



Website; www.cromarty.dsfb.org.uk

Director's Report December / January 2014

General

Broodstock collection and stripping at Loch na Croic was completed in December. A total of 870 salmon were caught compared with 1,300 in 2012. However because of the high proportion of large MSW salmon caught, they produced over 1.8 million eggs which is comparable with the 1.95 million collected in 2012.

The first of the eggs are now eyed and shocking to remove infertile or weak eggs will take place in February.

A coastal boat patrol report was prepared for the Beaully DSFB.

The annual report and survey for the Cromarty Board and Trust have been submitted to ASFB / RAFTS

Last year our long serving ex Hydro Land Rover was diagnosed with terminal chassis rust. Just before Christmas a new galvanized chassis was sourced. Between hatchery and other duties in January the Bailiffing team completed the rebuild to a standard they can be proud of. Not only has this saved thousands on the cost of replacing the Land Rover it has been an excellent team building exercise.

Projects / research

Marine Scotland are planning an experiment in the Cromarty Firth to investigate the impact of noise from marine piling on salmon smolts. During March there will be piling taking place as part of the development of the Nigg dockyard site. This research is important because of the extent of piling likely to take place in the Moray Firth during the construction of proposed large offshore windfarms.

A project is planned with support from Scottish and Southern Energy to investigate the passage of smolts through Loch Meig this spring. It is intended to install a Rotary Screw Trap upstream of the loch and PIT tag up to 1,000 smolts on their downstream migration. The number successfully passing through the loch and length of time taken by each smolt will be recorded by the PIT tag decoder in the Meig fish pass. Negotiations with SSE and SEPA are underway to experiment with flows at Orrin Dam to optimise smolt passage there.

The 2013 RAFTS / SEPA grant claim for Invasive Non Native plant species works in the Cromarty Firth region has been submitted. The current Scottish Mink Initiative project is due to end in March and an application has been made by RAFTS to SNH to extend it for a further 2 years.

A new interactive website which can be used to report invasive species to the Cromarty Firth Trust has been set up and details will be added to the website.

With support from the Forestry Commission we are planning to plant 15,000 native trees along the banks of Strath Rannoch on the Blackwater. The Forestry Commission are funding TCV to help bailiffs clear rhododendron from a spawning tributary of the Alness this spring.

Meetings attended / consultations

RAFTS Barriers assessment
Moray Firth Trout Initiative
Scottish Fishery Coordination Centre meeting
Forestry Commission
Scottish Mink Initiative Steering Group
Alness Weir site visit
Loch Achonachie AA AGM
SSE flows and freshets
Institute of Fisheries Management Council and Training meetings
Alness AA AGM
SFCC Biologists meeting
Luichart Forest plan
Ardross Castle rhododendron site visit
Hatchery abstraction licences