

The River Dee

The background of the lower section is a photograph of a river. The river flows through a rocky landscape with large, light-colored boulders in the foreground. The banks are covered with dense green trees and shrubs. A person is visible on the right bank, standing near the water's edge.

Dee District Salmon Fishery Board
*Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors &
Annual Public Meeting*
28 September 2023

Accounts

INCOME	2023	2022
Assessments	416,182	332,943
Property Rental	28,800	28,800
Sundry	40	6
Contracts	74,324	54,520
Projects	311,584	326,128
TOTAL	830,930	742,397
EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
Policing & Predator Control	114,911	104,652
River Improvements & Protection	405,253	416,371
Fisheries Development	67,200	72,787
Research & Monitoring	62,265	60,830
Administration & Office	135,795	126,329
Don DSFB Service Contract	48,359	46,233
TOTAL	833,783	827,202

Internal Funds 2022-23

External funds 2022-23

Income raised internally

Assessments	416,182		
Property Rental	28,800		
Sundry	40		445,022

Expenditure against monies raised internally

<u>Staff costs:</u>			
Salaries	280,317		
Recruitment/clothing/sundries/training	2,657	282,974	
Donation to River Dee Trust	40,000	40,000	
<u>Contracts:</u>			
River Cowie, Weir removal donation	8,640	8,640	
<u>Projects:</u>			
Habitat Restoration & Maintenance	5,333		
Biosecurity	259	5,592	
Fisheries Development	8,904	8,904	
Policing & Predator Control	3,316	3,316	
Administration & Office costs	89,255	89,255	
Depreciation	10,180	10,180	(448,861)
		Deficit	(3,839)

Income raised externally

<u>Contracts:</u>			
Garlogie	25,965	25,965	
<u>Projects:</u>			
Dee Riparian Habitat	238,480		
Large Woody Structures	61,758	300,238	
<u>Fisheries Development:</u>			
FishDee	5,000		
River Dee Trust	5,000		
Events	1,346	11,346	
<u>Service Level Arrangement:</u>			
Don DSFB	48,359	48,359	385,908

Expenditure against monies raised externally

<u>Contracts:</u>			
Garlogie	contract costs	15,465	
	salary contribution	10,500	25,965
<u>Projects:</u>			
Dee Riparian Habitat	project costs	157,237	
	salary contribution	96,412	
Large Woody Structures	project costs	40,440	
	salary contribution	5,655	299,744
<u>Fisheries Development:</u>			
FishDee	salary contribution	5,000	
River Dee Trust	salary contribution	5,000	
Events	event costs	854	10,854
<u>Service Level Arrangement:</u>			
Don DSFB	salary contribution	48,359	48,359 (384,922)

Surplus

986



Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

Annual Report

Selling the Dee to the World

7 Social media channels
Combined no of followers?
732 posts done
Multi subjects
35 Fishing reports

Media Coverage
BBC Wild Isles,
Countryfile, Landward,
Robson & Jim on ITVX ,
BBC Out of Doors
Other Radio & TV

New River Dee website launched
end of Sept 2022
12 months of data
Angling pages are much more
comprehensive

River Dee Web Audience
31k page views by 12k users
Top 5 - Home, Fish the Dee, Who
we are, Events, News.
1405 sessions onto FishPal
211k views on FishDee pages

River Dee Web Audience
Average no pages = 1.8
Angling pages – 3 mins !
72% on a Mobile

River Dee Web Audience
UK – 51% Sco/44% Eng
USA/IRL/NOR/GER/SWE/FR



ROBSON & JIM'S FLY FISHING ADVENTURES

- Web spike while on air
- Great PR for the river and the area that we did not pay for !!
- **2.5 million viewers**
- Uplift in all digital stats and web views on angling pages since.
- Enquiries for the 2023 and the 2024 event

ITV – 26 April 2023

Angling Development 2023



- 6 events at Inch & Lochter in Summer for 28
- 2 Ladies Day's on the Dee for 25
- 1 Come & Try Day on the Dee for 12

