



Annual Report 2024-2025

June 2025

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BEAULY DSFB CONSERVATION POLICY 2025

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DRAFT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

Report prepared by: -

Hamish Hope, Clerk to the Board

Ruth Watts, Senior Biologist

Ali Skinner, Water Bailiff

1.0 Foreword

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the 2024/25 Annual Report and the accompanying accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024.

This year has seen continued dedication from our team and volunteers in delivering the Board's statutory duties and progressing the priorities set out in our Fishery Management Plan. I would like to extend my thanks to Ruth Watts, our Senior Biologist, and Ali Skinner, our Water Bailiff, for their continued efforts. Special thanks also go to Anthony Watkins, who provided maternity cover for Ruth during a critical period of fieldwork and reporting. The Board welcomed the return of Reece Paton as Seasonal Bailiff, and we are grateful for his contribution to enforcement and conservation activities.

A collaborative relationship with SSE remains vital, particularly in relation to smolt monitoring and fish passage at the Aigas and Kilmorack dams. This is something the Board will continue to work towards as a key priority. While technical challenges persist with the AI-based fish counters, we are hopeful that improvements will yield more reliable data in the future.

We continue to face significant pressures on salmon and sea trout populations, including predation, habitat degradation, and climate-related impacts. The Board has responded with targeted actions, including sediment augmentation planning, invasive species control, and enhanced monitoring, including juvenile density surveys and adult scale sampling. The support of volunteers, river proprietors, and partner organisations is instrumental in these efforts.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to improving fish passage, minimizing predation and man-made impacts, restoring habitat, and strengthening community engagement. The Board is also preparing for further consultation on energy infrastructure developments that may affect the catchment.

I would like to thank all Board members for their time and commitment, and I encourage all stakeholders to engage with the work of the Board as we strive to protect and enhance the Beaully fishery for future generations.

Alastair Campbell
Convenor

Alastair Campbell
Convenor

The Board's conservation and monitoring work in 2024 was overseen by my maternity cover, Anthony Watkins. Thanks to Ant for all of his hard work.

Our recently updated Fishery Management Plan covers our work programme, and we continue to deliver on it, albeit slowly with limited staffing resources.

I am pleased that our smolt monitoring has now progressed to a stage where improved capture efficiency at Erchless will make future smolt behaviour or survival studies possible in relation to Aigas and Kilmorack dams.

I am also looking forward to seeing what sediment augmentation projects on the Rivers Beaully and Farrar could look like this year. We hope to improve the distribution of salmon spawning habitat and ultimately improve the resilience of salmon in the Beaully catchment as a whole.

We welcome Reece back as Seasonal bailiff and appreciate his help.

I hope you enjoy reading about what we have been up to in relation to protecting fish in the catchment in this annual report.

Please get in touch if you have any queries.

Ruth Watts

Senior Biologist

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2.0 Role of the District Salmon Fishery Board

The Beaully District Fishery Board is a statutory body responsible for the protection and enhancement of salmon and sea trout fisheries in the Beaully district, including the Rivers Beaully, Glass, and Farrar. The Catchment extends from Glen Affric in the south-west to the mouth of the River Beaully at the Beaully Firth and includes Glen Cannich, Glen Strathfarrar and Strathglass. There is extensive hydro-electric development on the system, including principal dams at Loch Monar and Loch Mullardoch, Aigas and Kilmorack.

Salmon fishing rights in Scotland are private heritable titles that are registered separately from land. As such these titles can be bought and sold like any other property. In Scotland, the cost of the local administration, protection and improvement of the fisheries is privately financed by the proprietors. The District Boards finance their work by levying a rate on the salmon fishery owners in the district. Elected representatives of those owners provide the core of the membership of the Board. However, since 1986, the Boards are required also to include representatives of salmon anglers and salmon netmen in the district. A further revision to the constitution of the Boards was made in 1999 to allow for even wider representation on the Boards by other parties who may have an interest or stake in salmon stocks or fisheries.

Powers and duties

The powers and duties of a DSFB are summarised below:

Powers

- to act, undertake works and incur expenses for the protection and improvement of the fisheries within their districts, for the increase of salmon and sea trout and the stocking of the district with these fish.
- to impose financial assessments on each salmon fishery in the district, and to charge interest on arrears.
- to borrow funds, and to incur a wide range of expenditure in furtherance of their powers and duties.
- to appoint bailiffs to enforce the salmon fisheries legislation.
- exempt persons from certain provisions of the law for scientific or other purposes.
- to sue in the name of the clerk.

Duties

- to appoint a clerk
- to maintain a list of proprietors within the DSFBs district
- to produce an annual report and audited accounts and to consider these at an AGM
- to call a triennial electoral meeting

The Board meets four times per annum. Minutes are published on the Board's website <http://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/>

3.0 Board Members and Staff

Board Members

Board members are elected triennially. The last elections took place in June 2024. Board members are all volunteers and are non-renumerated for their time and effort. The elected Board members subsequently elect one of the members to be their chairman/convenor. The current board members are as follows:

Representatives of Upper Proprietors:	Alastair Campbell, Convenor Eugenie Haniel Victoria Rotheroe Donald Fraser Charles McAndrew
Representatives of Lower Proprietors:	Vacant – Tom Waring was elected but resigned in May 2025.
Co-optee of salmon anglers:	Jim Braithwaite (Beaully Angling Club)
Clerk to the Board	Hamish Hope (Bell Ingram)

Board Staff

The Board currently employs a full-time Senior Biologist, Water Bailiff and a Seasonal Bailiff. A Seasonal Bailiff was employed for the 2024 season. We also benefit from having an Invasive Species Project Officer, hosted by the Cromarty Firth Fishery Board.

Current staff are: -

Senior Biologist	Ruth Watts (Anthony Watkins as Maternity cover)
Fisheries Officer / Bailiff	Ali Skinner
Invasive Species Project Officer	Trudi Clarke
Seasonal Bailiff	Reece Paton



