



NITH CATCHMENT FISHERY TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2015

PUBLISHED MARCH 2016





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Nith Catchment Fishery Trust (NCFT) is a Scottish registered Charity which was formed in late 2009 to conserve and enhance all native freshwater fish and their habitats located within the inland and coastal waters of the River Nith catchment and the jurisdictional area of the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board.

The aims of the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust are:

- To advance environmental protection and improvement by conserving and enhancing all species of freshwater fish and their environs within the River Nith catchment, for public benefit.
- To advance the education of the general public through raising awareness of aquatic ecosystems including their fauna, flora and economic activity within the River Nith catchment.

Trust Directors

Mr E P K Weatherall - Chairman
Mr T C F Florey
Mr J Henderson
Mr P Hutchison
Mr D Kempself
Mr B Lord
Mr J McKie - retired
Mr R Schiller
Mr A S Wood

Staff

Ms Debbie Parke - Operations Manager/Biologist
Miss Emily Iles — Project Officer (to April 2015)
Miss Amy Fergusson— Seasonal Fishery Assistant



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Company no. SC366067. Registered Office: 37 George Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EB. Registered in Scotland



Managing our rivers and the fish within them is currently challenging! Those challenges come in a number of guises from the ravages of winter floods to legislative changes, conservation policies, declining numbers of anglers and financial pressures. We, who are involved in fisheries management, are all working hard to manage our way through these challenges to ensure a sustainable future for the River Nith, its stocks of fish and its fishers.

At the time of writing this, I note the river is at its lowest for months. We seem to have endured more floods over this winter than ever before with the river breaching its course frequently. One would have to question what impacts this inflicts on the fish and their spawn in our rivers and the long term effects of high flows coupled with the movement of gravel etc.

Under the Scottish Government's recent conservation policies for salmon, the River Nith catchment has been classified as category 3. This reflects the numbers of salmon predicted to be present in the Nith based on mathematical calculations using catch data, potential spawning area, fish counter information from other rivers, then using that information to predict the likelihood of the river attaining its conservation limits for salmon. Our categorisation means that no salmon may be taken on the Nith during 2016, all salmon captured must be returned unharmed. We hope that this conservation policy assists the stocks of salmon and we are committed to working with the Government to gather all necessary data to improve our knowledge of fish stocks in our river. Thus raising our categorisation.

The Wild Fisheries Bill has been launched and we are considering its contents, prior to responding. We are being consulted in the Bill on a range of subjects that will potentially change the way we manage our river and the organisations involved. We will be responding on behalf of the Trust and Board and we urge all with an interest in the River Nith to also respond.

Many of the management issues associated with running the river are of little consequence to the fisher and we in management must never lose sight of the fact that most who go into the countryside to fish are there for a relaxing day in pleasant surroundings. A fish being a bonus and not essential. It is pleasing to note the interest from young people wanting to participate in angling via the initiatives managed by our Trust. We need these new recruits to the fishing community, they are the future of fishing as a sport.

Tight lines to all for 2016.

E.P.K. Weatherall
Chairman
Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Biologist's Comments



This last year has seen the successful completion of the two-year “Fishing for the Future” project, which has delivered many varied education sessions to over 950 young people throughout Nithsdale and the wider area. It has been an enjoyable experience for all involved and the participants have been provided with an opportunity to experience the great outdoors in a fun, safe way, learning about the aquatic environment and gaining a sense of ownership of their local watercourses. We plan to continue with Fishing for the Future and will be expanding on it in 2016/17 to provide a pathway for enthusiastic young people into angling.

Times are unsure for fisheries management, fishing proprietors, clubs and anglers throughout Scotland currently with the Scottish Government changing the way that wild fisheries are managed. New legislation to categorise rivers and ban the killing of salmon on all Category 3 rivers has caused a great deal of mixed views throughout the angling community. Whilst some anglers have welcomed this change with open arms, some are more cautious or opposed to the legislation. There is concern amongst angling clubs and associations that this could make it even harder to keep membership numbers up and there is a very real fear that some associations may cease to exist in the next few years. This is why it is even more important that we continue to encourage new people into fishing and, in the process, teach them how to appreciate the species that they are fishing for and best angling practice.

It is likely that the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust, like all Scottish Fishery Trusts, will only have a couple of years left in which to operate before being incorporated into a larger Fishery Management Organisation (FMO) in accordance with proposals in draft legislation currently under consideration. What this management organisation will look like is as yet unclear. What is proposed by the government are fewer larger fishery management bodies as opposed to the current 41 Fishery Board structures and 26 Fishery Trusts. The geographic boundaries are still to be decided. We will have to wait and see. But what we do know, is that there will be change. In the meantime, it is important that we continue to achieve our aims and hope that whatever we do now will have a positive impact on the future of all species of fish and angling in the Nith catchment and surrounding area.



Debbie Parke
Operations Manager/Biologist
Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

The River Nith Catchment

Vital Statistics

The total catchment area is 1596km² which includes the main stem River Nith, its tributaries, coastal burns and connected still waters.

The length of the main stem of the River Nith is 98km from source to estuary.

Fish Species Present

- Atlantic salmon
- Sea trout
- Brown trout
- Grayling
- Pike
- Eel
- Lamprey
- Minnow
- Stone loach
- Stickleback
- Tench
- Perch
- Bream
- Roach

Salmon and Sea Trout Fishery

The salmon and sea trout fisheries are owned by 36 proprietors within the Nith catchment.

