

DEVON

ANGLING REVIEW

The Newsletter of the Devon Angling Association

Hon. Secretary comments - The Devon Year 2017

In past times the River Devon enjoyed a fairly good autumn salmon run, but a very poor run and few catches in the spring. Recent data from Marine Scotland would indicate that the heavy autumn runs of recent years are diminishing and this is equally reflected on the Devon. Statistically the five-year average catch of salmon on the river reached 30 in 1989, decreased to 1 ten years later, rising again to 44 in 2012, after which numbers have declined again. There were just 4 salmon recorded during the 2017 season, which is slightly better than each of the previous two years. Clearly, there is a regular cyclical pattern overall, but many individual factors are at work, almost all of which are out of our control. The one aspect on which the members of the Committee have concentrated, and where we can do something, is the improvement of access and habitat. The spawning burns are visited regularly to clear obstructions and members help with electrofishing in conjunction with the Forth Fishery Trust biologists. This year's results indicate good numbers of both trout and salmon parr in the main hill burns which augurs well for the future. The improvements made at Dollar Weir and on the Dollar Burn should help the spawning effort.

Trout fishing on the river and at Glenquey Reservoir has on average been reasonable despite the weather patterns during the season.



Glenquey Reservoir

The reservoir was very popular again this year despite very high water levels persisting for most of the season, confining angling effort mainly to the south bank. Trout up to 2.5 lb in weight were caught but there were more very small fish caught this year, which indicates that spawning had been very good. The Glenquey Burn seems to provide a constant supply of juvenile trout, probably appreciated by the otters who seem to be well established now, as well as the anglers. Information received from returned tickets is shown below (last year's figures in brackets).

MONTH	NUMBER OF ANGLERS		NUMBER OF FISH CAUGHT		WEIGHT OF FISH CAUGHT (LB)	
Mar/Apr	46	(47)	166	(144)	108	(76)
May	65	(73)	654	(345)	383	(205)
June	71	(72)	369	(445)	209	(291)
July	56	(52)	257	(224)	148	(146)
Aug	57	(47)	139	(139)	88	(75)
Sept/Oct	35	(37)	113	(145)	73	(94)
Total	330	(328)	1698	(1442)	1009	(887)

For the 2017 season the number of returned tickets was 330 (61% of all tickets sold), this is 1% less than each of the previous two years but is nevertheless a good return and gives a reasonable overview of what is happening at the reservoir. The 1009 lb total weight of fish caught divided by the total fish number of 1698 gives an average weight per fish of 0.59 lb (9.5 ounces). The average number of trout caught per angler visit was 5.1. This, in itself, explains the attraction of this excellent water.

River Devon Trout fishing during 2017 season

Generally trout fishing on the river has been good with favourable comments received from many anglers. In particular, at the back end of the season conditions were good for fly-fishing. Correspondence and reports via the Association website have also been very positive.

In efforts to encourage youngsters to take an interest in the river environment and in fishing generally, the DAA is funding Alva Primary school to take part in the Forth Fisheries Trust 'Fish in the classroom' programme. This sets out to teach children about the life-cycle of fish, the children collect and learn about invertebrates, their importance to the fish's food chain and as indicators of water quality. A small fish hatchery is set up in the classroom, eggs are hatched and fry grown to a size when they can be placed in the local burn. Experience shows that children greatly enjoy this activity and benefit from it.

River Devon Salmon fishing

The River Devon continues to be designated category 3 (meaning no salmon caught can be retained) this category will remain in place until Marine Scotland is satisfied that a self-sustaining population is reached. Redd counts last year by the Forth Fisheries Trust indicated that there had been adequate spawning effort, but the survival rate of eggs and fry depends on the level of predation in the river and we know all about the goosanders etc who get a good living here. However, we pin our hopes on the spawning levels leading to increased fish runs in the next few years

The fact that no salmon (or sea trout) can be retained has led to a much reduced uptake in the combined permit. The price of a combined permit has remained the same for eight years (the trout permit for eleven years) and the Committee are keen to stick to one of the principal tenets of the organisation viz. the provision of fishing which is affordable for all. If there is a decline in income there is a possibility of a price rise in the future.

Electrofishing carried out during September

During September electrofishing was carried out on Dollar Burn (above and below the Water Race), Hole Burn (above the bridge at Muckhart Mill), Glendey Burn, Gairney Burn (above Powmill Bridge), Alva Burn (above the Glen footbridge) and Menstrie Burn. One of the best features was the large number of salmon parr in the Dollar Burn. This is the most comprehensive electrofishing exercise undertaken for some time. The results give some optimism, albeit highlighting some areas need further study, i.e. the Gairney Burn.

Looking after the River Devon

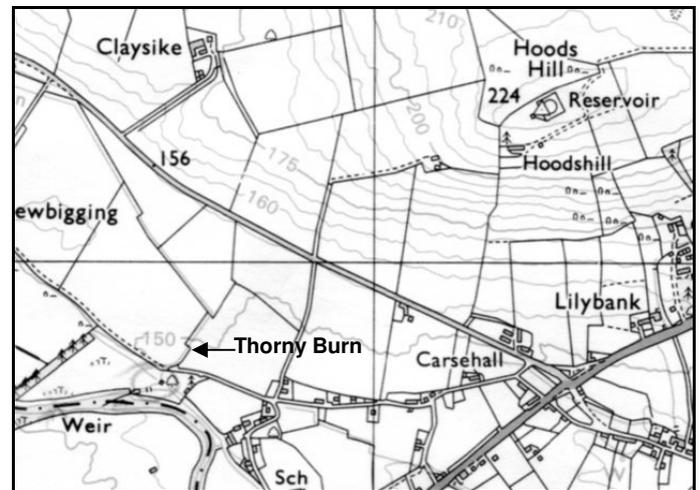
The Association has volunteer work parties out most weeks throughout the year. We have to thank them for their commitment to maintaining access, clearing debris from the water and generally keeping the riverine environment in good shape.

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.

Possible river improvement projects being investigated:

The Association is currently reviewing its 5 year management plan which includes various projects with aimed at improving the river environment and the fishing..

One of the projects currently being investigated concerns the Thorny Burn near the Crook of Devon Scout Camp.



The object is to provide better access for fish into the Burn from the Devon for spawning. The outcome will be dependent on discussion with the Landowner.

Other prospective projects are to reduce cattle encroachment to the riverbank near Dollar and improving salmon access to Tillicoultry Burn upstream of the A91 road bridge.

Devon Angling Association Website

www.devonanglingassociation.org.uk