



2020

**ANNUAL REPORT
&
ACCOUNTS**

River Tweed Commission
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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

2020 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

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CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

The 2020 fishing season on the Tweed was memorable for many reasons, some good and some bad. To deal firstly with the bad we had to come to terms with the shutting of the entire river to angling on 24th March in consequence of the Covid-19 lockdown. This was at the point that the river was settling down after weeks of high water and fresh fish were being seen. As Dr Ronald Campbell observed in one of the Tweed newsletters the river has probably not had such a total absence of angling in many hundreds of years (if not a millennium!). Fishing did resume in England on the 13th May and in Scotland on the 29th May but the “gap” makes it difficult to fit the results of the season into a full pattern.

The good news is that fishing conditions were largely benign for the main part of the remainder of the season and even more so that the Tweed enjoyed a sustained run of summer salmon and sea trout which restored the morale of those fishers who were fortunate enough to access the river whilst travel / accommodation restrictions were in force. The total rod catch of 9,614 represented a 67% increase on the previous year with the months of June, July, August and September being particularly productive. The sea trout catch was still good at 1872 albeit that this was slightly down from the previous year's figure.

Whilst the increase in summer catches is encouraging, concerns remain about the vulnerability of the Spring run. A year ago I expressed the hope that the Scottish Government would produce a Conservation Order to protect the Spring salmon beyond 31st March, but unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic and other issues have delayed progress. We are continuing our discussions with the Scottish Government with a view finally to resolving the unsatisfactory situation where we are required to apply each year for consent to fish by spinning during the closed time from 15th February to the 31st of March.

The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had an effect in slowing the speed of research into the reasons for the decline in the salmon catches throughout Scotland. Fortunately, the Tweed Foundation was able to continue its smolt projects with a view to better understanding the effect of predation in the river. These studies will continue into 2021 in part to establish the effect of the acoustic tags on the mortality of the smolts. As an indication of the perils faced by smolts, of the 1,000 that were PIT tagged in 2019, only 8 returned to the Gala Water as grilse during 2020. The real test however will be the number from the cohort of 2019 that return as adult salmon

in 2021. The number of salmon that returned to the Gala was certainly very healthy in 2020. The fish counter recorded 2544 fish, more than doubling the number from the previous year's figure.

Other studies on in river predation could not be advanced during 2020 and whilst the Covid-19 restrictions remain in place it may not be possible to pursue these in 2021.

The RTC's budget for 2020 was fixed on the basis of no increase in the assessment although it did provide for additional sums being awarded to the Tweed Foundation to assist smolt tracking. RTC ended the year with a small surplus which was in part due to the restrictions on its activities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the year there have been a number of staff changes in RTC. Fay Hieatt left in March after 26 years of loyal and efficient service, latterly as Clerk to RTC and Director of the Tweed Foundation. Alison Gorrie then joined us as Executive Assistant in April and Jamie Stewart as our new Clerk in October. They have both embraced the challenges facing the RTC and the Tweed Foundation and are already looking forward to the time when we can re-open Drygrange and meet people in person.

All in all it has been a very challenging year, but we have ended it with encouraging catches and a rejuvenated management team. My thanks go to the staff of both the RTC and the Tweed Foundation for their huge commitment and enthusiasm during a very difficult but rewarding period.

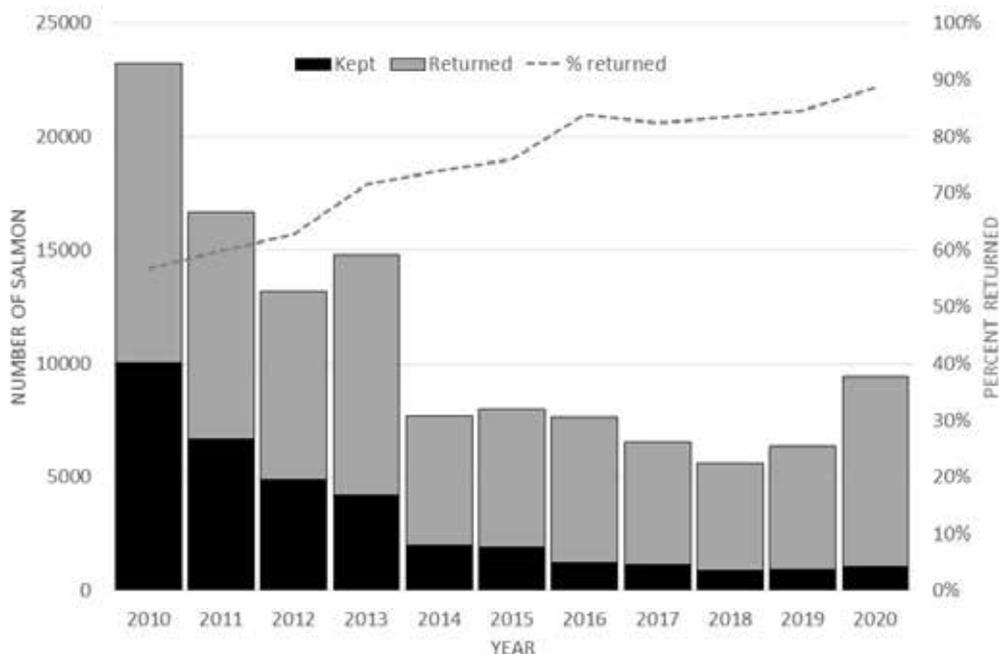
H P Younger

FISH CATCHES

Salmon

The 2020 Tweed salmon rod catch of 9,614 was the highest since 2013 (14,853) with a noticeable increase in the importance of the Summer months: in 2013 just 11% of the annual catch was taken in June, July and August, but in 2020, 49% of the total was taken in Summer. The total Salmon catch was 10,352 with 738 caught in nets. 89% of the rod catch was returned, the highest percentage on record.

