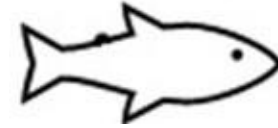




Beaully

Fishery Board



Annual Public
Meeting

8 December
2021

Agenda

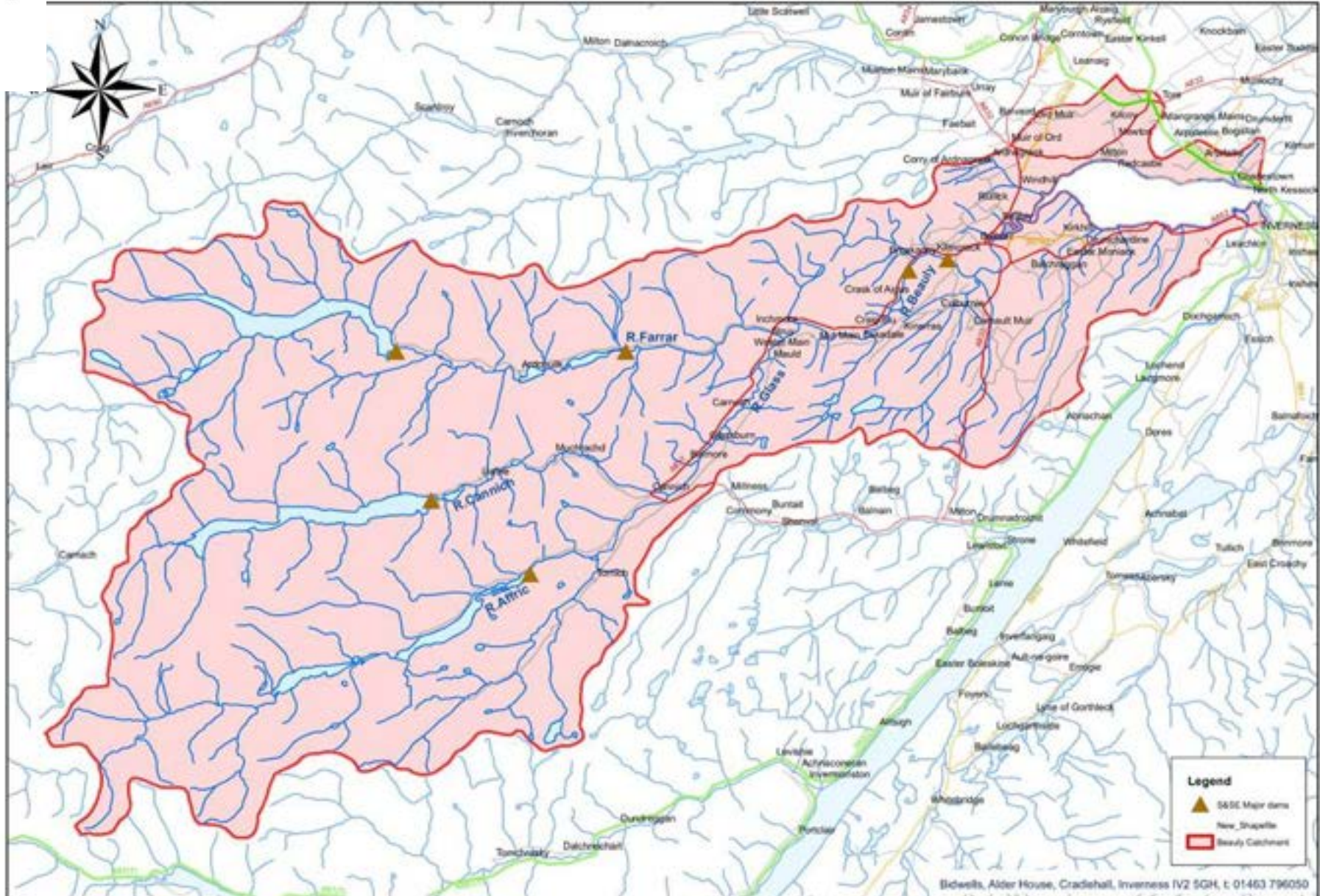
- Presentation of Annual Report 2020/21 and activities- Ruth watts
- Priorities for 2022 – Ruth Watts
- Annual accounts to 31 December 2020- Alastair Campbell
- Question & Answer Session

Beauly

Fishery Board



The Catchment



Our Role as a District Salmon Fishery Board

- Protect and Improve the fisheries (Salmon and Sea trout)
- Charge a levy on proprietors
- Bailiff
- Have a Clerk to the Board