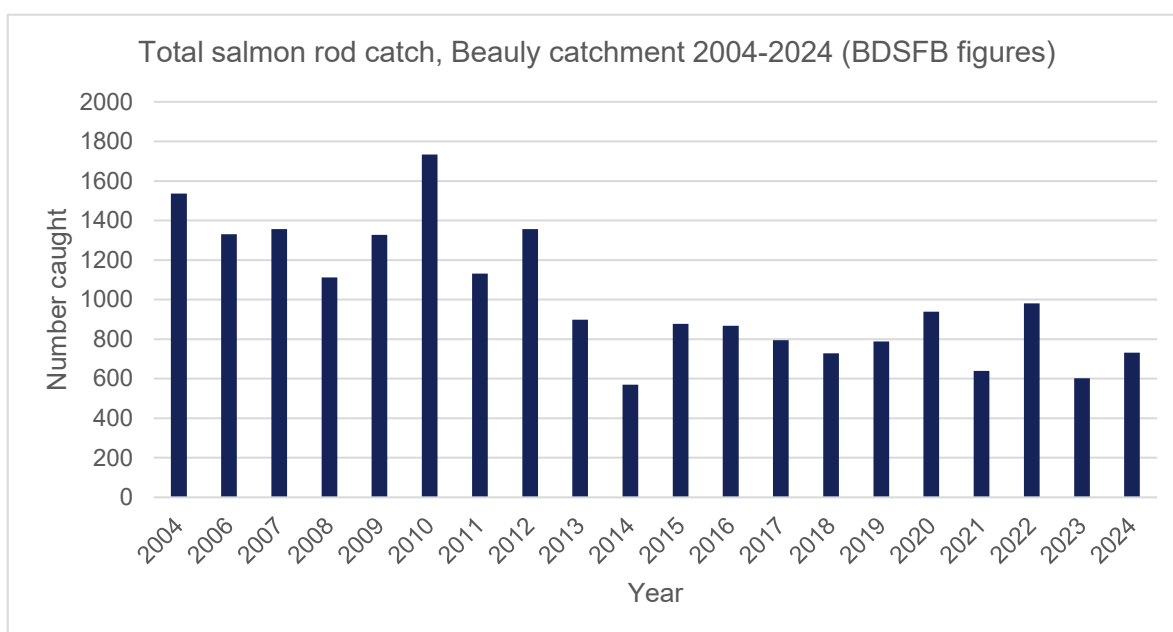
4.0 Fish Catches 2024

Catch returns are an important indicator of adult run size available for the system. Catch statistics are collected annually by Marine Scotland Science (MSS) for all fishery districts in Scotland. In addition to this, District Salmon Fishery Boards can collect data directly from proprietors twice per year. The size of the run can be used as a measure of its status by comparing the annual catch against long-term average catches and fish count data.

Salmon Rod Catch

In the 2024 season, 732 salmon were reported to the Board as being caught. One proprietor failed to return a catch report to the Board. Official MSS catch statistics report 752 salmon caught in 2024 (302 Multi Sea Winter, 450 Grilse). The total number of salmon caught (according to the Board's figures) was 6% lower than the 10-year average (779) and 7% lower than the 5 year average (790). August saw peak catches in the Beaully catchment.

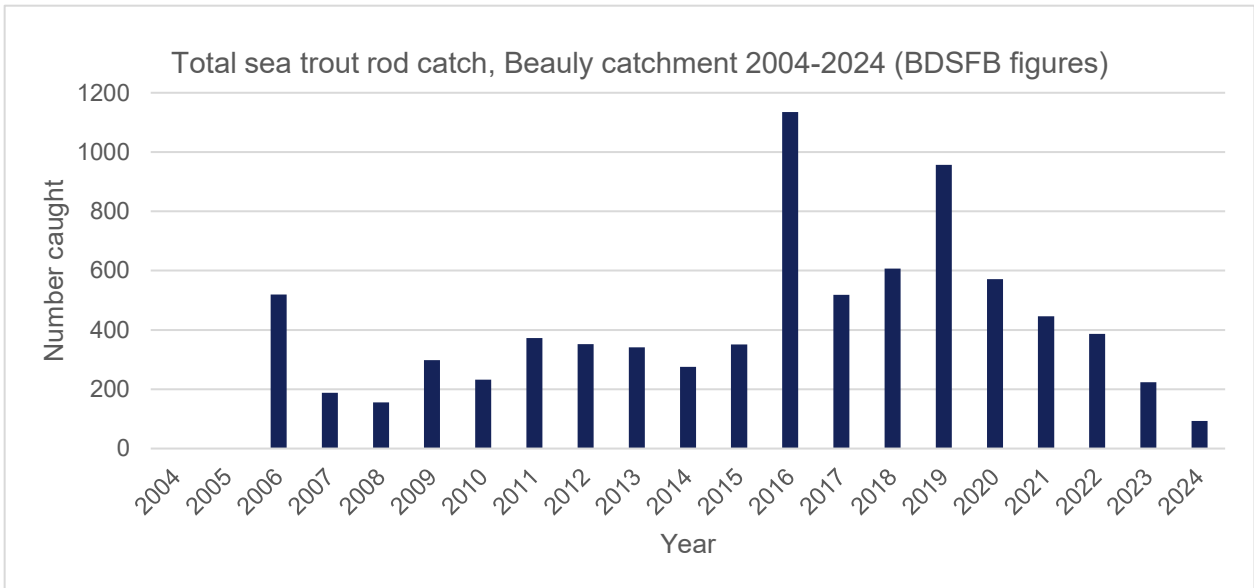
2004 to 2024 Salmon rod catch



Sea Trout Rod Catch

In the 2024 season, 94 sea trout and finnock were reported to the Board. The ten-year average recorded by the Board is 547 and the five-year average 517. This is the likely to be the lowest catch ever recorded. Sea trout numbers on the Beaully can vary widely. The low number caught may be due to the high water levels at the end of the season making angling on the lower river tricky, or a genuine shift from sea trout life history to brown trout due to a lack of productivity in the firth. Wider movements of sea trout around the Moray Firth are unlikely to be the causal factor as other districts also saw very low numbers of sea trout caught. There has been a concerning steep decline since 2019. MSS official statistics report 58 sea trout and finnock caught in 2024 – this is a significant difference from the Board's figure.

