

## New Season Opens On The River Spey



*SFB Chairman Alan Williams and Minister Elizabeth Curran opened the new season at Aberlour on 11th February 2008*

**The salmon fishing season on the River Spey opened on 11th February amidst high hopes for yet another successful year. Last year saw over 10,000 salmon and grilse caught, as well as almost 2,200 sea trout.**

As keen anglers gathered at the footbridge at Alice Littler Park in Aberlour for the Opening Ceremony, once again generously sponsored by Walkers and Glenfarclas, a prayer and blessing were given by Minister Elizabeth Curran. In the time-honoured tradition, a bottle of Glenfarclas whisky was poured into the River Spey to the accompanying sound of a piper and the 2008 season was declared officially open by the Chairman of the Spey Fishery Board, Alan Williams.

The volume of salmon catches over the last few years has not been the only reason for optimism; 2007 also saw the continued success of the Spey Fishery Board's voluntary Catch and Release policy, under which anglers are encouraged to release the fish they catch so that they can return to the natural environment from which they came in order to spawn. Last year 7,140 salmon and grilse were returned to the River to spawn. Assuming that at least 50% of these were hen fish, and with an average yield of 5,000 eggs each, this means

that almost 18 million salmon eggs will have been deposited throughout the Spey's catchment. For the last two years, over 70% of all salmon and grilse caught on the River Spey have been returned to the River to spawn. With concern still high about the poor survival rate of salmon at sea, this is a very creditable achievement for such a large River as the Spey. The Spey Fishery Board is grateful to all proprietors, ghillies and anglers for their active support and cooperation for the policy.

### Sea Trout Concerns

The dwindling numbers of sea trout around Moray Firth Rivers have also been a cause for concern. Here too, though, anglers have responded positively by returning over 50% of their catches to the river, in the hope that an increase in the numbers of fish available to spawn will help redress the situation. District Salmon Fishery Boards throughout the region are sponsoring a Moray Firth Sea Trout Project, which will see the recruitment of a marine biologist who will be tasked to identify reasons behind this decline in sea trout numbers. Over the next three years, and having identified the likely causes, he or she will also be tasked to introduce management plans to try to reverse this worrying trend.

Whilst nothing is ever certain about this captivating sport, we look forward in anticipation to what we hope will be another successful year on the River Spey. We wish all of you, both local anglers and the many who travel from afar to experience the fishing on this internationally-renowned River, good luck and "tight lines" in the season ahead.

### Ghillie John Whyte Retires

After twenty-seven years faithful service at Gordon Castle Estate, Ghillie John Whyte has decided to retire. John joined the estate in 1980 after eighteen years as Head Keeper at Grangehall. He will be missed by the many anglers who have fished the Brae Water over the years and we wish him every happiness in his retirement.

**SPEY FISHERY BOARD RESEARCH OFFICE**

**1 NETHER BORLUM COTTAGE, KNOCKANDO, MORAYSHIRE, AB38 7SD**

**TEL: 01340 810841 FAX: 01340 810842 E-MAIL: [research@speyfisheryboard.com](mailto:research@speyfisheryboard.com)**

# SPEY CONSERVATION POLICIES

Tel: 01340 810841

website: [www.speyfisheryboard.com](http://www.speyfisheryboard.com)

## SEA TROUT



- FINNOCK: Release all fish of 10 oz. / 25 cm / 10 " *or less*.



- SEA TROUT: Release all fish of 3 lb. / 50 cm / 20 " *or more*.



- BAG LIMIT: 2 sea trout or finnock of takeable size per calendar day.



- UNSEASONABLE FISH: Release all unseasonable fish (smolts, stale fish, kelts, over-wintered finnock).



Record all released fish and estimate weight from length

Length cm	inches	Weight lbs	Length cm	inches	Weight lbs	Length cm	inches	Weight lbs	Length cm	inches	Weight lbs	Length cm	inches	Weight lbs
50	19.7	3	75	29.5	10	91	35.8	18	101	39.8	25	103	40.6	26
55	21.7	4	77	30.3	11	93	36.6	19	103	40.6	26	104	40.9	27
59	23.2	5	79	31.1	12	94	37.0	20	104	40.9	27	105	41.3	28
63	24.8	6	81	31.9	13	96	37.8	21	106	41.7	29	106	41.7	29
66	26.0	7	83	32.7	14	97	38.2	22	106	41.7	29	108	42.5	30
69	27.2	8	85	33.5	15	99	39.0	23	108	42.5	30	109	42.9	31
72	28.3	9	87	34.3	16	100	39.4	24	109	42.9	31			

## SALMON



- Until 30th June each angler must return the 1st, 3rd, 5th etc... fish caught.



- After 30th June all hen salmon and hen grilse must be released.



- Throughout the season all stale or gravid fish must be released.



- Escaped farmed salmon must be retained.