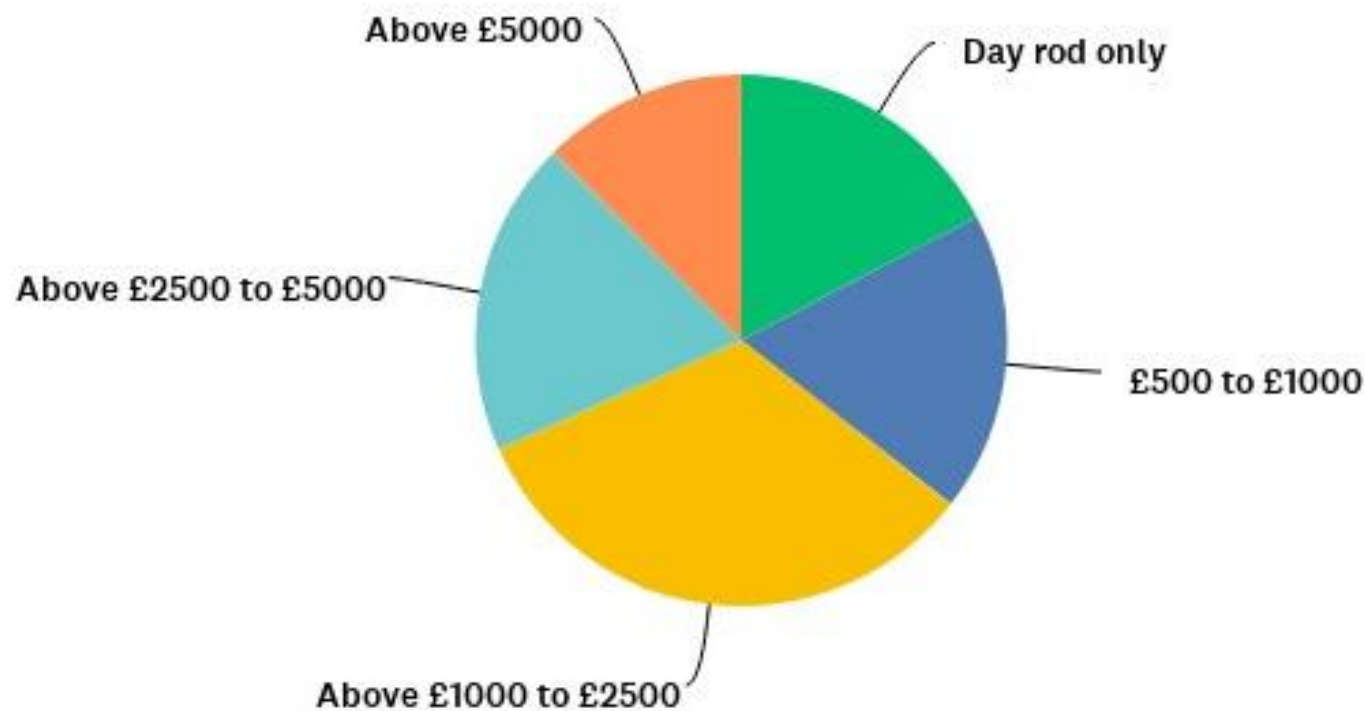
TOTAL = 65

Angling Survey 2023

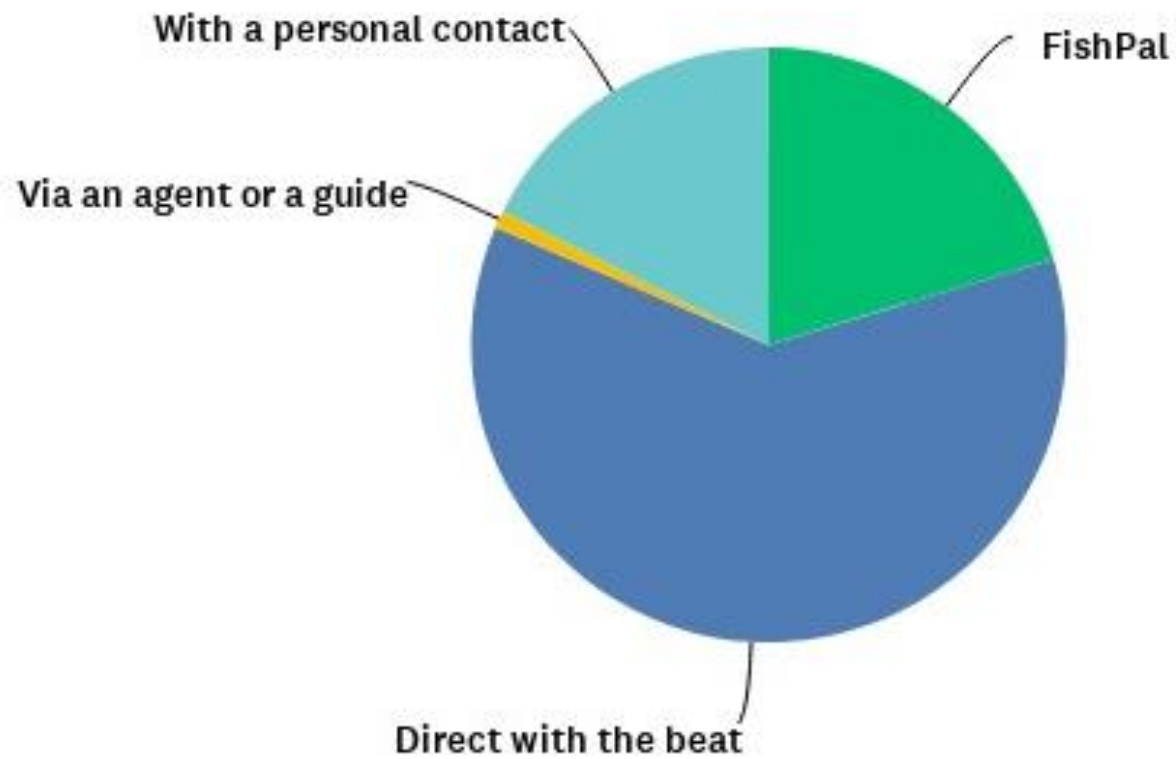
- 109 responses so far
- Majority not 1st visit to the Dee
- Average no in the fishing party was 4
- Average of 2.5 beats tried per visit
- Majority came from England , then Scotland, a few overseas
- Excellent experiences on the Dee and great comments about beats & ghillies
- Concern about the low numbers of salmon and the future



