NITH CATCHMENT FISHERY TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2018

PUBLISHED MARCH 2019

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust, 37 George Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EB
01387 740 043 trust@river-nith.com www.river-nith.com

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

The aims of the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust are:

- To advance environmental protection and improvement by conserving and enhancing all species of freshwater fish and their environs within the River Nith catchment, for public benefit.

- To advance the education of the general public through raising awareness of aquatic ecosystems including their fauna, flora and economic activity within the River Nith catchment.

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY ANGLING ASSOCIATION

& Misses Robinson's Trust

Cover photo: Angling Taster Day at Blackwood Pond

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust is a Registered Scottish Charity. Charity no. SC040908. Company no. SC366067. Registered Office: 37 George Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EB. Registered in Scotland

Chairman's Foreword

The good news is that the main stem of our river, and its tributaries, are in good order. Salmon and Sea Trout are spawning in encouraging numbers and their progeny are thriving. Our electro-fishing programmes confirm healthy populations of young fish preparing for their journey to sea.

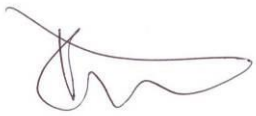
The bad news is that, in recent years, fewer and fewer of our fish have succeeded in returning, as adults, to the river of their birth. This pattern is mirrored throughout Scotland. The reasons for the decline are complex and, while research efforts are intensifying, not yet well understood.

Against this background your Board has, in recent years, made the conservation of the stock of fish that populate our river, a prime objective. In 2018 the Nith was 'promoted' to category 1 status. Your Board recommended a maximum of 2 salmon per angler be taken. I am pleased to be able to report that this 'catch and release' policy has been enthusiastically embraced by anglers throughout the Nith system and, during the year past, over 90% of rod-caught salmon were voluntarily released. Your Board thanks you for your restraint.

The reduction in fish numbers in the river has led, not unnaturally, to a reduction in angling effort. This has, in turn, led to lower income for riparian owners of all sorts. While our finances remain in good order for the time being a prolonged dearth of fish will have troubling implications for your Board. On the bright side, your Fishery Director and his team do a good deal of remunerative environmental consultancy work which produces welcome income. Writing this foreword gives me the opportunity to thank them for their hard work during the year past.

Anyone doubting the health of the River Nith and its ecosystem should walk its banks. There you will be struck by the rising numbers of fish-eating birds in evidence. To investigate this phenomenon, and to quantify the impact these birds may be having on our fish stocks, your Board is participating in the Scottish Government's piscivorous bird stomach analysis project together with colleagues from the Dee, Spey and Tweed.

To finish on an optimistic note: I am told that our Grayling anglers have been catching (and releasing) Sea Trout. Hopefully this bodes better for the forthcoming season. Tight lines to all who fish our rivers!



E.P.K. Weatherall
Chairman

Biologist's Comments

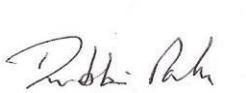
Having recently received all of the catch returns for the River Nith and collated the catch data, it is a depressing situation with continued decreased catch returns for both salmon and sea trout. Numbers of both species have been dropping for many years now but 2018 produced the lowest return figures on record since 1952. Whilst 2018 was not conducive to producing good fishing conditions with a long-term drought covering prime fishing months, this in no way masks that fact that fish simply did not return to our river in their former numbers. I have been looking at long-term trends in catch statistics and whilst the data shows peaks and troughs in recorded catches, we are now observing a long-term trend for both salmon and sea trout that is very worrying.

The catch return statistics do show that fishers are, in the main, taking responsibility for their actions and are returning most of their catches to the river. I do consider that sea trout are not given the conservation emphasis that salmon are.

Encouragingly, the juvenile surveys conducted during the summer of 2018 indicated good densities of salmon fry throughout the catchment. Our survey season was especially busy during 2018 due to the additional work from the Scottish Government's National Electrofishing project. This project is intended to provide data to the Government to be included in considering individual rivers conservation status. Within the Nith catchment, we conducted an additional 28 sites.

The Trust's Fishing for the Future project had a very successful year with more and more young people wishing to participate in the many varied outdoor education activities. The Nith Young Anglers has a full programme of events and our facilities at Blackwood have proven to be very successful. The pond is now fully operational and is mellowing after the major construction works. The facilities have proven their worth and are enjoyed by all who attend. The facilities have enabled us to include three new taster sessions to our events schedule and are proving popular. The proximity to our hatchery facilities expands the capabilities and deliverables of any activities that we run. Accordingly, the project has evolved into demonstrating to participants how they can turn a fish which they have captured into a tasty meal.

At the time of writing, we are enjoying the warmest February on record in Scotland and it serves to prove the point that we are vulnerable to whatever the weather forecast decides to throw at us with the resultant impact on species and habitats.