With Atlantic salmon and Sea trout decline our job is to do everything we can to reduce the pressures faced by these species

Board Members

Chair:

Mr Jock Miller (mandatory Beaully Fishing Syndicate)

Upper Proprietors:

Mr Michael Spencer-Nairn

Mr Frank Spencer-Nairn

Mr George Purdie

Mrs Victoria Rotheroe

Mr Tom Waring (mandatory Lovat Highland Estates Ltd)

Co-opted Members:

Mr Jim Braithwaite (Beaully Angling Club)

The Team



Chair of the Board
Jock Miller



Clerk to the board
Alastair Campbell



Senior Biologist
Ruth Watts



Fisheries Officer
Ali Skinner

The Team- seasonal

Seasonal Bailiff- Bob Smart



Electro-fishing contractor- Lynn McKelvey



Summer Intern- Karla Ilic





The Annual Report

Is on the website....



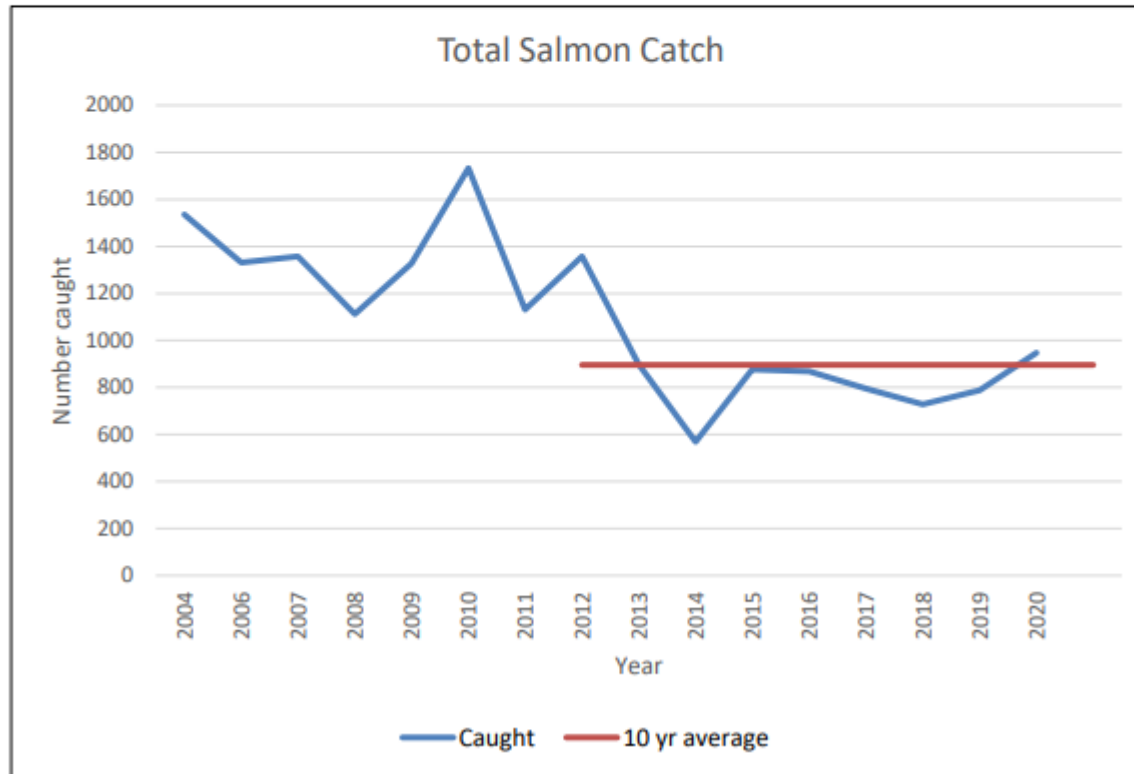
Fish catches

Salmon Rod Catches

In the 2020 season, 947 salmon were reported to the Board as being caught. This differs very slightly from the official statistics recorded by Marine Scotland Science (MSS), who have recorded 948 salmon. Three proprietors failed to return a catch report to the Board.

Despite COVID, the total number of salmon caught was 24% higher than in 2019, exceeded the 10 year average and was the best since 2012. July and the last week of the season saw peak catches on the Upper and Lower Beaully.

The ten-year average (MSS figures) is 896, continuing the decrease in longer-term average. The five-year average is 825; this continues the slight increase in rolling five-year average.



Fish catches

Sea Trout Catches

In the 2020 season, 571 sea trout and finnock were reported to the Board. The ten-year average is 548 and five-year average 758. This continues the increase on last year's rolling averages and confirms the increase in recorded sea trout catches in recent years. It is unclear how much this is due to better recording by anglers, but anecdotal evidence suggests that sea trout numbers in the Lower Beaully are healthy.

