

# **THE RIVER NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

## **MANAGEMENT REPORT AND REVIEW**

**1st December 2016 - 30th November 2017**



*"Caught at Cowhill"*

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# **AGENDA**

for the

ANNUAL QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS MEETING

for year

01.12.16 - 30.11.17

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1. Minutes of Annual General Proprietors Meeting 23.03.17
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 MEETING OF QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS**  
**HELD AT FRIARS CARSE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL**  
**AULDGIRTH, DUMFRIES**

on

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 at 10.00 am**

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**PRESENT**

Percy Weatherall – Chairman  
Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock  
Peter Landale – Dalswinton Estate  
Alan Nisbet – Buccleuch Estate  
Nick Wright – Closeburn Castle Fishing  
David Kempself – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association  
Wally Wright – Netting Representative  
Peter Hutchison – Netting Representative  
Thomas Florey – Angling Representative

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Simon Kelly  
Brian Fox  
John Davidson  
Tom Brown  
Karl Savege  
Mike Machin

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Roderick Styles – Clerk  
James Henderson – Fishery Director (FD)  
Deborah Parke – Nith Catchment Fishery Trust (FB)  
Davie McMichael – Senior Water Bailiff  
Julia Mitchell - Administrator

**APOLOGIES**

John Kingan  
Nick Brown  
Derek Hextall

The Chairman convened the meeting and welcomed everybody in attendance.

The Chairman referred to the Agenda.

**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chairman asked for comments on these Minutes. There were none. The Chairman sought formal approval for the Minutes, which was unanimously given.

**2. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report and asked for comments thereon. There were none. The Chairman sought formal approval for the Minutes, which was unanimously given

**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.

In response to a question the Clerk advised that Corporation Tax was raised on the investment income derived from interest on the Board's deposits held in Building Society accounts. The Clerk had many years previously received confirmation from the tax authorities that this was the Board's only taxable income. The Board's accountants drafted the tax return and submitted the final return on behalf of the Board. Accounts were also formally audited annually.

A query was raised about the nature of the Trust Biologists fees. The Clerk stated that the Trust had been set up and adopted charitable status to avail itself of alternative funding for organisations of charitable status, which was not available to the Board. There has to be a degree of separation in the operations of the Board and Trust and so the Board pays the Trust for its services and at the same time provides agreed grant aid to the Trust to allow it to function. Services rendered relate to research carried out by the Trust Biologist for the benefit of the Board. The Accounts were unanimously approved by all concerned.

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

JH referred to the Annual Report where completed work against each prescription is detailed as well as being in detail in the quarterly report. He concluded that they continue to work diligently at each prescription.

**5. A.O.C.B.**

No items were raised.

The meeting thereafter closed.

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

**on**

**3 July 2017**

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**Present**

Percy Weatherall - Chairman  
Nick Brown – Friars Carse  
Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock Estate  
Thomas Florey – Angling Representative  
Peter Hutchison – Netting Representative  
David Kempsell – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association  
Peter Landale – Dalswinton Estate  
Alan Nisbet – Buccleuch Estates  
Nick Wright – Closeburn Castle Fishing  
Wally Wright – Netting Representative  
Jim Gregory – Angling Representative

**Members of the Public in Attendance**

Tom Brown  
Karl Savege

**In Attendance**

Roderick Styles – Clerk  
James Henderson – Fishery Director  
Deborah Parke – Nith Catchment Fishery Trust  
David McMichael – Senior Water Bailiff  
Julia Mitchell – Administrator

The Chairman convened the meeting and welcomed everybody in attendance.

The Chairman referred to the Agenda.

**6. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report and asked for comments thereon. There were none. The Chairman sought formal approval for the Minutes, which was unanimously given.

**7. DRAFT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

The Chairman referred to the Accounts and the Clerk's notes thereon in the draft Annual Report, advising that he did not intend to comment on the Accounts unless there were specific questions. There were none. The Accounts were deemed to be approved.

**8. MANAGEMENT PLANS**

The Chairman referred to the management plans and asked for comments and questions. There were none. The Management Plans were deemed to be approved.

**9. AOB**

No matter was raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

## Chairman's Foreword

The year of 2017 for the fisheries world was one of uncertainty. We started the year with thoughts of amalgamation with our neighbouring river, the Annan. Discussions had taken place with representatives of the Annan and our river, and plans for managing both rivers were advancing in accordance with the Scottish Government's Wild Fisheries Reform. An announcement from the Government in the early spring of 2017 changed all proposed plans and most of the reform process was



abandoned. Managing fisheries into the future was to be continued by the traditional bodies of both Boards and Trusts. I always questioned the value of diluting our efforts in a larger Fishery Management Organisation, however we are back to business as usual with our own Nith Board and Trust.

Conservation of our fish stocks seemed to be taking a priority over other aspects of managing our rivers. During 2016 we had been assigned a category 3 conservation status by the Scottish Government, and all salmon had to be returned. This was elevated to a category 2 status for the 2017 season whereby fishers could take a salmon if they choose to do so but restraint was required. I am pleased to report that our Nith fishers saw sense and returned most of their catch achieving in excess of the 80% Catch & Release target requested by our river management. We look forward to the 2018 season with our, again elevated, category 1 status.

Whilst we continue to manage fewer fish in our rivers, of equal concern to us all, is the fact that fewer people are on the banks of our rivers fishing. We have taken steps to address this through the efforts of our Trust and their "Fishing for the Future" project. This project has been successful in giving young people the chance to experience fishing at various venues throughout the Nith catchment in a safe and enjoyable environment. Having seen the project in action, I am confident that we have recruited new Nith anglers for the future.

When numbers of fish are as low as they are currently, accurate information is key to all that we do in managing them for the future. In a bid to gain this information we are embarking on an exciting new venture to have fish counting facilities positioned in our rivers to enable accurate counting of the fish that pass them. It is hoped that information gained from these will aid future management decisions.

From an uncertain start to 2017 we head towards 2018 with a more certain future for our Board and Trust and look forward to a busier year on our river with our category 1 status.

Tight lines to all who fish our rivers!

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: -

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

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), however in recent years SEPA and SNH no longer have officer time available to fulfil these invitations.

### 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, Senior Bailiff David McMichael and part-time administrative support. 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 staff 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 staff also run the Board's hatchery operation 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.

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.

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 (*neopomacheilus 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.