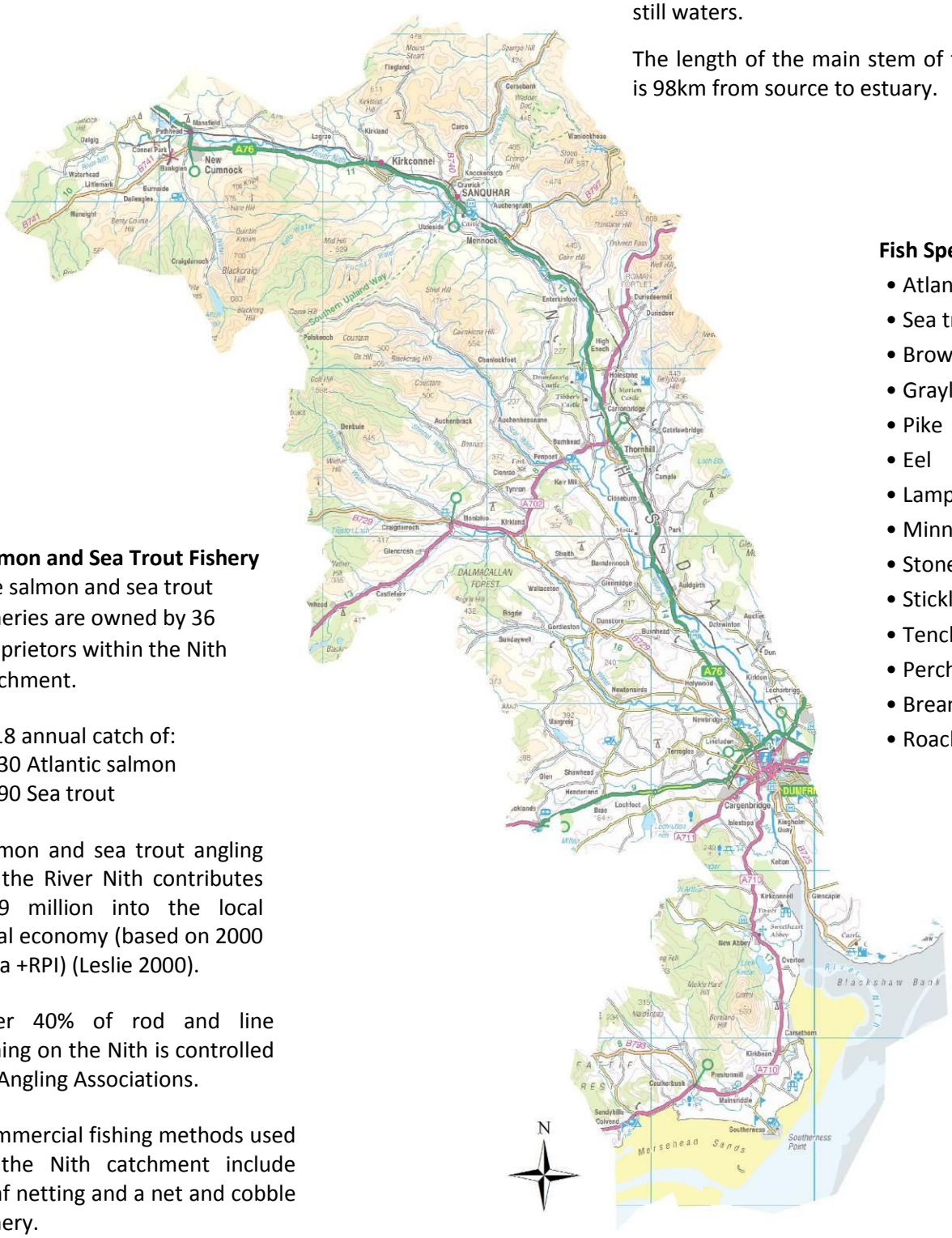
Debbie Parke
Operations Manager/Biologist
Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

The River Nith Catchment

Vital Statistics

The total catchment area is 1596km^2 which includes the main stem River Nith, its tributaries, coastal burns and connected still waters.

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



Fish Species Present

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

Salmon and Sea Trout Fishery

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

2018 annual catch of:
- 630 Atlantic salmon
- 590 Sea trout

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

Over 40% of rod and line fishing on the Nith is controlled by Angling Associations.

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

Other Fisheries

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

Overview of Fisheries Management work carried out during 2018 (Board and Trust)

Enforcement

- Bailiff team comprised 3 employed warranted bailiffs and 2 volunteer warranted water bailiffs
- 7 incidents dealt with by enforcement staff – 5 illegal fishing methods, 1 incident of spawning bed disturbance and 1 incident of breach of construction method statement.
- Continued Professional Development undertaken
- Supplied poaching exhibits to Police Scotland
- Obtained Dee (Kirkcudbrightshire) warrant cards
- Advised Police Scotland on Enforcement issues
- Advised the Dee Kirkcudbright and Urr Fishery Boards
- Policed commercial carcass tagging legislation Attended meeting with Environment Agency senior enforcement staff

Exploitation

- Catch and release 91% for salmon and grilse and 78% for sea trout by rod and line and 54% for salmon and 26% for sea trout by nets during 2018.
- Assisted Scottish Government with categorisation
- Assisted D&G Common Good with fisheries management advice
- Altered Nith Angling code to reflect Scottish Government policies
- Conservation promoted through education projects, outreach programmes and distribution of conservation codes
- Issued carcass tags to Haaf Netters
- Ran Nith Sea Trout Experience

Engineering and Forestry

- Consulted on multiple engineering projects
- Inspected flood damage on Nith prior to repairs
- 8 electrofishing surveys carried out in connection with engineering works taking place throughout the catchment
- 9 fish rescues throughout the catchment.
- Consulted on Lochfoot to Brighouse gas pipeline, SWS Overhead Powerline, Bridge repairs for Buccleuch Estate, SEPA Laggan Burn and Upper Nith Flood projects, East Ayrshire Flood Project, log jam at Buccleuch Estate, A76 Guildhall Bridge works, A76 Enterkin Roadworks, PA Forestry for culvert.
- Attended all Open Cast Coal Mine TWG's

Fish stocks and monitoring

- 2017 catch data collected and reported on website
- NCFT/NDSFB conducted electrofishing at over 150 sites throughout the catchment
- 10 annual electrofishing sites surveyed
- Provided electrofishing data to SFCC Participated in Scottish Government national electrofishing project

Planning and consultation

- Planning lists checked on a weekly basis and responses made where appropriate.

Renewables

- 8 surveys carried out in connection with renewables taking place throughout the catchment.

