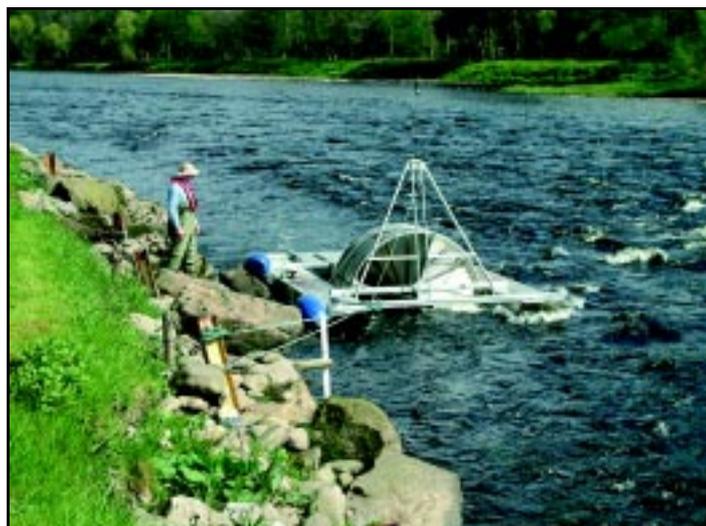


Measuring Smolt Numbers in the Spey

Smolt numbers are considered to be the best measure of the health of salmon stocks in a river, but counting smolts usually requires the costly construction of an instream trap. This is particularly difficult in rivers as large as the mainstem of the Spey. However, the recent development of floating rotary screw traps in North America has provided a more affordable approach. In early 2005 the Spey Research Trust purchased a 6ft diameter rotary screw trap, with funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Spey Fishery Board, to estimate the total run of salmon and sea trout smolts from the Spey.

Initial trials were conducted in March on the lower River Fiddich and 380 salmon and 304 sea trout smolts were captured. With advice and guidance from Dr Ian Davidson (Environment Agency), several mainstem sites were assessed in April and the best location appeared to be at Brae Beat 2, where good anchor points are present along with a good



Rotary Screw Trap operating on Brae Beat 2, River Spey.

(photo Bob Laughton)



Salmon Smolt from the Spey.

(photo Bob Laughton)

channel to guide smolts into the trap. The location also presents no danger for canoeing traffic. Given the size and volume of the mainstem expectations were low, but research staff were delighted to find over 50 salmon smolts in the collection box after the first evening and up to 1st June, 2212 salmon smolts had been captured. In addition 114 sea-trout smolts have been caught along with minnows, brook lamprey, eels and a stickleback. A recent surprise was also a 11b Rainbow Trout!

All salmon and trout smolts are measured and a proportion are marked with a simple dye tattoo and re-released 1km upstream. This allows the efficiency of the trap to be determined and total smolt numbers to be estimated. The trap will be removed in late June and the results collated. Valuable lessons have been learned during the trial period and in 2006 the exercise will be repeated.

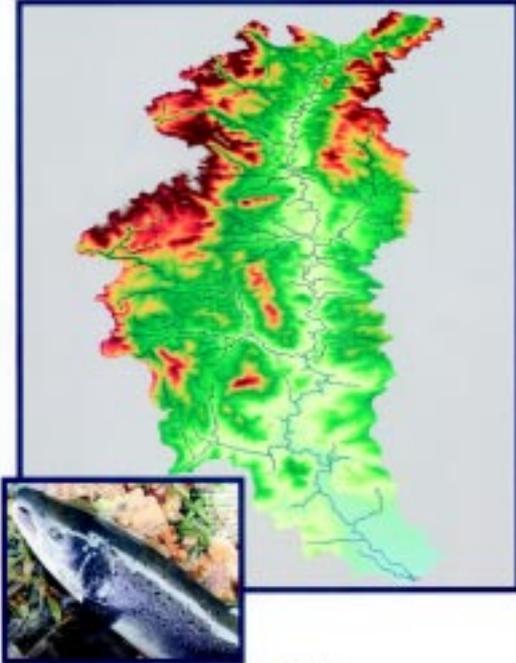
SPEY FISHERY BOARD RESEARCH OFFICE

I NETHER BORLUM COTTAGE, KNOCKANDO, MORAYSHIRE, AB38 7SD

TEL: 01340 810841 FAX: 01340 810842 E-MAIL: research@speyfisheryboard.com

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2004

Spey
Fishery
Board



The SFB Annual Report and Accounts for 2004 are now published and available from the Research Office.

40lb Salmon from Castle Grant!

On 6th June 2005 Mr Paddy Feakins, fishing Castle Grant landed a fresh male salmon 47ins (120cm) long. In accordance with the SFB's Salmon Conservation Policy it was his first fish and released to complete its journey. Based on length-weight tables the fish may have tipped the scales at between 35 and 40lbs. This is the largest fish caught on the Spey for many years and coincides with several other large fish between 20 and 30lbs being caught in the Spey.



FishSpey

- The definitive guide to fishing on the River Spey
- See current availability and book online today
- For telephone enquiries please ring 01573 470612

www.fishspey.co.uk

The *FishSpey* website has been launched to advertise the availability of salmon, sea trout, brown trout and rainbow trout fishing in the Spey catchment area. The website provides services for booking fishing, accommodation, travel advice, tackle services, river heights and important background information for visiting anglers.

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Membership Fees:

Fishery/Beat Rateable Value over £10,000	£500 per annum
Fishery/Beat Rateable Value under £10,000	£250 per annum
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Other Fishery (Rainbow Trout, Pike)	£250 per annum

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Dynamic Link	£100 per annum
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