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

| <b>River</b>   | <b>Bank length (km)</b> | <b>Instigation of scheme/s</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dalwhat        | 1.5                     | 1997                           |
| Spango         | 8                       | 1997                           |
| Upper Polneul  | 4                       | 1998                           |
| Marr burn      | 1                       | 1998                           |
| Kello water    | 6                       | 1999                           |
| Kello water    | 4                       | 1999, 2016                     |
| Nith           | 3                       | 2000, 2016, 2017               |
| Pennyland      | 3                       | 2000                           |
| Clauchrie Burn | 1                       | 2001                           |
| Carron         | 8                       | 2002                           |
| Cairn & tribs  | 1                       | 2003, 2016                     |
| Cample         | 4                       | 2004                           |
| Pennyland      | 0.5                     | 2005, 2016, 2017               |
| Wanloch        | 5                       | 2006                           |
| Shinnel        | 2                       | 2007                           |
| Lower Polneul  | 2                       | 2008                           |
| Craigdarroch   | 5                       | 2009                           |
| Mennoch        | 3                       | 2009                           |
| Nith           | 2.5                     | 2011                           |
| Nith           | 5.5                     | 2012                           |
| Crawick Water  | 7.5                     | 1999, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2017   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>77.5km</b>           |                                |

## 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 2017, over 150 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 2017, there are now four 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 table and graphs.

## ELECTROFISHING RESULTS – Annual Health check sites 2017

**Juvenile salmonids** – It should be noted that the sites selected are representative of salmon fry habitat and therefore densities of salmon parr, trout fry and trout parr are not comparable but there to show other species found.

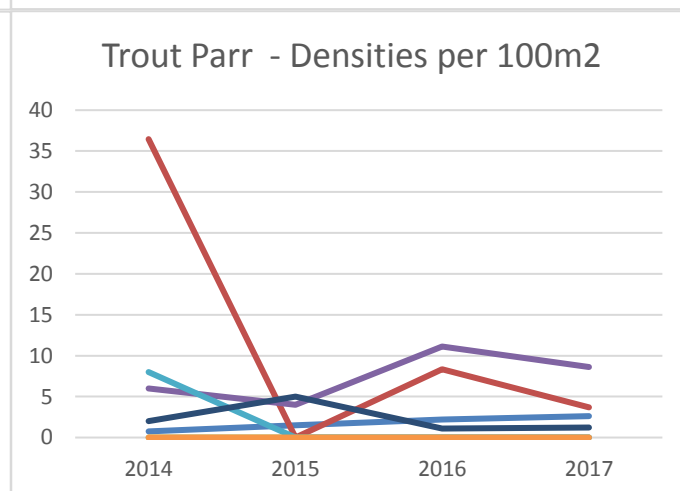
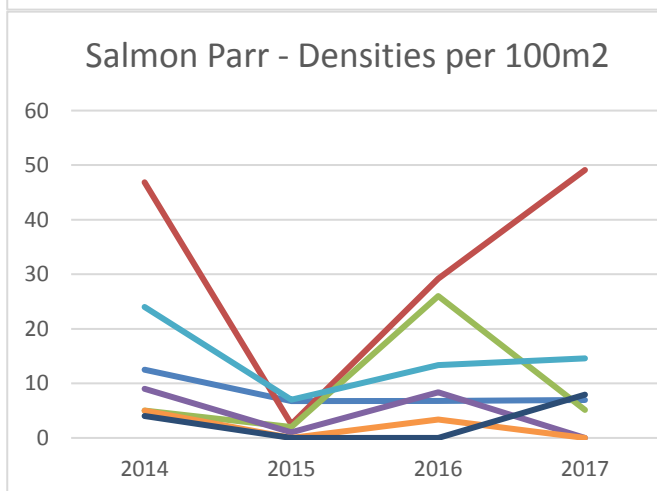
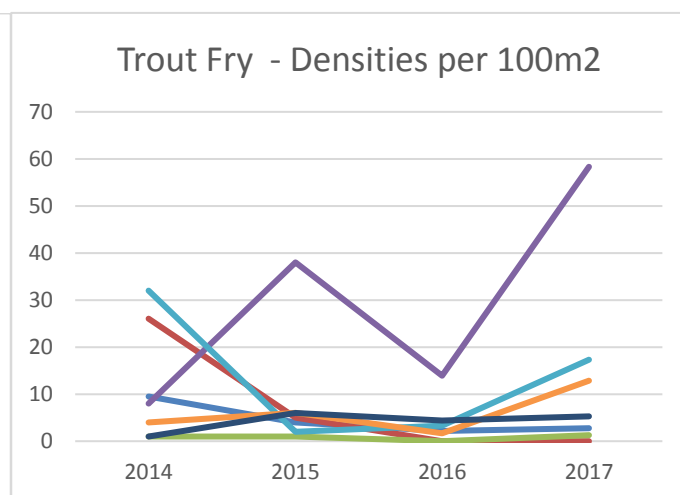
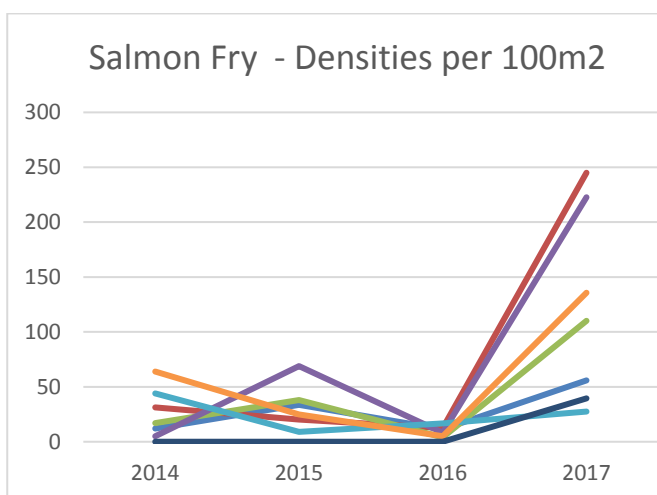
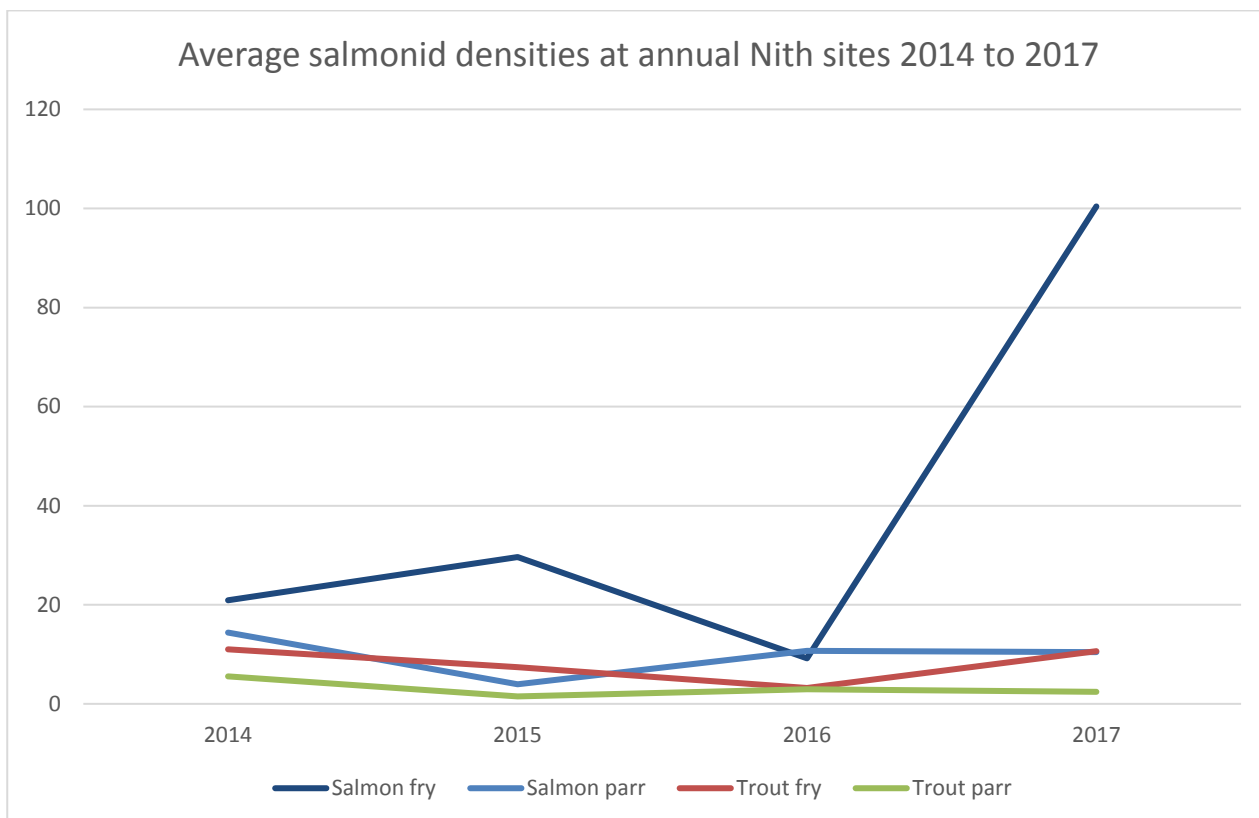
| Watercourse                  | Site code | Location                                    | Salmon fry (/100m <sup>2</sup> ) | Salmon parr (/100m <sup>2</sup> ) | Trout fry (/100m <sup>2</sup> ) | Trout parr (/100m <sup>2</sup> ) | Other species |
|------------------------------|-----------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Nith                         | 1         | Downstream of Nith Lodge, New Cumnock       | 131                              | 26                                | 5                               | 9                                | SL            |
| Nith                         | 2         | Downstream of Boig Road Bridge, New Cumnock | 34                               | 1                                 | 1                               | 0                                | SL, M         |
| Nith                         | 3         | Upstream of Guildhall Bridge, Kirkconnel    | 44                               | 0                                 | 5                               | 0                                | SL, M         |
| Nith                         | 4         | At Auldgirth New Bridge                     | 15                               | 0                                 | 0                               | 2                                | SL, E         |
| Afton                        | 5         | Upstream of Blackcraig Bridge               | 245                              | 49                                | 0                               | 4                                | -             |
| Crawick Water                | 6         | Downstream of Spango Bridge                 | 110                              | 5                                 | 1                               | 0                                | -             |
| Mennoch Water                | 7         | Upstream of confluence with Glenim Burn     | 223                              | 0                                 | 58                              | 9                                | -             |
| Scaur Water                  | 8         | Downstream or Bridge at Glenwhargen         | 28                               | 15                                | 17                              | 0                                | -             |
| Cample Water                 | 9         | Downstream of bridge at Kirkbog Farm        | 136                              | 0                                 | 13                              | 0                                | SL, M, E      |
| Dalwhat Water                | 10        | Upstream of Bailwood Plantation             | 39                               | 8                                 | 5                               | 1                                | -             |
| <b>Average of all sites:</b> |           |   | <b>100</b>                       | <b>10</b>                         | <b>11</b>                       | <b>2</b>                         |               |