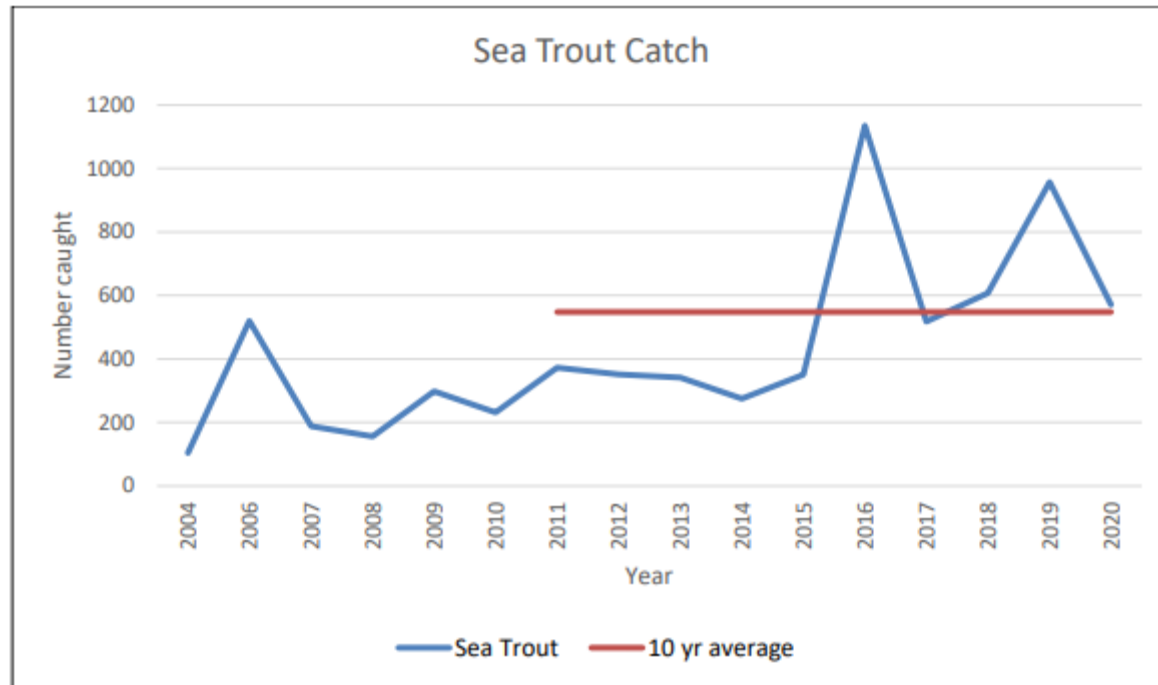


Figure 3 – Total Sea Trout Catches, Beaully District 1952-2019 (Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science) N.B includes finnock.

Conservation Policy and Status

- The Conservation Policy 2021 aims to protect fish
- It is the minimum requirement all anglers should adhere to
- The recorded catch and release rate for 2020 was 98%
- Best practice Catch and Release guidance is on the website
- The Beaully is currently at Grade 1 (good)

The Beaully District Fishery Board has a statutory duty to act for the protection and improvement of the fisheries and for the increase of salmon and sea trout within its District. With declining rates of marine survival, the conservation of stocks should be of prime importance to all anglers. This Conservation Policy represents a minimum requirement all anglers should adhere to.

SALMON

Given current concerns regarding salmon stocks, the Board supports and encourages responsible catch and release practice throughout the season, with the aim of achieving 100%. Specific policy guidance is given below.

11TH FEBRUARY TO 31ST MARCH - STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

Under The Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Time and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2014, it is an offence to retain any salmon caught before 1 April. By law, all fish must be released. Every effort should be made to ensure no harm is caused to fish prior to release.

1ST APRIL – 30TH JUNE

- 100% catch & release

To protect vulnerable spring salmon stocks, it is the Board's recommended policy that all salmon be released