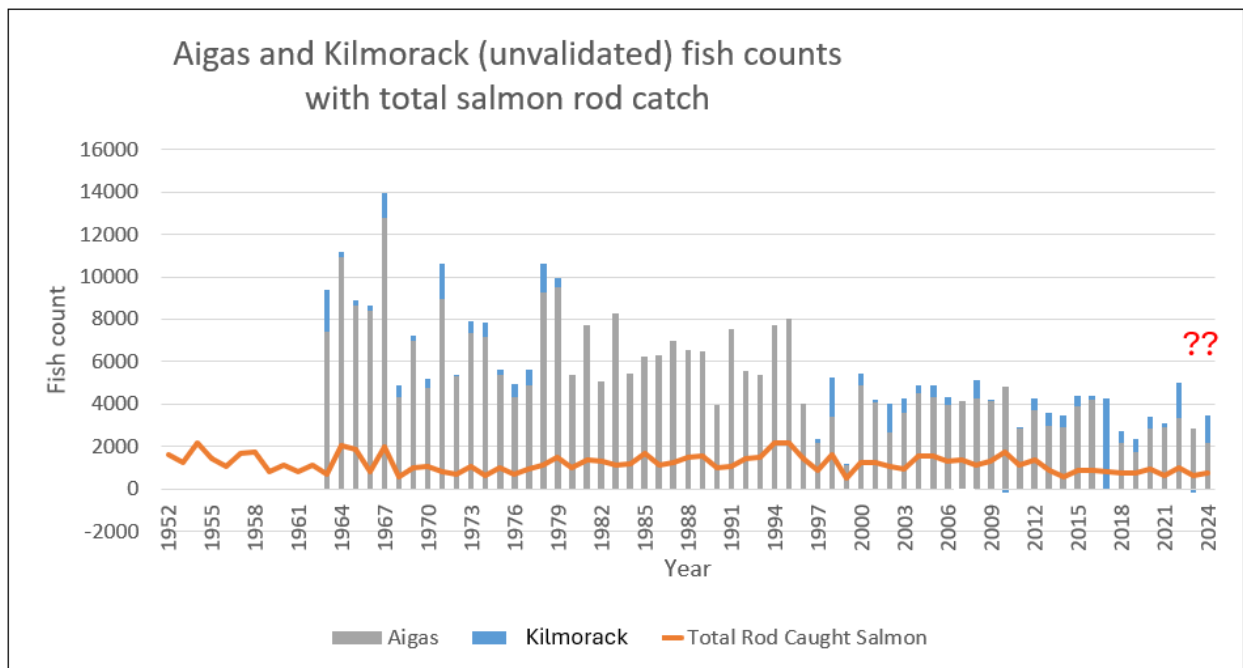
2006 to 2024 Sea trout rod catch



5.0 Fish Counter Data 2024

SSE installed artificial intelligence fish counters at Kilmorack and Aigas dams in 2023. Technical challenges resulted in 40-50% of fish count data being lost in 2023. In 2024 improvements to file storage capacity were made, however, further technical issues resulted in 20hrs of video being lost at Kilmorack in August (during the peak run), and a backlog of 400hrs of video from Aigas still needing to be processed. Unvalidated data from the mk14 counter installed at Beannacharan showed a minimum of 220 fish ascended the R. Farrar in 2024. We await updated fish counts from SSE. Fish counts should be seen as a minimum estimate of fish ascending at the dams especially as data is often incomplete.

Aigas and Kilmorack unvalidated counts (minimum estimate of fish numbers)



6.0 BDSFB Conservation Policy

The 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. The Board's current 2025 recommended conservation policy is attached in Appendix 1 and is on our website. It encourages 100% catch and release of salmon and sea trout. There was also an approved policy in place for 2024.

The recorded catch and release rate for salmon in 2024 was 97%.

Guidance on catch & release best practice can be found on the Board's website <https://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/files/2025/02/Catch-and-Release-January-2025-web-version.pdf>

7.0 Salmon Conservation Status

The Scottish Government grade the health of rivers across Scotland according to The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations. The River Beaully was Grade 1 (good) in 2024 and this has been maintained for 2025.

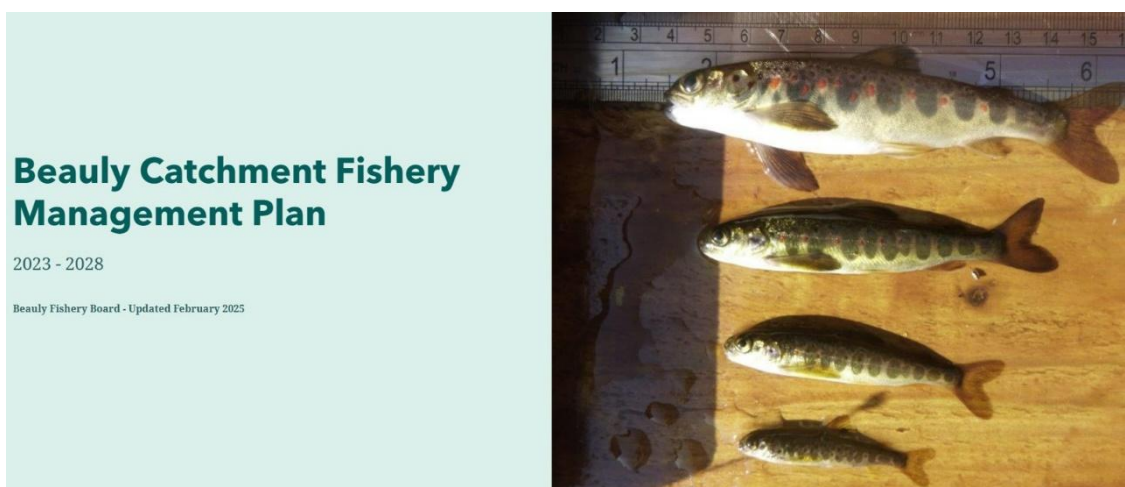
8.0 Fishery Management Plan

The Fishery Management Plan was published at the end of 2022 and recently updated in both pdf and Storyboard formats. They are available to view on the Board's website.

The purpose of the Fishery Management Plan is to set out how we aim to tackle the pressures faced by salmon and sea trout, our main work areas are:

- 1) **Bailiffing**: Maintaining a strong bailiffing presence
- 2) **Smolts**: Studying the survival and behaviour of smolts in relation to the dams to improve smolt survival where possible.
- 3) **Fish habitat**: Improving sediment management in relation to the large hydro dams to improve the availability of spawning habitat below them.
- 4) **Minimising predation**

The storyboard version of the Fishery Management Plan, 2025



9.0 Water Bailiff Report

This update summarises key working tasks undertaken during the 2024/25 season. The focus for 2024/25 was to undertake numerous patrols at different times of the day and night within our catchment, maintaining as high a presence as possible to try and deter any poaching activity. Most of these patrols were carried out during weekends and at unsociable hours.

During the winter months there were many fishermen fishing the river, from Aigas dam upstream to the river Glass. These anglers were targeting Pike, and I regularly stopped and inspected their tackle to ensure it was legal.

I also undertook a combination of early morning, daytime, twilight, night, and weekend patrols throughout the season, to try and deter potential poaching activities within the catchment.

We altered our patrols this year ensuring we patrolled the main poaching areas within our catchment especially at weekends, and this has made a big difference. Wildlife cameras are deployed throughout the catchment.

I am in regular contact with the Glass syndicate and Erchless Ghillies to discuss any possible poaching incidents and share information.

I am also in regular contact with Police Scotland's Wildlife Crime Officers and the Water Bailiffs from the Ness and Cromarty Boards to share any Fisheries intelligence. I have provided ongoing training to the new Seasonal Bailiff to enhance his knowledge.

Our dedicated team of Bailiffs works tirelessly throughout the fishing season and beyond, patrolling the full catchment from dawn till dusk. The work we do is critical as it not only catches poachers in the act but also deters others from targeting our rivers, potentially saving the lives of countless Atlantic Salmon.

Bailiffing of the Rivers Beaully, Glass and Farrar is not just about enforcing the law, it plays a crucial role in conservation. By preventing poaching, we help ensure that salmon populations can recover and thrive. Healthy salmon stocks are essential for the ecosystem and the local economy, supporting sustainable fishing and tourism.

Despite the challenges, the work of our Bailiff team is making a difference. Our efforts are helping to preserve the River Beaully's salmon for future generations, and we are immensely proud of the dedication and professionalism we demonstrate every day.

As we continue to address the issue of poaching, we urge the Community to support us by reporting any suspicious activity. Together, we can protect the Rivers Beaully, Glass and Farrar and their invaluable Atlantic salmon.

