



# **THE RIVER DON TRUST**

*"River in harmony"*

Don District Salmon Fishery Board

AGM

Oct 25<sup>th</sup> 2011

[www.riverdon.org.uk](http://www.riverdon.org.uk)



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## Introduction

- Background to the River Don Trust
- The River Don Trusts current activities
- Working with the Board
- Future activities



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Iain Morrison Chairman



Sam Martin



Rick Fyffe



Bob Dey



Bernard Martin



Dave Gordon  
Trust Manager



Jamie Urquhart  
Trust Biologist



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# BACKGROUND TO THE RIVER DON TRUST



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## The River Don Trust (RDT)

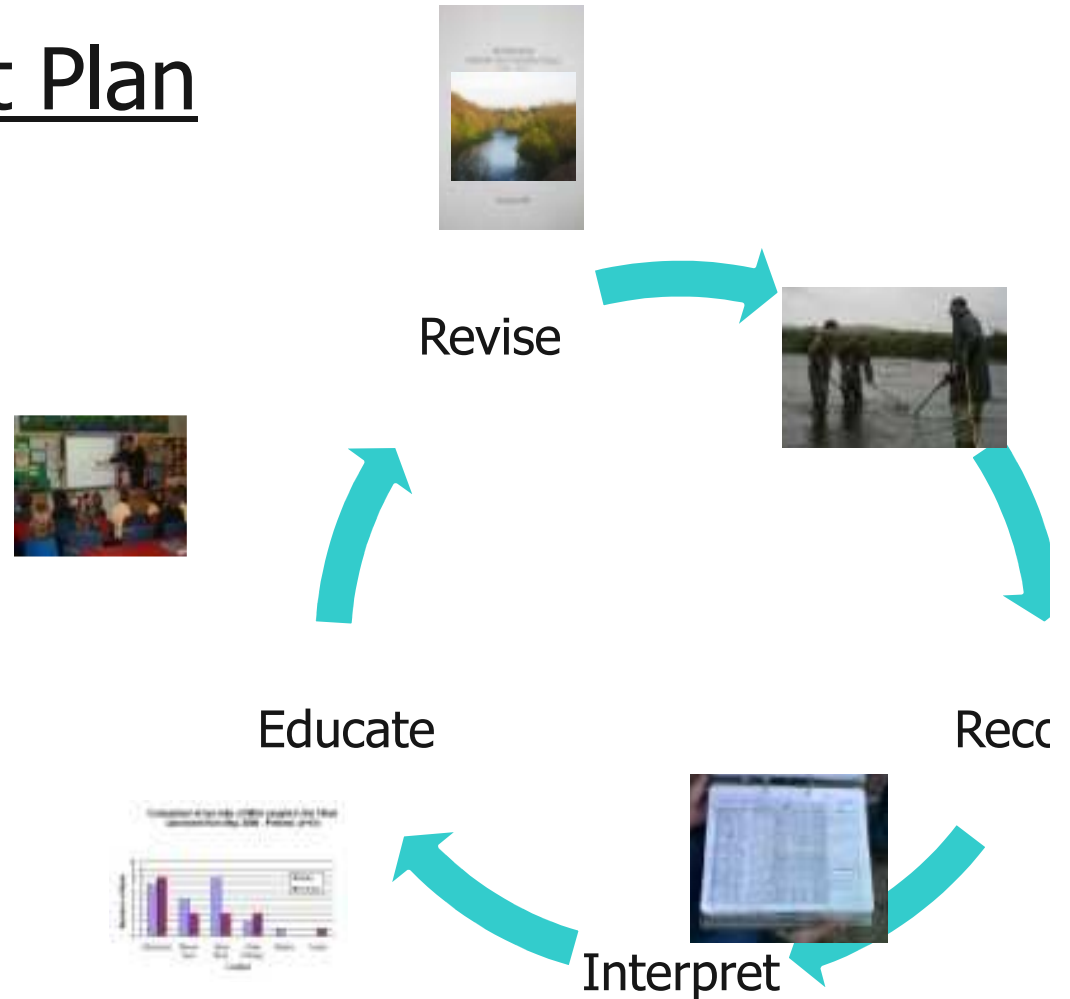
- *Charitable organisation established: To conserve and enhance the natural biodiversity associated with the freshwater environments of the River Don.*
- Can raise funds and separate remit to board
- Don Fishery Management Plan: outlined the state of knowledge of the river and its environment
- The Trust undertakes; scientific research, provides management, consultancy work; responds on developments where requested, raises funds through restoration and education projects and
- Engages with the anglers and local communities.



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# Fishery management Plan

- The FMP is the rivers blueprint for survival, first phase almost complete.
- Baseline surveys of habitat and species.
- Phase 2 of FMP restoration of the catchment will be undertaken.



RIVER DON  
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2009 – 2011



December 2008



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# THE RIVER DON TRUSTS CURRENT ACTIVITIES.





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### Undertakes core projects annually

Habitat surveys

Electro-fishing surveys

Genetic sampling

Salmon in the Classroom

Obstacle removal and easing

Invertebrates

Scale sampling

Invasive species control and monitoring.





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## Habitat Surveys

The Trust + volunteers + Board and has now completed habitat surveys of 75% of the catchment the remainder of the catchment is to be completed this winter.