Salmon rod catches since 2010



The importance of the October and November catch conversely decreased: in 2013 this made up 56% of the annual total, in 2020 it contributed only 20%. Angling effort for much of the season was reduced by the Covid-19 restrictions. These stopped all angling on the 24th March till the 13th May in England (though no overnight stays were then allowed) and the 29th May in Scotland. Tourist facilities re-opened on the 15th July and boat angling resumed in Scotland on the 14th August but some travel restrictions were re-imposed in November.

Spring catches were the most affected, with the whole of April unfished anywhere on the river. However, some of the English beats that were able to fish for half of May caught more salmon than they had caught for the whole of that month since 1970 and others matched their usual May catches despite their reduced fishing effort. These results show that if May had been fished normally, it would have made a significant contribution to the annual total, probably taking it to over 10,000 fish.

The total caught on the upper Tweed before the 1st of September in 2020 was 75 salmon, not a great number, but still the highest total taken in Summer on the upper river since 1970. The trend of the last few years for more salmon to be caught before the first of September than after continued, a pattern not seen since the 1960s.

After an unsettled period at the start, fishing conditions were generally good over the remaining season, with some spates in Summer. It was very fortunate that the problems caused by the Covid-19 restrictions were not compounded by a dry Summer.

Sea-trout

The Sea-trout trout rod catch at 1,880 was down from 2019 (2,176) but well up on the 2018 total of 817. It was the 9th best recorded since 1970 though the reduced fishing effort in May will have had an effect on the total. The Till's catch of 374 was slightly better than its five year average of 351 but would have been higher with full fishing effort in April and May. Total catch of 2,364 with 492 caught by nets.

Other Fresh Water Fish

The 2020 electro-fishing monitoring programme for juvenile Salmon and Trout focussed on the Whiteadder, Eden, Leet and Eye Water. The results confirm previous findings that Salmon spawning in the Eye Water is sporadic, with no evidence of a self-sustaining population. Juvenile Salmon are largely absent from the Leet Water, in part due to its small size. Numbers of Salmon in the Eden Water dropped quite significantly from 2017, suggesting a lack of spawning fish last year. For the Whiteadder catchment, numbers continue to be very high in the main channel upstream of Chirnside to the reservoir and in the upper parts of the Blackadder upstream of Fogo to Greenlawdean. Further details of the results (including Trout) can be found at arccg.is/1O8jn5.

Brown Trout catch log book returns were around 20% down on previous seasons. Whilst this may reflect the closure of the river until late May, it may also reflect the limitations put on ticket sales by some Angling Associations in light of the COVID-19-restrictions.

The catch rates for Brown Trout over 25cm (10") from the Upper, Middle and Lower Tweed in late May were amongst the highest on record, whilst the catch rates for June were the highest on record. The May and June catches possibly benefitted from the river being rested during April and much of May, and from reduced angling pressure in some areas. However, the catch rate for Brown trout between 25cm (10") and 40cm (16") was well above the ten-year average. In contrast, catches of bigger and smaller trout remained relatively close to the ten-year average. This indicates a higher abundance of 25-40cm Brown trout than would normally be the case and the likelihood that the catches in the first half of the Brown trout season would have been above average if the 2020 season had proceeded as normal.

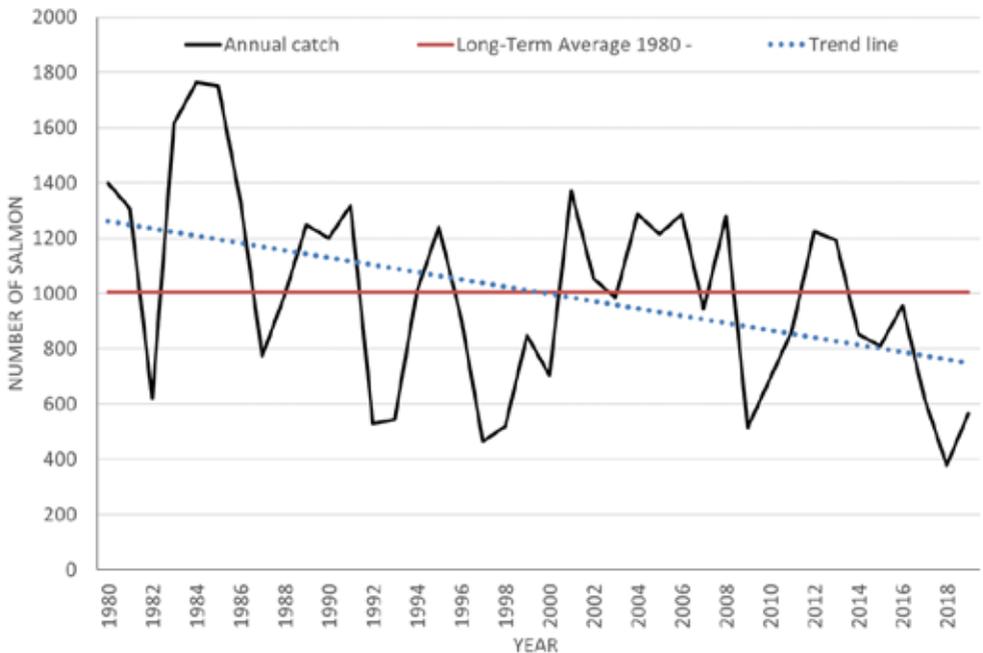
In contrast to May and June, the catches were much more variable between different areas in July, and were generally around or below average during August and September. Different catch trends are often observed between the first and second half of the season as the catch rate of Brown trout over 35cm (14") tends to drop off markedly after the end of June.

Grayling catches were also well above average during 2020, particularly on the River Teviot which experienced the highest catch rates since the current catch recording scheme began in 2006. The good catches were mostly as a result of a very strong one-year-old year class (2019's fry) which has experienced very good survival over the winter of 2019/2020.