Work Plan Progress to Address the Pressures on Salmon and Sea Trout

Bailiffing

River Patrols conducted 1 June 2024 – 31 May 2025

River	Patrols	Warning Letters Issued/Verbal Warnings
Beaully Firth	290	25 Verbal warnings/Advice/Removed
BAC water	250	5 Verbal warnings/Advice/Removed
LBFS – Upper Beaully beats	370	15 Verbal warnings/Advice/Removed
Farrar	35	0
Glass	180	5 Verbal warnings/Advice/Removed



Wildlife Crime Officers from Police Scotland carrying out a joint patrol with the Beaully Water Bailiffs

Predation

One bird was shot during the licence period October 2023-May 2024. I compiled the bird count and completed the bird licence application which was submitted to Nature Scot.

I carried out numerous early morning checks on the BAC, LBFS beats and Kilmorack dam to check for sightings of the Grey Seal. All sightings were added to a Seal app on the Fishery Board's website.



Seal acoustic device in operation at Kilmorack dam

Beauly Fishery Board Tasks

- Carry out regular patrols on the river Beauly, Glass and Farrar to deter any poaching.
- Seal Management on the LBFS, BAC beats to try and deter the Grey Seal using the Seal acoustic device.
- Burn clearance (blockage).
- Checking of spawning areas within our catchment during the winter months.
- Detering the Grey Seal from Salmon Redds.
- Regular patrols within our catchment. Inspected tributaries for blockages/clearance within our catchment in October and November 2024 and early February March and April 2025 for Smolt migration.

Invasives (Scottish Invasive Species Initiative)

- Mink traps were regularly inspected. 16 Remoti Mink traps were in operation in 2024/25 within our catchment.

People: Community Engagement, Participation and Heritage

- Uploaded regular posts on Facebook.
- Maintained regular contact with Estate workers and Ghillies.
- Attended the opening of the Salmon season.
- Responded to general enquiries from the public.
- I successfully completed my First Aid refresher course.
- I attended an Enforcement Conference with the Head of the Wildlife & Environmental Crime Unit at the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Monitoring

Adult fish

- Maintained regular contact with SSE staff at all dams.
- Monitoring river levels on the SEPA gauges.
- Inspected smolt gate slots at Aigas and Kilmorack dam with SSE employee Naveed.
- Sluice gate at Aigas dam were open during January, February and March 2025 to help Kelts move down through the system.
- Checked for Salmon and Sea Trout Kelts above the dams during January, February, March and April 2025. A few Kelts were observed.
- Checked for Salmon Smolts above the dams during April, May and June 2025.
- Plenty Smolts were observed below Kilmorack dam in May 2025. No dead Smolts were observed by me and there was no sign of Seagulls eating any Smolts.

Kelts - Smolts

- Checked for Salmon Redds at Teannassie, Belladrum and Bruich burns during December 2024.
- Checked for Salmon and Sea Trout Kelts above and below Kilmorack and Aigas dams from January to May and is ongoing (no Kelts were observed by me below or above Aigas and Kilmorack dams during Jan/Feb 2025).
- The Aigas and Kilmorack dam sluice gates were opened in early December, January and February.



Salmon cutting Redds

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 BSFB Bailiffs, the rivers Beaully, Glass and Farrar would be far more of a target for such illegal activity.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any issues on the river by email at ali@beaullyfisheriesboard.org or by phone on 07786 741482.

Ali Skinner, Water Bailiff

10.0 Conservation Work

Sediment Management

This work area is a priority of the Fishery Management Plan.

Walkovers and a review of old photos have highlighted that there is a lack of salmon spawning habitat on the Rivers Beauly and Farrar as a result of the hydro dams (See [Farrar](#) and [Beauly](#) reports). Ideally we would like to see sediment management plans automatically included as part of large hydro-scheme CAR licences and we are working with SEPA (through FMS) on this, however in the mean time we intend to deliver gravel augmentation measures where appropriate.

Drone flyovers of both rivers were completed in March 2025 to record the state of the physical bed of the rivers ahead of any potential changes. Building on work completed in 2023, we are currently applying for funding to contract a hydro-morphologist to advise us on the particulars of how and where it would be best to conduct gravel augmentation downstream of the dams. We are also engaging with the relevant landowners and proprietors.

Introducing gravel-pebble-cobble to the river would help restore the distribution of salmon spawning habitat and ultimately improve the resilience of salmon in the Beauly catchment as a whole

We recently attended site visits to the R. Shin, and the R, Orrin, where gravel augmentation has been carried out to refine our ideas. Thanks to the Cromarty Firth Fishery Board and the Kyle of Sutherland fisheries for their help so far.