### **OUTCOMES:**

Different habitat types present across the whole catchment

#### **Areas for concern / action**

Poaching and diffuse pollution by livestock,

Forestry impacts

Invasive plants

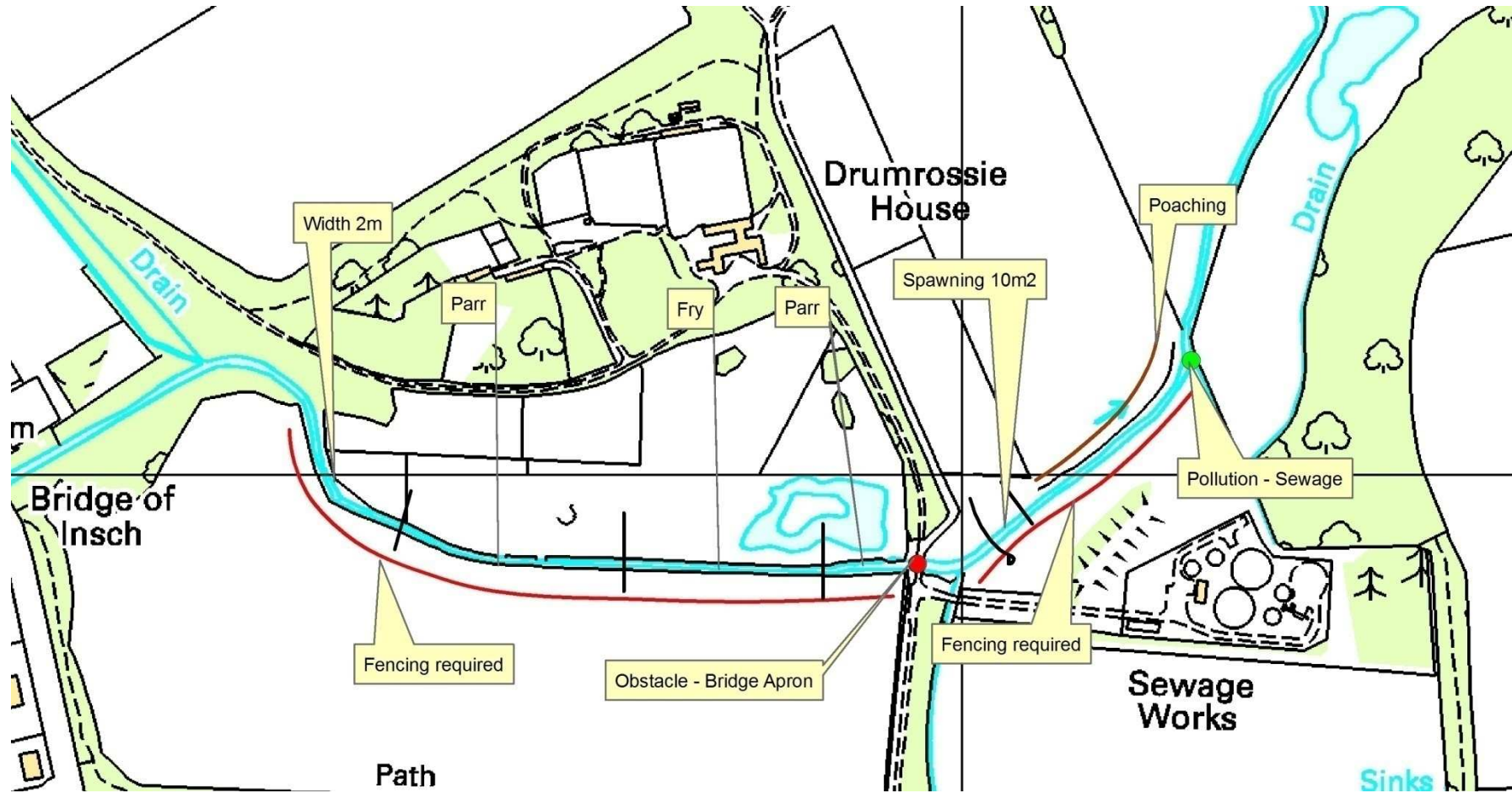
Obstacles to fish migration.

This information will enable the Trust to make recommendations to improve specific areas of catchment



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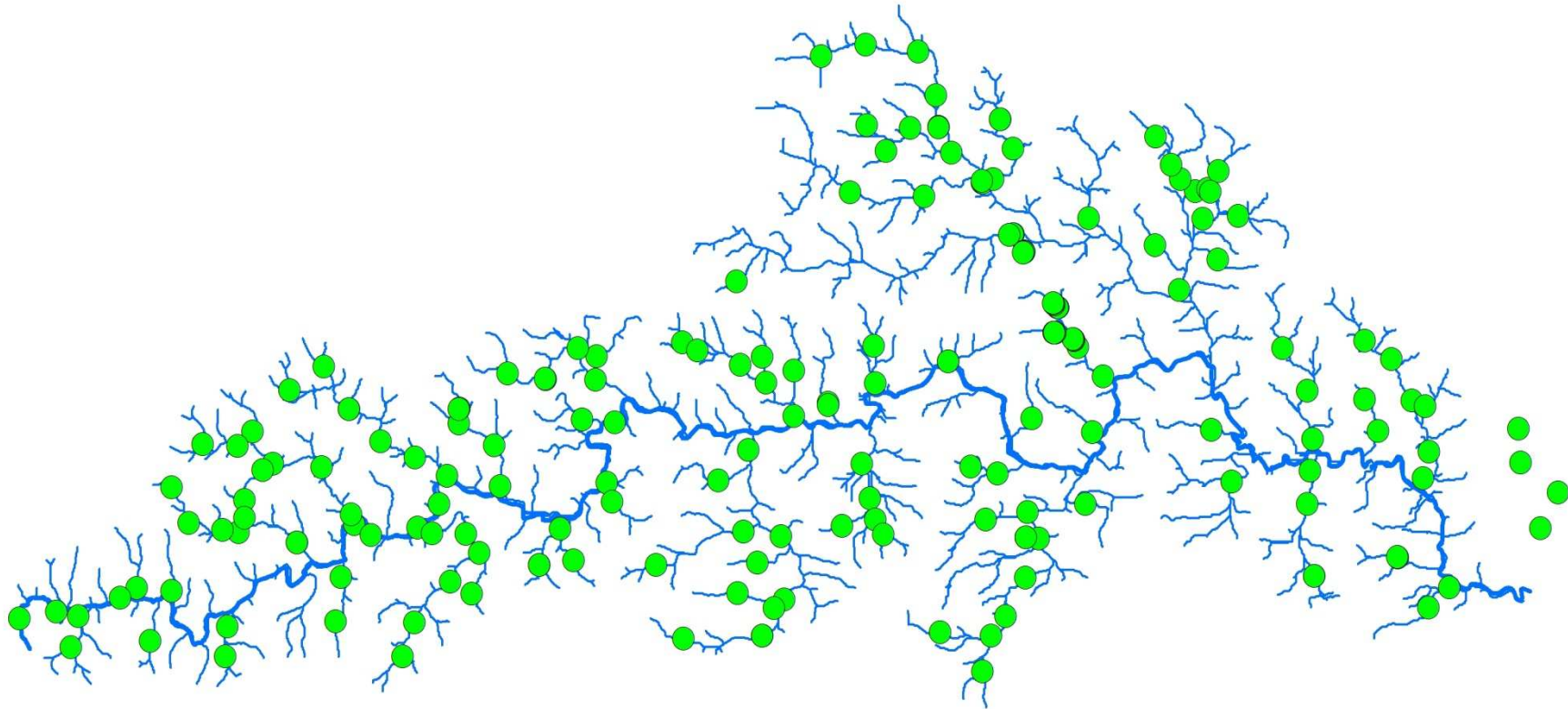
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## Electro Fishing Surveys