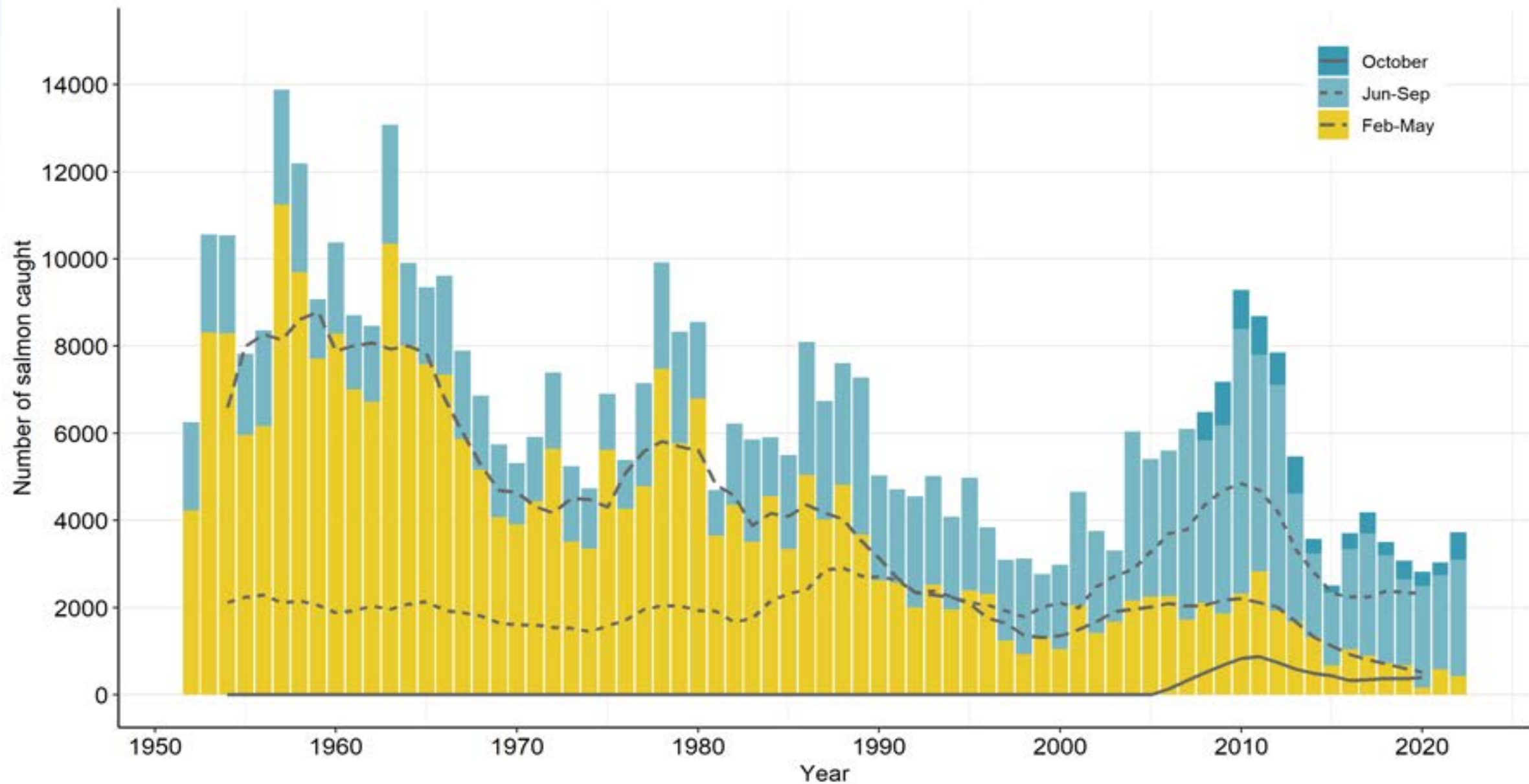
Q7 How much do you think your party spent in the local area including fishing accommodation, eating out and shopping?



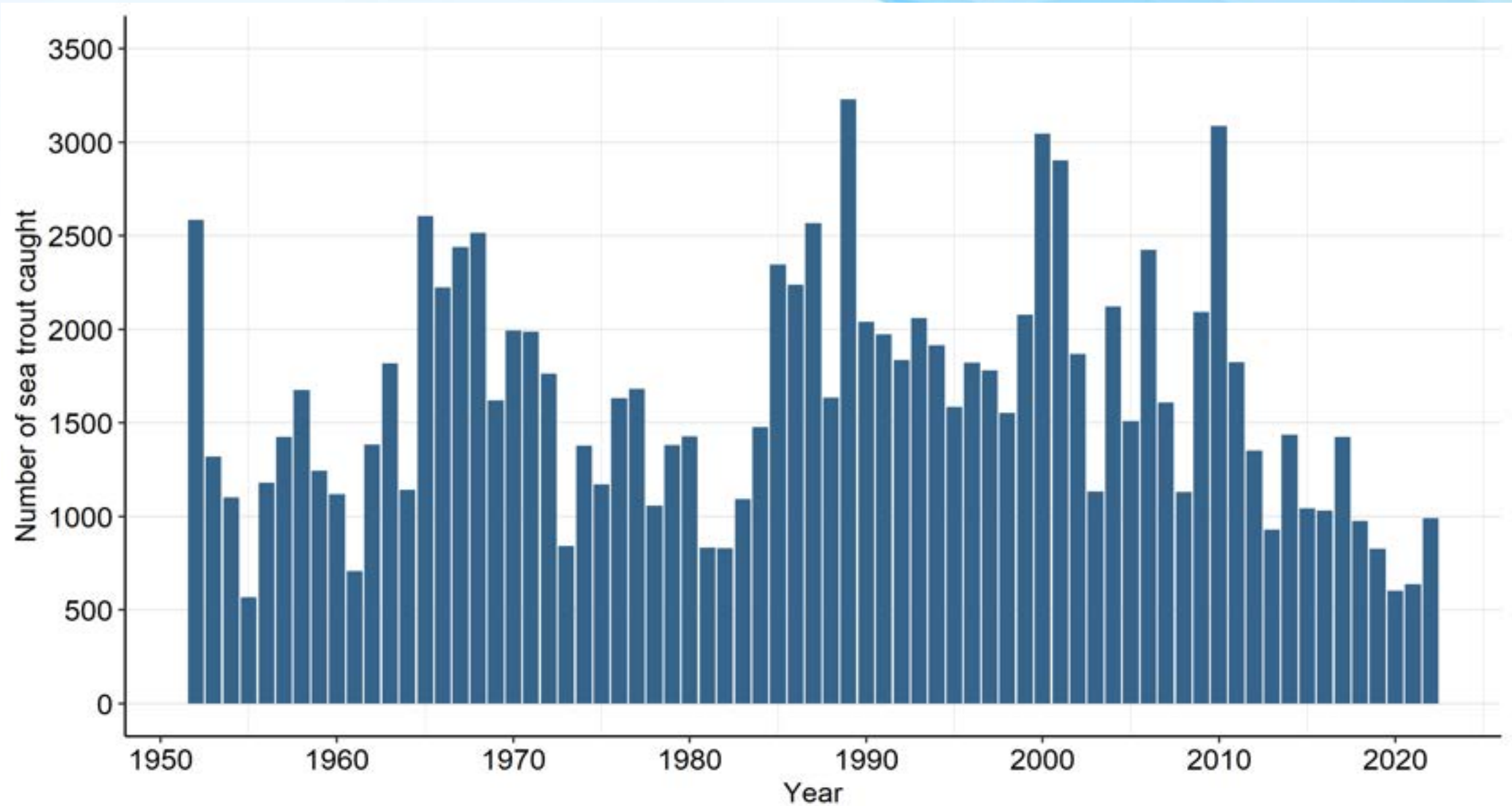
Q5 How did you book?