Habitat

- All habitat schemes checked and water gates repaired
- Replanting trees on Crawick and Pennyland habitat schemes
- Replaced fence on Pennyland habitat scheme
- Repaired fence on Wanlock habitat scheme
- Planted trees on Dalgig habitat scheme
- Problem trees removed throughout catchment

Access

- Obstruction tree cut on DGAA water
- Details of impassable road culvert near Kier reported to SEPA
- Observed sea trout ascending the falls on Pennyland Burn

Water Quality

- 4 pollution incidents attended and reported to SEPA
- 36 aquatic invertebrate surveys completed

Marine survival

- Completed all necessary documentation for seal licensing
- Discussions with AST regarding salmon tracking project
- Discussions with Inland Fisheries Ireland regarding sea trout tracking project

Governance

- All Health and Safety at work Policies updated
- Reviews and updated website
- All appropriate licensing requirements in place
- Various meetings attended - see Section 29 for full list of meetings/events
- Staff training carried out
- Fishery Catch Returns compiled

Predation

- Licenses applied for and gained to prevent serious damage to wild stocks of salmon/sea trout by cormorants, goosanders and seals.
- License returns completed
- 15 mink trapped

Biosecurity

- Crayfish refuge traps and Lochfoot Burn monitored for crayfish spread
- Japanese knotweed treated
- All Nith Giant hogweed treated

Hatchery

- 121,000 fry stocked
- Post stocking electrofishing surveys carried out
- Brood stock captured for fry production for 2017/18

Outreach

- 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.
- Various shows and fairs attended - See Section 29 for full list of meetings/events attended
- Ran Fishing for the Future programme in schools and groups
- Presentations given to other organisations.
- PR via website, social media, TV and newspapers.

Galloway Country Fair 2018

Fisheries Management

Conservation Regulations 2018

All Scottish salmon rivers are now assigned a Conservation Categorisation grading from 1 to 3. The definition of these Categorisations is provided in the box below. The River Nith was assigned a category 1 status for 2018.

Category (Grade) 1	At least an 80% mean probability of conservation limits (CL) being met in the last 5 years. Exploitation is sustainable and therefore no additional management action is currently required.
Category (Grade) 2	60-80% mean probability of CL being met in the last 5 years. Management action is necessary to reduce exploitation; mandatory catch and release will not be required in the first instance, but this will be reviewed annually. Where a Board does not exist, assistance in plan formulation will be offered to those responsible for local management.
Category (Grade) 3	Less than 60% mean probability of CL being met in the last 5 years. Exploitation is unsustainable and mandatory catch and release (all methods) for 1 year will be required. Management action is necessary to reduce exploitation.

Despite being assigned a Category 1 status, the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board considered that it was prudent to request that all fishers restricted themselves to a limited bag of two salmon for the year with an aspiration of achieving an 80% catch and release rate. This was achieve and exceeded on the majority of beats with an overall catch and release rate of 91%.

National Electrofishing Project

Due to the controversy regarding the Scottish Government's model for calculating the conservation status of individual rivers, the Government has decided to include juvenile stock data in addition to catch data for their modelling purposes. 2018 was the first year of juvenile stock data collection as part of this new initiative. The process to collect the juvenile data entailed 30 sites per river catchment, selected at random, being surveyed by electrofishing. The government selected the sites then individual river/fishery staff would go into the field and survey them. In addition to fish population data, genetic material and scale samples were taken.

Sampling in the Upper Scaur

The intention is that some of the sites surveyed will become annual sites, others will be surveyed on a tri-annual basis, with others being surveyed once over a nine year period. This is a very ambitious project that relies on funding being made available by Scottish Government for this purpose.

The surveying was very interesting and we found ourselves surveying areas never visited previously over the course of our working year. The purpose of this project is to enhance the Government's knowledge of fish to enable them to use the data when categorising individual rivers conservation status. The project took a large volume of time during the summer of 2018 but was very rewarding in the fishery information gained. It is the intention of the Scottish Government to produce a report of the work conducted by individual rivers monitoring in due course.

