

# BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

## Chairman's Report 2012-2013

### 1. Catches

#### **Salmon**

In the 2012 season 1,394 fish were reported to the Board as being caught. 72% of the fish caught were reported returned, a slight drop on previous years' figures. Of the total reported, 117 (8.4%) were caught prior to 30 June. As in previous years, the Board's recommended Conservation Policy was circulated to all Proprietors. I would encourage all Proprietors to comply with this.

Returns were not received from one proprietor – Mr Kwint, River Glass. Previous five years catches are shown below.

Previous years:	2011 - 1,154
	2010 - 1,714
	2009 - 1,295
	2008 - 1,186
	2007 - 1,335

The statutory returns reported by Marine Scotland give a total of 1,357 salmon caught on the Beauly system, of which 1,030 (76% were returned).

The salmon catch figure for 2012 was around average for the last 10 years. In keeping with many rivers in Scotland, the season was characterised by a strong but short grilse run around late July which then fell away quickly. The spring saw unusually low water caused by the prolonged easterly airflow. Very little rainfall fell on the western hills at the top of the catchment and the release of water through the dams barely rose above compensation for much of the spring. Lower numbers of fish were seen later in the season. The upper beats started very slowly but picked up good numbers of fish in later summer, early autumn.

#### **Sea Trout**

Total sea trout catch reported to the Board was 351, slightly down on 2011. However the Marine Scotland figures, taken from statutory returns, indicate a total catch of only 325, with 307 being released, a release rate of 95%.

Previous years:	2011 - 373
	2010 - 232
	2009 - 298
	2008 - 188
	2007 - 156

### 2. Fish Counter – Cumulative Totals

#### Kilmorack

Figures for	2012	4,282
	2011	2,849
	2010	4,705
	2009	4,233
	2008	5,100
	5 year average	4,118

#### Aigas

Figures for	2012	3,744
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2011	2,825
2010	5,100
2009	3,810
2008	4,264
5 year average	4,044

Beannachran

Figures for

2012	402
2011	184
2010	493
2009	214
2008	295
5 year average	276

These figures are provided by SSE. On both the Kilmorack and Aigs dams there were a couple of weeks where the counter did not report the number of fish through the pass. The above figures are therefore almost certainly an underestimate. However they do indicate that numbers returning to the river in 2012 were significantly better than in 2011 and closer to longer term averages.

3. Licences

A licence was obtained for the control of piscivorous birds. This licence was organised by Keith Williams in conjunction with the Spey District Fishery Board and was for the period 18 January 2011 to 30 April 2011. The total licence was for 2 mergansers and one cormorant, all of which were shot.

A licence for has been received for 2 mergansers and 7 gooseanders in 2013. Those ghillies nominated as marksmen attended a briefing session in March 2013 to outline their obligations under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

In April 2012 the District Fishery had a licence to shoot two common seals and two grey seals under the Moray Firth Seal Management Plan. One common seal was shot within the river.

A licence for 2 common and 2 grey seals has been received for 2013.

4. Baillifs

There are currently four baillifs warranted by the Board. A fifth warrant has also recently been issued.

Poaching incidents remain a concern on the Beauly, particularly above Kilmorack and Aigas dams. A successful prosecution resulted in 2012 following the arrest of a poacher on the Beauly.

5. DSFB Code of Practice

The Board has signed up to the Code of Practice for District Salmon Fishery Boards prepared by ASFB and will continue to monitor this to ensure the objectives are being met where applicable.

6. Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust

The Board continues to work closely with the Ness and Beauly Fisheries Trust. Dr. Keith Williams will update the Board on current progress on habitat management and fish genetics at the Board meeting.

7. Consultations

The following consultations were responded to on behalf of the Board up until May 2013:

- Aquaculture & Fisheries Bill – Rural Affairs Committee consultation
- Mauld Long-term Forest Plan
- Struy Estate Long Term Forest Plan
- Beinn Mhor Windfarm Proposal
- MORL Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (in conjunction with Moray & Pentland Firths Salmon Protection Group)

**Jock Miller**

Chairman

June 2013