

LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB

NEWSLETTER 34 : SEPTEMBER 2020

LOCH MEIG BOATS AVAILABLE FROM MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Two boats are now available for members only bookings through Contin Filling Station. The final safety checks and fittings are being completed over this weekend and members need to follow safe procedures at all times when using these boats. It has taken a deal of work under tricky circumstances to get to this point and we'll continue to improve access. Thanks for the messages of thanks and support from members about what we've been able to achieve so far. Please bear with us in getting the rules right and I am asking that you **acknowledge receipt of this newsletter** so that we know you have read and accept these rules for pontoon use. Thanks, Stephen Dowds

1 Members must wear lifejackets when using club boats and lifejackets to be worn on gangway and pontoon.

2 Members may only fish **2** to a boat until Phase 4 of national Covid rules is announced

3 Members must follow these set rules for using pontoon moored boats (see below)

4 WHAT TO DO

- Take your fishing gear, outboard, boat box etc down to the slipway **NOT** onto the pontoon
- One angler should go onto the pontoon, sit down on the edge of the pontoon and lower carefully onto the boat deck.
- Unlock and unfasten painters at bow and stern leaving the fender tyre hanging from the pontoon Fender tyre to be lifted off boat and returned to same position after fishing as marked on the gunwale
- Row the boat to the **slipway** to load fishing gear, attach outboard/s, and embark 2nd angler
- Row away from shallows before dropping outboard and motoring away.
- On return follow the above rules in reverse order returning boat to **same** position on pontoon. The wire painter is to be passed through bow eye and padlocked. The rope painter for the stern is to be attached to rear outside stern eye.

You should follow **FACTS** rules when fishing; carry and use hand sanitiser when you are fishing; and be aware of the prolonged survival of Covid19 virus on hard surfaces. Your boat keys will be sanitised before you pick them up and we ask you wipe them down similarly before returning them to Contin Filling Station. Your safe behaviour protects you and all of us.



A FISHY BRIGHT SIDE IN DOWN UNDER LOCKDOWN

Club member Jon King certainly had a wee silver lining to the Covid cloud when he was “isolated” in New Zealand due to travel restrictions between the largely Corona virus free New Zealand and the rest of the world. Forced to fish on in the islands’ beautiful waters he sent a message and photograph of a cracking rainbow just to cheer us up. **Jon wrote** Kia Ora Stephen, not meaning to rub it in, but you did ask, so attached is a pic of a 6lb rainbow which I took on a green beetle recently from my kayak where the Clutha river enters Lake Dunstan, just as the sun slipped behind Mount Pisa. Lockdown here ends tomorrow night, and fishing has been allowed for the last couple of weeks, so there are some compensations. Kia kaha, Jon King



MEMORY LANE

Many thanks to Jeanette Ross for sending in this photo from her Mum’s collection showing the presentation of LAAC life membership for signal service given to the club by Bob Brown



Front row L to R. Alex Watt, Jock Watt (Highland Council), Bob Brown, Mr Gores Estate Agents), and David Robertson LAAC Chairman at the time.

Back row L to R. Clem Cuthbert, Tom Gray, George Cameron, Ali Hunter, Hugh Cushnie, Bill “Rogie” Brown, and Ernie Woodfield

On the back of the photo:- The Loch Achonachie Angling Club opened two fishing huts on the Upper River Conon on their first day of fishing for the new season. Mr Ken Bowlt from estate agents Smith Gores officially opened the huts before presenting Honorary Life Membership to Bob Brown.

HOOKED FOR LIFE!

This very happy photograph comes from club member Donald Morrison out fishing with his grandson Johnny on Loch Achonachie last month, showing Johnny's first pike. Donald tells me Johnny caught a 2lb trout last summer in Lewis. He reckons he is definitely hooked. Tight lines Johnny !



LOCH BEANNACHARAIN (Scardroy)

Club member Allan Liddle wrote this comprehensive appraisal of the most remote of our club waters, and I know he considers it to be a prized asset of our fishing. It's fishing well just now, so why not give it a try? "Beautiful Loch Beannacharain (or as it's more commonly known Loch Scardroy) lies at the head of Strathconon and is a real 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Loch Achonachie Angling Club run waters. Formed thousands of years ago by the glacial influence so common throughout all of our countryside (some places more evident than others) this peaceful, stunningly beautiful loch offers more in line with what you could call a 'Traditional Scottish Hill Loch.' Totally different in character and back-drop to the other LAAC waters this loch offers a stunning place to de-stress and while away the hours in search of the wild resident trout found in abundance here.