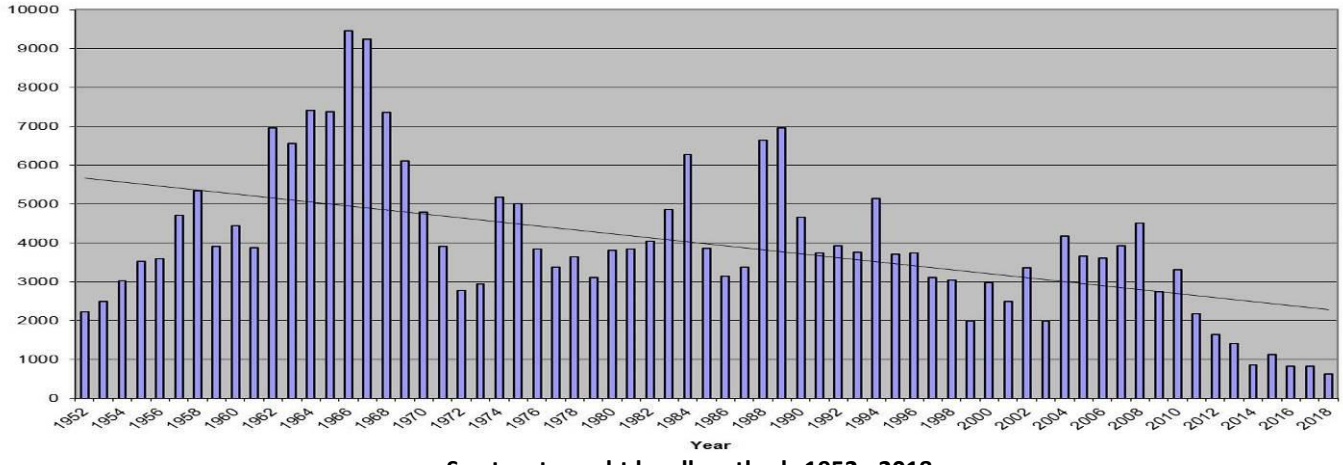
STOCK ASSESSMENT

Salmon and Sea trout catch data for 2018

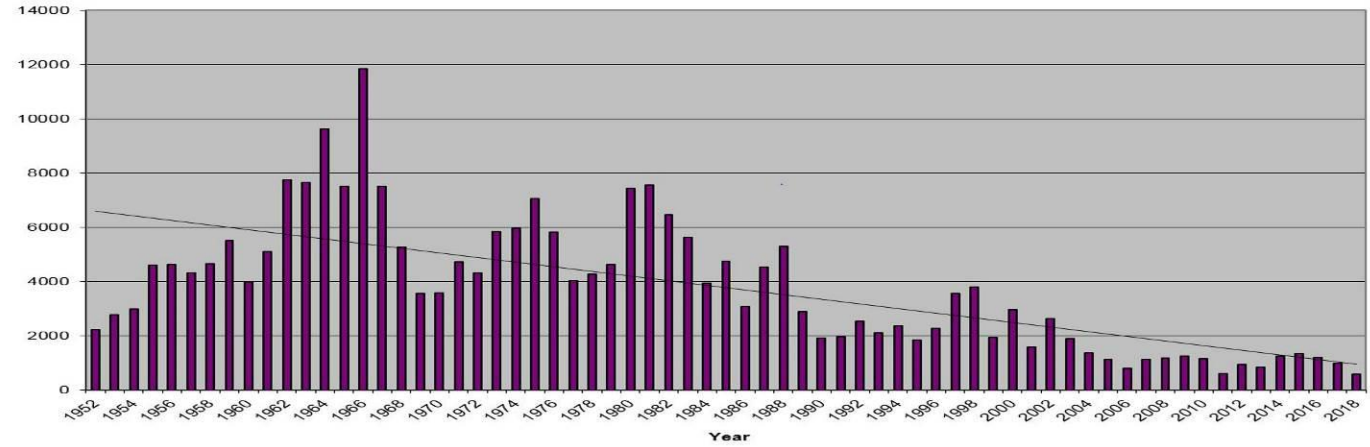
The reported salmon and sea trout catches for 2018 were the lowest on record. This did not come as much of surprise as the river conditions during the summer of 2018 were not conducive to good fishing. The prolonged period of low rainfall and hot weather meant that river levels were extremely low for the majority of the summer. This resulted in lower fishing effort during the summer by the rods but good numbers of salmon were caught during September once the river returned to reasonable water levels.

	Salmon and Grilse				Sea trout and Herling			
Year	Rods	Nets	Total	10 year average	Rods	Nets	Total	10 year average
2008	3764 (35%)	740 (0%)	4504	3268	961 (52%)	217 (7%)	1178	1658
2009	2095 (36%)	644 (0%)	2739	3342	1104 (49%)	136 (10%)	1240	1588
2010	2336 (43%)	970 (0%)	3306	3375	850 (44%)	303 (0%)	1153	1408
2011	1637 (40%)	545 (0%)	2182	3344	515 (46%)	94 (0%)	609	1310
2012	1283 (40%)	352 (0%)	1635	3173	782 (55%)	163 (1%)	945	1142
2013	940 (59%)	465 (0%)	1405	3114	671 (62%)	170 (8%)	841	1038
2014	520 (64%)	331 (1%)	851	2781	1119 (87%)	132 (8%)	1251	1026
2015	702 (63%)	417 (0.5%)	1119	2527	1063 (80%)	283 (4%)	1346	1044
2016	655 (100%)	163 (100%)	818	2248	866 (78%)	348 (40%)	1214	1089
2017	695 (89%)	133 (70%)	828	1939	768 (83%)	214 (12%)	982	1076
2018	520 (91%)	110 (54%)	630	1551	479 (78%)	111 (26%)	590	1017

Salmon caught by all methods 1952 - 2018



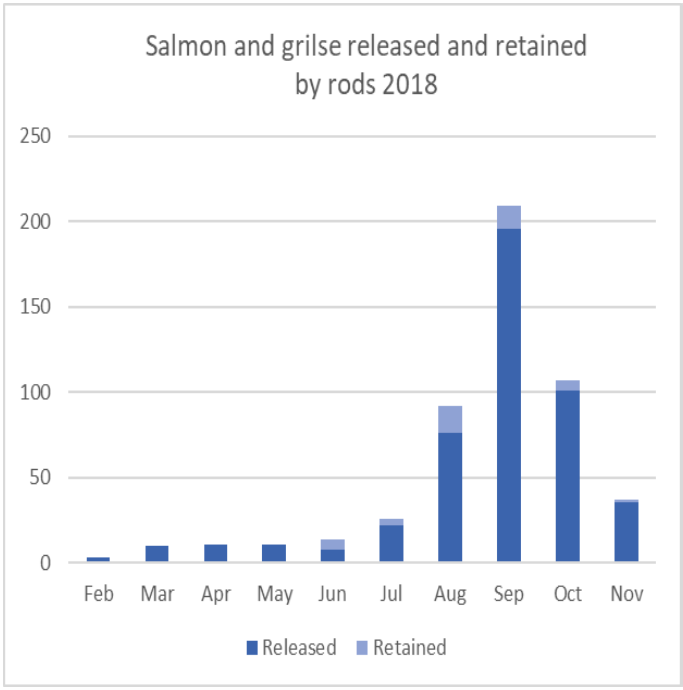
Sea trout caught by all methods 1952 - 2018

