

## **RIVER CREE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

### **THE REPORT OF THE BOARD TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS AND ALSO AT THE ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD – 22nd OCTOBER 2014**

This report covers the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

#### **PART ONE**

This part of the report summarises what the Board have done in carrying out their statutory functions during the period and what the Board propose to do in carrying out those functions in the year ahead.

The primary duties of the Board are the protection or improvement of the fisheries within their district, the increase of salmon and the stocking of the waters of the district with salmon – Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003, section 45(1). To assist it in fulfilling those duties the Board employs the services of two fisheries trusts, Galloway Fisheries Trust (GFT) and The River Cree Hatchery and Habitat Trust (RCHHT). There are attached as appendices to this report summaries prepared by those trusts of their activities during the period and their proposals for the coming year.

In addition to the activities of the two trusts mentioned above, the Board has dealt with the following matters during the period. At the meeting of the Board in November 2013 a **revised Conservation Code** for the district was adopted. This will be reviewed at the next board meeting in the light of experience over the last season. At the same meeting it was agreed to set up a **website** for the Board. This has now been set up (**rivercreedistrictsalmonfisheryboard.com**) and regularly updated by Board member Steve Smith. It contains details of Board members and officials, copy minutes, annual report and accounts, dates of next meetings and various notifications, including the Conservation Code. With effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> January Matthew Pumphrey was appointed **Clerk to the Board**.

At the meeting of the Board in February 2014 the **River Management Plan** for the district was adopted. This document was the result of many months of deliberation but now succinctly sets out how the Board aims to achieve its objective of protecting and enhancing stocks of migratory fish within the district. It is available for inspection on the Board's website. At the same meeting it was agreed to ask Jim Nichol to act as an additional **water bailiff** and Jim was duly appointed with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> March.

In January 2014 the Scottish Government set up a **Wild Fisheries Review**, to examine and make recommendations as to the management of wild fisheries in Scotland. The Board and individual members spent an inordinate amount of time considering various aspects of this review. The April meeting of the Board considered a paper prepared by the ASFB and requested the Chairman to respond. The response in large measure disagreed with the stance that ASFB were taking. Two members of the Board attended a meeting with Mr Thin, the chairman of the review, and in June the formal submission of the Board was sent in. The Review has now reported, and as will be seen, the submission of the Board has been largely ignored.

At the April meeting of the Board it was agreed to support counts of **fish eating birds** with a view to obtaining a licence to cull from SNH. The Board will request the co-operation of riparian owners in conducting such counts.

During the period under review the Board received two very illuminating presentations, one from Inspector McCallum of Police Scotland in relation to **wildlife crime** and one from John Gorman of SEPA in relation to **pollution from forestry-related activities** and SEPA's work in that connection.

Generally, in the year ahead the Board intends to continue to support the two trusts in the work they do for the Board and continue to manage the waters of the district in accordance with the River Management Plan.

The next **triennial elections** to the Board will be due on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

## **PART TWO – COMPLAINTS**

During the year the Board received no complaints.

## **PART THREE – GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The Board has complied with the good governance requirements in the 2003 Act, as amended by the 2013 Act, as follows. The Annual Report considered at the Annual Public Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 complied with Section 46A and the meeting itself complied with Section 46B. That Report and the audited accounts were published on the Board's website and copies sent to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with Section 44(1A). The notice of the annual meeting of qualified proprietors and the annual public meeting to be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 were advertised in a local newspaper and a copy sent to the Scottish Ministers to comply with Section 46C. The other requirements of Section 46C in relation to all other meetings of the Board have been complied with by publicising the dates of meetings and publishing the minutes thereof on the Board's website.

During the year the Board adopted a complaints procedure in accordance with Section 46D. A copy has been publicised on the Board's website and also sent to the Scottish Ministers.

During the year the Board has established a register of relevant financial interests of members of the Board (available for public inspection) in accordance with Section 46E.

In the following year the Board intend to comply with the good governance requirements by keeping its procedures under review and observing the good governance requirements as hitherto.

## **PART FOUR – GENERAL**

The officially recorded 2013 rod catch for the Cree was disappointing - 244 salmon and grilse as compared with 475 for 2012. Similarly, NSAA reported a total rod catch of 86 salmon and grilse, as compared with a total of 202 for 2012. The final figures for 2014 are not to hand at the time of writing but provisional reports suggest the rod catch will again be disappointing. Clearly, the fishing was not helped by some exceptionally dry weather.

