

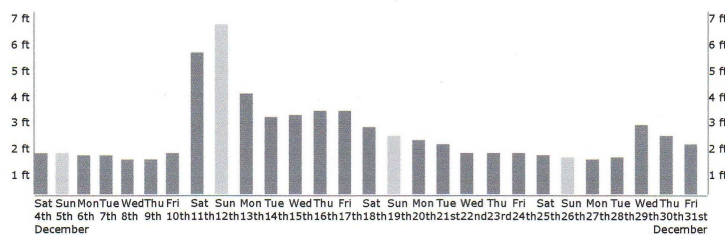
THE DON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
DECEMBER MONTHLY REPORT 2010

State of River

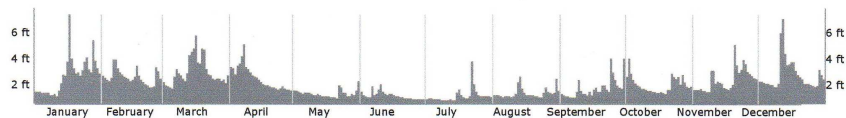
The river this month experienced severe arctic conditions along with the second largest flood of 2010, where the river reached an overall height of 7½ feet. January was the only other month this year when the river reached the same flood level.

Due to a sudden increase in air temperature on the 10th of the month, a very large snow melt took place over the entire river catchment which put the river into full flood conditions. This level of water took several days to fall back until colder weather again moved over the northeast bringing snow and hard frost during darkness hours. On the 22nd of the month the river started to freeze over at the top and middle reaches, and on the lower part of the river ice sheets were collecting at the sides of the river bank. Again on the 28th a small increase in air temperature brought on a small thaw and the river level increased by 1ft. The graph below shows the river levels for the month and year of 2010. There were only 2 months in 2010 that river flows were stable, May and June saw very little change in river conditions.

Last 28 days



Year so far



Fish in River

It has been very difficult to establish what fish have entered the river during the month, or to monitor the movement of Kelts that have dropped back to deeper water, simply due to difficult river conditions. Even dead kelts have been scarce and we normally get quite a few on the river banks, either washed up or otters have taken them out to feed on. I did receive a phone call on the 31st of the month from Castle Forbes informing me that 5 dead salmon had been seen just below the gardener's cottage at Ardhuncart, as I did not get the call until 5pm once I had returned from the hatchery it was dark. I went up on the following day the 1st January but the river level had increased during the night and the river was flowing a dark peaty brown colour, which made it impossible to see the river

bed. I suspect it was dead kelts that had collected in a quiet eddy below an Island that is there, but you can never be sure and the callout had to be attended to.

Hatchery

On the 22nd of the month gale force winds caused forestry trees to fall over our hatchery intake in the burn, as the picture below shows. This has now been cleared and no damage was done to the intake or stock within the hatchery. TV News reports have told us that it has been the worst winter for over 30 years, the hatchery has not been affected by adverse



winter conditions and all stock is progressing well at this time. The development of the young salmon in the eggs will have slowed right down, which means they will take a little longer to get to the eyed stage to plant them back into the river. During the month there has been only 1 day that we could not manage to reach the hatchery and had to turn back at Alford when the main road was blocked with fresh snow, but we did manage to get through the following day once it had been cleared.

Redd Count

Several attempts have been made again this month to no avail; the severity of weather and river conditions has made it impossible, the bed of the river had been scoured clean and the dips and holes the salmon leave are now all flattened with the floods making it very difficult to determine the Redd sites.

This year the Board and Trust staff including Lesley a volunteer for the Trust had our Christmas lunch at the Monymusk hotel where all enjoyed an excellent meal.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year.

Jim Kerr

River Superintendent