R. Shin and R. Orrin gravel augmentation projects visited in 2025



Predation

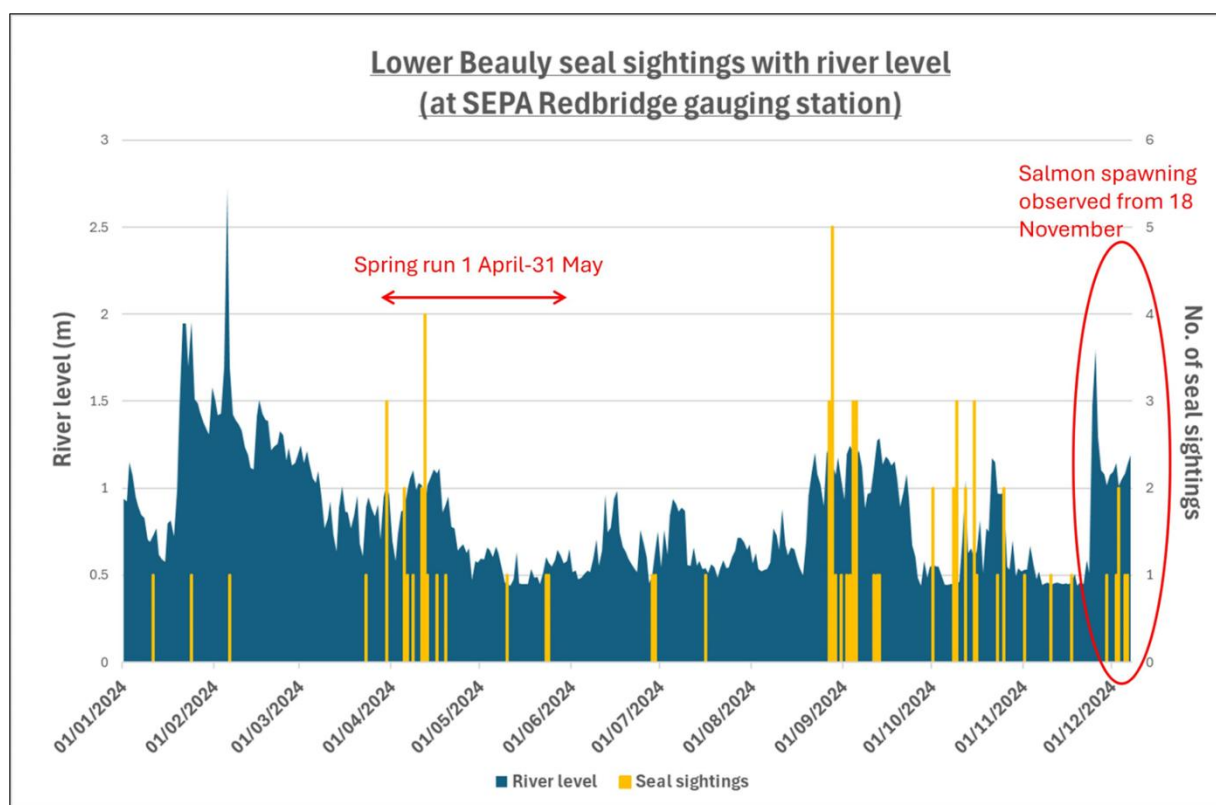
Specialist Seals

Following increased monitoring of seal presence in the River Beaully in 2023-2024 and with numerous observations of adult salmon being eaten by specialist seals above the tidal limit, a seal licence application was submitted to the Marine Directorate in January 2025.

All other practical mitigation had been taken before applying for a licence. Unfortunately, the Acoustic Deterrent Device appears to be mostly ineffective in the River Beaully. Predation by seals is exacerbated by the presence of Kilmorack hydro dam which impedes fish escape.

Predation is likely to disproportionately affect the spring run, and salmon in the act of spawning as these coincide in periods when the river is high and when specialist grey seals can access the river. Out of 105 observations, 56 were predation related (e.g. hunting behaviour).

Seal monitoring suggests that the impact of specialist seals on returning Beaully salmon is significant



Bird Counts

Three catchment surveys occurred in 2024/5 to support our 2025 licence application. These were carried out 3 Oct 2024, 10-11Feb, 31 March-1April. Bird count results, observations recorded by ghillies and scaring and shooting activities were submitted to NatureScot as part of a control licence renewal application.

Invasive species control

Invasive species control in the catchment is funded by the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) and we are guided by our [Biosecurity Plan](#). Phase 1 of the SISI project (2017 -2023; funded by Heritage Lottery Fund) was succeeded by Phase 2 in 2023 and will run until the end of March 2026 thanks to Nature Restoration Funding. We are in the third and final year of having Trudi, our SISI Project Officer for Beaully, Ness, and Conon catchments. With the help of our much-appreciated volunteers we continue to see invasive plant distribution diminish across the catchment.

We can eradicate invasives before they take hold and damage the river ecosystem and fish habitat, so it is vital we act now and take the threat seriously. The extent of invasive plants (especially in and around Beaully) is more than the Fishery Board alone can deal with, so we work with our much-valued volunteers.

We continue to work with the **Beaully Balsam Bashers** and Lovat estate. 2024 was the fourth year of co-ordinated Himalayan balsam pulling and the positive impact of our work was evident at several sites. In 2024, the Beaully Balsam Bashers gave us 109.5 volunteer hours. Also very helpful was a NatureScot volunteer day, with one of their staff, Sue. All known sites were picked thoroughly including Wester Lovat by kayak (Ruth and Steve). Less time was taken at sites compared to previous years, so we are seeing improvements (e.g., at Green bridge, Ferry Field, and Balblair) with Kirkton burn seemingly eradicated. As this was the fourth year of picking and seed is viable for three(ish) years we hope to see a drastic reduction in abundance of balsam from now on.

Skunk cabbage control continues through a mixture of manual removal (Mauld) and spraying (Kirkton burn, Teannassie, Tomich, Carnoch, Wester Lovat, Ferry point, Ferry field). A new site was identified near the top of the catchment near Knockfin bridge, Tomich, and this becomes a new priority for eradication.

Japanese knotweed was treated at various sites in the catchment (Guisachan, Glassburn, Eilean Aigas, Bridgend, Wester Lovat), including a key site at Struy which got its third year of treatment. SISI funded £3,960 of contractor work by AMW Partnership to carry out a second year of treatment from the Priors downstream to the estuary. This work had previously been funded by the Highland Nature Restoration Fund in 2023 to help improve biodiversity and local walking access.

Eleven volunteers (coordinated by Trudi) monitor mink rafts, and the Remoti network has recently been expanded to cover coastal areas more effectively. **Mink** are non-native voracious predators and can impact on the wider biodiversity of the river.

Invasive species control



Riparian Trees

Planting riparian trees (or encouraging natural regeneration along river banks) is the easiest way of making the catchment resilient to climate change and has multiple other benefits. Little progress has been made on this since 2022, but we are liaising with Braulen estate who seem happy to start planting their annual quota of boxed trees on the banks of the Uisge Misge to increase shading of the river (top of the R. Farrar).

Barrier removal

Proprietors were contacted to help ensure burns were clear ahead of the November 2024 spawning season. Ali conducted inspections of the Belladrum catchment which is prone to blockages. Several blockages were identified and cleared by LBFS ghillies and Beaufort estate.

Estuarine Netting

Ness and Beaully Fishery Trust, with support from Beaully Fishery Board and Ness Fishery Board bought out a key estuarine netting station (Sea park, Longman) in 2024. This should help protect returning adult salmon from possible commercial fishery interests.

Glen Strathfarrar



11.0 Monitoring

Electro-fishing

The fourth year of the Farrar genetics sampling took place (12 sites, 360 salmon fry) to help assess the number of spawning adults on the River Farrar and to look at other genetic patterns of salmon using the Farrar (e.g. run timing). The results from all years (2021-2023) suggests a minimum of 248-272 breeding adults. This compares to fish counts between 2020-2023 of 38-222. No fine scale genetic sub-structuring was found but there was a tendency for the fish at the top of the river to be more likely to have the allele for earlier run timing. The [report](#) is on the website.