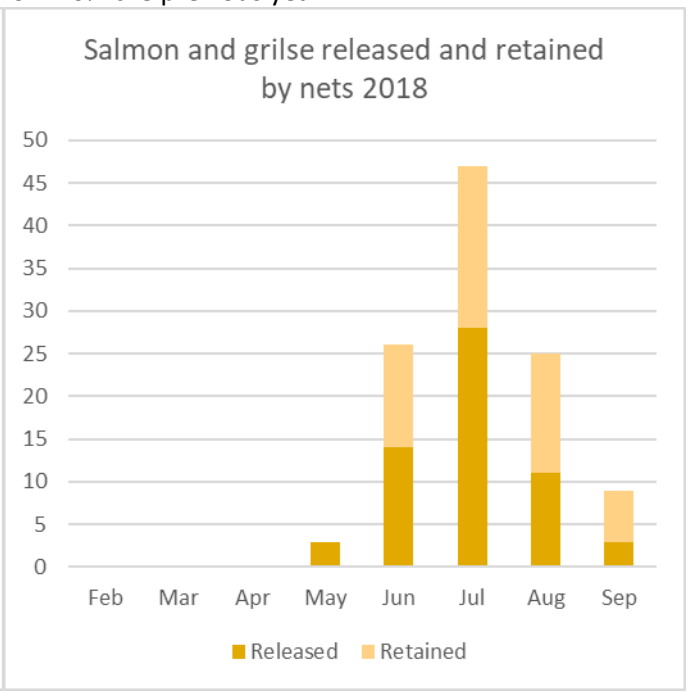


STOCK ASSESSMENT

Salmon and grilse catches in 2018

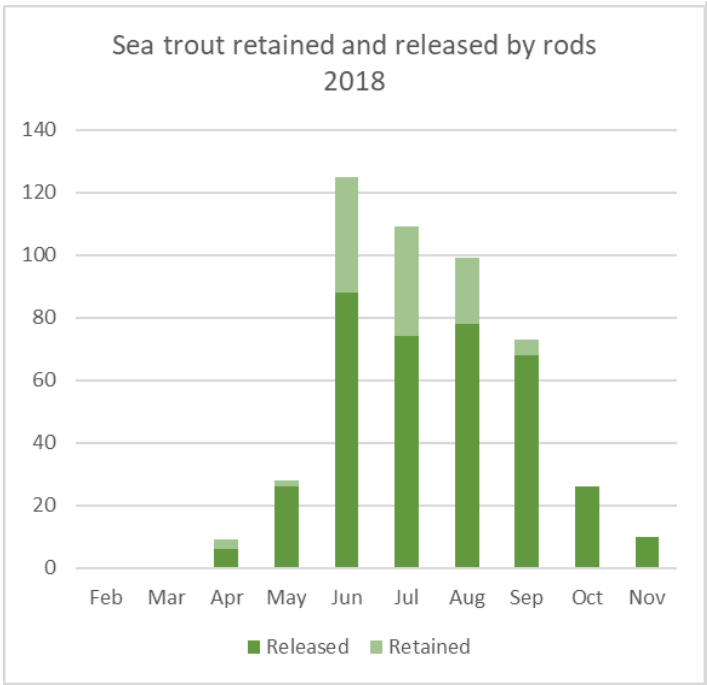
Using the catch data that is returned every year by salmon fishing proprietors we are able to develop a picture of when the fish are coming into the system and being caught. The majority of salmon were caught during September, once river levels had increased after a very dry summer. Over 200 salmon and grilse were caught over the length of the river during September, amounting to 40% of the total years catch. This follows a similar pattern that we have been observing lately where September is now the best month for catching salmon by rod and line. It was encouraging to see that the total C&R rate for rod caught fish was 91%. The majority of beats achieved the 90-100% C&R rates, however, three beats did not achieve the 80% C&R target set by the NDSFB for 2018. It was disappointing to see the C&R rates for the nets had decreased to 54% from 70% the previous year.

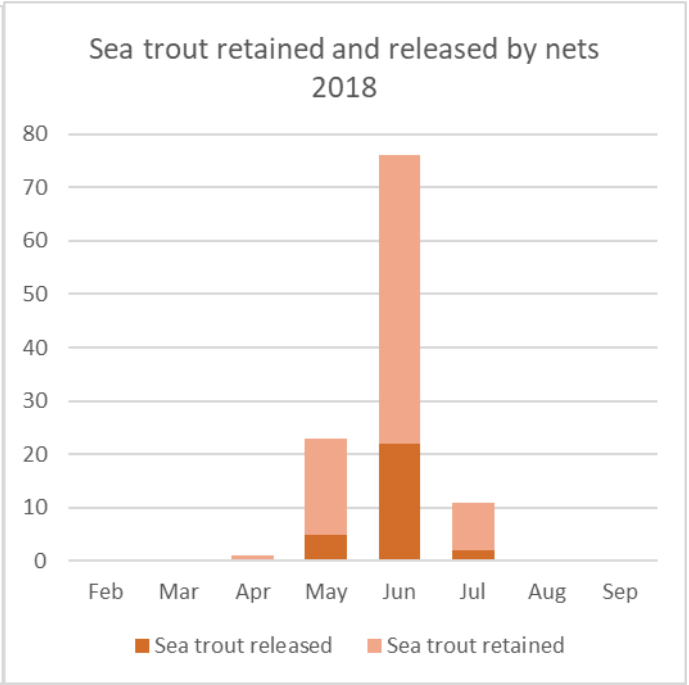




Sea trout catches in 2018

The charts below show the number of sea trout retained or released on a monthly basis by both nets and rods. As can be seen, the low water conditions did not impact on the sea trout catches in the same way that it did salmon. Sea trout catches were constant over the months of June, July and August with the bulk of sea trout being caught in June. However, the low numbers of sea trout being caught are definitely of concern. Given the low numbers of sea trout over the last decade, it was disappointing to see that C&R rates had decreased, both for rods and nets.





STOCK ASSESSMENT

Juvenile salmonid surveys 2018

Annual electrofishing for to assess the status of juvenile salmonid populations is an important aspect of the Trust's summer schedule. The NCFT works alongside the NDSFB to conduct surveys on over 150 sites every year. Some of these sites have been surveyed on an annual basis since the early 2000's whilst some of them are sites which have never been surveyed before. This provides us with an insight into the productivity of the River Nith as a whole and identifies any areas where there may be issues such as pollution, lack of habitat or barriers impacting on the number of salmonids. This information can then be used by Fisheries managers to assist in future management decisions.

In 2018, over 150 sites were surveyed between May and September by fully trained staff using a mixture of single run semi-quantitative and three run fully-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 2014, 10 sites were identified throughout the catchment to be surveyed on an annual basis to enable temporal comparisons to be made. These sites are located along the length of the main stem River Nith and within its main tributaries. The results from these surveys are displayed in the following table and graph.

