

2007 Season Opens

It hardly seems like four months have passed since the highly successful 2006 season closed. Yet the 12th February was soon upon us and with it the Opening Day of the 2007 season (it should have been the 11th, but this year that day fell on a Sunday and so there was no fishing).

A crowd had assembled at the footbridge at Alice Litter Park in Aberlour and a prayer and blessing were given by Mark Strange, who acted as Minister for the ceremony. Davey Leith, from Keith, had caught the first salmon of the 2006 season at Kinnermony and so, traditionally, the honour fell to him to pour the bottle of Glenfarclas whisky into the River Spey that would mark the beginning of a new season. To the accompanying sound of two pipers, Davey emptied the bottle into the river and the 2007 season was declared officially open.

Five fish were caught on the Opening day. The first – a fine 14-pounder - fell to a client of ghillie Sandy Smith

at Knockando. Others were caught at Tulchan, Wester Elchies, Craigellachie and Rothes. It was encouraging to see fish being caught over such a broad stretch of the river's beats and we hope that this bodes well for the season ahead. We wish you all "Tight Lines" throughout.

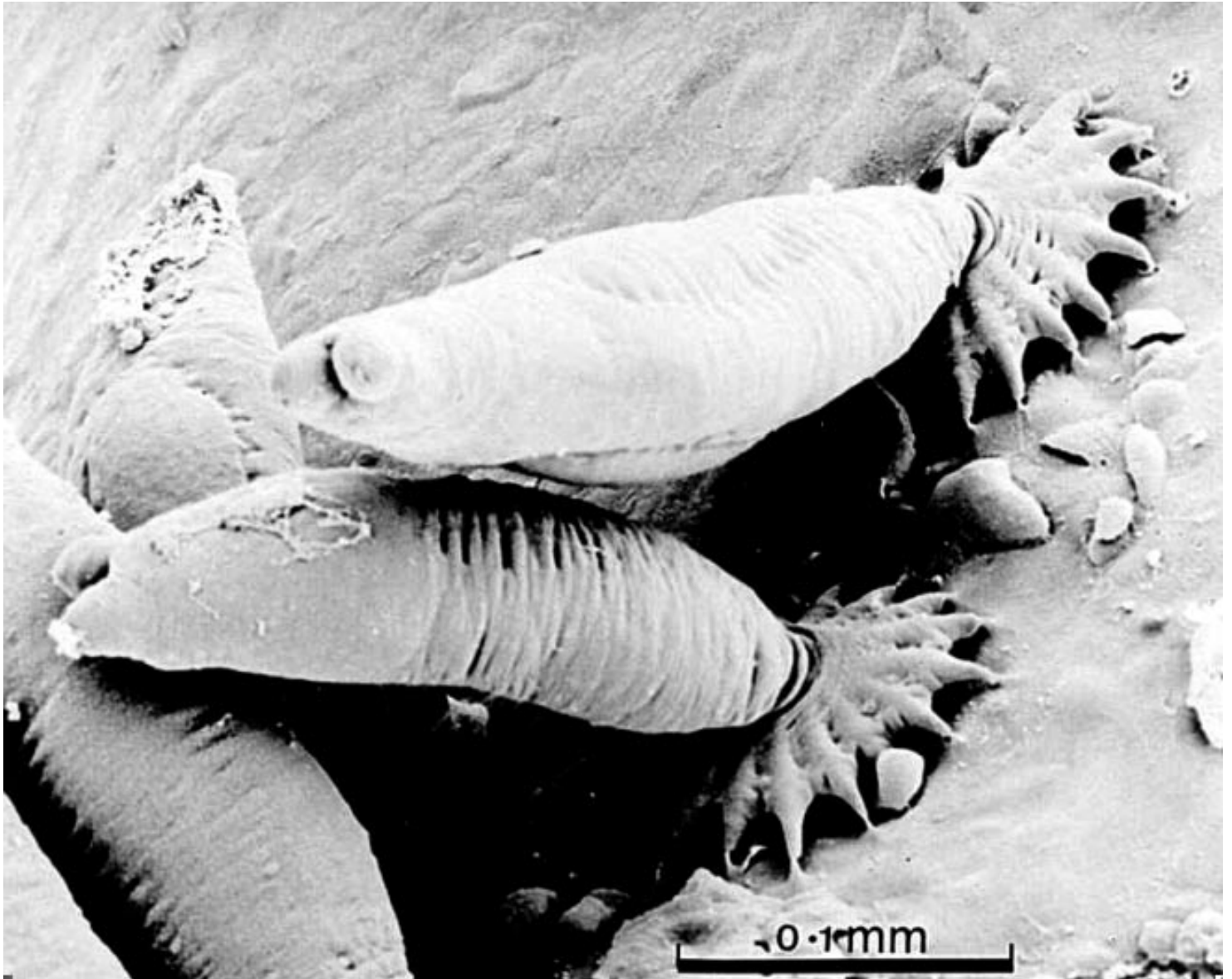


Hamish Munro, accompanied by sponsors Mrs Walker and Mrs Grant, began the proceedings at the Opening Day ceremony in Aberlour on 12th February 2007 (Roger Knight)

Angling on the Spey contributes £11.8 million each year to the local economy and provides 367 full-time jobs. Poaching therefore not only causes irreparable environmental damage, but also has a significant impact upon the local economy and causes damage to the rural community. We look forward to strengthening our already close ties with Grampian Police in order to control the poaching of these superb fish.

The Opening Day also saw Grampian Police launch "Operation Salmo" on the River Spey. Operation Salmo is a nationwide police operation against salmon poaching that will see greater cooperation between the Spey Fishery Board's Bailiffs, the police and – hopefully – the general public.

Keep Gyrodactylus salaries out of the Spey



Gyrodactylus salaris (GS) is the greatest threat to wild salmon in the River Spey, and the UK as a whole. It is a parasitic freshwater fluke which is indigenous to rivers in parts of Russia, Norway and Sweden, where salmon have evolved resistance to it. However, GS has spread to rivers in Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal where native salmon have no resistance, resulting in mass mortality of juvenile fish. In Norway infected rivers lost 98% of their salmon within 5 years. Infected rivers must be poisoned to remove all fish hosts, and barriers erected to stop salmon entering the river to spawn and generate more hosts.

GS can survive for 5 to 7 days without a host in damp conditions (e.g. angling clothing, waders, wet reels, lines or landing nets).

Currently the UK is GS-free. The economic and ecological consequences of GS entering the country and the Spey would be catastrophic. Please do your part to prevent GS from decimating the Spey's wild salmon by signing the Angler Declaration Form before fishing. The form is available from estate offices, ghillies and tackle shops, or it can be downloaded from www.speyfisheryboard.com