

1. LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB

NEWSLETTER No 2 2017

1. WELCOME

1.1 Welcome to the second Newsletter of the year for LAAC.

2. OVERVIEW



2.1 Heavy rain and high winds in July and August have made fishing difficult at times but some anglers persevered with good catches achieved as a reward for persistence. Sea trout are showing again in good numbers in Achonachie and Meig.

3. CATCHES REPORTED

Salmon

3.1 A few salmon were caught in the free months and returned. As expected these were mainly from the Upper Conon. The count through the fish pass at Tor Achilty at the end of August was 1,115 – well above the five year average.

3.2 Like last year, the salmon run is holding up whilst the grilse number are not as good as previous years – in common with other Scottish rivers..

Trout

- 3.3 Loch Scardroy is again proving very popular with members and visitors alike and excellent catches of over 20 trout are being reported.
- 3.5 Despite the changeable weather, loch Meig has again fished well with good numbers of fish being caught. Stocks of wild fish are as good as ever and sea trout are showing in increasing numbers.
- 3.6 Loch Achonachie always gives good sport for brown trout with sea trout mixed with a few salmon being reported..

Summary

- 3.7 The salmon runs are holding up with fresh fish showing all over our waters..
- 3.8 Natural trout stocks are improving and with the stocked trout are giving anglers great sport.



4. LAAC 100 CLUB – A REMINDER



100 Club

The 100 Club is the means by which the angling club raises funds and is proving a great success in the capable hands of John Cartlidge, Committee member.

The 100 club provides substantial funds to help with all aspects of the club, from subsidising competitions to maintenance and upkeep of facilities. At only £12 to join this is an excellent opportunity to support **Loch Achonachie Angling Club** with the chance to win cash every month. See the web site www.highlandfishing.net for details on how to join.



5. FISHING COMPETITIONS – HIGHLIGHTS

5.1 Highlights from our competitions are set out below:

- **Meig Open** – Beaully came first and won the William Bartlett Trophy, SGL came second with LAAC Bogtrotters coming third.
- **Loch Watten Charity Match** – Orkney won the competition. Lewis Ross and George Eccleson represented the Club and took a photograph of a nice brace of trout they caught – 2 for 2 ½ and 2 for 2lbs 9ozs respectively.



- **Danfoss Shield** – Held at the Stoer Lochs on Skye. LAAC won with 7 fish for 3lbs 14ozs.



- **All Night Challenge at Skye** – was cancelled due to horrendous weather conditions

5.2 Again a reminder, (particularly for new members) that the main adult competition left to go for the season is:

Loch Achonachie Members competition from boats on Loch Meig on Saturday 30 September. Start is at 09.30 and finish at 16.30. Two fishing per boat. To cover the cost there is an entry fee of £15.00 per rod which includes a finger buffet in the Cottage Bar & Restaurant. The Hydro Quaich will be presented to the angler with the heaviest bag and the Sports and Model Shop Trophy for the biggest fish, and SGL quaichs for the two anglers in the best boat.

5.3 For entry into the remaining competition, or indeed any further competition information, please contact Lewis Ross, Competition Secretary, on 01997 421293.

5.4 Our thanks go again to Lewis Ross, our Competition Secretary, for all his hard work in organising the competitions.

6. **EXCHANGE TICKETS – PORTREE AC VISITORS**

Skye based artist and keen fly fisherman Duncan Currie was one of two anglers who emailed our club chairman to set up an exchange ticket visit for them to Lochs Scardroy and Achonachie this month – the Portree AC Secretary had mislaid the exchange tickets we sent them but the chairman managed to get them sorted out. The **exchange ticket scheme** allows our members to share a wide range of fishing opportunities - **you should try them out!** Interestingly both the Skianachs – Duncan and his friend Fraser Stewart had gone to primary school on the Black Isle and fished Achonachie as boys many moons ago. Here’s their story of fishing our lochs.

“Hi Stephen, Just wanted to drop you a line to say thanks for a wonderful couple of days fishing this week! We had a great day’s sport on Scardroy with lots of fish between a half and three quarters of a pound and missed and “released at distance” as many again. This was followed by a harder day on Loch Achonachie. We saw no fish until past 5 p.m. and then spotted the odd fish moving up at the River mouth. A couple of nice Sea Trout among them I’d say and a bigger one – maybe a grilse moving upstream? We then decided to finish off with another go at



the tail of the Hydro out flow as you had suggested. Very quickly, I was into a powerful fish that turned out to be a Brownie/Sea Trout? Very silvery but with scarlet dots too so I returned it, but I feel it was probably a Brownie now.

If it was it's a shame as I want to paint a big Brownie. However, as I was in doubt I thought I'd let it go. I've enclosed a photo of it 18.5 inches so I reckon about 4 lb? See what you think? It all makes me think I need to improve my identification skills!!!!!!

Anyway, what great lochs you have and I'll be hoping to make it an annual trip now. My fishing pal will be renewing his membership of your club next Season, as well I think I think!

So thanks again Stephen and let me know if you are ever fishing on Skye – there are some great wee Hill Lochs in Sleat as well as the Association waters!"

NB Readers you can check out Duncan's artwork on his website www.duncancurrie.co.uk

7. CAREER NEWS

Ben Gamble, is a keen young club member who lives in Strathconon. Ben has served as the Junior member on the club's management committee for the past two years. His enthusiasm for fishing was very clearly reflected on his decision to seek a job in Grahams Fishing Tackle shop in Inverness.