SPRING SALMON CONSERVATION

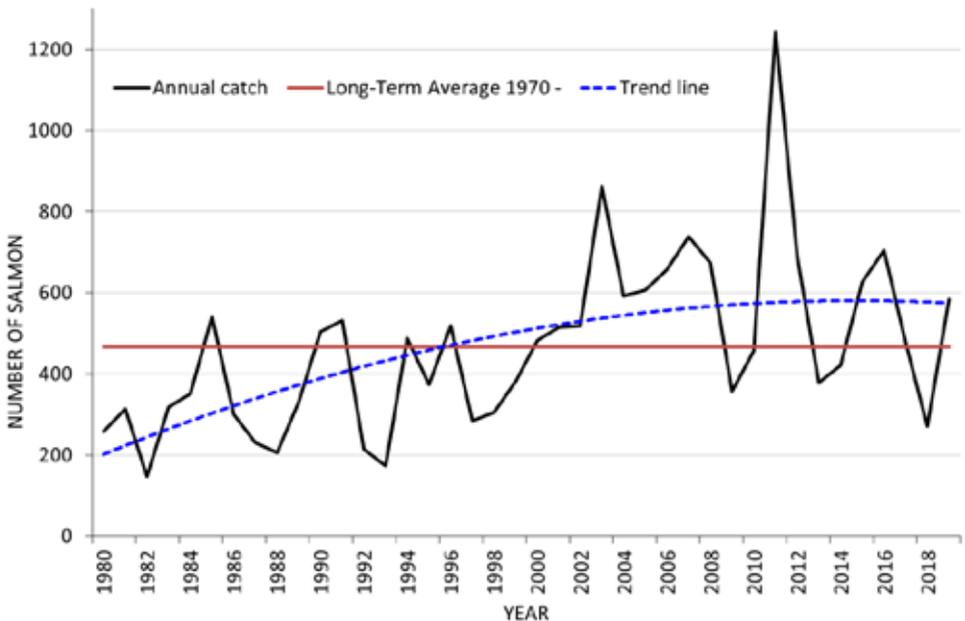
As there was little fishing effort in February and March due to high water and no fishing in April at all due to Covid-19 restrictions, there is effectively no new data for the early part of the season, which is the “pure” Spring Salmon time, when there are only Springers (and kelts) in the river. Over the period 1980-2019 though, the trend for this part of the season has been one of straightforward decline.

February, March, April 1980-2019



May is a more mixed month, when the first Summer Salmon start coming in, so its catches reflect the numbers of both Spring and Summer fish in the river. Again, there is no new data from 2020 as there was no fishing for all but two days of the month in Scotland, though the English beats could start fishing from the 13th. The long-term trend for the month is quite different from that of February to April, showing an upward trend to around 2002 and then a levelling off. The June trend is more strongly upward, reflecting the predominance of Summer fish which are increasing in numbers.

May 1980 to 2019



The 2020 total to the 30th June was 1,678 salmon, down from 1,924 in 2019 but still higher than the totals for 2018 (1,076) and 2009 (1,195). The June catch alone, however, was 1,143, the highest recorded for the month since 1970 – June is the month that sees the last Spring Salmon entering the river and it has the first proper Grilse run coming in towards its end. The middle river catch total to the end of June was just 279, compared to a lower river total of 1,357, the great difference being due

to its high June catch. On the middle river there were only 10 fish caught in May, compared to 148 in 2019. This lower river total was the 8th best since 1970. The tributaries caught only 38 fish before the end of June, compared to a ten-year average of 188. However, the upper Tweed catch of four, all in June, almost matched its ten-year average of 4.5.

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 2019 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 running-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 2020.

Staffing

After 26 years working for RTC and The Tweed Foundation, first as Administrator, then as Clerk/Director, Fay Hieatt left in March 2020. The RTC Treasurer Gail Hughes also stepped down at the end of the year and was replaced on an interim basis by P D Straker Smith, the Deputy Chief Commissioner

In April, Alison Gorrie was appointed as Executive Assistant for the River Tweed Commission and the Tweed Foundation to assist with the general operations of both organisations. With a background in business administration, finance and corporate services. Alison is a very welcome addition to the team.

In October Jamie Stewart was appointed as the new Clerk to the River Tweed Commission and Director of the Tweed Foundation. Jamie brings over 40 years of practical and management experience in the field of conservation, land and species management combined with experience working with elected members at both Westminster and Holyrood and also with regional government and non-governmental agencies.

Head Fishery Officer's Report 2020

Enforcement

Head Fishery Officer Karl Ferguson and his team worked throughout the season, including the peak of lockdown due to the Covid-19 outbreak. One Fishery Officer was required to shield and was placed on furlough at the start of the outbreak returning to work with the team at the end of July. Reserve Fishery Officers also assisted the team when needed throughout the year.

During the strict lockdown period of April and May, most people complied with the government restrictions with the team only having to respond to minor incidents around the catchment. As restrictions started to be relaxed on both sides of the border illegal fishing activity significantly increased around the catchment. With incidents reported from all over, the team struggled at times to keep up. This was a trend experienced throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK.

In preparation for the 2020 season, the enforcement team adopted an enforcement-recording app that had been developed by the River Dee enforcement team. The app, which is on all enforcement officer phones, can be used to record information relating to offences and reports from around the catchment. Once an officer submits a report it is stored in a main database, which can then be used to analyse the data. The following statistics from 2020 reported offences have been populated as an example of how some of the information is broken down.

SOURCE OF SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS		
	Number of Incidents	%
Tweed (including estuary)	35	67.31
Leader	6	11.54
Teviot	5	9.62
Gala	5	9.62
Coast	1	1.92

DETECTION METHOD OF INCIDENTS	
	%
Patrol	48.08
Intel	32.69
Call out	21.15

EQUIPMENT USED IN INCIDENTS	
	%
Spinning Tackle	48.08
Fly tackle	26.92
Gill Nets (13)	25.00

The most common illegal activity encountered by the team during 2020 was people fishing without permission. This became a major issue during the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions. This was partly down to the lack of outlets being open to obtain permissions but also people just being desperate to get out of the house. Many of the offenders had very little fishing experience and were oblivious to the fact that they required permission to fish. The enforcement team tries to educate rather than charge in many of these circumstances. Seven individuals were reported to the Procurator Fiscals Office in Scotland for various poaching offences, while others were dealt with by verbal or written warning from the RTC.

