

Strathspey Pupils Get to Grips with Salmon

Pupils from Aviemore and Craigellachie Primary Schools have been gaining an insight into the lifecycle of the salmon and its importance in the Spey. The opportunity was provided as part of the NORWAT project which involves four countries, Scotland, Finland, Norway and Sweden and is funded by the EU's Northern Periphery Programme (NPP). Environmental education and interpretation is one of the main themes and schools in each of the countries get the chance to learn more about a watercourse, not only for its environmental value but also in terms of the part that it plays in the economic, social and cultural life of the area.

During November 2004 pupils from both Aviemore and Craigellachie Primary Schools, visited the SFB Hatchery at Sandbank, Glenlivet and under the expert supervision of hatchery manager, Jim Woods and his team, they helped collect eggs from ripe females, watched them being fertilised and then placed on trays within the hatchery. Pupils then visited the Tervie Burn with biologist, Bob Laughton, and observed adult salmon spawning and completed a redd count.

In January 2005 an illustrated talk, introduced the pupils to the various fish species found within the Spey and the lifecycle of the salmon. Spey Board staff then

set up a classroom hatchery with around 250 salmon eggs in each school. Good husbandry is essential for the success and in each school the children worked hard to maintain low water temperatures, remove any dead eggs and record all events in a daily diary. Their efforts were rewarded with the salmon eggs successfully hatching into alevins. The pupils then monitored the development of their progeny for a few weeks before releasing the tiny fry into a nearby burn, wishing them well on their long and difficult journey.



Photo: Bob Laughton

During 2006 the project developed further with pupils in Aviemore receiving expert tuition in fly-tying and casting.

Pupils in Craigellachie conducted a study into the juvenile salmon in the River Fiddich and how warm water released from the local distilleries can affect the fish growth rates.

In August 2006 both schools came together for a days fishing. The Richmond Hotel generously donated their beat on the River Avon for the day and fishing on the

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Inverloch Pond was also provided by Mr John Irvine. Tuition in casting and fishing techniques for salmon and trout was provided and the pupils proved to be fast learners as several trout were captured through the day. Pupils also gained an insight into the invertebrates and juvenile fish populations of the River Avon by participating in a "Bugs and Beastie Hunt" and electro-fishing survey.

An important part of the project has been sharing experiences with the other countries involved. Both Craigellachie and Aviemore have established email links with schools in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In addition exchange visits have also taken place. The Spey Fishery Board, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Highland Council, hosted a two-day seminar on educational projects during May 2005. Delegates from Finland and Norway visited both schools and were entertained by an excellent DVD created by Aviemore pupils and a variety of powerpoint presentations at Craigellachie. Teachers from both schools made a return visit to Norway during May 2006 and Speyside will host a final project conference in Aviemore during April 2007.

Rosemary Garrity, head teacher from Craigellachie Primary School, said, "Educationally we feel it is very important for our children to learn about their local area. This joint project has offered inter agency working with different groups such as SNH, SFB and their contributions have enhanced the teaching and learning process. It is also important to work with other schools and we have today the opportunity to share a working day with the children of Aviemore".

SNH area officer, Zoe Taylor, agreed that the project is a great way for children to learn about the River Spey "The River Spey is internationally important for its natural heritage and is a fantastic local resource for environmental education. Getting local children involved in this way helps them learn more about why



Joan Springle - Richmond Hotel (back left) welcomes pupils from Aviemore and Craigellachie Primary Schools and members of River Spey Anglers Association, and Spey Fishery Board Staff to the Richmond Hotel fishing day.

the river is important in so many ways whilst at the same time having loads of fun."

Wendy Haywood, Junior Activities Co-ordinator from the River Spey Anglers Association said, "With less youngsters going fishing these days projects like these offer an excellent chance for children to learn about the importance of the salmon and sea trout to the economy and also to encourage them to come and try angling."



SFB wishes to thank the following for contributing to the success of the project:

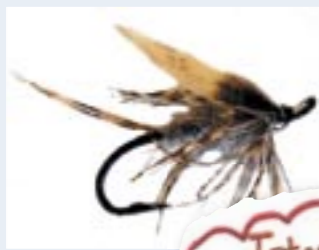


Simon Crozier, (Ghillie Strathspey Estate), Mel Macdonald, Wendy Haywood, Graeme Mackenzie, and Keith Williams (River Spey Anglers Association), Andrew Allen (Abernethy Angling Association), Les Pritchard, Ally Grant (Strathspey Angling Association), Geoff Charlton (Tomintoul Angling Association), Richmond Hotel, Mr John Irvine (Inverloch Pond), Mortimers Tackle Shop, Zoe Taylor (SNH).

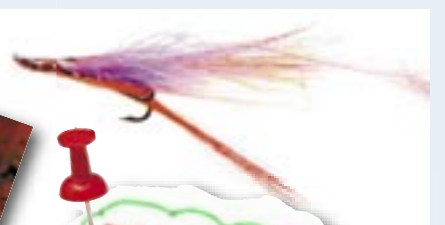
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I liked the bit when you zapped the fish and put it in a bucket and showed how long they were.



Interesting Fact
Ten pound girl Salmon can lay up to 7000 eggs

Interesting Fact.
The male Salmon fertilises the eggs before they can come out of the egg

Craigallachie Primary School
John Street
Craigallachie
Aber 2277
29/11/04

Dear staff of sandbank Hatchery. Thank you for showing us Harry and his girl friend. My favourite part was going to the river and looking for rubble and seeing the dead fish. I also liked when you washed the eggs. I did not like the tagging or the dice. It was very kind of you to let us come. We are looking forward to getting our own eggs.

Yours Sincerely
Jala



Bob took us down to the burn where we had to find weeds in the water and we found a dead salmon washed up on the grass. Daniel said that an otter had eaten it.



Salmon eggs



Interesting Fact.
The male Salmon has a big front tooth called a Kype.

male Salmon.



male salmon Wow



I caught a fish, it was small it was still a fish so that made my day.

If you take little ones fishing it may encourage them to fish