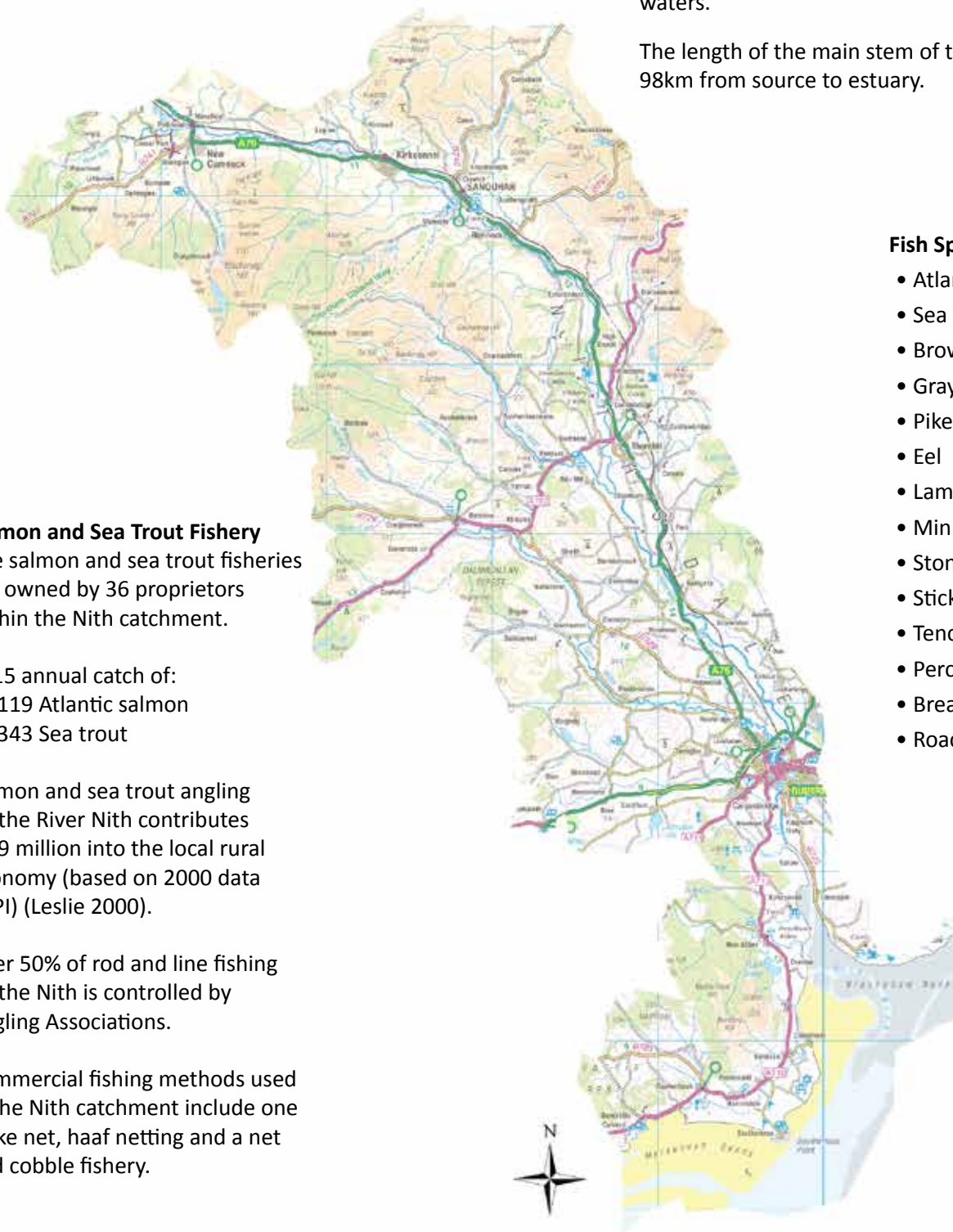
2015 annual catch of:

- 1119 Atlantic salmon
- 1343 Sea trout

Salmon and sea trout angling on the River Nith contributes £2.9 million into the local rural economy (based on 2000 data +RPI) (Leslie 2000).

Over 50% of rod and line fishing on the Nith is controlled by Angling Associations.

Commercial fishing methods used in the Nith catchment include one stake net, haaf netting and a net and cobble fishery.



Other Fisheries

The Nith also has healthy brown trout and grayling fisheries which are owned by landowners throughout the catchment. There are also a number of still water trout and coarse fisheries within the catchment. Sea fishing is popular at the quay at Glencaple and off the coast.

Fisheries Management

Wild Fisheries Reform

Major changes are underway in the way we assess the populations of salmon in Scottish rivers. From 2016, all rivers in Scotland have been assigned a category depending on the likelihood of them achieving their conservation limits. This new method of assessing salmon populations was felt necessary by the Government to facilitate management to sustain falling stocks of salmon. The River Nith, like all Solway rivers and 95% of all west coast Scottish rivers, has been given a category 3 listing. Rivers are categorised from 1-3.

Category (Grade) 1

At least an 80% mean probability of conservation limits (CL) being met in the last 5 years.

Exploitation is sustainable and therefore no additional management action is currently required.

Category (Grade) 2

60-80% mean probability of CL being met in the last 5 years.

Management action is necessary to reduce exploitation; mandatory catch and release will not be required in the first instance, but this will be reviewed annually. Where a Board does not exist, assistance in plan formulation will be offered to those responsible for local management.

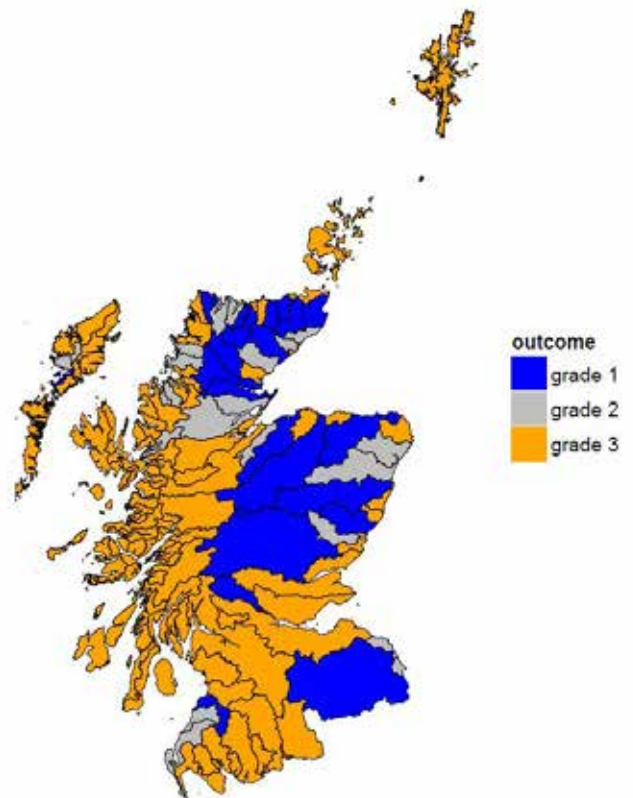
Category (Grade) 3

Less than 60% mean probability of CL being met in the last 5 years.

Exploitation is unsustainable and mandatory catch and release (all methods) for 1 year will be required.

Management action is necessary to reduce exploitation.

Production of a conservation plan by the District Salmon Fishery Board is required, in consultation with Marine Scotland, for all rivers.



Map of river categorisations throughout Scotland

So what are the implications for the River Nith, its fisheries and those who fish for salmon in the Nith?

Nith net fisheries are impacted. The stake net fishery cannot take salmon for three years. These nets can still fish for sea trout and if any salmon are captured they must be returned unharmed. After a 3 year period the government will reassess the salmon population and consider if it is appropriate to re-open this fishery for salmon.

The haaf net fishery cannot take salmon for one year. This fishery may fish for and take sea trout and if any salmon are captured they must be returned unharmed. The government will reassess this fishery on an annual basis to see if it is appropriate to re-open it for salmon fishing.

The net and cobble fishery cannot take salmon for one year. This fishery may fish for and take sea trout and if any salmon are captured they must be returned unharmed. The government will reassess this fishery on an annual basis to see if it is appropriate to re-open it for salmon fishing.

The rod fishery is also impacted. Rods may continue to fish for salmon but all salmon must be returned unharmed. Rods may still fish for and take sea trout, in accordance with the River Nith Angling Code. The government will reassess this fishery on an annual basis to see if it is appropriate to take salmon.

