



2021

**ANNUAL REPORT  
&  
ACCOUNTS**

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*Established by Order  
under an Act of Parliament  
to protect the fish stocks in  
the Tweed River System*

# **River Tweed Commission**

## **2021 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

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## **CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

The 2021 fishing season proved to be a challenge for a number of reasons. As with the 2020 season the early months were negatively impacted by Covid restrictions, but thereafter the similarities ceased. Whilst fishing conditions were largely benign during the summer and autumn of 2020, in 2021 there was very little rain in the catchment after May, leading to low water conditions which prevailed until late September. This was a factor that led to reduced fish catches during the summer and early autumn.

The total rod catch of 5,862 salmon was therefore a major disappointment after the encouraging result of 2020. Of important note, 93.5% of rod caught Salmon were returned safely to the river, reflecting a year on year increase in return rates since 2010. This is the first time the number of rod caught fish has exceeded 90% and demonstrates how angling practices continue to evolve on a voluntary basis.

Concerns remain about the Spring run with the catches in February, March and April falling below the 5-year average. We continue to be in discussion with the Scottish Government with a view to protecting Spring salmon beyond 31st March, but progress is slow. We also hope to resolve the anomaly whereby we are required to apply to the Scottish Government for consent to fish by spinning between 15th February and 31st March. We were issued with a consent for the 2021 season and for the moment this requirement continues.

RTC have continued to support the Tweed Foundation with their smolt studies which are focused on the effect of predation on smolts in the river. Good flows in the river at the time of the smolt run ensured that in 2021 survival rates of the tagged fish were very good, in excess of 80% of fish with the same tag as previous years surviving in the main river to reach Berwick. The study is also looking at the effect of the tags themselves on the possible mortality of the smolts. This aspect of the study will be continued through to the Spring of 2022 and will be reported on to RTC in the autumn.

We had been hopeful that we would learn more about the percentage of smolts returning to the river as adults following the PIT tagging of 1000 smolts in each of 2019 and 2020, but unfortunately software errors with the Gala detection equipment during 2021 mean that we can only expect to obtain some preliminary results at the end of 2022. Provisional numbers of salmon detected in the fish counters, 2,652 for the Ettrick and 978 for the

Gala whilst less than in 2020, have remained significantly above the numbers required to meet target egg deposition rates.

RTC's expenditure budget for 2021 was similar to that of 2020 although it was possible to raise slightly less than that from the annual assessment in view of the underspend from 2020. The year ended with a small deficit which was lower than originally projected.

The new management team of Jamie Stewart as Clerk and Alison Gorrie as Executive Assistant have continued to settle in well, although the Drygrange office had to remain closed for most of 2021 owing to Covid restrictions. The Fishery Officer team led by Karl Ferguson had another busy year and we welcome the arrival of Paul MacLean as a new team member.

During 2021 the Tweed Foundation's long serving biologist Dr Ronald Campbell retired and at his final attendance at the September Commission meeting he delivered a paper on salmon catch trends on the river which advanced the argument that we are as much addressing a structural change in the run timing and size of salmon as decreases in salmon numbers arising from climate change and human impact on rivers. We wish Ronald a long and happy retirement and thank him for his huge contribution to the protection of salmon in the Tweed over more than 30 years.

With the departure of trout biologist Kenny Galt during 2021, the Tweed Foundation have a new young team of biologists led by James Hunt and you will hear more from them in 2022. We thank Kenny for his unstinting commitment to the river over his 16 years with the Tweed Foundation and in particular for his work with the trout clubs on Brown trout.

My concluding thanks go to Jamie and all those at RTC and the Tweed Foundation who continue to work tirelessly to maintain the Tweed as a successful fishery and to conserve its fish stocks in the face of very considerable challenges.

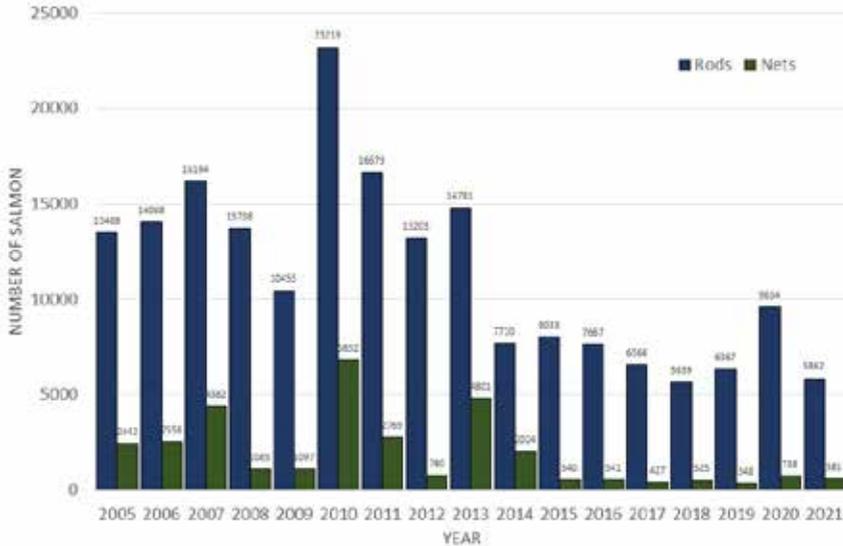
*Hugh Younger*

# FISH CATCHES

## Salmon

For the 2021 fishing season 5,862 salmon were caught by rods and 581 by nets. This was a marked reduction on the 2020 catch and the rod catch was 1,325 less than the five year average.

**Salmon rod and net catches since 2005**

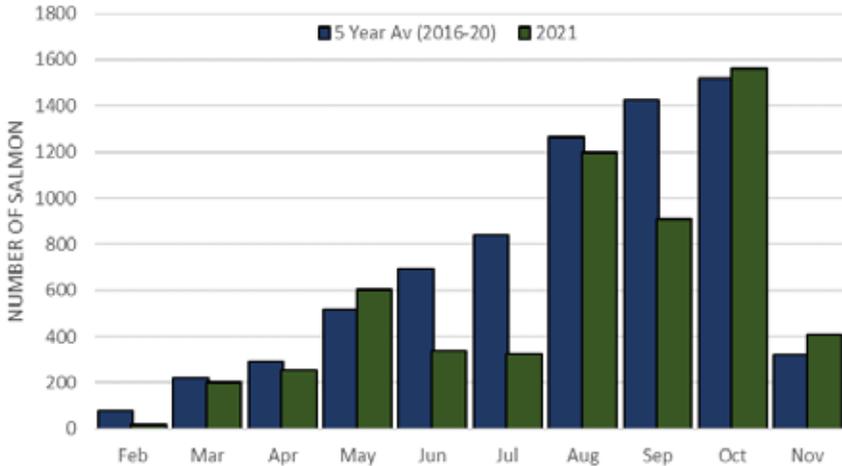


There were mixed fishing conditions through the season which have influenced the size and distribution of rod catches in each month. February was largely unfishable due to high water. There were several moderate increases in water level in March to help fish progress up the river, followed by a dry period in April, combined with below average temperatures. May was an unsettled month, with frequent small rises in water level. There was no detectable rise in water in June, with continued low water conditions from mid-June through to late September, with particularly warm conditions for several weeks in July.