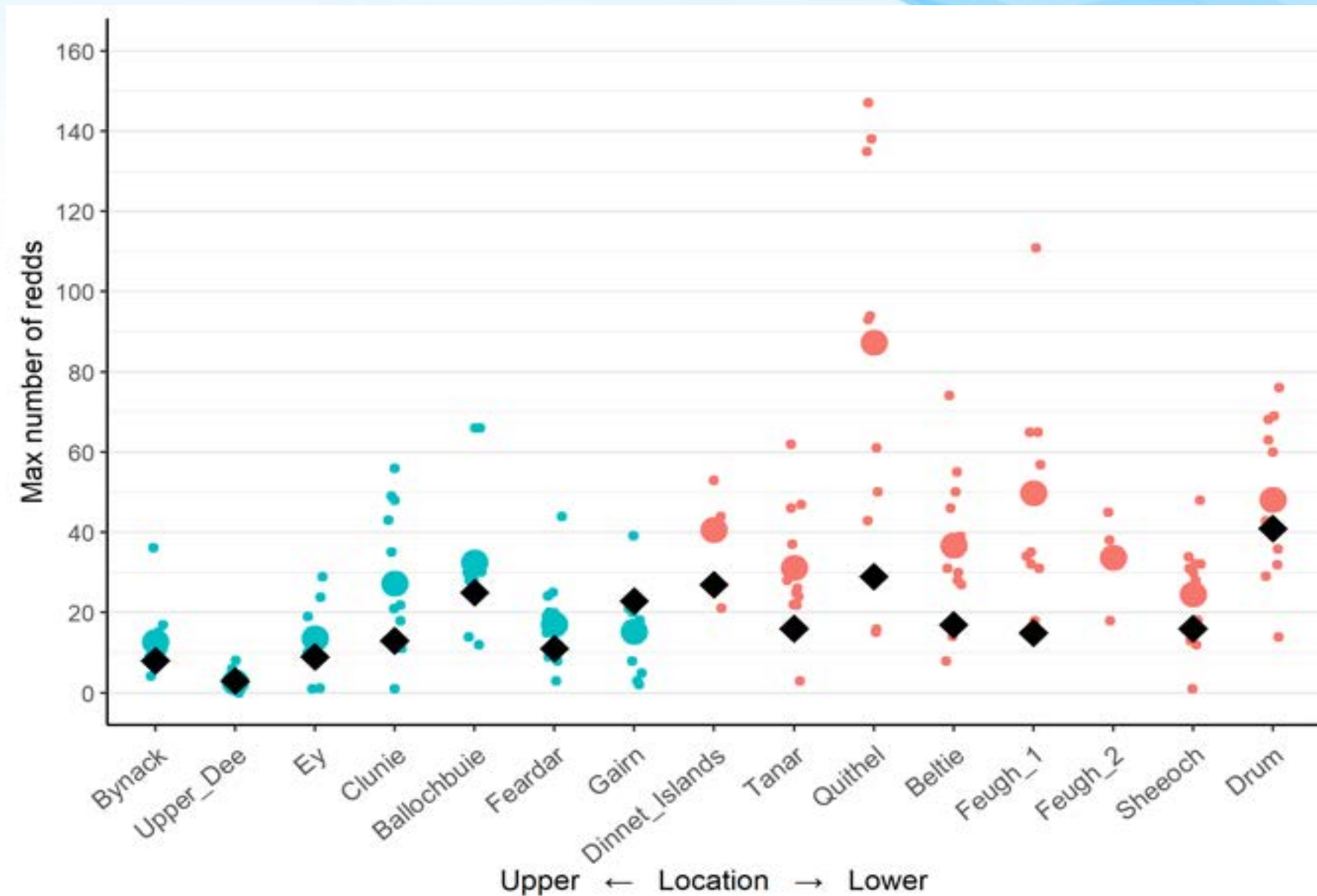
Rod catches to 2022



Sea trout catches to 2022



Redd counts

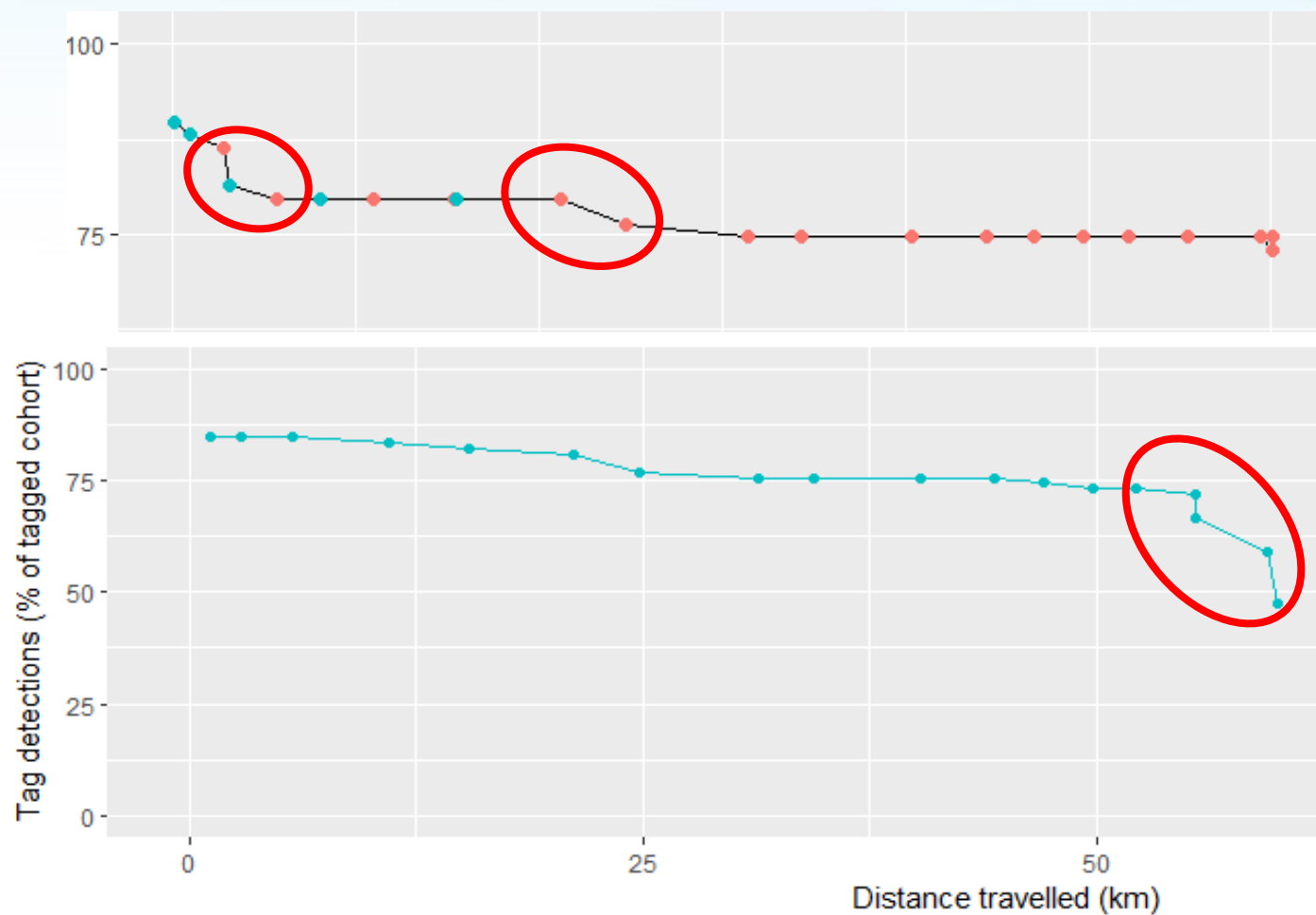


Smolts

	2023	2022
Beltie	680	(4000+)
Muick	255	
Baddock	1400	(1958)
Girnock	300	(1029)



