

THE RIVER NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

MANAGEMENT REPORT AND REVIEW

1st December 2015 - 30th November 2016



"Caught & released"

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AGENDA

for the

ANNUAL QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS MEETING

for year

01.12.15 - 30.11.16

1. Minutes of Annual General Proprietors Meeting 24.03.15
2. Annual Report
3. Annual Accounts
4. Management Plans for The Forthcoming Year and The Near Future
5. AOCB

NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL PROPRIETORS MEETING
HELD AT FRIARS CARSE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL,
AULDGIRTH, DUMFRIES

on

15 March 2016 at 10.00 am

PRESENT

Percy Weatherall – Chairman
Erin Hunter – Buccleuch Estates Limited
Wally Wright – Netting Representative
Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock
David Kempself – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association
Thomas Florey – Savills
Brian Fox – P.O.F.R.
Jim Gregory
Danny Marshall
Peter Hutchison

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Jeff Walters
Raymond Mundell

IN ATTENDANCE

Roderick Styles – Clerk
James Henderson – Fishery Director (FD)
Deborah Parke – Nith Catchment Fishery Trust (FB)
David McMichael – Senior Water Bailiff

APOLOGIES

Derek Bathgate
Nick Brown
Nick Wright
Richard Gladwin

The Chairman convened the meeting and welcomed everybody in attendance.

The Chairman referred to the Agenda. The Clerk pointed out that item one of the Agenda should have stated that the Minutes were of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors but dated 24 March 2015.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman asked for comments on these Minutes. There were none, there being unanimous approval.

2. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report and asked for comments thereon. There were none thus deeming the Annual Report to have unanimous approval of those attending.

3. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Clerk referred to the Accounts and his notes thereon in the draft Annual Report, advising that he did not intend to comment on the Accounts unless there were specific questions.

The Clerk advised on the change of vehicle during the course of the previous financial year because of failure of the previous vehicle. The Clerk reported that the vehicle had been traded in with an engine management problem, account of which had been taken during negotiations on price, with agreement having been reached with Lloyds Isuzu to pay £500 to the bill incurred by them for repair of the previous vehicle to over £1,000.

The Accounts were approved by all concerned.

4. MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR AND THE NEAR FUTURE – (reference the draft annual report and Fishery Management Plan)

FD reported that enforcement may be a problem. The Nith had been categorised as a Category 3 River in the recent Government Categorisation of Rivers which meant 100% catch and release. FD expected that there would be problems with regard to people not returning fish. FD would have to enforce the law.

Engineering Plans – large scale overhead pylons were coming through the region.

A large bore gas pipeline was expected to run through the region. Wind farms were being constructed throughout the region. Hydro-electric schemes had decreased substantially due to the Government's decision to cut back on the tariff.

Coal mining had decreased with Hargreaves being the only operation extracting coal and that with a view to reconditioning the coal to make it more appealing at market. Work had started on the remaining sites to restore them.

A pump hydro storage scheme was being proposed for Glenmuckloch OCCS. This would be challenging for the Fishery. Feed would intake from the Nith for the initial purging of the system.

FD reported on a large amount of time being spent on Wild Fisheries Reform with his involvement at various meetings at Government level.

FB has done much work to get increase in number of predator birds to be scared off the river.

FB was attending outreach projects with children for educational purposes.

The Chairman reported on the AGM of Nith Catchment Fishery Trust held the previous evening. There had been a good report from FB. A lot of electrofishing work had been undertaken. Non-native species of vegetation were being dealt with. Nine hundred school children had been involved in the Fishing for the Future project to encourage them to become interested in the river and possibly to become anglers.

Danny Marshall asked what would happen if someone was caught in possession of a dead salmon. FD reported that he would have to continue to police the river system under the new law and rules that would apply in relation to 100% catch and release. It would become a criminal offence that he would have to report the taking of a dead fish on that basis to the Police.

Thomas Florey asked about the new gas pipeline and if there was a method statement had been issued yet. FD replied that he had been asked to look at a section of work from Cluden onwards to Lochfoot and the Consultant involved had no plans when last discussions had taken place. When the previous pipeline had been run through the system what had been expected to be an eight hour job took eleven days because rock was discovered half way through the river system.

The Nith Board has baseline data for the rivers Nith and Cairn.

David Kempsell asked that DGAA be kept informed of any pipeline crossing work. FD replied that he had asked the contractors to keep Angling Clubs informed directly and FD would do the same for DGAA.

FD asked that Danny Marshall get his members to advise if there were any problems with regard to the Euchar Water as it was projected that there would be four to five commercial projects in that area in the near future.

David Kempsell invited FB to bring the Fishing for the Future project back to the Drum Fishery for which he was thanked.

5. A.O.C.B.

FD reported that the Board would have to produce a Conservation Plan given the Category 3 Status of the river. All rivers have been tasked with producing a Conservation Plan. Scottish Government is considering what to do with sea trout in 2017.

Scottish Government had produced a Conservation Plan template that it expects should be followed. FD suggested that Proprietors should get involved and that a sub-committee should be formed to deal with the production of Conservation Plan. The Board should be involved to represent multiple interests and different types of fishing water from private owners through to commercial interests. Peter Landale had shown interest for the formation of a sub-committee with strong views in conservation.

Peter Hutchison stated that netting representation was essential. A Small sub-committee will be formed and will include Board members to represent angling associations such as Danny Marshall and David Kempsell. Friars Carse would provide representation as a commercial organisation. Peter Landale would like to represent private landowners and Peter Hutchison and Robbie Cowan will represent nets.

FB reported that the Conservation Plan Template had been issued by Scottish Government the previous Tuesday with a deadline for response by end March. The draft had caused so much controversy that it had gone back to Scottish Government for them to reconsider it.

The meeting thereafter closed.

Chairman's Foreword

For the river Nith, its Board and its Trust 2016 was a year of frustration, distraction and uncertainty.

The Scottish Government introduced new conservation measures for salmon in 2016 and assigned each river in Scotland a grade. The Nith was categorised as grade 3 which dictated that, due to low numbers, no salmon could be killed. Our stake net, which operates within our seaward jurisdiction, was banned from taking salmon for 3 years.



The 100% catch-and-release regulation for all salmon caught by rod and haaf net had, unsurprisingly, a significant impact on the fishing effort on our river. Fishermen stayed away, visiting angler numbers fell sharply and the consequent economic effects, all negative, were felt by many.

During 2016, the Scottish Government also progressed its Wild Fisheries Reform. The main aim of this reform was to dismantle the 41 Salmon Fishery Boards in Scotland and to create, in their stead, about 15 Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs).

In anticipation of this your Board held meetings with the Annan Board at which the possibility for a Nith/Annan FMO was explored. These meetings were cordial and constructive but both parties were rather confused as to what benefit might be accrue to the salmon and sea trout of our two rivers after a "merger".

At time of writing it would appear that Wild Fisheries Reform, mainly as a result of budgetary constraints, is a disarray and the creation of FMOs is on hold. Your Board and Trust are, therefore, keeping calm and carrying on.

In late 2016 we were informed that the Scottish Government had categorised the Nith as Grade 3 again for the 2017 season. Your Board appealed this decision, the appeal was successful and, as a result, the Nith has been promoted to Grade 2 for 2017. This means that, while we must use our best efforts to conserve stocks, some salmon may legally be killed. At a recent meeting of the Board it was agreed that each angler and netter should restrict him/herself to killing 2 fish maximum during the current season.

Salmon and sea trout catches on the Nith have been disappointing in recent years. While pressures on the species within the catchment remain fairly constant there is a growing feeling that fewer and fewer fish, for one reason or another, are surviving their passage at sea. Too few fish are returning to the Nith and to Scotland in general.

What we can and will do as a Board is to increase through conservation numbers of fish spawning in our redds and to ensure the river waters are as attractive as possible for young salmonids.

Recategorisation to Grade 2 will hopefully boost the fishing effort in 2017. If this coincides with a good run of fish we hope to see an improvement in the river's fortunes in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'E.P.K. Weatherall'.

E.P.K. Weatherall
Chairman

Introduction

1. Constitution and Area

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board is constituted under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003.

The Nith Board for the year comprised: -

Chairman	Percy Weatherall	
Lower Proprietors	John Kingan Robbie Cowan	North Corbelly Caerlaverock Estate
Upper Proprietors	Peter Landale Nick Brown Nick Wright Derek Bathgate/Alan Nisbet David Kempself	Dalswinton Estate Friars Carse Closeburn Castle Fishing Buccleuch Estates Limited D & G Angling Association
Lower Co-optees	Peter Hutchison Wally Wright	Netting Representative Netting Representative
Upper Co-optees	Richard Gladwin Danny Marshall Thomas Florey Jim Gregory Tom McAughtrie	Angling Representative Angling Representative Angling Representative Angling Representative Angling Representative

- Derek Bathgate retired as representative for Buccleuch Estates and the Board accepted Alan Nisbet in his place.

Its main areas of jurisdiction comprise the principal River System of the River Nith and all its tributaries including parts of the Solway Firth.

2. Invitees

In addition to the elected Chairman, lower proprietors and upper proprietors, the Nith Board has invited representatives from the Scottish Environmental Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

3. Research and Improvement

In 1991 the Nith Board, together with Nith Fishings Improvement Association (NFIA) instructed that a research report be prepared by West GFT (now GFT) in connection with the ecological and biological condition of the catchment and as a result of the preparation of that Report the Nith Board together with NFIA formed the Nith Habitat Enhancement Committee (NHEC). NHEC has been subsumed into the Nith Board as the environmental and habitat department and this important work is now conducted on behalf of the Nith Board by the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust. In addition, the Nith Board has built and operates its own hatcheries.

4. Staff

The Nith Board staff during the period comprised Fishery Director Jim Henderson and Senior Bailiff David McMichael. During the summer the Nith Board Bailiff team was supported by the addition of Auxiliary Water Bailiffs who have worked enthusiastically during their time with permanent staff. The Nith Board has committed to training these volunteers to the same standard as the permanent staff and equips them with all that is necessary for them to fulfil their tasks. Throughout the busy summer months, the Water Bailiff team is also supported by the seasonal staff employed by the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust. A reciprocal arrangement exists so that the Trust gets assistance from Nith Board staff in dealing with Trust business.

The Fishery Director is qualified in the diploma of Institute of Fisheries Management and Management and holds an honours degree in Environmental studies. The Water Bailiff staff are suitably qualified in fisheries management. Individual members of staff are qualified in the use of Chainsaws, electrofishing equipment and other associated vocational qualifications. They undertake updated training courses as required on a regular basis.

5. Objectives

The Nith Board is constituted under the Salmon Fisheries Legislation commencing in the 1860s as subsequently amended and presently stated in the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 as amended. The Nith Board is empowered under fisheries legislation to do such Acts as it considers expedient for the protection, enhancement and conservation of stocks of salmon and sea trout and the general protection and enhancement of the fishery itself.

The Nith Board's principal objectives are therefore to preserve, protect and enhance stocks of migratory salmonids in the Nith catchment and to preserve, protect and enhance the fishery.

The Nith Board's principal objectives as set out above have been significantly widened as a result of the Water Framework Directive, also as a consequence of initiatives and consultations organised by the Scottish Government and in respect of initiatives relating to integrated Catchment management. The Fisheries Director attends regular meetings convened by SEPA concerning the development of the Nith Catchment Management Plan. It is important that the Nith Board, in responding to this wider remit, should never lose sight of its basic principle objectives but on the other hand should seek to promote these through exercise of its anticipated rights and obligations as a "Competent Authority" under E.C. Directives.

6. How the Nith Board Works

The Nith Board is constituted by voluntary non-remunerated members and meets at least four times a year. It reports to proprietors at the Annual Proprietors Meeting once a year at which the proprietors meet for the purposes of considering the report and audited Accounts.

Day to day responsibility for administration of the Nith Board rests with the Clerk who reports to the Chairman and liaises with the Fishery Director on a regular basis.

The Fishery Director and Bailiffs are responsible for the protection and enhancement of the stocks of fish and the measures undertaken include anti-poaching enforcement measures, catchment patrol, sea patrol, pollution observation, conducting fishery research, providing advice on best practices in respect of civil engineering works that might impact upon the river systems and other general responsibilities. Work particularly during the summer months can involve long nocturnal hours. The liaison with proprietors, keepers and river watchers is a priority.

The Fishery Director and Bailiffs also run two hatcheries and principal duties include collection of brood stock, maintenance of salmon and sea trout ova, rearing fry and releasing fed fry into suitable stream areas.

The Nith Board adheres to the statement of Good Governance (Appendix 2).

7. Funding

The Nith Board under its legislative powers derives its income each year from all proprietors of Salmon fishings in the district. All assessments are based on rateable value as calculated by the Local Authority Assessors for the respective beats and a sum determined by the Nith Board is levied against all salmon fishing proprietors to meet the assessment needed to fund the Nith Board. In addition, the Nith Board has received funding from Invicta Trout.

The Nith Board also received donations for its hatchery operations from Nith Estuary Haaf Netting Association. The Nith Board is enormously grateful for the support that it receives from the above and other sources.

