the Board's Catch & Release policy had been a success in 2008 and that the voluntary approach continued to be the preferred option. The 2009 Policy would be largely unchanged except that it would now recommend 100% return of Sea Trout and that, during the periods when worming was acceptable, circle hooks should be used. It was also important that all large fish should be returned

Proprietors were asked to remain vigilant to the threat of Gyrodactylus.

He reported that a number of projects had been carried out during the year including coppicing work and the removal of a number of obstructions, using TDSFB staff where possible.

The Almondbank Hatchery had had an excellent year with a full capacity of 3 million eggs/eyed ova planted out.

He referred to the continuing problems caused to fishing by the proliferation of rafting and canoeing and stressed that a working accommodation among the parties was essential.

He referred to the 2008 Conservation Dinner where the Ballathie Trophy was presented to John Apthorp. The 2009 dinner would include the revival of the presentation of the Malloch Trophy to the angler who catches and releases the largest salmon on the fly during the season in Scotland. This trophy is now owned by TDSFB.

He asked all proprietors to support David Summers in his efforts to return water to the Garry.

He thanked the Tay Ghilllies Association which had spent over £20,000 during 2008 on various projects, the bailiffs, Murray Smith, the new Administration Manager, Callum Towns and David Summers. He also thanked all Board members and paid tribute to those who were not seeking re-election, Christopher Dunphie, Patrick Gordon, Patrick Steuart Fothringham, Andrew Mactaggart and Murray Smith.

Ian Massie expressed the opinion that riparian owners should be encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring that the Catch & Release recommendations were applied on their beats.

On a proposal by Christopher Dunphie, seconded by William Lindsay, the Annual Report was approved.

The Ghillies lunch would be held on 5th January 2009 at the Royal Dunkeld Hotel at 10.30am.

Any Other Business

A meeting has been arranged, via ASFB, between John Milligan and David Summers with the Chairmen and Fisheries Directors of the Tweed, Spey and Dee to share information and experience.

David Summers made the point that there was a huge area of potential stocking in the Tay District but that the limiting factors were physical constraints and the acquiring of brood stock.

Christopher Dunphie thanked John Milligan for chairing the Board for the last 6 years.

No further items were raised and the meeting was closed.

Triennial Election of The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board held under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 on 1st December, 2008 at The Birnam Institute, Dunkeld.

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

In Attendance: Callum Towns as Clerk
Dr. David Summers, Fisheries Manager
Murray Smith, Administration Manager
Victor Clements

1. The Chairman of the outgoing Board, John Milligan, opened the meeting by intimating that he and the outgoing Board resigned. Mr. Milligan then handed over the meeting to the Clerk.

2. The Clerk welcomed the proprietors present to the Election under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. He said that the only business to be conducted at the meeting of proprietors was the election of representatives of proprietors. There was no maximum number of Board members.

3. The outgoing Board had served 3 years. In terms of Section 43 of the 2003 Act the meeting of Upper and Lower Proprietors had been called for the purpose of forming an Association of Proprietors of Salmon Fisheries within the Tay District and for the purpose of electing a Committee to act on behalf of the Association, which Committee would then become the District Salmon Fisheries Board for the Tay District.

4. The Clerk said that Notice had been given to each proprietor on the roll of proprietors in terms of the 2003 Act and also by advertisement in the press.

5. The meeting unanimously agreed that the Clerk should conduct the Election.

6. The Clerk then called for the Election in terms of the 2003 Act and called for nominations from those qualified proprietors present for representatives of Lower and Upper Proprietors.

   The following nomination was received for Lower Proprietors:-

   David Godfrey as Mandatory for Tay Salmon Fishing Co Ltd proposed by The Tay Foundation(Mandatory Christopher Dunphie) and seconded by The River Earn Angling Improvement Association(Mandatory John Young).

