

River Ythan SLA Report June to July 2023

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 2023/24 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.

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

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
07/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	River at low levels, Small Finnock being caught at Newburgh Estuary.
08/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	16.00pm to 20.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
15/06/23	Ardlethan to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Few rods on at Newburgh, little being landed.
16/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	15.00pm to 19.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Main River quite today
21/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Thunderstorms today and heavy cloud bursts of rain, very few anglers out today.
23/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
28/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
30/06/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.30pm to 18.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	None

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

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
04/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	2 Boats out fishing at Newburgh today,
05/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	16.00pm to 20.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
12/07/23	Ardlethan to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	A lot of Fishing effort today at Newburgh, some nice size Sea trout being landed.
14/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	15.00pm to 19.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
19/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	A lot of Anglers fishing at Newburgh Estuary, Numbers of Sea trout being caught still.
21/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00 to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
27/07/23	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Main River quite above Newburgh Estuary, However numbers of Sea trout seen and being caught at Newburgh still good.
31/07/23	Ardlethan to Newburgh Estuary	13.00pm to 17.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Good numbers of Sea trout jumping today, but river slight colour with rain run off.

Angling effort over the past two months has mainly been on the Newburgh estuary area. Catches in June were showing good numbers of Finnock, it was not till the month of July came round that catches of sea trout in numbers started to appear. Reports from anglers were positive in the range size and excellent condition of the Seatrout caught. Policing patrols were spread out between Methlick down to Newburgh estuary, with a high percentage of their time spent in the Newburgh estuary area.

Table 3. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting-Ebrie Burn

Date	Activity-Weed Cutting	Time	Grid Reference	Comments
14/7/23	Weed cutting. Section 1	8am to 4-30pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93035/38042 To NJ 93410/38855	Channels cut
17/7/23	Weed cutting.	8am to 4pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93225/38485	Channels cut

	Section 2		To NJ 93030/37910	
19/7/23	Weed cutting. Section 3	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93050/37100 To NJ 93260/36305	Channels cut
20/7/23	Weed cutting. Section 4	9-30am to 5-30pm 1 staff = 1 day	NJ 93200/36220 To NJ 92970/35485	

Cutting of Ranunculus weed took 4 days to complete. Cutting took place from Glenebrie Bridge down Arnage Bridge at Drumwhindle. Channels were cut through the blanketed areas and the areas that contained good spawning gravel. The weed that was removed from the stream was pulled onto the streambank; this allows any aquatic life to get back into the water course. The weed was then pulled further up the embankment to rot down naturally. 2 pictures below, 1 showing the blanketed affect this weed can have, the second picture showing the cut weed removed from the stream and resting on the bank edge before being taken further up the embankment.

Figure 1, Ranunculus weed blanket effect on the Ebrie Burn



Figure 2, Ranunculus weed removed from the stream onto the bank.



During weed cutting I came across 3 spruce trees that had fallen over the Ebrie. The branches of the trees are causing a blockage preventing debris from passing underneath. The riverbed is bedrock at this location and therefore the channel cannot cut and scour underneath. We have concerns over fish passage as a result and partially ease this obstacle over the coming weeks. Grid Reference of Location NJ 93375/38755

Fig 3 Looking downstream at the fallen spruce trees.



Pollution

There were no incidents of pollution this month.

Seals

None reported this month.

Forthcoming tasks for August/September, will be tree blockage easing on 3 sites and Habitat surveys to identify suitable locations for future restoration proposals.

Jim Kerr

Senior Fisheries Officer
Acting on behalf of the Ythan DSFB