2022 smolt emigration study



V5 tags

- 53/59 detected
- **75%** (44) detected leaving

JSAT tags

- 66/78 detected
- **59%** (46) detected leaving

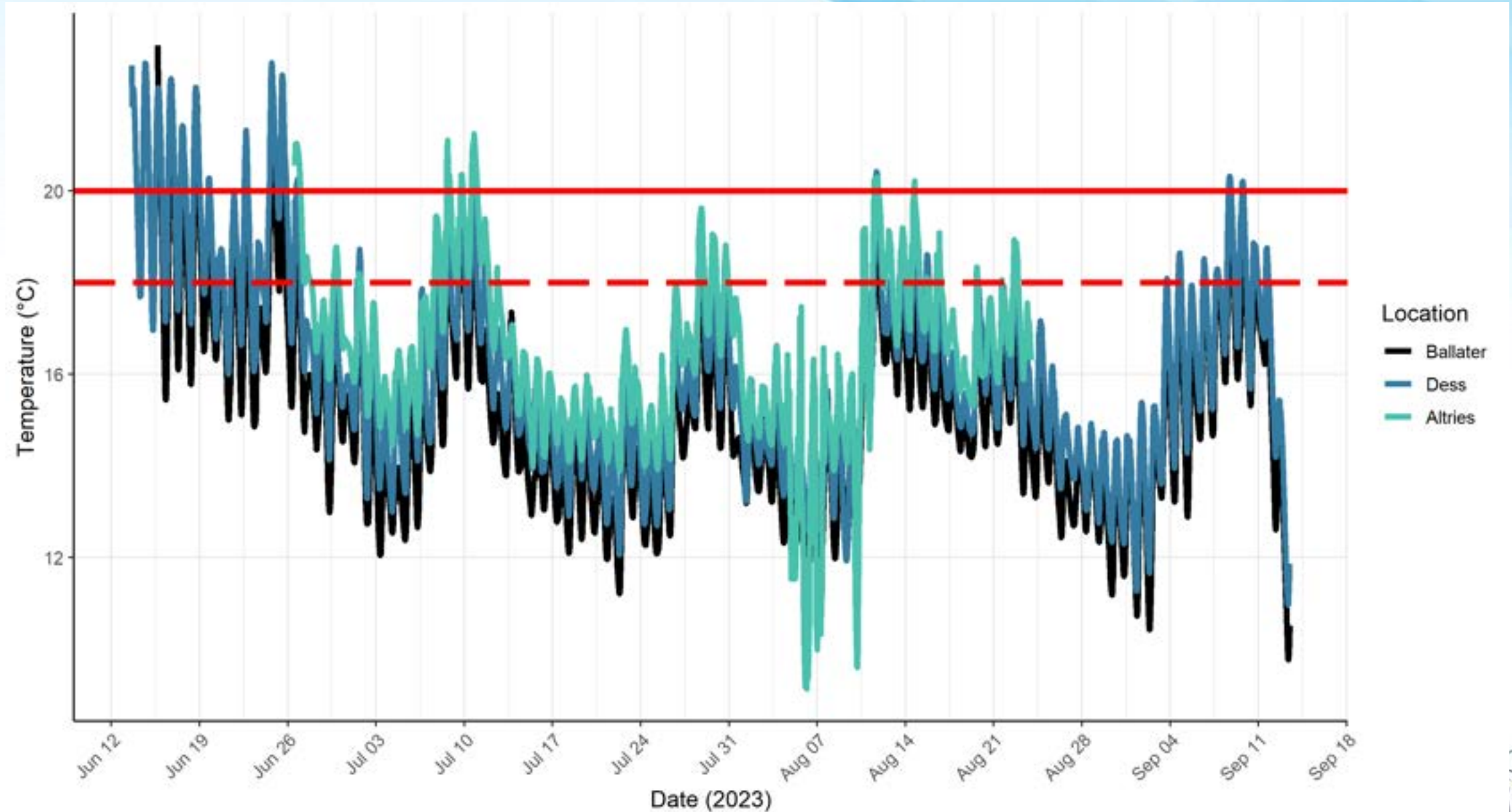
Invertebrate sampling 2022



Invertebrate sampling 2023

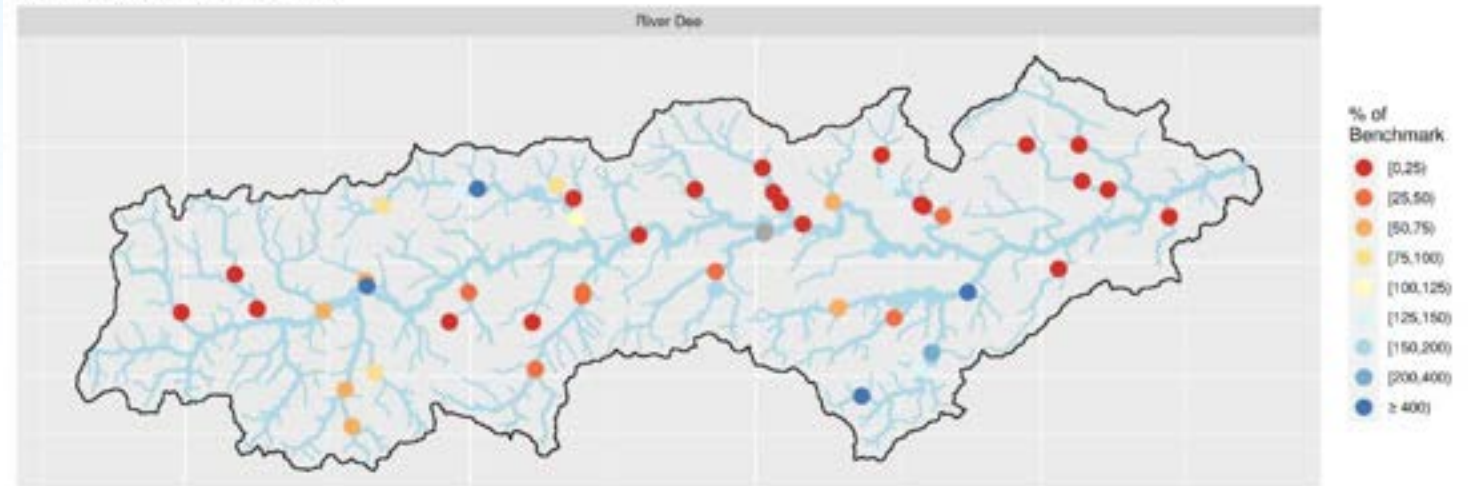


Temperature – summer 2023 (mainstem)

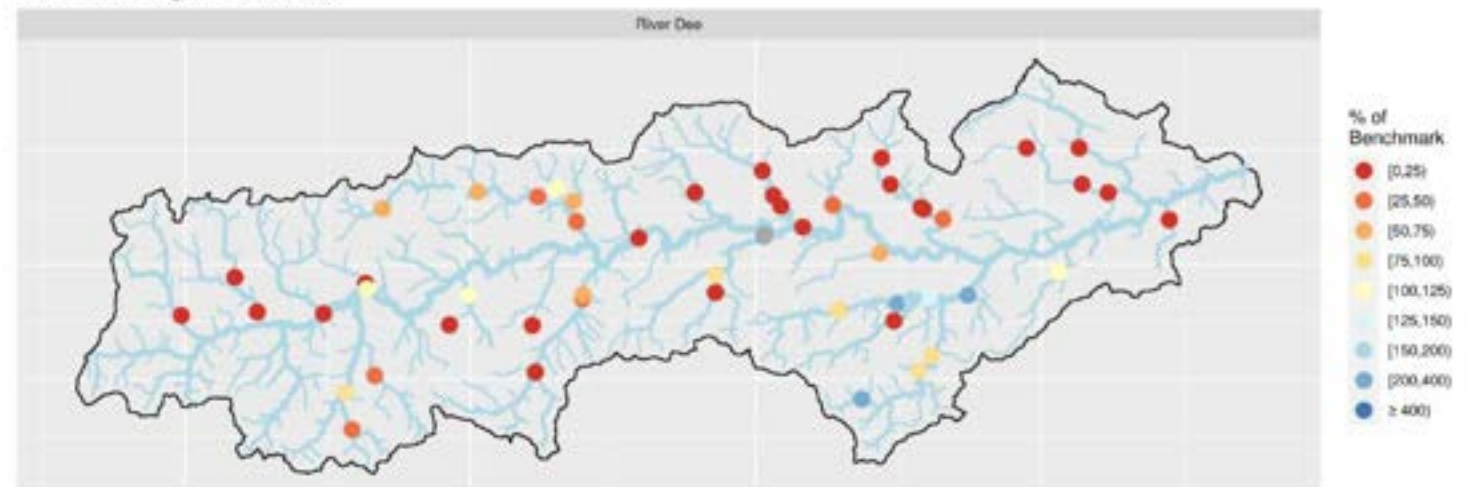


Juvenile surveys 2022

Fry - Percentage of Benchmark



Parr - Percentage of Benchmark



Juvenile surveys 2023



Protecting Smolts



- Smolt Survival Plan and Lower Dee Smolt Shepherding
- Controlled 45 goosanders and 24 cormorants largest ever quota !
- Scottish Government Wild Salmon Strategy – predation by avian predators recognised as a ‘pressure’ on Atlantic salmon

Protecting adults- Seals



- Significantly fewer seal sightings in Spring 2023
- Seal Patrols using Non-lethal approaches
- Detect and Deter Programme
- Call for Action

24 hr number for seal sightings - 01339 880411

Protecting adults – Illegal Exploitation



- 27 poaching incidents, like pre Covid-19
- Increased use of technology to support enforcement and protect staff
- Dee and Don staff working together.

24 hr number for poaching - 01339 880411

Pollution and Biosecurity

- 22 pollution incidents reported
- National Campaign to highlight pollution incidents
- Biosecurity measures distributed across beats and available at Milton of Crathes and at River Office



Salmon Habitat – Catchment Scale and Urgent

- Over 460,000 trees planted.
- 260 LWS's in place.
- Over 200km of buffer strips.
- ~18.5 ha of restored floodplain.
- ~2.2km of channels
- Wetlands, debris dams, leaky dams.



