



# river dee review

2018 - 2019







# farewell from the chair

A challenging season for angling in 2018 saw 3,500 salmon caught on the Dee, this is relatively low but considering the conditions in the year and the status of salmon stocks nationally and internationally, the Dee remains one of the most important rivers supporting the species.

The salmon crisis developing in the North Atlantic has become apparent to all, from international agencies, governments and perhaps most obviously, to anglers. It is essential that we continue to do everything we can at a local level to mitigate against ocean challenges, and the first focus of the Board and Trust is habitat restoration, ensuring there is a home where salmon can thrive.

Of course, a healthy river is a precious resource for all and brings many benefits to the Deeside valley. A healthy river can produce many smolts, but our research highlights that this alone is not enough as these fish need protection in order to survive. The Dee's research programme is helping at a local and national level with how to preserve this vulnerable creature.

It is important to keep the river in people's hearts and share our passion for salmon fishing, as the sport is key to its protection. We continue to focus on angling development which gives much satisfaction introducing newcomers to the river. We have great support from our volunteers who in making a contribution have developed their own connections with the Dee.

A new Fisheries Management Plan will be produced shortly and will bring together all these areas of focus and provide a way ahead ensuring that the river continues to thrive.

After serving on the Dee Fishery Board and River Dee Trust for 8 years, including 6 as Chairman, I have decided to step down. It has been my honour, a privilege and a challenge to lead the Board and Trust and there has been no shortage of highs and lows. Despite our best efforts we have seen a succession of disappointing annual catches, our river and community devastated by Storm Frank and huge uncertainty caused by the Scottish Government's Wild Fishery Reform. We commissioned an independent report looking at hatcheries, a subject that never fails to generate lively and often polarised debate. As I have said many times, if I had a magic wand, I would have a very sore arm!

On the plus side we continue to lead the way with our programme of habitat improvement especially in the Upper and Middle catchments, the smolt tagging and tracking project now in its fourth year is producing really useful data that helps to produce and protect precious smolts. We continue to innovate trialling nutrient enhancement in the upper catchment using deer legs and work closely with the River Don through a service level agreement to our mutual benefit. I was delighted to appoint Dr Lorraine Hawkins as River Director following the departure of Mark Bilsby, Lorraine continues to do an outstanding job for the River Dee maintaining our status as one of the best managed rivers in the UK.

I have been lucky to have the support of a strong and active Board, one not afraid to take difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions in the long-term best interest of the river. It has mainly been fun; I have learned a great deal from my fellow Board members and for that I am most grateful.

The River Office staff deserve equal praise and have been great to work with during some tricky times.

Please do continue to engage with them and use their expertise, we are lucky to have such a strong team working on our behalf.

Richard Gledson



99.5% of salmon caught were released in 2018

# STOCK HEALTH

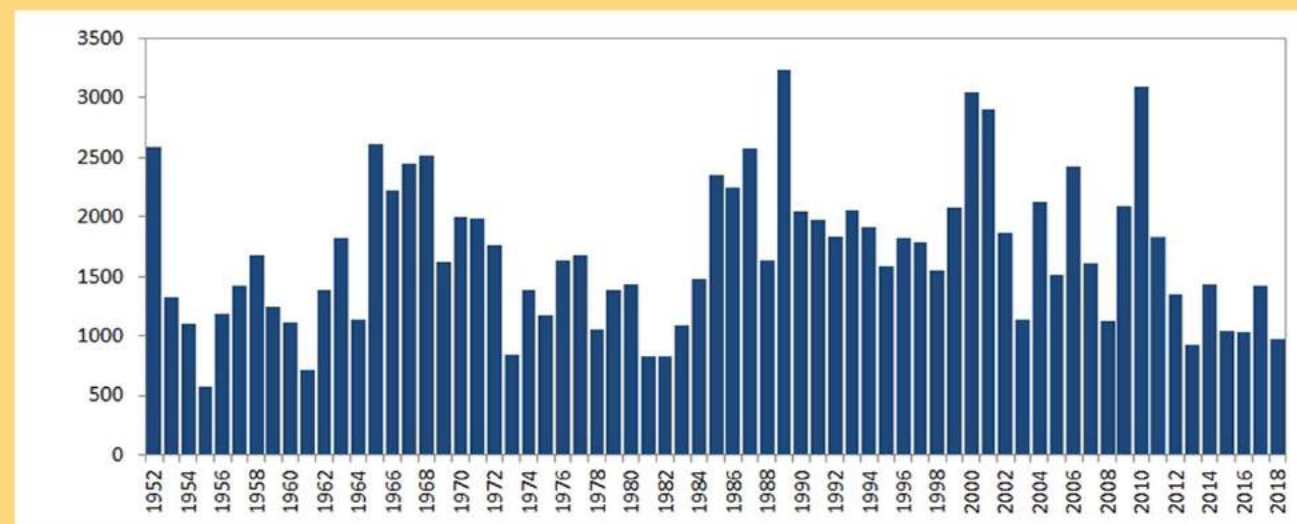
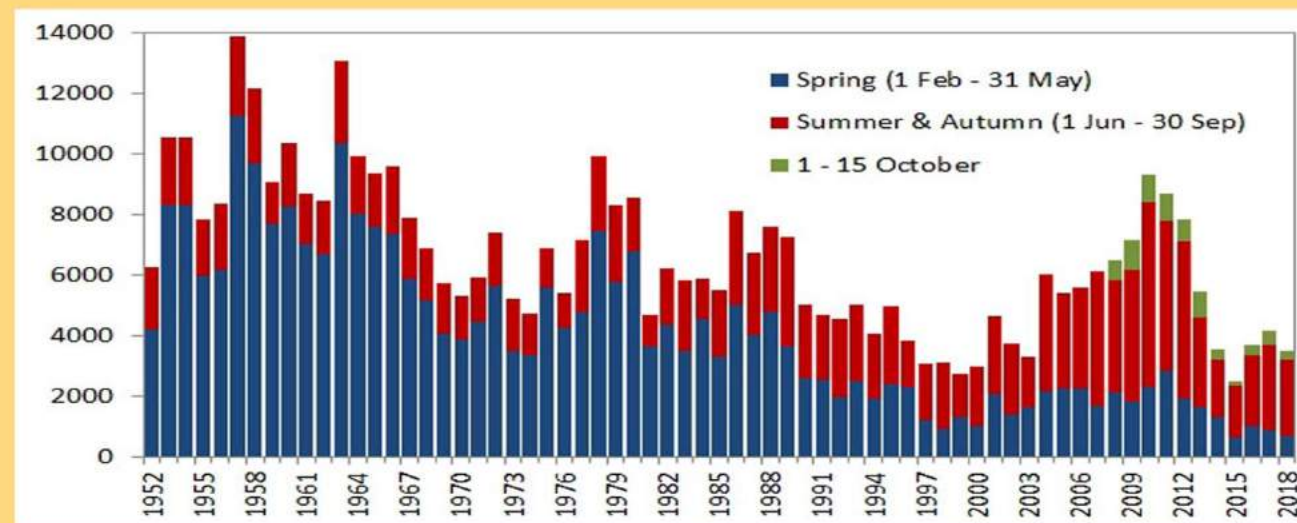
this is the sixth

