



Mission Statement

"To preserve a valuable part of our natural heritage for the enjoyment of current and future generation, through the conservation and development of our freshwater habitats and the fisheries they support"



Bradley McIntyre

Welcome

Gillian, our long serving biologist, went on maternity leave in February and the following month gave birth to a baby boy Bradley. ART staff and trustees wish her all our heartiest congratulations and look forward to welcoming her back in January 2016. Two new members of staff, Muir Glendinning and Struan Candlish, have joined the Trust to fill the gaps. More about them in the next issue!

Caaf Reservoir Fish Rescue

Finally after more than a year and a half in the planning with Scottish Water and Marine Scotland Science, we arrived at Caaf Reservoir to remove as many trout and other species from the reservoir before the dam wall is breached and the land reinstated. Galloway Fisheries Trust and a host of enthusiastic volunteers assisted with the first phase of the rescue which took three days to complete, during unseasonably harsh conditions in May.

An estimated 1500—2000 healthy wild brown trout were rescued and re-stocked under licence (Marine Scotland Science) into four suitable locations. A final day is planned to rescue the remaining fish once the water level reach the target height. This is proving challenging during current weather conditions. ART has been engaged to perform a similar rescue at Pundeavon Reservoir nearby.

ART would like to thank GFT and all those who volunteered with the rescue. Without their effort, we would have struggled to retrieve so many fish.



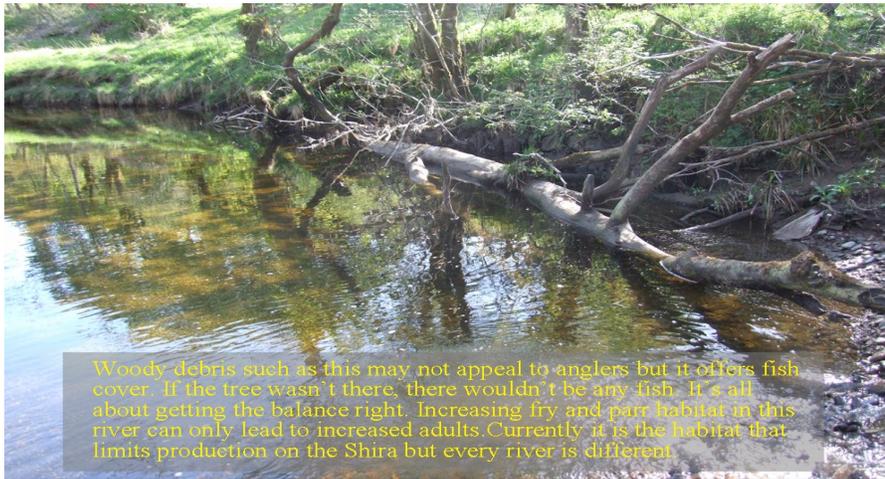
Releasing wild brown trout after the rescue



Drawing the 100m net during the first day of Caaf Reservoir fish rescue

In This Issue

- Caaf Reservoir Fish Rescue
- Fish Live in Trees!
- Kilmarnock Water Update
- Wild Fisheries Review
- Giant Hogweed Control
- Loch Doon Project
- River Ayr Map



Woody debris such as this may not appeal to anglers but it offers fish cover. If the tree wasn't there, there wouldn't be any fish. It's all about getting the balance right. Increasing fry and parr habitat in this river can only lead to increased adults. Currently it is the habitat that limits production on the Shira but every river is different.

An example of Large Woody Debris. Anglers should consider the value of leaving woody debris in place. If the habitat is lacking then so too will be the fish.

Fish Live In Trees!

ART staff attended a 2 day workshop in Inveraray organised by Argyll Fisheries Trust, funded by IBIS and delivered (in part) by the Wild Trout Trust to showcase the benefits and improvements of introducing (or leaving) Large Woody Debris (LWD) in rivers.

This excellent event was a demonstration of techniques to introduce LWD into burns and rivers where fish habitat has been reduced in quality and quantity inadvertently by man. We have plenty of watercourses in Ayrshire that have been altered, modified or degraded so these techniques have long been of interest to the Trust. We intend to use some of the techniques demonstrated during the workshop to restore natural processes and to reduce erosion.

It is important to stress that introducing LWD requires SEPA approval and depending on what and how much work is planned, a registration or CAR licence may be required. It is essential that there are clear aims in place and an understanding of the processes that occur and why, before anyone steps into a river with a chainsaw and starts felling trees. We will be happy to look at areas that clubs or owners would like to improve in advance of firm and possibly damaging plans being developed.

Thanks to Argyll FT, IBIS and the Wild Trout Trust for their excellent workshop and hospitality and 10/10 for arranging good, midge free weather!

Girvan and Stinchar The Trust is eager to get back into both the Girvan and Stinchar this summer to assess the impact of last years temperature related incidents on the lower reaches which resulted in fish mortalities. It was unclear exactly what caused these mortalities but electrofishing surveys will determine what long term effects have occurred, if any.

