

NESS & BEAULY FISHERIES TRUST NEWS

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News in Brief:

- N&BFT arranged for an invertebrate survey to be undertaken on the Deanie Burn, part of the Farrar catchment. The survey was undertaken by Aquaterra Ecology based near Huntly. Concerns had been raised regarding acidity levels in the burn. The survey, however, provided no evidence of acidity being a problem.
- *Salmon in the Classroom* was undertaken at Teanassie School in the Spring of the year. Additional outreach activities include biology talks at Inverness Gaelic School and Glen Urquhart High School.
- Talks on the activities of the Trust and the importance of freshwater fish to the Scottish economy were delivered to Drumnadrochit Chamber of Commerce and Highlands of Scotland Tour Guides Association.
- A full engineering report for the Farigaig bridge apron mentioned in the March newsletter has now been received from Mike Beech, a specialist fish pass engineer. The apron is a partial barrier to fish migration and N&BFT are now seeking funding for the remedial action required to solve the problem.

Genetics Project Yields First Results

Earlier editions of *Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust News* gave brief details of the FASMOP genetic project overseen by Rivers and Fisheries Trusts Scotland (RAFTS). N&BFT committed significant funds to the project in order to attempt to answer key management questions, not least on the Upper Garry system which has seen an ongoing, serious decline in the numbers of returning adult salmon over the last decade.

Results from the initial batch of samples analysed by the project have yielded interesting results. A priority of the research is to assess if the remnant salmon of the Upper Garry, once famed for its large spring salmon, are of local origin. However, results from two historically important tributaries in the Upper Garry catchment, namely the Greenfield Burn and the River Kingie, have been shown to have genetic profiles more

normally associated with Norwegian salmon rather than resembling the profile of other salmon analysed on the Ness system.

The results represent a setback in efforts to restore a viable population to the Upper Garry, which was once characterised by large spring salmon. N&BFT and the Ness District Fishery Board are currently assessing options available to try and improve the situation in the Upper Garry.

Elsewhere on the Ness system, results suggest that the overall salmon stock is split into several distinct populations. Thus far, River Ness, Oich and Enrick fish have been shown to be genetically significantly different from each other. Moriston fish, however, have been shown to be closely related to Oich fish.

On the Beaully, system initial results have indicated significant differences between the Lower Beaully, Glass and Farrar

samples analysed.

The results provide strong evidence of population structuring which in turn has important implications for the future management of stocks within both the Ness and Beaully catchments. N&BFT involvement in the project has been supported by RAFTS, Marine Scotland and Atlantic Salmon Trust.



Upper Garry—once the destination for large spring salmon.

Erchless Burn Improvements Commence

The 2009 N&BFT habitat survey of the Erchless Burn, Upper Beaully, identified a number of issues requiring remedial action. Key actions required included the easing of several timber blockages and the opening up of canopy cover.

This summer, a site visit with Ben Clinch, forestry specialist with Bowlts, identified key blockages to be removed (large

woody debris has numerous ecological functions beneficial for the aquatic environment and should only be removed if they are likely to hinder fish migration). These blockages were subsequently sensitively removed.

Over-shading by dense tree cover in the Erchless Burn is expected to be significantly reduced in the near future as a

result of the selective removal of sycamore trees, a non-native species, as part of the forestry plan for the estate. Increased light penetration will aid plant and invertebrate growth which will in turn improve fish production. The project has been funded by N&BFT, Erchless Estate, Beaully District Fishery Board and Upper Beaully Syndicate.

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Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust

N&BFT— How You Can Help

As an environmental charity N&BFT relies heavily on memberships and donations from the public in addition to grants etc from a number of bodies. Membership of N&BFT is open to individuals and groups at the following costs:

Associate Member (individual): £15 per annum

Life Member (individual): £500

Associate Member (Group, Association etc): £300 per annum

Under the Gift Aid scheme, N&BFT can reclaim an additional 28% of any sum donated if it is made by an individual who is a UK taxpayer. Donations in the form of usable fishing tackle etc or other items are also welcome as they can be sold free of charge by N&BFT on online auction sites.

N&BFT is administered by a group of *Ordinary Members* which in turn elect the board of directors. N&BFT would welcome applications from interested individuals who may wish to become ordinary members.

For further details on how you can help please make contact via the address opposite.

Trust Obtains Funding for Electric Burn Assessment

N&BFT, working in conjunction with Alan Jones Associates, have successfully obtained funding for a feasibility study to improve the habitat for fish in the lade at Whin Park, Inverness. The lade is known as the 'Electric Burn' due to its historical use as a hydroelectric facility. In recent years, however, the lade has been periodically dewatered leading to fish kills. This situation has been of concern to members of Inverness Angling Club and wildlife conservation organisations. The lade has also been a 'dumping ground' for litter and other items that have no place in the aquatic environment. The assessment of the lade as potential fish habitat has been partly prompted by plans to use the lower sections of the lade for canoeing which have been put forward by Inverness Canoe Club. The intention is to utilise the lade for evening slalom training, particularly in the winter months. The funding obtained enabled



a detailed study of the Electric Burn to be commissioned from Aquamaintain, a company of specialist ecological contractors. During the summer two members of staff from Aquamaintain visited Whin Park in order to obtain crucial measurements of the dimensions of the lade, the nature of existing features and the flows that are available. N&BFT have received a comprehensive report from Aquamaintain which included plans for improvements in the habitat via the judicious introduction of rocks, stones in certain

areas.

The aim would be to concentrate flows and increase velocity in key locations in a similar fashion to how croys work in large rivers. The assessment has been restricted to the upper section of the lade as this is the most likely area to benefit from any improvements.

A key difficulty to be overcome is ensuring that any fish (salmon, sea trout, eels,

lampreys etc) are able to successfully migrate out of the lade in order to reach the sea and complete their lifecycle. An assessment of the pipework in the vicinity of the old turbine house is due to be undertaken shortly. A decision on the feasibility of the improvements will be taken in the Spring of 2011. It should be noted that any proposed changes to the lade will require appropriate permissions to be obtained prior to them being enacted.