

YTHAN DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

Annual Report of the Clerk for 2021 Fishing Season

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CONTENTS

Annual Report of Clerk

Page 1

1. State of River
2. Predators
3. Nets in river
4. 2021 Season

Page 2

5. Spawning
6. Electro Fishing

Page 3

7. Stocking
8. Board Staff / Bailiffing
9. Sea Poaching
10. Pollution / Obstructions
11. River Ythan Trust
12. New website
13. Conservation Policy

Page 4

14. Complaints Handling
15. Members' Interests
16. Activities for 2022

10y	1783	15007	0	1283	11645			2551	15226		
Av	178	1501		128	1165			255	1523		
5y	541	6490	0	509	5419			541	6577		
Av	108	1298		102	1084			108	1315		

5. Spawning

We are awaiting the Redd Count data from the Bailiffing team and will publish this on the website once we have it. The same survey corridors have been used in 2021 -2 as in previous years so we are beginning to build up a better picture of the spawning situation over a reasonable area of river bed.

6. Electrofishing Survey

The Scottish Government Marine Science survey of 16 sites went ahead but did not include the 4 annual sites that have been surveyed in the previous 3 years. In order to maintain these sites we arranged for them to be added to the MS sites by the Deveron Bogie and Isla Rivers Trust.

The four sites contained both salmon fry and parr and trout fry and parr in all 4 locations and a summary of the data over the last 4 years is set out below. (Note the numbers present are graded from A (excellent) to F (absent)).

Passes	Year	Area m ²	Sal Fry	Grade	Sal Parr	Grade	Trt Fry	Grade	Trt Parr	Grade	
3	2018	102.0	58	B	6	C	18	B	7	C	Locham's Pot
3	2019	103.8	57	B	16	B	3	D	11	C	Methlick
3	2020	103.8	17	D	9	C	34	B	18	B	
3	2021	104.0	61	B	13	B	13	C	9	C	
	2018	105.0	26	C	3	D	5	D	6	C	Slaties Pot
	2019	105.0	4	E	1	E	5	D	2	D	opp. Ardlogie
1	2020	112.0	2	E	1	E	7	D	22	A	
1	2021	112.0	18	D	0	F	3	D	4	D	
1	2018	106.0	0	F	0	F	36	B	15	B	Mains of Towie
1	2019	112.0	7	E	0	F	87	A	9	C	
1	2020	114.0	1	E	1	E	13	C	10	C	
1	2021	114.0	0	F	0	F	18	B	14	C	
3	2018	112.0	7	E	10	B	97	A	11	C	Fordoun burn
3	2019	104.8	21	D	5	C	58	A	18	B	Rootie Linn
3	2020	117.6	70	B	10	B	42	A	15	B	Fyvie
3	2021	118.0	12	D	13	B	66	A	5	C	

7. Stocking

No stocking took place during the year.

FMS and Scottish Government Marine Science does not support introducing any stock fish from a hatchery save in exceptional circumstances. This remains an area of huge debate not only in the UK but also now in the USA and Canada particularly in regard to Pacific salmon species which have been heavily re-stocked for many years possibly at the expense of natural stocking.

8. Board staff / Bailiffing

The work of bailiffing the river has been conducted by a team from the River Don DSFB. All reports of illegal fishing have been followed up by the team and in some cases anglers warned off. As detailed above the bailiffs' time has been increasingly spent on non-policing activities including piscivorous bird surveys, redd counts, clearing obstructions and clearing ranunculus from spawning areas. These non-policing activities are likely to continue to occupy more of the bailiffs' time in the future as stock recovery is of paramount importance to the Board.

9. Sea Poaching

There have been no reports of poaching on the coast of the Ythan during the season.

10. Pollution / Obstructions

The devastation of woodlands by Storm Arwen in late November 2021 will have caused new obstructions to the river and its tributaries. Only a few of these will affect the upstream passage of fish but if you see an obstruction that you consider impassable please advise the Clerk and a survey will be carried out.

SEPA has confirmed that a project to remove the weir from the Bronie Burn at Scottisley will be undertaken during the year (it was postponed due to the lockdown conditions in 2020 and 2021) thanks to the work of Alec Patterson and the River Ythan Trust.

Scottish Water have intimated their intention to remove the obstruction on the Fordoun Burn at Bridge of Lewes in Fyvie. This will be a large project and SEPA have insisted on careful design of the replacement channel which has yet to be agreed.

11. River Ythan Trust

The Trust has again arranged for and supported the Ythan Biodiversity Volunteers to undertake the control of invasive species (plants) that remain in the catchment. Despite Covid regulations it has been possible for the annual spraying of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed to take place within the river Ythan with assistance from the SISI project. SISI has also controlled Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam within the water of Cruden / Laeca and Slains burn.

12. Website

The website is working well. If you have any ideas for improvement please report these to the Clerk.

13. Conservation Policy

The Board has adopted a conservation policy since 2008. This has been updated annually and places restrictions on the numbers of fish that can be caught and kept. The river has remained in

Category 3 which requires all salmon to be returned to the river. There will be an opportunity to discuss the number of sea trout that can be taken – if any.

15. Complaints Handling

The Board has adopted a Complaints Handling Procedure which is available from the Clerk.

16. Members' Interests

The Clerk will keep a register of financial interests of all members of the Board and any person associated with the Board.

17. Activities for 2022

The Ythan is vulnerable to diffuse pollution from the agricultural activities in the District and to accidental pollution from farms, industrial estates, development and housing. Previous incidents have been numerous and led to significant fish kills.

The Board will continue to monitor the river for pollution and to support SEPA with any subsequent action.

During 2020 SEPA ceased carrying out individual inspections of all farms in the catchment area from Ellon westwards (those to the East of Ellon have already been surveyed) because of Covid restrictions. The work in the catchment has still not yet been completed and further surveys did not take place in 2021. We hope that these will be concluded in 2022. Each farmer will be given a list of unacceptable practices or installations found on their farm and will be given an opportunity to discuss with SEPA a timetable for action. Those that fail to keep up with the agreed timetable may face further action from SEPA who now have enormous experience of farm inspections having already completed surveys of all of the other catchments in the North East.

The Board will ensure anglers abide by the Conservation Policy and will ensure compliance with the 100% catch and release policy on salmon that has been imposed on the river during 2022 season.

The Board will commission electro fishing surveys as requested by Marine Scotland of sites allocated by Marine Scotland over the Ythan and Ugie catchments. The Board will continue to conduct electro-fishing surveys of the 4 annual sites as detailed above.

The Board will support Aberdeen University and Nature Scot in monitoring and surveying seals within Forvie NNR. This includes work to establish the proportion of salmonids in the diet of seals. Scottish Government has been unwilling to provide financial support for this work.

The Board will continue to work with SEPA in all cases of pollution or CAR licensing failures.

The bailiffs will continue to monitor the river for poaching or angling without a permit, to carry out coastal patrols and to work with Police Scotland to protect the river against illegal activity.

The bailiffs will continue to carry out surveys to count the numbers of piscivorous birds and to assess the numbers of salmon and sea trout redds within the catchment by undertaking sample surveys and to undertake restoration projects to improve the quality and quantity of habitats for juvenile and breeding salmonids. The team will also assist in organising control of piscivorous birds on specific dates during the early spring of 2022 (Licence permitting)

The Board will continue to collect catch data from anglers and proprietors.