West Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Wild fishing in Sutherland (S. Marshall)

2016 Annual Review

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Chairman's Foreword

The West Sutherland Fisheries Trust is now celebrating its 20th anniversary. A great vote of thanks must go to the staff, particularly Dr Shona Marshall, for reaching this milestone. Shona has now been with the Trust for 19 years and has been the driving force.

Although we have maintained our baseline work program this year, a lot of time has been taken up with considering the ramifications of the Scottish Government's Wild Fisheries Review. The staff and Trustees have concerns regarding this review: not only is it creating uncertainty, it is likely to change the relationships within the wild fisheries management structure. This may affect the funding and operation of the Trust and of course other trusts. At this point in time we have no detailed proposals to consider, so as a trust whilst still being involved in the Review discussions we will continue our work in the same manner as in the past. When there are concrete proposals put forward we will be in a position to consider the Trusts place in the new management structure. The one thing we are committed to is that when the dust settles from the WFR, there will be either the same or at worst a similar local grass roots research team in place doing the same or enhanced work in the North West.

The Trust over the years has done a great deal of work covering habitat, salmon, sea trout, trout, eels and other fresh water species, in doing so it has also gathered a large amount of data. These data are very valuable but obviously not complete. The Atlantic Salmon Trust is working with Salmon at sea, but we are all short of information about sea trout in coastal waters, I personally would like to see the WSFT develop a project to cover this area. Unfortunately research work in the marine environment is expensive and this project is for the future.

I have been chairman of the WSFT for far, far too long and with the changes in the offing re. the WFR I have resigned as chair to allow new blood take the Trust forward into the new management structure. I am very grateful that Nick Joy has agreed to take over the chair at this time of uncertainty. He, like me, has been a Trustee since the beginning and I am sure he is the right person to negotiate the best outcome for the Trust through the WFR process. I not only wish him well but will be available for any support that he requests as I am remaining as a trustee.

And finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Trustees and staff, past and present, for the help and support that I have received over the years and with that I hand over the Trust for safe keeping to Nick Joy.

Charles Marsham

Summary

The West Sutherland Fisheries Trust had a busy year in 2015, with a range of projects coming together, some being completed and others started. These have all been reported separately in the following pages but this section aims to draw together these projects and set them in the context of the Trusts aims and objectives.

Salmonid population dynamics and management

Required to ensure that the fish populations remain healthy and to improve the management of the stocks, this is undertaken primarily through the analysis of catch statistics and completion of juvenile surveys. Sea trout are further covered through the sweep netting surveys.

From the juvenile surveys (p. 9) it would appear that the salmon and trout populations within most of the rivers are healthy. 2014 would appear to have been a good year for salmon, with high fry densities in many parts. Catch returns (p. 7) do not support this, with low catches recorded. However, this is likely to have been a function of the weather experienced during the fishing season. Sea trout catches were more variable, although there was an increase in catch across the area, when compared to 2013. Anecdotal evidence for 2015 would suggest that the catches are variable throughout the area, but that some larger sea trout have been recorded.

The estuary netting (p. 11) showed that growth rates were lower than last year, although still good. Catches within the netting remained good, with a large number of recaptures also recorded. Sea lice infestations were variable over the year, and differed between the estuaries. Caligus were present in the samples during 2015.

Fish traps are used to assess migratory behaviour and look at the smolt run. A trap was placed in Badna Bay in April, with a temperature recorder incorporated (p. 17). Fish movement was variable over the period, although fish were present on most days. Salmon appeared to run at the start of the period, during late April, with a May sea trout run following. We also tagged the sea trout as they ran down the system. Many of these fish were recaptured in the estuary netting (p. 11), giving more information on growth and survival.

Education (p. 18)

Education is an important tool in the conservation and restoration of fish populations. By teaching individuals about the fish and their environment we can raise their awareness of the consequences of their actions and also enlighten individuals as to the diversity of the riverine environment. The Trust provides a range of meetings and activities for local schools, community groups and ghillies. Each activity is geared towards the audience but centres, in most cases, on the diversity and abundance of life within the rivers and sea.

Fish farm interactions

Aquaculture is an important part of the rural economy but is viewed by many as a serious threat to the migratory salmonid populations. As such, the Trust looks at potential interactions, as well as working with the fish farms to address many issues raised. The latter is undertaken through our involvement in the two Area Management Agreements operational within the area.

Habitat

The Trust continues to give advice and assistance on the issues of habitat and stock restoration to managers. This involves determining suitable habitat improvements within the catchments and giving advice on proposed engineering structures or other actions. All of this assistance is aimed at providing a sustainable increase in salmon and trout populations. In all cases however it is up to the proprietors to instigate the work although the Trust will continue to give advice and help where this is requested.

On the issue of biosecurity and non-native species the Trust is more proactive, continuing to promote the importance of biosecurity to the health of the water bodies and of vigilance to stop the spread of non-native species. In the case of non-native species, the Trust is actively involved in the removal of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed within the area and the monitoring of mink rafts (p. 19).

Introduction

The **West Sutherland Fisheries Trust** continues to work towards the conservation and restoration of fish populations. Now entering its twentieth year, the information database for the Trust area continues to grow and provide useful data for owners, managers and policy makers. In addition, the Trust retains strong links with a variety of organisations and individuals throughout Scotland, and looks forward to cementing these links in the coming years. These links enable the Trust to move towards the integration of management within the Trust area.

Within the Trust area we are developing projects and practical management tools with a variety of local organisations, including Angling Clubs, the Highland Council Ranger Service, the schools system, estates and community groups. These collaborative projects not only assist the Trust with its work but also further integrate it into the local communities, while taking us into a range of different habitats. It is to be hoped that the Trust will continue to be seen as a valuable resource within the community – both to managers and the general public – providing helpful advice and educational opportunities that can be called upon at any point.

Locally, 2015 was a year of unexceptional weather – damp but not too wet, cold but not freezing, bits of sun but not enough – really middle of the road. There was enough water in the rivers to keep anglers happy – although no big flushes to stir things up. For the Biologists, we would have liked more of a summer. However, we managed to get all of the electrofishing finished by picking away at it on reasonable days and only had a couple of days where netting had to be cancelled.

It was a successful year for the sweep netting (see page 11), with only 4 out of 18 samples cancelled for weather – and those at the start of the year. The trout were in good condition with a number of larger fish taken, one that was first tagged in 2010. Anglers had a mixed year, with variable catches of both salmon and trout reported throughout the area.

The mink initiative continues to operate under the management of the Trust and we are extremely grateful to all our volunteers for making this possible. There have been a number of potential sightings within the southern part of the area with prints on one of the rafts. Despite trapping efforts, however, there were no animals caught. The volunteers always rally and increase efforts following sightings and it is to their credit that we remain a relatively mink free area (see page 19).

Adam joined us in May, and is getting to grips with the area and the work of the Trust. He took over from Kate and now manages the mink initiative, spending time getting to know volunteers and the location of the rafts. He has also successfully completed his first season in the field – although is suffering slightly from being vertically challenged at the netting (as am I)!! Adam will be continue to take responsibility for different projects and will help to keep building the Trust.

The Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals who have given time and effort to assist with the work programme. Without these committed individuals we would not have the range of information and data currently existing and would therefore not be in the present position of offering advice and guidance to the many owners and managers within the area. In addition, much of the restoration work and biosecurity actions currently in progress would be much further behind.

Partnerships

The Trust continues to maintain a close relationship with partner organisations in the Rivers & Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) and the Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre (SFCC), and national organisations such as Marine Scotland Science (MSS), Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). This allows the Trust to access a vast wealth of expertise and information as well as enabling the targeting of research to better further our aims.