This is the final report mentioned in section 44(1) of the 2003 Act.

**Terence Flanagan**

**Chairman**

**Dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014**

**THE RIVER CREE HATCHERY AND HABITAT TRUST**  
**CHARITY SC042355**  
**Report for the CDSFB AGM 2014**



During the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 RCHHT carried out the following works on the catchment of the District.

### **HATCHERY WORKS**

Broodstock collection commenced in the last week of October and continued during November. Together with associated cock fish, the numbers of hen fish collected and the resulting approximate numbers of eggs were as follows:-

**Cree** – 7 hens, 36,000 eggs

**Minnoch** – 12 hens, 40,000 eggs

**Penkiln** – 16 hens, 65,000 eggs

Due to the exceptionally mild winter, the eggs hatched much earlier than usual and the alevins and fry developed quickly. The first fry were stocked out on the 17<sup>th</sup> April and stocking out was completed by the 30<sup>th</sup> April. The stocking sites and approximate numbers of fry stocked were as follows:-

**Cree**

Fardin Burn	10,000
Challoch Burn	5,000
Castle Burn	7,000
Millburn	10,000
Linloskin	10,000
Coldstream Burn	500

Total 42,500

**Minnoch**

Eldrick Burn	8,000
Kirriemore Burn	15,000
Pulniskie Burn	7,000

Total 30,000

**Penkiln**

Glenshalloch Burn	6,000
Pulbae Burn	15,000
Green Burn	5,000
Campbells Burn	3,000
Garlies Burn	7,000
Upper Penkiln Burn	25,000

Total 61,000

We accompanied the GFT biologists when they carried out electro-fishing surveys of all the stocking sites during August and September. It was pleasing to note that there were good (and sometimes excellent) densities of fry and parr at all sites.

**HABITAT WORKS**

**Invasive non-native species**

Work continued in clearing rhododendrons from the banks of the Penkiln Burn and spraying re-growth. Throughout the summer period extensive areas of Himalayan Balsam were identified along the banks of the Cree and removed by hand picking. Surveys of the Cree from the Ghyll Pool down to the Saughes Pool identified concentrations of Japanese Knotweed and these were treated by spraying in September.

**Bankside and instream works**

Approximately one kilometre of the Kirkland burn was cleared of overshadowing vegetation and instream obstructions. The winter floods and gales brought down many trees into the Penkiln Burn and lower Cree, which were successfully removed.

**Pike removal**

During the latter part of March that part of the Cree downstream of Cunninghams Ford to the loch of Cree was netted for pike. This produced 44 pike and 18 perch. Apart from one pike of approximately 15lbs, all were dispatched. Autopsies revealed that many had been eating salmonids.

### **Challoch Burn Project**

This major project commenced in the spring. The first phase involved the removal of an old culvert bridge and its replacement with an overspan bridge supported on concrete plinths. The second phase consisted of the erection of over two kilometres of fencing (some of it on both banks of the burn) to prevent poaching by cattle, together with other bankside works, including cutting back overshadowing vegetation and prevention of bank erosion by removing obstacles.

### **PROPOSALS FOR NEXT YEAR**

It is intended to operate the hatchery and stock salmon fry into the catchment as set out in the Board's stocking policy document agreed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September. One change from previous years is that it is intended to stock a maximum of 5,000 fry into the upper Penkiln Burn as autumn fry.

Work will continue to monitor INNS along the banks of the Cree and Penkiln Burn and eradication measures will be taken as necessary.

It is intended to net the Cree once again with a view to removing pike and perch. The Challoch Burn Project will be continued. Certain watergates need to be replaced but the major part of the work will involve the addition of gravels and boulders to certain parts of the burn (to create suitable spawning and parr habitat).

It is intended to continue with bankside and instream clearance work as necessary. Walk-over surveys of burns in the Wood of Cree and the upper Penkiln Burn have identified works to improve the aquatic habitat and it is hoped to carry these out in the coming year.

**Murdo Crosbie**  
**Hatchery co-ordinator**

## **Summary of recent Galloway Fisheries Trust (GFT) work on the Cree catchment (for CDSFB AGM 22/10/14)**



### **Forest Design Plans**

Extensive Sitka spruce plantations have impacted heavily on the fish populations of much of the Cree catchment. GFT provide on-going input to the restructuring plans of these forests to minimise further damage during the felling phase and to ensure that any replanting is undertaken in a manner to

promote recovery of water quality and fish populations. This year we have provided input to the Forestry Commission 'Penninghame Forest Design Plan (covering Castle Stewart Burn / Penninghame Pond) and Scottish Woodlands 'Boreland Forest Design Plan' (covering various small burns which drain into the lower Cree).