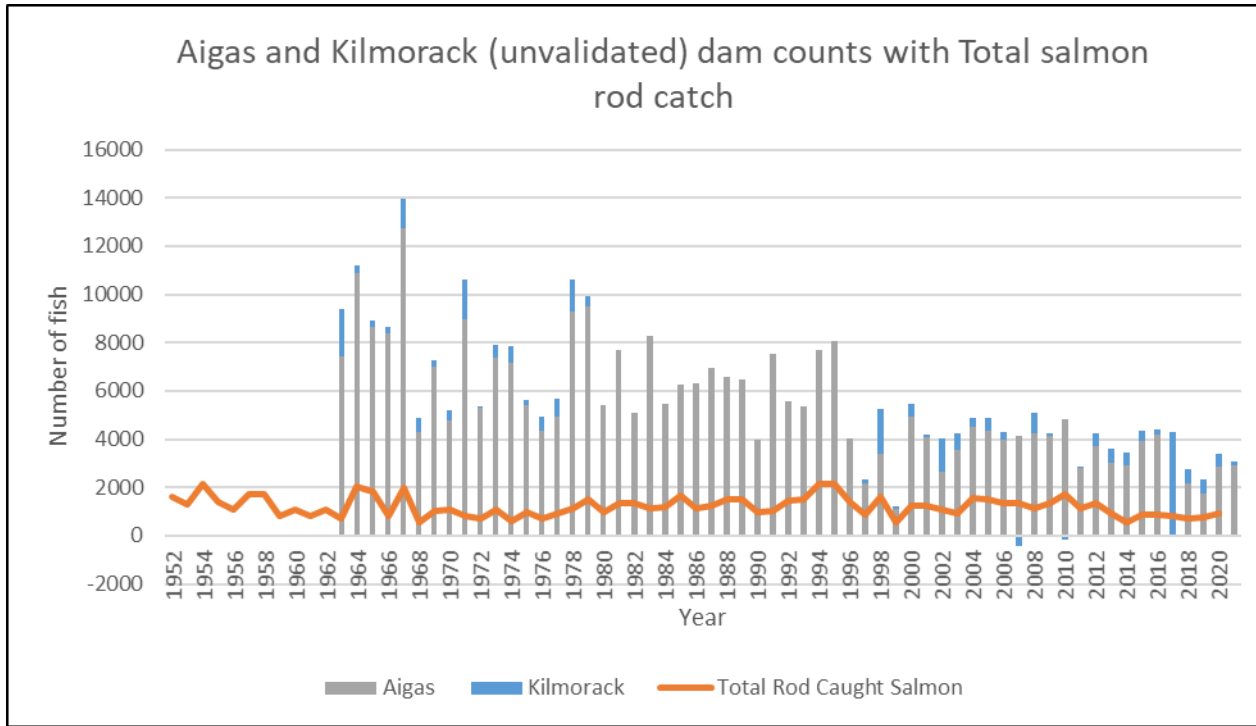
1ST JULY – 15TH OCTOBER

- Release all hen fish of any size and all cock fish over 7lbs (66cm/26 inches)
- Retain only one cock fish under 7lbs per angler per week with a maximum of three per season
- All coloured and unseasonable fish should be released. Please see illustrative guide overleaf.

SEA TROUT

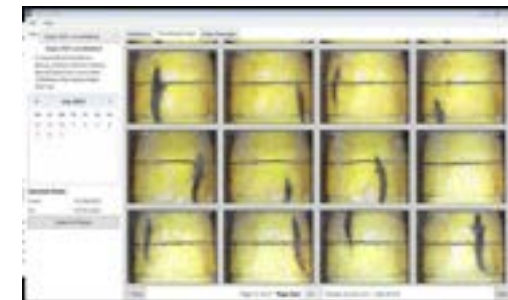
- Release all finnock of 1 pound (35cm/14 inches) or less
- Release all sea trout of 3 pounds (50cm/20 inches) or above
- Retain only two fish per angler per week with a maximum of six per season
- All coloured and unseasonable fish should be released (smolts, kelts, over-wintered finnock)