Reports and signs of illegal netting activity in the Tweed Estuary began to increase towards the end of May, this coincided with large numbers of Salmon and Sea trout entering the system on each tide. The enforcement team seized thirteen Gill nets, 10 Salmon and 1 Sea Trout during 2020. Four persons were charged in connection with the illegal netting; they subsequently appeared in Bedlington Magistrates Court in September. Each was fined just under £400 and banned from Hallowstell Beach for 2 years; this was a significant and welcome improvement on previous sentences.

The RTC equipped all the enforcement team with Thermal imaging binoculars during 2020; they have proved to be invaluable when carrying out night operations. The events taking place in darkness can now be recorded and used as supporting evidence.

Historically the enforcement team has always been extremely busy in the Upper Tweed towards the back end of the season, preventing the deliberate foul hooking of Salmon and Sea trout as they make their way to spawn. This activity is clearly decreasing with very few reports received or witnessed, only one person being reported to the Fiscal's office for this offence during 2020.

Police Scotland

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. Unfortunately, the planned joint training days have not been able to take place this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, though we hope to resume with this training as soon as restrictions are lifted. PC Irvine was able to join the team on two action days this year targeting areas in the middle and upper Tweed and is hoping to arrange similar days during 2021. Throughout the year Officers from Police Scotland have assisted the RTC during a number of incidents.

Northumbria Police assisted Fishery Officers (FOs) on the English side of the district, communication has also improved with the community Police Officers in the Berwick area.

Sea Boat

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions we were not able to use the sea-boat as much as we had hoped during 2020. When restrictions were lifted, a small number of coastal patrols were carried out during August and early September. The on-board

GPS navigation system, which was upgraded in 2019, is working well; having a visible depth reading is allowing us to work close to shore in a much safer manner.

Joint work carried out with The Tweed Foundation

Despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19, the Fishery Officer team helped to ensure that the smolt-tagging project on the Tweed continued as planned from March to the end of June. The team were involved in the tagging of smolts, operation of the Gala trap and the downloading of data during the smolt migration.

Fishery Officers working on a rotation basis assisted the Tweed Foundation with their electrofishing programme during August and September. Under normal circumstances Fishery Officers would help with this survey work from the beginning of July but due to the increase in illegal fishing activity resources were prioritised towards enforcement duties. The availability of Fishery Officers to assist the TF team is continually reviewed depending on the current circumstances and priorities within the catchment.

Using the Thermal Imaging Binoculars, the team can now carry out Piscivorous bird counts under the cover of darkness allowing more reliable counting with video footage also taken. The team also carry out regular counts on the tidal section of the Lower River between the Chain Bridge (Paxton) and the estuary.

During 2020 a licence was granted by Marine Scotland to control a small number of Grey Seals within the Scottish part of the River Tweed. Over the course of the licence period which expired at the end of August, there was no requirement or request from any beat to remove a problem seal. As part of the licence requirements regular reports had to be made to Marine Scotland updating them on any action taken during the licenced period.

The introduction of the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protection and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020 led to the withdrawal of seal control licences. Discussions are continuing with the Scottish Government about seal licences and their possible use for wider purposes including the conservation of other wild animals (including salmon).

The Head Fishery Officer worked closely with boatman and beats who participated in the Floy Tagging project throughout the season. A full report will be published on

the RTC website. The Project was fairly successful during 2020 despite the disruption caused by Covid-19. It is proposed that the project will continue in 2021.

Paxton Netting

For the last few years the enforcement team has been overseeing an exploitation study by the Tweed Foundation at Paxton on selected days between May and September. During 2020 amid concerns brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak it was decided that the scheduled netting programme would not take place. It is hoped netting will resume during the 2021 season.

River Works

River works applications and monitoring have kept the enforcement team busy throughout the summer months as Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and other agencies sought to catch up with postponed works after lockdown. The RTC continues to have a good relationship with the local SEPA office which helps to ensure that most in-river working is carried out within the required regulations.

During 2020 the enforcement team assisted SEPA with three incidents of illegal gravel extraction and two serious pollution incidents

Other Agencies

The Head Fishery Officer, along with the Clerk have continued to maintain links and improve relationships with other agencies such as Police Scotland, Marine Scotland, SEPA, the Environment Agency (EA), Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NIFCA) and the Tweed Forum. Most contact during 2020 has been virtual, hopefully at some point during 2021 meetings will be able to take place in person.

The Head Fishery Officer continues to be part of 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.

The Head Fishery Officer is also working closely with stakeholders involved in the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme. Work on this is expected to be significantly increased during 2021.

Wheelyboats

Neither of the Wheelyboats were used during 2020. Repairs carried out at the end of 2019 by the enforcement team mean both boats are ready for use during 2021 if Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Succession Planning

RTC has put in place a process of identifying and developing potential future Fishery Officers. New recruits will be required to shadow current Fishery Officers in order for them to gain as much “historic insight” and transfer of knowledge as possible

PREDATION

Avian Predation

With Covid-19 lockdown restrictions during the Spring period, the annual counts of Goosanders and Cormorants carried out in April and May were conducted by Fishery Officers from vehicles. The January and October counts were carried out as normal, with different sections of river being walked by fishery officers, Tweed Foundation staff and volunteers at the same time. All of the monthly totals for Goosanders were below average, particularly in January and October. The October total of 101 Goosanders in the main river from the Ettrick confluence down to Berwick was a third of the long term average. It is not known whether this reflects a wider population decline or simply changes in migratory behaviour. After a few years of above average numbers, the Cormorant population has returned to baseline levels.

