



29-pounder wins first trophy

On a lovely sunny day a crowd of over 100 people gathered to see the inaugural presentation of the Morison Trophy to Mrs Jean Marshall. Her magnificent 29lb September salmon (Upper Netherdale Beat) was the largest fly-caught fish on the Deveron of 2011. As she returned the fish safely,

she was also eligible for the G-Loomis salmon rod, but she kindly offered the rod back to the Trust to auction for habitat improvement works, a true sportswomen! Turriff and District Pipe Band's major Billy Hepburn and pipers Ryan and Andrew Conlon led the crowd to the banks of the Deveron at Turriff

AA where Banff and Buchan MP, Dr Eilidh Whiteford, officially opened the 2012 season by blessing the river with Chivas Regal, before Mrs Marshall cast the first line. We are very grateful to Chivas Brothers who sponsored the event, offering all those present a dram of their 12 year old.

IN BRIEF...

• A new trade fair with all the latest tackle manufacturers such as Hardys & Greys, G-Loomis and with angling professionals such as Andy Murray and Scott Mackenzie will take place on Sunday the 29th of April (10am to 4pm) at Turriff Trout and Salmon magazine will also be entertaining visitors throughout the day.



• Chivas Brothers Ltd has very generously sponsored our spring salmon reward scheme for 2012. Any angler safely returning a salmon caught before the end of May, ideally with a photograph or verified by another, will receive a bottle of Chivas Regal. Robbie Brown, ghillie at Coniecleugh has been our first winner.

• **Date for your diary: Please join us on the 6th August for the joint Trust and Board AGM. The meeting will be held at the Castle Hotel in Huntly. There will be more information in our next newsletter**

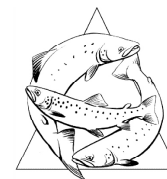


• **The 2012 Deveron Fishing Festival is approaching! See deveronfishingfestival.co.uk for more details.**

For further information please contact The Senior Biologist at The Offices, Avochie, Rothiemay, Huntly, Aberdeenshire AB54 7YY Telephone/fax: 01466 711388; email: richiemiller@deveron.org or visit the Trust's website www.deveron.org The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust is a registered charity. No. SC 032131

Visit our updated website www.deveron.org

• **Discovering Deveron genetics**
Funding to find out more **inside pages**



• Scan here for a quick link to our website...



THE DEVERON FLYER

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust

Newsletter 24, spring 2012

Welcome to the 24th newsletter of the Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust.

The Trust's objectives are to 'conserve, protect and rehabilitate salmon, sea trout and trout and other indigenous species of animal, bird, insect and plant life and more generally to promote the ecological cycle for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Deveron'.

Burn restoration programme

The Trust's burn restoration scheme is at the forefront of its work. SEPA funding means that essential improvements can be made to damaged spawning burns



FISHRIE BURN

PHASE 1

During 2009 a SEPA restoration grant provided the funds to remove a redundant dam which was an obstruction for salmon and trout. With subsequent juvenile monitoring in 2010 we highlighted that salmon are now utilising spawning grounds some 3 kms upstream - a fantastic result.

PHASE 2

In 2010 we placed cobble and boulders upstream of the old dam site to restore in-stream fish habitat. These provide habitat for salmonid parr and allow natural water flow to scour the river bed, cleansing existing spawning gravels. Our electro-fishing survey recorded salmon parr and trout of 250mm.

PHASE 3

The banks of this section of the burn were severely damaged by the 2009 autumn floods immediately after the dam removal (picture above), exposing



Left: the problem- bank collapse after the 2009 floods; and above: leaving the burn in its natural state

the vertical bank face to collapse, damaging the in-stream habitat and culminating in the loss of clean gravel and valuable arable land. A £25,000 grant from the SEPA restoration fund was then secured to undertake an innovative bank restoration technique

and initial work started July 2011. The land owner, Mr Alan Twatt, has spent a lot of his own time along with his farm staff installing the matting and managing the project of which we are extremely thankful.

THE SOLUTION

Allow the burn space to expand during high flows without eroding the banks. The flood bank behind protects the *continued inside...*

adjacent farm land. Coir matting and grass seed have been laid on the lower channel to provide vegetation and long term natural protection. Willow whips will be planted for added stability and larch logs will be installed to protect the flood bank. A final phase is planned for 2013 to replicate this on the opposite bank, which suffered similar damage. This will also be funded from the SEPA restoration fund.



MONQUHITTER BURN

During the summer of 2010 the Trust placed cobble and boulders in an area which had been dredged and straightened, removing the habitat for parr. We are very grateful to Colin & Morven Sivewright of Meikle Blackhills farm who provided the boulders and staff who helped in the operation. Electro-fishing surveys in 2011 showed a sharp increase in parr in these areas, including this superb trout.

