

MONTHLY BRIEFING

Spey
Fishery
Board

September 2004

www.speyfisheryboard.com

SPRING RUNS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

The most recent collation of Spey rod catches shows that the good salmon runs evident in February - April 2004 have continued. Until 30th June a total of approximately 3,800 rodcaught salmon and grilse were reported, compared to 2,580 fish for the same period in 2003, and 2,208 in 2002 (Figure 1).

Tagging studies carried out by the Spey Research Trust in 1999-2001 suggest that anglers catch between 15% and 20% of fish in the river during February-June. On this basis approximately 19,000 - 25,000 salmon and grilse entered the Spey up to 30th June 2004.

Fishermen have continued to support the Spey Fishery Board's Salmon Conservation Policy, releasing 68% of fish caught in 2004 so far. This is an improvement for the same period in 2003 when 62% were released, versus 29% in 2002. As a consequence of the efforts of Anglers, Ghillies and Proprietors, 2,500 extra early-running salmon and grilse have been released to spawn in 2004.

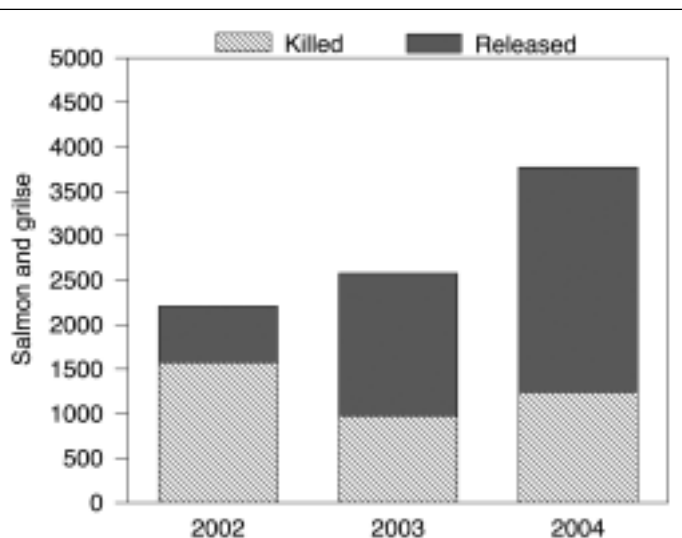


Figure 1. Rod catches of salmon and grilse from the River Spey during February-June, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

FishSpey Website Under Development

The economic survey commissioned by the Spey Catchment Steering Group in 2003 demonstrated that anglers spent £11.8 million in the local economy, supporting 367 jobs. The survey also showed that 65% of Anglers originate from outside Scotland, and these Fishermen contribute the most expenditure. Recognising the need to maintain this important sector of the rural economy, and to sustain the numbers of visiting Fishermen, the Steering Group recommended the development of an internet-based promotion and marketing scheme.

The screenshot shows a website layout with a dark header and a light main content area. The header includes the 'FishSpey' logo and several navigation links. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Fishing on the Spey' with a descriptive paragraph and a photo of a fisherman, and 'About this web site' with a paragraph describing the website's features and a photo of a fisherman. The footer contains copyright information for September 2004.

A 'FishSpey' website is currently being developed under the FishScotland franchise which includes similar schemes for the Tweed, Tay and Dee. With funding from the Spey Fishery Board, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Highland and Moray Councils. The site will provide a service for salmon, sea and brown trout, rainbow trout and pike fisheries to advertise fishing. Anglers will be able to book fishing through the website, and view current catches, water conditions, accommodation and management information. Currently 20 beats and angling associations are subscribing to the scheme for a two year trial period. It is hoped that the site will be launched in late 2004.

Any beat, association, hotel or trout fishery can subscribe to **FishSpey** at any time. For further information on prices and services provided please contact the Spey Fishery Board Research Office.

The following websites will also be of interest:

www.fishscotland.co.uk www.fishtay.co.uk
www.fishtweed.co.uk www.fishdee.co.uk

SPEY FISHERY BOARD RESEARCH OFFICE

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SIGNAL CRAYFISH WARNING

It has been confirmed by Fisheries Research Services in August 2004 that North American signal crayfish have colonised a tributary of the River Nairn, and are successfully breeding. The crayfish is a non-native species originally introduced to England, Wales and Ireland for aquaculture, which has since established in the wild and is now widespread. In Scotland there have also been introductions, with known breeding populations in the Rivers Dee (Kirkcudbrightshire) and Clyde. Localised colonies have also been found in ponds near the Rivers North Esk and Tay. The discovery in the Nairn is therefore their most northerly known location in the United Kingdom.

The effects of signal crayfish on the ecology of rivers and lakes are not fully understood. As for many non-native species, however, they are likely to have a detrimental impact. If they colonised the River Spey their impacts on salmon and trout would probably be:

1. Predation on juveniles and eggs;
2. Exclusion of salmon parr from winter shelter, increasing the risk of predation;
3. Competition for food;
4. Burrowing into soft banks, causing collapse and siltation of spawning and juvenile habitat.

Signal crayfish in the wild are officially classified as pests, and once established are almost impossible to eradicate. At its nearest point the Nairn catchment is only 20 km from the River Spey, but is separated by the River Findhorn. Every effort must be made to prevent the spread of crayfish in order to protect local salmon and trout stocks and the River Spey Special Area of Conservation.



Signal crayfish have been found in the River Nairn
(Photo: FRS Freshwater Laboratory)



It is illegal to introduce signal crayfish to Scottish waters.
(Photo: FRS Freshwater Laboratory)

**UNDER THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION IT IS ILLEGAL
TO RELEASE SIGNAL CRAYFISH**

- Import of Live Fish (Scotland) Act 1978
- Prohibition of Keeping of Live Fish (Specified Species) (Scotland) Order 1996
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

**PLEASE PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION OF
SIGNAL CRAYFISH TO THE SPEY**

- **Do not** keep them as pets in ponds or aquariums
- **Do not** introduce them for aquaculture or fisheries
- **Do not** release them illegally

**IF YOU FIND CRAYFISH IN THE AREA, PLEASE CONTACT
THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS IMMEDIATELY**

Spey Fishery Board Research Office: **01340 810841**
FRS Freshwater Laboratory: **01796 472060**
Scottish Natural Heritage (Aviemore): **01479 810477**
Scottish Natural Heritage (Elgin): **01343 541551**
Grampian Police Wildlife Liaison Officer: **0845 6005700**
Highland Police Wildlife Liaison Officer: **01463 720234**

Paul's Hill Wind Farm Judicial Review

At the instance of the Spey Fishery Board, a petition for Judicial Review of the acts of the Scottish Ministers in relation to the discharge of certain conditions of the consent for a wind farm development at Paul's Hill, Ballindalloch, was served on the Scottish Ministers on Friday the 10th September 2004. The petition is to be heard January 2005. As the matter is now subject to judicial process, the Board will not be making further comment at this time.