

RIVER SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

2015

FISHING SEASON

On February 11th 2015 Forres Angling Association held their opening ceremony at the Stoney pool, the toast was given by Andrew Graham Stewart, Mr Stewart who writes for Trout & Salmon also gave a talk about the new conservation code for the season. The ceremony was well attended with all anglers looking forward to a fruitful season.

The first fresh run fish of the season, weighing 18lbs was caught in February, this early success carried on through- out the spring, lower and middle beats had good numbers of fresh fish. Summer Salmon and Grilse came in good numbers and by August fish were in all beats of the river, we had some decent water levels at times this year and that improved the number of fish entering the river, the end of year returns as you will see, show an improvement on the overall catch and returns, we are over 80% return rate and urge all anglers to continue with their support by adhering to the conservation code.

POACHING

With a new team of bailiffs this year we were conscious of the fact that we might get some old poachers back on the scene, we kept a high profile on the river and coast to deter any possible activity, with plenty night patrols, we were seen from Forres Association to Cawdor on a regular basis, that itself proved to be a beneficial exercise in deterring poachers, we received several call outs and moved a number of holiday makers in the summer months with small spinning rods, most of them were up at Ardclach as it's a popular picnic destination, we are also in contact with the River Nairn Bailiff, Alistair Skinner on a day to day basis, Alistair organized a coastal patrol from Marine Scotland this year and we have jointly patrolled the River Findhorn and River Nairn.

We also help to patrol the River Lossie, on a Sunday patrol we stopped and questioned a fisherman in the mouth of the river as he was fishing illegally, the police were called and he was arrested and charged with a number of offences, myself and the assistant Bailiff have been summoned to appear at Elgin Sheriff court in February 2016 as witnesses, we will inform the Board and Trust of the out- come of this incident.

SEALS

The Moray Firth Seal Management Plan is still on-going and is carried out over the year, with a restricted area due to the new protected haul out site, we are finding it challenging to carry out this duty and to minimize predation.

SAWBILLS

The Sawbill counts were carried out during the year and figures were given to the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust, the bailiffs and public also reported sightings along with pictures of Sawbills to the Trust which also helped to secure a license, the Sawbill License will be carried out in the spring time when these ducks are plentiful and before the Smolt Migration.

FNLFT

We continue to work closely with the trust, this year we have helped out with spraying Giant Hogweed, electro fishing, American Mink trapping and water sampling, we also successfully helped to organize their Fund Raising day at Logie, we also netted the Findhorn bay this year on a few occasions to find out what kind of life we have in the bay at low & high tide, the bailiffs also attended a Fish Identification course in the Long Room at Logie Estate.

We have been getting used to the new Wild Life Cameras over the winter and will be using them from now on, they will be used for surveillance on Mink Rafts/traps, Sawbills, Seals and Poaching problems.

As this year comes to an end, I would like to thank all volunteers, estates and Keepers for their assistance and continued support you have given through-out the year, I give special thanks to Binsness Estate as they were kind enough to assist us with a boat, engine & fuel when we netted the bay with the Trust and when we did our practical on the Fish Identification course. Thanks also to the Assistant Bailiff Billy Forrester for his support and River Bailiff Alistair Skinner from the Nairn.

Kind Regards & Seasons Greetings,

Sean Mclean,

River Superintendent,

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