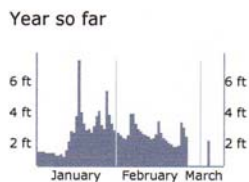
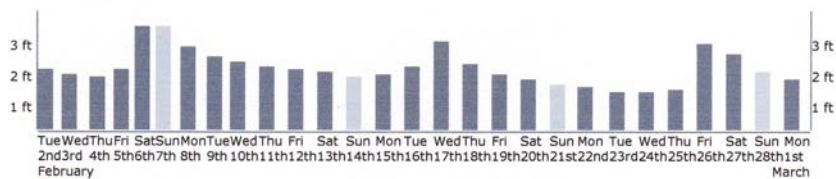


THE DON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD FEBRUARY MONTHLY REPORT 2010

River Conditions

February on the Don catchment was bitterly cold, with hail, snow and ice flows. The top of the system down to the middle river was affected the most. The river height during the month has been very unpredictable and running well above normal flow levels. There were three exceptional increases in flow levels during the month, when river levels reached a height of 3-4ft. On the 6th of the month, an increase in air temperature brought on a snow melt on the middle to lower river system which in turn increased levels, and on the 17th and 26th of the month rain moved over the Don catchment which again brought on another snow melt, this time from the top of the system down to the lower Don. As the month progressed more snow storms covered the River system. Up at the top of the system at Strathdon the depth of the snow is over 3ft, which should keep levels on a high for quite some time to come.



Fish in River

At the beginning of the month Kelts were showing quite frequently in the salmon pools from Monymusk down to the Parkhill waters at Dyce. The angling season got under way on the 11th of the month with some hardy anglers venturing out onto the Don system to wet a line. The first spring salmon was landed before 9am at Inverurie, a nice 6lb fish which was landed by the same angler who got the first fish last year as well. The angler in question has been fishing on the Don for many years and is local to the Inverurie area. As the opening day moved on there was a report of 1 fish landed at Stoneywood paper mill and two other fish, 1 on the Upper park hill stretch and 1 on the Lower Parkhill Beat on the ADAA fishing's. Considering the river conditions it was a good start to the season. Also on the opening day of the angling salmon season there was a private ceremony held for the late Gillie Mr Robert Demster, who had died suddenly at the end of last year. Bob was employed by Grandhome estate for the past 20 years as the Estate Gillie. He was a well known figure who will be missed by many, a salmon pool has been renamed in his

honour. Demster pool is in the top beat of the Grandhome fishing's on the North bank of the river. It was an excellent turn out for the event with representatives from the Board, many angling friends, family members and close friends. At the riverside a piper played the pipes and Mr David Paton, Laird of the estate said some nice words on how dedicated Mr Dempster had been to his work on the Grandhome beat. Mrs Dempster and Mr Paton then toasted the new pool with some good Malt whiskey and the new gillie Mr Paul Hans took the first cast in the newly named pool.

As the month moved on numbers of fresh spring fish caught were slowly coming in off the beats. There have been 12 spring salmon that we are aware of caught so far, and I suspect there will be more once returns are handed in. The beats that have had a catch are as follows, Grandhome fishing's 2, ADAA waters 4, Stoneywood fishing's 2; Kintore Burgh fishing's 1, Inverurie 3. Considering it has been the worst winter since the early 60s the Don is not doing too badly. There have been no rods above Kemnay as yet, so it will be interesting once rods start to fish the middle river. We will find out where the early spring salmon that entered the river in late December and January has been holding up over the winter.

The annual Don March on the first Saturday after the official opening of the salmon season on the 11th of February once again came round. This event has been happening now for quite some time and is very popular with the local community of Inverurie and surrounding districts. The event is organised by the Inverurie Angling Association. There was a good turn out with members of the Don Board, Don Trust and local anglers from Inverurie and Kintore. The march started at the Kintore arms where a piper led the way to the river, once at the river retired council member Raymond Bisset recited a poem and the Rev Mr Graeme Longmuir toasted the river and ourselves with a small dram of good whiskey, and wished all who fish the Don a good season.

Gyrodactylus Salaris

As the angling season has now got under way, Gyrodactylus is still a very big threat to all Scotland's rivers. The DDSFB and Don Trust urge all proprietors to make anglers fishing their waters aware of the importance of disinfecting all fishing equipment if they have been fishing over seas before going on to the Don. I have added a declaration form at the end of this monthly report for all anglers to fill in before going on to the river, which will give information on this parasite and the importance of keeping it out of the River Don.

Salmon in the Classroom

The salmon in the classroom has also started for another year, this year the program is being organised by the River Don trust. There are four schools taking part, two of the schools Craigievar and Monymusk primary had their eggs introduced into their aquarium during the last two weeks of the month. I accompanied Jamie the Trust Biologist to the school where a talk on the Salmon life cycle was given, the children all came to visit the hatchery last year and watched us during hatchery operations and still remembered seeing

all the big salmon. This is a new project to three of the schools, which I am sure they will enjoy. The other two schools taking part are Lumsden and Towie primary school; they will be getting their salmon eggs next month. For more information on salmon in the Classroom go to the River Don Trust web site at www.riverdontrust.org.uk.

Trout in the Classroom

This project has started once again, it is organised by Inverurie angling association. Over the past two years the project has been put into two secondary schools, but this year Strathmore Primary children got the chance to rear young trout in the Aquarium supplied by the IAA. Dr Sam Martin of the IAA set up the tank in the classroom, I met up with him at the school where he introduced me to the children and their teacher and after a talk on the life cycle of Brown trout the children each got a chance to put the eggs into the aquarium. This project received good publicity from the local Paper the Aberdeen Advertiser. As the eggs hatch and progress they will then be released back into the river.



Tank you very much: Pupils from Strathburn Primary welcomed Dr Sam Martin (left) of Inverurie Angling Association and River Don superintendent Jim Kerr to their class where they took receipt of the Trout Hatchery system that they will look after in the coming months. Photograph by David Porter

The Advertiser, February 26, 2010 13

Pupils have fishy future

PUPILS at Strathburn Primary welcomed some new additions to their class this week when they took delivery of a hatchery tank as part of a programme organised by Inverurie Angling Association.

The Trout In The Classroom hatchery system has been developed by the association to allow children to observe how the trout in the river Don hatch and develop from eggs as part of the project.

The tank will be looked after by pupils in primary five, who will be responsible for feeding the growing fish and monitoring the water quality, while the tank itself has a cooler system that maintains optimum temperature for developing trout, reflecting the natural temperature of the river they would normally grow up in.

The young fish will be nurtured through their first feeding before being released into the Don in May.

Hatchery

At this time all the hatchery stock is progressing well.

Jim Kerr

River Superintendent