COVID restrictions reduced angling effort in the first two months of the season but this may only have had a minor influence on the overall Spring catch as the river was largely unfishable in February and the first two months of the season produce a relatively small proportion of the total catch. By April, groups of six people from Scotland were able to fish and restrictions were further relaxed in May. When comparing the 2021 catch to previous years, it is important to note that the 2020 total will have been more affected by COVID restrictions, with almost no fishing in April and restrictions partially lifted towards the end of May.

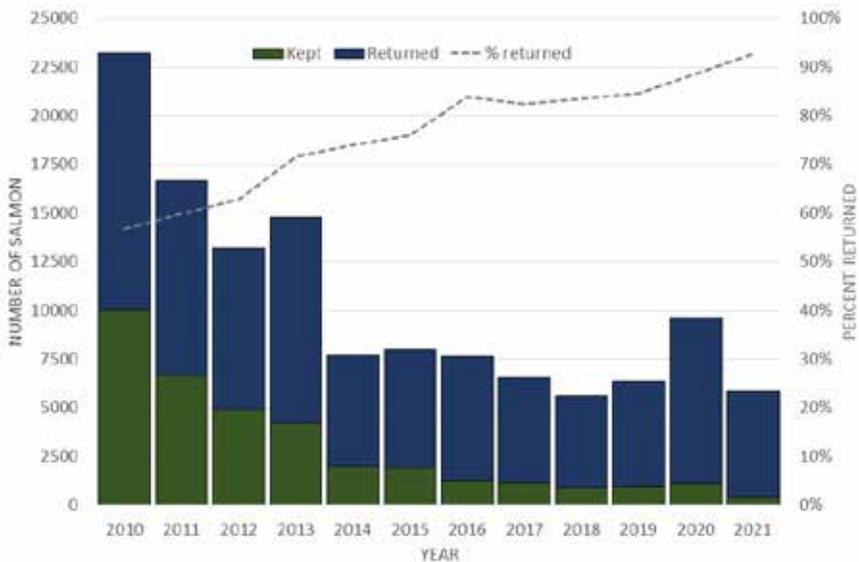
Rod catches in March, April, August, October and November were very similar to the five year average, but were well below average in February, June, July and September.

**Salmon rod catches by month, compared to the five year average**



Since 2010 there is a clear upward trend in the numbers of salmon returned to the river, with more than 93% of fish returned for the first time in 2021.

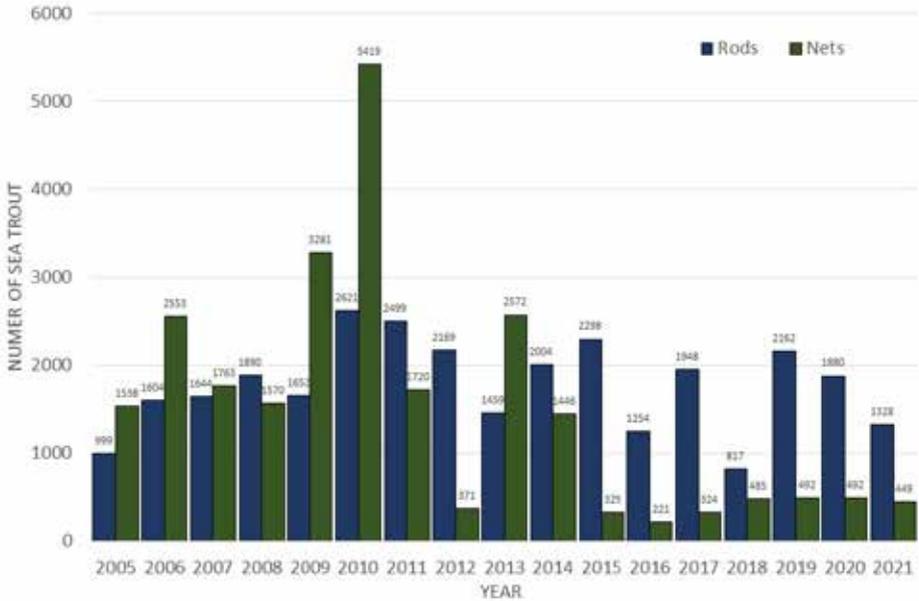
**Salmon catch and release figures since 2010**



## Sea Trout

1,328 Sea Trout were caught by rods in 2021, the third lowest catch since 2005. The poor fishing conditions in June and July will have reduced Sea Trout catches, but it is impossible to say by how much. 449 Sea Trout were caught by the nets, which is consistent with catches since 2015.

**Sea Trout rod and net catches since 2005**



The annual summer electro-fishing programme for monitoring stocks of juvenile Salmon and Trout was carried out for the Leader, Gala and Upper Tweed. A report will be published on the RTC/Tweed Foundation website [rivertweed.org.uk](http://rivertweed.org.uk) in the spring of 2022

## Brown Trout and Grayling Catches 2021

339 fishing trips were logged by anglers in 2021 using the Tweed Foundation Trout logbook scheme, which is 68 fishing trips more than 2020. There is currently a downward trend in recording catches since 2015 by anglers, either reflecting less angling effort or a reduced interest in completing logbooks. Although reduced fishing trips in 2020 were due to COVID, in 2021 there were no such limitations for fishing. Any further decline in logbook submissions will inhibit our ability to accurately monitor the Brown trout and Grayling fisheries. The catch rates in 2021 for all sizes of Brown trout were above average and similar to those experienced in 2019 and 2020. Catch rates in May and June were average (the best months for Trout fishing), but July, August, and September were above average despite the warmer water temperatures. Catches for takeable Brown trout (body length greater than 25cm (10")) throughout the Tweed were above average. There were similar catch rates in 2014 and 2020, but in 2021 takeable Brown trout catches were on average the highest since records started in 2006. Catch rates for takeable Grayling (body length greater than 25cm (10")) were also above average for 2021 but not as strong as 2020, with an upward trend in catches since 2006. The highest catch rates for Grayling are on the Teviot and Lower Tweed. The overall trend for catch rates for Brown trout and Grayling fisheries remain stable, although there is significant variation from year to year.

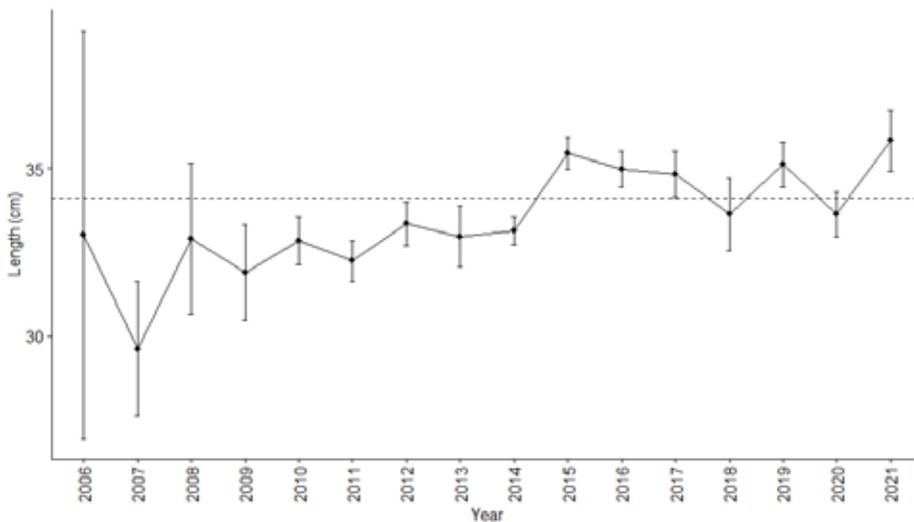


Figure 1 Shows the mean size (body length) of oversized brown trout caught each year. Black dash line is the mean length of oversized brown trout caught between 2006 and 2021. Vertical bars are the confidence intervals for each mean.