consecutive year that returns have exceeded 99%

In 2018, 3,500 salmon were caught on the Dee, including 721 spring salmon. The drought throughout Scotland no doubt impacted these low catches, but the Dee retains its important contribution at a national level, again accounting for nearly 10% of Scotland's total rod catch.

Every autumn we count the number of redds (the equivalent to nests in the gravel where eggs are laid) produced at sites around the catchment to assess adult spawning levels. During spawning season 14 sites, each one kilometre in length, are surveyed. Most sites have been surveyed for at least seven years, so we can look for trends in spawning levels.

In 2018, 30% of sites were above their long-term average, whereas 64% were below their average and one site was the same. However, in 2018 only two sites fell outside of the typical range, with one site being higher and the other lower.



Across Scotland, 2018 was the worst sea trout catch year on record. The catch on the Dee totalled 975, and although low, reflects the overall picture. 98.7% of these sea trout were returned to the river to continue to spawn.

Image courtesy of Ghillie, Craig McDonald:  
"12lbs, caught by me in the Clarach at Cambus O May"





For the last four years smolt traps have been run on the Beltie and Sheecho burns to estimate local smolt production and understand stock health. The smolt run in the lower Dee extends from late March until early June, although in some years most smolts leave these two tributaries within only a few days.

The traps capture varying numbers of smolts, however when accounting for environmental conditions and trapping efficiencies, salmon smolt production has been much more stable. 1 – 2 smolts are produced for every 100 m<sup>2</sup> of parr habitat.

Results from the National Electrofishing Programme suggest that smolt production in the Beltie burn is lower than its potential, whereas the Sheecho is more in-line with expectations.

The Middle Dee Project fish counter on the Beltie suggests that for the number of adult fish returning, 25% more smolts would be expected. Hence, production and survival of juveniles in the Beltie is below the expected level for the spawning population size. The difference may reflect degraded habitat conditions.

In the upper catchment, 16 sites electrofished for the past four years show a picture of improvement. On rivers such as the Gairn, Clunie and Ey, fry and parr densities had nearly doubled from the previous year.

The first year of the National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland shows that, overall, densities of fry at 30 electrofished sites across the Dee were 57 fish per 100m<sup>2</sup>, which is close to, but just below, the 61 fry per 100m<sup>2</sup> that we'd expect across a comparable catchment in good condition.

Average parr density in the catchment of 14 parr per 100m<sup>2</sup> was also lower than the 20 parr per 100m<sup>2</sup> expected in a comparable healthy river.





Our focus is to get as many smolts out to sea as possible, and the crucial information that our research provides helps to protect this iconic species. Four years ago, we invested in acoustic tracking technology which enables us to track juvenile salmon smolts to see when and how quickly they leave the river and head out to sea.

There is mounting evidence that large numbers of young salmon are lost in the river- an area we thought to be safe. Loss rates of between 0.2 and 0.8% per kilometre of river migrated demonstrate how challenging it can be for smolts, particularly when traveling from the upper catchment.

In 2018, just over a quarter of the smolts were lost in the harbour raising a fresh concern that adds further pressure to Dee salmon.

We are keen to explore conservation measures that make a difference. Finding an issue in the river is an opportunity as we have a real chance of reducing losses here. The most likely cause of river losses was thought to be predation by a burgeoning population of invasive predatory birds. In 2019 a conservation measure was to provide the necessary proof.