Fish Counts

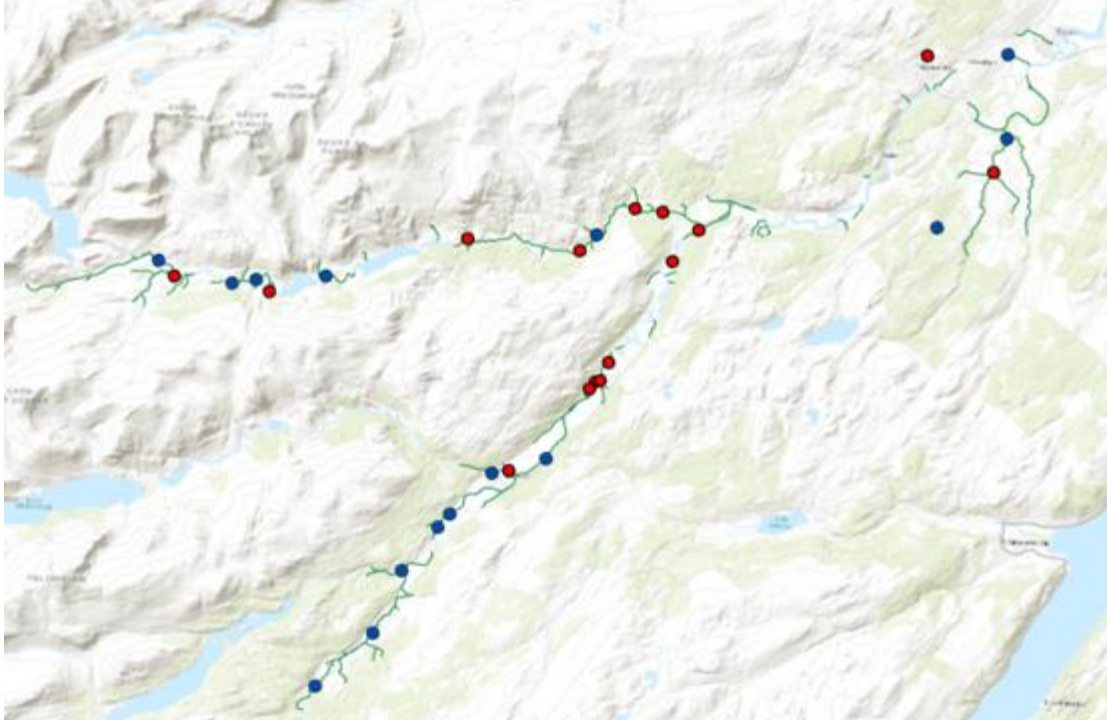


	2019	2020	2021
Kilmorack	2329	3374	3075 (missing counts 4-11 Aug)
Aigas	1723	2864 (missing counts)	2896
Beannacharan (Farrar)	?	144	123

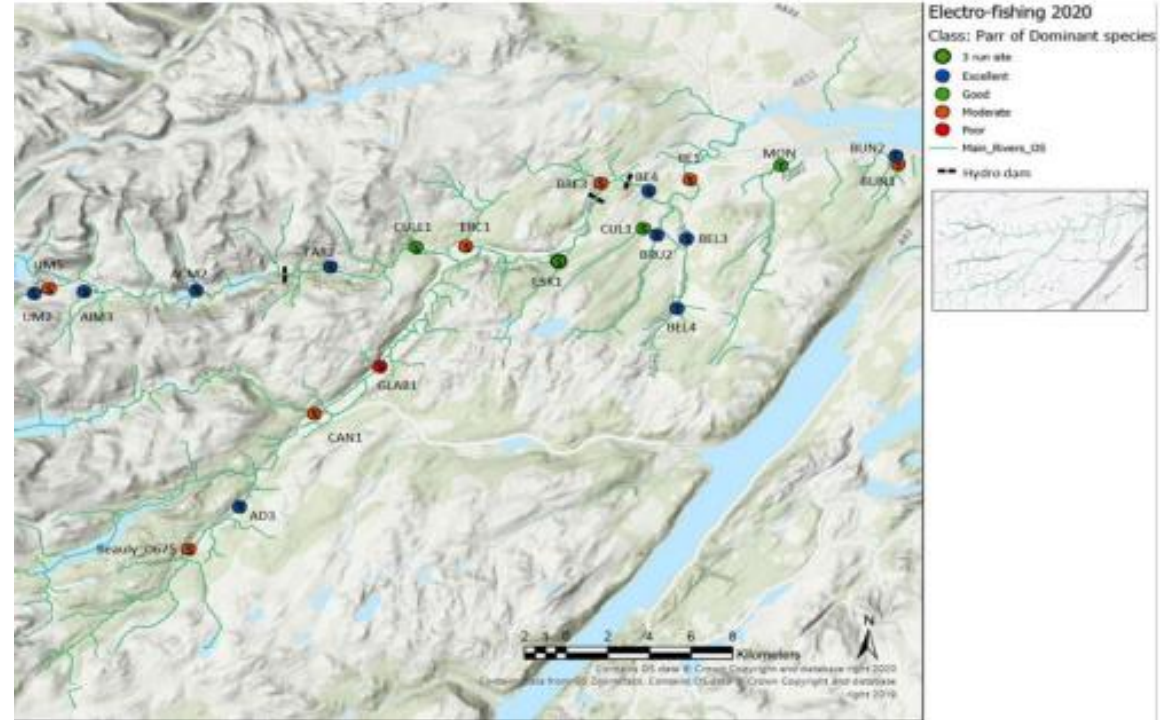
- 10 yr average for Kilmorack is 3583 counts
- 2021 inferred minimum count of 3555
- +25%= **4443 fish**
- General long term trend of decline



Juvenile densities



National Electrofishing Sites 2021 (NEPS)



Historic site locations

2021 data yet to be analysed...