Working with these organisations has enabled a co-ordinated look at the issues affecting fish populations and the development of projects to address some of the key issues. In this way the WSFT is involved in a widespread assessment of the salmonid populations and can undertake detailed research

that would otherwise be outwith its resources. A number of projects are currently being undertaken, as reported within this document, have been completed or are in development.

The Trust also works closely with the local District Salmon Fishery Board in order to assist with the management of the area. By providing advice on local issues, as well as assisting with any statutory consultations that arise, we hope to ensure that the fish and their environment are supported and protected. In particular, we are able to provide advice and guidance on stocking and fish farm applications, as well as the use of habitat improvements within the area.

The Future

The WSFT will continue with its current work, maintaining and developing the many datasets and using the data to inform management decisions. It is hoped that we can enlarge the research programme and enhance the many links currently in existence with individuals and organisations. In order to do this, it is reliant on the generosity, both in terms of time and financial aid, of its many supporters, enabling the Trust to move forward with the development of management policies within the area.

Biosecurity remains an important issue for the Trust, in an area that remains relatively free of invasive non-native species (INNS). We would hope to keep it like this, operating to decrease the numbers and potentially make the area free of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed (see p. 19). This involves working with a variety of different organisations and individuals as well as an educational role for anglers, walkers and other users. In addition, the importance of volunteers to report sightings and locations cannot be over-emphasised. While we have hopes of eradicating some INNS, and potentially funding to assist, the presence of rhododendron is a larger problem. It will require a more intense effort from everyone but the results will be worth it as the native vegetation returns and the rivers improve.

The Trust will continue to assist community groups and land managers with practical fisheries management and advice. It is hoped that restoration programmes, as laid out in the Catchment Management Plans, will be developed and progressed. To this end the work in Bhadaidh Daraich, looking at the sustainable restoration of the habitat and resurrection of the migratory fish populations, will provide exciting opportunities within the area.

The Trust would also like to further develop the educational aspects of our remit through talks, demonstrations and small "hands on" projects. As in previous years this is likely to involve the Ranger Service and schools, although it is hoped that other groups and individuals will also access this service. Shona is a Science and Engineering Ambassador and therefore can also be accessed through the STEMpoint network. This has the potential to extend our educational remit, and information about the Trust, beyond the local area.

The WSFT will continue to investigate the marine environment through the use of the netting of post smolts within estuaries. This will provide information on the smolt runs, usage of estuaries by sea trout, growth rates, marine mortalities and feeding potential. It is also hoped to develop this work further, looking at the relationships between trout and the environment. Discussions for this work are underway with a variety of organisations but, although interest is high the funding is proving difficult to source.

Following the completion of the Wild Fisheries Review in 2014 there have been a number of proposed changes to fisheries management, some enacted, which will have a bearing on fishing within the area and the future role of the Trust. There is a more detailed summary on Page 21, but this remains a case of 'watch this space'!

The emphasis will continue to be the wellbeing of native wild fish in the West Sutherland area and the Trust will represent them where required and defend their interests where it is felt that these are being ignored. The WSFT and its representatives feel that all populations are important, irrespective of size, and that their protection and enhancement are vital to the survival of these magnificent species.

Catches within the West Sutherland area

While catch statistics are generally used to determine the trends in salmonid populations, it must be recognised that there are a number of potential inaccuracies and inconsistencies inherent within this method. These include the following:

- The numbers of fish noted within the tables relate only to those fish recorded within the books. If anglers fail to report all or part of their catch then the figures will be an under-estimate of the total.
- Angling effort varies between years and is not recorded. A change in effort, either number of anglers, experience or time spent fishing, will be reflected in changes in the catch statistics.
- Weather and river conditions affect the number of fish within the systems and their catchability. Thus a low catch in a dry year may not reflect a poor adult run, simply the timing of the run and the ability of the angler to catch fish.

This leads to the view that the relationship between catches and stocks is complex. Catch records do not reflect the number or quality of fish in the system, but rather the angler ability to catch them under the conditions experienced at that time. Catch figures are therefore most valuable when it comes to expressing long-term trends.

2014

The official catch statistics for salmon and sea trout in Scotland have been published (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/science/Publications/stats/SalmonSeaTroutCatches) and are summarised below for the West Sutherland area (Table 1). These statistics are frequently used to indicate long term trends in populations, by region. By extracting the data relevant to the WSFT area, we can gain a greater understanding of the situation, as represented within this area. The areas used by the Scottish Government, and therefore within this report, are an amalgamation of several rivers, by the old District Salmon Fisheries Boards (Fig. 1). This is due to the confidential nature of the information and the requirement of the Scottish Executive to mask the catches from individual systems.

Table 1 The number of wild fish caught by rod and line, by Fishery Board

Fishery Board		Salmon & Grilse	Sea Trout
Hope & Grudie	2014	375	888
	(2013)	(552)	(615)
	5 yr. ave.	*594.8*	*949.8*
Inchard – Kirkaig	2014	415	451
	(2013)	(529)	(420)
	5 yr. ave.	*571.2*	*441.4*

Total salmon catches within the area showed a decrease on the 2013 catches, with the Hope & Grudie area having the greatest decline. These figures remain in the bottom third of historic catches, but are above those seen in the poor years of the last 3 decades.

The proportion of salmon released within the area continues to show a welcome increase, now being 85 % in the entire area. This is a welcome trend, although it would be nice to see this proportion continue to rise.

The differences in the proportion of fish caught and released, 83% in Inchard – Kirkaig and 87% in Hope & Grudie has narrowed. The increase in the proportion of fish released in the Inchard - Kirkaig area during 2014 is to be welcomed, particularly given the decline in catches. However, there was a decline in the proportion released in the Hope & Grudie area, an unwelcome trend given the large decline in catches over this period. While it is known that released fish can be re-captured on several occasions, thus influencing the suitability of catch returns to estimate adult runs, it is important at this time of low marine survival

to release an increasing number of fish in order to increase the spawning stock. Remember, the fish in the freezer or on the table cannot breed!

Sea trout catches within the area have also shown an increase in both areas on the 2013 figures. This was greatest in the Hope & Grudie area. Catch and release remains high within the area, with the greatest proportion of released fish being seen in the Inchard – Kirkaig area. However the difference is slight and the overall total of 90% of fish released is encouraging. It is to be hoped that this will continue to increase until numbers have recovered.

An analysis of the trend in fish catches for the WSFT area since 1952 (Fig. 2) indicates that 2014 was a poor year for both salmon and sea trout, being within the bottom 20% since 1952. However the catches remain similar to those seen in the 1970's. It must also be remembered that 2014 was an exceptionally dry year, and therefore poor for angling. This will have reduced the rod catch significantly.

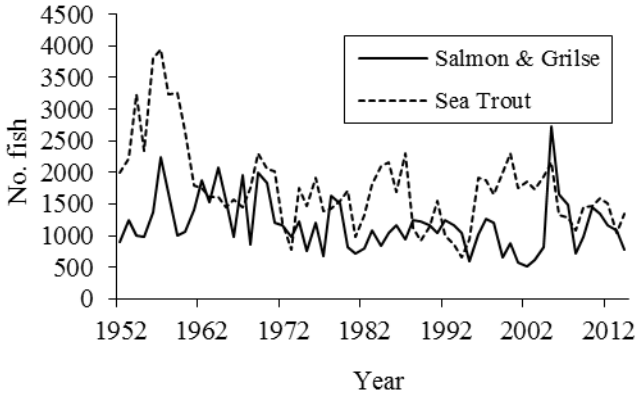

Fig. 2 Rod and line catches within the West Sutherland area, 1952 – 2014

2015

Catch data for the 2015 season are being compiled and will be produced by Marine Scotland Science in 2016. However, some information is available from angler logs and fishing books. Reports indicate a mixed season throughout the area, with some rivers reporting reasonable catches, others poor. This was the pattern for both species. However, larger sea trout than normal have been reported from several systems. This agrees with the estuary netting (p. 11), where a greater than average number of large sea trout were encountered.

