

Trout and Salmon Report

River Tay

15 February 2024

“Ben Lui”

I concluded my opening day report by saying that I thought that it would require a change from the frosty weather before reasonable catches of springers might be expected. Well, I didn't quite anticipate how much it would change! For that first week of the season, the river remained low for the time of year with hard frost, but then the heavens opened! By the 22nd the Tay was up to nearly 14 feet and it never fell below 8 feet until right at the end of the month. Only when the river got down to just over 6 feet by the last day was the main river really fishable. Under such conditions, of course, the place to be is the Linn Pool where springers pause before pushing on through Campsie Linn. True to form, the first springer of the season, the only one for January, was caught on 31 January by Stewart Ross in the Linn Pool on a Taymount day.

For some years, Islamouth has only started fishing on 1 February. So, when it opened, Robert Jamieson had a lovely fish of 14 pounds. Then, rounding off that third week of the season, on the Saturday, Sam Mercer Nairne had a 7 pounder on the Meikleour and Upper Islamouth beat, Stuart Lang had a 12 pounder from Glendelvine and Robert Arthur's 12 pounder was the first springer from Loch Tay for the season.

There was another lift in the water in the following week which meant that the focus, with a run of fish now clearly beginning, on the Linn Pool. It produced at least one fish every day that week, except for the peak of the spate on the Tuesday. Three were caught on Stobhall days, with Owen Walker having the first springer of the season, and three on Taymount days. David Cronshaw had two of the Taymount springers of 8 and 16 pounds. The third was another quality 15 pounder. Then, rounding off that week, Scott Sykes had a cracking perfect 16 pounder from Kercock.

In the following week of February, with the water now dropping slowly, Tuesday was a good day with five springers reported. On Stobhall, Owen Walker and Kevin MacKay had a fish apiece, while Ballathie opened its scoresheet with a cracking fish, estimated at 20 pounds, for Bill Davidson on a white and lemon Kynoch. Two fish were also caught on upper Farleyer. As would be expected after all that water, fish are now clearly spread out.

So, to round up as of 14 February, we have had a slow start, just evading a blank January. However, there is clearly a run of springers getting going and if the water settles, more catches will build up more widely, not just in the likes of the Linn Pool. It is good also to see some real quality fish too. The 16 pounder from Kercock was just perfection. These big springers really come into their own at this time of year, usually peaking in March. This is

now the time when you might hook a real fish to remember. You will still find good availability too at this time of year, much of which is found through the www.fishtay.co.uk website. I look forward to reporting your success in a couple of issues time!

Tight lines

Ben Lui