Electrofishing results for the Ten Annual sites in 2018

Watercourse	Site code	Location	Salmon fry (/100m^2)	Salmon parr (/100m^2)	Trout fry (/100m^2)	Trout parr (/100m^2)	Other species
Nith	1	Downstream of Nith Lodge, New Cumnock	192.00	13.44	24.96	5.76	-
Nith	2	Downstream of Boig Road Bridge, New Cumnock	79.25	25.36	3.17	3.17	SL, Eel
Nith	3	Upstream of Guildhall Bridge, Kirkconnel	223.85	36.63	0	0	M, SL
Nith	4	At Auldgirth New Bridge	55.10	5.70	0	0	SL, M G
Afton	5	Upstream of Blackcraig Bridge	195.00	45.20	7.50	17.50	-
Crawick Water	6	Downstream of Spango Bridge	283.56	37.53	0	4.17	Eel
Mennock Water	7	Upstream of confluence with Glenim Burn	88.00	12.00	18.00	12	-
Scaur Water	8	Downstream or Bridge at Glenwhargen	97.28	19.76	4.56	0	-
Cample Water	9	Downstream of bridge at Kirkbog Farm	327.24	3.03	3.03	0	SL
Dalwhat Water	10	Upstream of Bailwood Plantation	2.74	54.66	0	27.4	-
		Average of all sites:	***154.40***	***25.33***	***6.12***	***7.00***	

Key to other species: E – Eel, M – Minnow, SL - Stone Loach, L – Lamprey, SB – Stickleback, G – Grayling, F – Flounder, P – Pike.

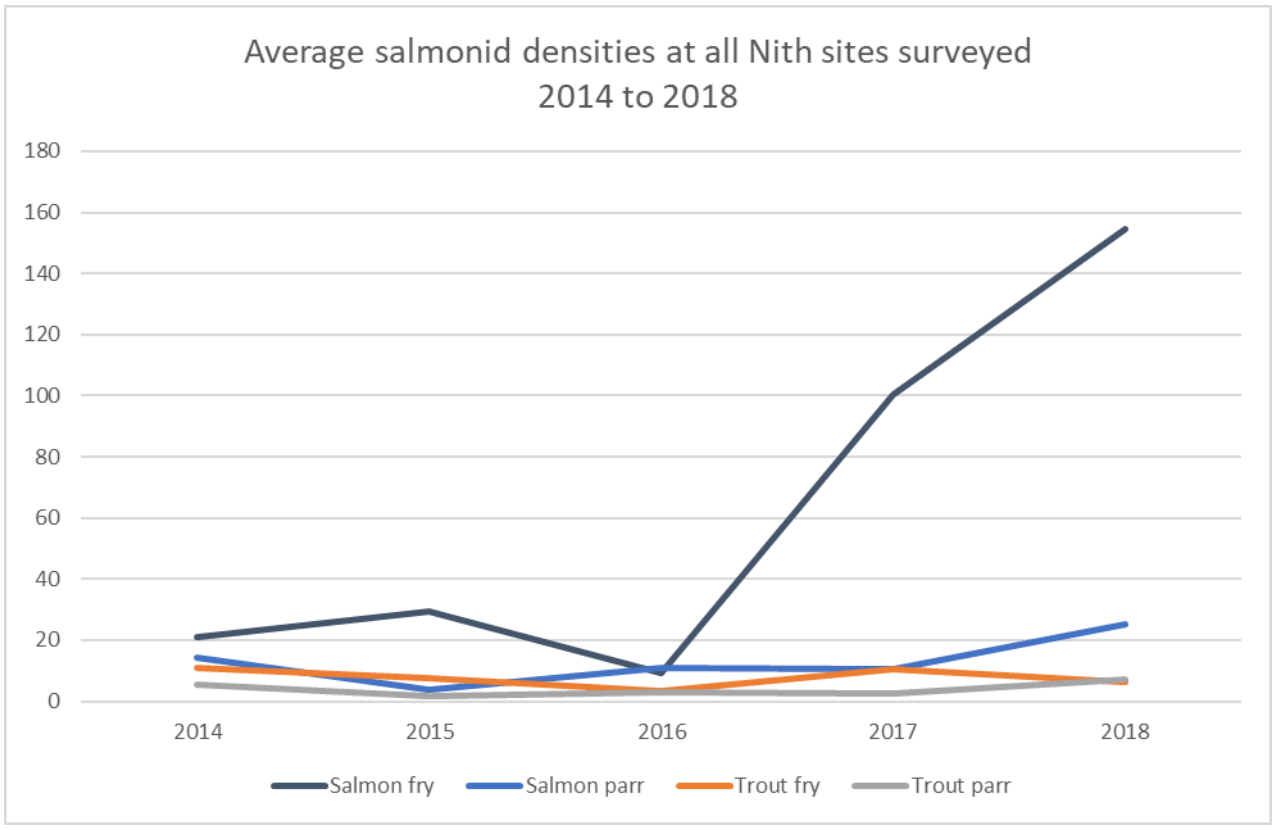
Key to classification of salmonids per 100m^2