Catch and release continues to be an important fisheries management technique within the area and has been adopted by a number of estates. It is to be hoped that this continues to be used, and hopefully increased, by the various estates and their angling clients, adding as it does to efforts throughout the area to improve the situation for fish populations through biosecurity, removal of non-native species and habitat improvements amongst others.

The Scottish Government has implemented new fisheries management practices throughout the country. Within this area this has resulted in a mandatory catch and release of all salmon within the area between Cape Wrath and the Point of Stoer. Most other rivers within the area will have to implement an increase in catch and release, while the rivers within the Grudie District can continue as they are. In reality this will have little effect on anglers enjoyment as there is already a high level of catch and release within the area, but it is to be hoped that all anglers will support the measures. While sea trout are not affected by this legislation, the low levels of catches would suggest that catch and release is of equal importance to this species.

All information on the fish populations within lochs and rivers is important when undertaking fisheries management. Any further information that can be provided will be gratefully received, particularly on the brown trout lochs within the area.

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A survey of juvenile abundance

Electrofishing surveys are designed to assess the juvenile populations within a system. The equipment operates by creating an electrical field within the water that at first attracts and subsequently stuns them for a brief period, at which point the fish can be netted out and examined under anaesthetic. The Trust has a rolling programme of surveys, with most sites visited every 2 years, while a small number may be sampled annually. When possible all sites are revisited, although some may not be accessed due to time and flow constraints, while others may be added. In 2014 most sites all repeat surveys.

The average densities of fish within each catchment are summarised (Table 2. This allows comparison between the catchments, although it should be noted that temporal changes in density throughout the summer months, and habitat differences between catchments are not considered in this table. The timing of sampling is important, with fish moving within the tributaries as a result of water height and temperature, food availability and size. Thus sampling after a spate may give a low density as a result of washout, whilst drought may decrease density as fish move into deeper water to avoid predation or desiccation, or may increase density as a result of concentration in severe cases. Similarly, densities will be greater shortly after hatching, reducing with time as the fish grow and require a larger territory for survival.

Table 2 Average densities of salmonids per catchment surveyed

	Average density ($100m^2$)			
Catchment	Salmon fry	Salmon parr	Trout fry	Trout parr
Laxford	34.79	11.83	46.17	7.24
Inver	25.82	16.17	12.74	3.81
Polla	10.72	7.50	17.96	2.75
Hope	4.40	13.01	7.18	6.00
Duart	24.28	14.18	8.65	7.50
Bhadaidh Daraich	0	0	36.59	6.45
Geisgeil	3.43	5.23	4.48	6.42
West Sutherland area average	14.78	9.70	19.11	5.74

There is a good distribution of salmonid species throughout the west Sutherland area with trout present in every system surveyed. With the exception of Bhadaidh Daraich, salmon were also recorded in each catchment. In general trout are more abundant with trout fry dominating the area; however, trout parr numbers are consistently low across the catchments, and were heavily dominated by salmon parr. Trout fry dominated in all catchments over trout parr, with the exception of Geisgeil. Salmon parr were dominated by salmon fry in all catchments other than Hope and Geisgeil.

Discussion

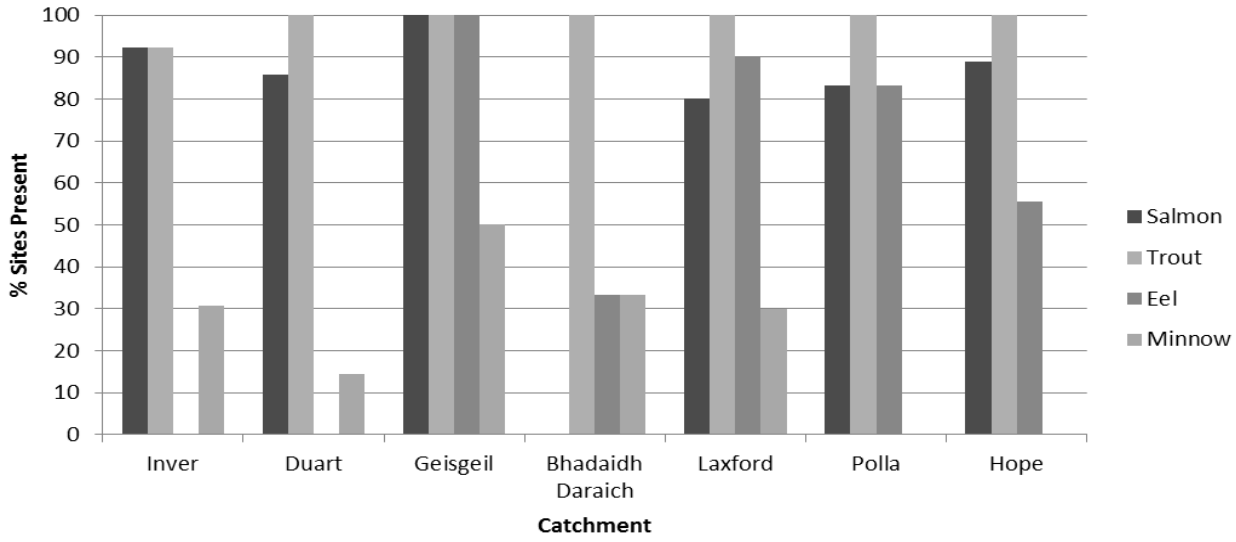
Minimum density estimates are underestimates of the total fish population, particularly when fishing efficiency is reduced as a result of fish being lost in stones or weeds, or if the water flow is high, and where conductivity is especially low. In 2015, salmonid fry and parr were recorded in every catchment, and populations appear to be healthy, despite being small in some catchments.

Salmonid fry densities are naturally higher than parr in all freshwater catchments as a result of density dependent mortality combined with migration as the parr grow and move into new feeding territories. Whilst this is reflected in the surveys within the west Sutherland catchments, there are certain years where salmonid fry numbers are dramatically high (suggesting prosperous spawning in the previous year), yet parr numbers remain relatively constant in comparison. It is likely that the carrying capacity for parr is exceeded within the burns, resulting in migration into the lochs; the water is deeper and provides more cover, as well as having a greater expanse in which to support feeding territories for higher parr densities. This seems to occur most notably in trout populations.

When compared to the previous surveys within these systems, juvenile salmon densities have increased across the majority of all catchments surveyed. Not taking the Bhadaidh Daraich and Geisgeil catchments into consideration (where salmon are historically absent in the Bhadaidh Daraich catchment

and are sporadically present due to the barrier in the Geisgeil catchment), the only case of a reduction in salmon densities occurred in the Hope catchment where fry densities decreased dramatically. This is likely to be due to destabilised substrate causing redd washouts following the spawning season of 2014 (possibly combined with poor 2014 spawning), and as such is an isolated case in spite of which the salmon fry densities remain within the range found in previous years. In contrast, juvenile trout densities did not show any discernible patterns, increasing in some systems whilst decreasing in others. However, all of the trout densities remained within the ranges recorded in previous years, indicating that there are no major problems within these catchments. Stocking does not form a major part in the management of the systems monitored in 2015.