Salmon Habitat – Future Restoration

- 300km of streams vulnerable to high temps. Trees top priority, 1M by 2035.
- Funding secured for a further 220 LWS for 2024/2025.
- NRF 4 funding secured for Cattie Burn Restoration project.
- HH funding for Mar Floodplain, 135Ha 3.6km of river.
- Increase efforts across whole catchment, upper, middle & lower.
- Habitat protection and restoration is essential for a healthy fishery.



Salmon Habitat- remove barriers & restore catchments

- Garlogie dam removal began 14th Aug.
- Removal of 5.7m high dam.
- One of the largest dam removals in Scotland and last major barrier on the Dee.
- Catalyst for further restoration on the Culter burn and further dam removals.



Salmon Habitat - Manmade Barrier Removal

- Restore access to 20km of salmonid habitat.
- Restoration of over 500m of river habitat.
- Creation of wetland, open water, tree planting and LWS.





Walk & Talk - Glen Muick

- Tuesday mornings 10am to 2pm, meet in Ballater.
- 10 Oct, 24 Oct.
- Informal short walk from the car park at Loch Muick.
- Cuppa and a “Tunnocks” with the Q&A afterwards.
- Nature of Scotland Awards.

Restoring Spring to the Dee

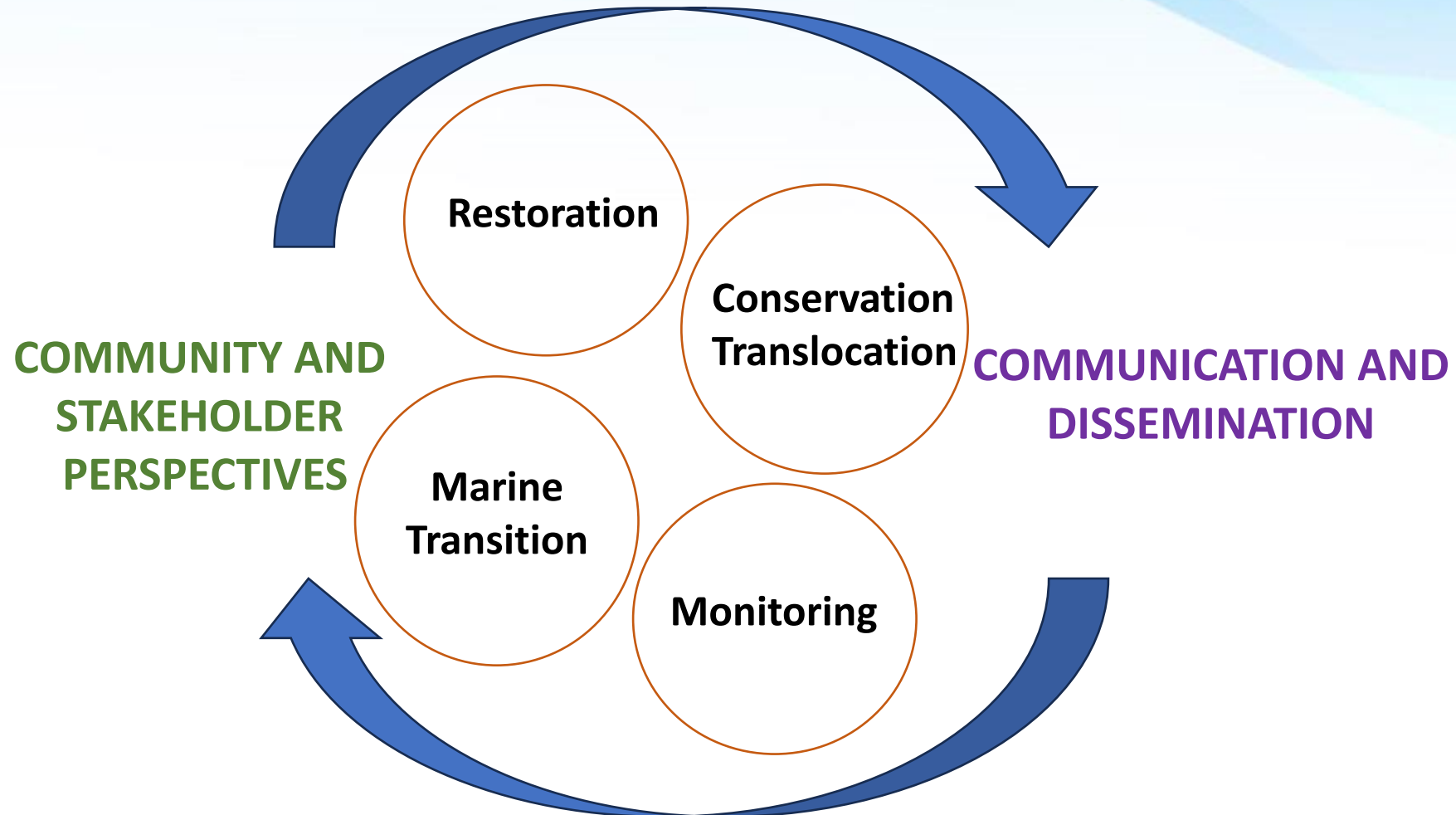


Programme of Work

- Restoring Spring salmon stocks
- Addressing cause of decline
- 20-year programme



Source to sea – Atlantic Salmon restoration



Programme Phases

- Phase 1 (1-5 years)
 - Engagement
 - Genetic & monitoring baselines
 - Habitat restoration
 - Pilot conservation translocation
 - Pilot marine transition investigation & sampling
- Phase 2 (6-10 years)
- Phase 3 (11-20 years)

Target: 50% increase in salmon abundance



Habitat Restoration

- Landscape scale
- Immediate physical habitat & invertebrate food
- Reduction in temperatures and high/low flow impacts
- Landscape and data analysis
- Prioritised plan



Conservation Translocation

Releasing fish into the wild for conservation purposes

Smolt to Adult Supplementation

Collecting wild smolts and rearing in captivity, releasing adults into the wild to spawn naturally.

e.g. Fundy Salmon Recovery Programme

Kelt Reconditioning

Collecting kelts and reconditioning in captivity, returning them to the river to spawn a second time.