The following nominations were received for Upper Proprietors:-

1. Bruce Reid as Mandatory for W Reid proposed by George Fleming and seconded by David Colville.

2. John Milligan as Mandatory for Ballathie Timeshare proposed by Christopher Dunphie and seconded by William Lindsay(Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare).

3. Ian Wotherspoon proposed by Patrick Gordon(Mandatory for Ramsay Partnership) and seconded by John Milligan.

4. William Lindsay as Mandatory for Taymount Timeshare proposed by John Milligan and seconded by Viscount Stormont.

5. Duncan Glass as Mandatory for Clayfield Investments proposed by John Young(Mandatory for Laird Securities) and seconded by John Apthorp(Mandatory for Stobhall Timeshare).

6. Jim Tritton as Mandatory for Mrs C C Ward proposed by Christopher Dunphie and seconded by John Apthorp(Mandatory for Stobhall Timeshare).

7. Viscount Stormont proposed by William Lindsay and seconded by John Young.

8. Ian Massie proposed by William Lindsay and seconded by John Milligan.

9. John Young as Mandatory for Laird Securities proposed by Duncan Glass and seconded by Ross Gardiner(Mandatory for Pitlochry Angling Club).

10. Bob White as Mandatory for A Gifford proposed by Ross Gardiner and seconded by John Young.

11. Thomas Steuart Fothringham proposed by Viscount Stormont and seconded by John Milligan.

12. Alastair Riddell proposed by Wattie Barbour(Mandatory for Westbury Holdings) and seconded by William Lindsay.

13. Ross Gardiner as Mandatory for Pitlochry Angling Club proposed by Bob White and seconded by Viscount Stormont.

14. John Apthorp as Mandatory for Stobhall Timeshare proposed by David Godfrey and seconded by Christopher Dunphie.

15. Sam Mercer-Nairne as Mandatory for Meikleour Hotels & Fishing proposed by John Milligan and seconded by William Lindsay.

16. Simon Furniss as Mandatory for Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel proposed by William Lindsay and seconded by John Milligan.

17. Michael Wedderburn proposed by Bob White and seconded by Wattie Barbour.

There being no further nominations and with the agreement of all proprietors present the Clerk declared that all nominees for Upper Proprietors and the sole nominee for Lower Proprietors had been duly elected as representative of the proprietors to serve on the Committee as follows:-

Upper Proprietors:-

Bruce Reid, John Milligan, Ian Wotherspoon, William Lindsay, Duncan Glass, Jim Tritton, Viscount Stormont, Ian Massie, John Young, Bob White, Thomas Steuart Fothringham, Alastair Riddell, Ross Gardiner, John Apthorp, Sam Mercer-Nairne, Simon Furniss, Michael Wedderburn.

Lower Proprietor:-

David Godfrey

The Clerk said that the formal business of the meeting was now concluded and asked the elected representatives to remain behind for the first meeting of the new District Salmon Fisheries Board. The Clerk thanked those proprietors who had attended.

Report of the Auditors to the proprietors of Salmon Fisheries in the Tay District

In accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation)(Scotland) Act 2003, section 44, we have audited the financial statements on pages 41 to 45. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2007), under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 43.

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opinion
In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to Smaller Entities of the state of the Board's affairs as at 31 December 2008, and of its deficit for the year then ended;
- the financial have been properly prepared in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Campbell Dallas LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
Perth
30 April 2009