The trial involved monitoring of bird numbers and targeted displacement and control of predatory birds in two sections of river, between three 'standard' sections of river, and then monitoring 134 tagged salmon smolts as they migrated downstream. This was carried out over 50km of river between March and May.

The 134 smolts were tagged in the upper catchment, including the Baddoch burn, thanks to support from Marine Scotland Science (MSS). 29 "pre-smolts" were tagged in February, to try and avoid any survival impacts from handling the fish during smolting. The remainder were tagged in April. We welcomed the support of Scottish Government to provide a £37,000 grant to purchase the acoustic smolt tags for this work. At the time of writing the receivers have just been removed from the river and the information is about to be downloaded.

We also assisted in a national programme led by Marine Scotland Science to assess the diet of goosanders and cormorants.

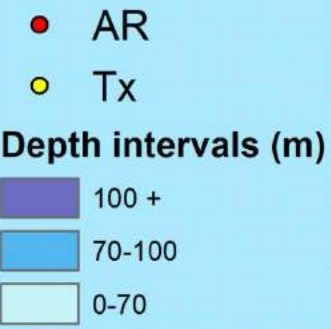


*smolt tracking is a key area of research for us*



## 2019 TRACKING

This joint project between the Trust and Marine Scotland Science is providing a new understanding of how salmon start their ocean migration, and through understanding better we hope to protect these fish in the future.



## Offshore tracking

In 2018 we completed our first year of tracking salmon smolts up to 10 km from the shore. In 2019 we have extended tracking to 20 km offshore.



In 2018 smolts headed south east from the mouth of the river, although some were recorded re-routing in a northerly direction. Tagging and tracking 150 salmon and sea trout smolts in 2019 should cast more light on when and where they turn north to their feeding grounds.

50 smolts were also tagged on the Don in 2019 to compare migrations from the two rivers. Once the 100 receivers are removed from the seabed later in 2019, analysis of the tag detections will begin. This information will help the understanding of smolt locations off the Scottish coasts and in locating future offshore wind developments.

This work has been possible because of funding by Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Ltd and Marine Scotland Science.





*All of us are more resilient in our natural environment, and the same is true for fish and other wildlife*

*The Board and Trust invest in protecting and restoring the aquatic and riparian habitat to ensure that the river can support healthy fish stocks and wildlife and be an asset to Deeside.*

Our upland tributaries such as the Gairn, Clunie and Muick are hugely important production areas for spring salmon. Habitat complexity and abundance of aquatic life are far from what they once were. The number of fish returning here has fallen, therefore production is also impacted and risks becoming a negative spiral. Our river restoration strategy involves some tried-and-tested measures and some novel ones too.

The backbone of upland restoration is tree planting. Salmon and trout need cool waters, in time the trees will grow to provide vitally important shading to help buffer against the high water temperatures that we're already experiencing. This year 26°C was recorded at the top of the system in the Geldie burn. Nutrient input into rivers comes from insects and leaves that drop from trees, all of which helps to feed fish and boost numbers. In years to come, these trees will themselves fall into the river and create perfect fish habitat as they decompose.

Over the last year, 4,640 trees have been planted in small enclosures on the Rivers Gairn, Muick, Ey and the upper main stem Dee. Some are being linked together to create larger wooded areas. The Woodland Trust have been greatly supportive with the provision of trees and we continue to check, maintain and replace fencing and trees if required. We have been building proposals for larger projects and hope these come to fruition in the next year.

Volunteers have been instrumental in assisting us with tree planting and we are keen to build these partnerships. 17 members of the public joined us in May planting 600 trees on the Slugain burn at Invercauld, and Aberdeen Standard Investments spent a corporate day with us on the Ey and planted 840 trees.

A diverse catchment requires a variety of management strategies, we work between the mountains and moorlands of the upper catchment, the agricultural lands in the middle and the urban environs of the lower Dee.

*"You would think helping to protect our environment not only for my children, but future generations to appreciate is reward enough, but on top of that I actually got to be there in a beautiful place, with winding rivers, woodland, hills and heather. I got to soak in the scenery, and the wildlife, wade through rivers with sunshine on my face, taste the clean highland air and along the way I learned a little something about the river and the work of the River Dee Trust, all this in the company of like-minded folk.*

*For me personally, volunteering with the River Dee Trust is food for my soul".*

*Tom McCormick, Aberdeen Standard Investments*

**In 2019, the Dee Fishery Board was awarded £157,000 from SNH's Biodiversity Challenge Fund to deliver habitat restoration across the upper catchment over the year.**

**This will include planting 10,000 native trees, donated by the Woodland Trust, the creation of large woody structures on the Gairn, and leaky dams on the river Muick.**

**Our vision for restoring the upper Dee riparian areas is ambitious, and the work to date has helped test and improve our measures.**

**To achieve a natural, healthy river, we need to up-scale this work. This requires partnerships with all involved in upland management and we are committed to doing this.**



Habitat complexity can be created with the addition of fallen trees into the river. Of course the long-term solution is to have trees growing to maturity along the river bank, but in the near term we carry out constructive work to improve the river by adding Large Woody Structures.

There are several major benefits of this work:

Firstly, salmon need deep, cool areas for refuge from high water temperatures in summer. The root plates of fallen trees provide young fish with deep pools for refuge from warm waters and somewhere to hide from predators.