The Nith Board also receives consultancy income from various third parties (such as civil engineering contractors and others) who require information and guidance from the Nith Board in connection with the likely environmental impact that any work to be carried out might have upon the river system and the steps that are necessary to mitigate against adverse environmental consequences for the river system under the Nith Board's jurisdiction.

8. Constitutional Evolution

The Nith Board has, for many years, comprised a chairman and representatives of lower and upper proprietors. The upper members represent angling proprietors while lower members represent coastal and estuarine proprietors involved in net fishing.

Even prior to recommendations from the Nixon report (Scottish Salmon Strategy Task Force, 1997) the Nith Board extended invitations to SNH and SEPA. Although these invitees do not have voting powers their attendance at meetings has been substantially beneficial since the inception of this arrangement in 1996.

As a consequence of the new legislation, the public have access to Nith Board meetings, the details of which are available on the Nith Board's website.

9. Fish Species Present in the Nith

The Nith is similar to many Scottish rivers and supports only a limited number of fish species. These include Atlantic salmon (*salmo salar*), trout (*salmo trutta*) as migratory Sea trout and as resident Brown trout, European eel (*anguilla anguilla*), pike (*esox lucius*), minnow (*phoxinus phoxinus*), stone loach (*neopemacheilus barbatulus*), three spined stickleback (*gasterosteus aculeatus*) and grayling (*thymallus thymallus*).

Three varieties of lamprey are also present sea lamprey (*petromyzon marinus*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and the fresh water resident brook lamprey (*lampetra planeri*). In recent years a number of local lochs have been stocked with rainbow trout (*oncorhynchus mykiss*) that have subsequently found routes into the river system. However, there is no evidence that they have established a breeding population. The trend of stocking rainbow trout into ponds is of concern to NDSFB due to the predatory nature of this species of non-indigenous fish.

10. Fishing Methods

Four methods of salmon and sea trout fishing are operated in the Nith District, fixed engine on the coast, haaf netting on the tidal river estuary, net and cobble in the River Cairn and rod and line in the rivers. The current season for haaf netting extends from 25th February to 9th September in each year with a weekly "slap time" or period of no netting activity from Friday at 6pm to the following Monday at 6am.

Most of the angling on the Nith is concentrated from Sanquhar to the river mouth. However, salmon are taken further upstream and also from a number of tributaries most notably the Cairn. The current season extends from 25th February to 30th November and angling for salmon and sea trout is not permitted on Sundays in Scotland by law.

11. Salmon and Sea Trout Populations

Both salmon and sea trout are anadromous fishes - that is to say they spawn and undergo their early lives in freshwater but experience most of their growth at sea. In Scotland, a period of sea growth is a prerequisite for the attainment of sexual maturity in hen salmon, but not for cocks, a proportion of which first contribute to the spawning act as mature parr. The dynamics of sea trout populations are more complex in that both sexes may attain sexual maturity while in fresh water. However, this tendency to early maturation is much more strongly developed in cock trout.

Rod and line fisheries for salmon are based upon the interception of sea run adults returning to spawn. The interception usually takes place in rivers of origin but a few fish, especially those entering fresh water many months before spawning, may be caught during the course of temporary excursions into non-native rivers. Exploratory behaviour of this sort is seen to a greater extent in sea trout that may also use non-native fresh and estuarine waters for feeding and over wintering purposes. However, as with salmon, the abundance and timing of spawning migration are the primary factors that determine the availability of sea trout to the fisheries.

In relatively large rivers like the Nith, the seasonal characteristics of the fisheries vary and the extent of the variation is greater for salmon than for sea trout. Generally speaking, it is believed that the earliest running salmon are derived from and home to the upper part of the river and the later running fish to the lower. There is increasing genetic evidence that the homing behaviour leads to a degree of reproductive isolation among various main groups of fish that may therefore be regarded, for management purposes, as separate self-sustaining populations. Within each population, it is generally found that the higher the sea age the earlier the seasonal date of river entry by Salmon.

12. Marine Pressures/International Impact

It has been known for many years that long-term changes take place in the numbers and seasonal availability of salmon. When such changes take place, their effects tend to be widely felt and there is increasing evidence that alterations in marine climate may lie behind them. The slower fish grow, the more vulnerable they remain. Similarly, the faster fish grow, especially in the spring, the earlier they are likely to mature and return. Because different populations of salmon appear to migrate to different parts of the North Atlantic, the effects of changes in marine climate may differ among the various groups of fish. The result for the fisherman may be a radical alteration, lasting for much of his fishing lifetime, in the numbers and seasonal distribution of the resource available to him. Growth and survival opportunities for salmon are currently poor for much of the North Atlantic. This conclusion is especially true in the North West Atlantic where many of the older sea springers complete their growth cycles.

Current insights into the likely causes of both short and long term changes in the abundance and structure of Atlantic salmon resources are largely based on the work of British, Norwegian and North American scientists as discussed at the regular meetings of the ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) Working Group on Atlantic Salmon.

In addition to changes in marine climate, the Working Group has recently drawn attention to other factors such as predation by seals and the side effects of marine fisheries for other species. So far as the Nith system is

concerned, the key requirements during the current lean period are to ensure that smolt production is not limited by lack of spawning adults. The risk of such limitation is greatest for the populations of early running salmon that currently spawn mainly in the upper catchment of the river.

13. Angling Availability

There are four angling associations on the River Nith as follows: -

Dumfries & Galloway Council (Burgh Anglers Association)
Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association
Upper Nithsdale Angling Association
New Cumnock Angling Association

The public can also easily gain access to the other beats on the river. The Nith provides more public access to angling than many other major Scottish rivers.

14. Water Quality and Riparian Habitat

Clean and well-oxygenated water is obviously of paramount importance in safe guarding fish stocks of all kinds within the Nith. The quality and quantity of water in the Nith catchment is monitored by SEPA and apart from a few isolated pollution incidents the quality of the river is considered excellent.

15. Fish Access

Access to spawning areas is of paramount importance for salmon and sea trout to complete their life cycle successfully. There are few obstructions to fish passage on the Nith and those that exist are largely natural waterfalls. The Nith Board has initiated several management options including stocking with juveniles above these difficult obstructions to try to improve smolt output. These stockings from Hatchery reared fry are monitored by means of electrofishing.

Other threats to adult access to spawning areas were recorded on a number of burns due to road bridge construction and natural blockages such as log jams over the course of the year. These have been dealt with and removed as appropriate. Discussions with road departments have resulted in securing bridge constructions that do not compromise adult access on a number of tributaries. Discussions now take place with Contractors prior to their moving onto site with full consultation with the Fishery Director. The District Salmon Fishery Board has good liaison with Dumfries & Galloway Council Roads and Bridges Department to ensure future consultation on any projects on or near to the watercourse.

16. Riparian Habitat Assessment and Management

Management of the riparian zone is an area of interest that has developed rapidly during the last decade. Pioneering work on the Tweed has illustrated the advantage of reinstating bankside vegetation and improving in-stream cover for fish. In addition, there is clear evidence that a well vegetated and maintained riparian zone offers considerable advantages in terms of shading, a source of food production and habitat for salmonids. There are also additional benefits to the watercourse such as improved bank stability and more varied habitat for other wildlife. To this end the work previously carried out by the Nith Habitat Enhancement Committee, which was formed in July 1995, continues under the guidance and control of the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust.

Habitat enhancement work is conducted throughout the Catchment. The Habitat Enhancement work is of long term benefit and the river is unlikely to see the benefit of this initiative in the short term. Annual maintenance of the Board's habitat schemes continues to be conducted with supplementary planting where required.

Table 1 – List of Habitat schemes

River	Bank length (km)	Instigation of scheme/s
Dalwhat	1.5	1997
Spango	8	1997
Upper polneul	4	1998
Marr burn	1	1998
Kello water	6	1999
Kello water	4	1999
Nith	3	2000
Pennyland	3	2000
Clauchrie Burn	1	2001
Carron	8	2002
Cairn & tribs	1	2003
Cample	4	2004
Pennyland	0.5	2005
Wanloch	5	2006
Shinnel	2	2007
Lower Polneul	2	2008
Craigdarroch	5	2009
Mennock	3	2009
Nith	2.5	2011
Nith	5.5	2012
Crawick Water	7.5	2013,2010, 1999, 2005
Total	77.5km	

17. Juvenile Salmon and Trout Populations

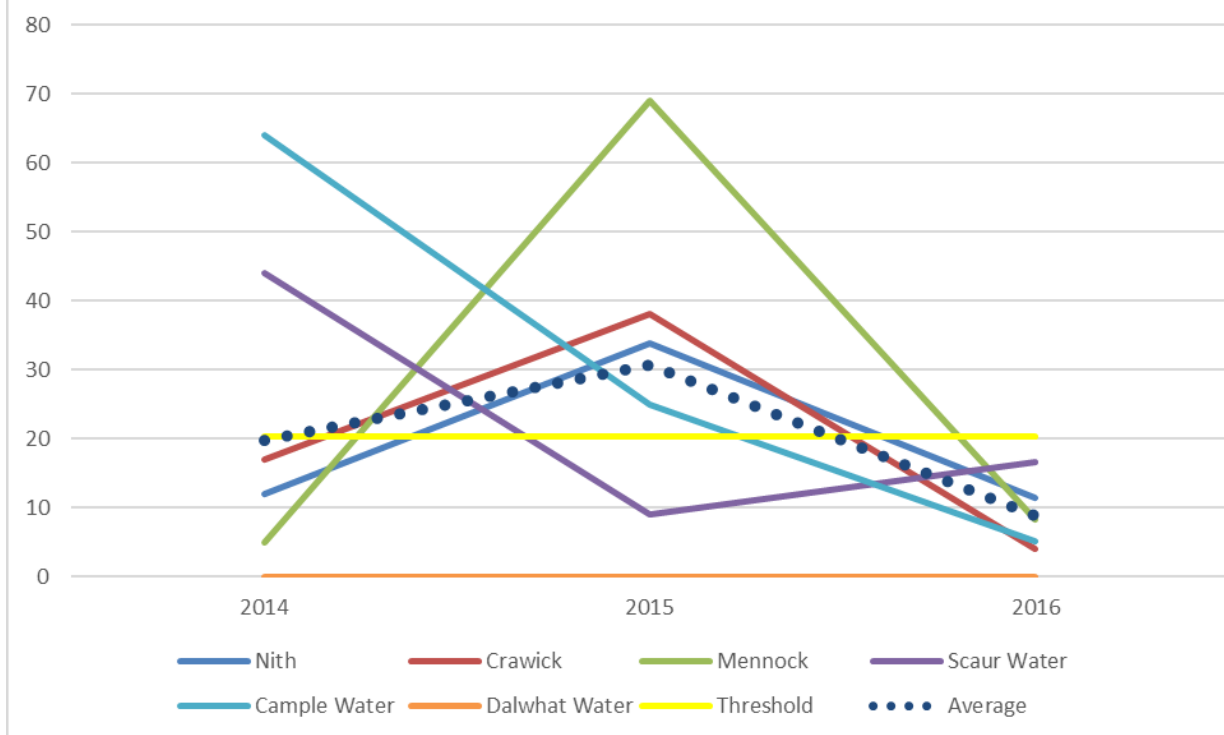
The Nith Fishings Improvement Association commissioned a report, prepared by Dr. Alistair Steven, BSC PHD of Galloway Fisheries Trust and started a programme of juvenile surveys in 1991. The aims of this initiative were to determine the distribution and density of juvenile salmon and trout within the Nith, and use this data to estimate smolt output, monitor changes in fish populations and identify weak areas of the catchment in terms of low juvenile densities. The report showed that in general juvenile salmon and trout are well distributed throughout the catchment and often present in high densities. Poorly stocked areas are also evident particularly above physical obstructions such as Shinnel Falls and Rouken Bridge on the old water of the Cairn. Ongoing survey work to assess juvenile population densities has continued on an annual basis. The District Salmon Fishery Board staff, supported by the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust Biologist, has conducted electrofishing surveys. Our Nith Board and Trust staff are qualified, equipped and capable of conducting these research surveys.

Electrofishing is conducted within the Nith catchment every year to monitor the populations of salmon and trout juveniles present in different watercourses. In 2016, over 120 sites were surveyed by fully trained staff using single run, semi-quantitative survey protocols developed by the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre. The densities of fry and parr were then classified using the SFCC national classification scheme. This classification scheme categorises the data according to five categories derived using data from over 1600 Scottish sites.