Key to classification of salmonids per 100m<sup>2</sup>

|           |
|-----------|
| absent    |
| Very poor |
| Poor      |
| Moderate  |
| Good      |
| Excellent |

Key to other species:

|    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| E  | - | Eel         |
| M  | - | Minnow      |
| SL | - | Stone Loach |
| L  | - | Lamprey     |
| SB | - | Stickleback |
| G  | - | Grayling    |
| F  | - | Flounder    |
| P  | - | Pike        |



Key to Rivers:

— Nith - average   
 — Afton   
 — Crawick   
 — Mennock   
 — Scaur Water   
 — Cample Water   
 — Dalwhat Water

As can be seen in the above table and graphs, there was an increase in the number of salmon fry found at all sites. This is encouraging and one theory is that the mild weather and limited flooding events experienced during the 2016/17 winter period resulted in improved egg and fry survival rate. All of the sites surveyed are selected for their good fry habitat, specifically salmon fry.

Of particular note:

- It was encouraging to see the increase on fry numbers on the Cample Water as it had been noted in last year's report that there had been a consistent downturn in fry numbers for the last three years.
- Salmon fry and parr densities appear to fluctuate in the Crawick Water at the selected site. The majority of the Crawick Water contains excellent parr habitat but fry habitat is limited due to the presence of large substrate. This may go towards explaining these fluctuations.
- The Mennock is predominantly a sea trout river and this is reflected in the number of trout fry present.
- The suppressed salmon fry densities observed in 2016 appear to have been due to flood damage from the frequent strong flooding episodes experienced in the winter of 2015/16.

## 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.

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 2017 at the following locations:

| Species     | Number | Location       |
|-------------|--------|----------------|
| Salmon      | 53226  | Nith Greenburn |
| Sea trout   | 24290  | Nith Greenburn |
| Salmon      | 40600  | Crawick Water  |
| Brown trout | 2982   | Cairn Water    |

**Total fry stocked out 121,098**

The capture of adult broodstock for the hatchery is conducted during October/November of any year. 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