# SPRING SALMON CONSERVATION

## PREDATION

### **Goosanders and Cormorant counts**

Main stem counts of Goosanders and Cormorants in January, April, May and October and regular roost counts of Cormorants were completed by Tweed Commission and Tweed Foundation staff, with assistance from volunteers. The January and May counts for Goosanders in 2021 were the lowest on record; only 68 birds were counted in January (long term average of 279) and 37 birds were counted in May (long term average of 115). The October count was around average (283 birds) and the April count was just below the long term average. These results represent a continuation of below average numbers for every count carried out in 2020. Counts on the Dee and Spey in the same time frame are reported to be around average, so these results appear to be specific to the Tweed rather than a change in the wider population, perhaps reflecting changes in migratory patterns.

Cormorant numbers for the last two years have been around average for each count, with the exception of a record 191 birds counted in October 2021 (average 68). Given that Cormorants are twice the size of Goosanders, therefore eating potentially double the quantity of fish and their ability to eat fish greater than parr size, their damage to the Salmon, Trout and Grayling fishery is likely to be significant. An application to increase our licence for shooting Cormorants based on the October count has been made.

### **Goosander tracking**

As a joint project between The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, The British Trust for Ornithology, The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and The Tweed Foundation, six Goosanders were caught on the Leader and Gala Water in Spring 2021, tagged and then released. Birds were located every 15 minutes using the mobile telephone network. As a pilot project, the method of capture, tag retention and data generated was evaluated. Unfortunately, the results cannot be shared until the official report has been released by Marine Scotland Science.

### **2021 Smolt tracking project**

Building on the preliminary study carried out in 2019 (60 tagged smolts) and 2020 (240 tagged smolts), 60 smolts were tagged by TF biologists at the Gala trap in 2021 using the same type of tag as the previous studies (5 mm Vemco acoustic tag). Another 140 smolts were tagged with JSAT PIN tags which are

a new, smaller tag that has recently become available; half of these fish were tagged in early March as pre-smolts and the remainder were tagged at the Gala smolt trap. Tracking conditions in 2021 were very different to the low flow conditions in 2019 and 2020, with a rise in water levels from the 3rd to 6th May, coinciding with the main smolt run.

A detailed report can be viewed at <https://arcg.is/19rfOLO>

For the main river monitoring, 39 fish with Vemco tags were detected at Galafoot (the start of the study section) and 31 were detected at the last receiver in Berwick, which represents an overall loss of 20% of tagged fish, compared to 59% in 2019 and 57% in 2020. The higher survival of tagged fish in 2021 is probably attributable to the rise in water in early May leading to a much shorter time spent in the main river; the average transit time from Galafoot to Berwick was 2.9 days in 2021, compared to 16 days in 2020 and 22 days in 2019.

The losses for the smaller JSAT pin tags were also relatively low, with 11% of fish not reaching Ladykirk. Receivers for JSAT tags were deployed in the harbour, but the data was excluded as the receivers were found to have lower detection efficiencies in salt water.

Similar to 2019 and 2020, losses were again higher in the Middle Tweed relative to the Lower Tweed.

High losses of fish tagged at the trap were again detected in the lower Gala Water between the Skinworks Cauld and Galafoot (a distance of 3.4 km). For fish tagged at the trap, losses were 35% for Vemco transmitters (21 out of 60) and JSAT's (29 out of 82) compared to 9% losses (4 out of 47) for fish tagged with JSAT tags in early March. However, many of the presmolts tagged in March migrated out of the Gala Water with the rise in water in early May, therefore passing quickly through the lower Gala section where high losses have been detected.

To continue the investigation into whether tagging is affecting the survival of smolts in the lower Gala Water and main river, an identical study design will be carried out by The Tweed Foundation in 2022.

## CONSERVATION LIMITS

Scottish Ministers continued to regulate the killing of salmon in Scotland, including the prohibition on retaining any salmon caught in coastal waters, by means of conservation regulations made under section 38 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Marine Scotland undertook an assessment of the conservation status of salmon in inland waters in Scotland for the 2020 fishing season. The outcome of that assessment was that the whole of the River Tweed system continued to be noted as Category 1. This is contrary to the RTC's view that Spring salmon do not form sustainable breeding stocks of fish that can withstand any exploitation and should receive additional protection beyond that already afforded (which is the extension of the Annual Close Time to 31st March.) The RTC continues to press for further protection for Spring Salmon so that the Conservation Limit for the river takes account of the strength of the run-stocks and is not set, as at present, by reference to the overall numbers of salmon in the river, leaving weaker stocks vulnerable.

A feature of the Spring Salmon of the Tweed is that they exist in a number of separate populations, two larger ones in the Ettrick and Whiteadder and at least four others in different tributaries. There is even some evidence that secondary tributaries on the Teviot and Upper Tweed may have their own isolated Spring stocks on them.

Whatever the total numbers of Spring fish on the Tweed may be, in breeding terms they are split into much smaller populations and so are more vulnerable than if they formed a single, connected, population. The conservation importance of small stocks has been highlighted in Verspoor (2007) where it is recommended to:

*“Maintain salmon populations at their largest possible size in order to retain genetic variation and adaptive potential, especially in the case of small populations inhabiting extreme, marginal, habitats”.*

The spinning season is linked to the netting season in the Tweed Order legislation and, therefore, since 2015 the agreement of the Scottish Government to allow spinning to continue between 15th February and 31st March has been required. The Scottish Government issued consent to the RTC to allow spinning from the 15th Feb through to 31 March 2021. The RTC is working with both the Scottish and Westminster parliaments to remedy a change in the Tweed Order to bring about a permanent solution to this anomaly.

## **The Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy**

The River Tweed Commission welcomed the publication of the Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy. The strategy was informed by an advisory group and sets out five priority themes for action to address the pressures which our wild Atlantic salmon face. The strategy recognises the urgency of the situation and the need for Scottish Government, Agencies, the charity and private sectors to work together and coordinate action to prioritise the protection and recovery of Scotland's wild Atlantic salmon populations.

The Clerk has written to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands Mairi Gougeon MSP welcoming the publication of the Wild Salmon Strategy and committing the RTC to aid wherever possible, the development of the practical work to enhance the sustainability of our rivers, through planting riverside trees to mitigate climate-induced warming, accelerating action to improve water quality and quantity, removing barriers to fish migration.

## **STAFFING**

In July, Paul MacLean was appointed on a short term contract to join the RTC enforcement team as a relief Fishery Officer. Mr MacLean will join the team on a full time basis from the beginning of February 2022.