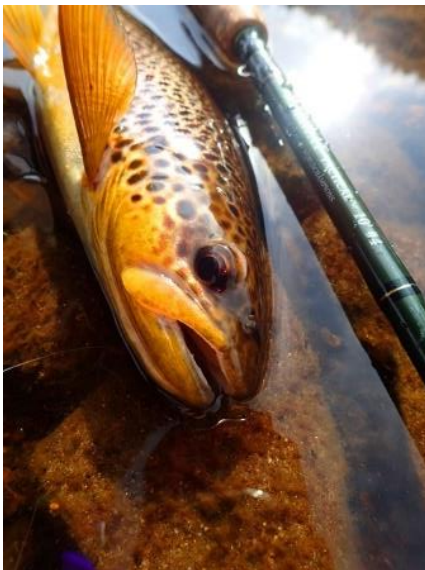
LOCH BEANNACHARAIN (continued)

Although the general residents encountered might be a wee bit smaller than on Loch Meig, Scardroy trout make up for this in sheer ferocity and a determination to escape that totally belies their size, or put another way they are certainly extremely hard fighting wild trout. Not that they are all little, I'd estimate the more modest average size of 8 to 10 ounces but with a few that will push the pound which isn't too shabby for an upland wild water.



Both boat and bank angling available here on Scardroy and you are free to drift or roam the mile or so length to your heart's content and its rough upland character means that you can expect fish closer to the shore with casting and walking or shore hugging drifts generally productive. That said there are abundant weed beds at the 'top' end (Western end) and longer drifts

across these can be very good. There's also a wee gem of a hidden sunken island (which I suspect is the remains of an age-old crannog) at the 'bottom' (Eastern end). Throw in a good number of feeder streams, points, rocky outcrops and a sheer 'cliff face' (that is interesting to try and bounce your flies off and attract fish in the first 12 inches of water) and Scardroy has more than enough to keep the angler busy. Although it lies at the head of the Conon migratory system and despite the height and distance, it is possible to connect with a salmon or sea-trout although these encounters are not overly common and reports are more annually than monthly. But happen they do, so be aware that it might not be another 'wee half pounder' this time especially if it's suddenly stripping line from the reel.



Fishing 'Short Line' style works great here in the wave with a team of tree flies incorporating the big and bushy on the 'Bob' and 'Middle' positions, and some form of wet fly on the 'tail.' However my favourite approach is with dries, especially with a 'rise' on which might be as a result of an olive, midge or sedge hatch or even a 'fall' of heather fly, heather beetle or daddies depending on the time of year. Others favour to search a bit deeper though which itself can be very rewarding and sunk line and lures can work well here so don't forget to take a range of tackle for the times when you need to employ deeper tactics. Deep here means in excess of 100 feet at the deepest point, that said the obvious choice is to try the relative shallow waters at each end, or the drop-off areas close to the shoreline.

You'll also regularly share the shores with the local deer population as well as visiting osprey accompanied here also by buzzards and even the chance of a golden eagle or two. Divers like this water too so there's always the chance of some wonderful wildlife sightings. Oh, and don't forget that stunning backdrop that all adds up to help make Scardroy a special place to visit."

Flies to Try: Kate McLaren, Wickhams Fancy, Loch Ordie, Soldier Palmer, Zulu, Blue Zulu, Clan Chief, Black Pennel, Greenwell Spider, Ace of Spades, Peter Ross and Silver Invicta are amongst the favourites and muddler versions of these can be very handy indeed. Hedgehogs in black, red, olive, natural Hare's Ear and claret are all very effective and for dries, hoppers, half-hogs, daddies and a few sedge type patterns worthy of a place in the selection. If you go deeper then snatchers are good for the bob and middle dropper positions on the 'cast' and goldhead damsel, chain bead black IPN, Viva, gold and silver Sparklers and the good old Sweeny Tod, all handy to have as well.