The Head Fishery Officer managed the scaring and shooting of piscivorous birds during the smolt migration. This was made more challenging than usual as the Tweed was in Covid-19 lockdown for most of this period. A small sample of Goosander and Cormorant bodies were retained for future analysis. A report for this licence period, which expired at the end of May, was completed and sent to NatureScot (previously SNH). In September, an application was submitted for a new piscivorous bird control licence. The RTC received this in October and it will run to the end of May 2021. The Head Fishery Officer will again manage the licence and those nominated to carry out scaring and shooting.

Fishery Officers are continuing to regularly monitor cormorant numbers on roosting sites and extra counts of both bird species are carried out during the smolt run in the tidal areas of the District.

A preliminary report on Goosander and Cormorant diet from samples collected in Spring 2019 has been produced for Marine Scotland Science by The Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). There have been significant delays in completing this analysis due to Covid-19 restrictions and the preliminary results cannot be distributed until a final report is published.

The annual licence for mitigating economic damage by avian predators held by the RTC continued from October 2019 through to May 2020 and has been reissued for the same months from 2020 / 2021.

Avian Predator Tracking

After several years of delays, a tender application for Scottish Government funding has been made to tag and track 20 Goosanders on the Tweed, with project partners including CEH, The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT). Subject to Covid-19 restrictions, the tracking work will be carried out in Spring 2021, with the results providing the first insight into the migratory behaviour of Goosanders.

2020 Salmon Smolt Studies

With support from the RTC, a Tweed smolt tracking study was set up by The Tweed Foundation in 2019 to investigate in-river smolt survival and assess the management options available. Building on the preliminary study carried out in 2019, 240 smolts were tagged in 2020 using the same type of tags and with a more extensive monitoring network of receivers. Tracking was again carried out during a prolonged period of low water.

For the main river monitoring, 155 fish were detected at Galafoot (the start of the study section) and 66 were later detected at the last receiver in Berwick, which represents an overall loss of 57.4% of tagged fish, compared to 59% in 2019. The geographical distribution of losses and rate of loss was also similar to 2019, with higher losses detected in the Middle Tweed compared to the Lower Tweed.

Also similar to 2019, but with a much larger and more representative sample size (231 fish), high losses of tagged fish were detected in the lower Gala Water between the Skinworks cauld and Galafoot (3.4 km) before fish entered the main river. Some 32% of fish caught electro-fishing and tagged upstream of the smolt trap and 28% of fish tagged at the fish trap at the cauld were not traced beyond this section. There is

no obvious explanation for these results as there are no known water quality issues in this area and predator numbers (in particular Goosanders, Herons or Otters) are relatively low. The similar results in 2019 and 2020 indicate that there are consistent factors influencing smolt survival under low water conditions but the challenge still remains to understand the different factors causing these losses.

A Scottish Government funded study focussing on the Tweed is planned to investigate whether the tag size or tagging process is influencing the results, which is an essential requirement for concluding whether the losses of tagged fish are representative of the natural population.

POLICY

Governance

The Commission met three 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 Covid-19 pandemic the June Commission meeting was cancelled and all other meetings after the AGM were either held by telephone conference or virtually.

The RTC Committee met eight times, including three times with the Trustees of the Tweed Foundation. Joint meetings with The Foundation included a review of work for its current year and that proposed for 2021, discussion and agreement of the draft annual budgets (after which the RTC budget was then proposed to Commission).

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 2020 AGM were:

Chief Commissioner	Hugh P Younger	
Deputy Chief Commissioner	Peter Straker-Smith	
Proprietorial Commissioners	Andrew Brough	Nigel Fenton
	David Platt	Johnny Rutherford
Representative Commissioners	Kenny Annand	Ronnie Glass
	Peter Huddleston	Larry Thomson

RTC Budget

The sum to be raised by the Assessment in 2020 was held at the 2019 level with the budget having been approved at the March 2020 Commission meeting. This projected a £25,000 deficit. In the event the year ended with a £38,772 surplus owing to a number of savings principally arising from the Covid-19 lockdown.

River Net Fisheries

RTC continues to work with Marine Scotland to agree on the provision of additional protection for Spring Salmon. There is now some momentum by Marine Scotland to deliver a Spring Conservation Order on Tweed, in place of a revised Annual Close Time, which would have the effect of protecting Spring Salmon further, an approach long advocated by the RTC. Such an Order would allow Sea-trout to be taken during an extended close season for salmon and provide more flexibility should stocks improve at some future point. The RTC will be working with Marine Scotland to take this forward.

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

Salmon and Sea-trout Protection Byelaws

The Environment Agency published a report outlining the results of a public consultation on extending the Sea-trout netting season in Yorkshire and the North East. In recognition that factors other than exploitation in net fisheries impact upon salmon and sea trout stocks, and that marine survival is one of the most important of these factors, the EA are working with partners to address all factors affecting salmon and sea trout stocks under the Salmon Five Point Approach, including water quality, fish habitat and access improvements, as well as working to better control levels of exploitation. The following recommendations are made:

1. The current sea trout netting season dates in each district in the Yorkshire and North East net fishery should be maintained, as defined by the 2018 national salmon and sea trout protection byelaws.
2. The management of the beach net fishery should be formally reviewed, including the potential to extend or restore the netting season for sea trout, as part of developing a new Net Limitation Order, on or before December 2022.

Communication

The monthly updates published by the Tweed fisheries management team of the RTC and The Tweed Foundation, "The River", continued in 2020, alongside Facebook posts and the Tweed News site. The completion of the new joint fisheries management website for both the RTC and the TF is scheduled for March 2021. The site will also host a Tweed proprietors' area, and it is planned that up-to-date catch information for the whole river will be available.

The Tweed and Eye Fisheries Management Plan

Commissioners approved the work programme for 2021 that was reviewed annually by the RTC Committee together with the Trustees of the Tweed Foundation.