In accordance with national policy, the River Nith, and all other rivers, must produce a conservation plan to demonstrate the initiatives and policies that we are implementing locally to ensure the future stocks of migratory salmonid species of fish in the Nith.

So what can anglers and netsmen do to assist?

One of the measures used to assist the government in categorising Scottish rivers is the annual catch figures. It has never been more important than now to ensure that all salmon and sea trout that are captured are accurately recorded on returns and submitted for inclusion in the proprietor's statutory returns.

It should be noted that the Scottish Government will be assessing sea trout populations so we have an opportunity to demonstrate that we can "put our own house in order" and adopt policies to ensure their continued survival. Some of these policies may not be universally popular but may be necessary in order that we can retain the ability to manage these species.

All who fish the Nith either by rod or net must work together to try to conserve our stocks of both salmon and sea trout and hopefully lift us out of Category 3.

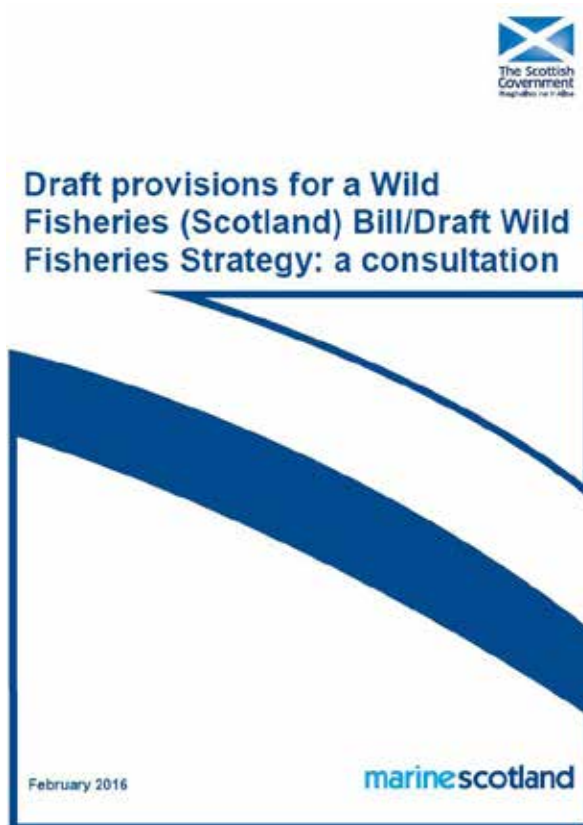
The Draft Bill

On the 8th of February 2016, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Dr Aileen McLeod launched the new draft fisheries bill incorporating the fresh water fisheries strategy for Scotland. This is potentially the most important document that all of us who have an interest in freshwater fisheries are likely to be consulted on. Radical changes are proposed on many aspects relating to the way we use our fisheries and the system for their management.

Proposals in the draft bill exist to revert from the current Fishery Board/Trust system of individual river catchment management, to larger Fishery Management Areas, encompassing many rivers within a geographically distinct area or possessing other features of commonality. Concerns have been raised regarding the loss of local knowledge of those who manage our rivers but when balanced with the economies of scale and finance available to manage our fisheries, there are benefits to be gained.

Generally, funding is an issue throughout the freshwater management sector and this is acknowledged within the consultation document. As is the importance for recruiting more young people into fishing in general. The economic benefits of sustainable fisheries throughout Scotland are acknowledged and are a goal. It has always been important to protect our fish stocks but in these times of reduced populations, that task is even more important and sits alongside the Governments conservation measures.

Individuals and organisations are encouraged to comment on the proposals and the window for making responses closes on 2nd May 2016. Make sure you or your organisation have their say - <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/wild-fisheries-reform-team/draft-wild-fisheries-strategy>



Fisheries Management work carried out during 2015

<p>Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bailiff team comprised 1 full time, 2 part-time, 1 seasonal and 2 volunteer warranted water bailiffs 8 incidents dealt with by enforcement staff – 1 abandoned by PF, 2 active and 5 cautioned National Bailiff Development Group meetings attended Attended National Bailiffs conference Ran 3 Solway Bailiff training courses 	<p>Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catch and release 63% for salmon and grilse and 80% for sea trout during 2015 Consulted on Scottish Government ban on killing of salmon and attended associated national meetings Conservation promoted through education projects, outreach programmes and distribution of conservation codes
<p>Engineering and Forestry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish rescues conducted Supervised channel repair on Nith at House of Water Consulted on 3 bank repairs Five juvenile fish surveys carried out in connection with engineering works taking place throughout the catchment Four responses made with regard to forestry plans Advised on DGAA river engineering works 	<p>Renewables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thirteen surveys carried out in connection with renewables taking place throughout the catchment Thirteen scoping responses made regarding renewables projects Nine reports submitted
<p>Planning and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulted on new hospital site 21 planning responses submitted Responded to public consultations on Ban to kill salmon 	<p>Biosecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crayfish refuge traps monitored and Lochfoot Burn monitored for crayfish spread 15741m² of Japanese knotweed treated 5524m² of Giant hogweed treated 13400m² of Himalayan balsam treated 739m² of Skunk cabbage treated Article on Giant hogweed with Border news Rainbow trout survey on Cairn Water
<p>Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat schemes checked and water gates repaired Willow whipping and habitat restoration day on Nith River bank planted with over 2000 native trees Pond weed survey Cample Water habitat scheme coppiced Removal of fencing at Upper Crawick habitat scheme 	<p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 barrier temporarily eased on Pennyland Burn Greenburn Burn barrier modified and resurveyed for passability Log jam removed on Enterkin Burn



Fisheries Management work carried out during 2015

<p style="text-align: center;">Water quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five pollution incidents attended and reported to SEPA • Six invertebrate surveys carried out 	<p style="text-align: center;">Marine survival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended 2nd International Sea Trout Symposium • Application to Horizon 2020 for additional research on marine survival rejected
<p style="text-align: center;">Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended meetings/consultations regarding Wild Fisheries Reform • Scottish Government meetings • Various meetings attended - see page 18 for full list of meetings/events attended • Staff training and appraisals carried out 	<p style="text-align: center;">Predation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licenses applied for and gained and used to prevent serious damage to wild stocks of salmon/sea trout by cormorants and goosanders • 19 mink trapped
<p style="text-align: center;">Fish stocks and monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 catch data collected and reported on web-site • 244 historic electrofishing sites entered into SFCC database • NFCT/NDSFB conducted electrofishing at 120 sites throughout the catchment • 10 annual electrofishing sites surveyed • Provided electrofishing data to MS Science 	<p style="text-align: center;">Hatchery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82,000 salmon fry, 10,000 sea trout and 3000 brown trout fry stocked • Post stocking electrofishing surveys carried out • Brood stock captured for fry production for 2016 • 18 school visits to hatchery • Many general visits
<p style="text-align: center;">Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing for the Future Project completed – over 900 participants took part • Nith Sea trout experience – eight weeks of free fishing to promote the Sea trout fishery on the River Nith • Nith Grayling day – 18 participants and 56 fish captured • Various shows and fairs attended - See page 18 for full list of meetings/events attended • Presentations given to other organisations • PR via website, social media, TV and newspapers including Autumn Watch 	



Stock Assessment

Salmon and Sea trout catch data for 2015

The catch data received by the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board for the 2015 season shows a slight improvement. The number of salmon and grilse caught for the season totalled 1119, sea trout numbers amounted to 1346. Both nets and rods showed an increase in the number of fish being caught. Disappointingly, catch and release figures were down catchment wide, with 63% of salmon being returned and 80% of sea trout. The average weights of fish reported are as follows: salmon 8.9lb, grilse 4.5lb and sea trout 1.3lb.

