

Week Thirty-two & Thirty-three

Salmon in the Classroom

The week started with a discussion with Dr Sam Martin one of the Trustees about various topics but in particular the Salmon in the Classroom (SITC) project. Sam has been running a similar project in the local schools on trout, with the help from the Inverurie Angling Association & Don DSFB. The system that Sam uses is very similar to the new system that the Trust will be using to deliver the project so it was a great chance to identify any obvious problem areas and gain some general hints and tips.

After our discussion we decided to set up one of the tanks in the office. The tank is like any ordinary glass aquarium it has a biological filter, and a water pump. The pump is fitted to a chiller unit which maintains the water temperature located alongside the tank. A small layer of gravel is laid along the bottom and a lid is fitted. Then it's just a case of filling it up with water and leaving it to settle for a few days before introducing the eggs.



The tank set up in the Cluny office ready for the eggs to arrive.

The principal purpose of the pipe lagging is to conserve energy by maintaining a regular temperature. The silver aluminium bubble wrap serves this purpose but also provides some much needed darkness for the alevin, when it's wrapped fully round the tank.

Biosecurity Planning

The Trust was contacted by Chris Horril of Rivers and Fisheries Trusts for Scotland (RAFTS), earlier in the week to arrange an opportunity to meet with him to discuss the production of a Biosecurity Plan for the River Don Trust. Chris is the Biosecurity officer for RAFTS who I have met several times at meetings and at two previous workshops which the RDT hosted and attended (Invasive plant ID course on Donside & Signal crayfish ID in Stirlingshire).

Each member trust of the RAFTS organisation will produce a Biosecurity plan to compliment the Fisheries Management Plans and tackle invasive species within the catchment. The RDT is scheduled for this final year of the programme and we have to develop, produce, consult and finalise our plan by the end of Jan 2011.

The three strategic elements of these plans are;

- Prevention
- Early detection, monitoring and rapid response
- Control, mitigation and eradication

In order for these plans to be successful the Trusts have to identify their priority invasive species and liaise and consult with local lead partners to create suitable actions/projects.

I was joined at the meeting by three Trustees Alistair Wallace, Iain Morrison and Bob Dey. The meeting went well with a clear and concise presentation being given by Chris. Several questions were asked about the level of support in terms of finance and provision of advice and guidance throughout the document production. Chris was only too pleased to help and was very supportive suggesting that he would be available for visits throughout the year.

So it was agreed and the RDT is now underway in the production of a Biosecurity Plan, Iain and I will be taking the lead on this document and shall shortly be consulting the appropriate stakeholders and partners across the catchment. Keep your eyes peeled for draft documents on the website www.riverdon.org.uk

Any help on the subject of invasive species will be greatly received when the Trust begins to establish monitoring and control programmes, so I will endeavour to keep you posted on our progress. In the mean time if you would like any further information or report sightings of invasive species please use the following web address.

http://www.invasivespeciesscotland.org.uk/biosecurity_programme/rafts_biosecurity_programme.asp

Education Delivery Workshop

The following week I attended a workshop for Education Providers in the NE. The event was hosted and coordinated by the Conoco Natural History Museum at the University of Aberdeen and SNH. The event was aimed at those responsible for delivering programmes to schools across the NE, with the main aims to create networking opportunities and identify possible partnerships in delivery. The day was well organised and I met several useful contacts including the Deveron Trust staff and their new invasive control officer, Alistair Fenn. I also met with the NE squirrel officer Holly Walker, and some folk from the local council ranger service, FC and SNH, all of which tied in nicely to the previous Biosecurity plan meeting.

Obstacle Assessment 2010

The Trust was also asked to compile a document for the Atlantic Salmon Fishery Board and RAFTS on behalf of the Board and the Trust. The document selected four structures which were to be included in this year's application to SEPA for inclusion in the Restoration Fund. These structures are potential physical barriers to fish passage.

The structures were additional to those that have been identified since last year's round of the programme, which were surveyed by Fish Pass Consultant Mike Beech. Those included in this year's programme are the Esset Mill Weir and the Tullynessle Weir see images below.



Esset Mill Weir, with Dr Sam Martin standing on structure for scale.



Tullynessle Weir upstream of the Esset Mill Weir, note the 10 gallon drum on top of the wall for scale.

It is hoped that with assistance from SEPA through the restoration fund the RDT & DonDSFB can remove these physical barriers to fish movements and increase the catchments potential for all fish species as a result.

The RDT & DonDSFB should very shortly be receiving the reports on all of last year's obstacle assessments from Mike Beech, more on this subject as it progresses.

Cheers Jamie