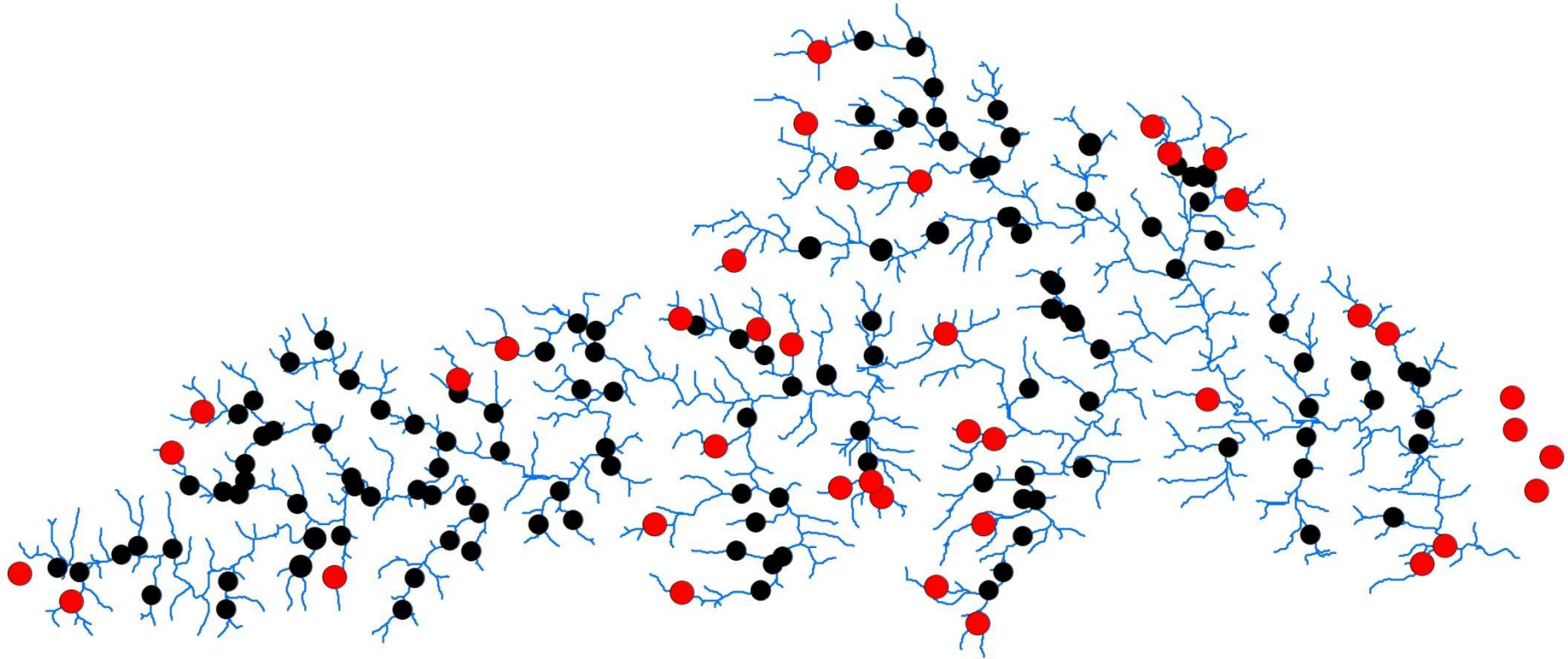
- The Trust + Board + volunteers: juvenile electro fishing surveys across the whole catchment > 170 different sites (over 2 years).
  - **Species presence and abundance**
  - **Physical characteristics of stream**
  - **Obstacles & pollution impacting fish habitat.**
- This information provides the evidence to formulate management decisions for the Board it also provides the baseline information required in order to establish projects to restore the catchment.