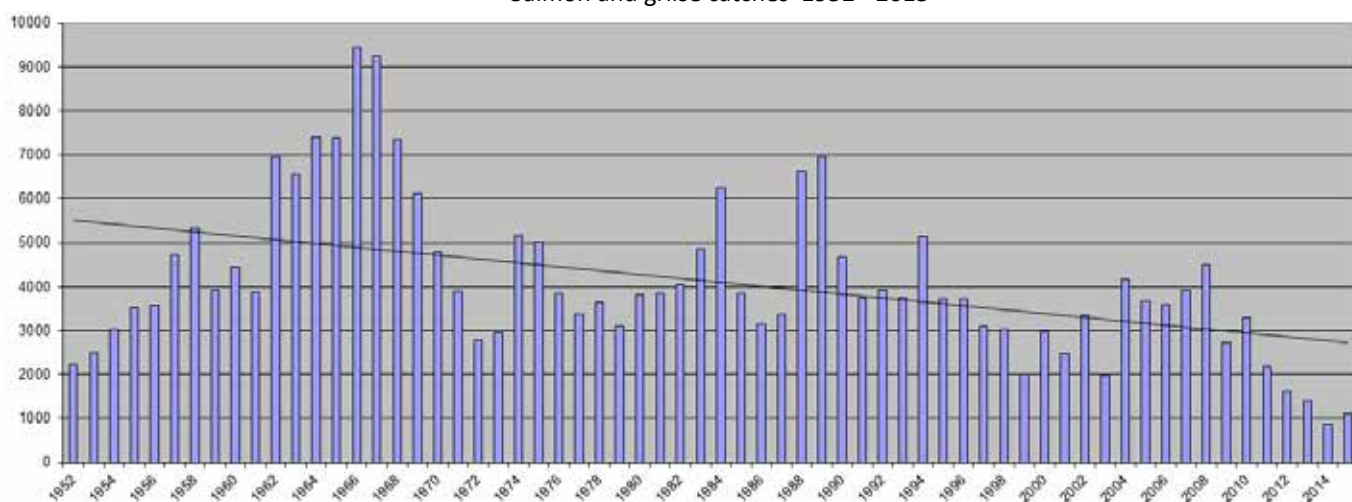
Table 1 - Salmon and grilse caught over the last 10 years

Year	Rods	Nets	Total	% C&R	10 year average
2006	2682	921	3603	26%	3038
2007	2993	932	3925	41%	3121
2008	3764	740	4504	35%	3268
2009	2095	644	2739	36%	3342
2010	2336	970	3306	43%	3375
2011	1637	545	2182	40%	3344
2012	1283	352	1635	40%	3173
2013	940	465	1405	59%	3114
2014	520	331	851	64%	2781
2015	702	417	1119	63%	2527

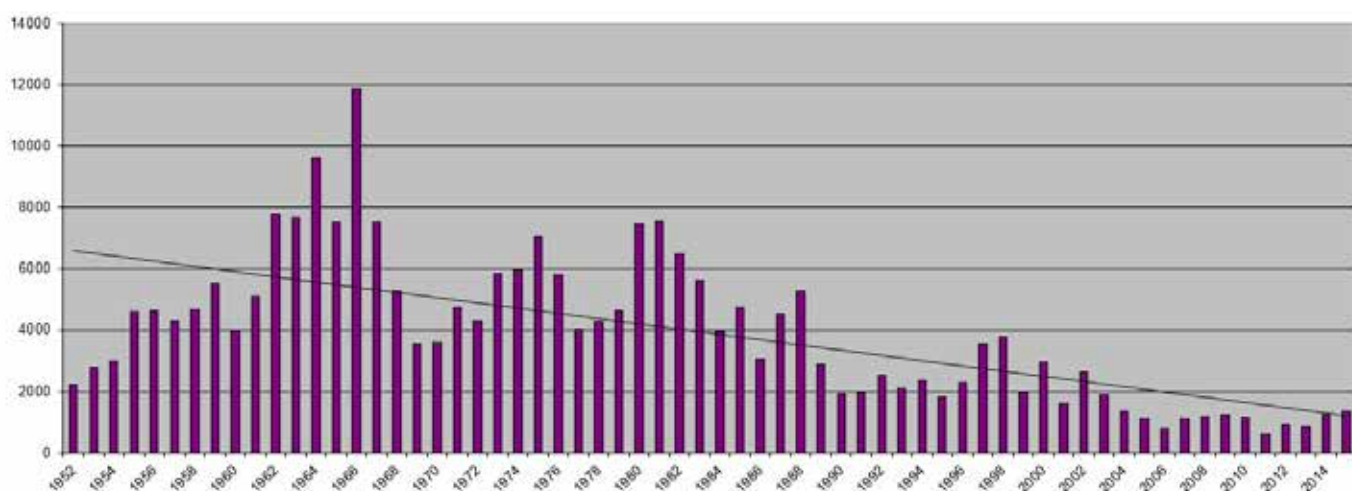
Table 2 - Sea trout caught over the last 10 years

Year	Rods	Nets	Total	% C&R	10 year average
2006	708	96	804	28%	2163
2007	1022	100	1122	43%	1919
2008	961	217	1178	52%	1658
2009	1104	136	1240	49%	1588
2010	850	303	1153	44%	1408
2011	515	94	609	46%	1310
2012	782	163	945	55%	1142
2013	671	170	841	62%	1038
2014	1119	132	1251	87%	1026
2015	1063	283	1346	80%	1044

Salmon and grilse catches 1952 - 2015



Sea trout catches 1952 - 2015



Catches throughout the River

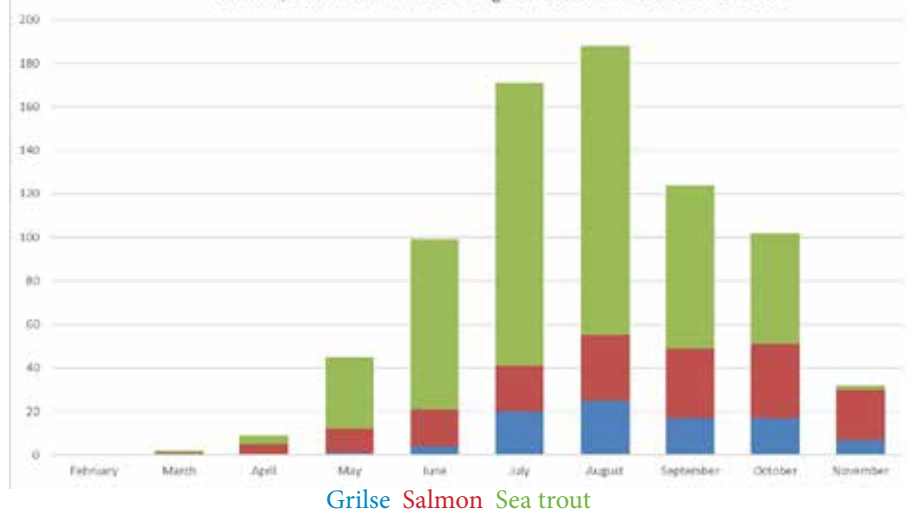
Lower beats - Burgh, DGAA, Portrack, Cowhill, Rosehill, West Cluden Mill and West Cluden Farm.