After thirty years of dedicated employment at The Tweed Foundation, attendance at more than 100 Commission meetings and six editions of the Tweed management plan, Dr Ronald Campbell, the senior biologist for The Tweed Foundation retired at the end of June 2021. After 16 years of dedicated work as the Trout and Grayling Biologist, Kenny Galt moved across to the West coast joining the Galloway Fisheries Trust.

Jonathan Archer and Suzanna Taylor joined the Tweed Foundation team on fixed term contracts until the end of 2021.

# HEAD FISHERY OFFICER'S REPORT

## Enforcement

Head Fishery Officer Karl Ferguson and his team worked at full capacity throughout 2021.

During 2020 the enforcement team experienced a significant increase in fishery related incidents. This increase in illegal activity coincided with the outbreak of Covid-19 and the strict Government restrictions which followed. It was a concern that this trend would continue into 2021 but it soon became apparent that with the reduction in Government restrictions and the introduction of vaccines, fishery related incidents returned to levels experienced prior to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The enforcement team have continued to use the incident recording app. The following statistics have been selected from this years reported offences.

## Source of Significant Incidents

*Number of incidents in brackets.*

Location	2021	2020
Tweed (including estuary)	(13) 44.83%	(35) 67.31%
Whiteadder	(13) 44.83%	(0) 00.00%
Gala	(1) 3.45%	(5) 9.62%
Leader	(1) 3.45%	(6) 11.54%
Teviot	(0) 0.00%	(5) 9.62%

## Equipment Used in Incidents

Equipment	2021	2020
Gill Nets	(12) 41.38%	(13) 25%
Spinning Tackle	37.93%	48.08%
Fly Tackle	17.24%	26.92%

## Detection Method of Incidents

Detection Methods	2021	2020
Patrol	20.69%	48.08%
Intelligence	55.17%	32.69%
Call Out	24.14%	21.15%

The Tweed Estuary and the Whiteadder have been the hot spots for illegal activity during 2021, with illegal activity peaking from the middle of June to the end of July, with this coinciding with an increase of salmon and sea-trout entering the catchment. An individual from the Berwick area was charged in relation to illegal netting activity in the Tweed Estuary, pleading guilty in North Tyneside Magistrates Court and was fined a total of £214. Any future offending will result in a harsher penalty.

An individual was also charged after being found in possession of 5 salmon believed to have been taken illegally from the Whiteadder. A report was submitted to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) with the outcome still to be decided.

The most common offence encountered by the enforcement team is fishing without permission; many of the offenders have very little fishing experience and are oblivious to the fact that permission is required. The enforcement team tries to educate individuals in the majority of circumstances where a minor offence has been committed.

The enforcement team closely monitored all the fish passes and caulds through the autumn. Fish movement to the spawning areas was steady throughout October and November. Spawning activity was witnessed in most areas with fish being particularly active on the Ettrick and Yarrow during the second week of November, most spawning activity seemed to be over by the 20th of December. Fishery Officers used the drone to capture spawning activity around the catchment.

On the 12th of August the enforcement team were finally appointed as Water Wardens by Marine Scotland under the provisions of Article 69(1) of the Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006. This appointment has allowed the enforcement team to enforce legislation specific to the Tweed and Eye Protection (Renewal) Order 1991 Variation Order 1994.

Gardo commenced fishing on Monday the 12th of April. The enforcement team made weekly checks of the catch record book which gave some

indication of fish numbers entering the system. Catches started to increase from the beginning of June with the arrival of Sea trout and Summer salmon. Catches remained steady throughout July and August before tailing off at the beginning of September. Gardo started to report the capture of Pink salmon at the end of June and reported further Pink salmon throughout July. Pink salmon were also collected from a number of beats below Coldstream including one from the Till at Twizel Cauld. The furthest upstream reported capture was from Lower Makerstoun. A small number of Pink salmon Kelts were reported during early August from beats below Coldstream. The RTC received a Licence from Marine Scotland to use specified methods to remove Pink Salmon from areas of the Tweed Catchment. An opportunity to action this did not materialise over the summer, so the licence was not used.

Work has continued with Police Scotland and in particular Wildlife Crime Officer Steven Irvine to maintain and improve the working relationship between the RTC and Police Scotland. Thanks largely to the efforts of Steven, an official information sharing agreement between Police Scotland and the RTC is close to being finalised. As an aid to Police Scotland and other rescue services searching for missing persons, the Head Fishery Officer with assistance from the TF team has mapped areas of interest on the Tweed between the Ettrick confluence and the Tweed Estuary. The document is close to completion and will be shared with all local emergency services. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions joint training days could not be accommodated during 2021. It is hoped as restrictions are eased that it may be possible to offer training days in 2022.

Contact was made with Northumbria Police Wildlife Crime Officer Curtis Ritchie, with a view to carrying out similar work with Curtis and his team in the Northumbrian areas of the District.

The Head Fishery Officer continues to represent the RTC on a national enforcement group, which has its secretariat within Fisheries Management Scotland: the group is currently considering ways to improve training and standards within fisheries enforcement.

### **Predation Monitoring**

The Head Fishery Officer under licence from Nature Scot issued nominated marksmen on the Tweed with a licence to control a small number of Cormorants and Goosanders. The current licence is valid from the 1st of October 2021 to the 31st of May 2022. The enforcement team continues to monitor all known Cormorant Roosts on the river. The main roosts are

Lowood, Rutherford, Hendersyde, Lennel, Milne Graden and Horncliffe. The information gathered is extremely important and contributes greatly during the licence application process. The enforcement team also assisted The Tweed Foundation with the Goosander walkover counts throughout 2021.

The introduction of the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protection and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020 led to the withdrawal of seal control licences. Discussion with the Scottish Government about seal licences and their possible use for wider purposes including the conservation of other wild animals (including salmon) did result in a change of policy which would allow an application to be made under certain circumstances providing there was also sufficient evidence. As such, the Clerk and Head Fishery Officer completed all the necessary paperwork to make an application to Marine Scotland for a licence to control a small number of Grey seals within Scottish areas of the River Tweed during 2021. However, the application was not successful. Following conversations with other catchments it appears that all 2021 applications have been rejected by Marine Scotland. The enforcement team have continued to record seal activity to ensure that the RTC can provide sufficient data to support further applications. The low water conditions of 2021 confined most seal activity to beats around Norham and Horncliffe.

### **Paxton Netting**

Unfortunately, at the end of June it was confirmed that due to ill health, the Paxton netting crew were no longer able to offer a service. The Head Fishery Officer was able to put a new crew together supported by members of the enforcement team. After some initial problems with equipment and the landing area, 23 days of netting were completed, resulting in the capture of 67 salmon and 47 Sea Trout. Due to extremely high water temperatures and fish welfare issues, netting at Paxton was suspended from the 19th of July and did not resume until the 10th of August. If RTC had been able to fish this period, catches would likely have been higher. Although rod catches on the river were disappointing through July and August, the enforcement team witnessed good numbers of fish entering the Lower River. However, the number of fresh fish seen entering the system significantly reduced from the beginning of September, which was evidenced by poor catches from the Paxton net after 2nd September.