## Current extent of electrofishing & habitat surveys

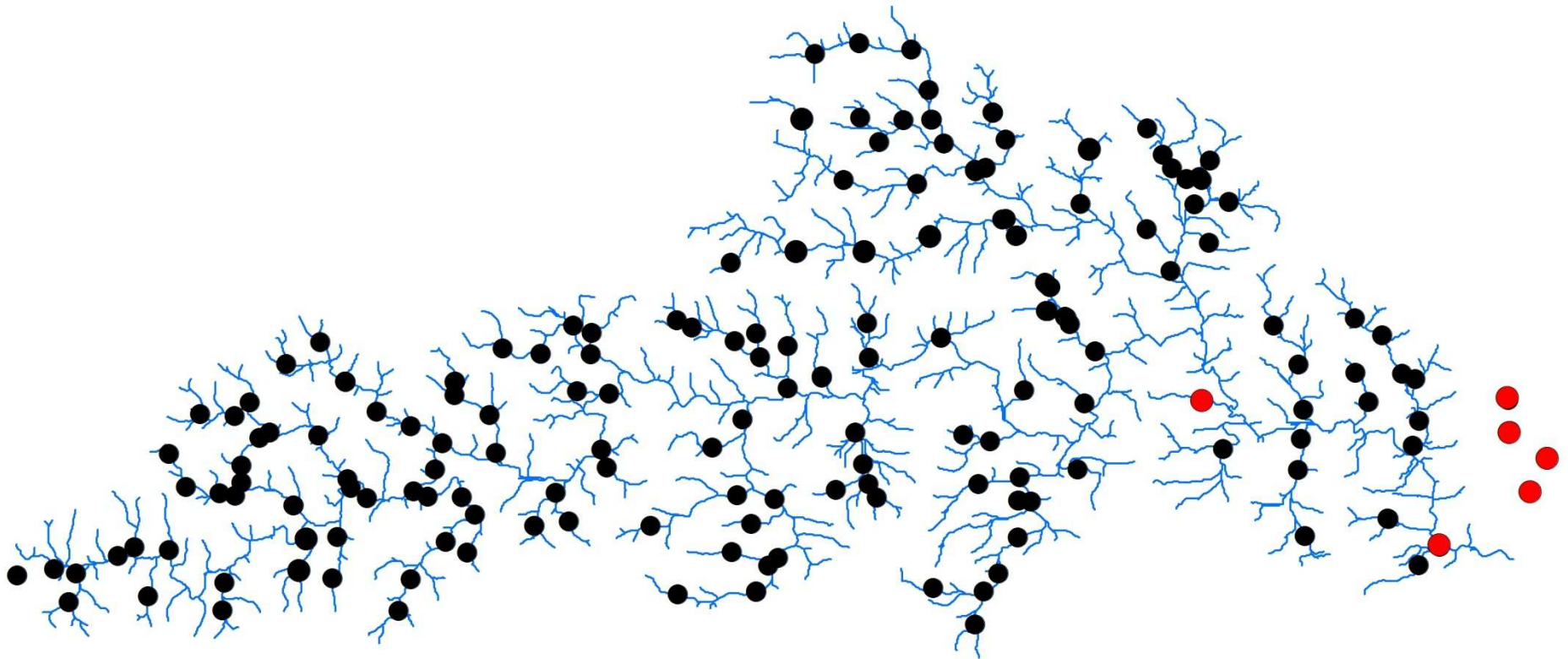


# Juvenile Salmon distribution



- Salmon present
- Salmon absent

# Juvenile Trout distribution



- Trout present
- Trout absent





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## Electro Fishing Surveys

- **Salmon:** 39 sites (23%) no juvenile salmon during the 2011 survey season.
- This absence could be attributed to obstacles (manmade, natural or debris) or could be due to the habitat type or a recent pollution event.
  
- **Trout:** 6 sites (4%) no trout presence during the 2011 survey season.
- Mostly habitat restriction or a pollution event for trout to be absent.
  
- Also present: **eels, stickleback, lamprey, stoneloach, minnow, perch** and **gudgeon** were also found across the catchment on occasion, with the latter five restricted to the lower catchment below Kintore.

SFCC TIMED ELECTROFISHING HABITAT SURVEY

Easting:		Northing:		Site code:		Date:	
Approx. Site Length		metres		LB Bankface veg.		Bare/Uniform/Simple/Complex	
Ar Wet Width (m)				RB Bankface veg.		Bare/Uniform/Simple/Complex	
				LB Banktop veg.		Bare/Uniform/Simple/Complex	
				RB Banktop veg.		Bare/Uniform/Simple/Complex	
% Channel Fished				LB Overhang Bough %			
Banks fished?		Left / Right / Both / Neither		RB Overhang Bough %			
% Depth (cm)		<10		Canopy Cover %			
		11-20		Bankside Notes:			
		21-30					
		31-40		Landuse: AR / BL / CP / FW / GA / IG / IN / MH / NC /			
		41-50		OR / OW / RD / RP / RS / SC / SU / TH / TL / WL			
		>50		Team Leader			
Substrate %		HO		No. Staff			
		SI		Purpose: INV / M / MSt / C / SAC / WFD / FI / Oth			
		SA		Purpose Notes:			
		GR		Equipment Type		Backpack / Generator	
		PE		Volts			
		CO		Amps			
		BO		Current		Smooth / Pulsed	
		BE		Manufacturer			
		OB		Model			
Instream veg %				No. Anodes			
Silted ?		Yes / No		Ring diameter (cm)			
Stable ?		Stable / Unstable		Capture Nets		Hand / Banner / Other / Comb	
Compacted?		Compact / Partly / Uncomp		Effective fishing?		Yes / No	
Substrate Notes:				Conductivity ( $\mu\text{Scm}^{-1}$ )			
				Temperature $^{\circ}\text{C}$			
Flow type %		SM		Time of day			
		SP		Water Level		Low / Medium / High	
		DP		Water Clarity		Clear / Coloured	
		SG		Survey Notes:			
		DG					
		RU		Salmon Access?		Yes / No / Sometimes / ?	
		RI		Trout Access?		Yes / No / Sometimes / ?	
		TO		Access Notes:			
Flow speed (m/s)							
Flow Notes:				Stocking?		Yes / No / Unknown	
				Salmon Stocked?		Yes / No / Unknown	
Bankside Cover %				Trout Stocked?		Yes / No / Unknown	
UC		DR		Stocking Notes:			
BA		MA					
RT		RK		Pollution?		Yes / No / Unknown	
OTH				Pollution Notes:			
LB							
RB							
Total LB fish cover %							
Total RB fish cover %							
Photos & IDs? Y / N							
NOTE: Shaded areas should always be completed, other areas are optional in Timed Habitat recording				Instream characteristics refer to area fished Bankside characteristics refer to area adjacent to area fished			

