

Aberdeen and District Angling Association

Honorary President, Alastair H. Hume MBE, 162 North Deeside Road, Milltimber, AB13 OHL



Association News Edition 7 February 2021

1. The New Year

First of all, may I wish all fellow members a happy and healthy New Year.

While we will all be looking forward to another season on our rivers and Stillwater's, it will be with a certain degree of trepidation, given the continuing COVID-19 19 situation. However, we have not, to date, been barred from practising our art, and surely that will continue, especially given the much-lauded and welcome vaccine roll-out.

It will be incumbent on us all of course, to follow the current government guidelines on angling in Scotland: [link](#)

2. Spring Fishing



The House Pool on Lower Parkhill Emphatically Not This Spring!

Salmon

More senior Association members will remember seasons past when both our main rivers, and particularly the Dee, would often be almost ice bound during the opening weeks. In fact, ghillies on beats of the Dee, especially below Banchory, would be quite prepared, of a morning, to break the ice extending out from the banks of their pools to allow their rods to fish. They knew the cold conditions would keep the

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“springers” in the lower river, and, to go even further back in time, tales would be told of upwards of 200 fresh fish being landed between Banchory and the sea in the first few days. On the Don the cold conditions would also favour the lower beats, with the man-made barriers of the mill weirs inhibiting fish from ascending far upriver.

Those halcyon days are in the past, at least for now, and, aside from the well documented reduction in salmon numbers, winters now tend to be characterised by what would have been, in past times, unusually mild and open weather. This winter, certainly in our north-east corner, has once again followed that pattern, resulting in our rivers being almost totally ice free since last season’s close. Most will rejoice at that and the conditions in play at this time, as I write in late January, will certainly present no barriers to early running salmon. There have already been a few sightings on the **Don** of what appeared to be fresh running fish around Upper Stoneywood and the Parkhill beats, so we can venture out with hope in the opening weeks. The **Dee** is renowned as a spring river of course, and we are fortunate in having access to Garthdee and Banchory Devenick, both at the top of, or just above, the tide, in addition to the Culter beat further upstream. The **Ythan**, while seldom considered these days in the context of fresh early salmon, does, albeit very infrequently, surprise finnock fishers with a springer. I was extremely fortunate (and surprised) a few seasons ago to land one myself.

Tactics for the opening weeks will, as always, depend to a great extent on water levels and temperatures and, traditionally, our beats’ deeper and slower pools would normally have been mainly targeted with deeply fished Devon minnows or other lures. This approach can still pay dividends of course, but, should milder conditions prevail, with fish taking up residence in streamier water, fly fishing with fairly fast sinking heads will be worth trying.

As always in the spring, we are likely to encounter **kelts** and these spent fish may well look very silvery, although they will not have the rosy hue of clean run fish and will be much thinner. To help any newer members who are perhaps not so experienced in this matter, a more detailed fact sheet is attached at the end of the newsletter.

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A typically perfect Dee fish landed by committee member Benny Smart in a recent season from the Pump House Pool. Every Dee fish must pass through this pool-an encouraging thought as we start another new season!

Sea Trout

Mature sea trout do not begin to run our rivers in any numbers until late April or early May, with most entering in the months of June July and August, and, at this time of year, any fish of over one and a half pounds is almost certain to be a kelt. Again, as with salmon kelts, **sea trout kelts** will probably be very silvery, but also very thin. It is incumbent on all of us to handle these spent fish with care, returning them as quickly as possible to the river. They have done their duty and will hopefully come back after a summer of feeding to spawn again. **Finnock**, having overwintered in our rivers are likely to be present in numbers, especially on the Ythan where they are mostly targeted with trotted worm, although, given suitable conditions of clearer water and reasonable temperatures, fly fishing doubles of sizes 8 or 10 on fast sink tips can also give results.

Brown Trout

The aforementioned continuing mild winters have resulted in a decision to revert the Association's brown trout season to its statutory dates of 15th March to 6th October on the Don. Anglers who have hooked brownies when fishing for salmon in the spring will have seen the fine condition these fish tend to be in now that they do not

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have to contend with the reduction in feeding opportunities that cold winters can impose. Trouting can now begin earlier and, while March may be too early in the year to expect to see prolific surface fly life, there will, on mild days, be occasions when sporadic hatches of early olives entice fish to rise. Mainly though, wet flies fished at depth will be most likely to produce results.

The Stillwaters

While there is no close season for *Salmo irideus* (Rainbow Trout) in Scotland and we enjoy 12-month access to fishing on our Stillwater's, not many of our members avail themselves of the opportunity over the winter months. A few hardy souls do though, particularly on Millpond, and there have been encouraging returns of rainbows from this fishery since the end of October. Again, if this spring continues to be another mild one, overwintered rainbows will be a worthy quarry.

