



LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB NEWSLETTER 47: APRIL 2024

Hi folks, just a few brief but important points about the full opening of our waters at our formal start of season across all our waters.

BOATS Two boats are out on Loch Achonachie and two on Loch Meig - the Meig boats are on the buoy & pulley systems until we can monitor for a week or two the repairs done to the Meig pontoon moorings last week. More of this in this week's newsletter.

UPPER CONON & UPPER BLACKWATER The rivers are open too and need only a phone call to book a beat in April & May. Watch out for kelts and handle careful if accidentally caught, keeping them in the water before release.

SMOLT MIGRATION We are working in co-operation with **Cromarty Firth Fishery Board & SSE** & a company from USA - **WHOOSH** - on a new and remarkable project to assist smolt migration down through the **Meig dam** itself. A pontoon style low current electrical fence will be under water from the screens at 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. Work starts this week but will not hinder access for anglers other than the **final 25 metres or so at the bottom of the dam are out of bounds in April & May**. A further update will come to you in the April newsletter which is in production.

4 LOCH SCARDROY - in a bolt from the blue announcement in mid March we were told that the owners of Strathconon Estate are banning any fishing in Scardroy and the Upper River Meig above our existing stretch of river. There was no consultation on this and though I have since met to discuss this loss of fishing - and offer a far better way forward - that has been to no avail - at least so far. The decision is part of a "rewilding" scheme by the Danish owner and allies across Europe and could have far reaching consequences in Strathconon and, far worse than our loss of the fishing lease, even affecting livelihoods.

We have brought powerful and convincing arguments to bear on this already, and are continuing to do so in the hope of regaining these highly valued fishing rights. **It is vital that we do not have an acrimonious debate or any falling out but we are pursuing the matter actively and I welcome any members' considered views by reply.** The aim of the estate owner is to allow **the flora & fauna to self manage** for the future.

Our members **are** supportive of good practice in conservation and in my view are a force for good in protecting our natural environment & stopping & reporting any abuses. It is more difficult to do this if we are banned from wild places to fish. The actions we are facing are happening elsewhere too as I'm sure you're aware. If you want to explore their ethos further you can find it at <https://earthkeeper.dk/en/>

5 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Thanking you all for the ease with which over 200 renewals have been done in the past two months via email & BACs plus a few cheques. I hope you found that all satisfactory. Gate padlock combination are for the moment unchanged and there are no new rules that you have not already been informed of in 2023. Staff at Contin Filling Station will be their usual highly helpful selves and, as there are new staff in post there too, let's all be patient when phoning in bookings. Cash only as usual though cash back is available too at the desk. Only renewed & paid up new members will have access to the booking system of course, Contin has a complete list up to date as of today, and if your normal fishing buddy hasn't yet renewed please give them a nudge.

I hope you all have a great season on the water. Any good stories or photos - please send them in to this email. Sending you all "**tight lines**" for 2024.

Stephen

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