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	NOTES	£	2008 £	2007 £
INCOME				
Fishery assessments	2		376,553	335,048
Revaluation Appeals			-	(3,358)
Bad debts, changes to provision for doubtful debts etc			-	-
			376,553	331,690
Compensation Received (SSE)			5,652	5,432
Contributions from Tay Foundation			25,258	22,000
Contribution from SNH			17,293	-
Conservation Dinner			(604)	1,945
Consultancy			827	9,835
			424,979	370,902
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries and National Insurance		221,719		229,311
Pension plus Death in Service- Board's contribution		10,255		7,728
Motor cars and boats running costs, incl insurance		29,831		29,607
Rent, rates and general insurance		14,228		16,734
Heat & light		5,352		4,065
Repairs&maintenance - General		4,369		2,617
Repairs&maintenance - Hatchery		12,200		9,983
Telephone & Communications		7,075		5,181
Printing, stationery and advertising		2,416		2,902
Annual report costs		742		814
Meetings and other statutory costs		2,352		2,377
Public Relations		4,097		-
Ghillies lunch and meeting		780		507
Administration costs		18,020		17,320
Legal fees		5,793		940
Audit and accounts fees		2,229		2,262
Depreciation		23,852		25,766
Subscriptions and levies		11,354		8,886
I T costs		1,330		1,206
Health & Safety implementation incl clothing		7,998		8,499
SOAFD - Kelt reconditioning		16,500		15,000
Stock enhancement costs		3,862		1,950
Project Work		22,766		3,190
Fishtay Website		6,203		11,652
Scottish Native Woods		4,284		-
Gifts & Presentations		447		-
			440,054	408,497
			(15,075)	(37,595)
Gain on sale of fixed assets			-	3,400
			(15,075)	(34,195)
Interest received	3		7,467	9,805
			(7,608)	(24,390)
Transfers to reserves: NASF(UK)	5		-	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year			(7,608)	(24,390)

The notes on pages 43 to 45 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

	NOTES	£	2008 £	2007 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	4		96,101	119,953
			96,101	119,953
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & prepayments		33,676		18,099
Cash at Bank and in Hand		155,101		173,868
		188,777		191,967
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Other creditors & accruals		34,319		53,753
Net current assets			154,458	138,214
NET ASSETS			250,559	258,167
Representing:				
Reserves	5		83,434	83,434
General Fund	6		167,125	174,733
			250,559	258,167

These accounts were approved on 30th April 2009

JOHN MILLIGAN JOHN MILLIGAN
..... BOARD MEMBER

WILLIAM LINDSAY WILLIAM LINDSAY
..... BOARD MEMBER

The notes on pages 43 to 45 form part of these accounts.

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

Fixed assets and depreciation

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

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

Taxation

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

Death in service scheme

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

2 FISHERY ASSESSMENTS

	2008		2007
	Rateable Value	Assessment	Rateable Value	Assessment
	£	£	£	£
Upper proprietors	720,535	374,678	724,760	333,390
Lower proprietors	13,805	7,179	13,805	6,350
	734,340	381,857	738,565	339,740
Less River Shee		(156)		(138)
Estuarial netting stations		(5,148)		(4,554)
		376,553		335,048

The assessments are based on 52% of Rateable Value (2007 - 46%)

3 INTEREST RECEIVED	2008	2007
	£	£
Bank interest	7,467	9,805
	7,467	9,805

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (cont'd)
AT DECEMBER 31 2008

4 FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Property	Motor Vehicles	Boats	Equipment	Plant & Equipment	Office and Computer	Total
	£	£		£	£	£	£
Cost:							
At 1 January 2008	64,578	76,620		42,671	186,517	16,853	387,239
Additions	-	-		-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-		-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2008	64,578	76,620		42,671	186,517	16,853	387,239
Depreciation:							
At 1 January 2008	17,096	45,112		40,844	148,146	16,088	267,286
Charge for year	3,393	9,871		458	9,595	535	23,852
Eliminated for disposals	-	-		-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2008	20,489	54,983		41,302	157,741	16,623	291,138
Net book amounts:							
At 31 December 2008	44,089	21,637		1,369	28,776	230	96,101
At 31 December 2007	47,482	31,508		1,827	38,371	765	119,953

5 RESERVES

	GENERAL	NASF(UK)	TOTAL
	£	£	£
At 1 January 2008	83,434	-	83,434
Provision in year	-	-	-
	83,434	-	83,434
Expenditure in year	-	-	-
Transfer from NASF(UK)	-	-	-
At 31 December 2008	83,434	-	83,434

