



2021 Tweed Trout & Grayling Initiative Newsletter

No. 19 – Gala Angling Association

2020 Upper Tweed Brown Trout Catch Summary

(Peeblesshire TFA & Gala AA Combined)

Nine anglers sent in Brown Trout catch records for the Upper Tweed for the 2020 fishing season covering 64 fishing trips and 209 hours of angling effort. This is down on previous seasons but most likely reflects lower angling pressure as a result of restrictions placed on permit sales when angling began after the COVID-19 lockdown in April and May. 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 season 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 higher than normal 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 Upper Tweed Brown Trout Angling Recaptures Summary



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

Ten anglers from the Upper Tweed participated in the Brown Trout spot pattern recognition project during the 2020 fishing season. Each angler sent in photographs of the Brown Trout over 30cm (12") they caught during the season. In total 140 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 individual trout and identification of trout caught on multiple occasions.

Catch returns have shown that catches of larger Brown Trout on the Tweed fall away after the end of June. As this 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 18 recaptures amongst the 140 pictures sent in. Of the 18 recaptures one was a trout first recorded in 2018, eight were of trout recorded during the 2019 season and nine were of trout first caught in, and then recaptured during, the 2020 season. One trout from 2020 was caught three times 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 number of times that some Upper Tweed Brown Trout are caught by anglers. This 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 November 2020 we spent a number of days trapping trout as they ran upstream to spawn in a burn that flows into the lower Gala Water. After being trapped the fish were recorded and quickly released to continue their journey upstream to spawn. Recording trout spawning populations helps us better understand the complicated relationship between Brown Trout and Sea Trout. It also allows us to identify how this relationship varies across the Tweed catchment and how it 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 trout caught during the 2020 trapping.



Only 9% of the spawning trout were female Brown Trout. They averaged 40cm (16") in length. This female Brown Trout of 41cm is typical of the female Brown Trout caught.



50% of the spawning trout were male Brown Trout. They averaged 24cm (9½") in length. This 30cm (12") Brown Trout was above average size.



32% of the spawning trout were female Sea Trout. They averaged 55cm (roughly 22") in length. This 55cm (22") female Sea Trout is typical example of the female Sea Trout caught.



Only 9% of the spawning trout were male Sea Trout. They averaged 70cm (roughly 28") in length. This 62cm male Sea Trout is below average size for the male Sea Trout captured.



This 79cm (31") male Sea-trout was the largest trout caught. It would have been over 10lb when it first entered the river.

The spawning population within the lower Gala Water burn is similar to trout spawning populations seen in many other burns trapped within 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 fertilizing Sea Trout eggs. A significant proportion of them are also likely to be the offspring of female Sea Trout.