Fly sizes range from 10 to 14 for the traditional patterns (a few of the bushy ones in a size 8 can prove deadly), 12 to 14 for the Hoppers and Hogs and longshank 8 to 12 for the lures. (Photos Allan Liddle and Brian Scobie)

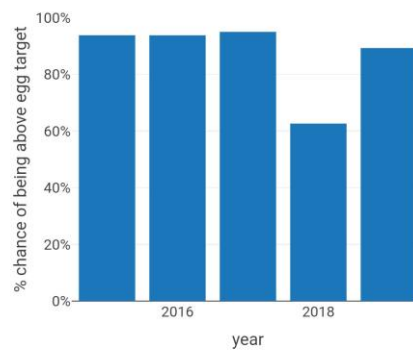
CONSERVATION STATUS FOR 2021 SEASON ANNOUNCED

Very pleasing to see this announcement – great news!



The assessment for the River Conon is Grade 1.

Average chance of the conservation limit being met of 86.9% during 2015-2019



The chance that the salmon stock reached its target during each of the last 5 years. Grade 1 is awarded where the 5 year average is over 80%; Grade 2 = 60-80%; Grade 3 less than 60%.

WINTER LEAGUE 2020-21

We surely have missed our competitions this season as all the clubs abandoned any hope of running inter club contests during the pandemic restrictions. Safe and sensible approaches were adopted as soon as allowed to let anglers get out and fish but the competitions were clearly a no go area.

I'm still going **Fishing**



However, there is eager anticipation of the club's Winter League being able to take place – all bank fishing, socially distanced, and often chilly but a great way to keep your skills sharp during the looming close season.

We have to fit in with a range of Covid compliant regulations in place at the various fisheries and stay safe on our travel to and fro the venues, but we have the dates and fisheries all booked up and showing below. Booking in is essential and contact tracing information is required by the fisheries. More information to follow by email.

- Leg 1 Achagour **Saturday 3 October;**
- Leg 2 Glen of Rothes **Saturday 24 October;**
- Leg 3 Lochter **Saturday 14 November;**
- Leg 4 Lagg – **Saturday 5 December;**
- Leg 5 Achagour - **Saturday 9 January;**
- Leg 6 Glen of Rothes - **Saturday 30 January;**
- Leg 7 Inch – **Saturday 20 February;**
- Leg 8 Lagg - **Saturday 13 March – The Final**

FLY TYING CORNER

Here's a fly dressing supplied by club secretary Okain MacLennan for you to try out. "A good fry and stickleback imitation is THE MISSIONARY. First tied by Captain J J Dunn for fishing the Chew and Blagdon reservoirs, it is equally effective in Highland waters where there are large, predatory trout.

The materials needed are:

Hooks: Down-eyed 6 to 10

Thread: Black

Body: White chenille

Ribbing: Oval silver tinsel

Hackle: Orange or red cock

Wing: Silver mallard flank

Head: Black

Dressing:

1. At the bend, tie in a length of white chenille, a length of oval silver tinsel, and a bunch of scarlet cock-hac
2. Wind the chenille up the shank after the tying thread. Follow this with the ribbing. Cut off surplus and tie in a beard hackle of orange or red cock-hackle fibres.
3. Take a silver mallard flank feather, (appropriate to the size of hook), and tie in on top of the hook, flat. Finish in the usual way.

Method:

Suggest fishing sub surface top layer or deeper with either a sink tip or intermediate line. Slow, regular retrieve with occasional stuttering pull.



THANKS

Staying in touch throughout these strange times has needed folk to adapt, use the phones, email and internet much more so can I say thanks to everyone who has helped out in any way and also those who have sent messages of support and appreciation. The club executive committee have stayed in close touch throughout, that has been essential as important projects, and financial decisions have been made. The staff at our booking agents, Heather Cormack and staff at Contin Filling Station have been great as always and very helpful to members and visitors alike. We've had a few tricky problems with poaching, fishing without permits, and some really unacceptable behaviour from a few unwelcome visitors but overall the experience has been one of supportive working together.

We'll be needing some willing hands at the end of the season to get the boats lifted, cleaned and into winter storage so please don't be shy at offering to do a wee bit volunteering for your club. It will make a difference for sure. If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found it useful please let us know and remember your contributions in stories and photographs are always welcome.

Our Club website <https://highlandfishing.net/>, Facebook page and Instagram site are all available to stay up to date with LAAC activities and news. Check out Kenny MacKintosh's collie supervising fish stocking for us earlier this season! Email to achonachie.angling@gmail.com

Stephen Dowds

LAAC Chairman

5th September 2020