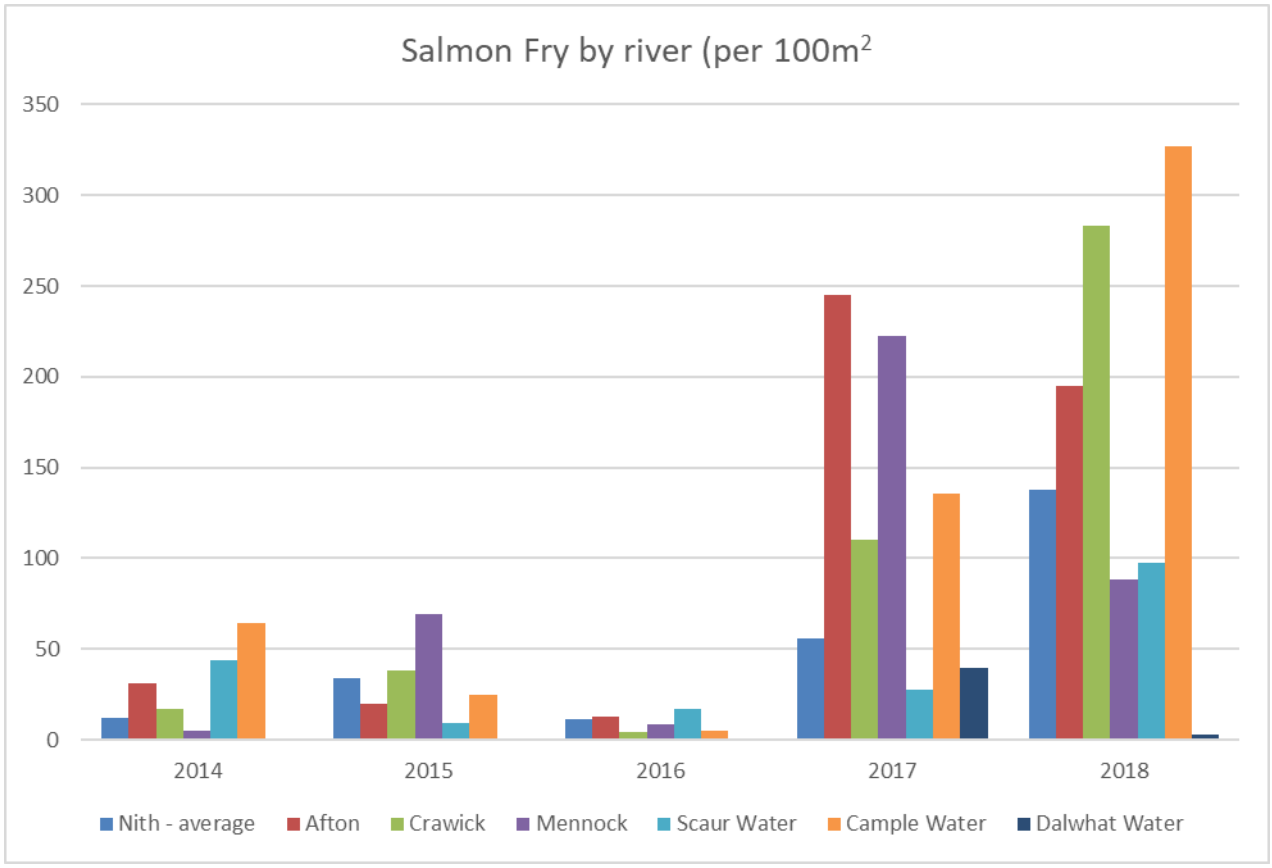
absent	very poor	poor	moderate	good	excellent

Overall, there was an increase in the average density of salmon fry found during the course of the annual surveys in 2018. This follows on from an increase in salmon fry densities in 2017 after poor numbers in 2014, 2015 and 2016. There was also an increase in salmon parr densities. Trout fry densities across the survey sites were found to be decreased slightly on previous years but trout parr have increased slightly. It should be noted that all of the sites surveyed are selected for their good fry habitat, specifically salmon fry. However, rivers such as the Mennock are well known for sea trout and therefore are more likely to contain a higher proportion of juvenile trout.

Stock Assessment

Juvenile salmonid surveys 2018 – Fish densities at Annual Health Check sites





HABITAT AND WATER QUALITY

Invertebrate surveys

During 2018, NCFT conducted more invertebrate surveys than ever before. These surveys are of high importance when evaluating the quality of the aquatic environment. Put simply, if the aquatic invertebrate population is missing, then it follows that the fish are also missing. Invertebrate populations provide us with an instant reading of the current state of a watercourse rather than fish, which provide a longer term environmental assessment.

Invertebrate survey (Gas Pipeline)

The reason that the Trust is conducting so many invertebrate surveys throughout the catchment is indicative of the volume and nature of the construction activity that is currently being undertaken across the catchment. In the upper most parts of the Nith, there are numerous windfarms being constructed. At the lower sections of the catchment a project to construct a gas pipeline connector to Ireland is being undertaken. Both projects require aquatic invertebrate surveys and the associated analysis.

This is extremely interesting work which we are doing increasingly more of and stands to protect our fish and the environment in which they reside.

East Ayrshire Roads Alliance

East Ayrshire Roads Alliance are managing the flood alleviation scheme at Leggate, New Cumnock on behalf of East Ayrshire Council. Part of the scheme proposals include measures to ensure that the Connel Burn does not over top in times of heavy rainfall and thus flood property in the conurbation of Leggate. NCFT have been involved with the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board to ensure that the construction works do not adversely impact on fish known to be present in the Connel Burn.

Connel Burn Flood Alleviation Channel

Construction procedures that have been necessary over the course of the scheme have involved entering the watercourse and could have potentially, been to the detriment of fish. Accordingly, fish rescues were performed in advance of those construction works and fish were removed to a place of safety temporarily to permit the construction activities to continue. When it was safe to do so the fish were permitted to re-enter the engineered section of river channel.

A section of the Connel Burn has had to be lined by impervious concrete walls and floor to ensure that property on the immediate river bank is not impacted by flood episodes. Such structures are not conducive to promoting fish habitats or migration. To assist in mitigating those potential impacts the constructors have designed a set of fish baffles to assist migrating fish through this section river. In a bid to offset any habitat loss due to the instigation of the concrete section the construction project has included some habitat planting on the section of watercourse upstream from the heavily engineered section.

This whole project is supported by an annual set of fish surveys which is reported back to East Ayrshire Roads Alliance in order that they and Nith fishery interests are fully appraised of any impacts on the fish community in the Connel Burn.

HABITAT AND WATER QUALITY

Changes in the Upper Nith catchment

2018 has been a year of change in the Upper catchment of the River Nith. Windfarms are planned for virtually every area of high ground in the catchment. Some are in construction and others are considering extending their already consented plans to enable them to take advantage of evolving technology and getting greater outputs from their windfarms.

In the flood plain, upstream of New Cumnock, the traditional coal mining industry is nearing completion. Coaling has completely finished on Kier's site at Greenburn and all efforts over 2018 have been in restoration of the site. Progress has been impressive with the perfect soil shifting weather experienced in the Nith catchment during 2018. Grass seeding was conducted immediately following soil spreading and growth rates were impressive with a hardy swarth being established as we entered the winter of 2018/19.