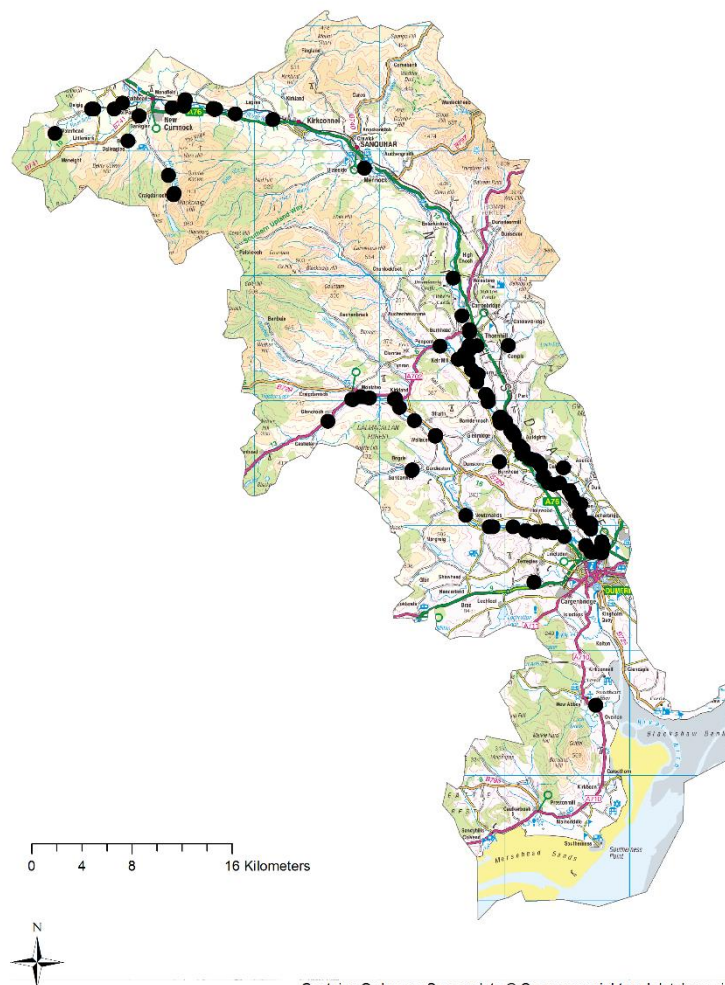
Although present in the Solway Firth, seals do not appear to be the threat that they are in other Salmon Districts. The Nith Board does have a licence and has the trained staff to be able to deal with any rogue seals that may cause issues. During 2011 the Nith Board had a member of staff trained as an 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 2017 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. Fourteen mink were captured during the period December 2016 to November 2017 inclusive; this is conducted at suitable times when the river is not in spate.

### American Mink Distribution in the Nith Catchment





## 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.

The Nith District Salmon Fishery Board considered its Category 2 status for the 2017 fishing season on the River Nith system, with the exception of the continuation of Category 3 status downstream of a line taken from Scar Point on the East bank of the estuary to Airds Point on the West bank of the estuary.

The Board notes the mandatory total catch and release requirement for salmon on all River Systems throughout Scotland to 1st April in any given year.

The Board notes the voluntary total catch and release policy for salmon from 1st April to 31st May on the River Nith system in any given year.

The Board recommends for conservation purposes that wherever possible total catch and release policy be adopted for the whole river system but taking into account the Category 2 status for the majority of the river system, if salmon are to be taken then no more than two salmon per person per season be taken with a view to achieving in excess of 80% catch and release of salmon for the 2017 season.

## 23. Salmonid Stocks

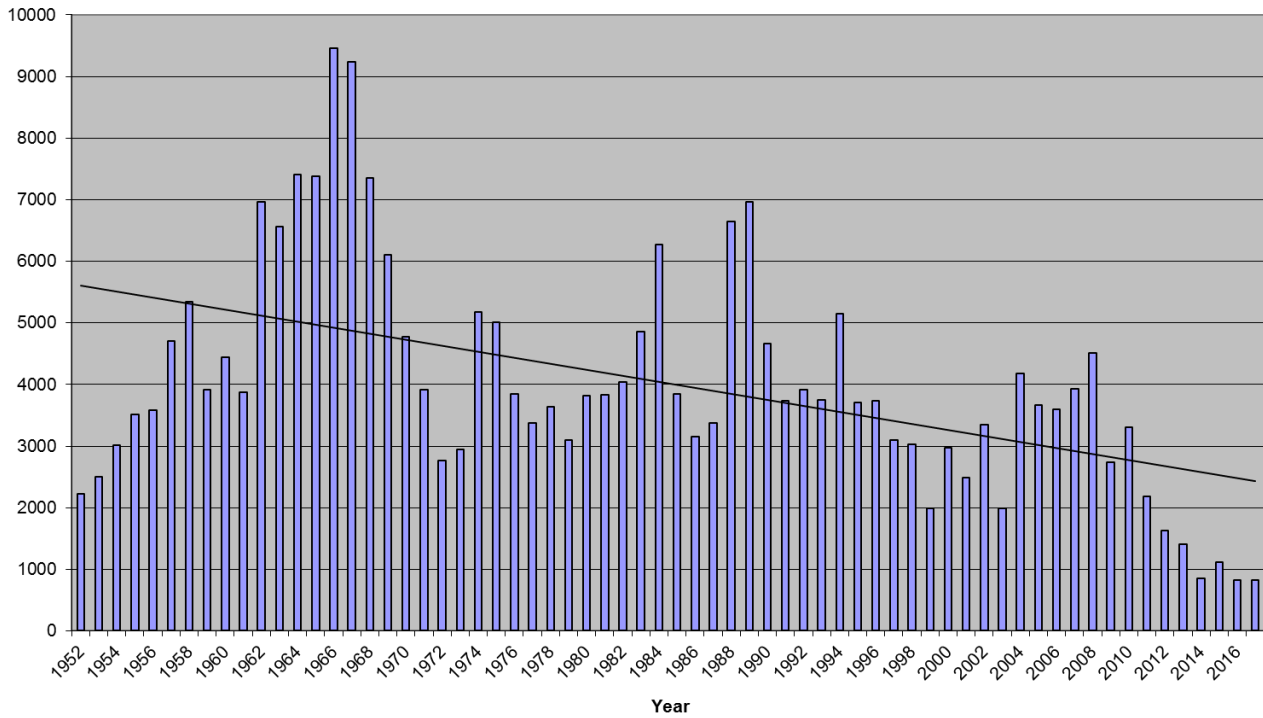
**Juvenile Stocks** Our surveys show that in general stocks of juvenile salmonids are at a satisfactory level in a majority of the catchment. There are, however, some tributaries in which numbers are well below optimum levels. Monitoring will help to determine which of these tributaries require Habitat 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<sup>st</sup> each year. In addition, the Nith Board recommends that no salmon should be killed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of June in any year.

