



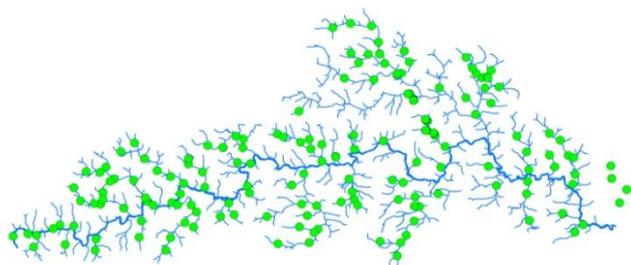
## The River Don Trust

Newsletter 5. Nov 2011

The River Don Trust is a charitable organisation established: To advance for public benefit environmental protection and improvement by conserving and enhancing the natural biodiversity associated with the freshwater environments of the River.

## 2011 Survey's completed.

Another season past and the Trust has finished it's electro-fishing surveys. Two years surveys across the whole catchment have now been completed and over the winter months the biologist will be working to interpret this data. This data will inform management practices for the Don District Salmon Fishery Board and Trust over the coming years.



Electro-fishing survey sites across the Don catchment

This year surveys illustrated issues relating to migratory fish access, species distribution and abundance at over 170 sites.

## Scale sampling programme

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the scale sampling programme this season. Some scales are still to be collected from anglers so please let the biologist know if you have any to return.



Scale being collected from a salmon in the water using tweezers

Already there are approx 70 samples from Salmon, an increase on last year's samples. However the volume of Brown and Sea Trout scales this year has been disappointing. It's important for the Trust to be able to gather information upon trout in order to provide management advice on these fish stocks. The Trust relies upon anglers to provide information on catches and scale samples, so please support the programme next year. Funding for these projects was awarded through the RAFTS Fishery Management Plan Programme.

## Redd counts underway across the catchment.



Sea Trout redd in a tributary of the Don, the red circle indicating the depression at top of the redd and the blue circle indicating the cut gravel with eggs underneath.

The Board has begun it's redd counts for this year with support from the Trust. This year the Trust has integrated a programme of mapping all redds, fish cutting redds and dead kelts during the redd counting process. This will enable the Trust to digitally map spawning for this year which will allow comparisons to be made with future season much easier. So far the results are looking promising with a good coverage of redds throughout the catchment, the dry autumn was thought to have restricted the movement of larger salmon in particular but this doesn't seem to be the case, further counts will shed more light on the situation and the Board will be updating you on this as progress continues.

## Quick Updates

**Stocking Policy Review 2011-12;** The Trust has prepared a review of the stocking locations and protocols for the 2011-12 season. The Board has used this document to inform this year's broodstock collection and hatchery work.

If you would like a newsletter to be sent to you automatically please email me at [iaian@riverdon.org.uk](mailto:iaian@riverdon.org.uk)



## Invasive Plant Control Training

The Trust has been working in conjunction with one of its neighbours the River Dee Trust and volunteers from the two catchments in a project funded by SEPA to control Invasive Non Native Plants.

The programme aims to control invasive plants by utilising groups of trained volunteers to control plants such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam. The control of these plants will result in improvements to bankside and in stream habitat, invertebrate abundance and access across the catchment.



Invasive plants, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed

To date 27 volunteers have been trained in the use of the safe use of herbicide spraying in or near water, the appropriate licences have been acquired and the spraying is due to begin next spring targeting Giant Hogweed in the upper catchment. Some control has been carried out focusing on isolated patches of Himalayan Balsam in and around Strathdon with the help of some volunteers.



Volunteers 'Pulling' Himalayan balsam adjacent to the River Don

If you're interested in taking part in the future programmes to help control these invasive plants please get in touch with biologist at [biologist@riverdon.org.uk](mailto:biologist@riverdon.org.uk)

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

## SNIFFER obstacle assessments

The Trust has been invited to be part of a pilot project with our umbrella organisations RAFTS and SEPA to determine the pass-ability of a number of obstacles across the catchment. The purpose of this work is to prioritise the structures so that they can be eased in a manner which is optimal for migratory fish movements.



The Biologist assessing a potential obstacle on a Don tributary

The assessments use a series of measurements on the structure, fish swimming abilities and flows to ascertain how passable the structure is to a range of species. These assessments will form a vital part of applications to the SEPA Restoration Fund and will enable the Trust to ease any that are posing problems for fish passage. Over the next few weeks the Trust will continue to undertake these assessments and shall be reporting upon the project upon its completion.

## Quick Updates

**GS Disinfection;** Remember to get your tackle disinfected upon return from high risk countries! The Trust provides the service at the office for a small donation to the Trust.

**Please help us fund these initiatives**  
**Visit the website to donate or contact the Trust directly**  
**on the details below to discuss.**