Starting: 1-3 tributaries, 200 smolts, 10-20 kelts.



Budget

Phase 1

Communication & engagement	£110,000
Conservation Translocation	£850,000
Habitat restoration	£350,000
Marine transition	£600,000
Monitoring	£120,000
TOTAL	£2,030,000

Phase 2

£1,060,000

Phase 3

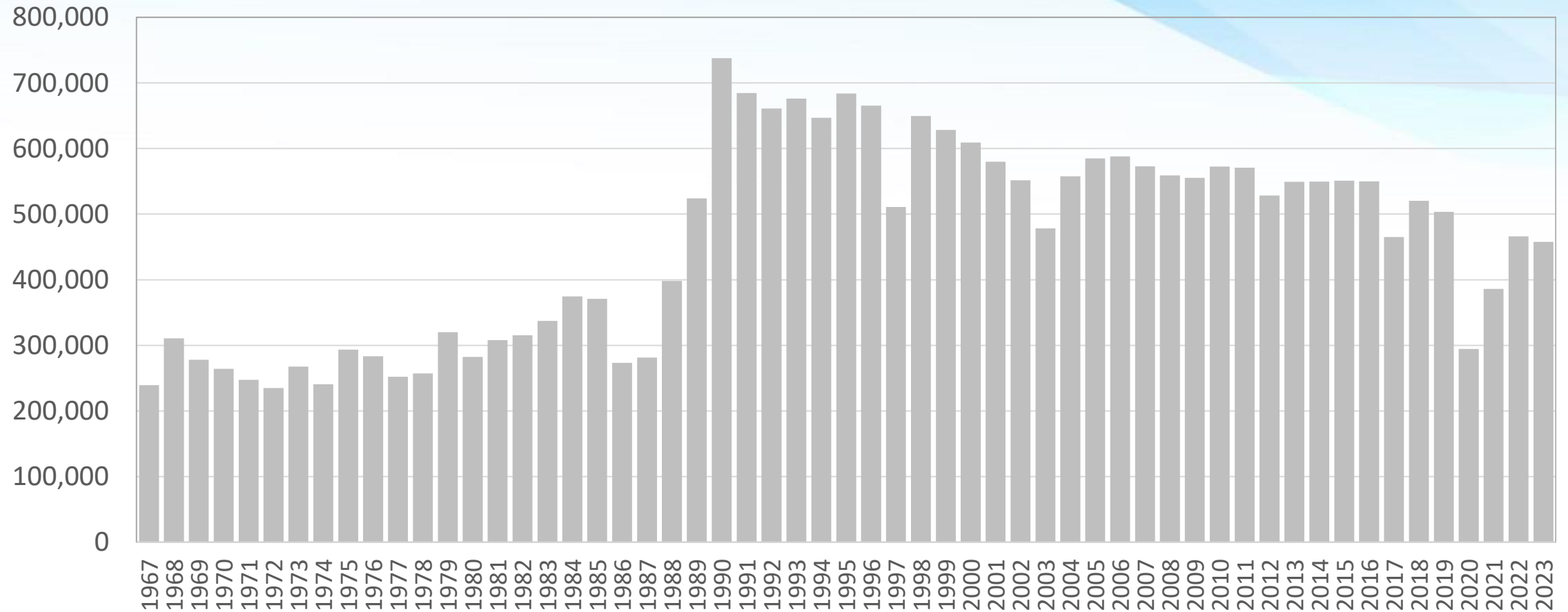
£795,000

Next Steps

- Fundraising
- Seeking Programme Co-ordinator
- Working with agencies
 - MSS/SAB –licence
 - NatureScot – HRA
- Winter stakeholder event



Assessment (2023 prices)



Conservation Code

Take extra care when river water temperatures increase above 18°C and avoid fishing altogether when temperatures exceed 20°C.

Guidelines on how to do this are available on <https://riverdee.org.uk/fish-handling/>



Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

THE DEE CONSERVATION CODE 2024

- A The season will run from 1st February to 15th October up to Aboyne Bridge. Above Aboyne Bridge the season will close on 30th September.
- B Salmon and Grilse: 100% catch and release for the entire season.
Sea Trout (including Finnock): 100% catch and release for the entire season.
- C Prior to 1st April it is a criminal offence to retain a salmon or grilse. By law any salmon or grilse that is severely injured or damaged, dies or is killed before this date, must be returned to the river.
- D On the Dee after 1st April all severely injured or damaged fish should be handed to the proprietor. This applies to all beats.
- E On the Cowie and Carron it is illegal to kill a salmon or grilse throughout the entire season.
- F It is illegal to sell rod caught wild salmon or sea trout.
- G All pink salmon must be killed, retained and reported to the River Office on the 24-hr number 013398 80411.
- H At the beat's discretion, spinning is a permitted option for the whole river between 1st February and 15th April. In addition, also at the beat's discretion, spinning is permitted in August and September from the top of Maryculter Beat downstream. It is recommended that fly fishing should always be given a fair try in preference to spinning. Note spinning is not permitted anywhere in October. No more than 1 hook per lure to be used.
- I It is recommended that all hooks should be barbless or crimped. No treble hooks should be used.
- J Irrespective of the date of capture, all fish handling should be kept to a minimum to avoid damage and stress. Take extra care when river water temperatures increase above 18°C and avoid fishing altogether when temperatures exceed 20°C. Guidelines on how to do this are available on <https://riverdee.org.uk/fish-handling/>
- K All anglers are required to disinfect waders and landing nets prior to fishing to prevent the introduction of *Gyrodactylus salaris* and other diseases to the Dee. Further information is available at <https://riverdee.org.uk/biosecurity/>

Remember, the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board needs the vital help of all Proprietors, Gillies and Anglers to realise the twin objectives of sustaining and enhancing the river's fish stocks and maintaining a viable thriving fishery.

Lawrence Ross
Chairman, Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

14th August 2023

Questions

- a. From Qualified Proprietors
- b. From Members of the Public