Secondly, the fast-flowing nature of upland streams, especially those lacking in structures, often have impractical conditions for the formation of gravel spawning sites. The woody structures create the right environment for these gravels to form, and this is already becoming evident around some of our structures.

Thirdly, the structures trap and retain nutrients within the stream.

Late in 2018 and following trials on the Geldie burn, we installed Large Woody Structures in the River Gairn, a major tributary and once a major producer of salmon. In total, 24 structures were added over 3 km, using over 70 windblown, native Scots pine from Invercauld Estate. The structures were designed to ensure stability, and funded by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, SEPA's Water Environment Fund and the Dee Catchment Partnership.



*Of course the long-term solution is to have trees growing to maturity along the river bank*

The second phase of this project will be delivered in September 2019 and involves a further 30 structures in 3 km of the River Gairn. Once complete, this 6 km stretch of river will form the largest habitat restoration project of its type in Scotland.

We have also worked with Forestry Commission Scotland (now Scottish Forestry) on the Upper Cowie to create 13 Large Woody Structures. This work is intended to be a demonstration site for FCS and will be used to train foresters in how to protect streams. In years to come the trees we've planted will fall into the river and create natural structures, so that we don't manually have to do this with diggers. Trees are ultimately essential to create a self-sustaining system.



## Our aim is to send healthier, fitter, salmon smolts to sea



Many of the upland tributaries, such as the Muick and upper Gairn, are now nutrient-poor. In the past, thousands of returning fish would mostly die after spawning. Their carcasses were vitally important for adding nutrients and feeding the next generation of salmon. Streams that lack dead adult salmon or other biomass may have fewer insects, meaning less 'fish food' and subsequently smaller fry.

In other river systems, nutrients have been added artificially and shown to help increase the number of invertebrates and the fish biomass. Salmon feed pellets were used as a proxy for salmon carcasses in trials on the Scottish River Conon, and had a major boost on salmon biomass.

In 2019 we began a trial in the upper Muick to replace the nutrients from dead salmon to see if an increase occurs in invertebrates and fish production. In some test areas this comprised of fish feed pellets, and in others we used the lower legs of red deer pinned in bundles to the river bed. The deer legs are a waste product from deer management carried out in the uplands and are readily available at no cost.

We will monitor the effects on algae, insects and aquatic life and juvenile salmon over the next three years, with sampling being carried out by the James Hutton Institute and the Trust. This project has gained wide media interest with articles in the Press & Journal, The Shooting Times, Trout & Salmon and The Field magazines, as well as being featured on BBC TV programme Countryfile.

Thanks to EWOS for donating the feed pellets and local estates for the deer legs.



# RESTORATION



Work to stabilise banks and protect newly planted trees from being eroded was carried out on the Baddoch burn and on the Dee at Braemar using live willow. This work is done by hand without the need for large machinery. Unlike using rock to repair riverbanks, willow diffuses the flow of water at the bank rather than deflecting the flow elsewhere, which can lead to further erosion. Willow branches are roughly woven around live willow stakes to cover the bank face. This forms a strong living bank that not only protects the bank from further erosion and topsoil loss but also provides food, shade and cover for fish and other wildlife. This work was featured on the STV programme Sean's Scotland. Thanks to Leys Estate for providing locally sourced willow and forestry brush.





In the middle Dee catchment, the more intensive land use gives rise to diffuse pollution in the watercourses. Reduced water quality and the smothering of natural river bed substrate produce conditions less suitable to fish and other wildlife.

Working with land owners and managers has been key, and we provide general advisory support for farmers and agencies, particularly for issues such as instream waterings and unfenced banks.



We also offer assistance in the preparation of applications for Scottish Government funding for environmental improvements. In 2018, all nine applications to the SRDP Agri-Environment Climate Scheme were successful, enabling 15 km of bankside enhancement and buffer zones to be delivered in 2019.

A further nine SRDP Agri-Environment Climate Scheme applications have recently been submitted for land alongside the Sheecho, Coy, Beltie, Dess, Tarland and Logie burns and mainstem Dee. If successful, these will result in a further 22.5 km of new buffer strip fencing and the replacement of 64 instream livestock watering points with water troughs in 2020.

In 2019 we also secured funding from SNH to support the upgrade and replacement of 11 stock waterings and 600 m of new fencing in the Cattie and Beltie sub-catchments. Nearly 2 km of new fenced buffer strip has been created along the mainstem Dee near Glen Tanar.







Over the past eight seasons the big three invasive plants- Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed- have been continually controlled. The Trust has a dedicated Invasives Coordinator who assists with this across the catchments of the Dee, Cowie and Carron and throughout Aberdeenshire. It is funded through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) and the North East Non-Native Invasive Species Project (NENNIS).



*"Ten of us ventured down to a rather rain-drenched river bank with the River Dee Trust in July. Our mission was to remove some invasive (albeit very pretty) non-native plants from the area. Understanding the impact on native plants, everyone threw themselves into the work with enthusiasm. By the end of the day and despite the rain, everyone had a smile on their face!"*  
 Caroline, CNOOC.

*Our legacy is to leave trained and coordinated community groups with the ability to tackle invasive species locally, as these plants will need treatment long after the projects are ended.*

The impacts of Storm Frank are still with us, particularly with Himalayan balsam whose seeds were spread far and wide in the flood. Downstream of Durris the plant is extensive. Nonetheless, 5 hectares was controlled again in the last year with the support from volunteers and local businesses.

