

## SPEY CATCH 2007

With a few beats still to declare their catches for 2007, the Spey catch so far amounts to 9,958 salmon and grilse (see Figure 1). The final total is expected to be just over 10,000, but not significantly more. Whilst this is not as high as the 11,378 for 2006, it is still above the five-year average of 9,700.

### Above Average Catch

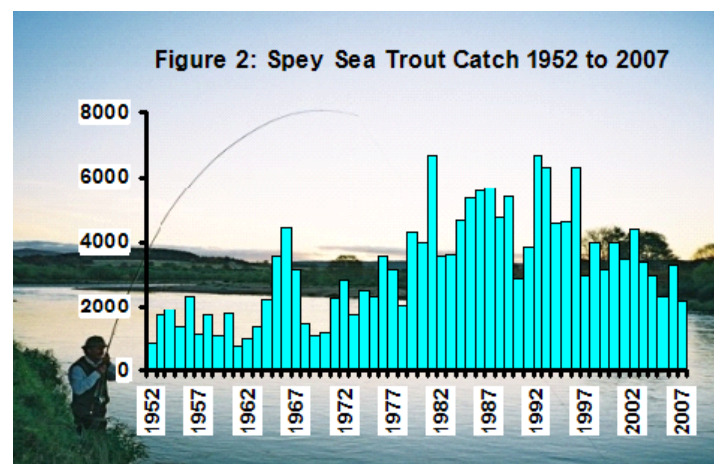
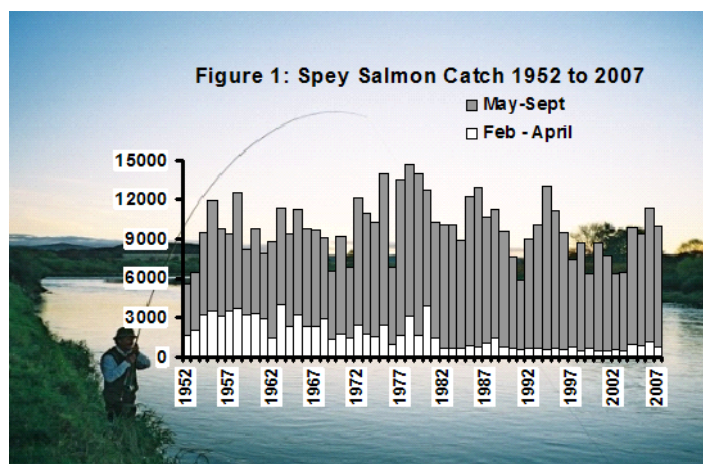
Unlike the last three years, which saw an above-average catch of spring salmon, this year got off to a slow start. By the end of June just over 2,500 salmon and grilse had been accounted for, but catch rates improved in July, August and September. Also unlike last year, 2007 did not see the significant numbers of small grilse being caught. Instead, we experienced a large number of fish with bleeding or "red vents", a symptom believed to be caused by the parasite *Anasakis* sp., and one which has been common in all rivers throughout Scotland this year. Further research on this is being undertaken by the Fisheries Research Services laboratories, which may shed more light on the matter in due course.

Encouragingly the release rates for salmon have remained consistent, with an average of 71% in 2007, an impressive result for a large river such as the Spey. This was achieved by the continuing support of anglers, ghillies and proprietors for the Spey Salmon Conservation Policy, which will remain unchanged for 2008.

Sea Trout catches have again been low at 2,141, about the same as 2005, but lower than last year's 3,286 and significantly below the ten year average of 3,700 (see Figure 2). However, the Board has been encouraged by the increased release rate for sea trout, up to 53% in 2007 against 49% last year and 40% in 2005. Having reviewed the Sea Trout Conservation Policy, the Board decided at its most recent meeting on 16th November to maintain the policy throughout 2008.

### Declined Stocks Addressed

It is still not known why sea trout stocks are declining, a feature witnessed throughout the Moray Firth. However, the Moray Firth Sea Trout Project will be starting in April 2008 with the recruitment of a project officer to research reasons behind this decline and identify management plans that aim to redress the situation. To help fund this position, the Board and Research Trust will each be contributing £2,000 per annum for the next three years. The River Spey Anglers Association are also sponsoring the project by holding an auction of sporting goods and activities, the proceeds from which will go towards the project. More details can be found on their website at [www.riverspey anglers.org.uk](http://www.riverspey anglers.org.uk) and any lots for inclusion in the sale (eg. a day's fishing/shooting/stalking or any associated equipment) would be very gratefully received.



# 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	Weight	Length	Weight	Length	Weight	Length	Weight
cm	lbs	cm	lbs	inches	lbs	inches	lbs
50	19.7	3	7.5	29.5	10	91	35.8
55	21.7	4	7.7	30.3	11	93	36.6
59	23.2	5	7.9	31.1	12	94	37.0
63	24.8	6	8.1	31.9	13	96	37.8
66	26.0	7	8.3	32.7	14	97	38.2
69	27.2	8	8.5	33.5	15	99	39.0
72	28.3	9	8.7	34.3	16	100	39.4
			8.9	35.0	17		40.0
							40.6
							40.9
							41.3
							41.7
							42.5
							42.9
							25
							26
							27
							28
							29
							30
							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.