

Week Ten

Week Ten started with a day's electro fishing with the Dee team. Following our meeting the previous week it was agreed that I would be able to assist the team and glean valuable information from their experienced staff and should I require some assistance be able to request for some assistance of my own. I was to meet Adrian Hudson the trust Biologist at the Milton of Crathes where we were to complete some timed electro fishing sites. The purpose of these surveys was to establish the current distribution and abundance of juvenile salmon following the easing of the Crathes dam last year. We carried out three separate sites each with three passes across the location. The fish were stored in buckets moved to the bankside for identification, measuring and counting. Firstly the fish were anaesthetised, this enable the fish to be handled much more effectively and reduces potential for any fish to be damaged. The fish are then measured and identified and this information is recorded for each site. We also found a few lampreys whilst surveying. See blurry image of one below.



We progressed around the tributary throughout the morning then moved up river in the afternoon to the Dinnet Burn to carry out some sampling across this catchment. The difference between these two tributaries could not be more marked in terms of juvenile salmon abundance. The Dinnet burn did offer a lot more suitable habitat and was also not impacted by any obstructions like the Crathes burn. The day was very useful and allowed me to further my skills and also observe how Adrian and his team work.

Tuesday consisted of an office day working on the final drafts of the RAFTS applications and preparing for the Habitats and Species meeting tomorrow.

Wednesday started with a meeting at the Macaulay Land Research Institute in Aberdeen, where the NE Biodiversity Officer Estelle Gill is located. The meeting was the first meeting of the reformed

freshwater and wetlands habitat group. The purpose of the group is to provide a steer for various projects within its remit, to establish action plans and priorities of work whilst providing guidance and promoting achievements made. Within the group there are several specific action plans already established the most pertinent to the Trust are Rivers and Burns and Lochs and ponds. See link for further details.

<http://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/actionplans/index.html>

The Trust can feed back into these action plans with the work it is doing and can also provide guidance on specific subjects. It's important to remember that the work carried out by the Trust not only achieves our established targets but also that of the NE Local Biodiversity Action Plans, a subject which is very important with regards to future funding. At the meeting we also discuss the Cairngorm National Parks plans to restore and establish wetland areas across its extent, the Wetland Vision Project. More in this in due course.

On Thursday Jim Kerr, Martin Webster and Sam Martin and I all met at the Trust Offices to discuss last week's meeting with Lucy and Eric at Marine Scotland in Pitlochry, regarding the genetics project. It was a chance to go over the plans with Jim and Martin, it's easy to do a desktop plan but without the knowledge of these guys the survey plan may fall at the first hurdle. Jim and Martin pointed out a few problems with the proposed sites and we tweaked them accordingly. We then discussed the aims of the project with them and set out some dates for the first sites to survey.

On Friday I prepared the genetic sampling kit for next week's surveys and also headed out into the field to establish permissions for the forthcoming habitat surveys.

Next week I'll be meeting with the new project officer for the NE Water Vole Conservation and Mink Control Project and I'll be carrying out some electro fishing and genetic sampling with the Don Bailiff's

Cheers Jamie