Kilmarnock Water Update

The upgrade at Dean Ford is complete and has reopened for traffic. This is a huge improvement over the ford and will allow salmon and trout to move up and downstream in virtually any height of water.

East Ayrshire Council and the contractors are to be congratulated on a job well done. Looking to the future, salmon numbers should quickly increase upstream of this point. It goes without saying that ART would discourage anglers from killing salmon this far up the Kilmarnock Water and beyond until stocks recover.



Dean Ford on the Kilmarnock Water

Following consultation with ART and SEPA, Scottish Water have agreed to upgrade the weir at Cheapside Street. The previous proposal involved the installation of a Larinier fish pass but all parties agreed a rock-ramp would be a more suitable option for fish passage at this site. All going well, we expect this work to be completed during 2015.

Wild Fisheries Reform Consultation

The main aims of Scotland's Wild Fisheries Reform are to :

- develop and promote a modern, evidence-based management system for wild fisheries fit for purpose in the 21st century, and capable of responding to the changing environment.
- to manage, conserve and develop our wild fisheries to maximise the sustainable benefit of Scotland's wild fish resources to the country as a whole and particularly to rural areas

Amongst the proposals considered were:

- Quotas on salmon and possibly other species harvested
- Carcase tagging to conserve wild fish stocks
- The dissolution of the DSFBs and Trusts replacing them with Local Fishery Management Organisations (LFMO).

Various consultations have been issued and are currently underway. ART will respond to each in due course. Watch our blog on the website for updates on these issues.

We encourage all anglers and DSFBs to respond to all consultations from the Government. There is no doubt that the WFR will lead to significant changes for every angler in Scotland.



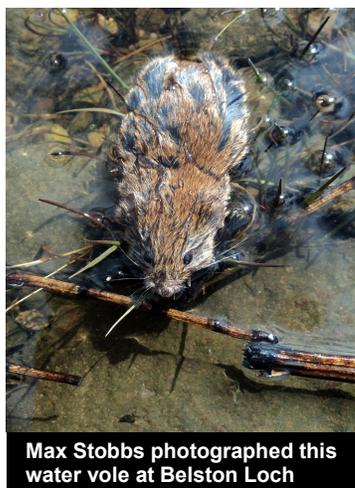
Angling on the River Stinchar

Giant Hogweed Control.

Following up on the previous years control of non-native invasive species, ART managed to secure a limited amount of funding to allow us to control Giant hogweed in Ayrshire. The River Ayr control has been completed and contractors and volunteers are working on the Irvine and Garnock at the moment. ART staff have tackled other affected areas.



Giant Hogweed control on the River Ayr



Max Stobbs photographed this water vole at Belston Loch

Water Voles at Belston Loch!

Water voles are popular in the ART office so we were pleased to find out one had been spotted on Belston Loch near Sinclairston recently. These wee animals are one of the UK's most threatened native mammals so it always good to hear of a new sighting in Ayrshire.

ART will be delivering a water vole survey training and workshop on 23rd June for East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative.

Loch Doon Project

We have been working away behind the scenes to put in place everything needed to monitor smolt output from the catchment above the dam. We know numbers are critically low as only a handful of salmon have made it through the dam in the last 3



Loch Doon

years. In the coming years we will PIT tag smolts in the burns above the dam and monitor their passage through the loch and the ladder where they will automatically be recorded. Smolts that survive to adulthood and return to the loch

will again be recorded as they pass through the receiver in the ladder. We should be able to tell exactly from where these returning adults originated and which burns are most productive. This work will allow us to monitor migration through the dam and may allow us to make recommendations to improve the success rate.

Culroy Burn Improvements

At the start of July work will commence on the Culroy Burn, to stabilise eroding banks. This will reduce the silt load in the burn and the Doon whilst protecting prime agricultural land. A combination of green engineering techniques performed under CAR licence, will be used.

Once the engineering works are completed, water margin fencing will be installed to ensure livestock access is prevented. We will monitor the results over the coming years and expect to see an improvement in fish populations.



Bankside erosion on the Culroy Burn (left) and how the river's meander has altered over a short space of time (right).

Quiz night Thanks to all who helped organise, contribute a prize and attend our annual quiz night in April, which raised funds for the Trust.



Ospreys on Loch Doon. Photo: Roundhouse Cafe

Ospreys Return

In 2010 ART helped install a nesting platform for Ospreys at Loch Doon and in 2014 a pair raised their first chicks. The first bird arrived back this year on the 8th April and both birds are now on the nest. Visitors can watch the birds using a telescope set up by the Roundhouse Café.