### **Joint work carried out with the Tweed Foundation**

The Fishery Officer team helped to ensure that the smolt-tagging project on the Tweed continued as planned from February to the end of June. The team

were involved in the acoustic and PIT tagging of smolts, operation of the Gala trap, deployment of receiver's and the downloading of data.

During August and September Fishery Officers worked on a rotation basis to assist assisted the Tweed Foundation with their annual electrofishing programme, with careful management so as not to impact on the teams enforcement responsibilities.

The Head Fishery Officer continued the floy tagging programme, which included a trial of attaching PIT tags to some of the floy tags to see if fish could be detected going through the Gala PIT loop array. Floy tagging effort was greatest during late spring and early autumn. The difficult river conditions of summer led to few fish being tagged during June, July and August. By the end of November 11, fish tagged by boatmen and 3 from Paxton had been recaptured. Tagged fish with and without the PIT tag have also been seen on camera going through the Gala and Ettrick fish passes. In total 459 salmon and Sea Trout were tagged, 357 by boatmen, 94 at Paxton and 8 during the adult sampling project. We would like to thank all the boatmen who participated.

As part of Marine Scotland's national adult salmon sampling project, enforcement officers collected scales, weights and photographs of live and retained salmon between July and September. The information collected was submitted via a phone app to Marine Scotland. Salmon caught at Paxton, Tweedhill, Horncliffe and Ladykirk provided a sample of 109 fish. Marine Scotland were looking for a minimum of 50 samples from the Tweed Catchment for which they provided. We would like to extend special thanks to Boatmen Brian Palmer, Tony Avrill and Mathias Viethen for their assistance during the project. Without their co-operation the sample would have taken much longer to obtain.

During November and December the enforcement team helped the TF collect adult salmon tissues for an isotopic analysis study. Deceased salmon Kelt heads were collected from the Middle and Upper Tweed, Ettrick, Gala and the Whiteadder.

### **Wheelyboats**

The Wheelyboats were used on six occasions during 2021. The enforcement team ensure that the boats are in perfect working order as well as arranging delivery and collection from the users chosen beat. Minor repairs carried out over the winter months will ensure both boats are ready for use during 2022.

## **Other Agencies**

The Head Fishery Officer, along with the Clerk have continued to engage with other agencies such as Police Scotland, Marine Scotland, SEPA, Nature Scot, SBC, EA, Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NIFCA) and the Tweed Forum to maintain and improve working relationships. Most contact over the last 12 months has been virtual, which at times has proved to be very challenging. Hopefully during 2022 engagement will be possible in person.

## **River Works/Pollution**

The enforcement team supported by TF worked with SEPA, SBC, Nature Scot, Network Rail and various sub-contractors throughout the year on a number of in river working projects. Notable works were carried out in the Teviot at Hawick as part of the flood prevention scheme and at the Red Bridge in Gala where underwater repairs were made to protect the bridge abutments. Fish rescues are a requirement for many in river working projects, including the Tweed, Teviot, Leader Water, Gala Water, Holms Water and Willowford Burn during 2021.

Flooding over the 5th/6th of October caused the Leader Water at Lauder Haugh to significantly alter course. The Head Fishery Officer, SEPA, Nature Scot and the Landowner oversaw emergency bank restoration work which was completed over the 26th/27th of October. This work was crucial to try and protect spawning grounds and land downstream. As part of the emergency works the enforcement team carried out a fish rescue saving over 1,000 juvenile salmon, trout, grayling and other fish from isolated areas of water. The works carried out will only be a temporary solution, as it has been accepted by all agencies that a long term solution will have to be developed in early 2022.

The same flood event over the 5th/6th of October caused the Cleekhimin Burn near Carfrae Mill to significantly alter course. The Head Fishery Officer, SEPA, Nature Scot, SBC and the Landowner are currently in discussion on how best to deal with the impact of the flood event. Due to an obstruction in the watercourse, salmon and trout will potentially struggle to reach spawning grounds upstream of Addinston Farm. Removal of the obstruction could not immediately be considered due to the possible resulting impacts to the A697 and the road leading to Longcroft. Engineer's from SBC are currently assessing what the potential impacts could be, as with Lauder Haugh, a long term solution will have to be developed for 2022. The enforcement team rescued over 1,000 juvenile salmon and trout from isolated areas of

the original channel. A small number of adult salmon and trout stuck below the obstruction were manually moved upstream by the enforcement team during October and November.

During 2021 the enforcement team reported and assisted SEPA with a number of pollution incidents and unlicensed river works. The RTC has an excellent working relationship with the local SEPA enforcement team which ensures that complaints are investigated and dealt with as quickly as possible.

An investigation was carried out by SEPA at the end of May following numerous complaints regarding the water clarity of the Tweed. SEPA reported *“This can be explained as the sudden increase in river temperature, combined with intensive sunlight leading to a rapid growth in algae population. This appears to have occurred quickly following a wet and cold May, which would have been a limiting factor on algae growth. Nutrient availability, which had not yet been locked up in algal biomass, has now become available with optimum conditions for growth. The algae can be known as diatom or other single celled algae. They can also have a natural grainy texture. There is not a manmade point source that has led to this natural phenomenon across the River Tweed length”.*

*“The ecologists found no issues at any sites with invertebrates. They did not observe polluted water or sewage fungus (a sign of organic enrichment, if present). At the majority of sites, they did not notice any significant growth of macrophytic algae, which if present, could suggest a severe chronic nutrient issue.”*

The Clerk and Head Fishery Officer continued dialogue with both SEPA and the EA over increasing concerns regarding water abstraction and temperatures during low flow conditions. Water temperatures during the summer months reached critical levels in some areas of the Tweed catchment, at the request of the RTC SEPA brought forward a scheduled freshet in an attempt to reduce temperatures.

# POLICY

## Governance

The Commission met four times in the year with its March meeting preceded by its public AGM, and which was followed by the annual meeting of fishery proprietors at which Proprietorial Commissioners were elected. In view of the ongoing Scottish Government guidance on Covid-19 all other meetings after the AGM were either held virtually or a face to face and virtual hybrid format.

The RTC Committee met six times, including twice with the Trustees of the Tweed Foundation. Joint meetings with The Foundation included a technical review of work programme for its current year and that proposed for 2022, discussion and agreement of the draft annual budgets.

## Election of the RTC Committee

Under the process adopted by Commission in March 2019, the RTC Committee is elected. It comprises the Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner, four Proprietorial Commissioners and four Representative Commissioners.

In addition to the Chief and Deputy Chief Commissioners, the Committee is also elected annually, although the Commission agreed that to provide some continuity Committee members should ideally serve a three-year term.

The Committee elected at the 2021 AGM were:

Chief Commissioner	Mr Hugh Younger	
Deputy Chief Commissioner	Mr Peter Straker-Smith	
Proprietorial Commissioners	Duke of Roxburghe*	Nigel Fenton
	David Platt	Johnny Rutherford
Representative Commissioners	Kenny Annand	Peter Huddleston
	Ronnie Glass	Larry Thomson

\* Andrew Brough resigned from Commission on the 15th January 2021 and was replaced on the Committee by the Duke of Roxburghe.