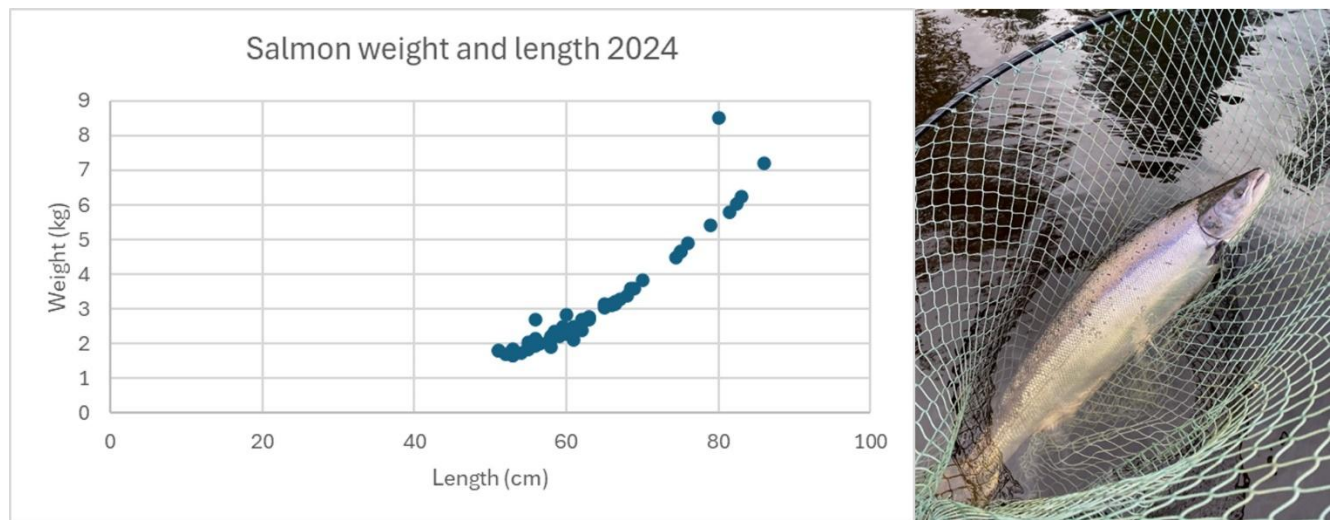
Overall, 2024 was a small year for electro-fishing surveys due to a lack of resourcing and high flows in September that limited access to the main stem. 8 sites were surveyed thanks to the valuable help of volunteers.

A review of recent [electro-fishing data \(2018-2024\)](#) has been carried out to help inform our knowledge and potential future management activities. This is on our website.

Adult Sampling Project

2024 saw the Board with the Lower Beaully Syndicate ghillies participate in the National Adult Sampling project. This involved the collection of scales, and accurate length and weight data from 67 fish caught on the Lower Beaully. Scale reading is being done by Marine Scotland Science. The 2021 and 2022 report is available [here](#) on the website. Another report is currently being produced by Marine Directorate.

National adult sampling



Kelt monitoring

A significant proportion of kelts may come back as repeat spawners so it is vital that they are allowed unimpeded passage out of the catchment. Kelts are able to travel down the fish passes at all three dams in the accessible reach but sometimes numbers above the dams can build up and the drum gates are opened for them. SSE and Board staff regularly check for this and no kelt build ups were observed in early 2025.

Temperature monitoring

Water temperature is very important for fish and gives us an insight into smolt run timing, peak summer temperatures, and when upstream migration can occur ($>5^{\circ}\text{C}$). We have three temperature loggers in the catchment: Above Knockfin bridge on the Abhainn Deabhag, on the U. Misge near the top of the R. Farrar and on the Lower Beauly at Cruives.

Smolt monitoring

Improving the survival of smolts in relation to the hydro dams is a key priority in our Fishery Management Plan. The smolt run was monitored for the first time at a good site adjacent to the Erchless fishing hut in 2024. The monitoring informed SSE flows in the catchment for improved smolt survival at Aigas and Kilmorack dams.

This year (April-May 2025) we ran the 6ft trap at the same site for a short period (between 21st April- 1st May) with the aim of improving capture efficiency. We positioned the trap further away from the bank to capture the main flow. Flows were very low throughout this period.

Once the trap was in prime position we re-captured 9% of 71 dye- marked smolts. This improved capture efficiency stands us in good stead for any future smolt behaviour or survival studies.

Erchless smolt trapping 2025



Thanks to SSE for providing the trap and Naveed for helping out on installation day, Jim, and Basher who 'fixed it,' the 4 volunteers who helped check it, The Cromarty Fishery Board for advice and training, and The Lower Beaully Fishing Syndicate for visiting.

SSE's smolt protection protocol was slightly amended from 2024. SSE implemented Phase 1 flows for smolts between 1st April-31st May with Phase 2 flows being in place from 28th April- first week of June.

SSE staff monitor the number of smolts in the dam gate slots. Smolt numbers rose to 200 at Aigas on 15th May prompting SSE to generate only at night, and rose again to 500+ on 23rd May. SEPA were informed. Although adhering to the smolt protocol, the dry spring meant there had not been much water for SSE to generate with. Luckily rain fell from the evening of 23rd May ending the long dry spell, generation increased, and the smolts were drawn out of the gate slots.

12.0 People: Community Engagement, Participation and Heritage

Oral History Project

After a lot of hard work, Louise Senior, our NatureScot funded, Working with Rivers Trainee (2022), finished writing up the Oral history project report in February! For more information see page 16 of FMS's annual review 2023 or read and listen to the Oral histories on our website (Publications tab). We are in the process of getting a few copies printed.



13.0 Working With SSE

The Beaully system is heavily affected by hydro-electric schemes operated by SSE. The Board has a good working relationship with SSE and recognises that through working together Page 17 Annual Report 2022/2023 Beaully DSFB improvements for fish and the river can be made. For a number of years members of the Board have held twice annual liaison meetings with representatives of SSE. The Board views these meetings as important in maintaining a good relationship with SSE enabling discussion on any specific concerns regarding the impact of the hydro-electric schemes within the catchment.

We work closely with SSE especially during the smolt run. See [Section 11](#) for details of our smolt monitoring.

14.0 Statutory Duties

Consultations and advice

Since the last Annual report, responses and advice were provided for tidal flap construction at Lentrán, Spittal-Loch Bhuidhe- Beaully Overhead line, BAM in-river working, Ballach Windfarm, Farrar Vista Over head Line, Beaully Battery Energy Storage System, Highland Biodiversity Action Plan update, Fasnakyle-Bingally connection, Fanellan/Black bridge.

Incidents

November 2024: Tomich burn - unauthorised engineering - Investigated by ourselves and SEPA. Re-instatement has been carried out.

December 2024: Low water during spawning on R. Beaully- SSE informed

January 2025: Ardblair burn (Glen Convinth) track washout- SEPA visited and provided advice

Assessing the fish impact of Tomich burn unauthorised engineering works



Stocking Applications

Under the Aquaculture & Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2007, the Board has a duty to consider any application for stocking of any life stage of salmon or sea trout. Written consent must be obtained from the Board before any such stocking takes place.

No applications for stocking were received by the Board during 2023. The Board does not currently operate any stocking programme of its own.

Compliance with Good Governance

Meetings

The annual meeting of qualified proprietors was held on 6th June 2024. This meeting was publicised by means of the Board's website and direct notification to proprietors and a copy of the notice sent to the Scottish Government. The minutes from the annual meeting of June 2024 can be viewed at <http://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/>

The 2024 annual public meeting was delayed until 2025 and will be carried out on the same date as the 2025 annual public meeting. A full meeting will be held for each year.

In addition, meetings of the Board were held on 19th March 2024, 6th June 2024, 4th October 2024, 10th December 2024 and 6th March 2025. These meetings were publicised by means of the Board's website. The approved minutes from these meetings can be viewed at <http://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/>

Annual Report and Accounts

This annual report will be published at <http://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/>. The annual report for 2023-24, including approved accounts for the year to 31 December 2023, was published on the same website and a copy sent to Scottish Government. Draft Annual Accounts to 31 December 2024 are attached to this report at Appendix 2.