3. General

The Postponed AGM - Questions Feedback

Details here: [AGM-2021 \(postponed\) | adaa-2014](#)

Closed Facebook Group

The online ADAA "Forum" facility has been terminated and, in its place, a new "Closed Facebook Page/Group" is now live and available to members for news and discussion: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/adaagroup>

Volunteers

Following on from Honorary President Alastair Hume's item in the annual newsletter, any members who would like to contribute in some way to the running of the Association are reminded that they are most welcome to volunteer. That could be in a physical capacity by helping with beat maintenance for instance, or by aiding in the administrative side of ADAA business. If you are interested, please contact ADAA Secretary Paul Toseland at secretary@adaasales.co.uk in the first instance.

The "Buddy" Group

From Vice President Kenny Riddell:

ADAA 2021 Buddies

The river brown trout season will shortly be upon us and with the season opening being brought forward into line with other Scottish Rivers, Monday 15th March is the opening day this year.

It is planned to have regular "River Day Experiences" on all our river beats. The "River Day Experiences" will be run by some of the ADAA Buddies who will give a talk on how best to access the beats, the parking areas, and the beats' physical limits. The buddies will also walk the beats with participants, showing them where all the pools are and, in their own opinion, how best to fish them. The Buddies may even give away some secrets on best flies and the best time of day or evening to fish.

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These “River Day Experiences” are open to all ADAA members, new & old, experienced or novice. All we ask is that you treat each other with respect, come fully armed with questions and be prepared for all weather condition overhead and under foot.

There won't be any casting lessons, or fishing demonstrations at these “River Day Experiences” but it will be a great chance to meet other ADAA members and learn something about the ADAA rivers & beats.

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, there are, as yet no definite dates for the commencement of these initiatives but keep an eye on the new ADAA Facebook page and the ADAA website for news on dates, times, and locations. There will be no need to book, just turn up on the day.

Kenny Riddell

Leased Fisheries

Members will be pleased to know that the Association has secured an extension of 1 year on the Banchory Devenick beat of the Dee and a 5-year extension on the Millpond fishery.

Should there be a summer of low rainfall, Banchory Devenick could prove to be a jewel in the crown of our salmon and sea trout waters. The longer lease on Millpond means we can, with the co-operation of the owners, instigate dredging and other work to improve the angling potential of this fishery.

Juniors

The increase in junior membership is encouraging and Acting President Paul Adderton has contacted all juniors to welcome them to the Association.

Apropos the “Buddies” section above, there will also be Junior Days, with tuition in fly fishing and spinning on our river beats, stillwater fly fishing at the Loch of Loirston, a junior “Salmon Fishing Day” at Culter and a planned visit to an “Anglers’ Emporium”. That sounds intriguing and exciting!

As previously stated of course, events can only be held once the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 situation are eased. Hopefully, that will not be too far off!

The Ythan – Predator Control

The Ythan Mink Control project is an important initiative which relies to a great extent on monitoring of the floating traps placed in several locations on the river and we have been asked to help with this. Any member who perhaps resides or works in the area, and who is interested in getting involved please contact Secretary Paul Toseland at secretary@adaasales.co.uk. This would only involve checking of the traps and reporting any signs of mink to the project co-ordinators.

Competitions

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The competition programme will also be dependent on the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Information will be posted on the Facebook page and in future newsletters.

Catch Returns

Members are reminded once again of the importance of prompt and accurate reporting of catches, including blank salmon returns, which the ADAA are obliged by law to register. Details are on our membership booklets.

4. In conclusion

As I write this section on the 1st of February, news reaches us of the first few fresh run salmon of the 2021 season from the Dee, one of which was a 7-pounder landed on the Park beat by no less than our own committee member Craig Fleming. Well done indeed Craig, and hopefully a sign of things to come for the ADAA this year.

On that note may I wish all fellow members tight lines and good health in the season ahead.

John Stephen, Dyce

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Kelts, Ripe and under size fish

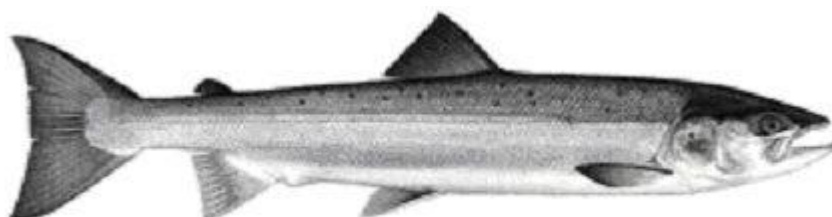
It is illegal in Scotland to kill an "unclean" fish, that is, a kelt that is a salmon or sea trout and has spawned and is making its way back to the sea.

It is a rule of the Association that all salmon and grilse, kelts, coloured fish, ripe fish, salmon parr, smolts, finnock, and any fish under 10 inches must be returned forthwith to the water with the least possible injury.

How to identify a clean Salmon



Fresh Salmon - 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.



Kelt - 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 to the water.