## **RTC Budget**

The sum raised by assessment in 2021 was held at the 2020 level with the budget having been approved at the March 2021 Commission meeting.

## **River Net Fisheries**

Under the current legislation, the remaining commercial Salmon netting station at Gardo can continue to take Salmon from the 1st April to the 15th September each season.

## **Communication**

The New RTC/TF website went live on the Monday 1st November. The new site combines the RTC and TF information with the most up to date fish catch totals and a specific fundraising section to further aid the Tweed Foundation in there in river work. The monthly updates published by the Tweed Fisheries management team of the RTC and TF, "The River" continued in 2021, alongside Facebook and Twitter posts and the Tweed News site.

[www.rivertweed.org.uk](http://www.rivertweed.org.uk)

## **The Tweed and Eye Fisheries Management Plan**

Commission endorsed the TF work programme for 2022 which had been approved at a joint meeting of the RTC Committee and Tweed Foundation Trustees. The Management plan can be viewed on the new website here.

[www.rivertweed.org.uk](http://www.rivertweed.org.uk)

# ACCOUNTS

## THE RIVER TWEED COMMISSION

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2021

2020		2021
£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
509,653	Statutory assessment	450,914
-	Other income	325
-	Rents received	-
106	Wayleaves	-
174	Interest received	8
<u>509,933</u>		<u>451,247</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Full Time Fishery Officers</b>		
1,428	Boat costs	1,887
1,631	Telecommunication costs	1,244
981	Other equipment maintenance	1,208
136,256	Salaries and other direct staff costs	157,375
21,778	Vehicle costs	25,021
<u>162,073</u>		<u>186,735</u>
<b>Administrative Costs</b>		
39,729	Management and costs	65,740
7,858	Insurance	7,695
2,926	Printing, telephone, stationery, etc.	3,999
4,597	Office costs	4,161
1,017	Interest and charges	276
4,726	Property costs	11,083
1,726	IT costs	3,526
25,746	Website development	2,690
19,736	Professional fees	7,474
18,872	Subscriptions	14,906
937	Meeting costs	444
2,984	Sundries	876
<u>130,854</u>		<u>122,870</u>
<b>Research and Conservation</b>		
151,654	Tweed foundation conservation	141,654
3,371	Other conservation expenses	18,875
<u>155,025</u>		<u>160,529</u>
<b>Depreciation, etc.</b>		
31,356	Depreciation	27,526
(8,200)	Gain on sale of motor vehicles	(4,500)
<u>23,156</u>		<u>23,026</u>
<u>471,108</u>		<u>493,160</u>
38,825	<b>Surplus from Ordinary Activities for the year</b>	(41,913)
53	Corporation tax	64
<u>38,772</u>		<u>(41,977)</u>

**THE RIVER TWEED COMMISSION**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2021**

2020		2021
£	£	£
	<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
-	Intangible assets	-
<u>232,308</u>	Tangible assets	<u>235,887</u>
232,308		235,887
	<b>Current Assets</b>	
38,362	Debtors and prepayments	32,493
<u>270,735</u>	Cash at bank and in hand	<u>183,115</u>
309,097		215,608
	<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	
82,734	Trade creditors and accrued charges	34,790
<u>53</u>	Corporation tax	<u>63</u>
(82,787)		(34,854)
<u>226,310</u>	<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<u>180,754</u>
<u>458,618</u>	<b>Net Assets</b>	<u>416,641</u>
	<b>Capital Account</b>	
419,846	Balance as at 1st January 2020	458,618
<u>38,772</u>	Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<u>(41,977)</u>
<u>458,618</u>		<u>416,641</u>

**EXTRACT FROM THE 2021 ACCOUNTS**

The financial information set out on these pages has been extracted from the RTC's full audited accounts on which the auditors, Rennie Welch, reported without qualification.

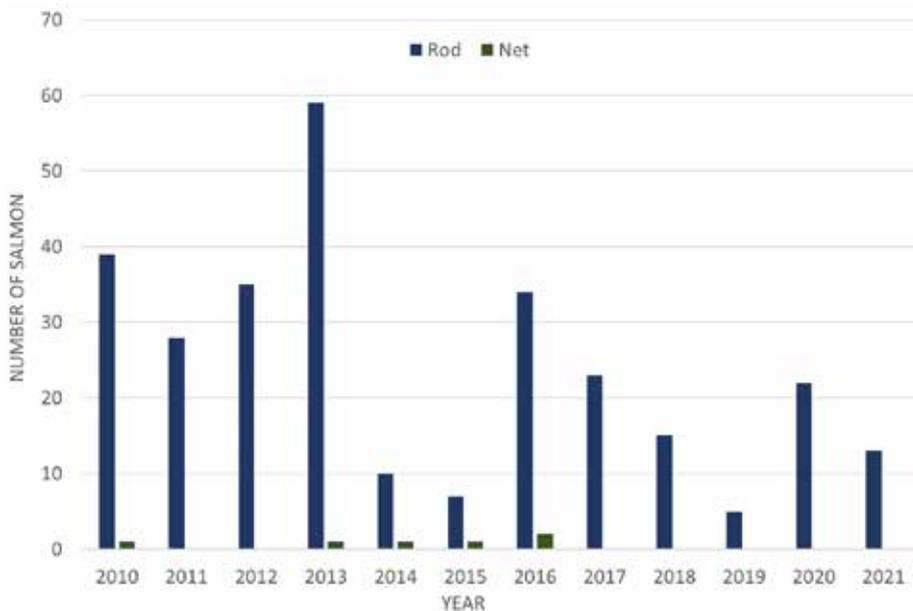
Copies of the full audited accounts are available on request.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

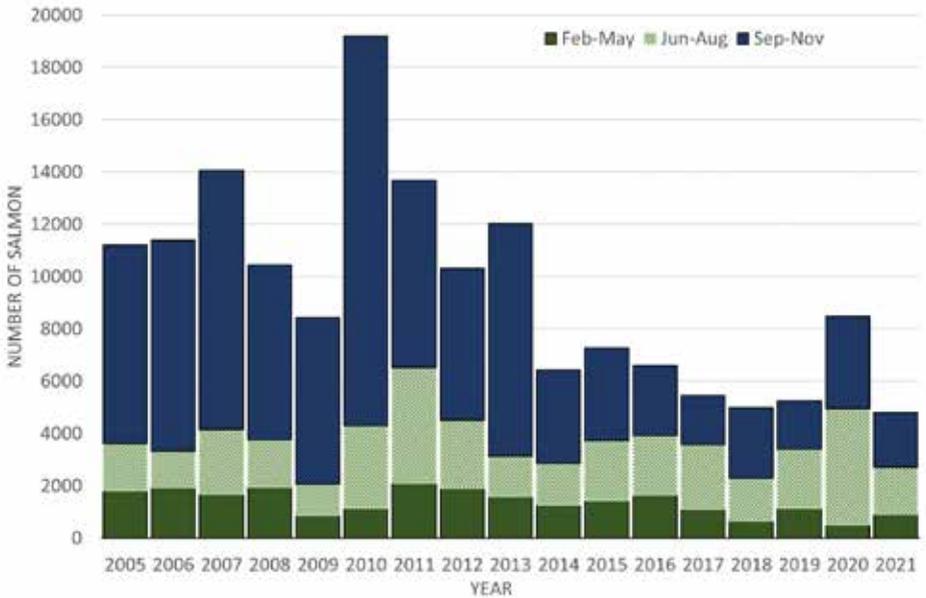
### Salmon of 25lbs and Over

Rod fishery	Weight (lbs)
Newbiggin	25
Tillmouth	25
Upper Lees	25
Upper North Wark	28
Birgham Dub	28
Sprouston	25
Makerstoun	26
Drygrange	25, 27
Fairnilee	34
The Yair	28
Upper Caberston	29, 25, 27