The annual report 2024-25 and accounts for 2024 will be published on the website once approved.

Complaints

The Board has set up and maintains a complaints procedure which can be viewed at <http://beaully.dsfb.org.uk/>. The procedure was reviewed at the Board meeting of 4th December 2014, was updated in April 2023 and most recently in June 2025. This policy was notified to Scottish Government.

No complaints have been received in the last year.

Members' interests

The register of members' interests can be viewed at the offices of Bell Ingram, Old Bank of Scotland Building, Beaully. We have included a standing item at each Board meeting inviting Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.

15.0 Priorities for the Coming Year

Our priorities for the coming year are in line with our statutory function and [Fishery Management Plan](#). We aim to do the following:

Fisheries Enforcement

- Ensure bailiffing is carried out in co-ordination with Marine Scotland compliance, Police Scotland, and neighbouring catchments

Conservation Work

- Commission an assessment of how best **gravel augmentation** may be carried out on the Rivers Beauly and Farrar for habitat restoration purposes.

- Review the large hydro CAR licences in relation to **flows** and suggest amendments to proprietors, SSE and SEPA. i.e. switch around the seasonal minimum flows to reflect a more natural flow regime for the benefit of spawning salmon and anglers.

- Conduct a walkover of the Belladrum sub-catchment focussing on the **diffuse pollution** pressure and link farmers to funding/ solutions.

- The Board will continue to eradicate **invasive species** in the catchment in an upstream to downstream direction with help from our Invasive species officer, Trudi. A focus in 2025 will be managing a contractor for the third year of treatment of the large stand of Japanese Knotweed at Beauly (on the riverbank close to the Priory, and downstream) as this will have multiple biodiversity and community benefits. We now have four willing (and trained) volunteers be able to help with follow-up treatment. We will also continue to support the **Beauly Balsam Bashers** in this fifth successive year of co-ordinated pulling.

- Continued co-ordination of blockage clearing on tributaries will continue to ensure good **fish passage**.

- We aim to continue encouraging more **riparian trees** to grow in the upper catchment through engaging with landowners, Riverwoods, and Trees for Life's Riparian Officer to help buffer the future impacts of climate change. Specifically, we hope to work with Braulen estate, in planting boxed trees on the U. Misge in March 2026.

Salmon spawning substrate on the River Farrar



Monitoring

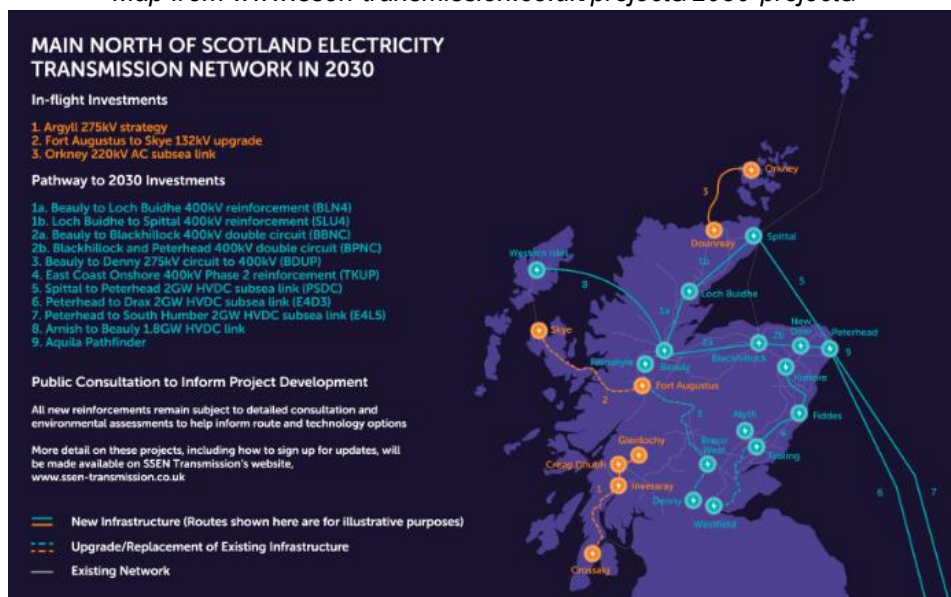
- There is no **National Electro-fishing Programme** for **Scotland (NEPS)** in 2025, so electro-fishing surveys will focus on gathering data for the R. Beauly as there is very little data for this management unit.
- The Board is participating in the **National Adult Sampling Project** again in 2025, in partnership with the Lower Beauly Fishing Syndicate ghillies.
- Build on the drone work completed in spring 2025 and conduct a drone flyover in late winter of the R. Farrar and R. Beauly. Map the outputs, and record redd distribution ahead of gravel augmentation.
- Review temperature data in relation to fish lift operation period.
- Design a smolt study for delivery in 2026 or 2027 to look at smolt survival or behaviour in relation to the hydro-dams to inform future potential mitigation measures. Review the smolt protocol ahead of the 2026 smolt run.
- Continue monitoring predation pressure. Engage with national licencing reviews. Continue to use non-lethal mitigation measures (e.g. Acoustic deterrent device) to deter predators and alleviate predation pressure. If necessary, carry out control according to licence requirements.
- Continue kelt monitoring at the dams in spring 2026.

Statutory duties

We will also continue **providing advice** to developers and proprietors.

We are expecting continued consultation by SSEN and other energy transmission and storage companies in relation to the tranche of planned overhead transmission lines and related infrastructure. The large amount of development is part of the delivery of the UK's 2030 Net Zero targets, and is likely to significantly alter the local landscape.

Map from www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/



APPENDIX 1 BEAULY DSFB CONSERVATION POLICY 2025

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

SALMON & SEA TROUT CONSERVATION POLICY

2025

The Beauly 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

100% catch & release

In line with FMS guidance, we are recommending 100% catch and release so long as the IUCN considers GB populations of salmon to be endangered. Under no circumstances will more than 1 fish be taken per angler per season.

SEA TROUT

100% catch & release

In line with FMS guidance, we are recommending 100% catch and release of sea trout until the balance of scientific evidence suggests that populations are stable and recovering.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- Fishing should be by Fly only. To facilitate the release of fish barbless or crimped hooks should be used. Treble hooks should not be used.
- Under the provisions of The Conservation of Salmon (Prohibition of Sale) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 the sale of rod caught salmon or sea trout is illegal.
- When releasing fish, try to keep them in water at all times and under no circumstances should fish be lifted clear of the water by their tails. Guidance on catch & release best practice can be found on the Board's website <http://beauly.dsfb.org.uk/>
- The use of 'knotless' mesh landing nets is a legal requirement and will help prevent the fish from being damaged.

