

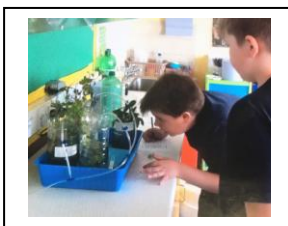


The Cromarty Firth Fishery Trust Education Programme.

Mayfly in the classroom.

Mayfly in the classroom projects have been underway within the Cromarty Firth Catchment for the last four years, visiting 13 local primary schools in total. Pupils visit their local burn or river and a kick sampling demonstration is given. One at a time pupils will have a go at kick sampling and then empty their net into a white tray. Pupils are then given a pictorial id guide, magnifying glasses and pots which enables them to identify the inverts in their burn. Inverts are a key food for juvenile salmon and trout and using the samples collected the pupils will be able to determine if their burn or river supports a healthy population of inverts.

The pupils may then pursue the Mayfly in the classroom project option. From samples collected during the kick sampling they can collect may fly larvae and then grow them in their classroom kit and study their development. Once they have successfully hatched they will be released back to their river. By looking after the mayfly larvae the pupils will gain an insight into the importance of clean water within our rivers and understanding of the importance of invertebrates in the diet of salmon and trout.



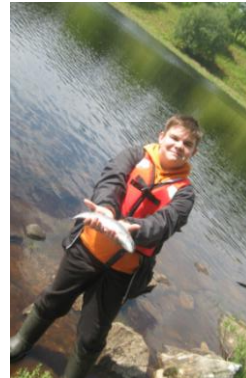


Angling.

To build on the ecological information gained through mayfly in the classroom, funding for junior angling has been set up for 3 of the primary schools within our area. The funding has been obtained from the Fairburn Wind Farm Fund. The aim of this project is to increase junior participation in community angling in the Cromarty Firth catchment. These children have had the opportunity to experience angling in a safe controlled environment at 2 locally stocked trout fisheries, Tarvie 2016 and the Brahan Estate 2017. Guidance and Coaching from a qualified Coach and support from Board staff was given. To date the number of children attending these days are as follows: Strathconon Primary P 5- P7 = 20 pupils, Marybank Primary P4,P5,P6&P7= 32 pupils and Tarradale Primary P7=66 pupils. For those children that want to continue angling a clear pathway has been highlighted for them to join the Cromarty Firth Fisheries Junior Angling Club, which will have its first meeting after the summer holidays.



Angling Days.





Classroom Presentations.

During May and June over the last 4 years pupils from the local primary schools have been introduced to the ecology of their local river. Learning of the importance of invertebrates as an indicator species for the health of the river and also linking in Salmon and trout and other riparian wildlife through a power point presentation. The power point is designed to be interactive and the pupils have ample opportunity to be involved in classroom discussions.

Fish surveys.

Pupils observe CFFB&T staff conduct an electro fishing survey to capture juvenile salmon, trout and other fish present in the river/burn. Pupils are then able to see close up the fish species that live in their local river and identify, measure them and collect additional data on the fish habitat. Combining this data with the invertebrate information will allow youngsters a valuable insight into the ecology of a local burn and the work required to understand and manage the burn effectively for future generations.



Electro fishing demonstration.



Tree Planting

Keeping with the theme on river ecology, Strathconon Primary School had an afternoon planting trees along the banks close to the river Meig in March. They learnt why riparian trees are important for aquatic ecosystem functioning. This was possible with agreement from Strathconon Estate and trees donated by ? The children are keeping an eye on the trees and reports from the school say they are doing fine.



Tree planting along the river Meig.



Adopting a Local River.

Seven Primary Schools have adopted their local river this year. The aim of the trust is for this to increase so that all the Primary Schools in the catchment adopt their local river. From classroom discussions children will discover where the headwaters and mouth of their river are formed. They are encouraged to discuss possible land use and pressures their river encounters on its way to the firth. A visit to a section of their river is arranged and children take part in investigations such as habitat surveys, measuring river flows and kick sampling. At the end of their field work children are encouraged to discuss their results.



Measuring river flows.



Analysing litter collected along the Sgitheach.

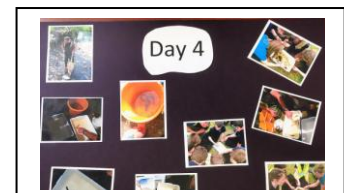
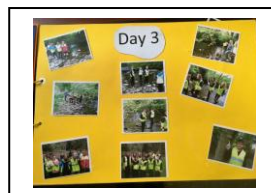


John Muir Award.

The John Muir Award is a national environmental award scheme. It encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places. The award is open to all and is run by the John Muir Trust.

To achieve a John Muir Award four challenges are required to be completed : Discover a wild place, Explore its wilderness, Conserve-take responsibility and share experiences.

Three Primary Schools, Marybank, Strathconon and Kiltearn (Evanton) have worked closely with the Trust to achieve their John Muir award. They adopted their local river, Orrin, Meig and Sgitheach respectively. Litter picking, invasive eradication, kick sampling, measuring river flows and electro fishing demonstrations were all part of the activities undertaken.





Bush craft



Bushcraft *covers* a range of skills including fire lighting with sparks cooking on an open fire, shelter building, plant identification and tying knots. Being in a natural environment allows learners to venture out and explore the world around them. Bushcraft is incorporated into some of the outdoor activities we undertake, especially if we are working with large groups. On the School Angling days the pupils will be split into two groups, angling and bushcraft.



Hatchery Visit.

The Contin hatchery and Loch na Croic brood stock collection has been opened up for school visits over the last few years. Here the children learn of the salmon life cycle and the importance of salmon conservation through the pressures that they encounter.

Community Benefits.

These projects provide an excellent opportunity to not only educate pupils about the ecology and wildlife present within their local rivers but also highlight the importance of managing them effectively for future generations. The projects help develop the pupils self esteem and through communicating the project to their parents, family and friends increase the awareness of the importance of local rivers to a wider community. The pupils are also provided with valuable experience in the collection of field data and bring home to pupils the important and valuable science that is underway on their doorstep and this can offer a career pathway for the future. In addition providing pupils with a first experience of fishing may lead to a lifelong hobby and we hope to encourage uptake of membership to the Cromarty Firth Junior Angling club.