

# Week Fifteen

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Monday started with a visit to some raft locations on the Don and Ythan catchment, to further Sarah Atkinson's training on the subject. We set some traps at sites where we had positive signs for mink presence and will check these over the next few days. I made it back into the office in the afternoon and caught up with some emails and paper work.

On Tuesday joined Sarah in the early morning to check some traps and assist with her first humane dispatch of an American Mink, the first of many I hope. I then headed into the office to prepare for the evenings meeting with the Trustees. The meeting agenda discussed several topics including the biologist's update, salmon in the classroom, next year's open day, water quality issues, and updates on the interaction with the Board, River Don brown Trout Improvement Association and the University of Aberdeen. It was a very successful meeting with all topics carefully considered and discussed with comments from most trustees on each section. Plans for the future were established and timelines set, look out for some amendments to the Fisheries Management Plan over the next few months and some publication of the open day in due course.

On Wednesday I was focussed in the office in the afternoon after assisting with mink trap checking in the morning.

On Thursday morning I waited for the Board team to come and collect me for some electro fishing. I had dropped the truck off for its MOT at Torphins the night before and was waiting for a call from them later in the day to collect it. We headed out to the Urie, using the larger generator this time due to the deeper water and the fact that the backpack kit was still getting repaired. We set off for Old Rayne on the Urie just below the confluence with the Shevock Burn. Here we had access to the burn with the generator and the bankside electro fishing equipment. We set the kit up and started fishing, it wasn't long before we had some decent sized trout, a good few to the half pound which were then scale sampled, measured and released. The water was deeper here but the larger kit dealt with the situation with ease having more power to draw fish from further afield, the deeper section of the stream bed and reaching further under the undercut bank sides than the backpack kit. With all the samples for the genetics collected we packed up the kit and returned to the office, I was then given a lift to collect the Trust vehicle after it had passed its MOT.

On Friday I joined the Dee biologists, Adrian and Lorraine to assist with their radio tagging programme. It was an excellent opportunity for me to learn more about this technique. Whilst familiar with radio tracking on terrestrial and semi aquatic mammals, tagging fish was a method I was not familiar with. The process also showed how effective and efficient Adrian and Lorraine were when it came to handling the animal, measuring, floy and radio tagging and releasing the fish all unharmed within the space of a few minutes. The information these fish will give the Dee trust will be invaluable in the evaluation of their season extension. More information can be found at the website [www.riverdee.org](http://www.riverdee.org)

## Radio Tagging



and release



In the evening I met with Alistair Wallace and Phillip Wood a friend of Alistair's whom regularly fishes the Don for Salmon in Sept/Oct and is a director of the River Wye Trust in England. We discussed several topics of interest to both parties and shared experiences. We spoke in detail about the issue of Rannunculus weed and its impacts on fish, angling and how it could be managed. The

discussion was very successful as was the weeks fishing with Alistair's friend's party of 6 rods having caught and returned all of their 19 fish so far that week, 6 falling to his own rod.

Next week I'll be assisting Mike Beach a fish pass consultant with the assessment of several obstacles to migration on the Don catchment. I'll also be meeting with Justin Prigmore from the Cairngorms National Park to discuss his new project entitled the Wetland Vision.

Cheers Jamie