The historical data shows peaks and troughs in salmonid populations which reflect natural cycles as a result of ecosystem dynamics. The peaks following the troughs, particularly in recent years in the case of salmon, show that there is no major cause for concern in regard to freshwater habitat in terms of instream characteristics; the habitat is being used to the optimum given the abundance of spawning adults. However, there is a severe lack of bankside cover across all of the catchments within the West Sutherland area; a habitat feature which is of vital importance to parr and adult trout, and is likely to be attributable to the consistently low densities of trout parr in spite of the refuge of nearby lochs within many of the systems. Strategic planting of mixed broadleaf trees within riparian zones would undoubtedly improve fish cover, food availability, and bankside stability; this is particularly vital in areas susceptible to dramatic landslips. Flooding is a natural occurrence, but a lack of structural bankside stability afforded through the root systems of complex bankside vegetation speeds up the process of erosion, and can have catastrophic consequences, as was seen within tributaries of the Hope and Polla systems following the heavy flooding in August 2014. The knock-on effects of this have undoubtedly had a negative impact on juvenile salmonid populations through rapid changes to stream courses and redd washouts.



Species composition and distribution per catchment

Monitoring of sea trout post-smolts

Introduction

Started in 1997, this project was originally designed to give an indication of the migrations and growth of sea trout within the area. The individual tagging of fish, combined with the measurements taken at capture, gave a baseline from which to assess these parameters following re-capture by nets or rod and line. In addition to these data, the numbers of sea lice were also assessed. This has now progressed, such that sea lice counts are the most important part of the project, with the tagging of fish giving additional information.

Materials & Methods

Three estuaries, Laxford Bay, Kyle of Durness and the Polla estuary, were sampled monthly where possible from April to September. A total of 407 fish were individually measured and scale samples taken, of which 185 were tagged using a visible implant tag behind the eye. The fish were also examined for the presence of sea lice, which were counted and staged.

Results and Discussion

The fish caught were of varied age and length, reflecting a mixed population structure. The age structure in the two estuaries was similar, with the Laxford returning a greater number of mature fish. This differs from previous years, when the Polla has returned the more mature fish. The predominant smolt age in the rivers is 2 years (S2), although there were a number of S3's also present. S1's were also observed in small numbers in both the Laxford and the Polla estuaries. The length distribution of fish within the estuaries was different, with the Kyle of Durness returning primarily post-smolts.

A proportion of the fish examined were from previous smolt runs, although the Kyle of Durness catch was primarily post-smolt throughout the year. While a May smolt run is normal for the Sutherland area there were a large proportion of smolts taken in the April samples from the Laxford indicating that some smolts may have run earlier. Smolts dominate the later samples in both the Laxford and the Kyle of Durness, suggesting that mature fish have left the area, possibly into the river.

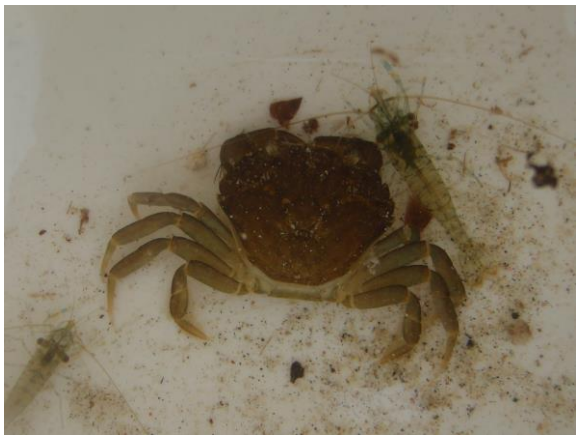
The presence of post-smolts at all sites throughout the year indicates a heavy usage of estuaries by this group, presumably for feeding and shelter. That the sea trout populations are relatively static can be inferred from the information on recaptures, where all bar one of the tagged fish recaptured during 2015 were taken in the same location as originally tagged (Badna Bay and the Laxford sharing an estuary). The exception was a fish originally tagged in the Laxford and recaptured in the Polla. This confirms findings from previous years.

Length appears to vary with time, although no discernible pattern can be seen. This reflects the movement of post-smolts within the estuaries for feeding and shelter, and the movement of sea trout between marine feeding areas and the river. During 2015 there was evidence of good feeding at sea, with a number of small gadoids taken during the September sweep in the Laxford.

There were 55 recaptures during 2015, all within the estuary netting. Three fish from the Laxford were recaptured twice, while one from the Polla (O20) was recaptured on 3 occasions. Of the recaptured trout, 1 was originally tagged in 2010, 3 in 2013, 21 in 2014, with the rest in 2015. This gives yet more information on sustained growth rates and demonstrates the potential effectiveness of the tagging programme. As Badna Bay and the Laxford share an estuary at the location of the netting station, all bar one of the recaptured fish were taken from the area of tagging. This pattern is common to the sampling programme over the past 18 years and demonstrates that the majority of sea trout do not stray far from their home rivers. The exception was a fish tagged in the Laxford and recaptured in the Polla.

Average growth rates within the Laxford were 5.81 mm, and 12.38 g per month. Within the Polla average growth rates were 10.40 mm and 39.07 g. Both growth rates are lower than those seen in 2014, but still good within the Laxford and within the range seen in the Polla.

Figure 3 shows that the specific growth rates (SGR) in the Laxford is the highest recorded during this survey. While this is encouraging it is important to remember that one year does not spell a reversal.



Crab and Crangon, two of the finds on the Seashore Day (S. Marshall)

Busy at the Highland Field Sports Fair (S. Marshall)

Smiling volunteers – on the pull! (S. Barnes)

Stem injection in action (S. Marshall)

Off we go lads! (S. Marshall)

A good sweep at the Laxford (M. Dawkins)

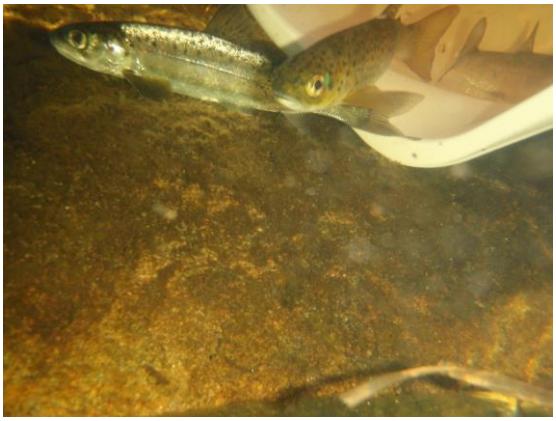
Predator on the prowl… (S. Marshall)

What an office. (S. Marshall)

A lucky find – a sea slug (S. Marshall)

Ready for action at the Highland Field Sports Fair (S. Marshall)

Another view of the office (M. Kinghorn)



Salmon and trout departing (S. Marshall)

However this is encouraging and was apparent in the appearance of the fish within the netting, which were plump and well conditioned. Within the Polla the situation appears less positive, although in reality the fish were in very good condition. While the SGR is low compared to that seen in previous years, this reflects the time of recapture, with many fish taken following a winter period of low growth. The results demonstrate the complexity of trout population dynamics and the interactions with external factors, such as food supply and temperature.