Established protocols used across all RAFTS surveys

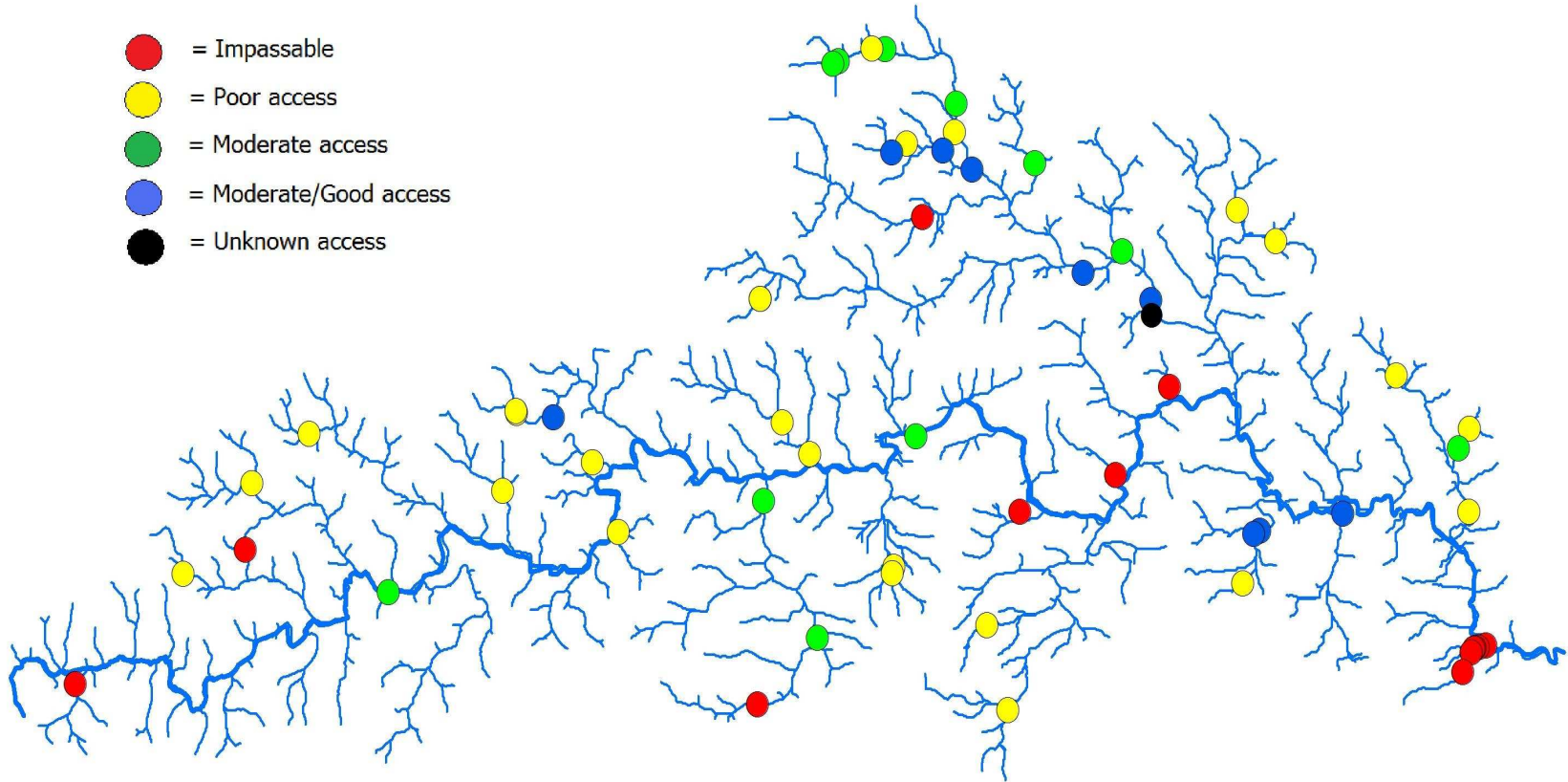


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## Obstacle Easement

- Over 200Km (21%) of Catchment identified as inaccessible to migratory fish due to man made obstructions, from the Trusts Habitat Surveys.
- The RDT is working with the Don DSFB, SEPA , RAFTS, Local Councils and Landowners to assess and ease these obstacles across the catchment.
- Several obstacle easements are to begin next year with two underway at present.
- Funds totalling £100k have been raised by the Trust to date on the Obstacle Easement programme.







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## The River Don Biosecurity Plan

- The vision of this plan is: *‘To establish a sustainable framework which will prevent, detect, control and eradicate invasive non-native species within the Don fisheries district through appropriate management, data collection, liaison and education’*
- Prevention of introduction and spread of **invasive non native species** (INNS) and fish diseases.
- The Trust has undertaken invasive species control & monitoring for including:

**American mink**

**American Signal Crayfish**

**Giant hogweed**

**Japanese Knotweed**

***Gyrodactylus Salaris***





Gryodactylus salaris  
Image. T Atle Mo



American Signal Crayfish  
Image. Colin Bean



Giant Hogweed  
Image. Jamie Urquhart



American Mink  
Image. John McAvoy



Rotenone



Crayfish traps



Glyphosate (Round Up



Mink Monitoring Rafts and traps

**River Don Trust Bio-Security Plan  
2011 - 2016**



**Prepared by**

**The River Don Charitable Trust**

**2010**

**Scottish Charity (SC 036015)**



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## Hatchery & Broodstock

- Trust has provides scientific advice and guidance for broodstock protocols.
- Recommended 150,000 eggs for this coming year