## APPENDIX II

### Spring, Summer and Autumn rod Salmon catches below Ettrickmouth



## APPENDIX III

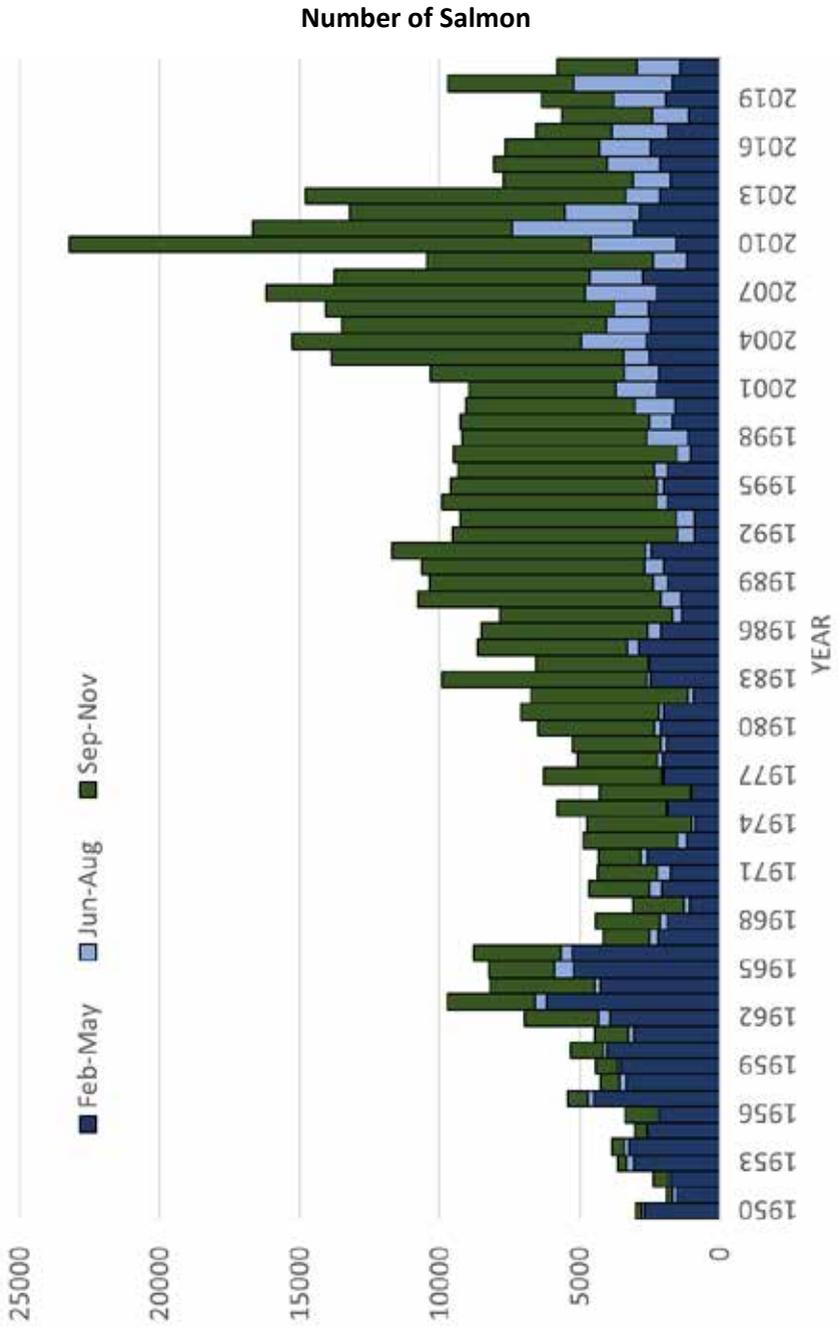
### 2021 Salmon Rod catch by month

MONTH	Upper Tweed	Middle Tweed	Lower Tweed	Whiteadder	Till	Teviot	Ettrick
February	0	5	8	1	0	4	0
March	0	46	127	13	2	12	0
April	0	65	176	9	4	0	0
May	2	225	271	71	17	16	0
June	0	120	207	7	7	0	1
July	3	47	268	2	14	0	0
August	10	217	925	18	28	6	0
September	19	158	708	8	4	11	1
October	383	464	573	37	18	72	34
November	176	123	56	1	11	40	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>1470</b>	<b>3319</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>47</b>
							<b>5862</b>

### 2021 Sea Trout Rod catch by month

MONTH	Upper Tweed	Middle Tweed	Lower Tweed	Whiteadder	Till	Teviot	Ettrick
February	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
March	0	0	9	0	0	2	0
April	1	2	12	3	3	1	0
May	2	9	58	2	94	1	0
June	5	20	60	2	147	2	0
July	2	22	81	0	99	5	0
August	12	66	90	3	33	2	0
September	16	42	40	0	4	4	0
October	95	60	64	1	6	36	0
November	46	31	16	0	6	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0</b>
							<b>1328</b>

# APPENDIX IV



## APPENDIX V

### TWEED COMMISSION MEMBERS

As at 31 December 2021

Tweed Committee: see asterisk\* below. Appointed by Local Councils.

<b>BERWICKSHIRE (9)</b>
M. Crozier (Coldstream)
J. Fairgrieve (Gordon)
Dr D. Gray
P. J. Huddleston *
M. Keysell
L. Thomson *
F. Turnbull
B. Turner (Whiteadder)
P. Neate * (resigned Sept. 21)

<b>ROXBURGH (9)</b>
I. Davis
R. Glass * (Kelso)
N. S. Highmore
F. Wight (Hawick)
J. M. Reddin
T. W. Reid
J. T. Scott
L. Law (Jedforest)
Vacancy (Club)

<b>TWEEDALE (5)</b>
K. D. Annand *
D. G. Fyfe
M. W. Ireland
E. Robertson
M. Stuart (Peebles)

<b>ETTRICK &amp; LAUDERDALE (11)</b>
R. Cockburn (Gala)
S. Emmerson
J. Harvey (St Boswells)
C. R. Scott
J. P. H. Scott
W. A. Virtue
H. P. Younger *
J. Nicol (Selkirk)
Vacancy (Club)
Vacancy (Club)
Vacancy (Club)

<b>NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL (9)</b>
J. Cameron (Lady Kirk and Norham)
P. Cowe (Berwick)
G. Hill
A. H. Murray
G. Renner-Thomson
G. Roughead
R. Tebay (Chatton)
Vacancy
Vacancy (Club)