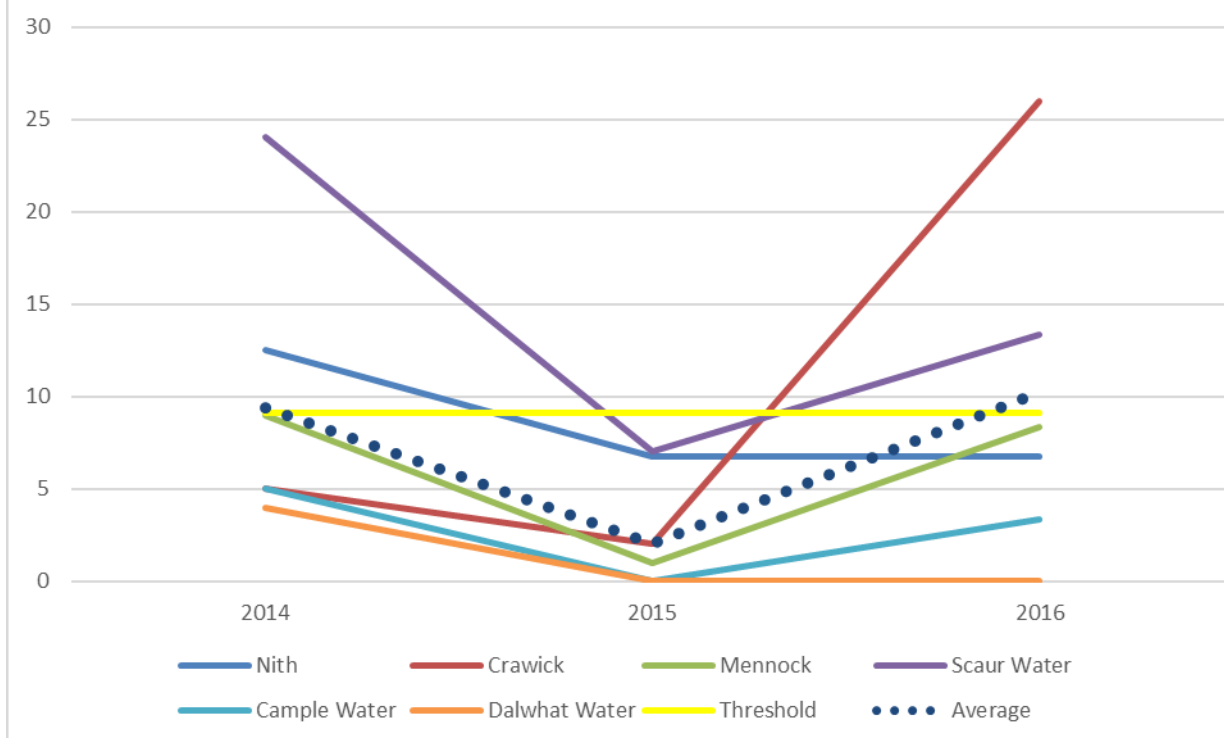
In order that we can compare year to year performance we have selected 10 sites throughout the catchment. These sites are located on the main stream River Nith and its tributaries. The ten sites will be sampled every year and it is anticipated that over time, long term trends will be established. The intention here is to detect any issues specific to individual areas of our catchment and enable managers to address those issues timeously.

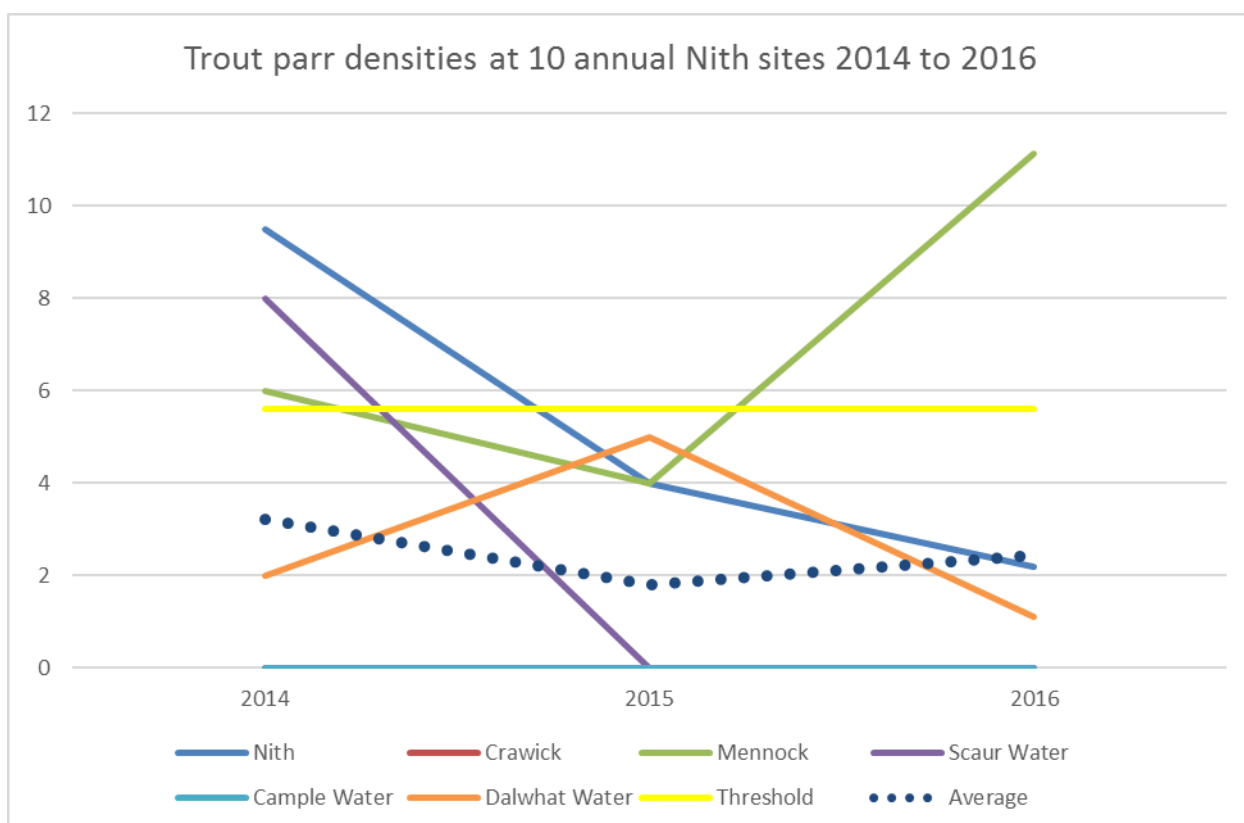
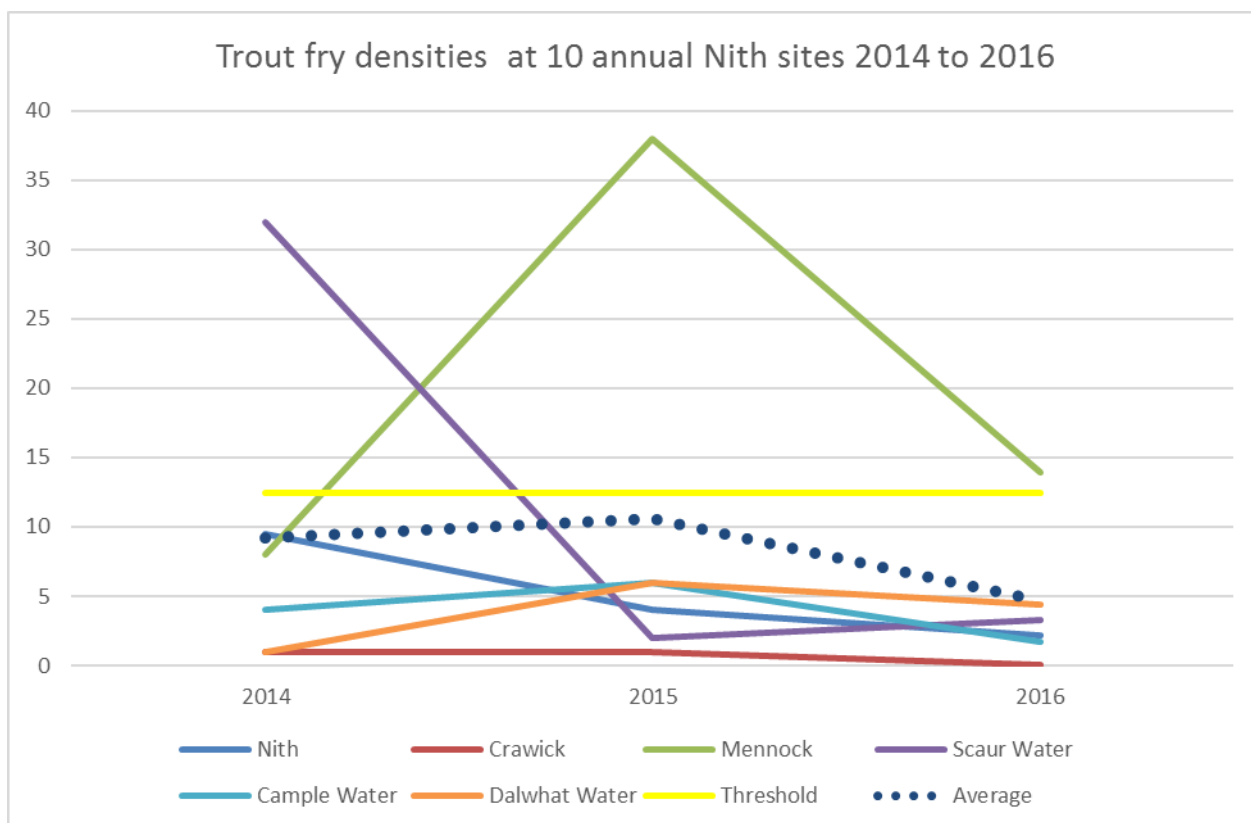
Following electrofishing surveys conducted during 2016, there are now three years' worth of data from these ten sites and it is possible to start to see short-term trends. These results are displayed in the following graphs.

Salmon fry densities at 10 annual Nith sites 2014 to 2016



Salmon parr densities at 10 annual Nith sites 2014 to 2016





It must be stressed that due to the natural fluctuations that occur within juvenile salmonid populations, it is not possible to identify any long-term trends using this data but the average densities (blue dotted line) from all of the sites can start to give us an idea of the current performance of the river. The yellow "Threshold" line represents the number of fish/100m² required to achieve a status of good or excellent in relation to electrofishing conducted throughout Scotland. It can be seen that the average number of salmon fry for all sites over the last three years has been Good to Excellent in 2014/15 but has declined below the Threshold in 2016. An inverse relationship between salmon fry and parr can be observed with low numbers of parr being present in 2015 when high numbers of fry were present. Generally, the average densities of trout fry and parr are below the national threshold with the exception of the Mennock Water, which is a known sea trout spawning river. It should be noted that the sites chosen are predominantly salmon rivers rather than sea trout or trout rivers.

Of particular note:

- the number of salmon fry in the Cample Water have declined steeply in the last three years and electrofishing in 2017 will enable us to determine if a downward trend is developing.
- the Crawick Water has shown a steep decline in fry during 2016 but an equally steep increase in parr.
- salmon fry densities should be monitored carefully in 2017 to determine if the lower numbers recorded in 2016 were due to flood damage from the frequent strong flooding episodes experienced in the winter of 2015/16 or if they are the start of a longer term decline in fry numbers.

Further analysis of long-term electrofishing data is currently being conducted.

18. Hatchery and Stocking

Following Galloway Fisheries Trust juvenile salmon and trout survey in 1991 it was evident that there was a need to produce hatchery stock to restock areas that were devoid of salmonids by reason of poaching, pollution and degraded habitat. To meet that need the Nith Board established a Hatchery at Blackwood Estate in 1994 and constructed a second hatchery at Dalswinton during 2008. These Hatcheries have the capacity to hold brood stock and produce ova and resultant fry for the catchment. Invicta Trout, Newtonairds Fish Farm, supplies all feed for fed fry.

Since the inception of the Hatchery program, the emphasis on the reasons for continuing with it have changed as a consequence of the commencement of substantial Open Cast Coal Operations at the top of the Catchment. The use of hatcheries in modern fisheries management is a subject on which almost all involved in the fisheries world has an opinion. Historically, there have been hatcheries on lots of rivers across Scotland but many of these are now gone and those that are still in existence are there to fulfil specific requirements. Hatcheries are no substitute for wild fish spawning naturally without the intervention of man.

So why does the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board operate a hatchery programme?

Because there is a requirement to produce hatchery reared fish to replace stocks lost as a result of mining activity in the upper catchment. Over the last decade there have been several major mainstream river diversions and loss of spawning watercourses due to the expansion of coal mining in the catchment. Part of the mitigation package negotiated by the Nith Board with site operators to offset any adverse impacts on the numbers of juvenile salmonids as a consequence of these operations is to provide additional indigenous salmonid stocks to restock coal abstraction areas once they have been reinstated. In addition, over the years, incidents have occurred involving mining operations which have resulted in the total loss of fry and parr from areas of the Nith catchment. The Nith Board has countered the effects of these incidents by using hatchery stock to replace lost fish.

Fry were planted out in the spring of 2016 at the following locations:

Species	Number	Location
Salmon	25000	Nith Greenburn
Salmon	7750	Crawick Water
Sea trout	2991	Crawick Water
Brown trout	5990	Cairn Water

Total fry stocked out 41,731

The capture of adult broodstock for the hatchery is conducted during October/November of any year and in 2015 the large and frequent flood events meant that opportunities to capture broodstock were limited. As a result, low numbers of broodstock were taken for stocking the hatchery and consequently, lower than normal numbers of eggs were stripped.

