



2021 Tweed Trout & Grayling Initiative Newsletter

No. 19 – Peeblesshire TFA

2020 Upper Tweed Brown Trout Catch Summary

(Peeblesshire TFA & Gala AA Combined)

At the time of writing several Brown trout catch log books have been returned for the Upper Tweed for the 2020 Brown trout season. The results indicate that catches of Brown trout over 25cm (10") were well above average. There is no doubt that the delayed start to the trout season, as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, resulted in some bumper catches when the season finally opened in late May. However, the good catches appeared to continue throughout June and into July, mostly as a result of there being a much higher than normal catch rate of Brown trout between 25cm (10") and 40cm (16"). This indicates much higher than average numbers of Brown trout of this size.



Picture courtesy of Scott Hamilton

Catches of Brown trout between 25cm and 40cm were well above average during the 2020 fishing season

2020 Brown Trout Angling Recaptures Summary

Six anglers from the Peeblesshire Trout Fishing Association participated in the Brown trout spot pattern recognition project during the 2020 trout fishing season. Each angler sent in photographs of the Brown trout over 30cm (12") that they caught during the season. In total 115 pictures were sent in. The distinct spot pattern on the left gill cover of each trout was identified, recorded and stored in a database, allowing comparison between trout and identification of trout caught on multiple occasions.



This 56cm (22") Brown trout was caught in the same location during both the 2019 and 2020 trout fishing seasons

Catch returns have shown that catches of larger Brown trout on the Tweed fall away after the end of June. As the project mostly looks at recapture rates of larger trout the lockdown at the start of the 2020 season greatly reduced the time available for these trout to be fished for and captured. Despite this, there were still 17 recaptures amongst the 115 pictures sent in. Of the 17 recaptures one was a trout first recorded in 2018, eight were of trout recorded during the 2019 season and eight were of trout caught, and then recaptured, during the 2020 season. One trout from 2020 was recaptured twice (in essence caught three times when the initial capture is

included – all by the same angler, including being caught twice on the same day).

As only a small number of anglers participate in the project each year the recaptures recorded likely represent only the "tip of the iceberg" in regards to the rate at which Upper Tweed Brown trout are caught on multiple occasions by anglers. It also highlights the importance of best practice catch and release.

The Tweed Foundation would like to thank the anglers who sent in pictures during the 2020 season.



Trout Spawning Populations

During late October and early November 2020 we spent a number of days trapping trout as they ran upstream to spawn in a major Tweed trout spawning tributary near Peebles. After being trapped the fish were recorded and released immediately to continue their journey upstream to spawn. This type of work helps us study trout spawning populations and better understand the complicated relationship between Brown trout and Sea-trout, how it varies across the Tweed catchment and how relates to the trout caught by Tweed anglers. The study will continue in 2021 with the full results being released at a later date. The pictures below provide a brief summary of the results from the 2020 trapping.



47% of the trout caught were male Brown trout. They averaged 29cm (11½") in length. This 33cm (13") Brown trout was fairly typical of the spawning male Brown trout.



14% of the trout caught were female Brown trout. They averaged 34cm (13½") in length. This female Brown trout of 34cm is typical of the female Brown trout caught.



14% of the trout caught were male Sea-trout. They averaged 59cm (roughly 23") in length. This 59cm male Sea-trout is a typical example of the male Sea-trout captured.



25% of the trout caught were female Sea-trout. They averaged 58cm (roughly 23") in length. This 56cm (22") female Sea-trout is fairly typical example of the female Sea-trout caught.



This 48cm (19") female was the largest Brown trout caught. 36% of spawning females were Brown trout with 64% Sea-trout. However, as Brown trout are smaller the percentage of Brown trout egg deposition would have been much lower than 36%.

The spawning population is similar, but not exactly the same as, trout spawning populations seen in other burns trapped further down the Tweed system. The results indicate that the majority of the eggs being deposited in the streambed have been laid by Sea-trout. However, given the numbers of male Brown trout within the population this likely indicates that many of these Brown trout are likely to be the offspring of female Sea-trout.