Identifying Pressures

Table 1: Main pressures identified in the catchment as part of Marine Scotland's pressure mapping work	
Main Pressures	Comments
Estuarine nets	Netting stations in the inner Moray Firth (Rosemarkie and Longman) are multi-stock, they take Beaully and Ness fish. Their operation was used for research purposes over the last couple of years but discussions in 2021 will occur with the Ness Board and Marine Scotland to see how we can progress to reduce this potential pressure.
Illegal exploitation	The Beaully has employed a part-time bailiff in the past but have a full-time and seasonal bailiff in place for the 2021 season.
Downstream passage	2018 saw approximately 10% of the catchment's smolts trapped and rescued from Aigas and Kilmorack dam gate slots. Mitigation and improved flow protocol appear to have reduced this pressure significantly. We are working closely with SSE to monitor smolt run timing to improve flows for smolts (see 'Assessing smolt run timing for improved flow management and smolt survival').
Loss of Riparian Vegetation	This is mainly due to high deer numbers in the catchment resulting in a lack of natural regeneration. We intend to secure funding for riparian tree planting in 2022 or 2023 (see 'Riparian Tree Planting'). Invasive, non-native plants also contribute to this pressure.

Loss of Sediment Transfer	Large hydro dams are known to have potential impacts regarding sediment transfer and flow regulation. This potential pressure needs to be assessed further in partnership with SSE where possible so that operational changes can be made if necessary.
Abstraction and Flow Regulation	
Predation	Fish- Pike (introduced, non-native) present in slack areas throughout the catchment
	Birds- Barriers can make fish vulnerable to predation. Further work can be done to update our understanding of sawbill impact on smolts in the catchment. Goosanders are generalist feeders and it would be good to assess if eel numbers are lower than expected in the Beaully. Improving eel passage may help reduce the pressure on smolts. We would like to do winter (as well as spring) bird counts to assess the potential impact on parr.
	Seals- It tends to be a few 'rogue' seals that enter the mouth of the river. SNH data shows total seal numbers are stable although Harbour seal numbers are declining possibly due to less abundance of sandeel. We have improved the monitoring of this pressure.
	Dolphins- Channonry point acts as a bottleneck

Our work in 2021

-Bailiffing

-SSE

-Smolt work

-Invasive species

We have been working on the known pressures faced by salmon and Sea trout

Bailiffing

- Ali and Bob
- Ali made good connections with BAC members and other anglers, bailiffs and ghillies on the river
- Most days bailiffing was carried out morning and evenings (14 hrs a day covered)
- Joint patrols were carried out 6 times a month
- Communication was good between neighbouring catchments
- Operation Wingspan
- Wildlife cameras set up



Bailiffing

River	Patrols	Warning Letters Issued
BAC water	156	3
Beaully -Syndicate and Middle	485	3
Glass	186	3
Farrar	142	0
Beaully Firth	182	2

Main Findings:

- Evidence of illegal fishing found throughout catchment
- Limited use of permits

- Lower Beaully:** Fishing equipment seized in relation to small scale fishery offences. 6 anglers removed.
- BAC- Youths fishing without permits- referred to BAC youth casting sessions, Caravan Park.
- LBFS waters- Angler has joined BAC, Beaufort.
- Boat with mono net found
- Glass:** Fishing equipment seized in relation to small scale fishery offences. Anglers not carrying permits.
- Farrar:** Small issues with permitting.
- Firth:** reports of illegal rib activity, illegal netting in Firth

Bailiffing- priorities for 2022

-Better permitting

-Retain a high profile

-Maintain good relationships with Police Scotland, anglers, ghillies, bailiffs and neighbouring catchments

Lower Beaully: Continue pointing youth poachers etc in direction of BAC youth casting sessions, improve net mark recording by anglers.

Glass: Better signage at Cannich to be discussed with Glass syndicate

Farrar: Improve permitting where possible

Firth: aim to work with MS compliance rib in 2022, gather more evidence.