Restoration on Kier's Greenburn site

A major part of the restoration of the Greenburn site has been the reinstatement of the Dalgig Burn. The Dalgig Burn was formerly a salmon/sea trout spawning tributary but had a redundant hydroelectric scheme which included a dam constructed across its course. The dam was proven to be an impassable obstruction to fish migration. This area of the Greenburn site was excavated for coal extraction and the restoration of the Dalgig Burn, obviously was completed minus the dam. Water has been flowing in the restored Dalgig Burn since 2018 and we are hopeful that this watercourse produces stocks of salmon and sea trout in the future for the River Nith. We will be conducting annual monitoring of the Dalgig Burn in accordance with previously agreed planning documentation between Kier and fisheries interests.

Neighbouring the Greenburn site is the House of Water site operated by Hargreaves Surface Mining. This site has less than two years of coaling to be conducted and currently the site is restoring previously mined areas. The ground levels have been restored and await their final top soiling. One major construction project on the House of Water site is the construction of the channel to convey the former Craigman Burn back into the Beoch Lane and onward to the River Nith. The Craigman Burn is being reintroduced to the Upper Beoch Lane as far upstream as is possible, within the topographical constrains, specifically to benefit fisheries interests. The Beoch historically has suffered from lack of water during drought conditions and any additional water will protect the integratory of the Beoch as a viable fish habitat.

House of Water site

EDUCATION

Fishing for the Future project

NCFT has been managing the Fishing for the Future project as part of their education and awareness role for the last 10 years. The project has evolved over the years to the current programme which has be nationally acclaimed and held as an example to other fishery areas throughout Scotland. The current Fishing for the Future project delivers education via three initiatives: - school sessions, angling taster days and a Young Anglers club.

We consider the Fishing for the Future project to be very successful and it is resulting in more young people fishing our rivers and lochs. The project has been totally embraced by the fishing proprietors of the Nith catchment, without whose generosity the project would not be possible. NCFT acknowledges the assistance given to all who support the Fishing for the Future project.

Fishing for the Future School sessions
Outdoor education is an increasingly important part of the school curriculum and the NCFT is well placed to be able to deliver outdoor education sessions pertaining to the aquatic environment. These sessions all relate to the life cycle of the Atlantic salmon. During 2018, we delivered 43 sessions to eight schools in the Nith catchment.

Fish dissection

Invertebrate identification

Successful fishing trip

Cooking their catch

Advanced Biology Higher Education

The Trust has been requested to supervise/facilitate Advanced Higher qualification projects this year at St. Joseph's College and Dumfries High School. The subjects have included Aquatic Entomology and Geomorphology to a detailed level that will equip students with the skills required for entry level at University. The Higher Biology students from St. Joseph's College were keen to conduct projects that looked at the productivity and health of a local watercourse using aquatic benthic invertebrates as a biotic measure. This involved conducting two surveys at different locations on a watercourse and then comparing results after laboratory analysis. The pupils associated with these courses have a genuine interest and could potentially take up a career in management of the aquatic environment.

Kick sampling for aquatic invertebrates

Angling Taster Days

With the completion of the restoration of Blackwood Pond, situated next to our office and hatchery facilities, the Trust has been able to accommodate public events to promote angling to wider audience. The Trust ran three "Angling Taster Days", all three of which were oversubscribed. These days introduced young people to the sport of angling and professional angling instructors were on hand to teach them the basics of setting up and casting a rod before they participated in fishing. Blackwood Pond has been stocked with rainbow trout. One of our members, Mr Simon Duffin, has kindly arranged sponsorship for these fish.

In addition to fishing, participants are shown how to turn their catch into an over-ready meal and even offered cooking guidance to wet their appetites. Many of our Taster Day participants have signed up to our Nith Young Anglers 2019 programme.

Angling Taster Day – July 2018

Mother and daughter joint effort

How to set up a fly rod and reel

EDUCATION

Nith Young Anglers Club

Our Nith Young Anglers got off to a flying start at Dalswinton where they were invited to take the “first cast” of the 2018 season at the opening ceremony. Low and hold, a well mended kelt was soon captured to the delight of all.

A number of events were organised/facilitated including 9 days fishing throughout the River Nith catchment. The participants fished for a range of species including Rainbow trout, Sea trout, Salmon, Grayling, Pike and Coarse fish. We also fished on our coastal boundaries in the Solway for flatfish, dog fish and other seasonal species.

Opening Day on Nith at Dalswinton

Rainbow trout at Slatehouse, Drumlanrig

Rainbow trout at Blackwood Pond

Grayling from Nith at Dalswinton

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A major role of the trust is the education of people about the aquatic environment. The trust delivers this information in a number of ways. We support the secondary education subject, Rural Skills, taught in schools by providing opportunities for hands on practical work. In addition, we convey information to the public at open events such as D&G Environment Day and the Galloway Country Fair. The Trust also attends the schools careers days to provide young people with an insight into the role of a fishery assistant/biologist. Hopefully this inspires the next generation of fishery champions employed in management. Below is a summary of some of the events, meetings, conferences and training courses attended by Trust staff and volunteers during 2018:

Salmon fishing at DGAA, Carnsalloch

Events attended
D&G Environment Day
Lowther Country Fair
Galloway Country Fair
Wallace Hall Science Careers Day
Nith Sea Trout Experience
Holywood Trust Christmas gathering
Anglers scale taking workshop
St. Joseph's College STEM Ambassadors

Galloway Country Fair

CANDO session at Dumfries High

Meetings and conferences attended
NCFT Directors meetings x4
NCFT Annual General Meeting
Fisheries Local Action Group meetings
NDSFB Board meetings x4
NDSFB Qualified Proprietors Meeting
NDSFB Annual Public Meeting
FMS AGM
Funding meetings x2
Borderlines meeting

Nith Salmon Fishing Season Opening

Training completed
Outdoor First Aid

Cooking with Closeburn Primary

Education sessions
School field trips and sessions x 43
Hosted Angling Days at Dock Park x1
Nith Young Anglers Days x 9
Angling Taster Days x 3

Sea Trout Experience BBQ

Pond dipping

Rural Skills Pupils Fencing

Lowther Country Fair