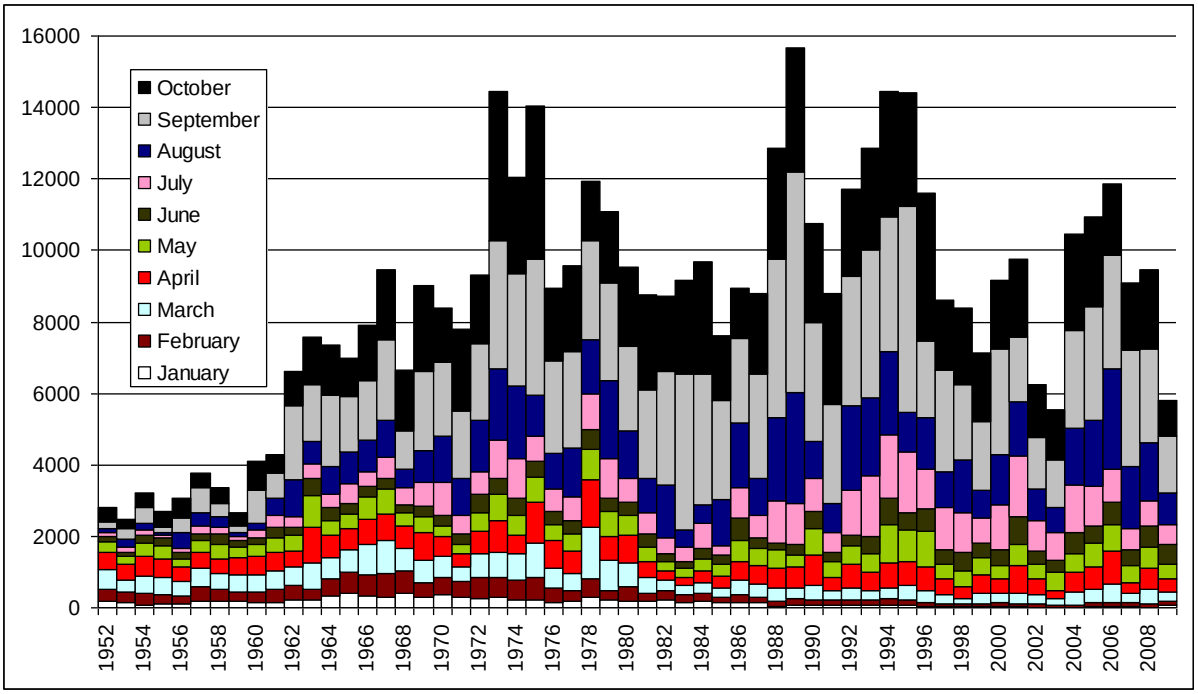
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (cont'd)
AT DECEMBER 31 2008