Club Chairman, Stephen Dowds interviewed Ben to find out how he was getting on in his first full time job after leaving school.

“Ben, everyone on the Loch Achonachie club committee was delighted you got this job. How do you think it might help you in your role on the committee?”



Ben “Thank you very much. Working in Grahams has widened my knowledge about all aspects of fishing and I still have a lot to learn. I feel it will help in the committee for recommendations where to go fishing and what tackle should be used.”

Did you get any training when you started? Was it general sales training or mainly about fishing tackle?

Ben “I had quite good general knowledge about fishing tackle before I started but I was taught how to put line on fly reels using a needle knot, changing fly reels from left and right hand wind and also what flies to use for different currents of water. I was also taught some basic sales techniques.”

What's your favourite work so far in the shop Ben?

Ben “My favourite work so far in the shop is setting people up with a fly rod, line and reel because it's always something that I'm interested in. Unfortunately I'm unable to handle firearms at the moment. “

What's the most expensive item you've sold so far?

Ben “The most expensive item I can remember selling is a pair of Zeiss 10×42 binoculars, the most expensive fishing tackle I've sold was a salmon reel with a Carron Spey line. I would like to sell a Loop salmon rod but not many people want to spend that much money on a fishing rod.”

What has been the most unexpected or surprising thing you've come across working in Graham's?

Ben “I have found it very surprising the lengths people who come into the shop will go to try and steal things such as spinners and other fishing tackle.” (When Stephen spoke later to David – Ben’s boss at Grahams, David explained that this did happen occasionally and Ben had been very impressed at the role the shop’s CCTV had played in catching thieves in the act!)

You must hear a lot of anglers talking about fishing outings and things that happened - have you heard any unusual or funny stories - or maybe some "tall tales" of the ones that got away?

Ben “I've heard nothing too out of the ordinary, it's mostly salmon anglers telling us about a big salmon they lost on the river Ness – the one that “got away”.”

Is there any chance of additional learning opportunities - say like day release to college perhaps? Have you had any fishing outings as part of the job?

Ben “Not as far as I'm aware but I'd be very keen to improve my knowledge and skills, and a lot of the people I work with offer to take me salmon fishing on the river Ness and other places they like to go to. It's very encouraging.”

Finally, what was also very encouraging was when our chairman went in to speak to David at Grahams – he was full of praise for Ben’s work and attitude since joining the company. David said he was always very good with customers, very pleasant to have on their team and very keen to learn. “We were delighted when we recruited Ben Gamble - he’s a dedicated and reliable young man who’ll do well”

8 CROMARTY FIRTH FISHERY BOARD



Director’s Report August 2017.

By the end of August the count through Tor Achilty Dam had reached 1,112, still well ahead of the five year average. There appears to be a lack of late running grilse again this year which is following a pattern reflected on other rivers throughout Scotland.

A total of 3 pink Pacific salmon have now been caught in the Cromarty region. On rivers like the Ness and Dee, which have very clear water pink salmon have been observed spawning in numbers. It is still very uncertain what interaction there may be between pink salmon and native species. If they were to become established the presence of large numbers of dying pink salmon in early autumn might increase the risk of fungal infection of salmon and sea trout as they

approach spawning time. The juvenile pink salmon hatch in early spring and migrate to sea soon after hatching and so are unlikely to interact with juvenile Atlantic salmon in rivers but may have some interaction with sea trout in estuaries.

There was some very heavy rainfall and localised flooding during August on the Bran system. Screens at Mossford power station were blocked by debris and had to be temporarily removed.

Fish rescues took place at Conon Bridge and at the Meig / Luichart tunnel.

Projects / research

Electro-fishing survey works are ongoing. We are carrying out a large number of timed electro-fishings of suitable fry habitat across the entire region. This will give us a picture of the success of last year's spawning.

This year's Himalayan balsam clearance works were completed on schedule by the end of August.

A series of junior angling days are to be held in September. There has been considerable interest from children who have attended school angling sessions funded by SSE Fairburn windfarm. More than 40 children have expressed an interest in attending further angling days.

Meetings attended / consultations

SFCC Geographical Information System upgrade training
SSE / SEPA drought planning meeting
Abhainn na Glasa site visit
Fishery Management Scotland law enforcement Committee
Fish rescue Conon Bridge
Fish rescue Meig / Luichart tunnel
Completed staff annual reviews
First aid training course
Annual report submitted to Scottish Government

9 LAAC WINTER LEAGUE



8.1 The Club will again be having a winter league commencing at the end of the normal brown trout/salmon season. Details will be sent out soon. We hope that more members will join us in what has turned out to be a very exciting and fun competition.

10 AGM

Just a reminder to members that the AGM in 2018 will be held on the Tuesday 9th January 2018 at the Cottage Bar Restaurant in Maryburgh at 07.30pm.

12. CLUB EXECUTIVE

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| 12.1 | Chairman: | Mr Stephen Dowds | Tel: 07876750584 |
| 12.2 | Vice-Chairman | TBA | |
| 12.3 | Treasurer | Shared by Mr Dowds and Mr McLennan | |
| 12.4 | Competition Secretary | Mr Lewis Ross | Tel: 01997 421293 |
| 12.5 | Secretary | Mr Okain McLennan | Tel: 01381 620674 |

11. EDITORIAL COMMENT

I hope you have found this second Newsletter for 2017 of interest. As always, if any of you have an interesting story, photograph or article - or indeed any comments - please send them to me.

Okain McLennan
Secretary
Loch Achonachie Angling Club