

Monthly Report – January & February 2025

Contin hatchery and egg stocking

With 1.5 million eggs developing in the Contin hatchery, the team were kept extremely busy during January and February working to ensure that flows remained adequate and that any dead eggs were picked out to avoid cross infection and unnecessary losses. As a result, hatchery mortality remained below 1% prior to shocking.

With a mild winter, the eggs developed quickly, and the first eggs put down exceeded 250 degree days by mid-January, the stage at which the eggs become ‘eyed’ and can tolerate the shocking process. This process involves giving the eggs a mild mechanical shock to remove any unfertilised, or ‘blind’, eggs prior to planting out in the river. This allows us to more accurately estimate the total number of viable eggs and plan stocking densities accordingly. This was especially important this year as, with so many eggs, all of the major Conon tributaries could be stocked to capacity.

With a favourable weather window, the team were able to start stocking by the start of February and whilst it was a hard month for all involved, with staff often having to break through ice to build redds, stocking was completed on the 20th of February 2025.

Table 1: Number of eggs stocked out by location, 2025.

River section	Eggs stocked
Blackwater (inc. Strathvaich and Strathrannoch)	800000
River Meig	250000
River Orrin (below dam)	200000
River Bran	230000
Allt Gobhrie	10000
Logie Burn	10000
Total	1500000



SFCC Biologist Conference

Staff attended this year's Scottish Fishery Coordination Centre Biologist's meeting in Pitlochry. As ever it is an excellent opportunity to take a look at what fishery boards and trusts across Scotland are doing, and to share ideas for the practical management and conservation of Atlantic salmon and freshwater biodiversity.

The presentation delivered by our biologists generated a lot of discussion over the course of the two days with other boards and trusts keen to hear more about the various projects we successfully delivered in 2024. Most notably; The upper Orrin restoration project, the Marybank weir removal and the lower Orrin gravel introduction.



Bailiffing

Despite the non-stop stocking, patrols are carried out throughout the district. We urge anyone who witnesses any illegal or suspicious activity to get in touch with the team. Throughout the winter all fish passes have also been visited to ensure free passage of fish for the coming season. With periods of very high-water over the winter, staff have identified several large woody obstructions throughout the district. With the help of Brahan Syndicate and the ghillies on the lower river, CFFB staff hope to tackle one of these obstructions posing a threat to river users at the cruives near Dunglass island.