

## A New Season on the River Spey

The River Spey's 2011 Salmon Fishing Season began with the annual Opening Ceremony at the Alice Littler Park, Aberlour on Friday 11th February. As keen anglers gathered for the Ceremony, Brian Doran spoke on their behalf and thanked Ishbel Grant (Glenfarclas) and Marjorie Walker (Walkers Shortbread) for their continued sponsorship of the opening day ceremony and donation of the prizes for the first and the heaviest fish caught on the Opening Day. A prayer and blessing were also given by local Minister Shuna Dicks. Glenfarclas Director Ishbel Grant then fulfilled the time-honoured tradition of pouring an entire bottle of Glenfarclas whisky into the fast flowing waters of the River Spey – a toast to bring luck to all those in pursuit of the elusive Spring Salmon - to the accompanying sound of piper Alan Sinclair and declared the 2011 season officially open.

Glenfarclas Distillery is celebrating 175 years of legal distilling and Evelyn Glass of Phones Estate, fishing at Orton, was this year's winner of the 'Spey Quaich', sponsored by Glenfarclas. Awarded to the angler who catches the first salmon on the Opening Day, Evelyn was presented with a bottle of Glenfarclas 175th Anniversary Highland Single Malt and a Walkers of Aberlour hamper. Evelyn's ghillie, Andrew Hall, received a bottle of Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength Highland Single Malt, together with a Walkers hamper. A generous prize of a bottle of Glenfarclas 40 Year Old Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky was awarded to David Smalley as the angler who caught the heaviest Salmon on the Opening Day. Delagyle Ghillie Willie Mearns, as the Ghillie in attendance, also received a bottle of Glenfarclas together with a Walkers hamper. Overall there were four salmon caught on the 2011 Opening Day.

Last year's season saw 9,231 Salmon and Grilse caught which was slightly higher than in 2009. However, whilst the overall catch for the year was reasonable, the slow start to the 2010 season ensured it would not be a memorable one for the River Spey. Nevertheless, 2010 saw yet another rise in and continued success of the River's voluntary Catch & 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. Overall, 81% of all Salmon and Grilse caught were returned to the River (up from

79% the previous year) enabling 7,520 Salmon and Grilse to be 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 an extra 18.8 million Salmon eggs will have been deposited throughout the Spey's catchment. With concern still high about the poor survival rate of Salmon at sea, this is a highly commendable achievement for a River as large as the Spey. The Spey Fishery Board is grateful to all proprietors, ghillies and anglers for their active support for and cooperation with the policy.



*To the accompaniment of piper Alan Sinclair, Glenfarclas Director Ishbel Grant opened the 2011 Salmon Fishing Season by pouring a bottle of Glenfarclas into the River Spey as a toast to bring luck to those in pursuit of the elusive Spring Salmon.*

## Sea Trout Catches Improved

Sea Trout Catches in 2010 were 63% up on those during the preceding year with 3,290 caught throughout the season. As for the previous three years, monthly catches showed that most Sea Trout (40%) were caught in June (1,303), with July again being the second most prolific month when 969 were caught (29%), almost twice the number caught in July 2009.

Here too, anglers have been diligent in returning 68% of their catches to the River, in the hope that an increase in the numbers of fish available to spawn will help redress the concerns over

dwindling catches seen in recent years. With this in mind, the Spey Board would also like to highlight the importance of conserving Brown Trout, which are the same species as Sea Trout. The Spey Fishery Board, alongside other District Salmon Fishery Boards throughout the region, is continuing to sponsor the Moray Firth Sea Trout Project which aims to identify the likely causes of the recent decline, as well as looking at suitable management plans to try to reverse this worrying trend.

Whilst nothing is ever certain about this captivating sport, we look forward to what we hope will be a 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, "tight lines" for the season ahead.

## 2010 Savills Malloch Trophy Awarded to the Spey

The Savills Malloch Trophy



*Delfur Ghillie Grant Morrison with the magnificent 36lb Salmon caught by visiting angler Huston McCollough who won the 2010 Savills Malloch Trophy.*

The Malloch Challenge Trophy, generously sponsored by Savills, is the most prestigious and historic trophy in the Scottish Angling World. It was reinstated in 2009 and is awarded annually to the angler catching the heaviest salmon

of the season on the fly on any Scottish river. The new criteria also states that the fish must be safely released alive back into the water and must be duly witnessed by an independent witness.

The six entries for the 2010 competition were collated by Robert Rattray, secretary to the Savills Malloch Trophy and after due consideration, it was agreed that the winner was Huston McCollough, who had caught and released a 36lb Salmon at Delfur on the River Spey on 15th May.

Huston McCollough said, "I'd like to reiterate my delight in winning the Malloch Trophy. The winning fish is a testament to the great work performed by the many charitable organisations devoted to restoring our Atlantic Salmon stocks, as well as to the management of the River Spey itself. In addition, the Mountain family, who are owners of Delfur, and their team of highly professional ghillies, deserve great credit for their stewardship of the river. I must also cite Grant Morrison, my ghillie at Delfur, without whose help and advice this notable catch would not have been possible. Finally, please accept my appreciation of Savills and all others who sponsor this award.

Huston was presented with his prize (a silver sculpture by Patrick Mavros and a £250 voucher generously donated by and for the House of Bruar) at the launch of the Dalmore Tay Dram at Scone Palace, Perth, on Tuesday 5th April 2011. Prizes were also awarded to Ghillie Grant Morrison (who received the Malloch Medal) and the proprietors of Delfur, Edward and Charlotte Mountain."

We look forward to considering the applications for 2011 later this year and wish all salmon anglers, throughout Scotland, tight lines for the season ahead.



*Winning angler Huston McCollough receives the Savills Malloch Trophy from Savills Director Roddy Willis.*