Japanese knotweed is now only present in a few isolated stands across the lower Dee, much of what was in the upper and middle catchment is completely eradicated and only a few small isolated stands remain on the Cowie.

Giant hogweed has also been largely controlled, now appearing as single plants and small stands on the lower Dee and River Carron, although we are vigilant for plants sprouting up from the seedbank below.

We are encouraged year after year by the community and businesses who support our invasive control effort. This summer, we have had three corporate volunteering days with groups from CNOOC, their Himalayan balsam-pulling has made a great difference.





# RESTORATION



*Pink salmon - easily distinguished by their spotted tail and black tongue/gums*



*American mink*

The fight against American mink continues with the Trust coordinating volunteers to monitor mink rafts and deploy traps. After 15 years of control on Deeside, low mink numbers now remain – only three were captured last year. However, this is a mobile predator that poses a continual threat of reinvading.

We had a return visit from another invasive when the capture of two pink salmon in July 2019 signaled the arrival of this Pacific species. Fortunately, this is much fewer than the 31 caught on the Dee in 2017, a trend also seen across Scotland.

Following these unprecedented numbers of pink salmon in 2017, we saw none in 2018 – as expected, given their two-year life cycle. Preparations in-hand for 2019, however despite monitoring, including snorkeling, no further pink salmon have been detected in the Dee.



*Protecting our natives species and habitat from invasives is an important part of our work*



# PROTECTION

# DEVELOPMENT

The unseen work of the Fisheries Officers detected 15 incidents of illegal fishing, resulting in three charges lodged with Police Scotland and 12 formal warnings issued. This is a lower number of incidents than in previous years, however fishing conditions are always a factor.

In the early season and following efforts to target these organised criminals, a netting gang was interrupted by Officers before fish could be taken. It is apparent that these operations do still pose a risk, particularly in early spring, and can cause substantial damage to the fishery.

A huge thank you to the ghillies who have supported our policing activities with their own night patrols, this greatly extends the cover we can provide. Our gratitude is extended to ghillies and members of the public for reporting intelligence.

We continue to ask for your support, in reporting any sightings of poaching or other suspicious activity. Any information received is treated with care and anyone providing information will not be involved in any part of criminal proceedings.



*New harbour development at Nigg Bay*

The Dee Board assesses and provides information and advice to any developments that have the potential to impact on Dee fish stocks. Development is necessary for Deeside, but developers may be unaware of the impacts on the river and fish. We therefore advise on how to carry out works in a way that minimises risk to fish stocks. Potential effects are sometimes unclear, for example the impact of noise and vibration from underwater works, particularly in large and complex projects such as the Aberdeen Harbour expansion or offshore windfarms. We are always keen to work with the developers and respond to around 50 proposals each year.

Please save our 24-hour number – 01339 880411



Attracting new people into angling is an important challenge if the sport is to continue to flourish. We need to develop a new generation of anglers as future customers for the Dee Valley fisheries and associated businesses.



*"I took part in the initial AFF 50 course with my two boys, aged 8 & 12. I had little or no interest in fishing and attended only for my boys' enjoyment. I was concerned that my youngest would be too young but he was encouraged all the way. I got so much more out of it than I expected. The course leaders and supporters are excellent. They were so patient and helpful and really knew their stuff. I've even been fishing alone without my boys since!" Ailidh, AFF50 participant.*

# ANGLING DEVELOPMENT

Taking up fishing has many rewards, it provides a connection between community and the natural environment, keeps people active, introduces new skills, and new friends, and provides crucial 'time out' from busy lives. We are keen to encourage many more people to try angling as the more people enjoy the river, the better!

The Dee Fishery Board has been driving angling development and in 2019 launched a new initiative called Aberdeenshire Fly Fish 50 (AFF50). Through a series of local events anyone who has never fished before can become proficient in angling.

So far AFF50 has delivered six sessions in two blocks introducing the basics of fishing. Participants can then fish unaccompanied with follow-up support or join in more events. Loch Inch and Tullich trout fisheries have provided excellent venues with many fish caught. We have kept in touch with participants and are delighted to report that they are still fishing!

This initiative has been supported from the outset by Scottish Government through the Scottish Angling National Development Structure. It is only possible due to a network of trained volunteers, committee and coaches who have given so much of their time.

Other participatory events over the last year include the ever-popular Intro Day at Invery & Tilquhillie. Ten anglers of all ages received first class instruction with all equipment provided. Two Big Fish Little Fish events were held at Crathes and Little Blackhall & Inchmarlo, and children accompanied by an adult fished with extra support.

The annual Ladies Day in September at Invery & Tilquhillie provides a relaxed environment for novice ladies. The event has proved to be very popular and for 2019, has expanded to allow extra participants with the inclusion of Lower Blackhall & Kinneskie and Banchory Fishings. An additional 2-day Ladies course was hosted in October 2018 with professional angler Marina Gibson. As a result of these efforts the River Dee Damsels group has been developed and coordinated by two proprietors.

With the support of The Fife Arms, we hosted a journalist and photographer to create an article on ladies fishing on the Dee, featured in Country Life magazine.