The hatchery is a useful tool for allowing people to learn about the lifecycles of salmon and sea trout and their importance to the Nith System in a fun, interactive and hands-on manner. Hatchery visits prove to be very popular with those pupils from schools involved with the "Fishing for the Future" project and gives them a unique opportunity to see how salmon are stripped of their eggs and how those eggs are incubated within the hatchery.

19. Sea Trout/Brown Trout

Salmon and trout do not exist in isolation and inevitably interact with other species. Salmon and trout at all life stages represent a food source for predators. The main predators in the Nith system include pike, otter, heron and mink within the river, seals which primarily forage around the river mouth and along the coast, and the goosander, and cormorants which migrate between the sea and river depending on the season. Ospreys also capture smaller salmonids.

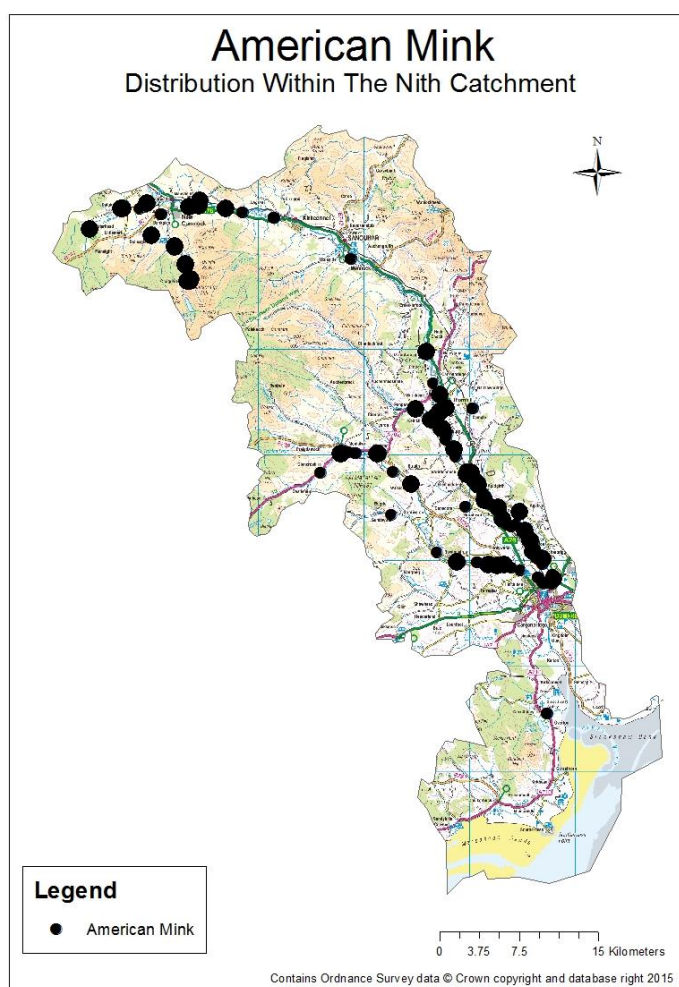
20. Predators - Statistics

Although present in the Solway Firth, seals do not appear to be the threat that they are in other Salmon Districts. The Nith Board does have a licence and has the trained staff to be able to deal with any rogue seals that may cause issues. During 2011 the Nith Board had a member of staff trained as an accredited marksman to enable the Nith Board to shoot seals under licence from the Scottish Government. The Nith Board continues to apply for a licence to shoot seals on an annual basis and makes the appropriate quarterly returns.

Cormorants and goosanders are known predators of juvenile fish and the Nith Board staff applies for and obtains an annual license to cull/scare limited numbers of avian predators the Nith Boards licence was extended during 2016 to cover the period of late November and December. Scottish Office research scientists have analysed the birds' diet and use the findings to establish a case for the sensible and effective management and control of these species.

Counts of goosander and cormorants were conducted on the mainstream and a number of tributaries during the early 1990"s and numbers varied considerably both seasonally and from year to year. These counts indicated that large numbers of goosanders and cormorants were often present in the lower Nith during the early months of the year. During the summer month's numbers dropped considerably and were predominantly female birds with young, while in autumn numbers began to increase again as male and immature birds returned to the river.

Mink continue to be seen throughout the catchment of the River Nith and the Nith Boards policy of controlling mink continues. The Bailiff Staff continues to follow Nith Board approved policy on mink control. Eighteen mink were captured during the period December 2015 to November 2016 inclusive; this is conducted at suitable times when the river is not in spate.



21. Exploitation

Early work by Shearer (1988) suggested that in summer between 5% and 8% of the returning adult salmon are captured by anglers. However, because early running spring salmon remain in the river for longer they may be subjected to higher levels of exploitation. There is some limited evidence from radio tracking (Laughton, 1991b) and mark recapture studies (Davidson, Cove, Milner and Purvis, 1996) to support this suggestion.

There is increasing interest in Catch and Release as a conservation policy for salmon stocks. Although concerns have been raised that this is damaging to the fish and may compromise survival, a number of studies have proved that if fish are handled carefully they have a high rate of survival.

The Nith Board keeps under regular review and actively supports and encourages an evolving policy on catch and release.

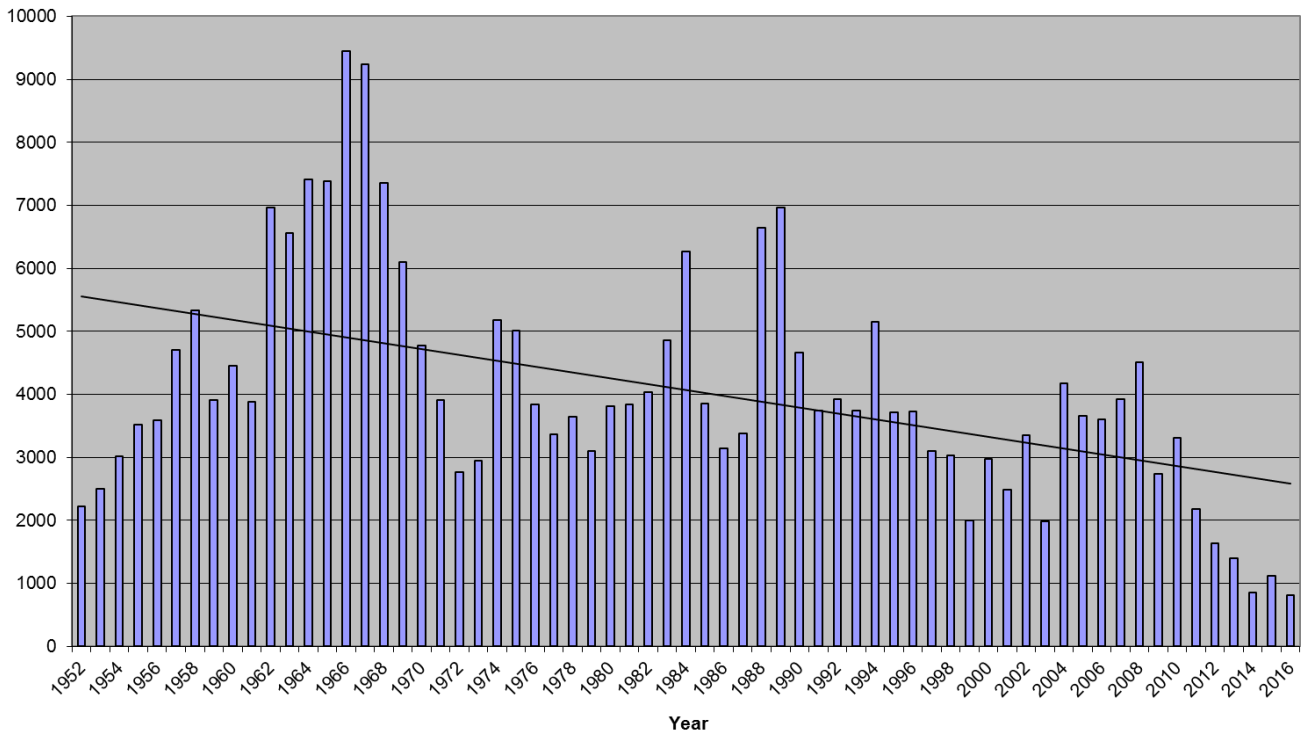
22. Government Conservation

The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations 2016 outlined a system whereby the Scottish Government categorised the conservation status of individual rivers to manage the killing of Atlantic salmon in inland waters on an annual basis. In 2016 the River Nith was categorised as a 3, which means that exploitation is unsustainable and therefore management actions are required to reduce exploitation for that given year i.e. mandatory catch and release of salmon (all methods). Because of the River Nith's category 3 status, rod fishing for salmon was 100% catch and release during the 2016 season, fishing with haaf nets for salmon in the estuary was 100% catch and release during the 2016 season and stake net fishing in the seaward jurisdiction of the River Nith district for salmon has been banned for a period of three years starting in 2016.

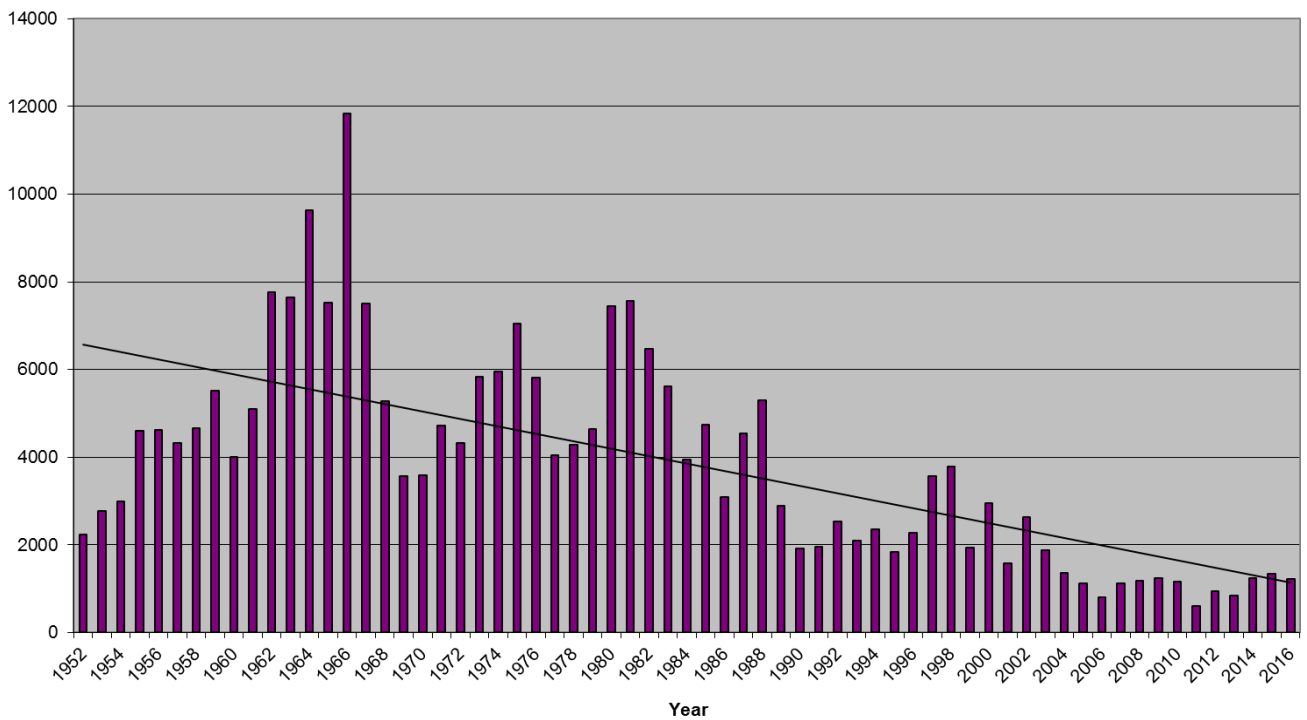
23. Salmonid Stocks

Juvenile Stocks	Our surveys show that in general stocks of juvenile salmonids are at a satisfactory level in a majority of the catchment. There are, however, some tributaries in which numbers are well below optimum levels. Monitoring will help to determine which of these tributaries require Habitat Enhancement measures before their potential can be realised.
Spring Fish	The Nith system does have a run of spring fish, those fish available to be caught, from 25th February to 31st May, however numbers of these fish are very much reduced from what they were in the 1960s. It is essential that this genetic core be safeguarded if there is to be any chance of an increase in its numbers. From 2015, the Scottish Government introduced a ban on the killing of any salmon prior to April 1 st each year. In addition, the Nith Board recommends that no salmon should be killed prior to the 1 st of June in any year.
Grilse and Autumn Fish	The availability of grilse and summer salmon plays an important part in providing fishing for local rods before many visitors come to the Nith for the autumn fishing.
Sea Trout	The Nith has no fish farms close to its estuary or adjoining coastline and has not suffered the near extinction of its stocks experienced by many Scottish, especially West coast, rivers. A considerable decrease in the number of Sea trout caught has occurred within the Nith system. The Nith Board has sought to encourage a policy amongst proprietors, anglers and nets men of return of sea trout over 3lbs in weight with a limit of one sea trout taken per rod per day. The Nith Board will continue to monitor the position with a view to deciding upon what courses of action it might take to try to stem the apparent decline in the sea trout population within the Nith system.