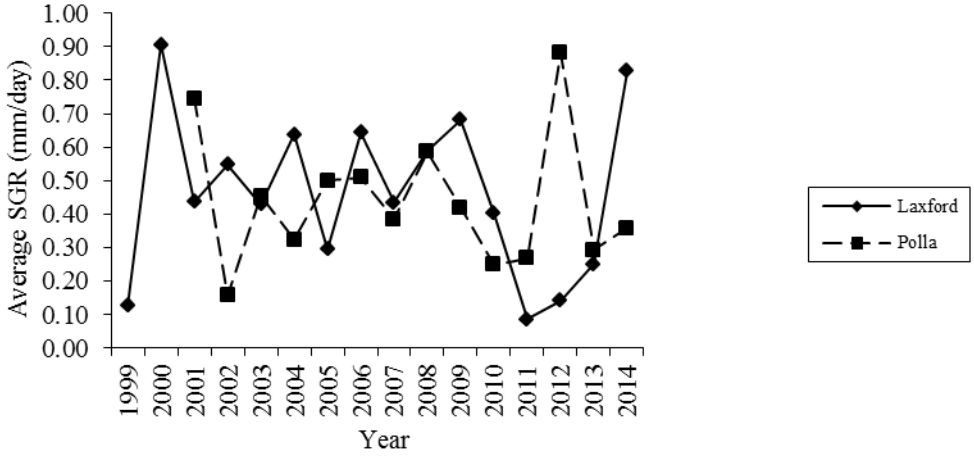


Fig. 3 Showing the average SGR for fish within the Laxford and Polla estuaries, by year

Sea Lice Infestations

Sea lice were present to a varying degree in all estuaries, with lice found during all sampling occasions. Chalimus dominated the Laxford catches with a small number of mobiles also found in June and July. A small number of adults were also present in June. The Polla samples demonstrated a mixture of lice stages on each sampling occasion. As with the Polla, the Kyle of Durness sea trout also carried a mixture of lice stages. Total lice numbers were low in the Kyle of Durness but much higher in the other two systems. In particular, the numbers of lice in the Laxford during April, May and June were significant, declining rapidly in July and August. The Polla also showed high numbers during June and September, with a dip in numbers during July and August. However, the total lice number per sample is dependent on sample size and the use of abundance and intensity data give a better assessment of the situation.

Laxford

Lice abundance within the Laxford samples increased steeply to June, before declining slightly over the following 2 months. There was no maturation of lice observed within the sample, with chalimus dominating the population throughout. *Caligus* were present on a small number of fish during June and July, with high numbers (69) seen on one fish in June.

The neighbouring cages were stocked in October 2014, giving growing fish within the site during the survey period. As with the wild fish, *Caligus* populations were low. However, the farm contained *Caligus* during July and August, slightly later than the sea trout population. *Lepeophtheirus* figures have followed a similar pattern to those on the farm, although the mixture of stages is greater within the farm. However pre-adult/mobile stages dominate within the cages.

Polla

The abundance of lice showed a peak during June, before declining during the rest of the year. The June sample was made up of immature lice, chalimus and mobile, with some evidence of maturation following. Gravid lice were present in each of the remaining months, with very few chalimus present in September. *Caligus* were present in each month, with the exception of July. The highest number of *Caligus* was found on the fish in June.

The neighbouring cages were fallow throughout the sampling period and therefore no comparisons were possible.

Kyle of Durness

The abundance of lice was relatively low, being highest in August. There was a mix of stages present, with potential maturation observed within the population. *Caligus* were present in June and August, but there were few individuals on a small number of fish.

A risk assessment of the lice numbers present within the wild trout

A recently published paper (Taranger, G.L., Karlsen, Ø., Bannister, R.J., Glover, K. A., Husa, V., Karlsbakk, E., Kvamme, O., Boxaspen, K. K., Bjørn, P. A., Finstad, B., Madhun, A. S., Morton, C. & Svåsand, T. ((2014). Risk assessment of the environmental impact of Norwegian Atlantic salmon farming. *ICES J. Mar. Sci. dor 10. 1093/icesjms/fsu132*) demonstrated a method to assess the increased mortality risk to salmonids based on the number of lice present per gram of fish. This was based on the physiological effects determined from laboratory experiments taken from literature, and the use of sentinel cages within fjords.

The data are treated differently depending on fish size and give a potential increased risk of mortality to each fish, with increasing risk as the number of lice increase. Thus, 0.1 – 0.2 lice/g will give a 20% increased risk of mortality to a salmonid of < 150g.In order to determine the likely population effect, the proportion of fish within the population appearing in each band is calculated and a population risk determined. Fig. 4 gives the results by year for each estuary, with the banding indicating whether the risk is low (<10%), moderate (10 – 30%) or high (>30%). Within the low zone it can be taken that there is minimal risk to the population, while the other zones show potentially population altering impacts.

From this, it can be seen that the potential risks within the Polla estuary are low throughout the study period, with the exception of 2006, when increased lice levels were observed. This is a positive reflection on the situation within the estuary, not perhaps seen in previous analyses based solely on lice abundance. It may, however, be more reflective of the rod catches, which have remained steady with time.

In contrast, the Laxford analysis would indicate that sea lice populations are creating a potential population changing effect on a regular basis. While there is a biannual effect observed, primarily giving a moderate effect, on 2 years, 2011 and 2013, this was identified as high. This is perhaps a better reflection of the impression drawn from the previous analyses of the abundance data, but serves to highlight the population changes observed with the rod catches.

Sampling within the Kyle of Durness has been more restricted than the other 2 estuaries, but results would indicate that there is a low risk to the population arising from the lice burdens within the population. The exception to this was in 2005, where a high potential risk was recorded. Catch records, again, mirror to some extent the potential risk to the population identified.

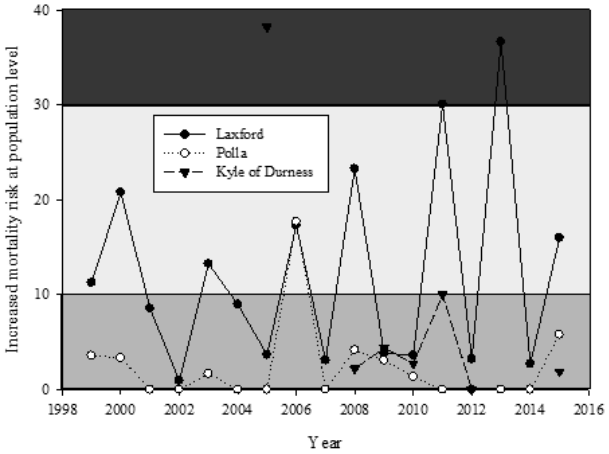


Fig. 4 Showing the increased mortality risk at population level created by sea lice

Sea lice stages and species

Lepeophtheirus salmonis—the salmon louse

Within this study, all *L. salmonis* are counted by stage. Not all stages are used, but for the purposes of this study they are split into:

Chalimus—Hard to see on the fish, these tiny organisms are anchored on the fish, often around the dorsal on sea trout.

Mobile—Free moving pre-adult stages, roaming over the fish skin.

Adult—Moving freely over the fish attracting (female) or seeking (male) mates.

Gravid females—Lice carrying egg strings.

Caligus elongatus

Also affecting salmon, *Caligus* can be found on a number of other species, such as herring and mackerel. It is much smaller that *L. salmonis* and faster moving. It will jump hosts more readily. *Caligus* are counted as a species within this study, and not to individual stages.

Bringing her home (S. Barnes)

The Bad na Baighe Smolt Trap

A smolt trap was deployed in Bad na Baighe from 12.4.15 to 1.6.15. A temperature recorder was placed in the trap, set to record hourly for the duration of the project.

While there were significantly more fish passing through the trap during 2015 than previous years, it is unlikely that all fish were recorded. The lead net was overtopped on several occasions, permitting fish to evade the trap, with a large flood on the 15 & 16 April putting the trap effectively underwater.

