

# Week Three

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Week three consisted of a mix of field work and office again.

Monday started with an interview from a MSc student who is writing a dissertation on SEPA's River Basin Management Plan. The aim of his project is to identify shortcomings in the consultation process and encourage organisations like the RDT and others stakeholders to participate and accept ownership for various issues. I will be getting a detailed summary of his conclusions in due course.

I was also speaking to a Mr Foster from the Yorkshire Esk Trust, with regards to the Archimedes Screw turbine in situ at Newe Weir on the Don and its impacts on salmonids. They were concerned that the proposed device on their system may negatively impact the salmonids present and were looking to us for some advice and examples of impacts. I referred him to the DDSFB and the River Superintendant Jim Kerr who has the most experience on this matter to date. We hope that they manage to resolve the issue and find a suitable solution which we can perhaps learn from for any future developments of this nature.

Tuesday consisted of primarily admin, and IT software addition to the laptop. My links with the University of Aberdeen from my old post and through a position as an honorary member of staff has enabled the RDT to access a number of IT facilities and resources which has not only saved the RDT a sum of money but has also sped up the process of establishing my position. In return for the honorary staff status I intend to provide suitable projects and opportunities for students to become involved with the RDT. The RDT's Scientific Advisor Dr S.A.M. Martin, is a perfect example of interaction between the two organisations. I met with Sam to discuss future surveys and to establish suitable plans for forthcoming projects. I also met with Dr John Baird to discuss the invertebrate sampling sessions on the Don which I have initiated to provide a snapshot of the invertebrate structure of various tributaries.

Wednesday, I was to meet Dr John Baird and two of his students at the confluence of the Water of Buchat and the Don. From here we would drive up to the headwaters and start our sampling, taking a succession of samples at every 50m gradient decline from the starting altitude. The sampling was of a simple but effective nature using a standard kick sampling approach we were able to identify species presence and absence and a relative abundance of the species present. We also recorded pH and water temperature and any other factors which we thought may influence the invertebrate composition. See image below.



I hope to offer this type of sampling activity to the Friends of the Don as part of a workshop following this up with an identification session back in the office. More details on this later.

I spent the whole of Thursday with River Superintendant Jim Kerr. The day focussed on a familiarising me with the upper section of the Don catchment and the people and issues associated with the area. We looked at one of the obstructions to migratory fish on the Delnadamp estate the Alt Veannaich Dam (see images below) and also looked at some of the spawning habitat, invasive species present, the DDSFB Hatchery and Newe weir and the Archimedes Screw. Overall i had a thoroughly interesting day and had a valuable insight from a very experienced point of view. I shall be having similar visits with the rest of the DDSFB team in the near future on the middle and lower Don.



During the morning on Friday I met with Mr Alpine of the Inverurie Angling Association, who had expressed an interest in controlling the invasive predator American Mink on their association waters. We set up a mink monitoring raft a device which is used initially to identify if mink are present in a system then secondly is used as a trapping platform. It provides a cost and time effective method of controlling mink compared to traditional trapping methods. For more info see link ([www.watervolescotland.org](http://www.watervolescotland.org))

The RDT has established a working relationship with both the Cairngorms and the NE Water Vole Conservation Projects, these projects undertake and coordinate mink control across their respective areas to minimise the predation of water voles by the invasive species American Mink. This collaboration has enabled us to tackle issues of invasive control by sharing best practice and also resources to protect “at risk” species such as the water vole but also other prey items such as salmonids, wildfowl, game birds and small mammals.

This week i’ll be attending a Habitat Surveying course in with the Galloway Fisheries Trust, more on this in the next BLOG.

Cheers Jamie