



TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Tay District River Management Plan 2021 Outcomes

What was achieved during the past 12 months?

Goal 1 – Stewardship

Conservation outcomes

		Outcome achieved?	Comments
Continue Catch & Release Policy, Review Annually	Ensuring spawning stocks are as high as they can be.	Yes	The Board continued to recommend 100% catch and release. Compliance remains high.
Enforce the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. Continue to employ a core team of full-time trained bailiffs and may appoint honorary bailiffs who have passed the IFM certificate.	Ensuring spawning stocks are as high as they can be.	Yes	The Board continued to employ a team of fisheries officers and maintained a functional enforcement service.
Respond to consultations on developments.	To prevent damaging development.	Yes	Responses were made to a number of issues throughout the year, for example, the ongoing issue of proposed restoration of the fish farm at Mill of Ross, River Earn.
Promote awareness of <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> among anglers and river users. A contingency plan should be produced in the event of <i>GS</i> being discovered in the Tay	<i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> is a parasite of salmon which will practically wipe out salmon in a river. It was introduced to some rivers in Norway but is not present in the UK.	No	Not enough progress was made on promoting awareness of this threat.

Predation

Perform counts of piscivorous birds and apply for licences to shoot to scare, especially at migration bottlenecks. Quantify impacts, particularly to establish whether pre-smolting salmon are a significant component of goosander diet in winter.	Piscivorous birds predating on juvenile salmon and smolts	Yes	The counting system was enhanced by the involvement of many volunteers resulting in more counts which were also more extensive. This resulted in increased licensed quota of goosanders. A “smolt shepherding” exercise was also conducted on the lower Erich and Isla during. These initiatives will continue to be developed.
Continue to apply for licences to control seals in upper Tay estuary. Investigate seal scarers.	Seals can penetrate the Tay to the head of tide and beyond. Predation on adult salmon in the river and descending kelts plus scaring fish from pools.	No	A licence was applied for, but as was the case for all rivers in 2021, Marine Scotland did not issue a licence.

Habitat outcomes

Monitor burns in spring, autumn and spawning time for beaver damming. Engage with beaver issues, including Scottish Beaver Forum etc as they arise.	Beaver dams now appear regularly in burns and can block passage of descending smolts and spawning adults	Yes	Fisheries Officers monitored a number of areas for beaver damming and ensured salmon had free passage.
Board staff or volunteers should keep fish passes clear in spring and autumn.	Fish passes can clog with debris (can be exacerbated by beaver damming) preventing upstream passage of adults.	Yes	Fisheries Officers removed numerous beaver blockages from fish passes over the course of the year, often repeatedly from the same sites.
Get permission to replace weir at Buchanty Spout, River Almond.	Hydro Board installed a gabion weir below Buchanty Spout to back up water level. Eventually it will fail, effectively increasing the height of the falls, making it more difficult for fish to ascend the Almond.	No	Some progress was made on this issue but remains on the agenda.
Think about extending control of invasive plants and mink outwith the Scottish Invasives Species Initiative area and for 2023 find replacement for SISI.	Invasive Plants cause loss of native vegetation, erosion, access to river, visual amenity. Mink predation on juvenile salmon and sea trout	Yes	The SISI team successfully applied for funding to extend the project for another, interim, year. A further application hopes to secure another round of longer term funding and expand the project area, which should then take in the Earn and Eden.
Improvements required at two weirs on the Shochie Burn, or complete removal if possible.	Some salmon may have difficulty ascending these weirs in certain circumstances.	Actioned	This is ongoing.

Goal 2 – Enhancement

Habitat outcomes

Work with Scotland's Rural College and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority to get flood banks lowered on Fillan Water.	Flood embankments on Fillan Water may have exacerbated bank erosion in a critically important spawning area.	Actioned	A survey of the embankment has been completed and a SEPA CAR licence is being sought for permission to remove. The next round of the Nature Restoration Fund is awaited, where funding will be sought to complete this project.
Obtain permission to open out areas of dense tree canopy on the Lunan Water to stimulate growth of weed and grasses to provide fish cover.	Dense tree shade over otherwise fertile burns suppresses algae / vegetation resulting in slower growing fish relative to general area. Also an emerging issue on other tribs. This experimental work will inform future policy.	No	Forestry and Land Scotland continue to refuse issuing of a felling licence. Representations continue to be made to persuade them otherwise.
Lobby SEPA to prioritise removal of an impassable weir on the Dall Burn, Rannoch, under Water Environment Fund.	Impassable weir on lower reaches prevents all salmon access.	Actioned	The issue has been raised with SEPA several times over the course of the year.

