



Director's Report April 2013.

The cold dry weather of March was followed with more cold and then very wet conditions in April. This has delayed fry development and smolt migration by several weeks.

Carcass tags for this year's tagging scheme have been distributed to ghillies and are being distributed to angling club members.

Projects / research

The cold dry conditions early in the month allowed us to finish this year's programme of tree planting. The Forestry Commission supplied alders and aspen to plant sections of Strath Rannoch.

Smolt trapping on the Bran started very slowly with cold dry conditions, which were then replaced by heavy rainfall, snowmelt and flooding. By the end of the month only a few hundred smolts had been trapped at Achanalt, normally several thousand would have been captured by then. With the flooding the trap has been overtopped and if smolts have been migrating many will have escaped downstream.

A Rotary Screw Trap has been installed at the foot of Orrin Dam and is to be used during May to try to optimise flows over the top gate of the Orrin fish lift for smolt passage.

A second Rotary Screw Trap has been installed on the Blackwater at Loch na Croic as part of a Glasgow University PhD project. Smolts will be PIT tagged and released at the trap. This work will give a marine survival for the Blackwater to compare with the long term marine survival monitoring on the Bran.

A programme of school visits funded through the Moray Firth Trout Initiative started in April. School children learn about rivers and conservation as part of a project called 'Mayfly in the Classroom' which was developed by the Wild Trout Trust.

Board staff were trained in autopsy and tissue sampling techniques as part of a project to investigate UDN. UDN (Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis) caused huge fish kills in the 1970's and in recent years there have been reports of similar disease symptoms from some rivers. Extensive research in the 1970's failed to isolate a causal agent although techniques, particularly for investigating viruses, were less developed. If a fish is caught with the typical lesions on its head it should be kept alive if possible and reported to the Board. We will then take samples which will be analysed at Stirling University.

Meetings attended / consultations

Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre Management Committee
IFM Bailiffs examination marking
Dingwall Environment Group meeting
Launch of TCV Green Gym
Moray Firth Trout Initiative Management Committee
Rivers and Lochs Institute Steering Group
SEPA / RAFTS Water Framework Directive / Fishery Management Plan meeting
Evanton AA / N Power meeting
Dingwall Environment Group river clean up day
ASFB Directors Meeting

Edward also attended;
ASFB Bailiff Development meeting
Inverness Police Liaison meeting