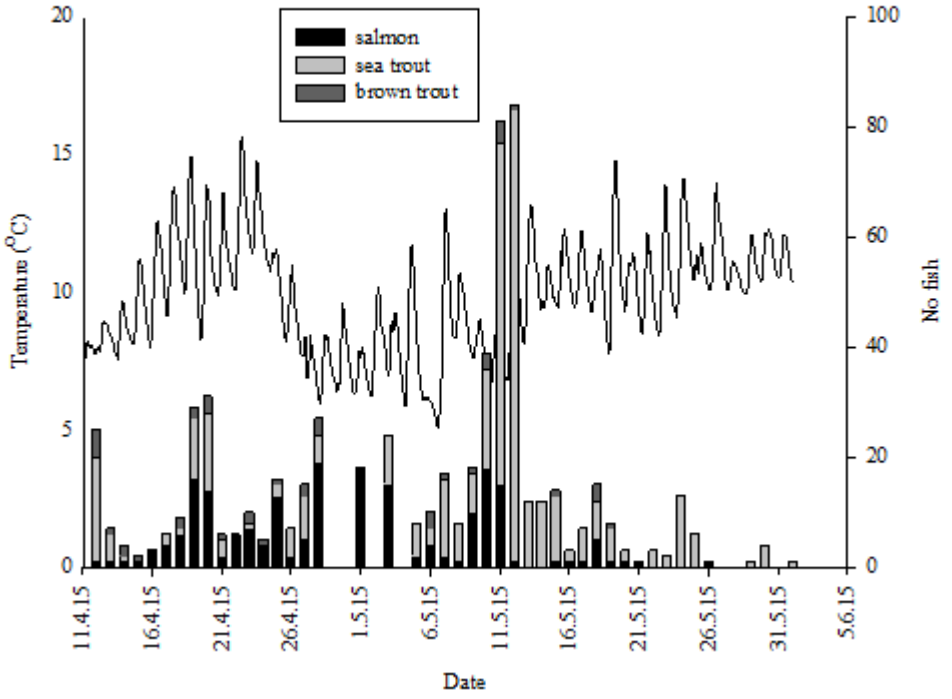


Fig. 5 Showing the temperature regime within the river (line) and no of fish caught on each day (bar)

Water temperature remained relatively static, with diurnal fluctuations dominating (Fig. 5). There was a dip in temperature from about 27/4 until 4/5, where the temperature dropped below 7°C for much of the time. Salmonids require a temperature of about 7°C before starting to move, and with the exception of this period the temperature was exceeded for the rest of the study period.

Salmon can be seen to dominate the catch at the end of April, with sea trout dominating in the later part of the sampling period (Fig. 5). However more sea trout than salmon passed through the trap in 2015. This was in comparison to the findings in 2014, but is more reflective of the type of fishery within the system. Few brown trout were seen to move downstream into the trap. From electrofishing studies we know that salmon are present in small, but significant, numbers and this is reflected within these results.

All sea trout were examined for tags and many of the fish were tagged at the trap prior to release. There were 12 recaptures associated with the smolt trap, all smolts tagged in the trap and subsequently recaptured (see p. 11). This formed 27% of the total recaptures within the Laxford estuary, and indicates that a significant number of the fish taken in the estuary sweep netting come from the Bad na Baighe catchment rather than the Laxford, highlighting the relationship between the two systems, which share a common estuary. It would be interesting to know more about trout usage of the estuary and the relationship between the 2 populations, a subject for further work should funding become available.

Education

Education forms a large part of our remit and the WSFT are particularly keen to get involved with schools and colleges within the area, as well as giving talks and demonstration to adult groups. It is considered to be an important link between the Trust, the general public, nature groups and the local community. It is a medium whereby scientific research data can be available to those interested in it.

Ghillies Seminar

This annual event provides a forum for the Ghillies within the area, giving them an opportunity to meet and discuss what's happening in their rivers as well as question some experts in the fields of fisheries management and salmonid biology. A platform for those working in the field to discuss issues that affects them directly, it is also a two-way process not only moving information to the workers, but also taking suggestions and ideas to the scientists and policy makers.

This year's seminar didn't really have a theme, rather bringing together a range of speakers to address a number of issues relevant to the area. Starting with a discussion on ways to work together with Marine Scotland Compliance on poaching at sea, we then moved on to the less man induced issues. Catherine Collins (Marine Scotland Science) talked us through MSS work on the modelling of sea lice and the dispersal patterns within sea lochs. Ann-Marie MacMasters (RAFTS) then took over, talking about the work of the Scottish Mink Initiative and the importance of the current project in reducing numbers within the project area (see p. 19). The meeting finished with an open discussion on the Wild Fisheries Review and the proposed Licence to Kill legislation. We discussed the issues that were particularly relevant to the area and their potential impacts.

There was keen participation and a genuine desire to address issues particular to this area, with feedback forms enabling future events to be tailored specifically to the audience. The meeting was well received and the notes can be found on the Trust website.

Seashore Day

The P5 – P7 pupils from Durness, Kinlochbervie and Scourie joined the Trust and the local Rangers on Scourie beach to undertake a beach exploration. From rockpools to the strandline, crab fishing and a puppet show to the wonders found in the deeper water and caught to creel. Afterwards the public were also invited to attend and learn about the beach and its treasures. This was an excellent day organised by the local Ranger, highlighting the importance of the intertidal area.

Highland Field Sports Fair

The Trust was sharing a stall with the Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust, Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust, the Ness and Beauly Fisheries Trust, the Moray Firth Sea Trout Initiative and the Scottish Mink Initiative. We duly turned up in a field in August, armed to the teeth with display boards, leaflets, competitions, etc. Up in the main arena this time, we had a busy 2 days talking to a large number of people about the Trust, the area and fish conservation and protection. 'Fred' also proved popular as a number of people tried to 'feed the fish' – including other Biologists!

Thanks have to go to those who donated prizes and equipment, and congratulations to the winners. Hopefully we will be there again in 2016 and hope to see a number of you then.

Assynt Fishing Fèis

Organised and run by Stewart Yates of Assynt Fly Fishing, this event saw the studio at Glencanisp Lodge taken over by all things fishy. A fun experience for all ages, with casting tuition, fly tying instruction, electrofishing demonstration, games and discussions, rounded off with some excellent muffins. During this, the fishing competition was running out on the loch.

Congratulations to Stewart for organising such a good event and to all the competition winners. See you in 2016.

Other Open Events

The Trust also participated in the Scourie Gala, the Clachtoll Seashore Day and the Scottish Salmon Festival in Inverness, having a stall at each. These events gave us another chance to talk to members of the public and promote the work of the Trust. All good days, and successful for the Trust.

Biosecurity Management

Following the creation of the Biosecurity Plan in 2009/10 the Trust has moved forward with some of the actions. These include awareness raising, monitoring and removal of different species.

Awareness Raising

Undertaken at the Ghillies Seminar, Trust Meetings, the DSFB meetings, the Highland Field Sports Fair, the Assynt Fishing Feis, Scourie Gala and Clachtoll Seashore Day, as well as on Facebook and Twitter, issues of Biosecurity and the presence of Invasive Non-Native Species were raised regularly. In particular, the need to disinfect equipment between catchments and the need for added awareness and reporting with regards to non-natives within the area were highlighted.

Biosecurity is an important issue within Sutherland as there are few non-native species present compared to many other areas within the UK. This can make people blasé to the risks posed and the need for care and vigilance. It is important to prevent the spread of non-native species into the area and it is incumbent on all residents and water users to play their part. Gardens, ponds, fishing tackle and water sports equipment are all routes of infection and ones that should be easy to block if care is taken.

American Mink

Mink have been spotted throughout the area for a number of years. A network of rafts and tunnels was established, monitored by volunteers and Trust staff. Thankfully, despite the discovery of tracks on a couple of the rafts, subsequent trapping failed to capture any mink. This would suggest that the population is currently small, possibly comprising of roaming males. However with several mink sightings within the area, a number caught on the west coast between Loch Ewe and the Isle of Skye, and further sightings in the Shin area, it is important to keep an eye out for them and report any sightings so they can be reacted upon.