# ANGLING DEVELOPMENT

There are many UK anglers who have not experienced fishing on the Dee, and we are keen to show them what there is on offer. As the only river to take a stand at the London Fly Fishing Fair in March, this was an excellent opportunity to meet with around 3,000 anglers, some of which have since visited the Dee for their first time. We are grateful for support from the Dee Salmon Fisheries Improvement Association and Support for Aberdeenshire Business Scheme operated by Aberdeenshire Council, to be able to attend this event.

## Supporting Fisheries

With a grant from Aberdeenshire Council, we arranged for five fishing beats to upgrade facilities through the waterless toilet scheme. A 40% contribution enabled beats to provide essential facilities in an environmentally friendly manner, providing anglers with a comfortable and enjoyable trip to the Dee.

## FishDee

FishDee was created to help sell fishing that beats did not sell directly. The 2018 season resulted in a 9% increase on the previous year and generated over £190,000 in rod sales. The website has generated over £1.8 million in rod sales since it began in 2005.





## OPENING CEREMONY

To welcome the start of the fishing season on Deeside, and say thank you to those who support the river, we celebrated on 1st February with the Board's River Opening Ceremony, attended by 340 invited guests. Scotland rugby legend, Rob Wainwright, was our guest of honour and officially opened the river with the traditional blessing of a quaich of Glen Garioch whisky and made the first cast.

The opening ceremony is kindly hosted by Banchory Lodge and Banchory Fishings. We were also delighted to welcome the Provost of Aberdeenshire, Councillor Bill Howatson, who awarded the Big Fish Trophy and the junior's Callum Mackenzie Cup.



# ANGLING DEVELOPMENT





# *the living river*



We wish to extend our celebrations in 2020 by inviting everyone to join us at the river in the afternoon of the 1st of February at Banchory Lodge Hotel.

This will be an informative and informal welcome event for everyone to engage with the river and the work we do, suitable for family and friends, old and new, to celebrate our Living River.

# *all welcome*



# SUPPORT



Our Friends support the work of the Trust throughout the catchment and there are various ways in which you can help at both Corporate and Individual levels. We are always in need of more Friends!

The Living River Dinner was a great success thanks to the support from sponsors, auction donors, Banchory Lodge, and special guest Rob Wainwright, who all helped raise over £10,000 on the night. Plans for the 2020 dinner are now well underway.

We welcome volunteer support and have ways for individual and corporate volunteers to get involved with the Living River. There are activities to join in on involving removal of invasive species such as Himalayan balsam, habitat works such as tree planting and bank reestablishment, or you can support angling events for beginners.

So, whether you want to join in for a day on the river bank or have a group that would like to do some meaningful work and have fun whilst learning about the river, then contact the Trust at the River Office.

*Please visit the website to find out more about the Living River*  
[www.riverdee.org](http://www.riverdee.org)



# SILENT AUCTION

A huge thank you to all those who generously donated the lots for the Trust's online auction at the start of 2019, and to those who supported the Trust by bidding. This raised £10,522 to support our work.

Our annual Auction will open online on 28th October 2019. Lookout for updates on the website or sign up for our regular news updates.



The Trust continues to work hard to raise funds for its River Education package to enable children to visit the river and undertake outdoor learning in a safe and fun manner.

We are grateful for support from CNOOC, Apex Tubulars and the Dee Salmon Fisheries Improvement Association.



We have yet to reach our target, so please contact the River Office if you can help

# FUNDRAISING



Earlier in 2019, the Trust was delighted to announce a new partnership with Maryculter House, which sits on the banks of the Dee and is one of Aberdeenshire's most historic hotels. By donating a discretionary £1 from every diner's bill to the Trust, the hotel aims to reach a fundraising target of more than £10,000 for the year. The partnership got underway with a ghillies' lunch when over forty guests were treated to a most enjoyable meal in celebration of the river and the men and women who work there.

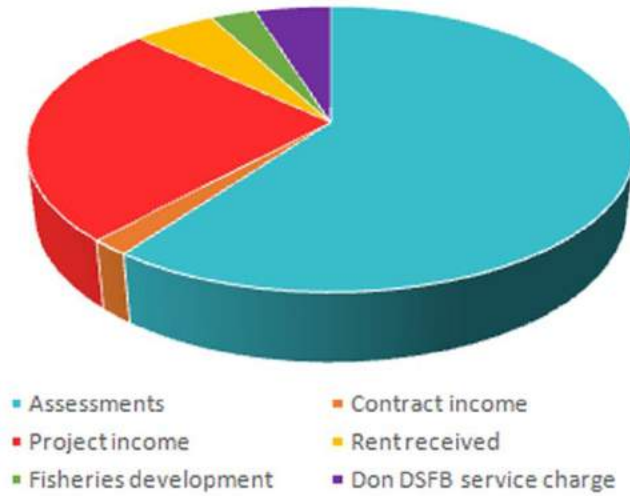
We are delighted by this novel way of fundraising and commitment to the river.