Salmon - 202
Grilse - 105
Sea trout - 528

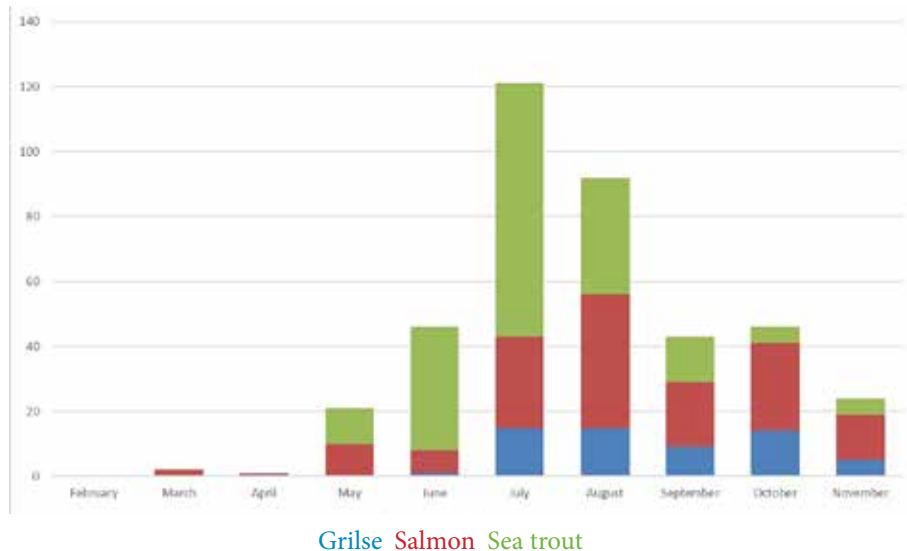
Prime months:
Salmon - August, September, October
Grilse - July, August, September
Sea trout - July, August

Catch and release:
Salmon - 60%
Grilse - 70%
Sea trout - 64%

Salmon, grilse and sea trout for Lower Nith beats and Cairn 2015



Salmon, grilse and sea trout for Middle Nith beats 2015



Middle beats - Barjarg, Bardennoch, Blackwood, Camling, Carsemains, Closeburn, Dalswinton, Ellisland and Friars Carse.

Salmon - 120
Grilse - 45
Sea trout - 166

Prime months:
Salmon - July, August
Grilse - July, August, October
Sea trout - July

Catch and release:
Salmon - 80%
Grilse - 73%
Sea trout - 86%

Salmon, grilse and sea trout for Lower Nith beats and Cairn 2015



Upper beats - Buccleuch, UNAA, Ryehill and Old Mains.

Catches:
Salmon - 184
Grilse - 46
Sea trout - 369

Prime months:
Salmon - July, August, September
Grilse - August, September
Sea trout - June, July, August

Catch and release:
Salmon - 55%
Grilse - 37%
Sea trout - 100%

Stock Assessment

Juvenile salmonid surveys 2015

One of the most important tasks that the Trust does on an annual basis is the monitoring of many different sites throughout the catchment. We are monitoring to see if fish are present and if so, at what densities and diversity of species. The importance of this work cannot be overestimated. The results of this work can indicate an issue such as pollution or a blockage precluding fish from accessing spawning habitat upstream. Fisheries managers rely on the results of monitoring to assist them in making future management decisions.

We have selected 10 sites throughout the catchment, out of the 100+ we normally survey. These sites are located on the main stem River Nith and its tributaries. The ten sites are sampled every year and it is anticipated that over time, long term trends will be established. The percentage increase or decrease on the previous year is shown in brackets to the right of the number of fish found.



Table 1. Density of juvenile salmon per 100m²

Site	Watercourse - Location	Salmon fry		Salmon parr	
		2014	2015	2014	2015
1	Nith - Nith Lodge	9	65 (+622%)	16	8 (-50%)
2	Nith - Boig Road Bridge	6	17 (+183%)	21	7 (-67%)
3	Nith - Guildhall Bridge	30	45 (+50%)	12	4 (-67%)
4	Nith - Auldgirth New bridge	3	8 (+167%)	1	8 (+700%)
5	Nith - Martington Railway	12	9 (-25%)	0	0
6	Crawick - Spango bridge	17	38 (+124%)	5	2 (-60%)
7	Mennock - Glenim	5	69 (+1280%)	9	1 (-89%)
8	Scaur - Glenwhargen	44	9 (-80%)	24	7 (-71%)
9	Cample - Kirkbog Farm	64	25 (-61%)	5	0 (-100%)
10	Dalwhat Water - Bailwood	0	0	4	0 (-100%)
	Average	19.00	28.50 (+50%)	9.7	3.7 (-62%)

Table 2. Density of juvenile trout per 100m²

Site	Watercourse - Location	Trout fry		Trout parr	
		2014	2015	2014	2015
1	Nith - Nith Lodge	38	14 (-63%)	3	4 (+33%)
2	Nith - Boig Road Bridge	0	0	0	0
3	Nith - Guildhall Bridge	0	2	0	2
4	Nith - Auldgirth New bridge	0	0	3	0 (-100%)
5	Nith - Martington Railway	0	0	0	0
6	Crawick - Spango bridge	1	1	0	0
7	Mennock - Glenim	8	38 (+375%)	6	4
8	Scaur - Glenwhargen	32	2 (-94%)	8	0 (-100%)
9	Cample - Kirkbog Farm	4	6 (+50%)	0	0
10	Dalwhat Water - Bailwood	1	6 (+500%)	2	5 (+150%)
	Average	8.4	6.9 (-18%)	1.9	1.5 (-21%)

Excellent	Good	Moderate	Poor	Very Poor	Absent
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As can be seen from the tables above, there is a great deal of fluctuation between rivers, years and age classes of fish. Overall, there has been an increase in the density of salmon fry found during 2015's surveys compared to 2014. In fact, the only rivers that show a decrease in salmon fry densities are the Scaur and Cample Waters. This could be as a result of the high temperature and low water conditions that were experienced when the surveys were conducted in 2014, corralling the fish into a smaller area and making it look like there were higher densities than there actually were. This could also explain the decrease in parr as it is not unusual for parr to drop back out of small side burns and into larger bodies of water during periods of low water conditions. There certainly was far more water this year for them to spread out in. This decrease can also be seen in trout fry and parr, albeit to a lesser degree. Overall, the changes in juvenile density are not overly concerning and are within natural fluctuations experienced throughout the catchment. It will only be one year of data available that we will be able to see trends emerging.