The volunteer network remains in place and the WSFT is extremely grateful for all assistance being given. Without the time and commitment donated by these individuals we would be less able to protect this area against invasive species. If you would be able to look after a mink raft then please contact the Biologist and we'll get you set up. Any mink sightings, or potential sightings, should be reported to the Biologist. This information will then be passed on to the relevant volunteers and also recorded in the Mink App, a national database of sightings.

Himalayan Balsam & Japanese Knotweed

Following the end of the previous restoration project, RAFTS was successful in obtaining an interim grant to continue with the removal of Himalayan Balsam, and start the survey of Japanese Knotweed populations. This is in advance of a larger project bid currently being submitted for wider scale work.

2015 therefore saw the Biologists and their intrepid volunteers once again descending on Nedd and Clashnessie to remove any Balsam plants spotted within the river corridors. It is getting increasingly difficult to find these plants, although there are occasional eruptions in places previously considered clear. Thanks go to all those who gave up their time in order to improve the habitat in a small part of Sutherland. This area has been treated since 2010 and it is encouraging to see the success of the work, which we have to hope will continue. While the seed bank will still remain in the soil and the area will have to be monitored for a more extended period, it is still good to know that we're having an impact.

Japanese Knotweed is also present, although in small patches. In 2015 it was decided to asses some of the know populations, and put out requests for records of others. Having spoken to many of the proprietors of many of these populations, September saw the Biologists crawling around the area armed with 'gun' and Roundup. Stem injection was undertaken on a number of the patches and we will see in 2016 how successful we were. Unfortunately, on population that we thought had been eradicated at least 6 years ago re-appeared following fencing activity. Although small, and being treated, this shows the persistence of the seed bed and the need for vigilance in all areas.

Plans for 2016

2016 will see the continuation of the work detailed above. We will continue to push the issue of biosecurity and the need for everyone to play their part in the prevention of the spread of non-native species. At the same time, we will be monitoring the area for the presence of non-native species and

reacting to any sightings – either our own or those reported by members of the public.

It is hoped that additional funding can be found to continue with the eradication of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed from the area. There is a real possibility of full eradication and it is to be hoped that this can continue.

Mink will also form a major part of the work programme. The Trust will be monitoring mink rafts within the Scourie and Reay Forest Estates and acting as a contact point for any new sightings or the collection of carcasses. The latter will be passed to Aberdeen University for further analysis as part of an on-going project.

It is hoped that the removal of Rhododendron within the area will be progressed. A time consuming and expensive operation, this will require the action of the different estates and the sourcing of funding and knowledgeable contractors. It won't happen quickly but it is a long term aim for the area.

Treatment against *Gyrodactylus salaris* (Official Scottish Government Guidelines)

1. Drying to a minimum temperature of 20°C for at least two days
2. Heating to above 60°C for at least one hour
3. Deep freezing for at least one day
4. Immersion of materials in a solution of, or addition of one of the following chemicals to water to the concentration indicated:

- Virkon* 1%
- Wescodyne* 1%
- Sodium chloride 3%
- Sodium hydroxide 0.2%

The Check, Clean and Dry Campaign

Principles

- Non-native species could be spread in any water or material. If you are visiting a water body there is a real risk that you could spread harmful organisms unless you follow good biosecurity practice.

- Biosecurity means taking steps to make sure that good hygiene practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spreading invasive non-native species. A good biosecurity routine is always essential, even if invasive non-native species are not always apparent.

Check, Clean, Dry disinfection procedure

- Check - All clothing and equipment should be thoroughly inspected and any visible debris (mud, plant or animal matter) should be removed and left at the water body where it was found. Particular attention must be paid to the seams and seals of boots and waders. Any pockets of pooled water should be emptied.

- Clean - Equipment should be hosed down or pressure-washed on site. If facilities are not available equipment should be carefully contained, e.g. in plastic bags, until they can be found. Washings should be left at the water body where the equipment was used, or contained and not allowed to enter any other watercourse or drainage system (i.e. do not put them down the drain or sink). Where possible, clean equipment should be dipped in disinfectant solution (e.g. Virkon) to kill diseases, but note this is unlikely to kill non-native species.

- Dry - Thoroughly drying is the best method for disinfecting clothing and equipment. Boots and nets should be hung-up to dry. Equipment should be thoroughly dry for 48 hours before it is used elsewhere. Some non-native species can survive for as many as 15 days in damp conditions and up to 2 days in dry conditions, so the drying process must be thorough.

Wild Fisheries Reform

In 2014 the Scottish Government commissioned the completion of a Wild Fisheries Review. After extensive consultation, the Review was published, containing 53 recommendations. These covered a wide gamut of issues, from management structure through finance and sustainability to open access. These recommendations were then considered by the Scottish Government over 2015, potentially resulting in draft legislation in 2016.

As a result of the review, some measures were introduced during 2015, for action in the 2015 or 2016 season.

Ban on the taking of spring salmon

Introduced at the start of 2015, this banned the taking of any salmon before the 1 April by either rod or net. Angling could still take place but with a mandatory catch and release policy in place. This sees the return of all fish, even those badly hooked or dead, and is subject to annual review. While it can be argued that perhaps the 1 April is early to give full protection to the spring component, this addresses one of the points raised in the Wild Fisheries Review and provides an element of protection to this beleaguered component of the salmon population.

Salmon Conservation Limits

This policy was announced on October 2015 and implements a variety of conservation measures. Some, the retuning of salmon under the existing spring conservation order (above) and the banning of fishing out with estuary limits for a period of three years due to the mixed stock nature of the fishery and the limited data on the stock composition of the catch, to be reviewed after 3 years, are welcomed by many. Perhaps of greater controversy, is the plan to use conservation limits to determine the annual management of systems. While broadly welcomed, there have been questions raised about the methods used to determine the figures. Rivers, or groups of rivers, have been split into 1 of 3 categories, based on the 5 year average rod catch. The categories denote the conservation measures required such that:

Grade 1 – (Grudie) where the conservation limit has been met on 4 of the last 5 years, exploitation is sustainable and therefore no additional management action is required. Production of a conservation plan is required in consultation with Marine Scotland.

Grade 2 – (including Hope, Polla, Inver and Kirkaig) where the conservation limit has been met on 3 out of the past 5 years, meaning that management action is necessary to reduce exploitation. While mandatory catch and release will not be required in the first instance, this will be reviewed annually. Production of a conservation plan is required in consultation with Marine Scotland.

Grade 3 – (including Inchard and Laxford) where the conservation limit has not been met on 3 out of the past 5 years, meaning that exploitation is unsustainable and management actions are required to reduce exploitation for 1 year i.e. mandatory catch and release (all methods). Production of a conservation plan is required in consultation with Marine Scotland.

