

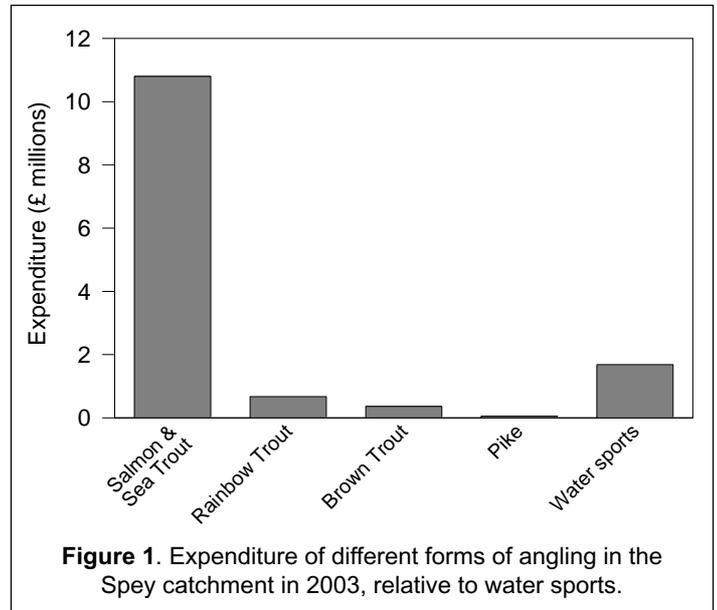
The Economic Value of Angling on the Spey

In June 2003 the Spey Catchment Management Plan was launched with the aim of developing a more integrated approach to the sustainable management and conservation of the River Spey. The Catchment Steering Group responsible for implementing the plan consists of representatives of the statutory bodies involved, including the Spey Fishery Board (SFB), Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Highland and Moray Councils.

A major feature of the Spey is its importance for water-based recreation, principally angling and water sports. Consequently the Steering Group decided to assess the economic value of these activities, their impacts on the ecology of the Spey, and opportunities for coordinating and optimising their future role in the catchment. In 2003 the Glasgow Caledonian University Division of Economics and Enterprise was contracted to carry out the study, and the final report is currently being published. This Briefing summarises the most pertinent results.

Summary

- In 2003 there were 54,746 angler days of all types with a total expenditure of £11.8 million;
- Salmon and sea trout angling was the most important sector, with £10.8 million expenditure (Fig. 1);
- 367 jobs were generated by angling;
- There were 38,190 water sports activity days with a total expenditure of £1.7 million (Fig. 1);
- Sailing and canoeing on Loch Morlich was the most important sector, with £1.5 million expenditure;
- 48 jobs were generated by water sports;
- Angling and water sports currently have minimal impact on the ecology of the Spey. River works to improve angling may temporarily disturb salmon eggs and juveniles, and freshwater pearl mussels.



Anglers spent £11.8 million in the Spey catchment in 2003 (photo: Ian Neale)

SPEY FISHERY BOARD RESEARCH OFFICE

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

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

Salmon and Sea Trout

- On average salmon and sea trout anglers spent £228 per day;
- Salmon and sea trout angling directly employed 65 full-time and 22 seasonal jobs, largely ghillies and estate workers;
- If salmon and sea trout fisheries had ceased to exist, £9.4 million would have been lost from the catchment in 2003;
- 35% of Spey anglers originated from Scotland, but the majority (55%) came from England & Wales (Fig. 2);
- 42% of anglers were 46-60 years old, and 40% were 60+ years old;
- 91% of anglers were men;
- 77% of anglers considered that a doubling in the number of canoeists on the mainstem would negatively effect their fishing experience;
- Based on the 2003 rod catch each rod-caught salmon generated £1,700 of angler expenditure.

In 1989 the Mackay Consultants also estimated the economic contribution of salmon and sea trout angling in the Spey. They estimated that there were 62,000 salmon and sea trout angler days in 1988 (versus 40,543 in 2003), and £11.3 expenditure (versus £10.8 million in 2003). The Glasgow Caledonian University study is likely to be more accurate because it has been based on an improved methodology.

THE SFB AND SPEY CATCHMENT STEERING GROUP WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL PROPRIETORS, ANGLERS AND GHILLIES WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SURVEY.

Copies of the Glasgow Caledonian University report

'An Assessment of the Economic Impact of Water-Related Recreation and Tourism in the Spey Catchment in 2003'

will soon be available from the SFB Research Office.

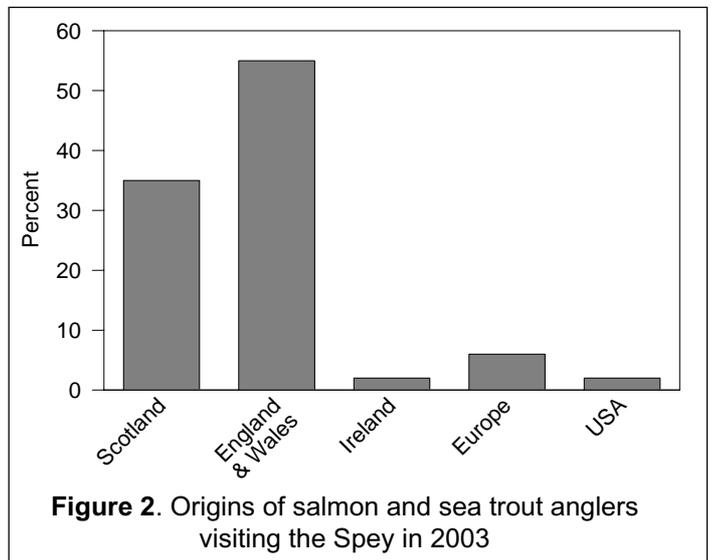


Figure 2. Origins of salmon and sea trout anglers visiting the Spey in 2003

The Future

The study has clearly identified the great value of angling to the economy of the Spey catchment, and salmon and sea trout fishing in particular. The Catchment Steering Group is now considering how to take the study's conclusions forward. The following actions have been highlighted:

1. Conservation of salmon and sea trout stocks: To maintain the valuable rod fishery, measures are required both in the freshwater and marine environment to conserve and improve stocks;

2. Marketing of angling: While the opportunities for increasing the number of salmon and sea trout angler days are limited by availability, there is a need to maintain the existing clientele of visiting fishermen, particularly from outside Scotland. An internet-based promotion and booking service is being considered;

3. Angling for other species: There are opportunities to increase angling for brown trout and pike within appropriate management frameworks;

4. Co-ordination with canoeing: The study highlighted that there was very little conflict between angling and canoeing on the River Spey, but increased canoe numbers may have a detrimental impact on angling, and vice versa. Further co-ordination is required between canoe and angling interests if water sports become more popular with the advent of the Cairngorms National Park and the Land Reform Act;

5. New anglers: Most anglers are 46+ years old and male. There is a need to introduce younger people and women to angling on the Spey.



In 2003 each rod-caught salmon generated £1,700 of expenditure in the Spey catchment (photo: Ian Neale)