

I have now been in post for just under 12 months and am really enjoying the challenge. I have a varied role, and this includes working with the Senior Biologist, Seasonal Bailiff, Ghillies and volunteers.

It has been great to meet with some proprietors and anglers and learn about the Rivers Beaully, Glass and Farrar, and the Beaully Firth. The seasonal Bailiff and I patrolled the catchment 14hrs per day on split shifts, undertaking a combination of early morning, daytime, twilight, and night patrols and weekend patrols throughout the season to try and deter potential poaching activities within the catchment.

I was also in regular contact with the Bailiffs from the Ness and Cromarty Boards to share any Fisheries intelligence.

### **Work undertaken during the season:**

#### **General**

- Completion of a quarterly report for all board members and proprietors.
- Monthly teams meeting with the Chair and Senior Biologist.
- Attended regular Teams meetings with the Senior Biologist and members from SSE to discuss fish counts/Smolt timings run and contact details of personnel to contact on the dams.
- Becoming acquainted with the BDSFB electronic system and shared folder.

#### **Tasks**

- Checking for Salmon and Sea Trout Kelts above the Dams during January February and March. No kelts were observed.
- The river Glass was surveyed for potential Smolt trap sites and once the site was agreed upon, the Smolt trap was installed and was up running this year.
- Purchased equipment for the Smolt trap.
- Installed a river temperature logger above Tomich.
- Taken over the running of the SISI program. Distributed Mink equipment to volunteers.
- Introduced myself to as many anglers as possible.
- Bird counts were arranged with help from BAC volunteers and sawbill data sheet updated.
- Successfully completed First Aid course.
- I met with Glass syndicate Bailiff and Ghillie to discuss operational joint working and the sharing of any possible poaching incidents.
- Daily contact with the seasonal Bailiff for operational purposes
- Deployment of the wildlife cameras throughout the catchment (no poaching incidents were recorded so far).
- Attended half day drone course.
- Follow up and data input of the 2016 and 2018 rod catch returns which were not on the system.
- SISI Volunteers hours recorded on CERVIS system.

- Pink Salmon data entered on FMS app.
- Met with the District Assessor and Alastair Campbell (Clerk), to discuss beat boundaries and owners. A map of the Beaully catchment showing the beat boundaries and ownership will be produced and shared in due course.
- Carried out regular patrols in the catchment and around the Beaully Firth.
- Worked with the LBFS ghillies to clear pinch points on the Belladrum burn.
- Conducted the spraying/Stem injection of Japanese Knotweed within our catchment during October with help from volunteers.

**Current and Planned work before end of the year:**

- Will be checking tributaries for redds during December 21 and January 22.
- SFCC data entry – electro fishing data.
- Will carry out a survey of the River Farrar with the Senior Biologist for possible sites for a Smolt trapping for 2022.
- Drone test flight if there's time

### **Highlights (and lowlights) of 2021**

In July, several fish were found dead on the BAC waters and Syndicate waters with possible mono net marks. I suspect these fish were netted downstream possibly in the Beaully Firth.



Picture of a dead Salmon found on the BAC waters with possible mono net markings

A Pink salmon was found dead at Fly pool on 2 Sep. This is the first known record of Pink salmon on the Beaully. All details were recorded and entered onto the FMS app.



Picture of a Pacific Pink Salmon that was found dead on the Syndicate waters



During September and October, we carried out surveillance operations and targeted patrols on the upper Glass and Farrar. I received several calls from persons unknown at weekends reporting poachers on the river. They refused to give their names and numbers were withheld. I suspect this could be false information as I have attended all call outs, but I have yet to find anybody poaching the areas.

A good number of fish were spotted on the Upper Glass during our patrols.

During October myself and volunteer Steve carried out the stem injection/spraying and cutting of Japanese Knotweed on several sites within our catchment. This will be an ongoing operation with massive amounts of Japanese Knotweed to be treated.



Volunteer Steve at Struy in October, surrounded by Japanese knotweed

Pinch points on the Belladrum burn were removed with help from the local ghillies with more sites to be tackled.