Total Salmon and Grilse Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2016



Total Sea Trout Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2016



24. Engineering and Other Works

Open Cast Coal Mining

Open cast coal mining continues within the River Nith catchment. In addition to the annual monitoring that the Nith Board conducts to measure impacts on the fish community the Nith Board's staff have been involved in the restoration of the Dalgig Burn on Kier's site at Greenburn. The work has involved the construction of a completely new channel having removed the redundant hydroelectric dam which had previously been a barrier for migrating salmonid species of fish.

House of Water

House of Water continues to produce coal albeit at a reduced quantity than previously. Restoration work is in an advanced state and the Nith Board continues to monitor and manage the major river diversions that took place on this site.

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy projects involving hydro would have appeared to have peaked during 2016 as a result of reduced feed-in tariffs for this method of energy production. The Nith Board maintains its policy of not supporting these proposals. That said, providing that the Nith Board can establish accurate fishery data prior to these developments being constructed and contribute to the plans in order that they can be adapted to be fish friendly, then re assess, post commissioning to ensure that the fish community has not been adversely impacted, then the Nith Board does not object to schemes.

In addition to hydro, wind energy proposals continue to be forwarded from the planning authority for comment from the Nith Board. The Nith catchment seems to have more than its fair share of windfarms. Each windfarm proposal requires a complete set of electrofishing surveys of all watercourses in the vicinity of the construction site and along the route of the cabling to effect a grid connection. Whilst these renewable energy proposals are branded as “green” the Nith Board is aware of the potential for such large scale construction works to create adverse impacts in the aquatic environment.

Forestry

The Nith Board has been consulted by the Forestry Commission and private Forestry interests regarding many forest plans throughout the catchment. Forest design plans indicate the management actions such as harvesting, replanting and the time scales when these operations are likely to occur. The Nith Board responds when appropriate on issues that could potentially influence fish or the habitat in which they reside.

High Voltage Electricity Infrastructure

The Nith Board were consulted on plans to construct a major power line through the east of the River Nith catchment. The Nith Board conducted electrofishing surveys and provide consultancy services to this project. The Nith Board have conducted further follow up surveys to validate the environmental protection measures adopted to protect the aquatic environment.

Gas Infrastructure

The Nith Board has been consulted on the planned additional phase of the gas pipeline transferring gas from the mainland to Ireland. Electrofishing surveys have taken place and invertebrate samples have been taken to monitor the aquatic environment. The gas pipeline project is due to take place during 2017.

25. Illegal Fishing

Statistics of incidents are provided further in this report.

26. Conservation Policy and Angling Code

Catch and Release	Further to the statutory conservation measures implemented by the Scottish Government for salmon (see section 22. Government Conservation) the Nith Board also requested that all proprietors seek to impose a restriction upon the taking of, the numbers and size of sea trout caught and retained during any one day by anyone fishing for them suggesting that a maximum of one (1) sea trout may be caught and retained per day and that all sea trout over the weight of 3 lbs should be returned to the river.
Netting	The Nith Board is representative of all fishery proprietors in the Nith System and benefits from the long and wide experience of its netting members.
Hatcheries	The Nith Board believes that the use of hatcheries has a specific role to play in the management of the fish stocks within the Nith System and therefore operates its hatchery programme within the catchment for the propagation of salmon and sea trout.
Habitat	The Nith Board attaches much emphasis to Habitat Enhancement. Naturally produced fish have been shown to be much hardier than those produced in a hatchery. The Nith Board is mindful of maintaining a proper balance between resources used for hatcheries and those used for Habitat Enhancement.

Water Quality	Close liaison with SEPA results in the Nith Board having access to water quality monitoring data on the Nith.
River Engineering Works	The Nith Board continues to provide guidance upon safe methods of work in relation to engineering works in or near the environs of watercourses to minimise risk of environmental damage to the river system.

27. Public Access

Approximately 62% of the mainstem of the Nith is directly available to public access for fishing via local associations. Of the remaining 38% the vast majority is available by daily or weekly rental. Further public access was afforded during the River Nith sea trout event which ran over four Friday evenings in the summer of 2016. Anglers given free access to private beats to fish for sea trout. The Nith Board considers this to be a very satisfactory situation; there is plenty of access for local anglers and good access for visiting anglers whose contribution to the Catchment's economy is considerable and vital. A report from Stirling University opined that Salmon Angling at 1999 figures was worth in excess of £2.2 million to the local economy.

28. Legislation and Its Development

The Nith Board responds to all consultations in relation to fisheries management including the Wild Fisheries Review which was conducted by Andrew Thin during 2014. The Nith Board will respond to this both directly and through the Fishery Director who sits on the Management Committee of the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards and has input to their responses.

29. Summary of Events from 01.12.15 - 30.11.16

The Nith Board wherever possible tries to ensure that Nith Board members are kept fully informed about the changing circumstances that affect the day-to-day management of the river system and meetings are often called at short notice.

The Nith Board met on: -
 10th December 2015,
 15th March 2016 (Annual General Proprietors Meeting),
 4th July 2016 (Annual Public Meeting and Board meeting),
 20th September 2016.

The Nith Board continues to be very busy attending to its statutory duties of managing the migratory stocks of salmonid species of fish throughout the Nith catchment. As well as delivering management on the river this also involves the attendance of staff at various consultation meetings and national events to engage at the highest levels to ensure that the Nith Board is able to contribute meaningfully to policies and future strategies. Nith Board members are aware of the importance of informing political leaders regarding the work of the Nith Board and the issues faced in managing salmon and sea trout.

The Nith Board was represented at meetings and events throughout the catchment over the year. The Nith Board recognises the importance of a presence at the various events in order that the anglers and netmen are afforded the opportunity to question the Nith Board's staff on any issues of concern.

The Fishery Director represented the Nith Board at various events throughout the year including: -

All coal mining Technical Working Groups, Bailiff Training meetings, Dumfries Burgh Fishing's Sub Committee, Nith Catchment Fishery Trust, Burgh Anglers AGM, Environment Days, Angler Burgh Work party days, Annual Bailiffs conference, Association of Salmon Fishery Board's Management Committee meetings, the Joint Working Group meetings to consider the Wild Fisheries Reform for Scotland, the Rivers and Fishery Trusts of Scotland AGM, various meetings with the Scottish Fishery Directors, various site meetings to discuss renewable energy proposals and many other events to promote the work of the Nith Board. The Fishery Director chairs the national Water Bailiff Development Group.

The Nith Board opted to participate in the Galloway Country Fair which was held in the grounds of Drumlanrig Castle. The event was considered a success for the Nith Board and afforded the opportunity to interact with the public. The Nith Board plan to continue to attend the Country Fair on an annual basis.

30. Biologist's Report 2016

During 2016, our Trust, like all others in Scotland, faced an uncertain future. The reform of all fishery management structures, promoted by the Scottish Government, has many implications for us, and our existence, as an organisation, going forward. This has led to a challenging working environment for Fishery Trusts in general, not least of which is in the field of funding. Times are financially difficult currently in Britain and exacerbated by the potential on sought of Britain leaving Europe. Consequently, charitable organisations are experiencing reduced funding and Fishery Trusts more so because of their uncertain future existence. In 2016, only short term funding was available for fishery Trusts and those were oversubscribed. We made the best that we could with the resources that we had and continued the work of our Trust albeit at a reduced level than in previous years with the Fishing for the Future project being the worst hit during 2016.

One of the aspirations of the Wild Fisheries Reform was to decrease the number of fishery management bodies, both Boards and Trusts and that to achieve this we were to consider amalgamations with neighbouring bodies. The Nith Board and Trust entered into discussions and met with members of the River Annan fishery management bodies. Those discussions went well and we found areas of commonality in terms of potential future management of both rivers. The likelihood was that one organisation would manage the rivers Nith and Annan. However, we have recently received news that certain aspects of the Wild Fishery Reform are being discarded, of which mandatory amalgamation is one.

Alongside the normal duties and projects run on an annual basis, the Trust has spent a lot of time exploring the new Conservation Regulations that have been issued by the Scottish Government. This has involved speaking to Marine Scotland to gain a better knowledge of the modelling requirements and identifying any data gaps for the Nith catchment. In order for the modelling process to be as accurate as possible, it is necessary to ensure that we are providing the best, most up-to-date data we have available. It is only by doing this, that we will gain an accurate assessment of our fish stocks and ensure that we have sustainable stocks for future generations.

Nith District Salmon Fishery Board Policy Statement

Introduction

The numbers of salmon available for exploitation in the Nith is, broadly speaking, a product of the numbers of smolts produced by the river and the number of adult salmon that return to it. An upper limit on smolt production is set by the availability of spawning and nursery habitat. Whether or not that limit is attained depends upon the adequacy of egg deposition for each of the main populations of salmon that use the Nith.

The broad objectives are to ensure that smolt production is maximised by focusing exploitation on the most robust populations, currently summer and autumn running salmon and grilse, and by taking all practicable steps to improve adult access and the quality of juvenile habitats.

In this section the Nith Board outline their current policy on a number of key areas and issues as described in Section 5. The Nith Board also works to a five-year Fishery Management Plan which outlines the Boards intentions for the foreseeable future. The second five-year plan was written and approved in 2014. It represents the future aims and activities that the Nith Board will embrace over the course of the next working year and beyond.

General Policy and Future Management

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to protect, conserve and enhance all stocks of salmon and sea trout in the River Nith,
- Continue to monitor and encourage stock components in particular the spring salmon,
- Remain accountable to Proprietors and ensure that resources are properly applied such that the most efficient and economically beneficial application of the funds, raised by Proprietors through assessments, is achieved, and
- Continue to liaise with and inform Proprietors, their agents and anglers on the work of the Nith Board and operate in an open and transparent manner in accordance with the law.

Enforcement

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue the employment of a qualified Bailiff force of suitable size to curtail unlawful fishing methods and activities,
- Maintain both river and sea patrol systems,
- Continue with the development of sophisticated intelligence systems, and
- Promote the prosecution of those breaching salmon fisheries legislation.

Monitoring

The Nith Board will, in liaison with other relevant bodies, continue to monitor and influence: -

- The riverine and related environment,
- Water volume and quality,
- Juvenile stocks,
- Smolt production, and
- Numbers of returning adult fish

and to utilise information arising from all of the above towards the better management of the Nith salmon and sea trout stocks.

Research

The Nith Board will continue and increase where possible its commitment to producing high quality research data to improve the management of the river and its salmon and sea trout stocks. Key areas include: -

- Improving data on spawning escapement through catch data,
- Maintaining and improving data on juvenile salmonid distribution and density,
- Further developing instream and bankside habitat surveys and establishing where improvements, if any, can be made,
- Monitoring the benefits, or otherwise, of stocking and/or habitat enhancement for salmonid stocks,
- Examining current data with respect to any available historical information and catchment land use data using latest available techniques.
- Continuing to promote the work of the Nith Board through presentations and publications at local and national level,
- Providing assistance and encouragement, where possible, to neighbouring Boards with their research and management plans, with a view to establishing as comprehensive a network of information as possible for the Nith and neighbouring Districts, and
- Continuing contributions to and liaison with other fisheries research bodies including, but not limited to, Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre, the Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory and the Marine Laboratory Aberdeen, Environment Agency, SEPA and SNH.

Stock Enhancement

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to operate the Nith Board's hatchery programme,
- Take all reasonable steps to avoid genetic mixing of ova, and
- Encourage natural spawning where possible but undertake stock enhancement in areas where stocks of fish are seriously depleted.

Sea trout and Spring Salmon

The Nith Board will: -

- Encourage proprietors to act responsibly over fishing methods and effort, and
- Encourage fishers to return fish to the river where possible and appropriate.
- Encourage fishers to return sea trout of appropriate classification

Predators

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to encourage control of salmonid predators such as, but not limited to, sawbills by continued application to Scottish Government/SNH/SASA for annual licences when deemed necessary,
- Encourage the trapping of mink and other riverside predators where lawfully possible and demonstrated to be damaging salmonid stocks, and
- Resist the re-introduction of the beaver (although it is not a direct predator on salmon) due to its potential harmful effects on riparian habitat.

Transfers of fish and fish disease

The Nith Board will: -

- Maintain vigilance in the unlawful transfer of fish and/or fish diseases both to salmon, sea and brown trout, rainbow trout and other species to continue to monitor and operate surveillance in this regard paying particular attention to keeping Proprietors advised of the information passed to it on best practice for the prevention of outbreak of Gyrodactylus Salaris.

Habitat Management

The Nith Board will: -

- Encourage appropriate instream and bankside management,
- Encourage the adoption of beneficial land management practices, and
- Encourage liaison with and among relevant proprietors and other bodies such as, but not limited to, SNH, FWAG, SEPA, Forestry Commission and Planning Authorities.