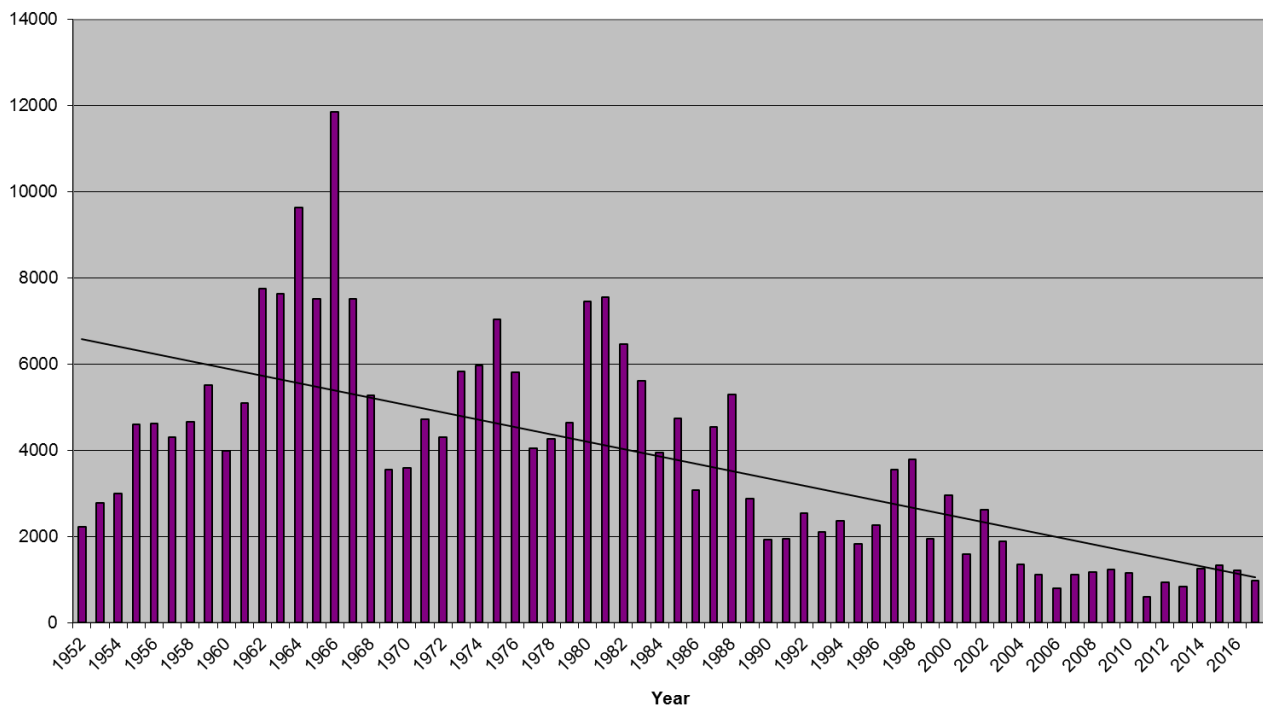
**Grilse and Autumn Fish** The availability of grilse and summer salmon plays an important part in providing fishing for local rods before many visitors come to the Nith for the autumn fishing.

**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 - 2017**



**Total Sea Trout Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2017**



## 24. Engineering and Other Works

### Open Cast Coal Mining

Open cast coal mining is reducing 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 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. These surveys were repeated during 2017. This construction project was due to complete during 2017 but has extended to 2018.

## **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 2017. 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 responded to this both directly and through the Fishery Director who sat on the Management Committee of the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (now Fisheries Management Scotland) and has input to their responses. During March 2017, an announcement was made by the Scottish Government that most of the proposals within the Wild Fishery Reform were being abandoned and that Boards and Trusts would continue to manage fisheries in Scotland.

## **29. Summary of Events from 01.12.16 - 30.11.17**

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: -

20<sup>th</sup> December 2016,

18<sup>th</sup> January 2017,

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 (Annual General Proprietors Meeting followed by Board members meeting),

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 (Annual Public Meeting followed by Board members meeting),

11<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

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, 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 2017

In 2017, we saw a change in emphasis for our Trust. Funding streams have altered and this has led to a change in priorities. In addition to the key work of supporting the Fishery Board and supplying the relevant data for management decisions to be made, the focus for the Trust has been the "Fishing for the Future" project. This project has given many young people the opportunity to experience fishing throughout the Nith catchment and hopefully recruited them to the ranks of Nith anglers for future seasons to come.

It is exciting to be working on our newly excavated pond at Blackwood which will be a valuable resource for the Trust as a venue to conduct aquatic research and general environmental education. The pond will be used by our aspiring young anglers and has already been enjoyed by some Rural Skills groups who have assisted with restoration works.

With the reduction in fish populations in all of Scottish rivers, the importance of measuring their performance has never been greater and our reliance on statistics, is required in all aspects of the work of the Trust. Some examples of this are the need to prove how many predators are on our river in order to obtain predator licences. We need to know how many adult salmon are running our rivers. We need to know how many fry and parr are in our tributaries. How many smolts go to sea. All anglers and netsmen have to provide an annual return of salmon and sea trout captured. We have asked anglers how long are they fishing for before they catch a fish. We record how many alien species are present in our catchment. All of the above numbers are a measure of the health and vitality of our river and used for comparisons with others.

I look forward to having the ability to accurately count the number of adult salmon running our rivers with the Boards proposals to install fish counters, but we must remember that the runs of adult fish are only one side of the population equation. The ultimate measure for our spawning tributaries is the number of smolts that are produced each year. Whilst we know, from previous research projects conducted, that the proportion of smolts which make it back to our rivers as adults is very small due to pressures on them in the marine environment, we want to send as many smolts to sea as we can. I look forward to potentially counting smolts on some parts of our catchment.

I am pleased to report that on our staffs fishing day during 2017 I caught my first fly caught salmon so I am enthused for the coming season.

# 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. During 2017, Scottish Government attended Nith Fishery Board meeting where it was decided that the creation of a new Fishery Management Plan would be suspended whilst we await the imminent production of the new Fishery Management Plan template from Scottish Government.

## 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 2 for the 2017 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 2017 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 (now Fisheries Management Scotland)
  - North Atlantic Salmon Fund (UK)
  - Atlantic Salmon Trust (AST)
  - 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.
- 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.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Local Organisations and Groups</b>     | Proprietors and Agents<br>Nith Haaf Net Fishers Association<br>Anglers and Angling Clubs<br>Local Authorities and Councils<br>Other Fishery Boards<br>Police Scotland   |
| <b>National Organisations (Fisheries)</b> | Scottish Government (Marine Scotland)<br>Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB now Fisheries Management Scotland)<br>Scottish Net Fishing Association<br>North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) |