Sea trout experience

During the summer of 2015 Nith District Salmon Fishery Board assisted by the Trust ran the River Nith Sea Trout Experience. This was a free event intended to provide the opportunity for anglers to have a "try before you buy" experience on the River Nith. The event gained a significant interest from the media and was televised. The event raised the profile of the sea trout fishery, provided free fishing for local and visiting anglers and was deemed by many to be a complete success, so much so that the event will be repeated during 2016. Keep an eye on our web site for details www.river-nith.com.



Week 3 of the sea trout experience
Graeme Lightbody 3lb sea trout on the Rosehill beat

Nith Grayling Day



Young angler, Finlay Thomson taking part in the Nith Grayling Day

The Trust recently ran a successful grayling day on the River Nith. Beats were kindly donated by proprietors, free of charge to the Trust in order that anglers could get the opportunity to try new stretches of water that, in some cases, have never been open for grayling fishing previously. The anglers gave a donation to the Trust for the privilege of fishing and provided accurate information on grayling populations present in the beats that were fished. Grayling are a good indicator species of the health of the river and the aquatic environment in general. Despite challenging river conditions, anglers were not disappointed by catches, both quality and quantity of grayling were impressive. In total, 18 anglers caught 50 grayling ranging from 10 - 48cm long.

Invasive Species and Bio-security

Tackling the New Abbey Burn

Since 2010, the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust has been funded by SEPA, the Landfill Fund and various private owners along watercourses within the Nith catchment to tackle the problem of Invasive Non-native Plant Species. These are plants which have been introduced into Britain and have become established to the point that they have taken over and are now causing harm to our native biodiversity by shading out our native plant species and even in some cases, posing a public health risk. One commonality amongst most of these invasive plants, is that they are extremely difficult to get rid of and can require many years of persistent treatment to prevent them from re-colonising again.

Over the last five years the Trust and Board have concentrated their efforts on Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Skunk cabbage along the main stem on the River Nith and its tributaries. This has involved thousands of hours of labour, many litres of glyphosate and we have treated a total of 16569m² of Japanese knotweed, 8702m² of Giant hogweed, 45252m² of Himalayan balsam and 373m² of Skunk cabbage. In order to have minimal negative impact on environment, the Trust chose to inject Glyphosate into the stems of the plant, preventing the chemical from coming into contact with other native fauna and flora. This has proven to be very effective and there is normally a 90% decrease in the number of Japanese knotweed stems in an area after the first treatment. Thereafter, careful monitoring and re-treating of any newly emerging knotweed stems has to be carried out on an annual basis for 7 - 10 years. On the main stem Nith and its tributaries, we are now at the stage where all known stands of knotweed have received an initial treatment and are now, only needing monitored and re-treated on an annual basis.



From surveys carried out by the Board and Trust, it became apparent that the New Abbey Burn/Pow was a hot bed for Japanese knotweed and, its cousin, Giant knotweed. As its name suggests, Giant knotweed grows far taller than Japanese knotweed and its leaves can be 20-40cm long. It was estimated that 14600m² of Japanese knotweed present. This is 80% of the total amount treated throughout the rest of the River Nith catchment. So we applied for funding from SEPA and local land owners, and started treatment during 2015. This has been very successful with the majority of the knotweed having its initial treatment. We are in the process of applying for further funding this year and will continue tackling knotweed in the New Abbey area and along coastal burns between Dumfries and Sandyhills.



Japanese knotweed at Nunholm near Dumfries - Before treatment in 2012 and after treatment in 2015

Whilst the method of treatment for Japanese knotweed using stem injection is laborious and time consuming, from the before and after photographs above it can clearly be seen that the method is effective. Retreatment requires very little effort to ensure effective treatment. This area is a high public amenity with well used foot path utilised by dog walkers. Alternative non-target specific methods of treatment simply would not be appropriate for location such as this.

American Signal Crayfish Update

American signal crayfish known to be present in a specific part of the Nith catchment, have been monitored on an annual basis. Our monitoring programme indicates that the spread of this non-native species has not been as rapid as we had initially feared. From their initial point of discovery, they have been found to have spread for a few hundred metres downstream in a relatively fast flowing burn. We had concerns about the extreme flood episodes which we have been experiencing over recent winters, exacerbating the downstream spread, thankfully this has not occurred. We continue to monitor the issue.



Least WANTED

Signal crayfish
Pacifastacus leniusculus

Native to: North America

Habitat: Freshwater

Introduced: For food in the 1970's. Quickly escaped and spread throughout UK. Transferred intentionally to improve fisheries, eat dead fish and as fishing bait.

Ecology: Very hardy animal. Can live out of water for periods of time. Mate in autumn and females carry eggs under tail over winter. Eggs hatch in spring and young released in May-June.

Impacts: Predates on native invertebrates, fish and fish eggs – will even eat aquatic vegetation. Out compete native species and spread "crayfish plague" killing our native crayfish. Cause damage to banks through burrowing.






Fishing for the Future project

What is Fishing for the Future about?

The Fishing for the Future project was a multi-faceted education programme, combining one-off awareness raising events and delivering a series of seven sessions to young people throughout the Nithsdale area. The sessions were aimed at young people between 5 and 25 and enabled them to gain an understanding of different aquatic environments, from the river to the sea, and some of the threats experienced by the salmon as they develop from egg to adult. The sessions included electrofishing demonstrations, fish anatomy, handling live fish, sampling for aquatic bugs and beasties, learning how to fish and exploring the coast. These activities raise awareness of local fisheries, demonstrating the connectivity between the freshwater and marine environments and how sustainable management is important to the rural economy and local communities.

What inspired or influenced the project at the beginning?

As a sport, fishing is generally under-represented by young people and this is being felt by local angling associations and fisheries as the number of young people joining these groups is declining year on year. The aim of the project was to re-engage young people by providing them with knowledge and respect for the aquatic environment and providing them with the skills to be able to develop an interest.

How is the project set up, funded and managed?

The Fishing for the Future project was set up by the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust and a project officer was taken on to assist in the delivery the sessions. Local businesses and fisheries donated time and venues for the sessions including the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board, Borderlines, Solway Firth Partnership, Douglas Hall Fishery, Dalswinton Estate, Blackwood Estate, Upper Nithsdale Angling Association, Friars Carse Fishery, Invicta Trout Farm and Caerlaverock Estate. The project was funded by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund 2012-13 programme and the Holywood Trust.

What are the project's greatest achievements?

A total of 187 sessions were delivered to approximately 968 individuals. Of these individuals, 608 were under 15 years old, 200 were between 15 and 25 years old and there were 160 participants over 25 years of age.