Doon Fencing

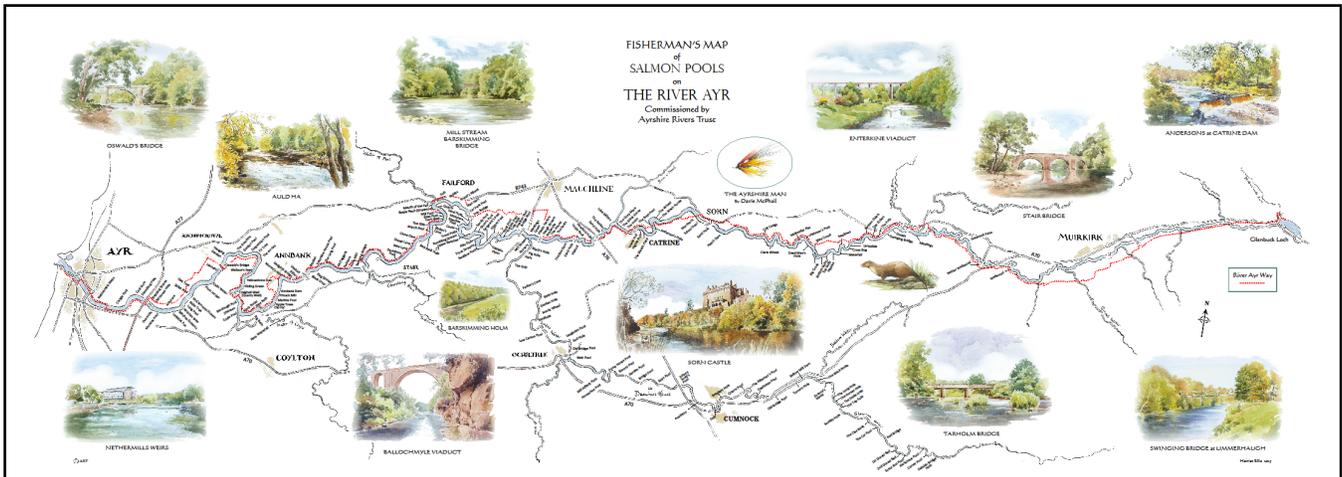
The River Doon DSFB generously agreed to fund up to 50% of the cost of the fencing within priority areas of the catchment. The aim is to improve habitat and water quality and ultimately fish populations. Fencers continue to work on this project co-ordinated by ART.

Farmed Salmon Escape

Upwards of 16,000 farmed salmon escaped from a Marine Harvest site following a storm on the 3rd of June. These fish were around 10lbs and will make a beeline for west coast rivers. We cannot stress how important it is that anglers be vigilant and if any of these fish are caught, we encourage they be killed with pictures, scales and a flesh sample retained. Please contact ART and we will arrange to collect these samples. It is crucial that as much evidence as possible is gathered to assess the impact that these escapes have. Please go to ART's blog for details of how to identify farmed salmon from wild fish.

River Ayr Map now on sale!

Harriet Ellis has produced this stunning map of the River Ayr, featuring 14 water colour pictures from locations around the Ayr valley. The map also features the pool names along the length of the river and is the third in a series of maps produced for us. The map's dimensions are approximately 78cm by 32cm and would make a beautiful adornment to any office or study wall. Davie McPhail dedicated one of his salmon flies the "Ayrshire Man" to the Trust and this features in the centre of the map. The map can be collected from ART's offices during normal working hours, or can be sent by post in a tube. Payment can be made either by PayPal (through ART's website) or by cheque. The map is priced at £31.50 plus postage and packing.

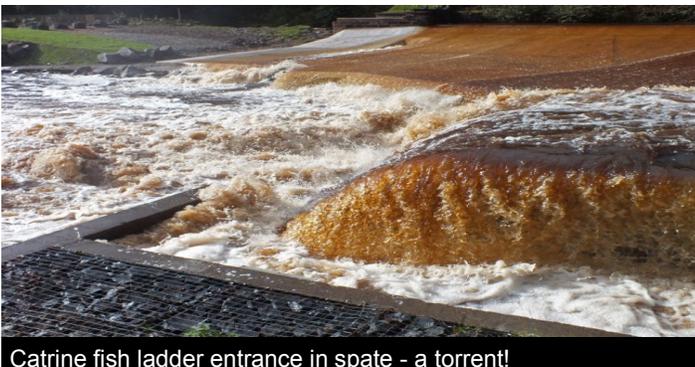


Harriet Ellis's stunning depiction of the River Ayr

Catrine Dam

There remains concern over the efficiency of the fish pass following the refurbishment of it last year. Salmon are still unable to find the entrance of the ladder during high flows and runs are delayed as a consequence. This remains a significant concern for clubs and proprietors in the upper catchment.

Catrine Community Trust are aware of the DSFB and Trust's concerns and are working towards the solution. However, these issues were first highlighted by the Trust in August last year and we are disappointed by the slow progress. SEPA are involved and we hope these issues will be resolved very soon.



Catrine fish ladder entrance in spate - a torrent!

Contact Us

Ayrshire Rivers Trust (Scottish Charity Number SC030426) can be contacted at:

1 Gibbseyard
Auchincruive Estate
Ayr KA6 5HW

01292737300

info@ayrshirerivertrust.org

Visit us on the web and read our blog at:
www.ayrshirerivertrust.org



www.facebook.com/AyrshireRiversTrust