River Engineering Works

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to provide guidance and assistance through its Fishery Director to those wishing to undertake such works enabling repairs to take place, and seek to restrict improvement works without prior consultation and assessment, and
- Provide an Advisory Service to Proprietors.

Abstraction

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to monitor the amount of abstraction from the river, and
- Monitor the use of water for agricultural irrigation purposes.

Catchment Land Use

The Nith Board will: -

- Liaise with the all relevant bodies over land within the catchment and encourage moves towards integrated catchment management,
- Provide an advisory service preventing irresponsible land use developments which may adversely affect salmonid populations, and/or their habitats, and
- Seek to inform proprietors, where salmon or sea trout angling may not be a priority, of the importance of maintaining upper tributaries and spawning areas in good condition.

Level of Angling Exploitation

The Nith Board will: -

Monitor levels of fish returning to the river system and encourage proprietors to utilise common sense and sensitivity in the levels of exploitation exercised by fishers at any time and from time to time, Restrict, where appropriate, spring fishing to protect the vulnerable early running populations of salmon, Encourage proprietors to ensure that the level of fishing effort is reasonable, and take other appropriate steps to protect, conserve and enhance the stocks of fish and to give publicity thereto.

Catch and Release

The Nith Board will: -

Adhere and promote the Scottish Governments conservation policy with regard to conservation of salmon regulations which has categorised the River Nith as a 3 for the 2016 season. In addition, the Nith Board will seek to conserve stocks of sea trout as discussed in section 25. Conservation Policy and Angling Code. See Appendix 6 for the 2016 Angling Code.

Netting

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to take an interest in the level of high seas exploitation to support bodies such as, but not limited to: -
 - Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
 - North Atlantic Salmon Fund (UK)
 - Atlantic Salmon Trust
 - North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO)

in their endeavours to restrict and where possible remove interceptor high seas fishing.

Nature Conservation

The Nith Board will: -

- Liaise with proprietors and bodies such as, but not limited to, SNH, Solway Firth Partnership and SEPA in maintaining the high quality of the natural environment and safeguard the outstanding natural heritage features within the Nith system.

Liaison with neighbouring Boards

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to liaise and encourage the promotion of good relations with other neighbouring Boards. During 2016 the Nith Board attended meetings with the Annan Board to explore the possibility of an amalgamation with a view to forming a Fishery Management Organisation in accordance with the aspirations of the Wild Fishery Reform.
- Continue surveillance and enforcement activities in liaison with neighbouring Board Bailiffs and to provide and receive assistance under existing complementary jurisdiction arrangements.

European Directives

The Nith Board will: -

- Continue to consult with SNH and other bodies and will liaise closely with proprietors in promotion of the salmon and sea trout interests covered by the Habitat and Species Directive, and
- Review its potential responsibilities and the advantages to be gained from the Water Framework Directive.

U.K. and Scottish Legislation

The Nith Board Will: -

- Continue to monitor the promotion and development of draft legislation which is likely to have an effect, whether direct or indirect, upon the promotion of the interests of salmon and sea trout, the fisheries related thereto and the sustainable exploitation of the fishing resource within the Catchment.
- Continue to consult with the proprietors in connection with the drafting of responses germane to the interests of proprietors in relation to the promotion of relevant draft legislation by the Scottish, U.K. and European Parliaments.

Liaison Organisations

Organisations and groups with which Nith District Fishery Board liaise closely and regularly regarding local, national and international management of salmon and sea trout stocks.

Local Organisations and Groups	Proprietors and Agents Nith Haaf Net Fishers Association Anglers and Angling Clubs Local Authorities and Councils Other Fishery Boards The Solway Firth Partnership Police Scotland
National Organisations (Fisheries)	Scottish Government (Marine Scotland) Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB) Scottish Net Fishing Association North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) Institute of Fisheries Management Other Fishery Boards
National Organisations (Conservation/Protection)	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Forestry Commission (FC) Environment Agency (EA)
Industrial Companies	Kier Mining Highways Agency Windfarm Operators Network Rail Hargreaves Surface Mining Gas Infrastructure Iberdrola, AMEC and Scottish Woodlands Scottish Power Renewables

Nith Fishery Management Plan 2014-18 Prescriptions

The following prescriptions are to be found in the Fishery Management Plan, full details of which can be found on the Nith Board's web site.

The prescriptions have been agreed by fishery proprietors and managers as necessary to promote the welfare of populations of fish within the River Nith catchment.

Poaching (High Priority)

- Maintain a team of Water Bailiffs commensurate with the threat of illegal fishing.

Exploitation (High Priority)

- Encourage the promotion of sustainable fishing throughout the catchment with all of its proprietors using the angling code and to develop an annual conservation code to be made available to all anglers.
- Promote accurate recording of all catches.
- Further endorse sustainable fishing via its education programme and by raising awareness of the benefits of catch and release.
- Adopt and promote carcass tagging which is anticipated will be initiated within the term of this fishery management plan for the purpose of assisting with the sustainable management of fish stocks.
- Discourage further exploitation of the resource.

Engineering procedures (High Priority)

- Respond to applications to conduct engineering and offer advice on mitigation and environmental protection in order to prevent degradation of habitat or fishing potential.
- Conduct monitoring in relation to engineering works.

Renewable energy (High Priority)

- Respond and comment on applications to construct renewable energy projects.
- Provide data and scientific input in relation to consideration of all renewable energy projects.
- Conduct monitoring to establish fishery data.
- Recommend mitigation to prevent damage to the resource.

Biosecurity (High/Medium Priority)

- Take full cognisance of the River Nith Biosecurity Plan when responding to consultations.
- Combat invasive non-native species throughout the catchment and continue to raise awareness about this issue.
- Participate in catchment, local, national and international initiatives to combat INNS.

Habitat degradation (High Priority)

- Carry out habitat surveys within catchment to identify potential habitat improvements.
- Carry out habitat works where identified and permitted.
- Maintain existing habitat schemes.

Access for fish (High Priority)

- Prioritise barriers within the Nith catchment using recognised barrier assessment tools.
- Remove temporary impediments to migration.
- Seek removal of any man-made obstruction to fish.

Water Quality (Medium Priority)

- Liaise with SEPA and other agencies regarding potential or existing water quality issues.
- Respond to any reported incident with the potential to impact on fish stocks and pursue through appropriate channels.
- Expand the Riverfly Partnership Anglers Monitoring Initiative.

Marine survival (High Priority)

- Participate in appropriate local, national and international research projects.
- Work with other agencies to gain knowledge.
- Use latest science to advise and make informed management decisions on local and national levels.

Predation (Medium Priority)

- Conduct predator counts to provide accurate data for license applications.
- Apply for annual licences to predators.
- Conduct annual licenced predator culls.
- Conduct mink trapping within the Nith catchment.
- Improve counting techniques and keep abreast of alternative means of control.

Fish stock data (High Priority)

- Conducting electrofishing surveys throughout the catchment.
- Conduct repeat annual electrofishing surveys at core sites throughout the catchment to assess annual fluctuations.
- Carry out scale reading of adult and juvenile salmonids to gain data on the structure of fish populations.
- Continue to participate in national research programmes to determine stock dynamics and populations trends within the Nith catchment.

Artificial enhancement programmes (High Priority)

- Continue to operate a hatchery at levels agreed by the NDSFB Stocking Committee.
- Endeavour to maximise natural stock production by improving habitat, access and conserving stocks of returning adults rather than stocking artificially.
- Authorise and stock fry into areas identified.
- Monitor any salmon and sea trout stocking.
- Comment on applications made to Marine Scotland to stock brown trout.

Prescription	Actions
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailiff team comprised 1 full time and 3 volunteer warranted water bailiffs • 12 incidents dealt with by enforcement staff – 1 providing advice to Police Scotland, 1 falsely reported, 2 tidal nets seized, 1 net found hidden, 3 convictions, 1 poaching incident investigated (gaffing spawning tributary). Call out to poaching incident by Police Scotland. Police Scotland requested information on two occasions (out with Nith catchment). • National Bailiff Development Group meetings attended • Attended National Bailiffs conference • Presented at Marine Scotland Compliance Conference • Chaired Crime Enforcement Working Group for Scottish Government • Ran Solway Bailiff training course and tutorials • Ran netting training course
Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch and release 100% for salmon and grilse and 78% by rod and line and 40% by nets for sea trout during 2016 • Assisted Scottish Government with categorization • Altered Nith Angling code to reflect Scottish Government policies • Assisted Marine Scotland on salmon conservation mapping project • Conservation promoted through education projects, outreach programmes and distribution of conservation codes • Nith Conservation working group met
Engineering and forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted on multiple engineering projects • Inspected flood damage on Nith and Cairn prior to repairs • Seven electrofishing surveys carried out in connection with engineering works taking place throughout the catchment and one fish rescue. • Consulted on two road infrastructure projects, two SEPA projects, two flood mitigation proposal (Dumfries Whitesands and New Cumnock), new hospital cable project and Dalgig burn reconstruction x 4. • Managed Upper Nith river restoration project and Laggan Burn Restoration Project.
Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four surveys carried out in connection with renewables taking place throughout the catchment and one fish rescue
Planning and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning responses made regarding numerous projects
Biosecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crayfish refuge traps monitored and Lochfoot Burn monitored for crayfish spread. Crayfish found 200m downstream of original source in Lochfoot Burn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8978m² of Japanese knotweed treated • 2158m² of Giant hogweed treated • 4480m² of Skunk cabbage treated • Rainbow trout survey on Cairn Water and fish farm reported to Fish Health Inspectorate.
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All habitat schemes checked and water gates repaired • Problem trees removed throughout catchment • 2500 native trees planted in habitat schemes
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pennyland Burn fish pass modification completed and electrofishing survey complete upstream showing improved salmon/trout numbers. • 1 fish barrier reported to SEPA and progress monitored
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight pollution incidents attended and reported to SEPA • Seven invertebrate surveys completed
Marine survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited to be associate member of Marine project re sea trout by Inland Fisheries Ireland
Governance	<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 carried out
Predation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licenses applied for and gained to prevent serious damage to wild stocks of salmon/sea trout by cormorants, goosanders and seals. • 18 mink trapped
Fish stocks and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 catch data collected and reported on website • NCFT/NDSFB conducted electrofishing at 100+ sites throughout the catchment • 10 annual electrofishing sites surveyed • Provided electrofishing data to SFCC • Visited Inland Fisheries Ireland to inspect fish counters and IFI investigated Nith sites.
Hatchery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32,750 salmon fry, 2991 sea trout and 5990 brown trout fry stocked • Post stocking electrofishing surveys carried out • Brood stock captured for fry production for 2016/17
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nith Sea Trout Experience – four weeks of free fishing to promote sea trout fishing on the River Nith. BBQ event for participants held at Dalswinton Fishing Hut. • Nith Grayling Day conducted at Friars Carse Hotel. • Various shows and fairs attended - See page 20 for full list of meetings/events attended • Presentations given to other organisations. • PR via website, social media, TV and newspapers.

Incidents of illegal Fishing/Poaching Activities 1/12/15 - 30/11/16

- 12 incidents dealt with throughout the catchment.

Nith Habitat Enhancement Projects - 1st December 2015 to 30th November 2016

During 2016 all habitat schemes throughout the Nith catchment were maintained and those where planting of trees has been conducted have been checked and re-planting conducted where necessary. Various tributaries have been cleared of woody debris where this was causing an impasse to migrating salmonids.

Appendices:

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Appendix 1: Attendances at Nith Board Meetings

Nith Board Meeting Dates	No. Board Members Attended	Attendance Rate (%)
10 th December 2015	11 (max 15)	73
15 th March 2016 (AQPM)	10(max 15)	67
4 th July 2016 (APM + Board meeting)	9 (max 15)	60
20 th September 2016	9 (max 15)	60

Board Meeting Dates	Attendees (apologies/absent)
10 th December 2015 Board meeting	Board members Percy Weatherall John Kingan Robbie Cowan Peter Landale Derek Bathgate Nick Wright Nick Brown David Kempself Wally Wright Peter Hutchison Richard Gladwin Danny Marshall Jim Gregory Thomas Florey Tom McAuchtrie
15 th March 2016 Annual Qualified Proprietor Meeting Members of public Jeff Walters Raymond Mundell	Board members Percy Weatherall John Kingan Robbie Cowan Peter Landale Derek Bathgate Nick Wright Nick Brown David Kempself Wally Wright Peter Hutchison Richard Gladwin Danny Marshall Jim Gregory Thomas Florey Tom McAuchtrie Erin Hunter(rep. Derek Bathgate) Brian Fox (rep. Nick Brown)

Board Meeting Dates	Attendees (apologies/absent)
4 th July 2016 Annual Public Meeting and Board Meeting Members of public Tom Brown Raymond Mundell	Board members Percy Weatherall John Kingan Robbie Cowan Peter Landale Derek Bathgate Nick Wright Nick Brown David Kempself Wally Wright Peter Hutchison Richard Gladwin Danny Marshall Jim Gregory Thomas Florey Tom McAuchtrie Erin Hunter(rep. Derek Bathgate)
20 th September 2016	Board members Percy Weatherall John Kingan Robbie Cowan Peter Landale Derek Bathgate Nick Wright Nick Brown David Kempself Wally Wright Peter Hutchison Richard Gladwin Danny Marshall Jim Gregory Thomas Florey Tom McAuchtrie Alan Nisbet

Appendix 2: Statement of Good Governance Compliance

Meetings

The annual meeting of qualified proprietors was held on 15th March 2016 at Friars Carse Country House Hotel, Auldgirth, Dumfries. The meeting was publicised by means of notice on the Nith Board website and a copy of the notice was sent to the Scottish Government. Two members of the public chose to attend. The minutes from this meeting can be viewed at www.river-nith.com

The annual public meeting was held on 4th July 2016 at Friars Carse Country House Hotel, Auldgirth, Dumfries. This meeting was publicised by means of notice on the Nith Board website and a copy of the notice was sent to the Scottish Government. One member of the public chose to attend. The minutes from this meeting can be viewed at www.river-nith.com

In addition, further meetings of the Nith Board were held on 10th December 2015 and 20th September 2016. These meetings were publicised by means of notice on the Nith Board website. The minutes from these meetings can be viewed on the Nith Board website.

