



River Don Monthly Report

November 2020

Policing

Despite the angling season having finished two rod and line incidents were reported by members of the public. Unfortunately, these incidents were reported some time after they occurred. Fisheries officers followed up on the locations of the incidents and sporadic patrols were carried out in these locations thereafter. No further incidents were recorded.

Spawning Surveys

Throughout the month water levels and overhead conditions remained ideal for redd counting surveys. Activity on the upper reaches above Strathdon is now finishing off however salmon are currently making use of the ongoing conditions with spawning still being observed on the lower reaches at Inverurie and Kintore. Sustained water levels throughout October assisted access for fish up into the main tributaries, small numbers of salmon redds were found on all sites but an increase in trout redds was noticeable.

The main river has been patchy with mixed results, upper river counts remained low all month with suitable areas gravel lacking both fish and spawning activity. Middle and lower river stretches of the mainstem are now improving as later spawning takes place. Dead salmon kelts are now being found on the riverbank along with some large trout kelts up to 7lbs.

Alford AA committee and members enjoyed a field trip out on the catchment learning all about redds and how to identify them. Those who attended all enjoyed the morning and were able to witness visible salmon and trout redds. To view photos from the day, click below.
<https://riverdon.org/2020/11/23/redd-count-walk-over-with-alford-angling-association/>

Habitat Improvement

Sites on the main river at Inverurie, Alford and Parkhill have been assessed with proposals to undertake bank erosion repairs using willow spiling. This ongoing restoration technique has been utilised on several other locations across the catchment. <https://riverdon.org/2020/12/03/willow-bank-restoration/>

Work will commence in the spring following the harvesting of willow canes and posts in later winter.

Fishery Development

The River Don feature written by Craig Fleming will appear in the December edition of Trout & Salmon magazine. The nine-page article gives an account of the history of the river and focuses on its potential to be not just a world class brown trout river but also a worthy salmon river. Its hoped that this scale of coverage will raise the profile of the River Don and help to attract more anglers to come and sample what the river has to offer.

River Predation

The third and final autumn bird count was carried out on the 24th from Poldulie Bridge downstream to the estuary. A total of 112 goosanders and 5 cormorants were counted on the day.

Staff will commence spring surveys again in March 2021. Licenses are currently being distributed out to marksmen please contact jim@riverdon.org with any queries.

Compiled by Martin Webster

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