How has the project impacted on local communities and what opportunities are afforded for the future?

The Fishing for the Future project was positively received by all who participated. From speaking to participants, teachers and parents, we know that the project has increased the awareness of young people to the ecology of the aquatic environment, developing their appreciation and respect for the countryside and its wildlife, specifically fish. Local angling communities have also benefited from a small increase in the number of young people purchasing angling tickets.

The Nith Catchment Fishery Trust will continue to deliver these structured sessions to groups throughout Nithsdale and will be looking at ways to enable those participants who are interested in developing their interest in angling or fisheries, a pathway to achieving that. We are looking to set up a Youth Angling Club and train coaches to mentor and instruct the members, taking them out to different venues on a monthly basis. It is felt that this step is vital to enable the children that develop an interest during our school sessions, to be able to pursue this sport in a safe environment.

We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for the time, equipment, fishing or fish that have been contributed freely to help make this project a success: Nith District Salmon Fishery Board for assisting in the delivery of the project, Nic Coombey from Solway Firth Partnership for bringing along fascinating coastal artefacts as part of their "Making the Most of The Coast " project, Dalswinton Estate for the use of Drumloch Fishery, Drumlanrig Estate for the use of Slatehouse Loch, Upper Nithsdale Angling Association for allowing Kelloholm Primary to fish on their water, Invicta Trout Fish Farm for supplying rainbow trout for the dissection sessions, Robbie Cowan from Caerlaverock Estate for giving demonstrations of Haaf netting and Douglas Hall Fisheries for demonstrating the method of stake netting.

Photos clockwise from top left: St Teresa's identifying aquatic invertebrates, This project was part financed by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund 2012-13 programme and the Holywood Trust looking for bugs with Sanquhar Primary, dissecting a rainbow trout with Wallace Hall Academy, proud new angler with a small sea trout, Heathhall Primary seeing a salmon caught in the stake net, Haaf netting demonstration, rainbow trout caught by pupil from Sanquhar Academy, electrofishing demonstration with Kirkbean Primary.





Session 1 - Introduction to salmon



Session 2 - Freshwater environment



Session 3 - Marine environment



Session 4 - River survey



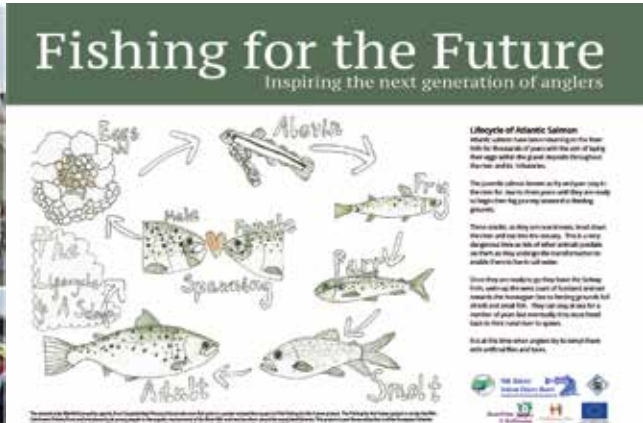
Session 6 - Primary Schools fishing day



Session 6 - Secondary schools fishing day



Session 7 - Explore the coast



Winning poster as a sign in Dock Park

Education and Outreach

The Nith Catchment Fishery Trust attended and ran a number of events throughout 2015 to raise awareness of the aquatic environment and demonstrate the work of the Trust. Below is a summary of some of the events, meetings, conferences and training courses attended by Trust staff and volunteers during 2015:

Events attended

Burgh River Opening Ceremony
Friars Carse Grayling Competition
D&G Environment Day
Galloway Country Fair
Fintastic Tails electrofishing day
QI Invertebrate ID day
QI Food and Farming Days
Worlds Ocean Day
Nith Sea Trout Experience Opening
Summerhill Open Day
Autumn Watch x 1
Ladies Day on Blackwood x 1



Meetings and conferences attended

NCFT Directors meetings x 4
NCFT Annual General Meeting
Fisheries Local Action Group meetings x 3
Burgh Anglers AGM
NDSFB Board meetings x 4
NDSFB Annual Public Meeting
D&G Council Outdoor Learning meeting x 1
RAFTS/ASFB AGM
D&G Local Invasive Non-native Species meetings x 2
Funding meetings x 4
RAFTS Regional meetings x 1
Friars Carse fishing meeting
2nd International Sea Trout Symposium
ITV Border news report
Holywood Trust funding meeting
SFCC Biologist's meeting
RAFTS/ASFB conference
IBIS conference
ECAF meeting
Marine Scotland Science meeting



Training completed

PA1/PA6AW Pesticide courses x 2
CSCS exam
Induction training x 6
Outdoor First Aid Training
Solway Bailiffs Training x 2
Team Leader Electrofishing Refresher course
Invertebrate identification course

Education sessions and Presentations given

High school field trips and sessions x 36
Primary school field trips and sessions x 54
Other educational field sessions x 4
Forth Fishery Trust habitat and river diversion day
YPSS Pond Dipping Days
Children's Fishing Day x 1
Hosted Angling Days at Dock Park x 2
Presentation at RAFTS conference
Presentation to Cumnock Rotary



Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2015
for
Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Farries, Kirk and McVean
Chartered Accountants
Dumfries Enterprise Park
Heathhall
Dumfries
DUMFRIESSHIRE
DG1 3SJ

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31st December 2015

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Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31st December 2015**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2015. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

SC366067 (Scotland)

Registered Charity number

SC040908

Registered office

c/o Walker & Sharpe
37 George Street
Dumfries
DG1 1EB

Trustees

T C Florey
J Henderson
P Hutchison
B L Lord
J McKie - resigned 14.9.15
E P K Weatherall
R Schiller
A S Wood
D Kempsall

Company Secretary

Miss D V Parke

Independent examiner

Farries, Kirk and McVean
Chartered Accountants
Dumfries Enterprise Park
Heathhall
Dumfries
DUMFRIESSHIRE
DG1 3SJ

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, its memorandum and articles of association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

The scheme was incorporated on 24th September, 2009, and has been registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as a charity.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The governing document states that the number of trustees shall not be more than ten. There is no minimum number.

All normal trustees must be members of the charitable company but may not be an employee of the company. Trustees may serve a maximum term of office of six years and are not eligible for re-election thereafter until a further year has elapsed. One third of the elected trustees must retire each year by rotation.

Notwithstanding the above provisions, the trustees may at any time appoint any member as a trustee and may co-opt any non-member to be a trustee either on the basis that he or she has been nominated by a body with which the company has close contact in the the course of its activities or on the basis that he or she has specialist experience or skills that could be of assistance to the trustees. Such co-opted trustees are limited to a maximum of two at any one time and must retire annually at each annual general meeting, though they are eligible for immediate reappointment.

Under 44c of the Articles of Association, the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board may nominate two persons to serve as trustees. These trustees are not required to retire from office.