- Be mindful of water temperature. During a warm summer, the best time to fish will be in the morning before river temperatures have warmed up. When the water temperature is above 18°C consider stopping fishing until the temperature is lower. Warm water holds less oxygen, and a fish played in warm water will be more stressed, and this can decrease survival rates for released fish.

How can salmon be recognised at the different stages of their life?

Fresh-Run

Recognised by the pristine condition and bright silver flanks. Fish straight from salt water have loose, easily detached scales and many carry sea lice which drop off within a few days. Hen salmon (illustrated) have a tiny kype on the lower jaw, but unlike cocks they retain normal head proportions while in the river.

Salmon



Maturing 'coloured' Cock & Hen

Cock: The combination of "tartan" colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals, and the enlarged adipose fin, are the most consistent indicators of maturity.

Hen: These are usually less coloured than cocks of similar age and they never have enlarged jaws. This one will have spent a few weeks in river or estuary - note the coloured head and lack of true silver flanks.



'Unseasonal' Cock & Hen in Breeding Dress

Cock: The combination of 'tartan' colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals is the most consistent indicator of maturity.

Hen: This is a summer fish – 'springers' are often darker by spawning time while late entrants may still be silver flanked. Fully mature hens have soft, swollen bellies and spawning is imminent if they also have protruding vents.



‘Unclean’

Kelts are salmon which have spawned. Usually identified by the thin shape, distended vent and presence of "gill maggots" on the red gill filaments, they are often encountered by anglers in spring when they regain a silvery appearance and can be mistaken for fresh run ‘springers’. Kelts must be returned unharmed.

Kelt



(Illustrations used with permission from the Atlantic Salmon Trust www.atlanticsalmontrust.org)

APPENDIX 2

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

A9 Accountancy Limited
Chartered Accountants
Elm House
Cradlehall Business Park
Inverness
United Kingdom
IV2 5GH

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

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Balance sheet	3
Statement of changes in equity	4
Notes to the financial statements	5 - 7

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

REPORT TO THE BOARD ON THE PREPARATION OF THE UNAUDITED STATUTORY ACCOUNTS OF BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

I report to the board on my examination of the accounts for the period ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 2 to 7.

Respective responsibilities of river proprietors and examiner

The river proprietors are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013. The river proprietors consider that an audit of the financial statements is not required. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

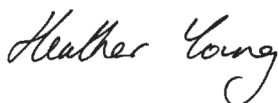
My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the board and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the board members concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter had come to my attention:

- which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records and prepare accounts in accordance with the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 or the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 have not been met; or
- to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Heather E Young CA CTA

A9 Accountancy Limited

Chartered Accountants

.....

Elm House
Cradlehall Business Park
Inverness
IV2 5GH

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover		153,272	154,046
Administrative expenses		(162,440)	(159,722)
Operating loss		(9,168)	(5,676)
Interest receivable and similar income		926	937
Loss before taxation		(8,242)	(4,739)
Tax on loss		-	-
Loss for the financial year		(8,242)	(4,739)

The profit and loss account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

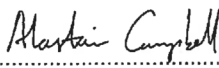
BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	3		3,812		4,429
Current assets					
Debtors	4	36,570		7,442	
Cash at bank and in hand		47,812		91,224	
		84,382		98,666	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	(5,462)		(12,121)	
Net current assets			78,920		86,545
Net assets			82,732		90,974
Capital and reserves					
Retained earnings			82,732		90,974
Trustee funds			82,732		90,974

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 3 May 2022, we approve the financial statements set out on pages 2 to 7. We acknowledge our responsibility for the financial statements, including the appropriateness of the accounting basis as set out in note 1 to the financial statements, and for providing A9 Accountancy Limited with all information and explanations necessary for their completion.

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors and authorised for issue on and are signed on its behalf by:


.....
Alastair Campbell
Convener

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Profit and loss reserves £
Balance at 1 January 2023	95,713
Year ended 31 December 2023: Loss and total comprehensive income	(4,739)
Balance at 31 December 2023	90,974
Year ended 31 December 2024: Loss and total comprehensive income	(8,242)
Balance at 31 December 2024	82,732

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Statement of compliance

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to Smaller Entities), which have been applied consistently (except otherwise stated).

1.2 Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the requirements of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013.

1.3 Turnover

Levies represent amounts receivable from the proprietors in order to finance the work of the board.

1.4 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Tenants improvements	10% straight line basis
Plant and equipment	25% straight line basis

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is credited or charged to profit or loss.

2 Employees

The average monthly number of persons (including directors) employed by the company during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Total	4	3

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

3 Tangible fixed assets

	Tenants improvements £	Plant and equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 January 2024	4,648	6,640	11,288
Additions	-	379	379
At 31 December 2024	4,648	7,019	11,667
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2024	930	5,929	6,859
Depreciation charged in the year	465	531	996
At 31 December 2024	1,395	6,460	7,855
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2024	3,253	559	3,812
At 31 December 2023	3,718	711	4,429

4 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	30,574	2,810
Prepayments and accrued income	5,996	4,632
	36,570	7,442

5 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	2,595	8,361
Taxation and social security	1,685	2,254
Accruals and deferred income	1,182	1,506
	5,462	12,121

6 Financial commitments, guarantees and contingent liabilities

Amounts not provided for in the balance sheet

The total amount of financial commitments not included in the balance sheet is £9,772 (2023 - £273).

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

7 Related party transactions

Members of the board represent proprietors who pay levies to the board. Levies are paid in accordance with assessed ratable values. The members of the board are assessed at the same rate as proprietors who are not members of the board.

8 Control

The board is controlled by the elected proprietors.

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

DETAILED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Turnover				
Levies receivable		88,163		79,719
Income from SSE Renewables		51,609		49,481
Contracting income		6,552		24,020
Grants and subsidies		6,948		826
		<u>153,272</u>		<u>154,046</u>
Administrative expenses				
Wages and salaries	89,203		84,154	
Social security costs	4,008		3,076	
Staff clothing	171		12	
Health & safety costs and training courses	593		365	
Staff pension costs defined contribution	3,633		2,826	
Power, light and heat	549		917	
Upkeep of property	1,872		-	
Fisheries Management Scotland	2,705		1,606	
Insurance	5,845		3,136	
Small tools and equipment	123		1,009	
Computer running costs	168		112	
Motor running expenses	15,491		14,185	
Administration costs	16,828		15,216	
Legal and professional fees	-		604	
Accountancy	5,201		5,753	
Bank charges	59		109	
Advertising	-		498	
Telecommunications	1,533		1,950	
Irrecoverable VAT	9,323		8,662	
Sundry expenses	839		1,603	
Project expenses	3,300		11,804	
Depreciation	996		2,125	
		<u>(162,440)</u>		<u>(159,722)</u>
Operating loss		<u>(9,168)</u>		<u>(5,676)</u>
Interest receivable and similar income				
Bank interest received	926		937	
		<u>926</u>		<u>937</u>
Loss before taxation	5.38%	<u>(8,242)</u>	3.08%	<u>(4,739)</u>