

## **Monthly Report – June 2021**

### **Meig and Orrin Smolt Traps**

It is challenging for salmon smolts migrating down the River Meig to successfully navigate Meig dam. To increase survival of smolts, a rotary screw trap (RST) has been used on the river as part of a trap-and-transport strategy to move juvenile fish beyond the dam. However, the capture efficiency of the RST is highly variable and is strongly affected by river levels. To maximise the number of smolts captured, a demountable Wolf trap (similar in construction to the Achanalt trap) is being designed by SSE. In June, the Board met with SSE, Strathconon Estate, and a consultancy firm APEM at the proposed site on the River Meig to oversee a bathymetric survey of the river. The survey will guide trap design and determine the scope of in-river works required prior to installation.



*Upper River Orrin*

A visit to the upper River Orrin was also undertaken to investigate the possible use of a Wolf trap to allow the trap-and-transport of smolts around Orrin dam.

The habitat above Orrin reservoir is semi-pristine and has the capacity to produce large numbers of smolts. However, issues associated with passage through Orrin dam currently prevent smolts being able to exit the reservoir.

### **Peffery Restoration**

Board staff met with Lockett Agri-Environmental in June to discuss progress of the River Peffery restoration work. Funding was secured earlier this year to realign a 700m artificially straightened section of the river, with the aim of improving the local ecology and providing natural flood management downstream to Dingwall. Work will include reinstating and enhancing the wetland area with a series of ponds.

Re-meandering of rivers for ecological benefits is becoming increasingly common across Scotland, and the Peffery is an important sea trout river that will benefit from the increased habitat complexity offered by a more natural river channel. Groundworks are due to start in August, and Board staff will carry out a detailed analysis of the impact of the work on the fish population.

### **National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland**

Details of the survey sites for the 2021 National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) were provided by Marine Scotland at the end of June. The NEPS work provides an assessment of the status of juvenile salmon and trout stocks in Scotland and offers a complementary approach to the adult-based Conservation Limits and river gradings. Board staff undertook a

