

Week Thirty-six & Thirty-seven

Don opening

I spent the Saturday morning as many other keen anglers (approx 40) from the Don did, down by the riverbank in the village of Inverurie. The turnout was very good with the anglers meeting at the Kintore Arms Hotel then following the piper as we marched down to the river. We all gathered and a lovely poem about the Don and its fishermen was read by retired councillor and keen fisherman Raymond Bisset and then the river was blessed by the Rev Graeme Longmuir. The event was once again hosted by the Inverurie Angling Association and many thanks must go to those involved along with all of those who attended the event.



Rev Graeme Longmuir toasting the River Don at the official opening ceremony on the 14th of Feb 2010

I managed to speak to a few anglers on the day but as usual never got a chance to chat to everyone so if your about on the river and see the RDT truck (dark green L200 with a white cab) stop and have a bleather with me or even get in touch and pop out to the office. Call 01330 830080/07860846999 or email biologist@riverdon.org.uk to arrange a time.



Don anglers of all ages at the opening ceremony, the first break in the weather for some weeks.

Council Fishing

I had intended to meet with James Stevenson Aberdeenshire Council Fishing's Director for some time now but it was only this week that I actually managed to achieve this. I met Mr Stevenson at Gordon house in Inverurie for a general chat and to hopefully source some information on the catch records of the Council waters. Mr Stevenson was very welcoming and was keen to learn more about the Trust and what I had been doing in post since last June. After a very interesting discussion about the council waters, rules and conservation code, the RDT and some general tactics (Mr Stevenson is a keen angler himself) I enquired further about the catch records for the council waters.

I explained my intentions, which is to investigate several beats across the catchment with almost complete records to try and identify if there are any changes in trends such as size, run times and distribution. Mr Stevenson kindly provided me with catch records from the mid nineties to last season. I confirmed with him that I would provide any results from the analysis to him first to confirm that the information was not sensitive for general distribution. We agreed to keep in touch throughout the season and I would report back on my findings in due course.

I have been in touch with a few other estates and should have some information coming in from them on both salmon and trout catches, so watch this space for historical catch record reports in due course.

Biologists Meeting

This week I also attended the biologists meeting held at Marine Scotland Labs at Pitlochory. The event was scheduled for earlier in the year but was cancelled due to the adverse weather. The programme was very interesting and pertinent to many of the Don projects with topics such as timed electro fishing, training developments, Sawbill duck counting and a Biosecurity update. The

event was well attended with over 20 Biologist present from the Orkneys to the Tweed. I shall be reporting on some of these subjects individually as and when they are relevant to RDT activities so shall leave them for now. One topic I will briefly mention is Sawbill duck counting, as many of you are aware Sawbill ducks such as the Cormorant, Goosander and Merganser predate upon juvenile salmonids, along with othe freshwater fish. This can especially be the case when salmon and sea trout are migrating as smolts and is amplified at different times of the year by migratory stocks of some Sawbills.

This is a topic which has caused problems for the Don DSFB in the past due to various staffing requirements and the numbers of counters required to complete an accurate count across the catchment. I would like to use the BLOG as a means of appealing with you to identify whether you would be able to help with Sawbill counting; it usually takes place once a month in the morning for a few hours, training and coordination would be provided by the RDT. This is more a general query to see what interest we have in this subject further discussion would be required but information could be vital in understanding the current impact these Sawbills have on the freshwater fish of the River Don. Your views are welcome at biologist@riverdon.org.uk

Cheers Jamie