#### Limestone Gravel Salmon Spawning Beds

Electrofishing was undertaken this summer at the limestone gravel spawning beds which were created on the High Cree (around Dalnaw) to increase wild salmon spawning success. Good numbers of wild salmon fry and parr were found. We continue to look for further funding to add more limestone gravel.

#### Water sampling

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March GFT were involved in a Galloway wide water sampling exercise looking at pH and other water quality parameters. 35 sites were surveyed on the Cree catchment (including the Palnure Burn) out of the >100 sites sampled in Galloway.

#### Site visits

Advice given on possible RCHHT works on various burns (Ballocharus Burn, Cordorcan Burn, Coldstream Burn and Barclye Burn) which flow through the Wood of Cree.

#### Bio-security

Various signs and leaflets distributed to fisheries regarding the 'check-clean-dry' campaign and 'be plant wise' initiatives to help in stopping the spread of invasive species.

#### Creetown Waste Water Treatment works

In the spring (over two months) GFT met weekly with Scottish Water contractors at Creetown to ensure the Balloch Burn was fully protected during nearby Waste Water Treatment works.

#### Hatchery programme

GFT monitored the stocking programme by electrofishing 15 stocked sites. All contained good densities of fish. We also produced the 2014/15 Cree Stocking Guidance document for the CDSFB.

#### Electrofishing surveys to monitor wild salmon stocks:

The focus this year was surveying suitable juvenile wild salmon sites on the lower River Cree – results were encouraging. Laglanny Burn (on Minnoch) surveyed due to GFT concerns of water quality problems. Washing Burn examined for possible future stocking.

Site	Grid reference	Date	Trout fry*	Trout parr*	Salmon fry*	Salmon parr*
Laglanny Burn (Minnoch)	357903	1/8/14	7.9	5.2	0	2.6
Washing Burn – u/s road bridge (Wood of Cree)	384700	22/8/14	28.8	5.8	0	2.9
Cree – just downstream	385694	26/8/14	0	0	44.7	27.6

of Penninghame House						
Cree – just upstream of stepping stones at Challoch	387674	26/8/14	0	0	154.1	6.9
Cree – tail of Linloskin Pool	394669	26/8/14	0	0	160.4	15.8
Cree – Whitehills (by fishing hut)	405668	26/8/14	0	X1 herling	81.93	19.45
Cree – immediately downstream of weir upstream of Suspension Bridge	409665	4/9/14	0	0	71.7	13.25
Cree – downstream of Creebridge Weir	412656	4/9/14	1.5	0	56	32.1
Palnure Burn – near Bargaly House	460660	4/9/14	4.4	0	55.6	7.1

\*fish numbers are all standardised to density per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of water (minimum densities)

#### Glenhead Burn Project:

The head water of the Glenhead Burn (which runs into Loch Trool) was diverted many years ago (by the Galloway Hydro Scheme) into the Dee catchment. This loss of water from the Glenhead Burn is now a concern as wild salmon have recently returned in good numbers to the lower and mid burn as water quality has improved. A loss of wetted area is limiting fish numbers (particularly parr) during low flows due to reduce habitat, increase predation risks and increase vulnerability to extreme temperatures. GFT are working up a proposal to return some of the water flow back to this burn. Our studies suggest that a length of over 2000 metres of good salmon habitat would benefit. Further upstream of the forestry, due to increased gradient, salmon are unlikely to access here but a further 885 metres of watercourse suitable for trout would benefit from any increased flows.

#### Proposed GFT works for the next 12 months on the Cree catchment:

- Continue to monitor (by electrofishing) and advise on best practice regarding the Cree stocking programme including the experimental stocking of autumn fry.
- Undertake a survey of wild fish stocks (by electrofishing) on the Minnoch catchment.
- Progress the proposal to increase water flows in the Glenhead Burn (upstream of Loch Trool) – discussions now needed with SEPA and Scottish Power.
- Continue work aimed at replacing the two impassable pipe bridges on the Black Clauchrie Burn (High Cree catchment).
- Survey key tributaries of the Minnoch and High Cree to recommend habitat enhancement works to improve their water quality and suitability for salmonids. Habitat works to be completed either by GFT, RCHHT and/or FCS.

