

River Ythan SLA Report June to July 2022

1. Introduction

The Don DFSB have been contracted to carry out fisheries protection, predator surveys, spawning surveys and habitat restoration activities across the river Ythan catchment throughout 2022/23 by the Ythan DSFB under a Service Level Agreement. Each activity is allocated a set number of man-days/patrols to accommodate the requirements of the annually agreed SLA. Activities are defined following consultation with the Ythan DSFB.

Any incidents relating to pollution and policing will be recorded and shared with the Clerk. Information from predator surveys will be collated and shared with the Clerk directly following the survey period. Information on spawning surveys will be collated and reported upon in a summary report following the end of the spawning period. Any seals reported above Logie Buchan Bridge will be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible.

All activities will be covered by the Don DSFB health and safety polices, as stated in the service level agreement.

2. Reporting

A log of all patrols and activities will be sent to the Clerk monthly.

June, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol

Fisheries officers have been keeping their attention on the Estuary at Newburgh, Sea trout numbers by the middle of June were increasing as was angling effort. Fishing Beats above the Newburgh beats have been on the quite side currently.

Table 1. June, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts.

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
16/6/22	Haddo to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day + 2.15 hours (pollution incident)	Pollution Incident reported to SEPA, concerning the Modley Burn. See Pollution section for details.
17/6/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
23/6/22	Ardlethan to Newburgh Estuary	13.30pm to 17.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	Good numbers of sea trout being seen and caught at Newburgh estuary.
30/6/22/	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	16.00pm to 20.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None

July, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol

Table 2. July, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts.

It has been another good month on the Ythan estuary at Newburgh. Sea trout are still being seen in large numbers, where fish in the 4lb mark are being landed. On the 25th of the month Fisheries officer were called out by a dog walker, informing us that a small group of anglers had taken a Grilse from the water. Fisheries officers attended and spoke with the anglers in question, fishing bags and vehicle were searched, it turned out to be mistaken identity and was not Grilse but a large 4lb Sea trout. However, it's great to know that the public are ever vigilant and reporting anything suspicious.

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
6/7/22	Ardlethan to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
7/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14-30pm to 18-30pm 2 staff = 1 day	Motley Burn checked, clear
12/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Sea trout up to 4lb being caught.
15/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
19/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	16.00pm to 20.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	1 Incident See above.
22/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	16.30pm to 20.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
25/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	15.00pm to 19.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Call out/patrolling
27/7/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	15.00pm to 19.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Sea trout caught at Esslemont.

Table 4. Non-native Invasive Plant locations on the Ebrie Burn 2020 (reproduced from Ebrie Burn Habitat Survey 2020)

Survey Point	Grid Ref	Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	NJ 9308 3699	Location 5	NJ 9318 3682
Location 2	NJ 9310 3698	Location 6	NJ 9318 3680
Location 3	NJ 9313 3692	Location 7	NJ 9320 3675
Location 4	NJ 9314 3692	Location 8	NJ 9320 3603

Table 4. July SLA Activity-Invasive Plants Himalayan Balsam/Ranunculus Weed cutting-Ebrie Burn

Date	Activity-Invasive Plants	Time	Comments
12/7/22	Balsam Clearing	8am to 4pm 1 Staff = 1 day	Top section, Glen Ebrie House, very large quantity of plants in full flower now pulled.
18/7/22	Balsam Clearing	8am to 4pm 1 Staff = 1 day	Middle Section Widely spread-out single plants.
19/7/22	Balsam Clearing	9am to 5.00pm 1 staff = 1 day	Middle Section Widely spaced-out plants
21/7/22	Balsam Clearing	7.30am to 4.00pm 1 staff = 1 day	Lower Section Very few plants found as stream widens out towards Arrange station Bridge

Fig 1, Himalayan Balsam plants found at Glen Ebrie



Fig 2, Pulled Plants at Glen Ebrie House.



Table 4. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting-Ebrie Burn

Date	Activity-Weed Cutting	Time	Grid Reference	Comments
25/7/22	Weed cutting	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93035 38042	Section cleared
26/7/22	Weed cutting	8am to 4pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93149 36943	Channels cut
28/7/22	Weed cutting	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93162 36896	Channels cut

The area of concentration on the time I had available was between Arrange station Bridge and Glenebrie Bridge. On this very large section there were many areas where the Ranunculus was so thick extending from bank to bank that the water flow was very poor. To increase oxygen levels and hopefully reduce water temperature, I managed to clear some very large sections, which not only created more flow, but will help significantly in reducing sediment from settling on the gravel spawning beds.

Fig 3, Before Weed clearing



Fig 4, Channel now cut through



Date	Activity	Time	Area	Comments
20/7/22	Tree Removal	8am to 4-30pm 2 staff = 2-man days	Methlick below church, Haddo Fishing's	All removable timber stacked neatly away from path and farmers fence line.

Fig 5, Before Tree removal



Fig 6, Tree now dismantled



The allocated habitat improvements days have now been used up for his year. Works carried out this year consisted of, willow bank repair, tree removal from two sites within the catchment, invasive plant- Himalayan Balsam pulling, and Ranunculus weed clearing.

Pollution

On the 16th of June pollution was identified running from a road culvert into the Modley Burn. A culvert was traced back to just below the council depot on Hospital Road by Ellon. SEPA were contacted and information passed on. Scottish Water also sent an operative out to locate the source of pollution. The source of the white/green discharge as far as I am aware was never found. Checks were made by Fisheries staff thereafter and there has been no further discharge. No fish kills were evident at the site.

Predators

There have been no reports of Seals over the past months.

Jim Kerr

Senior Fisheries Officer
Acting on behalf of the Ythan DSFB