

## River Ythan SLA Report September/October/November 2022

### 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 2022/23 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.

### September, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol

**Table 1. September, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts.**

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
2/9/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	River still at low flows, Few anglers out today
6/9/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	13.00pm to 17.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	River slightly coloured due to heavy rain
15/9/22	Machar pool to Methlick	12.30pm to 16.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
22/9/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	11.30am to 15.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	Obstacle assessment (Windblown Trees) & Policing Patrol
28/9/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	14.00pm to 18.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Only 2 Anglers at Ardlethan, very quiet.
30/9/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.30pm to 16.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	None

Angling activity tailed off this month compared to August. Low flows prevailed with only the odd heavy rain shower during the month, which had little effect on river levels. Coming to the end of September, anglers were observed on the middle catchment area.

**Table 2. Piscivorous Bird Survey 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2022**

	Number of Goosanders	Number of Cormorants	Number of Merganser
River Ythan Bird Count 26th of September 2022	22	8	0

**Locations where birds were surveyed.**

9 Goosanders were identified between Blairfowl and Methlick bridge.

13 Goosanders were identified from Methlick down to the Meadows, with 7 Goosanders around Ardlethen, 4 Goosanders at Ellon and 2 Goosanders at the Meadows.

**Cormorants Locations**

2 Cormorants were seen in flight heading upstream at Ardlethen and 6 Cormorants were counted at the estuary.

**Pollution**

No reports for month.

**Seal Predation in river**

No reports for month.

**October, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol**

**Table 3. October, SLA Activity/Policing Patrol allocation of shifts.**

Date	Patrol Area	Time of Patrol	Notes/Incidents
4/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
6/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	River Levels low
10/10/22	Machar pool to Methlick	12.30pm to 16.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	Increase of angling activity on ADAA waters,
13/10/22/	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	Ardlethan & Shivas angling activity increase, Grilse in small numbers landed. Good numbers of finnock at the Machar pool
18/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	13.00pm to 17.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
19/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	13.00pm to 17.00pm 2 staff = 1 day	None

21/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	12.00pm to 16pm 2 staff = 1 day	None
26/10/22	Methlick to Newburgh Estuary	10.30am to 14.30pm 2 staff = 1 day	River level increase, good numbers of anglers on fishing beats today

October started on low flows which reflects on the low numbers of anglers on the fishing beats in the early part of the month. From the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month up until the 18<sup>th</sup> fishing effort was good with many anglers seen. Small pockets of grilse were landed on some of the beats. Good sport was also had on the Machar pool, by ADAA anglers fishing for Finnock, which were showing in good numbers. From the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month the long awaited increase in river level occurred, bringing many anglers onto the river to enjoy the last few days of the angling season.

**Table 4. Piscivorous Bird Survey 31<sup>st</sup> Of Octoberr2022**

	Number of Goosanders	Number of Cormorants	Number of Merganser
River Ythan Bird Count 31st of October 2022	14	6	0

**Locations where birds were surveyed.**

5 Goosanders were counted at Blairfowl, a further 4 Goosanders were seen Shivas and 5 Goosanders Ardlethen.

**Cormorant Locations.**

1 Cormorant at Blairfowl, 2 at the Meadows and 3 at Newburgh Estuary.

**Pollution**

No reports for month.

**Seal predation in river.**

No reports for month.

### **November-SLA Activities**

#### **Redd Counting/Habitat Restoration monitoring and assessment**

Sites with habitat restoration activities undertaken during 2022 and previous years were assessed in line with weekly redd counting activities. A snapshot of these findings is detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Redd Counting and Habitat Restoration monitoring and assessment.

Date	Activity	Time of Survey	Comments
4.11.22	Redd counting	1 day	Redds were identified on a several sites over the catchment
8.11.22	Redd counting	1 day	11 salmon redds were identified on the Ebrie burn and with several directly at a willow bank repair locations.
11.11.22	Redd counting	1 day	Salmon redds now identified at the Methlick gravel cleaning site form 2021.
18.11.22	Redd counting	1 day	Survey attempt was made today but unsuitable river conditions prevailed.
25.11.22	Redd Counting	1 day	High water levels along with poor visibility, due to coloured water made the task impossible.

**Fig 1, below showing freshly cut Redd directly below the willow bank repair on the Ebrie Burn. Note the clean gravel that has been excavated out by the salmon.**



### **Piscivorous Bird Counts**

Due to the severity of the high flows towards the end of November it was not possible to undertake the planned bird count safely. Water levels too some time to recede and bank conditions were unstable as a result of the flooding.

The decision was made to cancel the count and utilise count data for November from previous years to provide an average figure to populate forthcoming applications.

### **Pollution**

No reports for month.

### **Seal predation in river.**

No reports for month.

*Jim Kerr*

Senior Fisheries Officer

Acting on behalf of the Ythan DSFB