Debris blockages cleared jointly with LBFS ghillies

**Total River Patrols 2021 (September to end November patrols in blue)**

River	Patrols	Warning Letters Issued
BAC water	156 (21)	3
Beaully -Syndicate and Middle	485 (45)	3
Glass	186 (41)	3
Farrar	142 (23)	0
Beaully Firth	182 (21)	2

**Beaully Firth**

182 patrols were conducted within the Beaully Firth. One angler was observed fishing from a rib. When challenged on his arrival into Kessock pier he could not produce a permit to fish the Firth and was issued with a warning letter. No fish were onboard his rib. One person was observed fishing below the Kessock bridge and when challenged, had no permit, and was also issued with a warning letter.

One Multi mono net was found on the shoreline while carrying out a night patrol and information passed onto Police Scotland.

I have received numerous phone calls reporting possible poaching in the Beaully Firth by small scale vessels and have been carrying out as many patrols as possible. Several vessels have been inspected on arrival into Kessock pier and only Pollack and Mackerel have been found.

I will contact Marine Scotland Compliance this coming year to request they deploy one of their inshore vessels to carry out rib patrols within the Inner Beaully Firth.

21 patrols were carried out from September to end November and no incidents were recorded.



### **Beaully Angling Club and Syndicate Waters**

641 patrols were conducted on the Beaully Angling Club (BAC) waters and Lower and Middle beats of the Syndicate during the season. I have spoken to several youths regarding fishing the BAC waters without a permit.

Six anglers were removed from the BAC and Syndicate waters for fishing without a permit and fishing with the wrong tackle. They were all issued with a warning letter and all fishing equipment was seized. They had no Salmon.

I carried out patrols at Beaufort castle. I received permission to set the wildlife cameras in the area and have permission to carry out ongoing patrols on the Castle bank.

1 Monofilament net was found on a Saturday night patrol. No fish were in the net and on inspection no scales were found.



Monofilament net found in boat at Teanassie and fishing gear seized.

66 patrols were carried during September to end of November and no incidents were recorded.

### **Glass**

186 patrols were conducted on the river Glass during the season. Three warning letters were issued, and fishing equipment was seized for small scale fishery offences.

Very few anglers fished the river until August, but we kept a good presence in the area.

I met with the Bailiff and Ghillie from the Glass and agreed our joint working operational plan for the season.

The hut at Balmore beat 6 was broken into and I reported this to the proprietor who said they would investigate.

41 patrols were carried out from September to end of November and no incidents were recorded.

### **Farrar**

142 patrols were conducted on the river Farrar and a number of small-scale fisheries issues have been addressed so far (no permits).

I have met with several SSE employees in the Farrar catchment and shared with them both mine and the seasonal Bailiff's contact details.

I have an excellent working relationship with the Ghillies on the Farrar.

23 patrols were carried from September to end of November with no incidents recorded.

## **Police Scotland**

I organised several joint patrols throughout the season with the local Wildlife Crime Officer from Police Scotland. This collaborative approach will be ongoing to deter any illegal fishing.

I attended a video conference with Police Scotland's Senior Wildlife Crime Officer regarding operation Wingspan. This is a joint venture between local Wildlife Crime Officers and Salmon Fishery Board Bailiffs to deter wildlife crime.

All poaching incidents are passed onto the Wildlife Crime Officer to record on Police Scotland's database.



## **Strategy**

I have fostered excellent working relationships with the Bailiffs, Ghillies, river watchers, volunteers and staff from SSE.as previously stated, I arranged for the catchment to be patrolled 14 hours a day (where possible), through a combination of early/day/late/night patrols during the season to try and deter potential poaching activities within the catchment.

I would like to say a special thank you to the Seasonal Bailiff for all his hard work and for the support he has given me in my first season with the BDSFB.

I continue to keep a very high profile to deter poaching activity on the rivers and along the coastline. Whilst poaching activity may be declining, there is no doubt that without the dedicated professional work of the BDSFB Bailiffs, the rivers Beauly, Glass and Farrar would be far more of a target for such illegal activity.

Members of the BAC and river watchers have been very helpful passing on information on suspicious behavior and of strange cars parked at the river. I have found the local Police Wildlife Officers to be a great source of information and they have also been extremely helpful when I have had to contact them.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any issues on the river by email at [ali@beaulyfisheryboard.org](mailto:ali@beaulyfisheryboard.org) or by phone on 07786 741482.

**Ali Skinner,  
Fisheries Officer /River Bailiff**