

Monthly Report – July 2021

Red Skin Disease

For a third successive year, reports of adult salmon exhibiting signs of red rash, bleeding and ulceration were received from anglers in the district. Despite extensive testing of affected fish in 2020, the cause of the infection remains unknown. Red skin disease has been reported in numerous rivers across the country in 2021, and Fisheries Management Scotland are closely following the situation. Anyone observing or catching a fish displaying signs of a red rash or ulcerations should contact the Board.

Allt Graad Survey

A detailed electrofishing survey of the lower Allt Graad was undertaken at the beginning of the month to assess the impact of declining rod catches and changes to hydropower operations on the health and status of the juvenile salmon population. Salmon fry and parr were captured at all electrofishing sites on the river, along with brown trout, eels and lamprey. A full report will follow in due course.



Three age-classes of salmon caught at a site on the Allt Graad

National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland

Board staff surveyed 21 out of 30 sites as part of the 2021 National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland in July. The sites are located across the Cromarty district on the Conon, Allt Graad, Alness and Balnagown rivers. Early indications are that the rivers are in a healthy state. The data will be analysed and reported by Marine Scotland Science, with the expectation that they will provide a complementary approach to the adult-based river grading system in due course. Board staff wish to extend thanks to the estates, proprietors and homeowners that provided permission to access these sites.

Fish Rescues

Two fish rescues took place in July to support scheduled maintenance work on railway infrastructure across the district. Board staff provided advice to contractors and attended the site of bank stabilisation and bridge repair works on the River Bran to ensure fish were removed from working areas. More than 700 fish were captured and safely relocated.



Bailiff Report

Board staff continued with fishery protection patrols across the district throughout July. These were carried out at varying times of day and night. A significant amount of time was spent on coastal duties after a report was received that a bag net had been set near Balintore.

A small number of incidents were dealt with where people were found to be fishing without permission. The individuals concerned were removed and warnings given. On two occasions persons were found in possession of fishing equipment that was banned in 2007, and warnings were given regarding their use.

Contact with Police Scotland was maintained during this period, and a number of issues were discussed.