

# *DEVON*

## *ANGLING REVIEW*

**The Newsletter of the Devon Angling Association**

**Hon. Secretary comments - The Devon Year 2016**

The only thing you can say with certainty is that every year on the river is different. This may well have been true for all time because every year sees at least slight changes in topography - a new shingle bank here or a build-up of silt in a particular pool there. However, the River Devon has had to cope with many non-natural circumstances as well, each of which has had, or will have, its own effect. The biggest single problem for the river is the impoundment of water in the five reservoirs in the headwaters, especially in Castlehill. There are two new contributing features, recently established, which may affect the flow of water on the river either positively or negatively. The first is the establishment of a small hydro turbine at Castlehill Dam run by Scottish Water. As far as can be seen at the moment, this may have a positive effect on flow because more water is required in order to run the turbine effectively. The downside is of course that this turbine will not be working continuously. The second construction is that of the new weir just below Crook of Devon, taking water off to service a turbine sited below Rumbling Bridge. It is not yet clear as to what effect this will have on the fishing in this area but for long periods the river will probably cease to “rumble” at Rumbling Bridge.



**Glenquey Reservoir**

The reservoir was very well patronised this year and attracted 529 visits - a record for recent years. Information received from returned tickets is shown below:

MONTH	NUMBER OF ANGLERS	NUMBER OF FISH CAUGHT	WEIGHT OF FISH CAUGHT(LB)
Mar/Apr	47	144	76
May	73	345	205
June	72	445	291
July	52	224	146
Aug	47	139	75
Sep/Oct	37	145	94
TOTAL	328	1442	887

The returned tickets (328/529) = 62.0% of all tickets sold. Coincidentally, this is identical to the figures for the previous two years. The average weight of fish caught (887/1442) = 0.62lb, nearly 10 oz. Clearly these weights are only estimates but given the size of the sample and the accuracy which some angler’s exhibit, I think we can be confident that the figures give a good indication of the level of sport to be had. The largest trout caught this year were in the range 2-2.5lb.

A feature of the fishing this year was the relative ease with which anglers could fish all round the loch. This was in no small measure due to the clearing of vegetation on the north bank by the work parties during the winter. Also, the water level was down a bit because of work being undertaken by Scottish Water on the dam wall. It would be good to have that level all the time.

## River Devon fishing during 2016 season

Trout fishing this year was on the whole fairly good with fish up to 5lb being caught, although an average outing was more likely to yield much smaller trout which were plentiful at times. It is interesting to find that there is more emphasis again on fly-fishing and indeed a fair number of anglers were using upstream methods including Czech nymphing or the so-called French Style. Once again though early season on the river proved difficult-nothing seemed to be moving until well into May.

Late Summer and Autumn were characterised by very dry conditions with the inevitable result of a lack of migratory fish. The sea trout which did arrive later on were not in evidence in June and July when traditionally they are fished for in the late evening. Salmon were extremely scarce during the season and 2016 yielded only one grilse caught. The last three seasons have produced a total of six salmon. With the rain in November came some salmon. Hopefully enough of them will have escaped the marauding seals at Cambus and will be able to spawn successfully to provide another crop of smolts. Worryingly, not very many salmon parr have been reported by anglers during the season whereas in the past anglers were often pestered with two or three parr at a time on their cast. The Scottish Government has issued guidelines which confirm that the River Devon is classed as a Category 3 river and as such we shall be continuing with the Catch and Release Policy for all salmon caught in 2017. This will undoubtedly continue until a self-sustaining population of salmon is established. This may take some time.

## River Forth Fisheries Trust Genetics project

The River Forth Fisheries Trust genetics project is on-going and aims to collect scale samples from adult salmon caught in the Rivers Forth, Teith, Devon and Allan Water.

The samples collected are sent for genetic analysis at University of the Highlands and Islands to determine whether fish have returned to their natal rivers or strayed into neighbouring rivers. This genetics work will lead us into a future project looking at 'numbers of breeders' which will aim to determine how many adults are involved in producing local juvenile communities. The ideal is to have a large number of parents involved so that genetic heterogeneity (and therefore genetic and physical fitness) is maximised. Because a small number of adults can fill a spawning burn with juveniles, we can't always assess the health of the adult population by counting juveniles. This genetics project will help provide us with unequivocal data on the numbers of returning adults involved in breeding.

## What has been visiting our river?



This debris found in an isolated area of the river bank might well indicate the presence of a beaver. If you come across similar signs when out and about along the river please let the Hon. Secretary or any committee member know about it.

## Looking after the River Devon

The Association has volunteer work parties out most weeks throughout the year. We have to thank them for their commitment to maintaining access, clearing debris from the water and generally keeping the riverine environment in good shape.

This is enjoyable but essential work and help is always welcome. If you can spare some time to help out (the regulars are usually out on the river doing planned tasks on Wednesdays) then contact any member of the committee or speak to one of the bailiffs.

## Dollar Weir at Rackmill upgraded

The Devon Angling Association contributed to the project completed early in 2016 by Murdoch Smith Construction Limited for the River Forth Fisheries Trust that has successfully improved the fish pass in the Dam on the River Devon at Rackmill. This will give greater access for trout and migratory fish (salmon) to reach suitable habitat for spawning both upstream in the Devon and in the Dollar Burn.

Given the low water in the autumn it still remains to be seen if this project has achieved what it set out to do.

## Devon Angling Association Website

[www.devonanglingassociation.org.uk](http://www.devonanglingassociation.org.uk)