THE RIVER TWEED COMMISSION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

2019		£	£	£
	INCOME			
509,561	Statutory assessment			509,653
6	Other Income			-
4,800	Rents received			-
1,081	Wayleave			106
1,667	Interest received			174
<u>517,115.00</u>				<u>509,933</u>
	EXPENDITURE			
	Full Time Fishery Officer			
3,813	Boat costs	1,428		
1,562	Telecommunication costs	1,631		
1,014	Other equipment maintenance	981		
143,451	Salaries and other direct staff costs	136,256		
22,574	Vehicles costs	21,778		
<u>172,414</u>				162,073
	Administrative Costs			
52,863	Management costs	39,729		
9,915	Insurance	7,858		
5,057	Printing, telephone, stationery, etc.	2,926		
5,547	Office costs	4,597		
834	Interest and charges	1,017		
3,784	Property costs	4,726		
2,838	IT Costs	1,726		
-	Website development	25,746		
8,382	Professional fees	19,736		
19,962	Subscriptions	18,872		
2,383	Meeting costs	937		
1,968	Sundries	2,984		
<u>113,533</u>				130,854
	Research and Conservation			
126,654	Tweed Foundation conservation	151,654		
20,786	Other conservation expenses	3,371		
<u>147,440</u>				155,025
	Depreciation, etc.			
36,329	Depreciation	31,356		
(12006)	Gain on sale of motor vehicles	(8,200)		
<u>24,323</u>				23,156
<u>457,710</u>				<u>471,108</u>
59,405	Surplus from Ordinary Activities for the year			38,825
803	Corporation tax			53
<u>58,602</u>				<u>38,772</u>

EXTRACT FROM THE 2020 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.

THE RIVER TWEED COMMISSION
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

2019		£	£	£
£				
-	Fixed Assets			
254,865	Intangible assets			-
<u>254,865</u>	Tangible assets			<u>232,308</u>
254,865				<u>232,308</u>
	Current Assets			
28,498	Debtors and prepayment	38,362		
157,404	Cash at bank and in hand	<u>270,735</u>		
<u>185,902</u>			309,097	
	Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year			
20,118	Trade creditors and accrued charges	82,734		
803	Corporation tax	<u>53</u>		
<u>(20,921)</u>			(82,787)	
<u>164,981</u>	Net Current Assets			<u>226,310</u>
<u>419,846</u>	Net Assets			<u>458,618</u>
	Capital Account			
361,244	Balance as at 1st January 2019			419,846
58,602	Surplus for the year			38,772
<u>419,846</u>				<u>458,618</u>

EXTRACT FROM THE 2020 ACCOUNTS

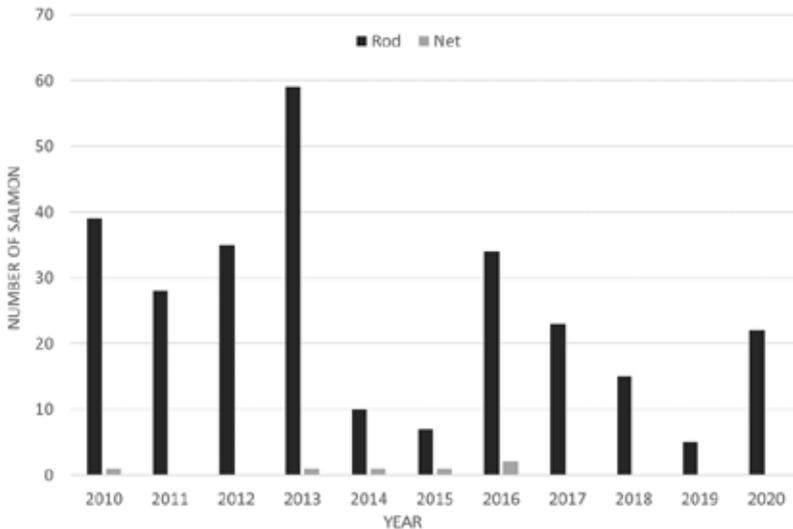
The financial information set out on these pages has been extracted from the RTC's full audited accounts on which the auditors, Rennie Welch, reported without qualification. Copies of the full audited accounts are available on request.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

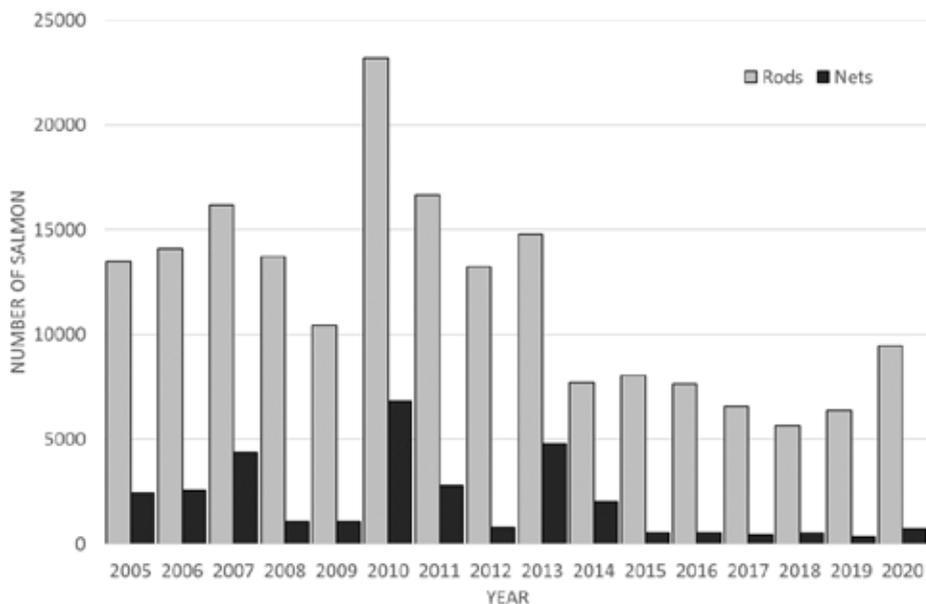
Salmon over 25lbs

Rod Fishery Individual Weights (lbs)	Rod Fishery Individual Weights (lbs)		
Mounthooly	26	The Junction	25
Pedwell	31	Rutherford	25
Gliddyheugh	25	Dryburgh Upper	25
West Newbiggin	27	Gledswood	25
Tillmouth Water	28	Tweedswood	27
Tweedmill	32	Boleside	30
Lower Lees	25	Fairnilee	28
Lees Upper	25	The Yair	30
Wark South	28	Caddonfoot	26
Birgham Dub	26	Holylee	30
Birgham Dub	28	Caberston	35
Horncliffe	28		