Working with SSE

-For **better fish passage**

Adults: Introduction of 3 lifts from 2 at Aigas and Kilmorack dams

Smolts: downstream smolt migration

-For **better fish habitat**

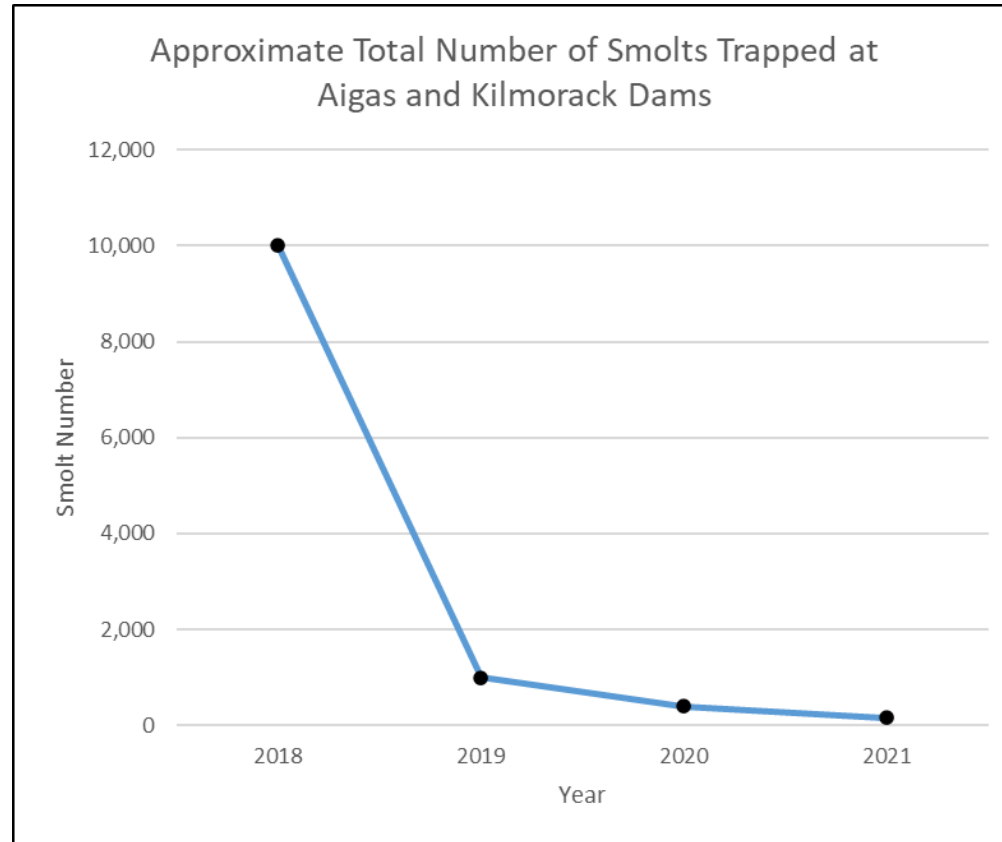
-For **better flows**

-For **better fish counts**

We meet every 6 months and maintain good communication in-between to discuss and address concerns proprietors may have.

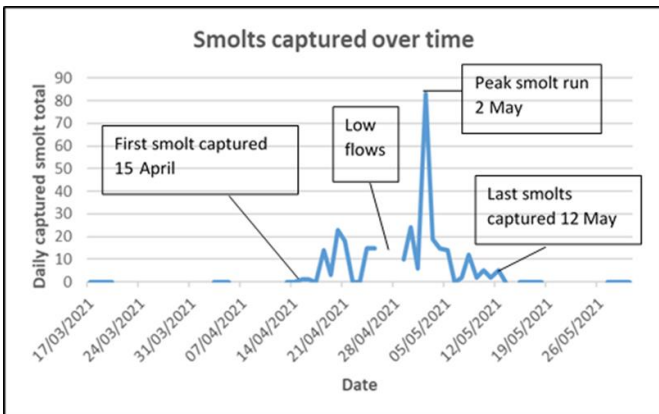


Smolt run timing work for improved smolt survival



-Improved 2 stage flow protocol agreed between us, SSE and SEPA.

A peak total of 152 smolts were seen on 27 May 2021. This compares to a peak of approximately 310 smolts seen by operatives on 15 May 2020, c1,000 trapped in 2019, and c10,000 in 2018.



Smolt Run Timing work for improved smolt survival



Invasive species

- All Invasives work funded by Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (Mink and Plants)
- We control invasives in line with our Biosecurity Plan.