Annual Report and Accounts

This annual report will be published on the Nith Board website.

The accounts will be published on the Nith Board website.

Complaints

The Nith Board has set up and maintains a complaints procedure which can be viewed on the Nith Board website.

Members' interests

The register of members' interests can be viewed on the Nith Board website. We have included a standing item at each Nith Board meeting inviting Nith Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.

Appendix 3: Register of Complaints

1. Complaints received:

During the last 12 months Nith District Salmon Fishery Board received no complaints.

Appendix 4: Nith System Catch Data

The Nith Board now collects its own data from all proprietors. The charts show the returns to season end 2016.

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
2016	655	163	818	100%	2248

Sea trout caught over the last 10 years

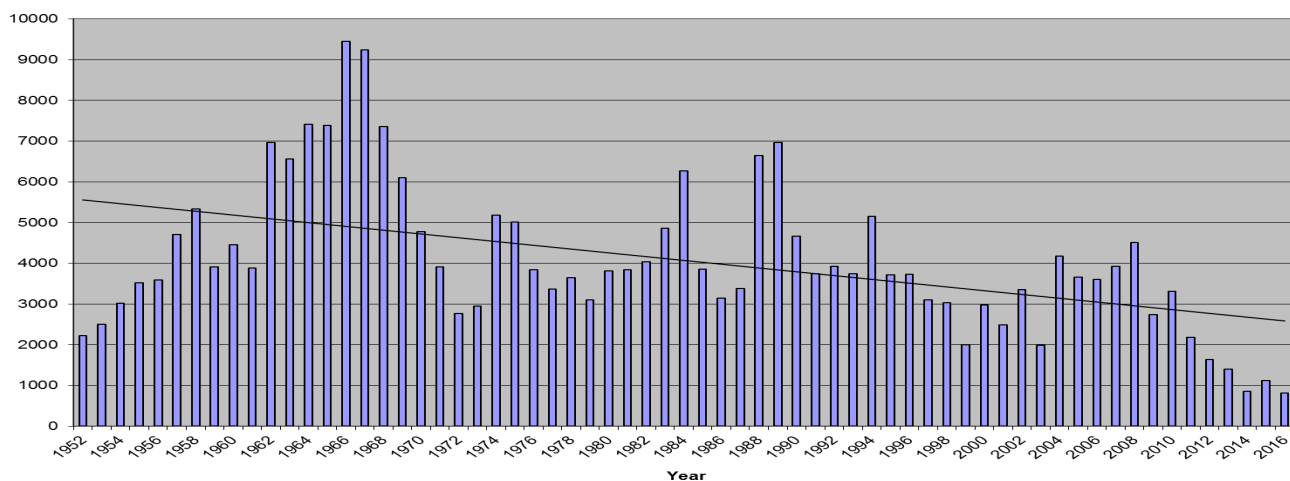
Year	Rods	Nets	Total	% C&R	10 year average
2006	708	96	804	28%	2163
2007	1022	100	1122	43%	1919
2008	961	217	1178	52%	1658
2009	1104	136	1240	49%	1588
2010	850	303	1153	44%	1408
2011	515	94	609	46%	1310
2012	782	163	945	55%	1142
2013	671	170	841	62%	1038
2014	1119	132	1251	87%	1026
2015	1063	283	1346	80%	1044
2016	866	348	1214	78%	1089

Appendix 5: Nith Salmon and Sea Trout Catches - Catch Statistics Returns 1952-2016

Total Salmon and grilse caught 1952 - 2016

Year	Retained	Returned	Total	10 year average
1952	2220	-	2220	
1953	2497	-	2497	
1954	3018	-	3018	
1955	3518	-	3518	
1956	3585	-	3585	
1957	4711	-	4711	
1958	5336	-	5336	
1959	3912	-	3912	
1960	4447	-	4447	
1961	3877	-	3877	
1962	6960	-	6960	4186
1963	6562	-	6562	4593
1964	7407	-	7407	5032
1965	7379	-	7379	5418
1966	9452	-	9452	6004
1967	9243	-	9243	6458
1968	7353	-	7353	6659
1969	6100	-	6100	6878
1970	4781	-	4781	6911
1971	3909	-	3909	6915
1972	2768	-	2768	6495
1973	2946	-	2946	6134
1974	5174	-	5174	5911
1975	5013	-	5013	5674
1976	3839	-	3839	5113
1977	3370	-	3370	4525
1978	3640	-	3640	4154
1979	3100	-	3100	3854
1980	3811	-	3811	3757
1981	3837	-	3837	3750
1982	4040	-	4040	3877
1983	4863	-	4863	4069
1984	6270	-	6270	4178
1985	3851	-	3851	4062
1986	3147	-	3147	3993
1987	3377	-	3377	3994
1988	6643	-	6643	4294
1989	6962	-	6962	4680
1990	4663	-	4663	4765
1991	3737	-	3737	4755
1992	3917	-	3917	4743
1993	3748	-	3748	4632
1994	5012	133	5145	4519
1995	3576	135	3711	4505
1996	3435	300	3735	4564
1997	2899	201	3100	4536
1998	2727	307	3034	4175
1999	1792	203	1995	3679
2000	2658	319	2977	3510
2001	2021	468	2489	3385
2002	2480	873	3353	3329
2003	1501	490	1991	3153
2004	3067	1110	4177	3056
2005	2896	764	3663	3051
2006	2917	686	3603	3038
2007	2623	1131	3925	3121
2008	3178	1326	4504	3268
2009	1988	751	2739	3342
2010	2307	999	3306	3375
2011	1543	648	2182	3344
2012	1120	515	1635	3173
2013	853	552	1405	3114
2014	517	334	851	2781
2015	672	447	1119	2527
2016	0	818	818	2248

Total Salmon and Grilse Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2016

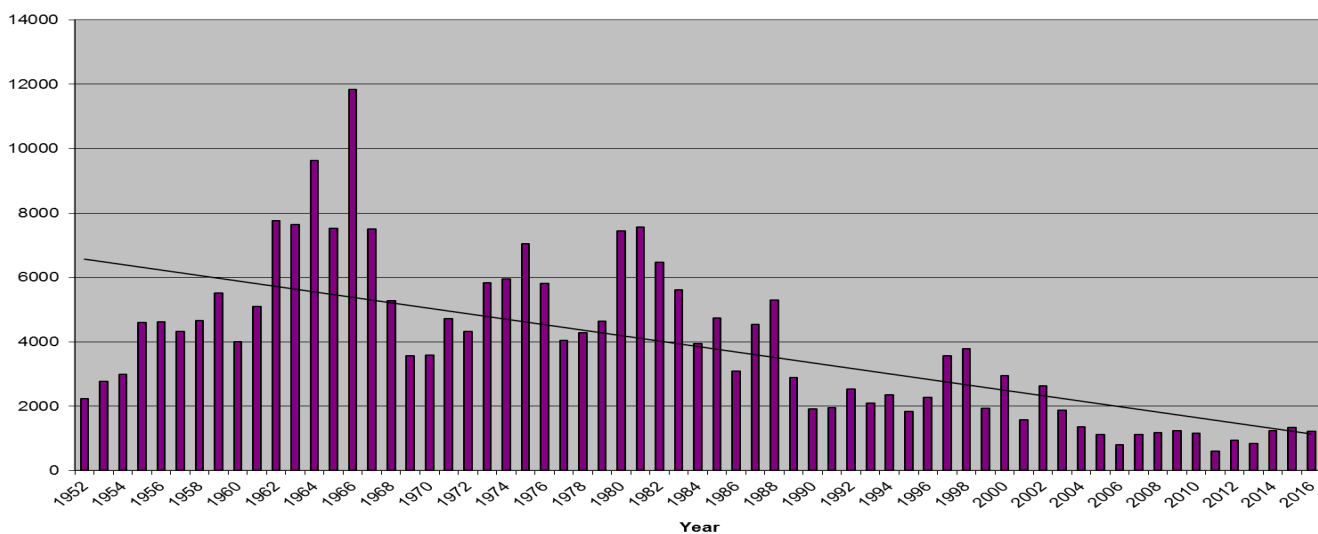


Total Sea Trout caught 1952 - 2016

Year	Retained	Returned	Total	10 year average
1952	2228	-	2228	
1953	2778	-	2778	
1954	2999	-	2999	
1955	4599	-	4599	
1956	4626	-	4626	
1957	4317	-	4317	
1958	4659	-	4659	
1959	5521	-	5521	
1960	3999	-	3999	
1961	5095	-	5095	4082
1962	7760	-	7760	4635
1963	7642	-	7642	5122
1964	9633	-	9633	5785
1965	7517	-	7517	6077
1966	11846	-	11846	6799
1967	7511	-	7511	7118
1968	5284	-	5284	7181
1969	3559	-	3559	6985
1970	3587	-	3587	6943
1971	4724	-	4724	6906
1972	4314	-	4314	6562
1973	5837	-	5837	6381
1974	5961	-	5961	6014
1975	7048	-	7048	5967
1976	5815	-	5815	5364
1977	4043	-	4043	5017
1978	4275	-	4275	4916
1979	4637	-	4637	5024
1980	7448	-	7448	5410
1981	7563	-	7563	5694
1982	6470	-	6470	5910
1983	5618	-	5618	5888

Year	Retained	Returned	Total	10 year average
1984	3945	-	3945	5686
1985	4749	-	4749	5456
1986	3081	-	3081	5183
1987	4537	-	4537	5232
1988	5290	-	5290	5334
1989	2887	-	2887	5159
1990	1922	-	1922	4606
1991	1953	-	1953	4045
1992	2541	-	2541	3652
1993	2105	-	2105	3301
1994	2295	65	2360	3143
1995	1787	47	1834	2851
1996	2135	138	2273	2770
1997	3344	220	3564	2673
1998	3494	291	3785	2522
1999	1738	207	1945	2428
2000	2748	207	2955	2532
2001	1400	189	1589	2495
2002	2239	384	2623	2503
2003	1600	284	1884	2481
2004	1138	226	1364	2382
2005	708	159	1119	2310
2006	579	170	804	2163
2007	644	386	1122	1919
2008	661	517	1178	1658
2009	717	560	1240	1588
2010	779	374	1153	1408
2011	373	236	609	1310
2012	511	434	945	1142
2013	409	432	841	1038
2014	273	978	1251	1026
2015	489	857	1346	1049
2016	402	812	1214	1090

Total Sea Trout Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2016



THE RIVER NITH CATCHMENT ANGLING CODE

for Salmon, Sea Trout & Trout Anglers

A guide to legal restrictions and good practice for fishing on the River Nith and its tributaries

All reasonable Salmon, Sea Trout and Trout anglers realise and understand that it is important to set a good example in standards of sportsmanship and in care of wild stocks of fish, the environment, wildlife and fellow anglers.

This code has been produced by the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board to encourage such standards and give guidance to all proprietors and anglers who fish rivers and burns within the Nith Catchment.

This Code comprises four sections:

Section A: Statutory Regulations

Section B: Regulations to be imposed by beat owners, including Spring and Autumn Salmon and Sea Trout Conservation measures.

Section C: Good Practice.

Section D: General Conduct.

Reference to Fish or fish in the code means salmon and sea trout.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

Owners, managers, associations and clubs should ensure that the principles of this code are applied to their beats and are expected to withdraw permission to fish from those who contravene Sections A and B.

Nith District Salmon Fishery Board
37 George Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EB
Tel: 01387 267222
E mail: board@river-nith.com

Section A: The Law

1. The season starts on 25th February and ends on 30th November.
2. There is no fishing for salmon and sea trout on Sundays.
3. As of 2016 it is a legal requirement that all salmon captured must be returned.