CROOKSMILL BURN

We have secured £16,000 from the SEPA Restoration Fund to carry out an environmental/geo-morphological survey (by CBEC) of the Crooksmill burn (Isla System). The survey will prioritise treatments necessary to restore the burn. Grazing pressures, floods and dredging all took their toll on this burn, which supports salmon and sea trout. The report by CBEC will help us to systematically approach the problems and negotiate with various landowners to restore the burn to a healthy, productive state.



• Thanks to a grant from the Jo Walters Trust of £2,000, we were able to purchase six portable coolers, which were used to keep salmon eggs at a constant temperature in participating schools. This has been a considerable improvement, as the central heating in schools can often cause problems in trying to keep water temperatures low. We provided this equipment to seven schools in the district who participated in our Salmon goes to school 2012 project: Portsoy, Whitehills, Aberchirder, Drumblade, Gartly, Clatt & Glass. These primary schools all successfully looked after salmon eggs and will in release the fry during the summer.

Deveron salmon genetic analysis – new SNH funding secured!



The Trust is delighted to announce that it has secured funding of £11,854 to allow us to use a different class of genetic marker (Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms, or SNPs) to address the resolution of population structuring and provide a more robust assessment.

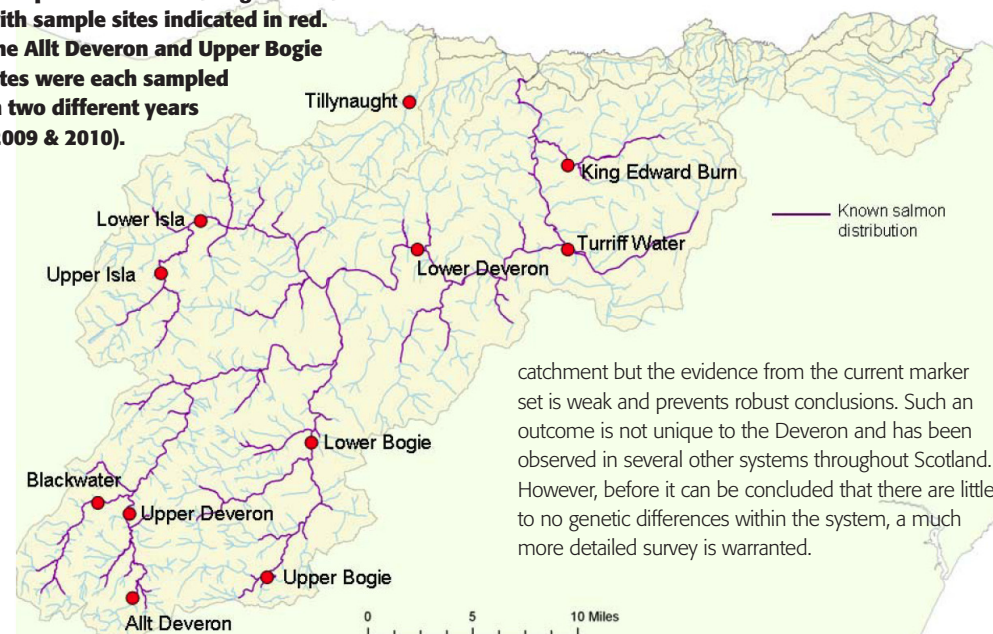
The main aim of this new project is to use genetic analysis of juvenile Deveron salmon populations and returning adult salmon to direct future salmon habitat and sub-stocks management more cost-effectively.

Genetic information from Deveron juvenile Atlantic salmon was sampled from 10 sites within the Deveron and one site from the Burn of Boyne from 2009-2011 and these have been analysed to help inform fisheries management. Our key objective was to define the genetic structure of the locations under investigation, to determine whether salmon in the area represent distinct breeding populations. The analysis showed that, most sites exhibited weak genetic differences from one

another. The Allt Deveron, Upper Bogie, Upper Isla and King Edward burn sites were the most different from other locations sampled. Work through the Scottish Governments FASMOP programme has shown the utility of microsatellite genetic markers to identify between-river structure and also fine-scale structuring to breeding populations within river systems (Feochan study; Thompson et al. 2006).

Although all systems exhibit a level of population differentiation within rivers, the magnitude of these differences is variable. In practical terms, the larger the differences the more likely you are to be able to assign a rod-caught adult to its tributary of origin, which is our ultimate goal. This is the situation in the Ness system, where fish can be assigned to tributary with a high degree of accuracy (80-90%). Smaller differences, while interesting, do not provide the power to address more complex management questions such as "Where are our spring fish spawning?", or "When do the fish from tributary X return?". This scenario appears to be most common for the large east-coast systems, where the percentage of fish accurately assigned to tributary of origin using the current analysis method may drop to less than 30%. There is some suggestion of genetic structuring within the Deveron

A map of the Deveron, Bogie & Isla, with sample sites indicated in red. The Allt Deveron and Upper Bogie sites were each sampled in two different years (2009 & 2010).



catchment but the evidence from the current marker set is weak and prevents robust conclusions. Such an outcome is not unique to the Deveron and has been observed in several other systems throughout Scotland. However, before it can be concluded that there are little to no genetic differences within the system, a much more detailed survey is warranted.