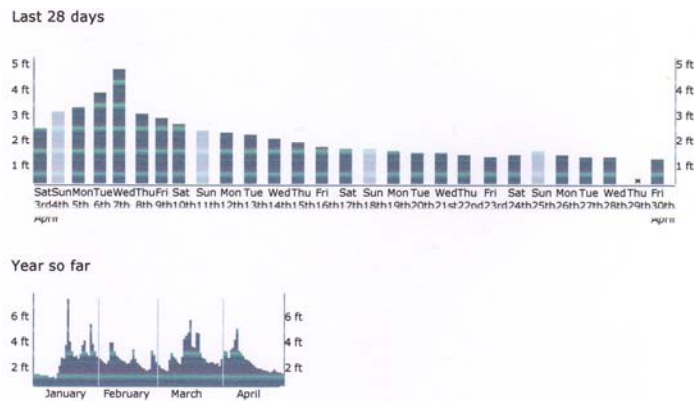


THE DON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
APRIL MONTHLY REPORT

River Conditions

On the 7th of April the river was running at 5ft above normal levels after a snow thaw occurred at the top reaches of the river system. The river level remained high as the last of the snow thawed throughout the system. It wasn't until the 15th of the month that the river returned to a more appropriate height for angling effort to get back on track. The river level continued to drop, and by the end of April the river was just above normal flows.



Fish in River

April has been another excellent month for spring salmon catches up and down the river system. Most beats have now doubled their catches and more for this time last year, and I think there have been as many fish lost to the net or just grabbing the lure or fly. I have had a lot of reports from anglers unable to stop fish when they were running hard through the pools earlier in the month, when river levels were high. The catches I have for the month are approximate numbers as there are still catches coming in for April; Grandhome 19, ADAA 20, Stoneywood mill 5, Balbithan 4, Kintore 3, Inverurie 16, one lucky well known angler had 10 spring fish in two days, 3 one day and 7 the next and all were returned, Manar 10, Fetternear 8, Kemnay ADAA, 2 Salmon, 1 sea trout, Monymusk 5 salmon and Brown trout up to 4½lb, Tilliefoure 13, and Castle Forbes Estate 9. There are a lot of beats and small syndicate waters in between the beats that I have not mentioned, that have also done well for catches for the month. Now we are into May anglers will be looking for early summer salmon and of course sea trout which should be slowly entering the river system. Hopefully with a good rise in river levels by the middle of May and if good numbers of fish are on the coast, the fishing could be quite exciting for the coming months.

I would like to ask all anglers on the river to be extra vigilant at this present time, and if they see anything suspicious such as cars parked in unusual places or anglers/members of the public that they have not seen before on the river bank acting suspiciously, to please give the river bailiffs a phone on 07836645510 or 07836645509. All information is totally confidential, thank You.

Hatchery

All the egg trays have now been removed from the egg troughs, and all the young salmon are progressing well. I have purchased a bag of first feed food just in case when the time comes to release the fish at the end of May, river conditions are not appropriate. The young salmon will then be fed in the hatchery until river conditions improve for stocking practices.

Don Trust

The River Don Trust projects will be kicking off once again this coming month with the habitat survey, if the weather holds this should give us a good start in completing the top half of the river in good time, possibly 4 to 5 weeks which should take us into June. This includes taking in the tributaries as we come down to them from the main river. Some of the upper tributaries are quite extensive and are a day's walk even for 3 men walking through them; the Nochtly burn is a good example where you are maybe speaking 1½ days.

Trout in the Classroom

On the 28th of the month I was invited to attend a special assembly at Strathburn primary school at Inverurie. The young children dedicated the whole assembly to the Trout in the classroom, there was about 30 pupils and all their parents, plus myself, Dr Sam Martin and Mr George Niblock of the IAA. First the children thanked Mr Niblock for sponsoring the fish aquarium and equipment, then they thanked Dr Sam Martin for all his dedication in helping the school with the project then they thank me and the Fishery Board for donating the Trout eggs for the project, after they had thanked everyone they began to sing a song they had made up of the young trout hatching in their tank and swimming with their big yolk sacks still attached to their bodies and rigging. The head teacher then told the audience that they had made a documentary video of the project which we all watched and it was great, then they had made another song this time it was rather sad as they were releasing their fish back into the wild where they could swim free but they would have to watch out for all the bad big birds who might eat them. The teacher then invited all the mums and dads to go to the children's classroom and see their paintings and project work. The Teacher of the class asked me if one of the children could show me her work as her parents could not make it to school that day, the child showed me the drawings of trout that all the children had done which were displayed on the classroom wall, she showed me her drawing and her work book, as I looked through her book and got to the last page it read thank you mum and dad for helping me with the research on

my project, this is when you realise how important these projects really are to the local community. Press pictures were also taken on that day by the local papers. The release date for the trout is the 10th of May.

Salmon in the Classroom

All the young salmon in the tanks in the 5 schools have now hatched and are progressing well at this time.

Jim Kerr

River Superintendent