

## Monthly Report – September 2022

### Electrofishing

With the close of the fishing season on the Conon system approaching, and the beginning of stalking season, staff prioritised juvenile surveys in upper parts of the system. A general picture of the season is beginning to emerge, and we are confident that stocking over the winters of 2020 and 2021 have been successful in recruiting juveniles throughout the blackwater. As the season begins to turn and water levels rise, board staff turn their attention to the input and analysis of electrofishing data from the summer. A report will be available on the Board's website early next year.



### Loch na Croic Adult Fish Trap

As fish begin to make their way upstream in earnest, staff prioritise annual checks and running at the stripping shed and fish trap at Loch na Croic. Staff have been busy running through operating procedures and checking the condition of equipment. Fish are being seen holding at the heck and a moderate number are jumping downstream in the loch. At this stage it is purely speculation to guess at the run we will see this autumn. Screens have been cleaned and staff are keeping a close eye on water levels as we approach a date suitable for opening of the trap.



## **Contract Survey Work**

Staff continue to work closely with contractors and developers to ensure that best practice standards are adhered to regarding development and monitoring of large-scale development schemes. This month staff surveyed a number of locations on the upper Balnagowan for salmonids and invertebrates. This project forms part of a five-year monitoring scheme and should allow us to determine the effect of wind farm development on the freshwater communities in the burn.



## **Invasive Non-Native Species**

The board have managed to secure several landowner agreements which will allow us to continue management of invasive non-native species within the catchment. The five-year SISI project is about to close, and it is important that we ensure invasive stands remain at a manageable level. The SISI project is in the process of applying for a further round of funding which should see continuation and expansion of invasive control across Scotland. As ever, if non-native plants are seen around water ways in the catchment, we urge you to make us aware of it.

## **Bailiffing Report**

10 individuals were removed from the Conon for fishing without permission. One male was reported for an offence under the 2003 act. Following a review of the report, the police issued him with a formal written warning. The equipment he was using was seized, along with that of a juvenile who was also present at the time.

Board staff continued with fishery protection patrols across the district throughout the month. Furthermore, regular checks were made on fish passes. These checks are carried out to ensure fish have free passage during upstream migration to their spawning areas.

