River Ythan SLA Report June/July 2026

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 2026/27 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 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. June/July, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
04/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	Few anglers out on the river beats today, all fishing permits checked. Good sized Finnock being caught at Newburgh Estuary fishing's.
09/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	Main River beats quite today, 3 anglers fishing the Newburgh section, all were fishing legally.
19/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	A few sea trout being landed at Newburgh estuary. Main river quiet, river levels dropping quickly.
22/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	No comments.
25/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	13.00pm to 17.00pm	Pollution checks carried out at Ellon and Ramornie beat, all clear. Newburgh Estuary only 4 persons fishing at time of visit, all checked and okay. No sign of anglers on the main river.
30/06/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm	Foot patrols were carried out from Meadows to Esslemont, and Newburgh bridge to confluence with the sea, All clear. Just a few anglers out today.

03/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	Pollution checks on hot spots on the river and on the Ebrie Burn at the village of Auchnagatt, no pollution found. Very few anglers fishing Newburgh estuary today.
08/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	Very few anglers seen today, catches have been poor on the Newburgh fishing's.
14/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	All beats checked Newburgh estuary busy today due to competition.
17/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	Gale force winds were making angling very difficult on the tidal waters today. Main river beats still very quiet and water levels now very low.
21/7/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	15.00pm to 19.00pm	All beats checked and coastline for any unusual activity, nothing found.
24/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	10am to 14.00pm	There seemed to be an increase of angling effort at Newburgh estuary today. It was good to see an increase of young youths taking up the sport, and some catching sea trout and returning them.
30/07/26	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm	Foot patrols from Meadows to Esslemont viaduct was carried out, all clear. Pollution checks were also made. At Newburgh estuary very few anglers fishing, all had appropriate fishing permits.
31/0726	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm	No one seen angling on main river today. Newburgh fishing's was checked and watched for a time, nothing suspicious seen at time of visit.

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

Survey Point	Grid Ref	Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	NJ 93270/39750	Location 8	NJ 93380/38905
Location 2	NJ 93230/39650	Location 9	NJ 93193/38422
Location 3	NJ 93230/39580	Location 10	NJ 93115/38131
Location 4	NJ 93233/39586	Location 11	NJ 93040/38038
Location 5	NJ 93207/39493	Location 12	NJ 92973/37729
Location 6	NJ 93406/39177	Location 13	NJ 93055/37007
Location 7	NJ 93409/38957	Location 14	NJ 92892/37578

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

Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	JN 73469/36767

Table 4. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting site cleared-Burn of Fortree

Survey Point	Grid Ref
Location 1	NJ 9350/39751

Table 5. July SLA Activity- Ranunculus Weed cutting-Ebrie Burn/Fourdon Burn/Burn of Fortree

Date	Activity-Weed cutting	Time
14/7/25	Weed clearing	9am to 5pm 1 Staff =1 day
15/7/25	Weed clearing	8am to 4pm 1 Staff = 1 day
16/7/25	Weed clearing	8am to 4.00pm 1 staff = 1 day
21/7/25	Weed clearing	12pm to 4.30pm 1 staff = 0.5 day
22/7/25	Weed clearing	1pm to 5pm 1 staff = 0.5 day
24/7/25	Weed clearing	9am to 5pm 1 staff = 1 day
27/7/25	Weed clearing	9.30am to 5.30pm 1 staff member = 1 day
28/7/26	Weed clearing	8am to 4pm 1 staff member = 1 day
29/7/26	Weed clearing	9am to 5pm 1 staff member = 1 day

3 tributaries on the Ythan catchment have been targeted again for weed cutting in 2026.The Ebrie burn, Burn of Fortree and the Fourdon burn. All three tributaries contain very high amounts of Ranunculus weed that is smothering valuable spawning areas. With another year of low water conditions and increasing water temperatures, this plant has had ideal conditions to thrive in the tributaries and parts of the mainstem of the lower river.

On the Ebrie burn between Glenebrie bridge downstream to Drumwhindle bridge. 14 sections were cleared over a 10km stretch of the Ebrie burn, by hand pulling and cutting of Ranunculus weed. On the Burn of Fortree, one large section was cleared.

On the Burn of Fortree there was no visible flow at the confluence of the Ebrie of which it flows into, due to the damming effect this weed has when the spread is from bank to bank, only very slow seepage can get through. Once it was cleared, a good flow was achieved going into the Ebrie burn from this side tributary of the Ebrie catchment.

As in 2025, the same section was cleared on the Fourdon burn, which will help to keep the spawning gravels clear from siltation that Ranunculus weed causes by trapping sediment particles at the root of the plant.

The pictures below showing before and after Ranunculus weed clearing.

Fig 1. Section 1, Ebrie Burn before cutting.

Fig 2. Section 1, Ebrie Burn after cutting.

Fig 3. Section 2, Ebrie Burn before cutting.

Fig 4. Section 2, Ebrie Burn after cutting

Fig 5. Fourdon Burn before cutting

Fig 6. Fourdon Burn after cutting

Pollution

periodic checks for pollution at known locations are ongoing, to date no pollution discharges have been identified.

Seals

No reports for June/July