*Please visit our website to find out more*

[www.riverdee.org](http://www.riverdee.org)



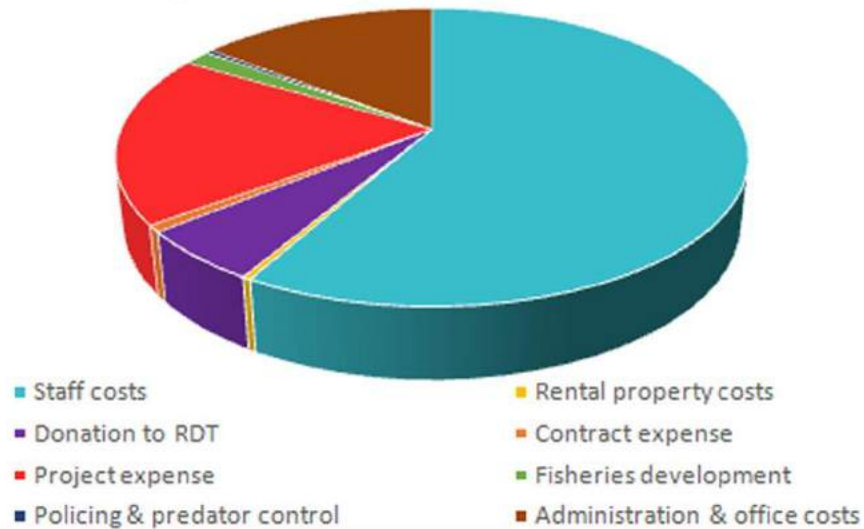
Income April 2018 - March 2019



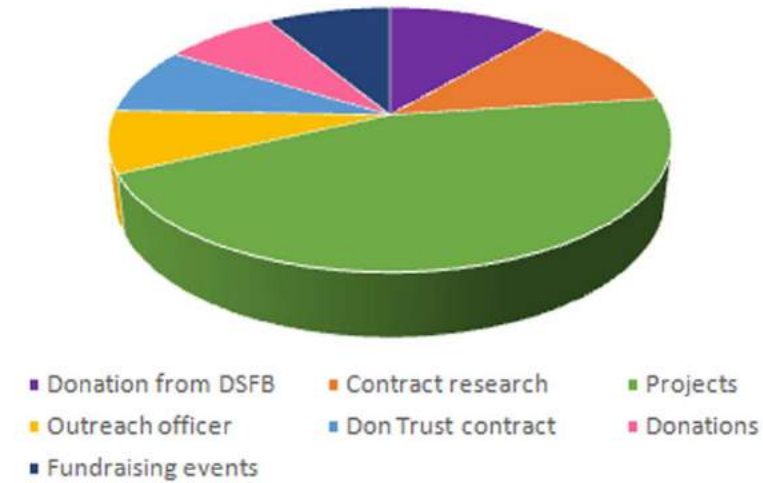
## The River Dee Board

60% of the Board's income comes directly from fishery owners through the assessment. This is then topped up by obtaining grant funding to deliver beneficial projects on the river, and to a lesser extent contract work. This enables the Dee Board to employ the equivalent of nine full time staff and therefore deliver more work than Boards that rely solely on assessment collection.

Expenditure April 2018 - March 2019



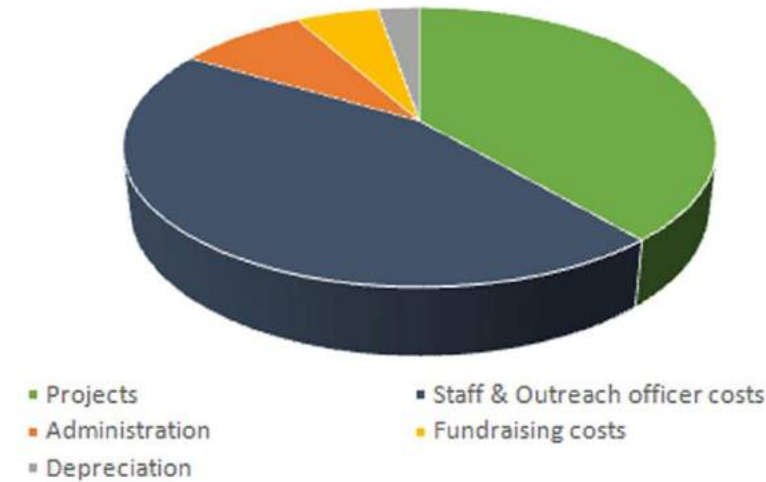
Income April 2018 - March 2019



## The River Dee Trust

Fundraising and donations make up one quarter of the Trust's income, which provides the capital to then achieve grant funding for projects and deliver contracts. Projects are in our priority work areas, whilst contract work is beneficial to the river but is not necessarily a priority. The Trust employs the equivalent of four full time staff, including 1.5 that are funded by projects.

Expenditure April 2018 - March 2019





# RIVER DEE BOARD



Top row: Richard Gledson, CHAIRMAN, Craig Stewart (Aberdeenshire Council), Lawrence Ross, Clerk, Ian Murray,  
 Second row: William Foster, Scott Rutherford, Will Boyd-Wallis (CNPA), Keith Young (Aberdeen Harbour Board),  
 Third row: Robert Harper, Craig Fleming (anglers rep), Edward Humphrey, Robert Dey,  
 Bottom row: Victor Beamish, Sam Fleming (SEPA), Gavin Clark (SNH), Bert Webster (ghillies rep)

# RIVER DEE STAFF



Top row: Lorraine Hawkins, Director, Bas Buddendorf, Biologist, Edwin Third River Operations Manager, Carol Mair Administrator  
 Second row: Ross Macdonald, Fisheries Development Officer, Mark Walker, Fisheries Officer, Marina Piper, Outreach Officer Dee  
 Catchment Partnership, Colin Esson, Fisheries Officer. Third row: Estée Farrar, Invasives Co-ordinator, Diarmid Hawkins, Lead Fisheries  
 Officer, Pamela Esson, Field Officer, Jamie Urquhart, Fisheries Protection Manager. Bottom row: Steff Ferguson, P/T Riparian Habitat  
 Advisor, Flora Grigor-Taylor P/T Riparian Habitat Advisor, Jamie Welsh, Seasonal River Officer, Jan Millard, Invasives Officer.