|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Institute of Fisheries Management<br>Other Fishery Boards  |
| <b>National Organisations<br/>(Conservation/Protection)</b> | Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)<br>Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)<br>Forestry Commission (FC)<br>Environment Agency (EA)  |
| <b>Industrial Companies</b>                                 | Kier Mining<br>Highways Agency<br>Windfarm Operators<br>Network Rail<br>Hargreaves Surface Mining<br>Gas Infrastructure<br>Iberdrola, AMEC and Scottish Woodlands<br>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"> <li>• Bailiff team comprised 1 full time and 3 volunteer warranted water bailiffs</li> <li>• 19 incidents dealt with by enforcement staff – 4 incident of damage to spawning beds, 3 individuals cautioned, 11 coastal incidents (nets/boats), 2 incidents of gaffing on a spawning tributary, 1 incident of illegal culvert.</li> <li>• Advised Police Scotland on Enforcement issues</li> <li>• National Bailiff Development Group meetings attended</li> <li>• Attended National Bailiffs conference</li> <li>• Presented at National Bailiffs Conference</li> <li>• Met with Chief Constable Police Scotland</li> <li>• Chaired Crime Enforcement Working Group for Scottish Government</li> <li>• Marked legal exam papers</li> <li>• Contacted MSP's, Lord Advocate, Marine Scotland and Cabinet Secretary regarding coastal netting issues</li> <li>• Working with Marine Scotland Compliance on netting</li> <li>• Advised the Luce, Cree, Dee Kirkcudbright and Urr Fishery Boards</li> </ul> |
| Exploitation             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch and release 89% for salmon and grilse and 83% for sea trout by rod and line and 70% for salmon and 12% for sea trout by nets during 2017.</li> <li>• Assisted Scottish Government with categorization</li> <li>• Assisted D&amp;G Common Good with fisheries management</li> <li>• Altered Nith Angling code to reflect Scottish Government policies</li> <li>• Conservation promoted through education projects, outreach programmes and distribution of conservation codes</li> <li>• Nith Conservation working group met</li> <li>• Issued carcass tags to Haaf Netters</li> <li>• Presentation on Catch and Release to Burgh Anglers</li> <li>• Attended Annual Biologist's meeting</li> <li>• Angler Diaries issued</li> <li>• Ran Nith Sea Trout Experience</li> </ul>   |
| Engineering and forestry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulted on multiple engineering projects</li> <li>• Inspected flood damage on Nith prior to repairs</li> <li>• Seven electrofishing surveys carried out in connection with engineering works taking place throughout the catchment</li> <li>• 15 fish rescues throughout the catchment.</li> <li>• Consulted on Lochfoot to Brighthouse gas pipeline, SWS Overhead Powerline, Crawick Viaduct works, Bridge repairs for Buccleuch Estate, SEPA Laggan Burn and Upper Nith Flood projects, East Ayrshire Flood Project, East Ayrshire Water Mains replacement, Directional Drilling for Scottish Water at Kirkconnel and Durisdeer.</li> </ul>  |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attended all Open Cast Coal Mine TWG's</li> <li>• Managed Upper Nith river restoration project and Laggan Burn Restoration Project.</li> </ul>   |
| Renewables                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three surveys carried out in connection with renewables taking place throughout the catchment.</li> </ul>  |
| Planning and consultation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning lists checked on a monthly basis and responses made where appropriate.</li> </ul>   |
| Biosecurity                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crayfish refuge traps and Lochfoot Burn monitored for crayfish spread.</li> <li>• Japanese knotweed treated</li> <li>• All Nith Giant hogweed treated</li> <li>• Rainbow trout survey on Cairn Water completed</li> </ul>  |
| Habitat                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All habitat schemes checked and water gates repaired</li> <li>• Problem trees removed throughout catchment</li> <li>• Native trees re-planted in habitat schemes</li> </ul>  |
| Access                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 fish barrier reported to SEPA Laggan Burn</li> </ul>   |
| Water Quality              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twelve pollution incidents attended and reported to SEPA</li> <li>• Three invertebrate surveys completed</li> </ul>  |
| Marine survival            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acoustic monitoring station installed and maintained in Nith for Marine Scotland tracking project.</li> </ul>  |
| Governance                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Health and Safety at work Policies updated</li> <li>• Liaised with D&amp;G Assessors</li> <li>• All appropriate licensing requirements in place</li> <li>• Various meetings attended - see Section 29 for full list of meetings/events</li> <li>• Staff training carried out</li> <li>• Fishery Catch Returns compiled</li> </ul>  |
| Predation                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licenses applied for and gained to prevent serious damage to wild stocks of salmon/sea trout by cormorants, goosanders and seals.</li> <li>• License returns completed</li> <li>• 14 mink trapped</li> </ul>   |
| Fish stocks and monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016 catch data collected and reported on website</li> <li>• NCFT/NDSFB conducted electrofishing at 150 sites throughout the catchment</li> <li>• 10 annual electrofishing sites surveyed</li> <li>• Provided electrofishing data to SFCC</li> <li>• Applied and obtained planning permission and CAR license for Crawick Fish Counter.</li> <li>• Met and Liaised with Buccleuch Estates and all residents for Crawick Fish Counter</li> <li>• Adult fish sampling conducted and fecundity estimate taken.</li> </ul> |
| Hatchery                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 121,000 fry stocked</li> <li>• Post stocking electrofishing surveys carried out</li> <li>• Brood stock captured for fry production for 2017/18</li> </ul>  |
| Outreach                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Various shows and fairs attended - See Section 29 for full list of meetings/events attended</li> <li>• Presentations given to other organisations.</li> <li>• PR via website, social media, TV and newspapers.</li> </ul>   |

## **Incidents of illegal Fishing/Poaching Activities 1/12/16 - 30/11/17**

- 19 incidents dealt with throughout the catchment.

## **Nith Habitat Enhancement Projects - 1st December 2016 to 30th November 2017**

During 2017 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 (%) |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 20 <sup>th</sup> December 2016                     | 10 (max 15)                | 67                  |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2017                      | 8 (max 15)                 | 53                  |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2017 (AQPM & Board meeting) | 9 (max 15)                 | 60                  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2017 (APM & Board meeting)    | 10 (max 15)                | 67                  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2017                    | 8 (max 15)                 | 53                  |

| Board Meeting Dates  | Attendees (apologies/absent)  |
|--|---|
| <p>10<sup>th</sup> December 2016<br/><b>Board meeting</b></p>                                      | <p><b>Board members</b><br/> Percy Weatherall<br/> John Kingan<br/> Robbie Cowan<br/> Peter Landale<br/> Alan Nesbit<br/> Nick Wright<br/> Nick Brown<br/> David Kempself<br/> Wally Wright<br/> Peter Hutchison<br/> Richard Gladwin<br/> Danny Marshall<br/> Jim Gregory<br/> Thomas Florey<br/> Tom McAuchtrie</p> |
| <p>18<sup>th</sup> January 2017<br/><b>Board meeting</b></p>                                       | <p><b>Board members</b><br/> Percy Weatherall<br/> John Kingan<br/> Robbie Cowan<br/> Peter Landale<br/> Alan Nesbit<br/> Nick Wright<br/> Nick Brown<br/> David Kempself<br/> Wally Wright<br/> Peter Hutchison<br/> Richard Gladwin<br/> Danny Marshall<br/> Jim Gregory<br/> Thomas Florey<br/> Tom McAuchtrie</p> |
| <p>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017<br/><b>Annual Qualified Proprietor Meeting and Board Meeting</b></p> | <p><b>Board members</b><br/> Percy Weatherall<br/> John Kingan<br/> Robbie Cowan<br/> Peter Landale<br/> Alan Nesbit<br/> Nick Wright<br/> Nick Brown<br/> David Kempself<br/> Wally Wright<br/> Peter Hutchison<br/> Richard Gladwin<br/> Danny Marshall<br/> Jim Gregory<br/> Thomas Florey<br/> Derek Hextall</p>  |

| Board Meeting Dates   | Attendees (apologies/absent)   |
|---|--|
| <p>3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017<br/> <b>Annual Public Meeting<br/> and<br/> Board Meeting</b></p> | <p><b>Board members</b><br/> Percy Weatherall<br/> John Kingan<br/> Robbie Cowan<br/> Peter Landale<br/> Alan Nesbit<br/> Nick Wright<br/> Nick Brown<br/> David Kempself<br/> Wally Wright<br/> Peter Hutchison<br/> Richard Gladwin<br/> Danny Marshall<br/> Jim Gregory<br/> Thomas Florey<br/> Derek Hextall</p> |
| <p>11<sup>th</sup> September 2017<br/> <b>Board meeting</b></p>                               | <p><b>Board members</b><br/> Percy Weatherall<br/> John Kingan<br/> Robbie Cowan<br/> Peter Landale<br/> Alan Nesbit<br/> Nick Wright<br/> Nick Brown<br/> David Kempself<br/> Wally Wright<br/> Peter Hutchison<br/> Richard Gladwin<br/> Danny Marshall<br/> Jim Gregory<br/> Thomas Florey<br/> Derek Hextall</p> |

