



Director's Report June 2013.

The late spring run this year continued well into June with dam counts double those of recent years. The dam counts are now posted on the website as soon as they are received from SSE.

There have been a number of reports of salmon showing head lesions characteristic of UDN (Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis). In the 1970's UDN resulted in huge salmon mortalities throughout Scotland. Despite extensive research at the time the cause of the disease remains a mystery. In recent years fish with similar symptoms have been reported from several rivers.

An outline bid has been prepared for EU funding for extensive upper catchment bankside planting with native trees. A total of 95 km of river within the Cromarty Firth region has been identified as being of high priority for restoration. Restoring natural bankside vegetation and tree cover would restore nutrient levels, provide shade and control excessive erosion. This bid is hoped to feed into EU Life funding between 2014 and 2020.

Projects / research

Thanks to the Lower Fairburn ghillies a live salmon showing symptoms of UDN was made available for analysis. The training which we received last month from the SFCC was put to use and a very detailed autopsy was carried out. Samples of blood, all major organs and lesion tissue were collected and prepared for bacteriology, virology and other analysis. The samples were then sent to Stirling University where research using techniques not available in the 1970's is being carried out to try and find the causal agent.

The regrowth of rhododendron on the banks of the Orrin was sprayed with glyphosate, the native trees planted along the banks this spring are growing well.

A number of school, community group visits and electro-fishing demonstrations took place in June, including a very well attended Dingwall Wildlife Day organised by the Dingwall Environment Group.

A new research programme is being planned with the Forestry Commission to investigate the habitat and fishery effects of restoring Large Woody Debris to rivers. Dead timber is an important habitat feature in natural rivers and helps to create variation in flows and depth. This results in moving and cleaning of gravel providing essential habitat features for fish. On a great deal of Forestry Commission and other upper catchment land, trees are largely absent from river banks. This project aims to use techniques developed by the Wild Trout Trust to introduce and stabilise felled timber in rivers and monitor the effects.

Meetings attended / consultations

Dalmore Distillery weir
Teanninch Distillery
Wyvis Hydro Scheme radio tracking meeting
Dingwall Environment Group wildlife day
SEPA flooding meeting
Loch Glasa Hydro consultation
Highland Council presentation on work of Board / Trust
SFCC Management Committee
Highland Invasive Species Forum Meeting
Evanton Community Woodland Trust
Broodstock collection licence application to Marine Scotland
Forestry commission Scotsburn Forest Plan
Board Insurance annual review
Luichart windfarm