

UPPER SHIN NEWS

1998



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Here is the first Shin news letter. It was felt that you might be interested in what happened throughout the last season and it also gives an opportunity for input from yourselves, the tenants.

After a slow and difficult start to the year, the fishing finally picked up in July.

This was reflected throughout the other rivers in the area. There were a host of pet theories going about - a few of the favourites are listed here. A) Disastrous smolt migrations. B) Predation by increasing numbers of seals. C) Climatic changes. D) Danish trawlers hoovering up all the smolts when fishing for sand eels. E) El Nino lowering the sea temperatures, making feeding for MSW fish harder, as the species that they feed on move to different areas. F) Over fishing at sea, the list goes on and on!

The grilse came in great numbers, although we complain when it rains all the time - it was really beneficial and the fishing was superb throughout July and August. The Grudie running throughout was a great stimulus to the river. This was because the Hydro were doing essential repairs. There was so much water in the top loch, the Hydro Board got nervous and decided to let six times the usual flow down the

river for eight days in August. This was some what disconcerting to the rods. Those, who knew the river well, thought it was unfishable, but on persuasion had a go in the quieter sections with very encouraging results. Others, who were unfamiliar with August conditions were a bit baffled by this Hydro river behaving like a spate river - however, they were not disappointed.

Computer problems at the Hydro headquarters in Pitlochry caused an alarming result. A fisherman on the Lower Shin went down early in the morning to find no water at all going over the Falls and the fish crowding into the deeper sections like sardines in a tin. The powers that be were hastily alerted and the water was switched back on with little or no damage done. A strongly worded letter about procedures was sent to the Hydro Board, who have done their best to assure us that it will not happen again.

September saw the river full of fish, but unfavourable weather conditions. Cold winds and low pressure made the fish a bit dour. The last three days of the season were successful - 21 fish were caught and 19 of these were returned. A large hen fish of approximately 19lbs was caught and



returned in the Suspension. Congratulations to Dave Crompton who returned the second fish he had ever caught, a 17lb hen fish from the Wall pool. Many thanks also to Rhian Pilkington who made a great sacrifice when she returned a monster in Meadow. It was measured at 39 inches long and 12 inches deep, an estimated 28 lbs - this must have been a remarkable fish to come into contact with, let alone land and then release, a great example of self control.

The netting for brood fish has taken place, apparently in appalling weather, and the results were very encouraging. Charlie Menzies the Kyle Board's head water bailiff reported a large proportion of totally fin clipped grilse in the netting. This is a good result from the Grudie smolt trap experiment and again, thank you to those people who returned fish they caught with no adipose fins. A special thank you to a lady who had fished with great patience for 4 years and finally caught her first fish, to find it had no adipose fin so she put it back as requested. About 40 fish from the Grudie smolt experiment were found in the November netting, a better result than

could have been anticipated. These were to be found throughout the system from Wall to Meadow. The number of partial fin clipped fish (which are rod caught and released fish) has doubled since last year and they retrieved 15 in the netting.

The most dramatic statistic to arise from the Upper Shin this year is the amount of fish returned overall. This was ONE THIRD of the total catch. As this was the first year of suggested catch and release this is an outstanding figure. There will be no need to introduce compulsory bag limits if all fishermen and women behave as responsibly as the tenants on the Upper Shin, a hearty congratulations to you all.

The bank improvements are very much the work of David Allison and Jamie Clark, who have worked like Trojans for your benefit, a big thank you to them both.

They remain enthusiastic and dedicated to the river and the tenants, in good and bad conditions and are a pleasure to go fishing with.

Thank you all for your support and hope that you enjoyed your fishing as much as I did. Tight lines for 99.

James Greenwood.