## **Appendix 2: Statement of Good Governance Compliance**

### ***Meetings***

The annual meeting of qualified proprietors was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 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. Six members of the public chose to attend. The minutes from this meeting can be viewed at [www.river-nith.com](http://www.river-nith.com)

The annual public meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 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. Three members of the public chose to attend. The minutes from this meeting can be viewed at [www.river-nith.com](http://www.river-nith.com)

In addition, further meetings of the Nith Board were held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017. 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 (%C&R) | Nets (%C&R) | Total | 10 year average |
|------|-------------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
| 2008 | 3764 (35%)  | 740 (0%)    | 4504  | 3268            |
| 2009 | 2095 (36%)  | 644 (0%)    | 2739  | 3342            |
| 2010 | 2336 (43%)  | 970 (0%)    | 3306  | 3375            |
| 2011 | 1637 (40%)  | 545 (0%)    | 2182  | 3344            |
| 2012 | 1283 (40%)  | 352 (0%)    | 1635  | 3173            |
| 2013 | 940 (59%)   | 465 (0%)    | 1405  | 3114            |
| 2014 | 520 (64%)   | 331 (1%)    | 851   | 2781            |
| 2015 | 702 (63%)   | 417 (0.5%)  | 1119  | 2527            |
| 2016 | 655 (100%)  | 163 (100%)  | 818   | 2248            |
| 2017 | 695 (89%)   | 133 (70%)   | 828   | 1939            |

##### Sea trout caught over the last 10 years

| Year | Rods (%C&R) | Nets (%C&R) | Total | 10 year average |
|------|-------------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
| 2008 | 961 (52%)   | 217 (7%)    | 1178  | 1658            |
| 2009 | 1104 (49%)  | 136 (10%)   | 1240  | 1588            |
| 2010 | 850 (44%)   | 303 (0%)    | 1153  | 1408            |
| 2011 | 515 (46%)   | 94 (0%)     | 609   | 1310            |
| 2012 | 782 (55%)   | 163 (1%)    | 945   | 1142            |
| 2013 | 671 (62%)   | 170 (8%)    | 841   | 1038            |
| 2014 | 1119 (87%)  | 132 (8%)    | 1251  | 1026            |
| 2015 | 1063 (80%)  | 283 (4%)    | 1346  | 1044            |
| 2016 | 866 (78%)   | 348 (40%)   | 1214  | 1089            |
| 2017 | 768 (83%)   | 214 (12%)   | 982   | 1076            |

## Appendix 5: Nith Salmon and Sea Trout Catches - Catch Statistics Returns 1952-2017

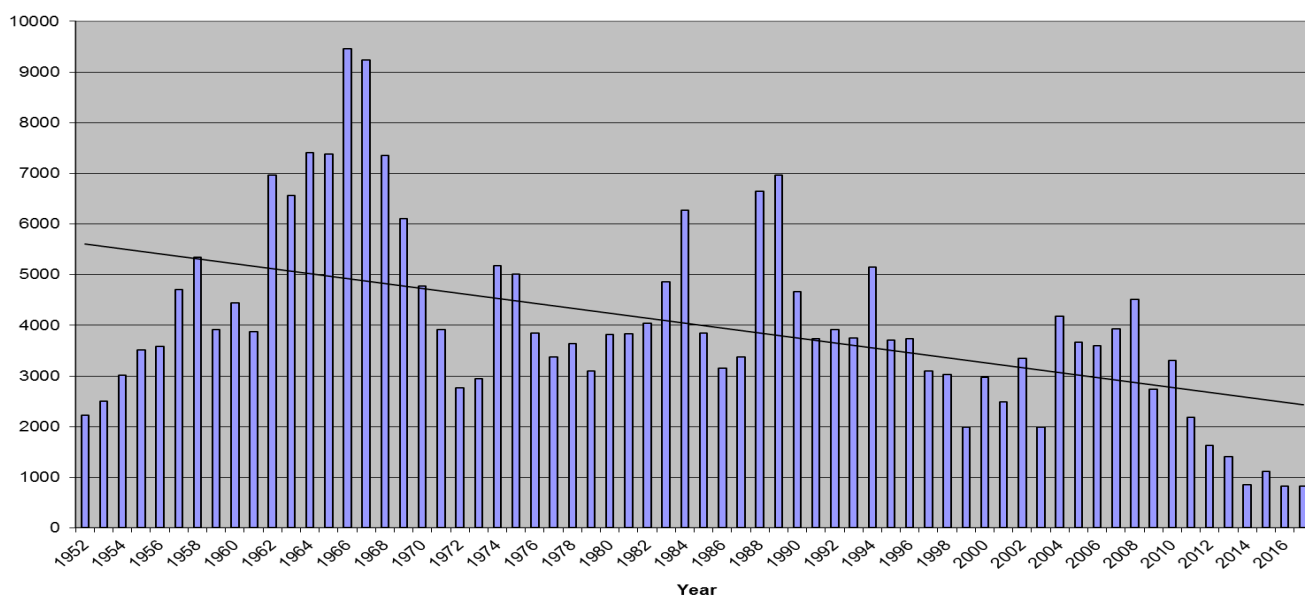
### Total Salmon and grilse caught all Methods 1952 - 2017

| 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            |

| Year | Retained | Returned | Total | 10 year average |
|------|----------|----------|-------|-----------------|
| 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            |
| 2017 | 116      | 712      | 828   | 1939            |