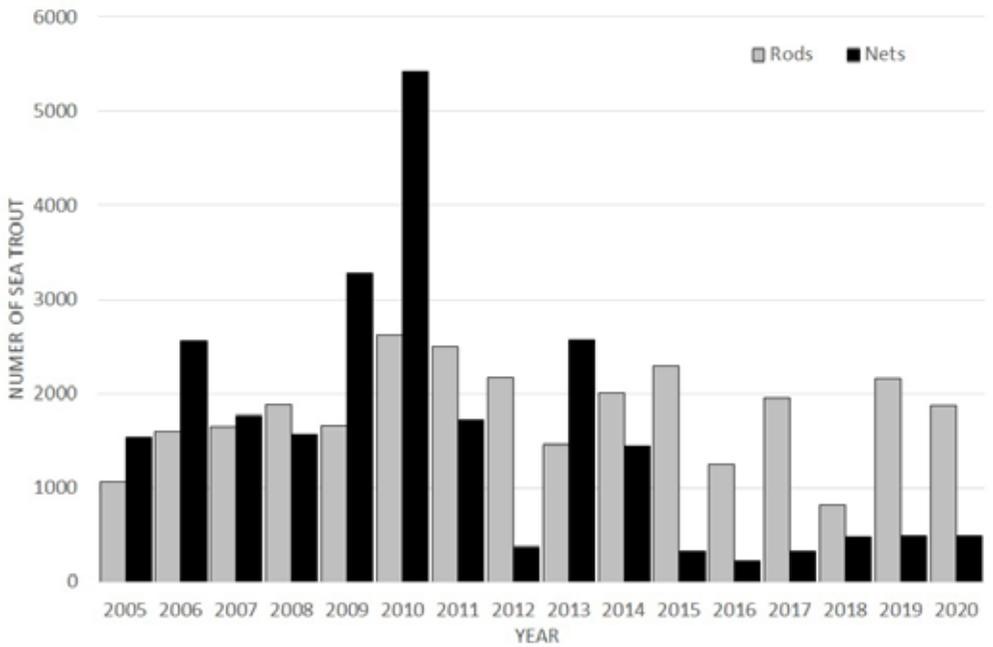


Appendix II

Salmon catches 2005 – 2020 for Rods and Nets

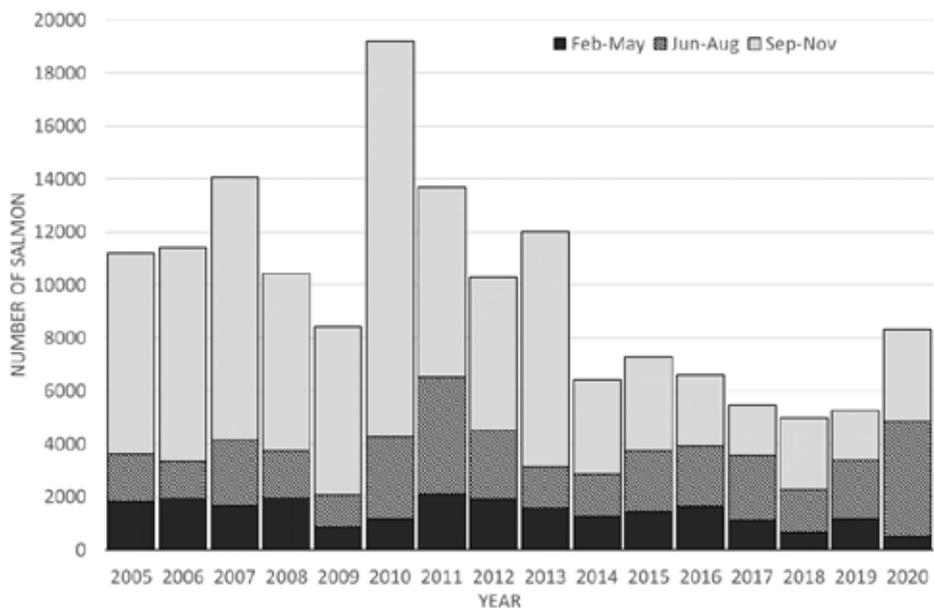


Sea Trout catches 2005 – 2020 for Rods and Nets



Appendix III

Spring, Summer and Autumn rod Salmon catches below Ettrickmouth



Appendix IV

2020 Salmon Rod catch by month

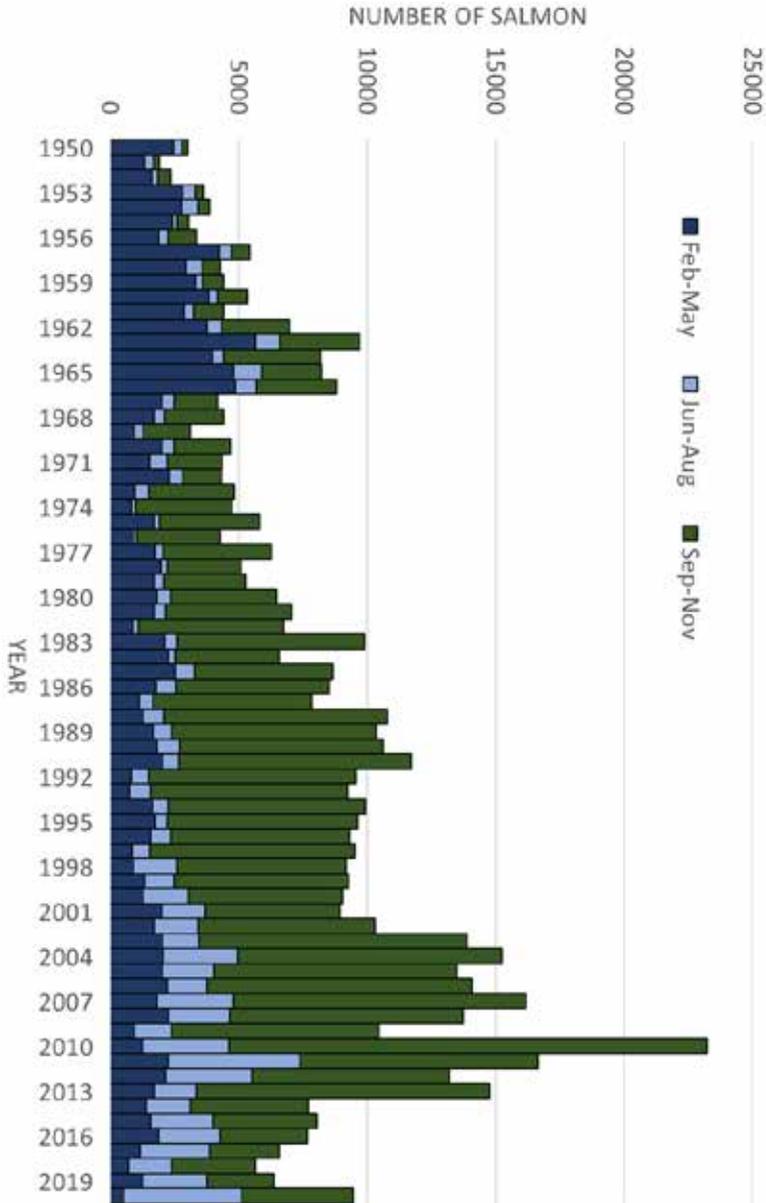
MONTH	Upper Tweed	Middle Tweed	Lower Tweed	Whiteadder	Till	Teviot	Ettrick
Feb	0	4	15	0	0	0	0
Mar	0	32	86	7	0	2	0
Apr	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
May	0	10	370	2	1	0	1
Jun	4	233	881	4	17	4	0
Jul	27	520	1242	8	16	22	1
Aug	34	369	1188	38	23	37	2
Sep	109	581	1678	21	43	32	9
Oct	446	431	772	29	15	57	33
Nov	55	32	40	1	6	11	8
Total	675	2212	6277	110	121	165	54

2020 Sea Trout Rod catch by month

MONTH	Upper Tweed	Middle Tweed	Lower Tweed	Whiteadder	Till	Teviot	Ettrick
Feb	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Mar	0	2	12	1	1	1	0
Apr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	29	0	12	1	0
Jun	10	80	141	1	166	8	1
Jul	26	246	250	1	101	24	0
Aug	16	125	188	8	60	35	0
Sep	21	41	57	1	31	9	14
Oct	42	30	36	3	1	11	1
Nov	16	7	7	0	2	1	0
Total	131	531	722	16	374	90	16

Appendix V

Salmon Rod Catches on Tweed 1950-2020



Appendix VI

TWEED COMMISSION MEMBERS
As at 31st December 2020
Tweed Committee: see asterisks below.
Appointed by Local Councils

Berwickshire (9)
M. Crozier (Coldstream)
J. Fairgrieve (Gordon)
Dr, D Gray
P.J. Huddleston *
M. Keysell
P.J.H Neate
L. Thomson *
F. Turnbull
B. Turner (Whiteadder)

Tweeddale (5)
K.D. Annand *
D.G. Fyfe
M.W. Ireland
E. Robertson
M. Stuart (Peebles)

Ettrick & Lauderdale (11)
R. Cockburn (Gala)
S. Emmerson
J Harvey (St Boswells)
C R Scott
J.P.H.S Scott
W.A. Virtue
H.P. Younger *
J. Nicol (Selkirk)
Vacancy (Club)
Vacancy (Club)
Vacancy (Club)

Roxburgh (9)
I, Davis
R, Glass * (Kelso)
N.S. Highmore
D. Noble (Hawick)
J.M. Reddin
T, W. Reid
