

Monthly Report – February 2021

Contin Hatchery & Stocking

A total of 1.52 million eggs were incubating at Contin hatchery at the start of February. Stocking of the Blackwater started during the last week of the month, with eyed ova being placed into artificial redds dug in the riverbed. Stocking is taking place at the eyed-egg stage rather than the fry stage in 2021. This allows alevins to hatch into a natural river environment where they are immediately exposed to factors that are key to their survival. Given the prolonged period of cold weather in February, the expected hatch date of the eggs ranges from mid-March to mid-April.



Smolt Tagging, Tracking and Survival

Salmon smolts captured at the Achanalt and Meig traps are transported and released below Tor Achilty to improve poor survival rates associated with dam passage. Smolts are released during daylight hours, and in recent years, concerns have been raised about their susceptibility to visual predators (e.g. trout and pike). Alongside SSE and the University of Glasgow, the Board is planning a programme of work for 2021 to identify the potential benefits of releasing tagged smolts at night. A holding cage was designed to allow tagged smolts to be automatically released at varying times during the night. This will be deployed in April and survival rates of tagged smolts returning as adults will be compared for day and night releases. Results from this study will be used to inform smolt trapping and trap-and-transport operations across Scotland.

Bailiff Report

Fishery Officers responded to an incident of suspected illegal fishing in February. Police Scotland issued warnings to both individuals involved.