



## **Director's Report August 2013.**

By late August over 900 fish had been counted at Tor Achilty Dam, remaining well ahead of counts in recent years. Lack of water has restricted upstream migration on the Alness.

After long negotiation a fish pass has been installed at the Strathpeffer Sewage Treatment Works Weir by Scottish Water. This opens around half of the suitable salmonid habitat in the Peffery to sea trout. This work was completed thanks to excellent cooperation between SEPA and Scottish Water to bring the project to a successful conclusion.

A meeting was held with RAFTS to identify and prioritise the remaining barriers to fish migration in the region.

As well as a busy programme of electro-fishing for monitoring, research and contract work a number of demonstration electro-fishing events were held in August. There was a public electro-fishing afternoon at Dunglass Island held with Highland Council's Countryside Ranger Service and also events for The Conservation Volunteers and Dingwall After School Club.

### ***Projects / research***

A project is planned for this year with the Forestry Commission to investigate the effects of adding dead timber to a stream. Marine Scotland Science has given advice on experimental design and work will start in September in Strath Rannoch, a tributary of the Blackwater. We are working closely with the Forestry Commission to replant native trees along rivers in several catchments. However it will take many years until these trees mature when some will die and fall into the river. In a mature natural river there should be native trees lining the banks and some dead wood in the river. The importance of this has long been recognised in America. The cover and deeper water provided by dead timber is likely to benefit larger parr and increase smolt production. It also helps to retain leaves and nutrients in the stream increasing overall productivity.

Electro-fishing survey of the Balnagown was completed, electro-fishing to monitor the impacts of the Luichart windfarm was completed and survey of the River Meig upstream of Corriefeol is underway.

Cromarty Staff worked with other members of the Moray Firth Trout Initiative to sweep net for sea trout in the Beaully Firth to catch sea trout for tagging and genetic sampling.

***Meetings attended / consultations***

IFM Scottish Branch Meeting

Brahan Hydro scheme consultation

Moray Firth Trout Initiative steering group

Marine Scotland Science Cromarty research review and planning meeting.

RAFTS Barrier prioritization meeting

Forestry Commission project planning meeting

Kildermorie Long Term Forest Plan Meeting

Easter Ross Long Term Forest Plan Meeting