## APPENDIX V (Cont.)

### ELECTED BY PROPRIETORS As at 31st December 2021

M. Baker	Tillmouth
C. K. Balfour	Birgham Lower
P. A. Baxendale	Sprouston
Lord Biddulph	Makerstoun
Edward Morris	Middle Ettrick
J. McK. Brownlie	Drygrange
B. Burbridge	Lothian Estates
C. Crawford	Middle Pavilion
M. Cuddigan	Ford & Etal
D. J. Dobie	The Retreat
A. Douglas-Home	Lees Upper
G. Edgar	Selkirk Burgh
N. Fenton *	Hendersyde
G. Conchie	Birgham Dub
J. R. Gardiner	Caddonfoot
E. R. T. Harris	Ewart
Lord Edward Innes-Ker	Dryburgh Upper
F. G. Jennings	Boleside
J. H. Lovett	Lower North Wark
J. McCorquodale	Maxton
C. A. Matheson	Tweedhill
T. P. Metcalfe	Crown Estate Fisheries
J. Miller	Upper Caberston
R. J. Onslow	Tweedmill
P. Pitchford	Bemersyde
D. Platt *	Milne Graden
J. Pringle	The Nest
The Duke of Roxburghe *	Floors
J. C. Rutherford *	Rutherford

## APPENDIX V (Cont.)

### ELECTED BY PROPRIETORS As at 31st December 2021

J. G. Scott	Ancrum
R. D. Smyly	Sunderland Hall
P. D. Straker-Smith *	Carham
W. Straker-Smith	Middle Birgham
The Duke of Sutherland	Mertoun
D. Theaker	Mounthooly
N. Thompson	Cornhill
R. Trotter	Horncliffe
Dr N. Walters	Eckford

## APPENDIX VI

### RTC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES At the end of December 2021

<b>Chief Commissioner</b>	H. P. Younger
<b>Deputy Chief Commissioner:</b>	P. D. Straker-Smith
<b>Clerk:</b>	J. Stewart
<b>Executive Assistant:</b>	A. Gorrie
<b>Acting Treasurer:</b>	P. D. Straker-Smith
<b>Office:</b>	The North Court Drygrange Steading Melrose Roxburghshire TD6 9DJ Tel: (01896) 848294 Fax: (01896) 848277 Email: <a href="mailto:enquires@rtc.org.uk">enquires@rtc.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rtc.co.uk">www.rtc.co.uk</a>
<b>Head Fishery Officer / Superintendent of Bailiffs</b>	K. Ferguson Mobile: 07884 230045
<b>Fishery Officers / Water Bailiffs:</b>	A. Davison Mobile: 07884 230048 K.G. Graham Mobile: 07884 230047 T.A. Heard Mobile: 07884 230046

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The River Tweed Commission is charged under The Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006 with the general preservation and increase of Salmon, Sea Trout, Brown Trout and other freshwater fish in the River Tweed and its Tributaries, and in particular with the regulation of fisheries, the removal of nuisances and obstructions and the prevention of illegal fishing. The area of jurisdiction extends eight kilometres out to sea and includes the coastline between Cockburnspath and Holy Island. Powers are granted to the Commission by this Order in Council made in accordance with an Act of Parliament to help fulfil these duties.

The Governing body is the Commission which consists of 43 members appointed by Local Authorities (23 from Local Angling Clubs and 20 from other interests), and 38 members elected by the Proprietors of the River from their number. An annual assessment is levied on the owners of all registered fisheries.

The Commission only has statutory duties and powers relating to fish, although this inevitably necessitates an interest in many other aspects of Tweed management. The statutory responsibilities for these other areas are, however, held by other organisations, with whom we maintain close links; on the English side these are the Environment Agency, Natural England, Northumbrian Water and Northumbria Police and, in Scotland, Marine Scotland, Marine Scotland Science, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), NatureScot, Scottish Water and Police Scotland.

The Tweed is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Salmon and three species of Lamprey; known primarily as a Salmon river, it also has important Sea-trout, Trout and Grayling fisheries, as well as some coarse fisheries. It has approximately 18% of Scotland's Salmon spawning area. Tweed fisheries are now mostly rod fisheries with 26% of the Salmon being caught in England and 74% in Scotland; the Sea Trout rod catch is distributed evenly between England and Scotland. The RTC has responsibility for the management of these and all other species of fish in both the English and Scottish parts of the Tweed system.

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

**River Tweed Commission**

[www.rtc.org.uk](http://www.rtc.org.uk)

**River Tweed News**

[www.rivertweed.org.uk](http://www.rivertweed.org.uk)

**The Tweed Foundation**

[www.tweedfoundation.org.uk](http://www.tweedfoundation.org.uk)

**The Tweed Foundation Facebook Page**

[www.facebook.com/TheTweedFoundation/](http://www.facebook.com/TheTweedFoundation/)

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## **Other Organisations**

**Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

**Environment Agency**

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Fisheries Management Scotland**

[fms.scot](http://fms.scot)

**FishPal**

[www.fishpal.com](http://www.fishpal.com)

**Natural England**

[www.naturalengland.gov.uk](http://www.naturalengland.gov.uk)

## **Other Organisations (Cont.)**

### **Northumberland County Council**

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

### **Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NIFCA)**

[www.nifca.gov.uk](http://www.nifca.gov.uk)

### **Northumbrian Water**

[www.nwg.co.uk](http://www.nwg.co.uk)

### **Scottish Borders Council**

[www.scotborders.gov.uk](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk)

### **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)**

[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

### **NatureScot**

[www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)

### **Scottish Water**

[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

### **The Scottish Government, Marine Scotland Science**

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/salmon-trout-coarse](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/salmon-trout-coarse)

### **Tweedbeats**

[www.tweedbeats.com](http://www.tweedbeats.com)

### **Tweed Forum**

[www.tweedforum.org](http://www.tweedforum.org)

## GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS

### KEEP GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS (Gs) OUT OF *Tweed*

*Gyrodactylus salaris* (Gs) is an extremely dangerous parasite and the RTC is taking most careful steps to ensure that it does not enter the Tweed fishery. As such, we have adopted rigorous biosecurity procedures, which we are sure you will support.

#### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO**

In order to minimize the risk of spreading *Gyrodactylus salaris* to Scotland, it is imperative that you clean and treat your equipment before fishing on Tweed in one of the following ways **if** the equipment has been used outside Britain and Ireland in the preceding seven days:

- a) Dry at a minimum temperature of 20°C for at least 2 days, OR
- b) Heat for at least one hour at a temperature above 60°C, OR
- c) Immerse in a suitable solution. Virkon (at 1% solution); Wescodyne (at 1%); a 3% solution of common salt (Sodium Chloride), or a 0.2% solution of Sodium Hydroxide, OR
- d) Deep freeze for at least one day.

Gs has been shown to survive away from a live fish host for 5-7 days at ambient river temperatures. Equipment or product that has been kept cool and damp and is transferred rapidly (within one week) may present high levels of risk.

This notorious parasite has destroyed the Salmon stocks of over 20 rivers in Norway. It is also indigenous to, or has been spread to, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal - largely through fish-farm movements of Rainbow-trout.

**If this parasite gets into Tweed it means the absolute end of our Salmon.**