Total Salmon and Grilse Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2017

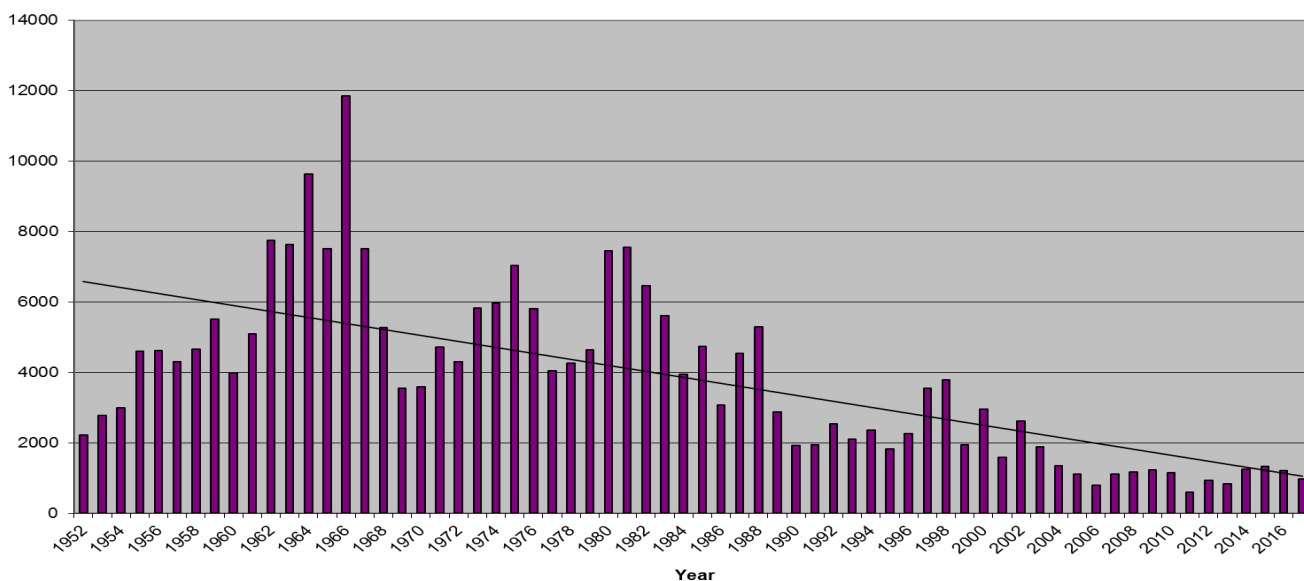


## Total Sea Trout caught 1952 - 2017

| 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            |
| 1984 | 3945     | -        | 3945  | 5686            |

| Year | Retained | Returned | Total | 10 year average |
|------|----------|----------|-------|-----------------|
| 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            |
| 2017 | 318      | 664      | 982   | 1076            |

Total Sea Trout Caught by all Methods 1952 - 2017



## NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD CONSERVATION POLICY 2017 (previously referred to as the Angling Code)

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Statutory Regulations</b></p> <p>Fishing seasons</p> <p>Rod and Line      25th February - 30th November</p> <p>Net                    25th February – 9th September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No fishing for salmon or sea trout on Sundays by rod and line</li> <li>No fishing for salmon or sea trout from 6pm Friday to 6am Monday by net</li> <li>No salmon to be taken till 1st April</li> </ul> <p>It is illegal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliberately attempt to foul hook fish or to take fish which have been foul hooked i.e. those not hooked in the mouth.</li> <li>Kill kelts, smolts or parr.</li> <li>Take unclean or unseasonable fish being baggots, highly coloured, black or red fish and fish about to or in the process of spawning.</li> <li>Sell salmon or sea trout which have been caught with rod &amp; line.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Fish for any fish without written permission (or permit) from the beat's owner or his representative.</li> <li>Fish with any form of salmon roe.</li> <li>Fish with a "fixed line."</li> <li>Use gaffs, tailers or knotted mesh nets.</li> </ul> <p>All fish caught must be recorded with the beat proprietor with the exception of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kelts, i.e. fish that have spawned.</li> <li>During spring only, sexually mature fish that have not yet spawned.</li> </ol> <p>Breach of any of the above could lead to criminal prosecution, seizure of fishing equipment and vehicles.</p> | <p><b>Nith Voluntary Regulations – Category 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board notes the existing voluntary catch and release policy for salmon from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> May.</li> <li>The Board recommends total catch and release of salmon for the whole river system. However, if salmon are to be taken, a maximum of 2 salmon per person per season be taken with a view to achieving in excess of 80% catch and release for the river system.</li> <li>All sea trout under 10" and over 3 lb must be returned.</li> <li>Sea trout retained should be limited to no more than 1 Sea Trout in any day.</li> <li>Barbless hooks be used when the intention is to Catch &amp; Release.</li> <li>Foul hooked fish i.e. those not hooked in the mouth, must be returned to water.</li> <li>Ripe or darkly coloured fish should be returned to the water. If in doubt, RETURN it!</li> <li>Fish being returned to the water should not be handled by the tail or gills 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.</li> <li>Fish being retained should be killed as quickly as possible using a priest or appropriate instrument.</li> </ol> <p><b>General Rules</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect boundaries between adjoining beats.</li> <li>Anglers must show permits, tackle and catch to Bailiffs, Police Officers or other anglers if requested.</li> <li>Anglers under 12 years of age should be accompanied by an adult when fishing.</li> </ol> <p><b>Methods &amp; Equipment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not use sweep nets, ground bait or rod rests.</li> <li>Do not fish from trees, bridges, etc. or use assistance from anyone in such a position.</li> <li>The maximum permitted line breaking strain for all types of fishing should be 15lbs.</li> </ol> | <p><b>Spinning and Bait fishing</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bait/spinner must be kept moving through the water at all times.</li> <li>The maximum permitted hook size for bait fishing will be No 4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Fly Fishing</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Anglers should not use weights or lead-core lines of any kind when fishing with the fly.</li> <li>No retrieve, other than slow hand-lining should be made until the cast has been fished out.</li> </ol> <p><b>General Conduct</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always fish in a sporting manner.</li> <li>Give consideration to anglers on the opposite bank.</li> <li>Fish down through pools in rotation, taking at least one full step between casts.</li> <li>Avoid unnecessary wading or any avoidable disturbance to the water.</li> <li>Always respect the environment, wildlife, other anglers and members of the public.</li> <li>Do not park vehicles so that they obstruct gateways or cause a hazard on the roadway.</li> <li>Remove waste nylon and personal litter from the river banks and parking places.</li> <li>Follow the Country Code. Always respect farm animals and crops.</li> <li>Do not light fires or allow dogs to roam free.</li> <li>Always be conscious of and alert to hazards and look after your own safety and the safety of other anglers.</li> </ol> <p>Report strange goings-on immediately to:</p> <p><b>River Enforcement Staff - 07785 743663</b></p> <p><b>Police – 101</b></p> |
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Catch and Release Guidelines can be found on the River Nith website [www.river-nith.com/conservation-policy](http://www.river-nith.com/conservation-policy)

**Clerks Notes on the Accounts**  
**01.12.16 – 30.11.17**

**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.

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 - £65,000).

**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. The Board took on during the course of the financial year a part time administrative assistant.

Grant to NCFT

The Board agreed some time ago to support the formation and running costs of NCFT to the level of £35,000. This period shows the year's level of support.

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 complies 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. Three Honourary bailiffs were engaged during the course of the year and were provided with the necessary 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.

#### Promotional and Public Relations Expenses

For website design update and hosting

#### 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 and some assessments remaining outstanding, one of which relates to withdrawal of the right to continue with netting and killing of salmon as a consequence of the Scottish Government's decision to ban the netting of salmon during the course of the year.

#### **Current Liabilities**

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