

DEVON ANGLING REVIEW

The Newsletter of the Devon Angling Association

Hon. Secretaries Comments 2022:

The 2022 season on the river was well supported by members with good permit sales. A few members had very successful outings, catching Trout using various types of nymph methods.

The long period of drought in the Summer resulted in the river reaching high water temperatures, this resulted in the fishing being very poor. During the Salmon fishing a few Trout in the region of 8lb were caught. Twelve Salmon were reported the largest being 10lb, seven Sea Trout were also reported. Although being a slightly better season than last year the number of fish in the river was poor. After the season had closed there were several sightings of fish getting over at Cambus and Dollar weirs. Next Spring non-lethal methods to control Gooseanders, Mergansers and Cormorants are going to be carried out on the river in order to help smolts to safely return to sea, this will hopefully increase the numbers of fish returning.

Glenquay had a reasonable season with Trout up to 1.5lb being caught. Some members were not happy about the number of small fish being caught this will be investigated in the spring.

The Forth Rivers Trust are going to manage a project on the Harvieston Estate to eliminate cattle entering the river, this will involve tree planting, bank stabilization etc. They will be applying for various grants to carry out this work. The Landowner is very keen on this project.

The Black Devon:

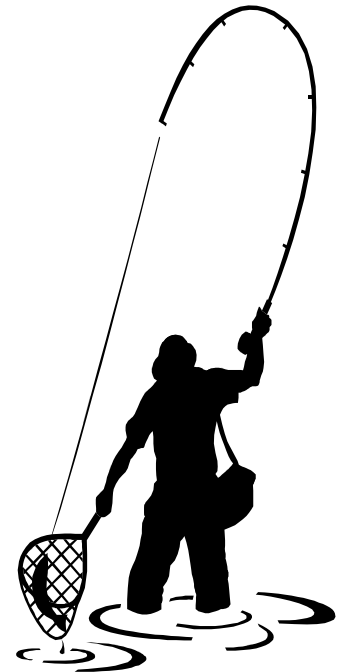
The Black Devon rises in the hills above Saline, close to the Knockhill Racing Circuit. It flows down through an area of coal and iron deposits on a steep scarp where evidence of old mine workings may still be seen.

Bypassing the village of Saline, the river then flows through pleasant farming countryside until it reaches Forestmill. At this point a weir was constructed and a lade built to take water from there to Gartmorn Dam. The lade is now disused and the weir is redundant unless the system is ever resurrected in the future.

Downstream from Forestmill the Black Devon runs in a rocky valley, with more of a defined gorge at Linn Mill, until it reaches Clackmannan. At Linn Mill there are two obstructions which prevent migratory fish from ascending. The lower is a natural rock formation at the old mill and further up is a brick-built weir which once housed a turbine. From Forestmill to Alloa, the river is largely enclosed by trees, mainly conifers, but over most of its length is eminently fishable.

The river is tidal up to the proximity of the old pond in the Mar Estate at Alloa, and there is a regular run of sea trout and possibly a few salmon. Brown trout can be found over its entire length.

The migratory fish rights are owned by the Crown Estate who in the past had enquired whether the Devon Angling Association might be interested in also looking after the Black Devon. Not surprisingly the Committee at the time,



busy enough with their own affairs, declined the opportunity but stated that they would be very willing to help if a similar organisation was set up to control fishing on the Black Devon. Crown Estates Scotland with the Forth Rivers Trust are now exploring opportunities to open the fishery to the local community. The Black Devon has lots of potential and a great deal to commend it.

Potential projects to enhance spawning and fish populations for the future:

The **Glendy Burn** upstream from its confluence with the Devon, was and still is an important breeding area for the Trout populations in the river. Over recent years however, slumping of the bank alongside the steep hill to the north bank of the burn has caused significant soil sediments in the burn leading to a reduction in the fish population. Planting of an appropriate plant variety along the lower part of the bank to improve its stability and clearing some of the soil sediment from the burn is a project that could be beneficial.



The picture on the left shows the slumped bank Along the Glendy Burn.



The Glendy Burn where it joins the Devon. The Castlehill Dam is just visible.

The **Thorny Burn** enters the Devon adjacent to the Scout Campsite located at Crook of Devon and water flow between the burn and the river is restricted by a bridge that enables the farmer to get into the adjacent fields. Currently the structure of this bridge sits across two water pipes that allow limited water flow from the burn into the river but they restrict the ability of fish to enter the burn to breed. Subject to the landowner's agreement a project to carry out works is being planned to improve access for fish and water flow.



The picture on the left shows the Thorny Burn Bridge and outflow pipes

This opens up the fascinating possibility of brown trout from Loch Leven once again being able to reach the Devon at spawning time. In 1796 Rev Graham the then Minister of the Parish of Fossoway and Tullibole wrote in the First Statistical Account of Scotland "*The Devon affords excellent trout and are all of what are called the Burn or Moss kind*" and "*There are, however, some Loch Leven trout caught in the Devon, which are easily distinguished from the Burn Trout, being of quite a different kind. This to a stranger would appear inexplicable, yet it is easy to account for it. A little above the Crook, there is a small stream of water that falls into the Devon. Part of this stream is carried off to supply the village with water. What is taken off runs towards Kinross; and when it is flooded, the trouts, in the spawning season come up, get into the larger stream, and from thence into the Devon, from whence few it is supposed few return*". The Pow Burn (a tributary of the South Queich which runs into Loch Leven) comes within 200m of the Thorny Burn below Thortonhill by the side of the A91 in an area of moss. Both the Thorny and Pow Burns were heavily modified to capture as much water as possible, with an unexpected bonus for the 19th century angler!