Mink

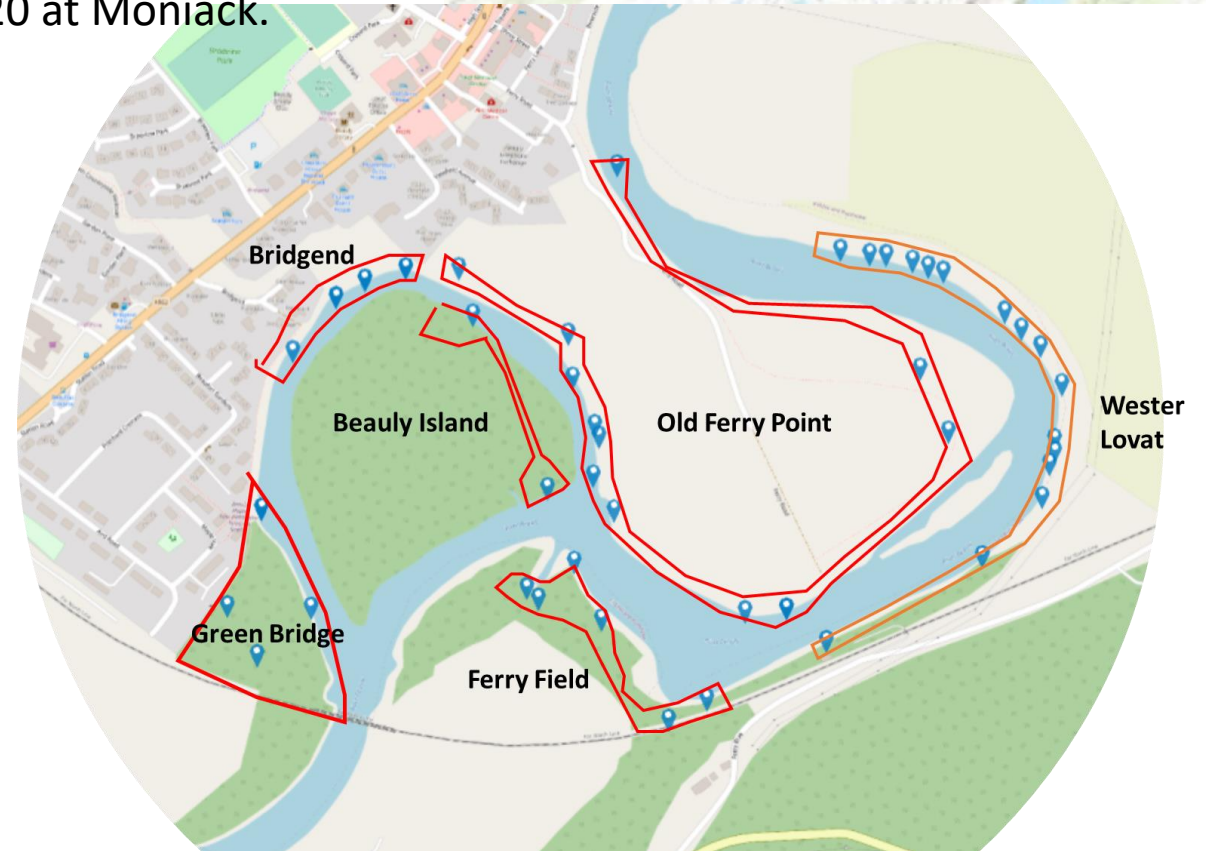
- 4 mink caught in 2021 (Teanassie, Tomich, Moniack). 1 in 2020 at Moniack.

Himalayan Balsam

- Beaully Balsam Bashers set up (6+ volunteers)
- 100 volunteer hours
- All priority sites pulled this year

Japanese Knotweed

- Invasive survey conducted, JK mapped
- 5 sites treated in October





Priorities for 2022

-Update the **Fishery Management Plan**

Continue tackling the pressures through:

- monitoring
- bailiffing
- working with SSE
- smolt run-timing work (aim to include the Farrar too)
- tackling invasives
- predation monitoring (bird counts, seals)
- barrier removal work (lower Beaully tributaries with the LBFS ghillies)....



Priorities for future

...

- Flows and Sediment management
- Riparian Tree planting
- Trial drone work



Map 1: Scottish River Temperature Monitoring Network (SRTMN) Management Priority, Beauly catchment

Accounts

- Full accounts contained within Annual Report (Appendix 2). Available on website: www.beaully.dsfb.org.uk
- 2020 saw start of new era for Board – direct control of employment and step-change in management

- Summary Totals: -
- Total income **£100,607** (increase of £58,359)
 - Proprietor Levies £60,011
 - Other income (incl. SSE contribution) £40,560

- Total Expenditure **£52,093** (increase of £26,685)
 - Saving on salary costs etc. due to delays with recruitment (Covid 19)
 - No contribution to NBFT (historically £20,000)

- Reserves at end of year in healthy position (£85,032)

Beaully
Fishery Board



Thanks for listening

Any Questions?

