

Week Twenty Five

This week I had a good mix of office and field work to look forward to assuming the weather would allow it. Monday started with a meeting in the office with Dr Sam Martin one of the Trustees. Here we discussed various topics, including the salmon in the classroom project, hatchery work; redd counts and the forthcoming Trust meeting. Sam is also the secretary of the Inverurie Angling Association (IAA) and has already established a Trout in the Classroom project with several local schools over the years through the IAA. He is therefore familiar with the process involved and also the equipment used. I used this time to glean further info on the project and decided to join Sam when he visits his participating school in Jan 2010. We also spoke about the hatchery work, both Sam and I agreed that given the Trusts role to provide scientific and informed advice to the Don DSFB we should work with Jim and his team to outline some protocols for the 2010 brood stock collection. Closer to the time we will work with Jim, Martin and Stephen to complete this document on the methods and aims of the hatchery work.

On Tuesday I was due to attend the final meeting on risk assessments with the Dee, however I decided that my time would be best used if I were to take advantage of the cold frosty morning and carry out some redd counting and habitat surveying on the Leochel Burn. I started at the bottom of the system and slowly progressed upstream noting all the different habitat factors I came across on the 1:10,000 scale maps. Normally I would work in a pair for this sort of work leapfrogging each other with the vehicle allowing for a greater area to be covered. I noted factors like suitable parr and fry habitat, spawning gravels, erosion, pollution points, obstacles to fish and also redds and spawning fish. This information is recorded on a map in the field then it is transferred to a GIS programme on the computer where it can be digitally mapped. Here is an example of the GIS mapping on the Arcview Programme.



Each coloured section of water represents a different habitat type and each different colour of fish symbol represents either a dead kelt, a redd or a spawning fish.

Over the next few months I will be expanding the database and collecting further information like this, which will enable us to map the whole system, identify problems and respond and target electro fishing.

On Wednesday Dave, Bob and Iain joined me at the office to discuss a few things and bring over some of the equipment for the Salmon in the Classroom project. I spent the rest of the afternoon working to create a database to enable easy input of the habitat information for the GIS programme.

On Thursday and Friday I attended a course on fish diseases held in Aberdeen by Marine Scotland and the Fish Inspectorate Services at the Torry marine labs. Over the two days the Trusts and Boards attending were introduced to the problems faced by freshwater fish by diseases and parasites. Presentations on Gyrodactylus Salaris and Redd vent were just some of the topics we covered. We were also instructed on the methods required for sampling diseased fish and each given the chance to work on a few fish in the labs before we left. All together the event was well hosted very informative and well attended. More details to be posted on this topic in the near future.



Disease sampling procedures being practised at the Marine Scotland Labs in Aberdeen.

Next week I'll be working with Martin and Stephen on some redd counting and habitat surveying of the Leochel and Esset burns.

Cheers Jamie