It is illegal to:-

- Deliberately attempt to foul hook fish or to take fish which have been foul hooked i.e. those not hooked in the mouth.
- Kill kelts, smolts or parr.
- Take unclean or unseasonable fish being baggots, highly coloured, black or red fish and fish about to or in the process of spawning.
- Sell salmon or sea trout which have been caught with rod & line.
- Use natural shrimps or prawns on any part of the river upstream of the Kingholm Gates at the bottom end (tidal area) of the Dumfries Town Fishings.
- Fish for any fish without written permission (or permit) from the beat's owner or his representative.
- Fish with any form of salmon roe.
- Fish with a "fixed line."
- Use gaffs, tailers or knotted mesh nets.

All fish caught must be recorded with the beat proprietor with the exception of:

- a) Kelts, i.e. fish that have spawned.
- b) During spring only, sexually mature fish that have not yet spawned.

Breach of any of the above could lead to criminal prosecution, seizure of fishing equipment and vehicles.

Section B: Nith Rules

Regulations that the Board expect beat owners to impose.

The Nith Board expects all proprietors to implement the rules in Section B and to withdraw permission to fish from those who break them.

The rules have been carefully drafted to ensure their effectiveness whilst minimising the disruption to the legitimate fisherman. We hope that everyone to whom these rules apply will understand the need for responsible conservation based action and accept any inconvenience as part of ensuring the requirements to protect the fishery resource and to ensure that the fishery is sensibly fished

1. G.S.

In order to prevent the introduction of **Gyrodactylus Salaris (G.S.)** all angling equipment of whatever kind used outside Britain within the previous fourteen days **must** be decontaminated by either:

- (a) drying at a minimum temperature of 20 C for at least 48 hours, **OR**
- (b) heating for at least one hour at a temperature above 60 C, **OR**
- (c) immersing in a suitable solution. Virkon - 1% solution; Wescodyne - 1% solution; Na Cl (table salt) - 3% solution; Sodium Hydroxide - 0.2% solution **OR**
- (d) deep freezing for at least 24 hours.

Anglers will be required to sign a Declaration to this effect. The GS Form can be downloaded from the Nith Board's web site.

www.river-nith.com

2. Invasive species

No species of fish, bait or other wild animal or plant life of any type should be used or allowed to escape into the catchment.

3. Fish Conservation

- All salmon caught must be returned alive.
- All sea trout under 10" and over 3 lb must be returned.
- Fish retained should be limited to no more than 1 Sea Trout in any day.
- It is recommended that barbless hooks be used especially when the intention is to Catch & Release
- Foul hooked fish i.e. those not hooked in the mouth, must be returned to water.
- Ripe or darkly coloured fish should be returned to the water. If in doubt, RETURN it!
- Fish being returned to the water should not be handled by the tail and should be released as quickly as possible. Remove the hook with forceps and return the fish facing upstream and gently support it until it swims away.
- Fish being retained should be killed as quickly as possible using a priest or appropriate instrument.

Section C: Good Practice Our Recommendations

The Board recognises that the various Associations and Beat Owners on the river will wish to exercise their own rules and that many of these will necessarily vary.

We strongly recommend the following rules and conditions to anglers and to owners or Associations for inclusion in the beat's own rules.

General Rules

1. Respect boundaries between adjoining beats.
2. Anglers must show permits, tackle and catch to Bailiffs, Police Officers or other anglers if requested.
3. Anglers under 12 years of age should be accompanied by an adult when fishing.

Method & Equipment

1. Do not use sweep nets, ground bait or rod rests.
2. Do not fish from trees, bridges, etc. or use assistance from anyone in such a position.
3. When bait fishing or spinning, the bait/spinner must be kept moving through the water at all times.
4. The maximum permitted line breaking strain for all types of fishing should be 15lbs.
5. The maximum permitted hook size for bait fishing will be No 4.

Fly Fishing

1. Fly hooks or tubes should be properly dressed - with a coloured body and a reasonable quantity of hair/fur/feather in proportion to the hook size.
2. Anglers should not use weights or lead-core lines of any kind when fishing with the fly.
3. No retrieve, other than slow hand-lining should be made until the cast has been fished out.

Section D: General Conduct

It is important that all anglers know how to behave on the river and surroundings and that all participants are conscious not only of their own needs, but also the safety, welfare and enjoyment of others.

With this in mind they should:

- Always fish in a sporting manner.
- Give consideration to anglers on the opposite bank.
- Fish down through pools in rotation, taking at least one full step between casts.
- Avoid unnecessary wading or any avoidable disturbance to the water.
- Always respect the environment, wildlife, other anglers and members of the public.
- Not park vehicles so that they obstruct gateways or cause a hazard on the roadway.
- Remove waste nylon and personal litter from the river banks and parking places.
- Follow the Country Code. Always respect farm animals and crops.
- Not light fires or allow dogs to roam free.
- Always be conscious of and alert to hazards and look after their own safety and the safety of other anglers.

Remember to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself!

Re-Stocking Programme

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board operates a stocking programme, which introduces migratory fish fry into the river and its feeder streams when and where appropriate to do so.

Habitat Enhancement Project and Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

The District Salmon Fishery Board and Nith Catchment Fishery Trust operate a Habitat Enhancement Project the aims of which are to create good conditions for successful natural reproduction and growth of fish stocks. This includes combating bank erosion, developing cover and improving natural feeding.

The Project is advanced through the Trust Biologist with Board staff. The Trust is a registered charity whose primary aim is to secure the welfare of all fish species within the Nith Catchment.

The project is financed from a number of sources. Anglers are encouraged to support the venture through donations which can be sent to:

**Nith Catchment Fishery Trust
c/o Walker & Sharpe, Solicitors
37 George Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EB**

Alternatively donations can be made when purchasing permits through Fish Nith.

For more information on each of the above visit the Fishery Board website: www.river-nith.com

Keep a Watch Out ...

We encourage anglers to have an active regard to their own safety and security on the river. To protect yourself and the fishings:

- * Don't leave fishing tackle exposed in your car.
- * Keep an eye out for suspicious characters.
- * Report strange goings-on immediately to the River Enforcement Staff (07785 743663) or Police (0845 600 5701)

Clerks Notes on the Accounts
01.12.15 – 30.11.16

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Turnover

Assessments Receivable

The Sums raised by assessment issued to the Proprietors of Salmon Fishings within the District.

Payments from NCFT

Charges raised by the Board to the Trust for the provision of services, manpower and equipment by the Board to the Trust.

Consultancy Income

- This arises from the Board's activities in connection with supplying environmental audit reports derived from electro fishing and other monitoring data collected by the Board. The consultancy income generated has decreased over the last year. as a consequence of time spend managing the SEPA upper catchment project, time spent on WFR, reduction in hydro applications due to feeding tariffs reducing and saturation level approaching with windfarms

Refund of dues

The proportion of refund arising during this accounting year agreed to be paid by the Board to the Proprietors in the last fiscal year (round figures - £55,000).

Other operating income

Bank Interest

This is derived from Board investments. Interest rates have remained low and static during the last financial year.

Overheads

Wages & Salaries

The Board at the close of the financial year employed a Fishery Director and a Head Bailiff.

Grant to NCFT

The Board agreed some time ago to support the formation and initial running costs of NCFT. This period shows the year's level of support, which has reduced as a consequence of the Trust funding itself to a greater extent from projects involving the Trust

Trust Biologist's Fees

The Board contracts with the Trust for provision by the Trust Biologist of her services for electrofishing and biological work. There has been no contra charge to the Trust this year.

Staff Pensions Costs

These are linked to salaries paid by the Board paying a percentage of salary paid to the employees The Board contributes pension contribution of 7.5% of salary paid to employees who have pension plans. The Board has during the course of the year undertaken the necessary steps to comply with Government requirements to put in place a retirement pension scheme for its employees. Both employees have declined to take up the statutory pension scheme, but the Board will continue to provide access to the scheme for existing employees and new future employees .

Insurance

Premia increased in line with industry increases. In addition, there was taken increased indemnity insurance cover to satisfy the cover levels required by some of the companies with whom the Board carried out consultancy work.

Repairs & Maintenance

During the course of the year there were payments for office, hatcheries, boat repairs and maintenance, chainsaw and electrofishing equipment servicing, repairs and maintenance, shotgun safety inspection and maintenance etc.

Habitat & Hatchery Expenses

The Board is responsible for two hatchery buildings and re stocking work. Habitat Enhancement was carried out during the course of the year as detailed within the Annual Report.

Clothing Allowance

Payments for staff clothing.

Hire of Equipment

Hire of quad bike required for various projects in respect of which Consultancy Income is engathered.

Accommodation & Subsistence

Attendance of staff at Bailiffs and other Fishery related Conferences and meetings.

Clerk's Fees

Increased as a consequence of added workload on consultancy on Wild Fisheries Review and compliance with the 2012 legislation. The increase is in line with budgetary recommendations.

General Expenses

Subscriptions, Shotgun Licence renewal, hire of rooms etc. for meetings, etc.

Subscriptions

ASFB Subscription, Membership of Fish Legal and Institute of Fisheries Management.

Balance Sheet

Fixed Assets

Plant & Machinery

As detailed in the Fixed Assets Schedule.

Motor Vehicles

As detailed in the Motor Vehicles Schedule.

Current Assets

Debtors this year relates to outstanding consultancy income invoices at close of books. All assessments were engathered during the course of the year.

Current Liabilities

Relates to sums outstanding at close of books for the year.

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board

Balance Sheet
as at 30th November 2016

	2016	2015
£	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tenant's Improvements	1,798	1,998
Nightsights	829	1,036
Plant & Machinery	6,267	8,317
Motor Vehicles	27,174	36,232
	<u>36,068</u>	<u>47,583</u>
Current Assets		
Stocks and work-in-progress	10,503	-
Debtors	43,476	52,686
Prepayments	2,737	4,125
Clydesdale Cashflow Account	9,263	23,332
Clydesdale Cash Management Account	25	25
Scottish Building Society Scotplus Account	137,774	81,339
Scottish Building Society - SEPA funds	93,224	-
Scottish Building Society Vehicle Account	8,013	2,008
	<u>305,015</u>	<u>163,515</u>
Current Liabilities		
Funds due to other parties	93,001	-
Corporation Tax	45	-
Accruals	2,100	2,050
	<u>95,146</u>	<u>2,050</u>
Net Current assets	<u>209,869</u>	<u>161,465</u>
Net assets	<u><u>245,937</u></u>	<u><u>209,048</u></u>
 Income and expenditure account	 245,937	 209,048
Members' funds	<u><u>245,937</u></u>	<u><u>209,048</u></u>

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 30th November 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
Turnover		
Assessments receivable	182,872	182,860
Payments from NCF Trust	4,434	14,423
Consultancy income	83,558	116,279
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	270,864	313,562
Less: Refund of dues	(54,986)	(35,043)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	215,878	278,519
 Other operating income		
Bank interest	1,498	972
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income	217,376	279,491

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The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 30th November 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
brought forward	217,376	279,491
Overheads		
Wages and salaries	92,825	109,253
Grant to NCF Trust	26,250	35,000
Trust Biologists Fees	-	19,500
Staff pension costs	4,185	4,109
Staff training	1,260	65
Insurance	4,964	4,513
Repairs and maintenance	3,023	3,922
Hatchery and habitat enhancement expenses	-	3,426
Clothing allowance	1,430	1,384
Printing, postage and stationery	596	1,700
Telephone and internet	2,231	2,679
Hire of equipment	2,000	4,069
Motor expenses	10,890	14,366
Accommodation and subsistence	1,367	3,701
Promotional & public relations expenses	256	820
Clerk's fee to Walker & Sharpe	9,384	8,940
Audit fees	2,120	2,050
Bank charges	360	583
General expenses	1,967	2,264
Subscriptions	2,664	3,759
Depreciation	11,557	15,337
Losses on disposal of tangible assets	858	100
Gain on sale of fixed assets	-	(1,981)
	(180,187)	(239,559)
Surplus before tax	37,189	39,932
Taxation	(300)	(194)
Surplus for the year	36,889	39,738
Retained profit brought forward	209,048	169,310
Retained profit carried forward	245,937	209,048

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board

Fixed Asset Schedule
for the year ended 30th November 2016

£

£

Tenant's Improvements

Opening Balance		1,998
Less: Depreciation for year @ 10%		200
Closing Balance		<u>1,798</u>

Nightsights

Opening Balance		1,036
Less: Depreciation for year @ 20%		207
Closing Balance		<u>829</u>

Plant & Machinery

Opening Balance		8,317
Additions		
Telescope and tripod	900	
		<u>900</u>
		9,217
Disposals		
Software	200	
Laptop	105	
Water temperature logger	123	
Miscellaneous plant and machinery	430	
		<u>858</u>
		8,359
Less: Depreciation for year @ 25%		<u>2,092</u>
Closing Balance		<u>6,267</u>

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board

Fixed Asset Schedule
for the year ended 30th November 2016

	£	£
<u>Motor Vehicles</u>		
Landrover ST64 CVH - balance b/f	13,523	
Depreciation for year @ 25%	3,381	
		10,142
Isuzi SG15 EBC - balance b/f	22,709	
Depreciation for year @ 25%	5,677	
		17,032
Closing book value		27,174

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