

FNLRT Progress Report 02.2021

R. Laughton, 15/08/2021

The following report provides an update on activities from 5th March 2021 to 15th August 2021. The report is set out in the form of the new Fisheries Management Plan 2021-2026.

Coronavirus: FNLFT/SISI Staff: Following Government guidelines on Coronavirus the Trust office remained closed with staff generally working from home or in the field during the period. Restrictions are easing and staff will operate a mix of home working and using the office.

Reporting: Management Plan 2021-26 completed and now available from web site [Click Here](#). MoU approved by FFB and signed. MoU circulated to Lossie Board but meeting postponed.

Change of Trust name completed and extensive work by Valerie undertaken to change bank details, web site, etc to reflect this.

1. Climate Change

Riparian Woodland Restoration Project: Joint initiative with the Dee Trust, Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust and funded by Fishmongers Company Ltd. River temperature data obtained from Scot-Gov/CEH and mapped for Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie. Maps produced by Sean Robertson (Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust) and indicate the upper reaches of Findhorn and upper tributaries are most at risk from rising temperatures. Target areas for improving upland woodland being produced along with indicative costs and a report is now available.

Options for re-creating riparian woodland have been developed with Steve Conolly (Cawdor Forestry) and submitted to one upper proprietor for consideration. Contact with additional proprietors is planned.

2. River habitat and Land Use

Findhorn-Lossie: A96 Dualling: Hardmuir – Fochabers Section: Meeting to discuss Lossie bridge crossings attended with Dave Gowans and Elgin AA during August.

Cloddach Bridge: The centre channel underneath Cloddach bridge is in poor condition with a deep undercut at the upstream end and during low flows will fish passage. A letter was sent to Moray Council raising concerns meeting with Daniel Prentice (Moray Council) took place on 1st Dec. Bridge is in very poor condition and there are no plans or budget to replace the bridge. The tonnage limit now in place. No further progress with surveys of the channel. Inspected bridge with Elgin AA members on 4th August and agreed to apply for fish transfer licence again.

Glen Elgin Distillery Pond: Pond to be drained, silt removed and repairs to pen-stock valves carried out during August. Potential for fish rescue required if fish remain trapped in the pond as it drains. Site visit attended on 10th August to discuss work plan; fish rescue unlikely but remaining in contact with engineers.

[Clashgour Windfarm:](#) Public enquiry results still to be published.

[Carn Duhie Windfarm:](#) plans for development being revised.

Lethen Wind Farm: Scoping report on 20 turbine wind farm located on Lethen estate was received. The wind farm impinges on the Tomlachlan Burn which drains into the Findhorn. Comments were prepared and a holding objection was submitted from the Board and Trust.

Wester Greens Distillery Proposal: Planning approved.

Achavraat Farm River works, Muckle Burn: SEPA and farmers in discussions to repair river works at Achavraat.

Broom of Moy Bank Repair, Muckle Burn: SEPA and farmers in discussions but no further information available at the moment.

Lossie-Scottish Water: Repairs to outflow valve on Glenlatterach Dam are scheduled for August which will interrupt compensation flows for a short period. Lossie Board informed in advance of works.

Mosset Burn – Sanquhar Mains Sediment removal: Significant build-up of sediment has occurred on the Mosset at Sanquhar Mains farm raising the riverbed above the level of the surrounding farmland. The farmer has applied and received a CAR licence and removal will begin in August 2021. I've provided advice on silt control, methodology, timing of works and we are also developing some installation of woody debris structures to improve fish habitat.

Lossie – Mayne Farm Sediment Removal: Significant build-up of sediment has occurred on the Lossie within the reach at Mayne Farm which has raised the riverbed and blocked the farm drains, leading to drainage and flooding problems. Met with the farmer in July to discuss the issue and provided comments on the planned removal and CAR licence application to minimize impact on fish populations.

Muckle Burn – Bridge at Moy Sediment Removal: CAR application to remove sediment deposits from under the dry arch of the bridge at Broom of Moy to allow high flows to use the second arch. Sean inspected the site and found no concerns for fish populations, proposal approved.

