

River Ythan SLA Report July 2025

1. Introduction

The Don DFSB have been contracted to carry out fisheries protection, predator surveys, spawning surveys and habitat restoration activities across the river Ythan catchment throughout 2025/26 by the Ythan DSFB under a Service Level Agreement. Each activity is allocated a set number of man-days/patrols to accommodate the requirements of the annually agreed SLA. Activities are defined following consultation with the Ythan DSFB.

Any incidents relating to pollution and policing will be recorded and shared with the Clerk. Information from predator surveys will be collated and shared with the Clerk directly following the survey period. Information on spawning surveys will be collated and reported upon in a summary report following the end of the spawning period. Any seals reported above Logie Buchan Bridge will be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible.

All activities will be covered by the Don DSFB health and safety polices, as stated in the service level agreement.

2. Reporting

A log of all patrols and activities will be sent to the Clerk monthly.

SLA Activities/ Table 1. July, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
10/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	3pm to 7pm 2 staff = 1 day	Sea Trout and small number of Sea Bass being landed at Newburgh estuary. All permits checked.
11/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	3.00pm to 7pm 2 staff = 1 day	Main river quite today, small number of anglers at the estuary.
16/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	6.00pm to 10pm 2 staff = 1 day	Large number of anglers out this evening at Newburgh estuary, small number of sea trout landed.
18/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	3.00pm to 7pm 2 staff = 1 day	Newburgh Estuary busy with anglers today, all fishing permits checked.
23/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	2pm to 6pm 2 staff = 1day	Reports of salmon showing in the pools at Newburgh estuary. 1 large sea trout of 8lb landed. Good size Finnock giving good sport. All permits checked.
25/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	2pm to 6pm 2 staff = 1day	Newburgh Estuary still holding large numbers of anglers. All checked and legal.

29/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	2pm to 6pm 2 staff = 1 day	Fewer anglers at Newburgh estuary today.
31/7/25	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary.	2.30pm to 6.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	Newburgh estuary still producing numbers of sea trout land.

July has been a productive month for sea trout catches at Newburgh estuary, with sea trout landed up to 8lb in weight. From the third week in July, anglers while fishing for sea trout, have been very fortunate to have landed sea bass. Good shows of Finnock have also been reported throughout this month. Salmon in small numbers have been seen jumping in the tidal pools at Newburgh by various anglers while out fishing for sea trout. From the middle of the month, reports from anglers that salmon have been seen jumping in the tidal pools.

Angling effort at Newburgh estuary has been on a high, and good catches of sea trout reported landed.

Table 2. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting sites cleared-Ebrie Burn/Fourdon Burn

Survey Point	Grid Ref	Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	NJ 93315/39756	Location 6	NJ 93282/38614
Location 2	NJ 93233/39648	Location 7	NJ 93213/38503
Location 3	NJ 93216/39522	Location 8	NJ 93201/38347
Location 4	NJ 93406/38961	Location 9	NJ 92913/37511
Location 5	NJ 93338/38711	Location 10	NJ93116/36953

Table 3. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting sites cleared-Fourdon Burn

Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	JN 73469/36767

Table 4. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting-Ebrie Burn/Fourdon Burn

Date	Activity-Weed cutting	Time
4/7/25	Weed clearing	8am to 4pm 1 Staff =1 day
5/7/25	Weed clearing	8am to 4pm 1 Staff = 1 day
9/7/25	Weed clearing	12.30pm to 5.00pm 1 staff = 0.5 day
12/7/25	Weed clearing	9am to 13.00pm 1 staff = 0.5 day
17/7/25	Weed clearing	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day
18/7/25	Weed clearing	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day
23/7/25	Weed clearing	9.30am to 5.30pm

		1 staff member = 1 day
27/725	Weed clearing	9am to 5.30pm 1 staff = 1 day

3 tributaries on the Ythan catchment have been targeted for Ranunculus weed cutting this year, initially it was just the Ebrie burn. During walk over surveys, to identify barriers prior to the smolt migration, Ranunculus weed was found on the Furdoun burn, between Cranna lodge and Rothie vale.

This site is one of our Redd counting sites on the Furdoun burn and has always been very productive during the spawning period. The spawning gravel prior to the weed cleared and roots removed, was very badly affected by the impact of the Ranunculus weed.

The 3rd site chosen is the Burn of Fortree, this small tributary of the Ebrie catchment was dredged by the resident farmer a few years ago, where all natural features and aquatic plants were removed. Unfortunately, this left no competition for the Ranunculus weed which has now taken over the stretch of the stream, as the picture below shows.

10 sites were chosen over a 10km stretch of the Ebrie, from Glenebrie bridge downstream to Drumwhindle bridge. With the low water flows since March along with high water temperatures, has been ideal conditions for this weed to thrive. Many spawning areas with good spawning substrate were smothered by the roots of this plant. Now these sites have cleared by cutting and hand pulling and roots removed from the gravel where possible. These sites will now be accessible for the forth coming spawning season.

On the Furdoun burn, 1 site was cleared and I hoping to get another site cleared in August.

The burn of Fortree, I have not made a start of this section as yet but hoping to acquire a few days in August to cut a channel through the thick mass of weeds. By doing this, it will allow water flow to pass through the weed and generate more oxygen and help to regulate water temperature. While walking over this site, I did see small pockets of juvenile fish in the few openings where Ranunculus weed had not covered.

Fig 1, Furdoun burn before weed clearing.



Fig 2, Furdoun burn after weed clearing.



Fig 3, Burn of Fortree, showing high density of Ranunculus weed.



Fig 4, Burn of Fortree, weed barrier.

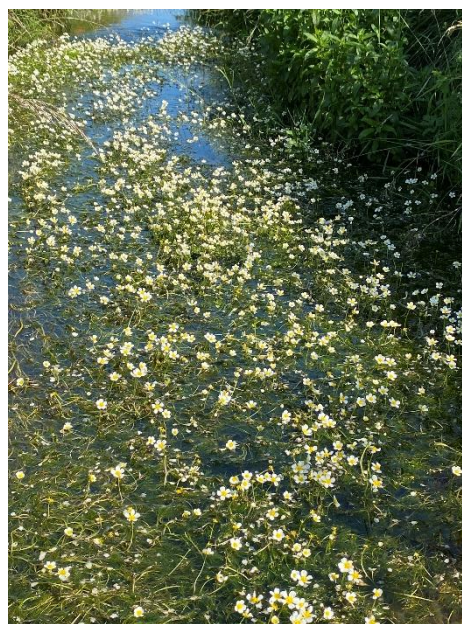


Fig 5, Ebrie Burn, before weed clearing.



Fig 6, Ebrie burn, after weed removal.



Pollution

No reports for month.

Seals

No reports for month.