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31st December 2015**

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the Memorandum of Association of the company, the company has the following objects:

To advance for public benefit environmental protection and improvement by conserving and enhancing all species of freshwater fish and their environs primarily but not limited to the inland and coastal waters of the River Nith catchment and the jurisdictional area of the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board.

To advance the education of the public and any association, company, local authority, administrative or governmental agency or public body or representative body in:-

- (1) The understanding of aquatic ecosystems, including their fauna, flora and economic activity, and river catchment management.
- (2) The need for, and benefits of, protection, conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of aquatic environments.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

The Invasive Non-native Species project continued in 2015 and we received £8,000 funding from SEPA (via RAFTS), £1,062 from Irvine Homes & Homes Scotland, £4,976 from Shambellie Estate and £1,420 from the Dumfries Common Good Fund. All work was completed and funding applications are in place to continue into 2016.

The two year Fishing for the Future project was completed in 2015 with final payments made by D&G Council on behalf of the EU Axis 4 funding. Over 900 participants took part over two years. We currently have funding applications in to continue this project into 2016. All education work carried out by the Trust now comes under this heading.

Other work has included:

- Electrofishing surveying throughout catchment to assess juvenile salmonid populations.
- Surveying of American Signal Crayfish.
- Awareness raising at local events such as the Galloway Country Fair, D&G Environment Day and Allanton World Peace Festival.
- Youth angling sessions for local schools.
- Scale reading and population analysis.
- Barrier assessment and easement.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The charitable company has established a reasonable level of reserves to allow for the continuation of the charitable activities and the trustees consider the financial position of the charity to be satisfactory.

Principal funding sources

The principal sources of funding are from the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board, European Fisheries Fund, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Holywood Trust and the Landfill Fund. In addition was received via various donations, both corporate and individual.

Investment policy and objectives

Under the Memorandum of association, the Trustees are not limited in the types of investment they may make. However, to date the Trustees have made no investments other than cash deposits.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 9th March 2016 and signed on its behalf by:

J Henderson - Trustee

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Nith Catchment Fishery Trust**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2015 set out on pages four to eight.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity's trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1)(a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under Section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rodney Palmer, BA, CA
Farries, Kirk and McVean
Chartered Accountants
Dumfries Enterprise Park
Heathhall
Dumfries
DUMFRIESSHIRE
DG1 3SJ

9th March 2016

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the Year Ended 31st December 2015

		2015 Unrestricted fund £	2014 Total funds £
	Notes		
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Incoming resources from generated funds			
Voluntary income		32,254	34,147
Activities for generating funds	2	-	64
Incoming resources from charitable activities			
Fishery Management		22,744	11,085
Invasive Non-Native Species Project		28,105	23,139
Fishing for the Future		42,694	41,882
Total incoming resources		<hr/> 125,797	<hr/> 110,317
 RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities			
Fishery Management		70,718	62,445
Habitat Works		-	600
Invasive Non-Native Species Project		6,043	15,597
Fishing for the Future		34,466	29,665
Governance costs		1,132	1,346
Total resources expended		<hr/> 112,359	<hr/> 109,653
 NET INCOMING RESOURCES		<hr/> 13,438	<hr/> 664
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward		20,428	19,764
 TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<hr/> <hr/> 33,866	<hr/> <hr/> 20,428

The notes form part of these financial statements

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Balance Sheet
At 31st December 2015

			2015 Unrestricted fund £	2014 Total funds £
	Notes	£		
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	6		10,395	5,640
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	7		9,595	618
Cash at bank and in hand			14,953	22,028
			<hr/>	<hr/>
			24,548	22,646
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due within one year	8		(1,077)	(7,858)
			<hr/>	<hr/>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			23,471	14,788
			<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			33,866	20,428
			<hr/>	<hr/>
NET ASSETS			33,866	20,428
			<hr/>	<hr/>
FUNDS	9			
Unrestricted funds			33,866	20,428
			<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS			33,866	20,428
			<hr/>	<hr/>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st December 2015.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2015 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015).

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 9th March 2016 and were signed on its behalf by:

J Henderson -Trustee

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2015

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008), the Companies Act 2006 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Plant and machinery	- 15% on reducing balance
Motor vehicles	- 25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	- 25% on reducing balance

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS

	2015	2014
	£	£
Fundraising events	-	64
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3. NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES

Net resources are stated after charging/(crediting):

	2015	2014
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	3,145	1,502
Deficit on disposal of fixed asset	850	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2015 nor for the year ended 31st December 2014.

Trustees' expenses

	2015	2014
	£	£
Trustees' expenses	127	242
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The trustee expenses in both the current and comparative years relate to the costs of attendance at the annual RAFTS Conference and associated subsistence for two trustees, Mr P Weatherall and Mr J Henderson.

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2015

5. STAFF COSTS

	2015	2014
	£	£
Wages and salaries	<u>52,445</u>	<u>58,174</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2015	2014
Biologist	1	1
Project officer	-	1
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

No member of staff earned in excess of £60,000 in the year under review.

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1st January 2015	5,077	10,925	1,596	17,598
Additions	-	10,500	-	10,500
Disposals	-	(10,925)	-	(10,925)
	<u>5,077</u>	<u>10,500</u>	<u>1,596</u>	<u>17,173</u>
At 31st December 2015	<u>5,077</u>	<u>10,500</u>	<u>1,596</u>	<u>17,173</u>
DEPRECIATION				
At 1st January 2015	2,687	8,325	946	11,958
Charge for year	360	2,625	160	3,145
Eliminated on disposal	-	(8,325)	-	(8,325)
	<u>3,047</u>	<u>2,625</u>	<u>1,106</u>	<u>6,778</u>
At 31st December 2015	<u>3,047</u>	<u>2,625</u>	<u>1,106</u>	<u>6,778</u>
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31st December 2015	<u>2,030</u>	<u>7,875</u>	<u>490</u>	<u>10,395</u>
At 31st December 2014	<u>2,390</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>650</u>	<u>5,640</u>

7. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2015	2014
	£	£
Trade debtors	9,250	250
Other debtors	345	368
	<u>9,595</u>	<u>618</u>

8. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2015	2014
	£	£
Trade creditors	177	5,459
Taxation and social security	-	1,499
Other creditors	900	900
	<u>1,077</u>	<u>7,858</u>

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2015

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.15 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.15 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	20,428	13,438	33,866
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>20,428</u>	<u>13,438</u>	<u>33,866</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	125,797	(112,359)	13,438
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>125,797</u>	<u>(112,359)</u>	<u>13,438</u>

10. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The charitable company is related to the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board (NDSFB) which is a major funder and has the right to nominate two person to serve as trustees at any given time.

During the year under review NDSFB provided £51,583 of funding to the charitable company (2014 - £43,257).

During the year NDSFB also provided a temporary loan of £20,000 to assist with cash flow. This sum was repaid in full within the same financial year. No interest charge was made. A similar loan of £10,000 was provided and fully repaid without interest in the comparative financial year.