3. Biosecurity and INNs

SISI Project: Giant Hogweed control progressed well during Spring early summer.

Nairn: GH control completed from Cawdor to the river mouth. Auldearn Burn completed and addition sites at Safeways and neighbouring Industrial Estate were also sprayed. Densities declining to very low levels, although a few pockets remain.

Findhorn: GH control completed from Coulmony to A96 bridge. Densities generally dropping but significant re-growth at Dalvey where a new drain has been opened up.

Mosset Burn: GH control completed from sources at Sourbank and Altyre to river mouth. Densities dropping to low levels, and no GH plants were found in Altyre this year which was very encouraging.

Muckle Burn GH control completed from Earlsmill to Dyke and starting to see a drop in GH densities at last.

Lossie: GH control completed from Kellas to Wester Manbeen. GH densities from Kellas to Bogside are dropping considerably and improving from Bogside to Wester Manbeen. However, still several years of treatment required. Additional funding for control along the Lossie received from Crown Estate - Wester Manbeen, Moray Estates and EB Scotland.

Some work on skunk cabbage started on Dallas Pond and the Doual Burn, and at Blairs Loch.

Control has been led by SISI project officer James Symonds. Mirella Toth re-joined as seasonal project officer for a month before heading off to the Wester Isles Mink control project. We were delighted to appoint Elise Cox as her replacement in June. Elise has been a volunteer with us over the last few years and is highly experienced in the control of non-natives.

Vicky Hilton continues to promote the project through a wide variety of social media platforms and processes the data on volunteer input. The SISI project relies heavily on volunteer and landowner assistance. With Covid restriction easing this year we saw over 623 hours recorded by volunteers, farmers and landowners, during April to June.

James and Elise also maintain the mink monitoring raft and trap network. This winter and spring we've had very few sightings and only mink captured so far. However, they will begin to disperse from their dens in August and September so please report any sightings.

Work switches to Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed as we move into Autumn.

Keep up to date on SISI project at www.invasivespecies.scot and for our biosecurity plan, click [here](#).

4. Fish and Fisheries

2021 Catches: Fishing appears to be going well this season with both the Nairn and Findhorn reporting good numbers of salmon and grilse present. More fish reported within the Lossie to. Uptake for fishing tickets from the Angling Associations is also good and most estates and beats are fully open.

National EF Survey Scotland (NEPS): Approved by Government for 2021 and we have started surveys. Seven sites completed so far but heavy rain last week curtailed activities.

Findhorn Juvenile Fish Survey: Six of the 30 core sites completed so far but rain hampered progress last week.

Nairn: The Nairn DSFB have contracted the Trust to complete a juvenile survey this year. This will be undertaken in Sept/Oct.

Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre ([SFCC](#)): Helped to revise and update the EF Team Leader Training course. Delivered one Team Leader Training Course with Chris Daphne (Ness DSFB) and the Team Leader Refresher Course (online).

AST Missing Salmon Project: Smolt trap installed at Red Craig and the acoustic receivers were installed by Sean and Ali during April. April proved ideal for operating the trap with steady flows, however, high river flows during May led to a wide river which reduced the efficiency of the trap, Five days were also lost due to high flows and log jams. However, 93 smolts were tagged and released.

Sean and Ali plus considerable additional help from Bill Whyte (AST), Ness Divers and various volunteers have uplifted all the receivers and data is being collected and processed. Two receivers lost during 2020 were also retrieved.

Further details/updates on the AST Missing Salmon Project, [click here](#).

Protection of Fish Stocks: Further sawbill count was completed March 2021. Data has been compiled and sent to Roger Knight as part of the Moray Firth licence application.

5. Marine and Inshore Environment

No further work.

6. Education and Awareness

Schools Go To Fish: All schools projects still suspended due to coronavirus restrictions.

Meeting held with Ian Robertson and neighbouring Trusts on a Scotland wide angling initiative, further meetings to develop and initiative planned for Autumn.

www.fnlrt.org.uk [Facebook](#) www.invasivespecies.scot