



River Don Monthly Report December 2020

Policing

Throughout the month Fisheries Officers maintained regular foot and vehicle patrols across the catchment checking for any sign of illegal activity. As the end of the year approached patrols were focused on the main holding pools from Kemnay downstream where any spring Salmon that have entered the system will be holding, several salmon and sea trout kelts were seen jumping on Kintore and Fintray stretches hopefully the current higher water will help assist their journey downstream. No poaching activity was observed or reported for the month of December.

Redd Surveys

In complete contrast to November's ideal conditions December was plagued by heavy rainfall which kept river levels high and coloured. This hindered the remaining surveys on the lower main river sites and staff ceased counts on the 17th due to the poor conditions. Some late salmon spawning was observed on the lower Urie as the year ended.

A summary of this year's redd counts will be available soon.

Habitat Improvement

Several sites on the main river were assessed with proposal to carry out bank erosion repairs using willow spilling. A huge thanks to Leys Estate for again kindly providing the required willow to support this project. Harvesting of the required posts and canes will begin in early February with repair work starting thereafter. If anyone wishes to learn more about willow spilling, then please follow the link to the News Section on the River Don website [HERE](#) or contact jim@riverdon.org

Pollution

A pollution incident was reported on the upper reaches of the river due to some maintenance being undertaken too close to the bankside using heavy plant. The works licenced by SEPA resulted in some damage to the integrity of the bank of the river, it seems that the operative was not following appropriate guidance issued by SEPA and had not contacted the Don DSFB. A subsequent spate then weakened and eroded sections of the bank causing sediment to enter the watercourse.

SEPA were duly informed and the owner has since been contacted about potential disturbance to redds and fish. A site visit by SEPA to discuss this issue further, is due to take place when Covid restrictions allow.

Can I remind all proprietors that all instream works are to be undertaken during the period 1st June to the 31st Oct. This is to prevent disturbance to spawning, subsequently laid eggs and any developing

juvenile salmonids. It is an offence to knowingly destroy, injure or disturb juvenile salmon, spawn or spawning substrate.

Bank Erosion

Due to erosion occurring on the riverbank at Towie fishing's two electric power line poles were found to be of concern and in need of bank reinforcement to prevent further exposure. SSEN have been informed of the findings and we await a reply on what measures are proposed.



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