Hatchery outcomes

Stock eggs from reconditioned kelts to kick start restoration of Garry salmon population.	Adult salmon still to colonise newly restored river.	Yes	The Garry and Allt Glas Choire (see below) were stocked in the spring of 2022, as planned.
Mitigation stocking of eyed eggs from reconditioned kelts in Allt Glas Choire. Ultimately sufficient broodstock may be obtained in Glas Choire below intake or in Garry with no need to recondition.	Adult salmon have no access above impassable hydro abstraction weir on Allt Glas Choire	Yes	See above.
Conduct scientific stocking in areas with low juvenile abundance to determine whether carrying capacity is being achieved.	To identify areas where juvenile salmon numbers are limited because of access constraints or other constraints on successful spawning	Yes	Trial stocking continued on the upper reaches of the Ruchill Water, Earn tributary.
Seek permission to establish a salmon population in the River Braan by trapping adults at Inver and trucking around Hermitage and Rumbling Bridge falls	Natural impassable waterfalls prevent salmon entering this otherwise excellent salmon river.	No	This issue awaited the publication of Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy and is still to be raised as potential inclusion in implementation plan.

Hydro and abstraction mitigation

Lobby SEPA to seek to make the upper River Garry accessible to salmon.	Salmon cannot access upper River Garry despite flow now restored, because Garry Intake is not screened for smolts.	Actioned	This will be presented to Scottish Government for inclusion on Wild Salmon Strategy Implementation Plan.
Make case and lobby SEPA for conversion of rock fish passes on River Lochay to "rock ramps".	Three fish passes, hewn from rock may pose difficulty to some ascending salmon, because salmon have yet to colonise the upper reaches. Reducing the fish pass gradients and increasing flows may help.	Actioned	A report summarising the Board's monitoring of the River Lochay was presented to SSE, SEPA, NatureScot and Marine Scotland and various meetings held. This was done in conjunction with the next action below. SEPA are to review SSE's CAR licence over summer 2022. Outcome awaited.
Lobby SEPA / Scottish Government for more for dry weather abstraction to cease on River Lochay.	Hydro water abstraction exacerbates low flows during dry periods and may reduce salmon parr habitat	Actioned	See above.
Collect information on the impact of damming on water chemistry in the River Lyon. If an effect is found, lobby SEPA and others for replacement of lost nutrients.	Juvenile surveys indicate invertebrate community of the River Lyon has been altered because of hydro flow regulation. Change in temperature regime and chemistry are potential causes. Salmon growth rates appear significantly affected.	Actioned	This will be presented to Scottish Government for inclusion on Wild Salmon Strategy Implementation Plan.
Monitor smolt passage at Blairgowrie Fish Farm, River Ericht, to inform SEPA of the suitability of arrangements. If necessary, lobby SEPA to conduct further review.	Fish farm abstracts from Ericht at Blairgowrie. Despite recent SEPA review can still take a significant proportion of the flow and the bypass effectiveness remains to be demonstrated.	Actioned	In 2021 and 2022 Fisheries Officers monitored smolt passage and information informed SEPA. The Board commissioned independent flow gauging. Action group of local parties and Board set up to monitor situation and feed information to SEPA. SEPA have promised a further review of the abstraction licence.
Lobby SEPA to review general irrigation abstraction licences.	In dry weather, agricultural irrigation is common and can impact on drought flows in burns particularly.	No	

Goal 3 - Knowledge

Conservation outcomes

Continue with juvenile electrofishing surveys, including National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) and Gaur and Lochay above fish passes. Review regularly.	Understanding the status of the salmon population and identify problem areas.	Yes	A full programme of electrofishing was conducted in summer / autumn of 2022, including NEPS survey.

Water quality

Commission audit of historic SEPA invertebrate data.	There are concerns that diffuse and point source pollution and other impacts may have altered or reduced freshwater invertebrate populations.	No	This proposal was put on hold until SEPA's databases were restored following a cyberattack.