

May 2015

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Pupils hooked on Salmon Project

Local school children help to hatch, look after and release juvenile salmon as part of the popular 'Salmon in the Classroom' programme run by the Spey Foundation.

This year three schools were selected to take part: Knockando primary; Cullen primary and Aviemore primary. Each class began the programme by taking part in an interactive lesson on the River Spey, the ecosystem and the lifecycle of the Atlantic salmon. Polly Burns, Assistant Biologist and co-ordinator of the Spey Foundation's education programme said, "All the classes were attentive and listened really well, asking some brilliant questions, particularly when the time came for them to be released."

The classes were introduced to their salmon eggs, and given detailed instructions on how to care for them to ensure their survival at the release stage. When the eggs hatched into alevins; the stage when the fish still have their egg sacs which provide nutrition, it was time to release the salmon into the local burn, where the alevins could mature in the wild.

released them into the Fochabers burn and finally Aviemore primary whose salmon were released into the Milton burn.



Above: Cullen primary P4-5 class after releasing their salmon, with teacher Mrs Thompson and Spey Foundation education programme coordinator, Polly Burns. (Photo courtesy of Cullen Primary School)

Below: Aviemore primary school P5 class ready to release their salmon (Photo courtesy of P. Burns)



Above: Knockando primary P5-7 class after releasing their salmon (Photo courtesy of P. Burns)

Knockando primary were the first to release their eggs into the Knockando burn, closely followed by Cullen primary who



In June the pupils will be given an opportunity to return to the area of the burn they stocked and see how much the fish have changed and grown.

SPEY FISHERY BOARD RESEARCH OFFICE

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BRIEFING - MAY 2015

Smolt Traps Season Underway

The first of the smolt traps went into the Upper Fiddich on the 17th March in preparation for this year's smolt run. The 4 foot diameter rotary screw trap was one of three traps deployed as part of the Fisheries Monitoring Plan in association with the Dorenell Wind Farm. With a joint Deveron and Spey team effort, the other two traps were installed in the Allt Deveron and Blackwater, a Deveron tributary, operated by the Deveron River Trust.

The River Fiddich trap is located in the upper river water with about 5 or 6km of first class habitat used by salmon upstream. The conductivity and pH in the Fiddich are amongst the highest found in the Spey catchment. There was a good mixed catch last year with the salmon smolts considerably larger on average than found in the upper Spey tributaries.



Above: The River Fiddich Trap secured into position and operational



Above Left: The Deveron and Spey Team working together to secure the Allt Deveron Trap. The Upper Deveron has very good habitat with a good catch of salmon smolts last spring.

Above Right: The third trap was deployed a short distance downstream of the Deveron trap location in the Blackwater, a short distance upstream of the confluence, a good sized spawning tributary well known for its spawning run of big river trout.

River Avon and Tommore Burn Smolt Traps

Following the success of last year's smolt traps on the Avon, one of the Spey's main tributaries, a decision was made by the Spey Foundation Committee to continue monitoring the spring smolt run with the same traps again for 2015. It was also agreed to install a smolt trap on the Tommore Burn, a stocked tributary of the River Avon, to quantify the numbers of fin-clipped fish leaving as smolts.

Due to its small size, the Tommore Burn required a bespoke smolt trap to be designed and built on site.

This engineering work was carried out by SFB Hatchery Manager, Jimmy Woods, SFB Bailiffs: Richard Whyte, Jason Hysert, Ali Grant, Lindsay Grant and Ghillies Steve Brand, and Josh Walker. The Spey Foundation would like to thank all involved and in particular the Ghillies, Steve Brand and Josh Walker. Both smolt traps began operating from the 21st March and by the 26th April the total number of smolts recorded on the Tommore Burn was 296 salmon and 32 trout and the Avon had a total of 2467 salmon and 166 trout smolts recorded. The final results of the smolt traps will be published in our next Briefing.



Construction Team at work: Alistair Grant, Josh Walker, Jason Hysert and Lindsay Grant. (Photo Courtesy of Richard Whyte)



Tommore Burn Smolt Trap installed and operational



A fin-clipped salmon pre-smolt from the Tommore Burn trap. This one has been fin-clipped to identify it as originating from the SFB Hatchery. (Photo courtesy of J. Woods)



4 ft and 6 ft Smolt Traps in position again on the River Avon

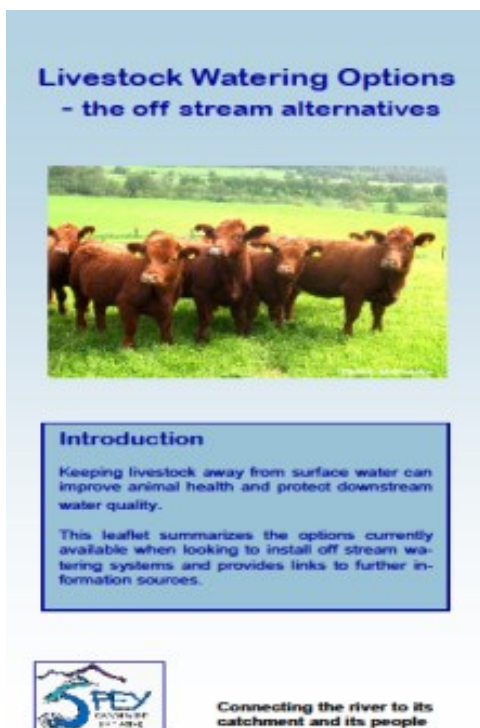


Alliance of Water Stewardship

In March, the Spey Catchment Initiative gave a presentation at the inaugural UK Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) event as a case study for the delivery of catchment scale water stewardship. AWS has the potential to become a future key driver in water usage responsibility and improving standards. More information about the alliance can be found at <http://allianceforwaterstewardship.org/>

The Spey Catchment Initiative recently published a leaflet, as part of its work to improve the condition of river banks, tackle diffuse pollution and promote best practice. The leaflet summarises all the options available for watering livestock off-stream.

Downloadable versions are available on the following websites at www.cairngorms.co.uk and www.speyfisheryboard.com/spey-catchment-initiative.



Exhibition at Speyside Visitor Centre

We are very pleased to announce that we have been given an opportunity to exhibit information about the work of the Spey Fishery Board and the Spey Foundation at the Speyside Visitor Centre in Aberlour which opened on the 2nd April. The visitor centre, formerly Aberlour railway station, was taken over by the Aberlour Community Association who plan to upgrade the premises over the coming months. Last year there were circa 4000 visitors and it is hoped that the visitor centre will attract similar numbers, if not more, this year. The centre will be open daily from 10:00am until 5:00pm and will run until the end of September.



Dates for the Diary

Spey Fishery Board Meetings

To be held at **9:30 am at the Craigellachie Hotel**, Victoria Street, Craigellachie, AB38 9SR on the following dates:

Friday 22nd May, Friday 28th August and Friday 20th November 2015.

Members of the public are invited to attend as observers, but are requested to give notice to the Board's Administrator, Sally Gross, by telephone on 01340-810841, or by email at admin@speyfisheryboard.com

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