### **General:**

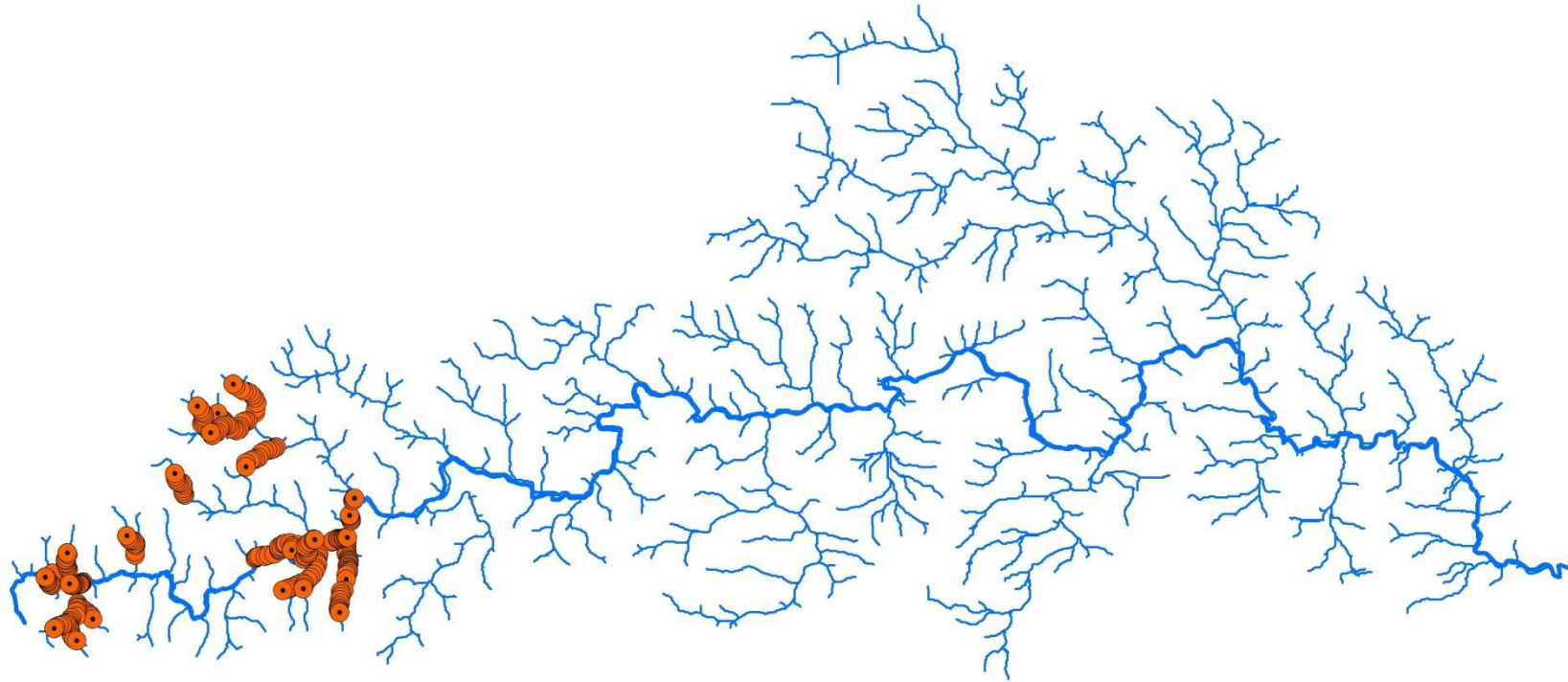
Scale reading to ensure 2 sea winter fish

Floy tagging to mark these fish for crossing

Eggs for the Salmon in the Classroom Programme.



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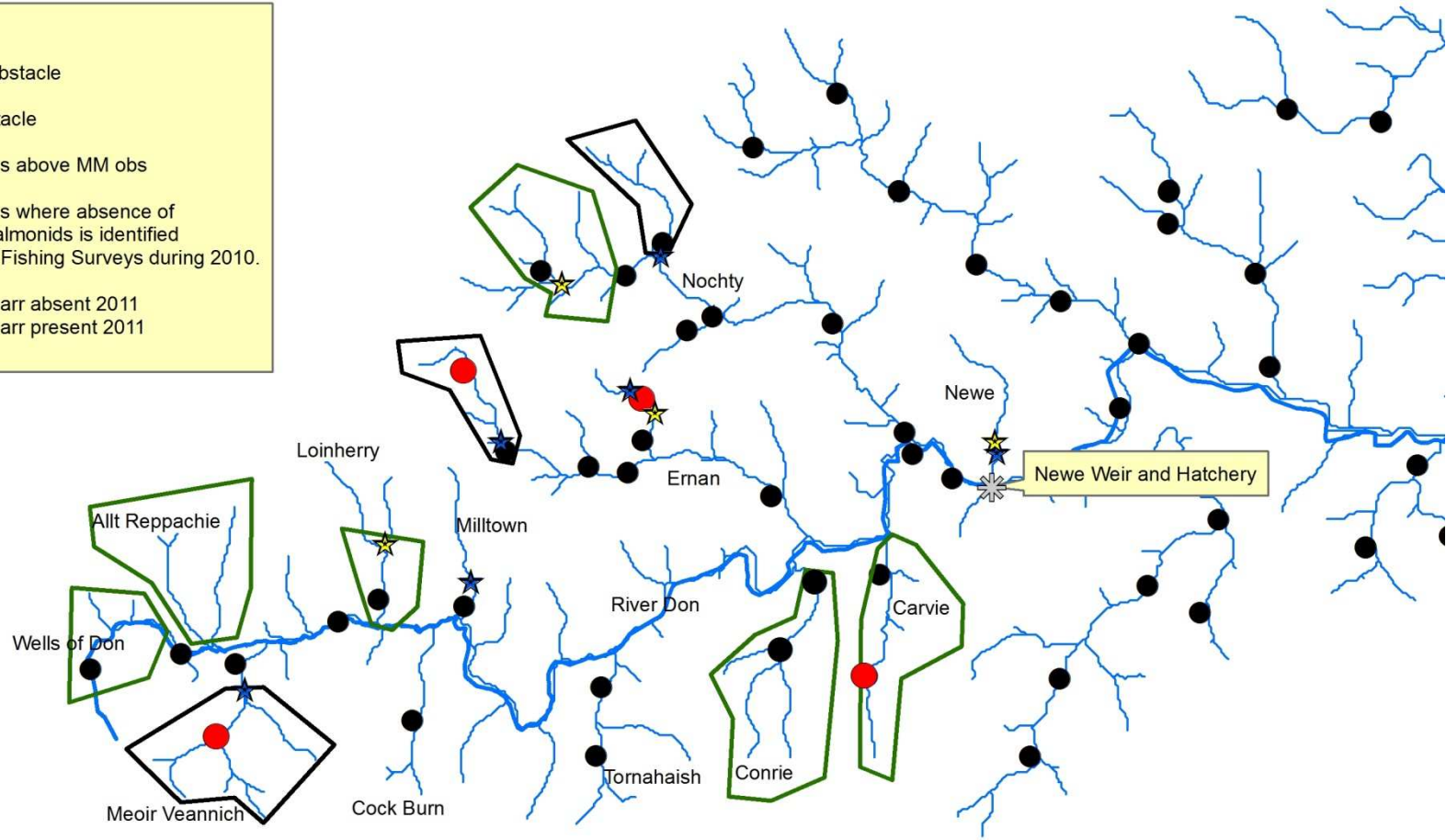
Placement of eyed eggs 2011