6 GENERAL FUND

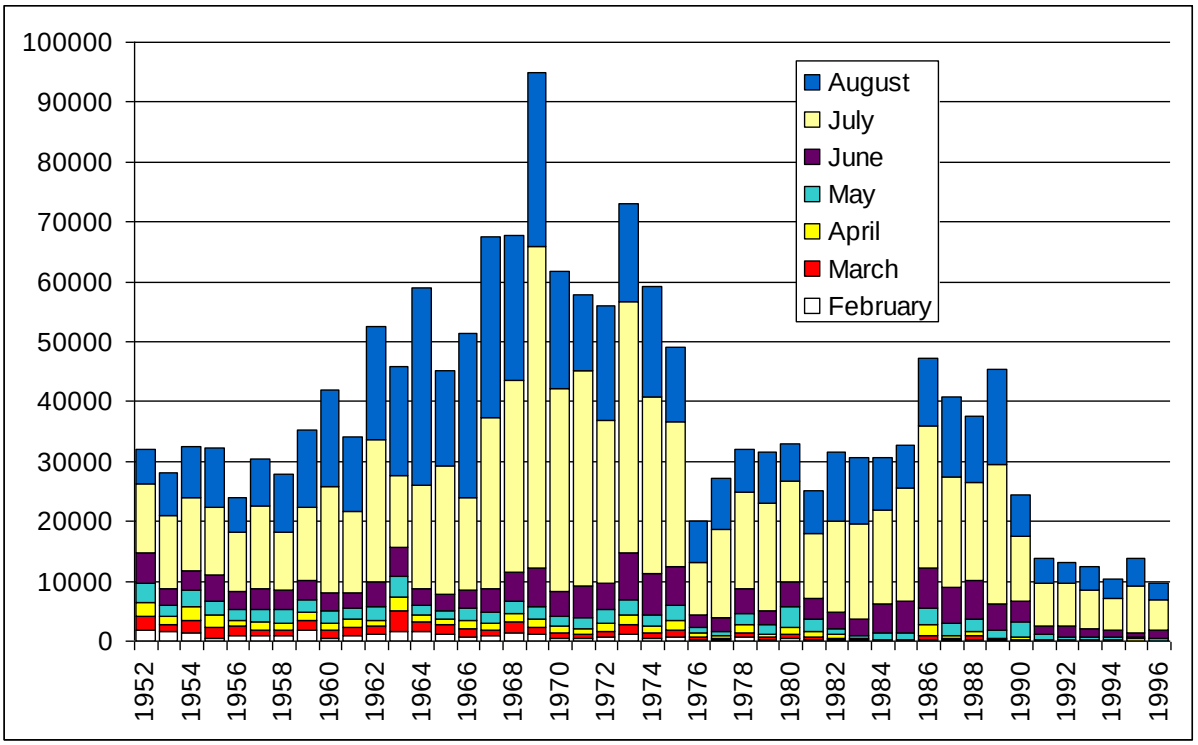
	2008	2007
	£	£
At 1 January 2008	174,733	199,123
(Deficit)/Surplus for year	(7,608)	(24,390)
At 31 December 2008	167,125	174,733

7. CAPITAL COMMITMENT

At the year end the Board had authorised the building of an office extension and computing equipment up to the value of £73,500 and £1,000 respectively.



Monthly angling catch for the Tay District 1952 – 2009 (including released fish). The 1952 – 2008 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. 2009 is a preliminary estimate based on fishtay website analysis.



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 2008

	12 February	11 March	15 April	12 June	11 August	8 October	1 December
J. Milligan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J. Apthorp	-	-	X	X	X	-	X
D. Clarke	X	-	**	-	-	-	***
C.C Dunphie	-	X	X	X	-	-	X
P. Fothringham	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
R. Gardiner	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
D. Glass	-	-	X	-	X	-	X
P.Gordon	X	X	X		X	-	X
W. Lindsay	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
A. MacTaggart	-	-	*	-	*	*	*
R. Rattray	X	-	X	X	X	-	X
J.M. Smith	X	-	-	X	-	Resigned	-
Lord Stormont	-	X	X	-	X	X	X
J. Tritton	-	-	X	-	-		X
R. White	X	X	-	X	X	X	X
J. M. Wood	X	X	-	X	X	X	X
J. Young	X	X	-	-	X	X	X

X Present
\- Apologised for non-attendance
** Ian Mitchell for David Clarke *** David Godfrey as new mandatory
* Alastair Riddell for A.Mactaggart

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board wishes to acknowledge the following people, organisations and companies for their very kind assistance and support throughout 2008 and 2009.

All Proprietors within the Tay District
Callum Towns
Andrew Graham-Stewart
All honorary Bailiffs
All Ghillies and Boatmen
All Tay Board staff
The Tay Ghillies Association
The Tay Foundation
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Mike Miles, Steve Keay and Jim Muir at the Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Almondbank
The staff of Marine Scotland at:
Pentland House, Edinburgh
Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry
Montrose Research Station
The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish and Southern Energy plc