



Director's Report July 2014.

The hot dry conditions of June continued throughout July. This gave very difficult angling conditions which were reflected in catches. Fish counts at Tor Achilty had been ahead of last year through the spring but fell behind during July. Reports from other countries would suggest a weak grilse run this year although more grilse began to arrive in Cromarty rivers in the last days of July.

Bailiffing patrols continued during July. Bailiffs targeted illegal sea trout fishing around the coast and a local man was arrested on the Conon.

A staff review meeting was held with the Chairman and new staff handbooks have been prepared.

Giant hogweed on the Balnagown was sprayed and densities are significantly reduced from last year. There have been a number of mink sightings around the region and extra traps and tracking rafts have been deployed.

The Wild Fishery Review process is ongoing. Progress reports can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/wildfisheriesreview>

Projects / research

July was a busy month for electro-fishing, but has been helped by three very enthusiastic volunteer students from Portsmouth, Doncaster and Spain. Staff from Marine Scotland Science stayed for 2 weeks and we have completed the field work for both Glasgow University research projects which involved electro-fishing more than 40 sites.

In addition to the Glasgow University / MSS research we have electro-fished sites above Corriefeol on the Meig and started monitoring the effects of the instream habitat improvement works on the Peffery. There remains a busy programme of electro-fishing during August and September.

The other main body of research work this summer is a radio-tracking study on the Allt Graad to investigate the behavior of salmon in relation to the new hydro scheme at Black Rock Gorge.

We are awaiting delivery of radio-tags from Canada to start tracking fish. In preparation for the project we have hired radio-tracking equipment from the Dee Board, had meetings with N-Power to set up the project, selected sites for installing radio listening stations, purchased batteries and consumables for the project and had useful liaison with the Evanton AA.

Tags should arrive in mid August and tracking will continue until spawning is finished in December.

Meetings attended / consultations

Wild Fishery Review meetings at Pitlochry, Inverness and Ullapool
Radio-tracking set up meeting with N-power
Radio-tracking equipment training with Dee Board
Institute of Fisheries Management Council
SEPA licensing visit to all hatchery facilities
Staff review meeting
Evanton AA meeting
ASFB Director's meeting
Scottish Mink Initiative Steering Group
Marine Scotland Science meeting