# RIVER DEE TRUST



First row:  
CHAIRMAN, Richard Gledson,  
Mel Shand,  
Hugh Mackay MBE,  
Randall Nicol  
Second row: Carol Fowler,  
Alastair Hume MBE,  
Victor Beamish

The River Dee Trust is a community-based charitable company, registered in Scotland, No. SC028497. It was set up in 1998 and is tasked with the following aims and objectives:

To improve our knowledge of the ecology and associated fish stocks of the River Dee so that practical improvements and restoration of the River and the wildlife it supports can be achieved. We work in co-operation with those that have the improvement of the River at heart.

To deliver educational information to schools, organisations and individuals living in the North East of Scotland.

Our work is guided by the principle of how we can better understand and improve the River so that we may look after it for this and future generations. To achieve these aims the River Dee Trust must raise sufficient funds so that these works can be achieved to the highest standard. With your support we will be able to meet our aims and continue looking after the Dee and the surrounding area, for many years to come.

to sign up to our newsletter – subscribe at [riverdee.org](http://riverdee.org)  
and follow us on social media!

 @RiverDeeTeam

 @theriverdee

 theriverdeeteam

Our key work for the following year will be:

#### Protect smolt production

- Provide protection through policing, predator management, responding to pollution and to development proposals
- Improve understanding, through redd counting, electrofishing, smolt trapping and smolt tracking at sea

#### Develop the fishery

- Extend and deliver Aberdeenshire Fly Fish 50, including lesson blocks, introductory events, ladies' days and fly-tying lessons
- Promote angling opportunities through the London Fly Fishing Fair, magazine articles, news and social media
- Maintain the FishDee website
- Support beat facility improvements
- Feed into national marketing of salmon fishing

#### Conserve and restore the river

- Upland rivers – expand tree planting through the Dee Riparian Habitat Project and Biodiversity Challenge Fund project, add large woody structures and nutrients
- Lowland rivers – support farmers and land managers to develop AECS applications and install buffer strips and waterings
- Biodiversity Challenge Fund project to re-meander part of the Beltie burn
- Removal of Invasive Non-Native Species of plants and mink through SISI and NEINNS projects and through developing corporate volunteering network
- Remove Garlogie dam

#### Community engagement

- Deliver the Trust's education programme to Deeside schools
- Build volunteer base and scheduled events
- Living River fundraising and grow the Trust's Friends network



#### DSFB Governance

We voluntarily adhere to Fisheries Management Scotland's Code of Good Practice; available on their website – [fms.scot/governance/](http://fms.scot/governance/)

Go to [www.riverdee.org](http://www.riverdee.org) for information about our quarterly meetings held throughout Deeside which are open to the public and advertised on the website, along with an agenda and the minutes.

The Declaration of Board Members Interests and our Complaints Procedure is also available here, in the last year no complaints were received.

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 are available on [www.riverdee.org](http://www.riverdee.org)



Aberdeen Harbour Board  
Aberdeen Standard Investments  
Aberdeen City Council  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Balmoral Estate  
Banchory Fishings  
Banchory Lodge  
Sandy Bremner  
Tom Clarke  
CNOOC  
EWOS  
Glen Garioch  
Glen Muick Estate  
Invercauld Estate  
James Hutton Institute  
CHAP Group  
Countryside Learning Scotland  
Leys Estate  
Loch Inch Fishery  
LOOP Tackle Design AB  
Marine Scotland Science  
Maryculter House Hotel  
Orvis, Banchory  
Prime Events  
Repro Overflow  
Mel Shand  
Scottish Countryside Rangers  
Association  
The Fife Arms  
The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa  
The Woodland Trust Scotland  
A Thomson, Middle Dee Project  
Tullich Fishery  
Twin Peakes Fly Fishing  
Rob Wainwright

HM the Queen  
Aberdeen Offshore Windfarm Ltd  
Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Mitigation Fund  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Alba Ecology  
Anglers of Ballogie Estate Enterprises  
Anglers of FishPal Ltd  
Apache  
M Buchan  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
F Chadwick  
CNOOC  
Dee Catchment Partnership  
Dee Salmon Fisheries Improvement Association  
Deeside Distillery  
FishPal  
D Flux  
Garthdee Angling Association  
R Harper  
R Harries  
Heritage Lottery Fund  
Kirkwood Homes Ltd  
LEADER  
M Leishman  
K Mair  
H Mackay  
Marine Scotland  
B McIntosh  
R Mudie  
W Phillips  
C Pike  
Major S Poett  
L Ross  
S Ross  
FG Sandison  
SEPA Water Environment Fund  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
P Taylor  
Iwan & Manuela Wirth  
A Wright





# *living river festival*

On Saturday  
1st February 2020,  
from 2-4pm  
Banchory Lodge Hotel.

*This is a free, family event  
all about the Dee and how  
we manage the river.*

*all welcome*



VATTENFALL



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