

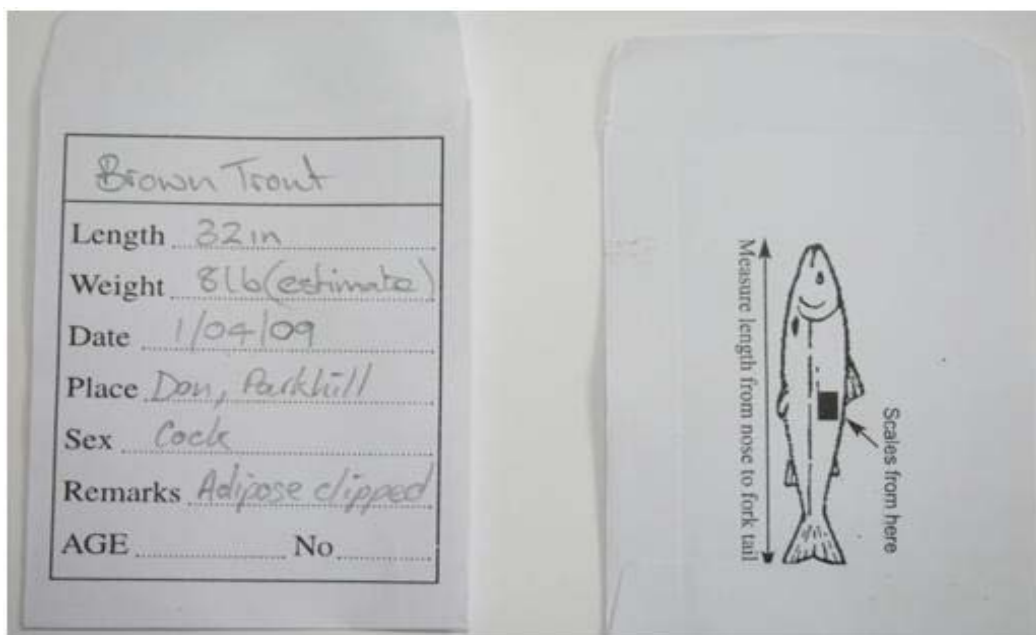
# Week Forty Two

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## *Scale Sampling Workshop*

The trust hosted its first workshop in the Cluny offices on Monday night the 29th March; the event was focused on the Fishery Management Plan, Scale Sampling Programme. The aim of the event was to educate anglers of the reasons for sampling scales from fish and how this information could inform management practices for the catchment. It also gave those attending the opportunity to participate in preparing and reading scales for analysis and explained the process of reading the scales and what information can be derived from a single trout or salmon scale.

The event was attended by 11 individuals; I presented to the group and led the participatory sections of the workshop over the evening. Every attendee was offered a small package containing scale packets and a pair of tweezers; given the practical information and experience gleaned from the evening they were asked to collect scales from fish they caught, obviously without causing undue harm or distress to the fish. Along with the scales anglers were asked to record information on the scale packets (see image) as this may often prove vital in understanding the exact age of the fish.



(Left) Front of scale packet with example information recorded and (Right) with small image indicating scale removal location.

For any anglers interested in participating in future Scale Sampling Workshops please feel free to get in touch with me on [biologist@riverdon.org.uk](mailto:biologist@riverdon.org.uk) to register your interest.

## *Meeting with new Grandhome Ghillie, Paul Hans*

Recognising that the need for me to introduce myself was long overdue I stopped in at the Grandhome Bothy this week to meet Paul Hans and some of the syndicate members. Paul has taken

over from the Bob Dempster who sadly passed away at the end of last year after having being ghillie on the beat for over 30 years. I chatted with Paul about the Grandhome fishing's and explained to him about the trust and our various projects. It came to light that this has been the best start tot eh season for Grandhome in over three decades. Bearing this in mind I asked Paul and the anglers present if they would like to attend a future scale sampling workshop and for those that have been previously trained to take scales from fish in the mean time. Paul and the syndicate obliged and I collected some scale packets which had already been sampled during Bob's time. I also learnt of a few locations where sea lampreys were often seen to spawn and other tales of odd fish including shad being caught on the beat in previous years.

#### *Hatchery seminar*

The heavy snow that fell on Tuesday night prevented the six of us heading down from the Don to the hatchery seminar in Birnam. Three from the Trust and three from the Board were heading down to this obviously emotive event. The event was not cancelled but the programme shortened as some individuals managed to make it down despite the conditions. It has been confirmed that the Hatchery Seminar will be repeated at a later date, it will be one that I'm sure will attract plenty of attention.

One of the RDT projects within the Fisheries Management Plan is the Evaluation of the Hatchery Process. The subject shall draw conclusions from the results gathered during the previous season's surveys, external literature and information from the board. This process is not due to take place until year three of the FMP but regular input of relevant information and literature research shall be ongoing.

#### *Hatchery inspection*

I joined the Jim and Martin from the board to inspect the hatchery and some of the upper tributaries this week. Upon reaching the hatchery it was quite apparent that conditions were completely different from the bottom end of the river. Where it had been snowing in Aberdeen two foot of snow was lying around Strathdon. The temperature was back down and the river was low again but not for long it was due to warm later in the week and with that thaw the water would rise. The hatchery was running well no burst pipes and the eggs were progressing well with most having hatched out only a few trays still to hatch but most of the alevin now in the troughs.



Some sea trout alevin congregating in the middle of one of the troughs, a few stones placed into the tanks to divert the flow of water through the trough and provide a more natural type of “cover”.



From tray to trough, on the left of the image you can see eggs which are yet to hatch whilst those that have are removed from the tray and transferred to the trough. No prizes for guess the number!



Another inhabitant of the troughs a stonefly nymph (Plecoptera).

Next week I'll be meeting with potential survey volunteer, continuing office work and preparing for the forthcoming survey season.

Cheers Jamie