The Future

The Scottish Government is proposing radical changes to Fisheries Management in Scotland, with new legislation resulting in a new structure. This will be based to a large extent on the recommendations of the Wild Fisheries Review. While the consultation process has started, there are currently no firm indications of the form the legislation will take. However, from the original consultation, it would appear that there is the possibility of the following:

- Management will be ‘all species’, much like the status of the Fisheries Trusts.
- The formation of Fisheries Management Organisations (FMO’s) covering the country. While the area covered by each FMO has still to be finalised, there are indications that there will be about 15. This is a large drop from the 26 Fisheries Trusts or 40+ Boards currently existing. The Boards will cease to exist.
- The introduction of a rod licence is being considered.
- Angling for All is considered an important element of the programme, possibly paid for by the rod

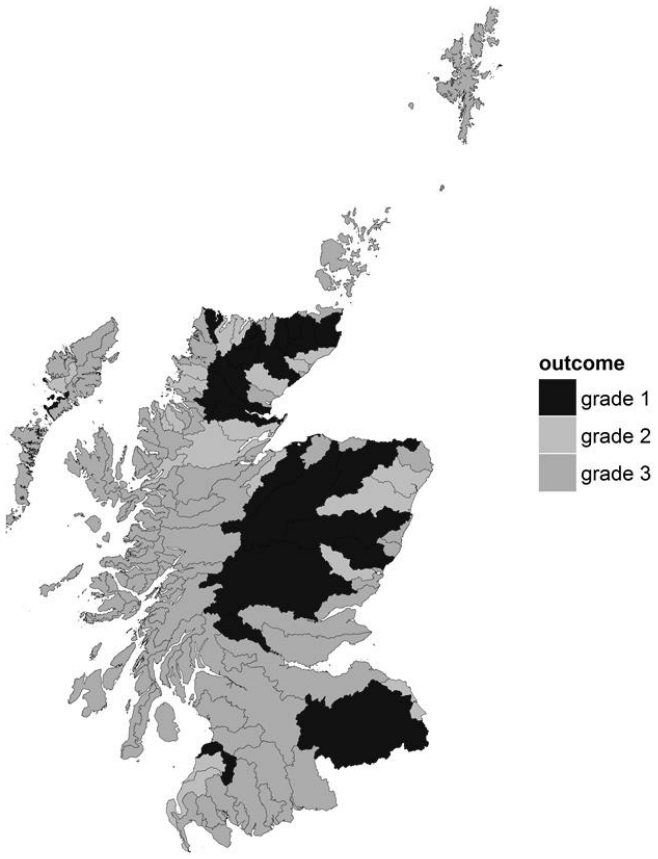
licence, with increased access and training for young anglers.

As the legislation is developed and things become clearer, we will know more about how the FMO's will develop. However, Government hopes are that:

- There will be an over-arching National organisation determining much of the work of the FMO's and giving quality control.
- They will be non-statutory, having no official say in planning applications, etc. At present the Boards are statutory, and can comment on any activity that may affect the fish within the rivers and estuaries, including aquaculture and renewable energy.
- FMO's will be charitable organisations, funded from levy, grant and donation. This is how the Trusts are funded at present, with the inherent difficulties that result each year to keep running. No additional or Government funding will be available.
- They will cover freshwaters only and will have no jurisdiction over coastal waters.

FMO's will have approved status, and will provide data to an agreed standard in order to assist the Government to fulfil their NASCO and EU obligations. Data are already collected to an agreed standard, managed by the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre, using methods developed by the Biologists.

The developing legislation has consequences for the Trust and will be followed closely. As independent charities, the Fisheries Trusts and Foundations cannot be subsumed into the new structures, or legislated against. However, there is the potential that our work (and funding) stops and the main purpose of the Trusts removed. While assured that this is unlikely to be the case, we watch this space with interest!!



A map showing the spread of the different categories within Scotland

Acknowledgements

The Trust would not be able to function without the assistance of an army of volunteers, many of whom give up substantial amounts of time to the Trust. Similarly, we would like to acknowledge those who support us financially and without whose help we would not be able to operate. Grateful thanks also for the assistance of the various estates. In particular, sincere thanks must be expressed to Reay Forest Estate and Scourie Estate for their donation of accommodation.

A number of other individuals have assisted the Trust with its work programme, some listed below. Apologies to those not mentioned by name, but our grateful thanks all the same.

Catches and Scale Reading

The WSFT acknowledges the assistance of hotels, estates and anglers in compiling catch records and collecting scale samples.

Monitoring of sea trout post-smolts

This work would not be capable of completion without the assistance of the Reay Forest Estate and Rispond Estate. Also to the army of volunteers, in particular Ross Barnes, John Craig, Dave Debour, Andrew Marsham and Rex Onions for their help in all weather and conditions.

Funding for this work comes from a variety of sources. The North & West District Salmon Fishery Board, estates, individuals and the Trust add value to a grant from the Scottish Government, received through RAFTS as part of the Managing Interactions with Aquaculture Project. The work of RAFTS in the securing of this, and other, funding must also be gratefully acknowledged.

Education

The Ghillies Seminar was partly funded by the District Salmon Fishery Board and the kind donations by our speakers of time and travel.

Biosecurity Planning

Mink rafts were provided by the Scottish Mink Initiative and monitored by various estates and individuals. Funding to oversee this process has been provided by SNH.

The following Charitable Trusts, Foundations, Estates and organisations have kindly donated funds or provided grant funding towards the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust. Our sincere thanks to all listed, and to the many individuals who will remain anonymous but have donated time and money to the Trust and its activities. Without all of this support we would not be able to operate.

Trusts & Organisations

Assynt Angling Club
Assynt Angling Company Ltd
Brackloch Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
North & West District Salmon Fishery Board
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Scottish Government
Scottish Natural Heritage
Westminster Foundation

Business (incl. Fish Farms)

Loch Duart Ltd

Estates

Rhiconich Estate
Reay Forest Estate
Rispond Estate
Scourie Estate

UNAUDITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the period 1.4.15 to 31.3.16

INCOME		£
District Fishery Board		
Fish Farms		12000
Trust Donations		5700
Grants		19405
General Donations		2767
Membership		724
Other		6499
		47095
LESS: EXPENDITURE		
Wages, Salaries, Pension & PAYE	48434	
Plant running costs	3441	
Consumables	694	
Insurance	1654	
Telephone	694	
Professional fees	5622	
Miscellaneous expenses	6618	
		67157
SURPLUS/DEFICT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		**-20062**

West Sutherland Fisheries Trust - Membership

Help us in our struggle to restore and maintain the trout and salmon stocks within the west Sutherland area by joining the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust for as little as £10 a year. We are already carrying out research into the salmonid life cycle in local river systems and are maintaining close links with biologists working throughout Scotland to ensure that results are co-ordinated and therefore give as complete a picture as possible. However, as a Charitable Trust (Charity No. SC24426) we are in constant need of financial support.

Contributions: Yearly Membership £25.00: Junior £10.00

Any additional contributions you feel able to make would enable us to be more active within the area. In return you will get the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the effort to save our salmon and trout, a local contact point for exchanging views and information, 2 newsletters a year and an Annual Review to keep you informed about what we are achieving.

Please complete the following form and return to: Gardeners Cottage, Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX

West Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Name: _____ Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

E-mail:_____

Contribution: £ _____ Annual □ Junior □

I want the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust (A Scottish Registered Charity No. SC24426) to reclaim Tax* on any donation/membership subscription paid from the date of this declaration.

Signature …… Date ……/……/……

Notes

1. You must pay an amount of income tax/capital gains tax, at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donation in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give). Remember to notify us if this no longer applies.
2. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief on your self-assessment tax return.
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims you can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying us.

✂----------

Banker's Order
(Annual Membership)

To the Manager of_____

Address _____

Please pay to the Royal Bank of Scotland, 11 Argyle Street, Ullapool, IV26 2UD (Account No. 00145607, Sort Code 83-28-01) the sum of £_____ on:- _____ and annually thereafter on the same date.

West Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Address:_____

_____

Account No: _____ Sort Code: _____

Gorm Track to Ben Stack

Clive Halnan, professional artist (http://clivehalnan.co.uk), has kindly donated some money from the sale of his picture 'Gorm Track to Ben Stack' to the Trust. The picture is available as a limited edition run of 125 prints, and is also available as a card.

They can be purchased from Scourie Hotel or directly from the artist (info@clivehalnan.co.uk).