J.T. Scott
R. Young (Jedforest)
Vacancy (Club)

Northumberland County Council (9)
J. Cameron (Ladykirk & Norham)
P. Cowe (Berwick)
G. Hill
A. H. Murray
G. Renner-Thompson
G. Roughead
R. Tebay (Chatton)
Vacancy (Club)
Vacancy

Representatives of Angling Associations are denoted by the name of their club. The remainder are independents.

Appendix VI cont.

Elected by Proprietors As at 31st December 2020

M. Baker	Tillmouth
C. K. Balfour	Birgham Lower
P. A. Baxendale	Sprouston
Lord Biddulph	Makerstoun
A. Brough	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
I. Fleming	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
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 VII
RTC Officials and Employees
At 31 December 2020

Chief Commissioner	H. P. Younger
Deputy Chief Commissioner:	P. D. Straker-Smith
Clerk:	J. Stewart
Executive Assistant:	A. Gorrie
Acting Treasurer:	P. D. Straker-Smith
Office:	The North Court Drygrange Steading Melrose Roxburghshire TD6 9DJ Tel: (01896) 848294 Fax: (01896) 848277 Email: enquires@rtc.org.uk Website: www.rtc.co.uk
Head Fishery Officer/ Superintendent of Bailiffs	K. Ferguson Mobile: 07884 230045
Fishery Officers/ Water Bailiffs:	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, 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 and Northumbrian Water and, in Scotland, Marine Scotland Science, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage, and Scottish Water.

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

River Tweed News

www.rivertweed.org.uk

The Tweed Foundation

www.tweedfoundation.org.uk

The Tweed Foundation Facebook Page

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)**

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **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)

**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
[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.**