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Key

- ★ = Manmade Obstacle
- ☆ = Natural Obstacle
- ⬮ = Planting Sites above MM obs
- ⬮ = Planting Sites where absence of migratory salmonids is identified from Electro Fishing Surveys during 2010.
- = Salmon fry/parr absent 2011
- = Salmon fry/parr present 2011

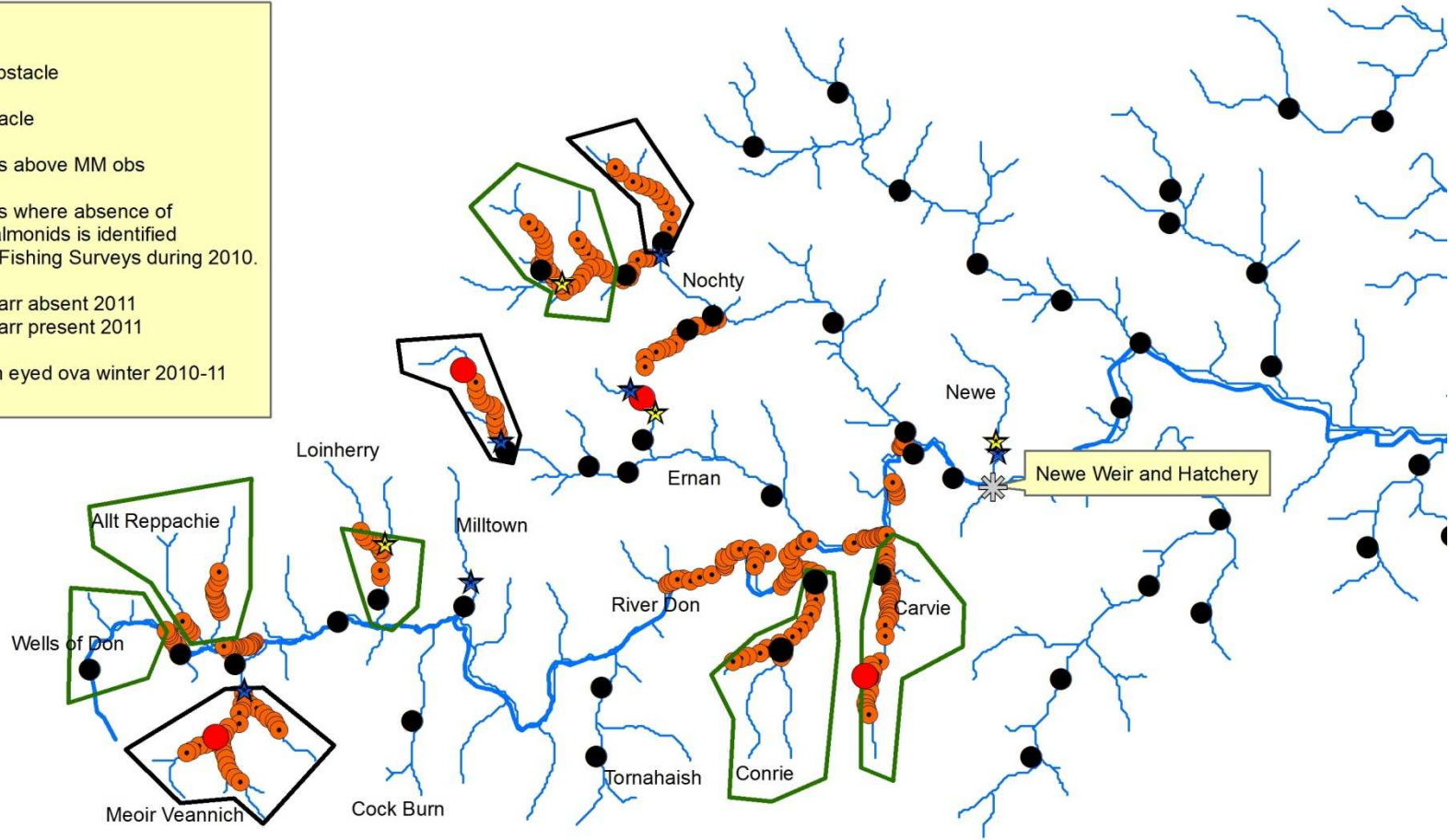


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- = Salmon fry/parr absent 2011
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- = Stocking with eyed ova winter 2010-11





