



LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB NEWSLETTER 48: APRIL 2024

UPPER CONON & UPPER BLACKWATER

Our rivers are open of course and being fished despite the weather. Delighted to hear that the first reported salmon has been caught and carefully returned – a fresh run 6lb estimated cock fish by junior member Grant Walkingshaw – well done Grant! Remember it only needs a phone call for **members** to book a beat in April & May. Watch out for kelts too and handle all fish careful when caught, keeping them in the water before release. No trebles to be used to ease release and club rules insist you report all catches of salmon.

SMOLT GUIDANCE PROJECT: UPDATE

As you know we've been working in co-operation with **Cromarty Firth Fishery Board, SSE & WHOOSH** on an electro guidance system to assist smolt migration down through the **Meig dam** and track the passage of **PIT** tagged smolts. These are fish that have been trapped upstream and fitted with tiny tags that can be tracked as they pass down the system and out to sea. A pontoon style low current electrical fence is now in place and operative from the head of the Meig dam across to the burn entrance on the opposite bank. It will guide smolts in the direction of the outfall into River Meig below the dam and on downwards through the system. **The final 25 metres at the east end of the dam are now out of bounds in April & May - possibly into early June.**

A long snake of electro-pontoons or buoys is assembled along the carpark and onto the Meig pier



The kit is ready to be towed down the loch to the dam.

Fixings are drilled into the dam wall



... and the line of buoys is then anchored on the opposite bank

The electrodes hang down into the water between the bouys – the current will not be on all the time as part of a check to see if more tagged smolts do pass down with the current switched on. We will get a complete picture of the project from fishery Board manager, Sunny Bradbury, in due course.



START OF SEASON 2024 WORK PARTIES

Many thanks to all those willing hands who turned out to get the boats ready for the start of the season. Kenny & Robert Ross; John & Derek Ritchie over from Nairn; Chris & David Ross, all helping Ian MacPhail get the boats washed and lifted into Achonachie and Meig. A special thanks to club stalwart machine operator Lewis Ross who operated a telehandler machine, working in really difficult conditions with Ian to complete the very tricky task of lifting the bridge back onto the pontoon moorings. As many of you know and will have seen the bridge and the pontoons parted company in December due to exceptionally high water level, way above the spill line of the dam, and accompanying high winds lifting the bridge wheels right out of their runners. All back in place now - plans afoot to preventing exceptional water levels resulting in dislocation. **THANKS !**

DECEMBER DISASTER



START OF SEASON



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS 2024

As I write, 211 renewals have been completed and e-permits issued. Only renewed & paid up new members will have access to the booking system of course, and Contin has a complete list up to date as of today. Again, if your normal fishing buddy hasn't yet renewed please give them a nudge. They will have a £5 late renewal surcharge to pay – as per our rules - but the first notification went out in January with three reminders since going only to non-renewed members.



I hope you all have a great season on the water. Any good stories or photos - **please send them in to this email**. I'll be keeping you in touch with our efforts to get have our lease of Scardroy re-instated and though I'm not optimistic we will do our utmost to persuade that the position being taken is mistaken.

Sending you all "tight lines" for 2024.

FOLLOW OUR RULES

An **updated rules document for season 2024** is now up on the website and you can download it from the front page. I can also send it to you by email. You need to note the change that **treble hooks are not allowed** so as to ease safe catch & return. So it's time to get busy with some split rings and double or single hook replacements or just get your snips out. Safe use of the Loch Meig pontoons has been highlighted to you before but here's it again. Our check on the repaired Meig pontoon system is just about complete and I'll notify you when the boats are back on the pontoon – safety means using a life jacket too. Meantime two boats are on the pulley system to buoys – please don't make knots in the ropes when using the pulley system. Thanks.



7 ESSENTIAL PONTOON RULES

- 1 Take care using the pontoons
- 2 One angler to unlock the boat and row to the slipway
- 3 Load up and fix on any outboards etc. at the slip way **not on the mooring**
- 4 Take care of the keys – they have a floatation key fob attached but keep them safe please
- 5 Return your boat securely as above
- 6 Fasten the chain at the top of the bridge
- 7 **RETURN THE KEYS TO CONTIN AND HAND IN YOUR CATCH RETURN**

Our Club website <https://highlandfishing.net/> and Facebook page and Instagram site are all available to stay up to date with LAAC activities and news. Remember to keep a record of your fishing so as to make it easy to complete your mandatory catch return in October.

Email us anytime at achonachie.angling@gmail.com

Tight Lines !

Stephen Dowds
LAAC Chairman/Secretary
April 2024