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## Scale Sampling Programme

- Scales provide information on the **life history** from juveniles to adult fish.
- **smolting** age
- Adult age
- Adult time of river entry
- Multiple spawners
- Growth checks in ocean feeding
  
- Requires help from anglers and proprietors
- **service for anglers.**
- **Even if only from killed fish**

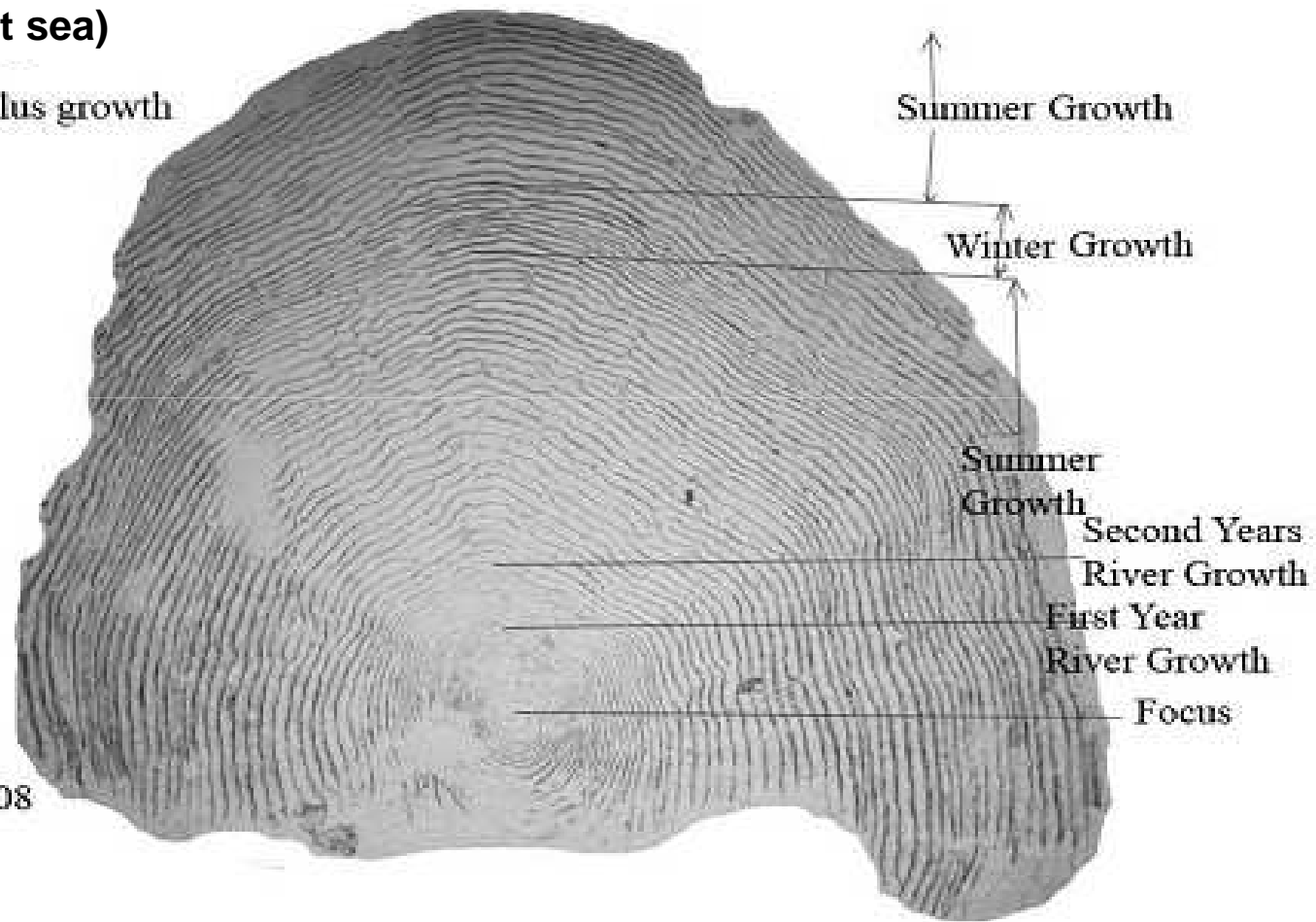
**Age: 2:1:1**

**2: two winters as parr in river**

**1: One winter at sea**

**1: plus growth (at sea)**

note: one year's plus growth



**Details**

length: 59cm

Wt: 51b.

Date: 9 th.Nov 08

Place: Don

Sex: Hen

N0: 37





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## Salmon in the Classroom

- Participating schools: eggs to parr in the classroom
- The Trust has received funds totalling £10k from Scottish Natural Heritage, and Rivers and Fisheries Trusts for Scotland (Scottish Executive) to date for this project, with further applications in process.





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**WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE RIVER  
DON TRUST.**



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## Working in Partnership



- The Trust leads on correspondence on consultations, made representations on behalf of the Board and sits on several steering groups representing the interests of the River Don.
- The Board has provided staff assistance to the Trust which has been greatly received, enabling the Trust to complete habitat and electro fishing surveys over the past two seasons.
- Its imperative that the Board assist the Trust in the delivery of FMP programme for the benefit of the river. Throughout its delivery many new skills have been established by the Trust and Board alike which all have helped to improve the understanding and management of the river.





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## The Trust's Future

- Analyse the data collected for the **Fishery Management Plan** and using this information prepare **Phase two** focusing on restoration and rehabilitation.
- Continue to work with our partners the Don District Salmon Fishery Board and the River Don Brown Trout Improvement Association with scientific advice.
- Promote the Trusts actions and achievements to date in local and national press.
- Develop further projects and new initiatives working with communities and other organisations in partnerships.



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## The Trust's Future

- Expand our commercial services to inform consultation and environmental impact assessments for developments within the catchment.
- Secure funding and sponsorship to continue delivering the Trusts activities to date.





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# Thanks

Any questions?

[www.riverdon.org.uk](http://www.riverdon.org.uk)