

## **Trout and Salmon Report**

### **River Tay**

**23 October 2024**

**“Ben Lui”**

I ended my last report, saying how we longed for some water to stir the fish up after a dry end to September. Well, that didn't really quite go to plan. October started with the Tay still running just under a foot and it more or less stayed like that until the 13<sup>th</sup>! Only then, with two days of the season left did we get a lift to a couple of feet, which helped a little perhaps on the last two days. But by then, it was really far too late. However, those first two weeks of October were cooler and most beats continued to catch fish. At least there was no great loss of fishing due to conditions, as can happen at this time of year, and the season still ended on quite a high.

And so, most beats on the lower river, at least, continued with better catches in October. Almondmouth, for example, had its best October in over five years with 46. Waulkmill did even better with 58 for those two weeks. I guess the low water did not help Luncarty, which only had three, and to some extent Fishponds which had 19. On the last day there, Mike Elgie and Willie Cumming had two fish apiece while Robert Harvey had one of 14 pounds. Upper Redgorton, on the other hand, also had its best October in over five years with 28.

Benchil also had a good October with 19, with John Norcliffe and Neil Mitchell being among the successful. Pitlochrie, on the other hand, had three and Catholes four, including one for Jason Stratton. Upper Scone had 15, but, again as a result of the low water, Burnmouth only reported one.

Stobhall had 67 which was way above its recent average. Likewise Taymount with 63. Ballathie then had 31 and Cargill had 64. On Ballathie, Mike Rowlison had quite some experience. On his first day salmon fishing, ever, he was briefly shown how to Spey cast from the boat. Shortly afterwards he hooked into a 27 pounder, which was eventually landed 300 yards downstream! What a start! From new starts to long experience, it was also good to see Neil French landing several fish on Cargill on the last day.

Islamouth had 61, again its best October in over five years. But, while the low water may have been kinder to Islamouth, the Meikleour and Upper Islamouth beat might have benefitted from a good lift in those last few weeks, but ended up with 17. Interestingly, a Mr Cuthbert, caught a relatively fresh grilse, his first ever on the fly. Such fish were the norm at this time of year only 10 years ago and now are a source of remark! Kercock, on the other hand can do better in lower water, and had a very impressive 54. Again that was its best October in over five years.

Catches further up the middle Tay were generally more mixed, again perhaps reflecting the conditions. Burnbane, for example, reported 10. Of those, Mike Elgie had fish 22 and 13 pounds on the fly, while Willie Cumming had one of 14 pounds. Ross Barrett caught his first ever salmon, an 8 pounder on a Tay Lure. Glendelvine, next, also had 10, which included two for Magnus Glock. The Murthly 1 beat had 15 salmon while Stenton had 7. However, Murthly 2 had 34, again a best in over five years. Newtyle then had 8 and Dunkeld House 11. Dalmarnock then had 15, another best in over five years, while Dalguise had 7, Lower Kinnaird had 16 and upper Kinnaird 9, again a good score there for the time of year, without water! Even without a spate to pull fish up, Edradynate on the upper Tay had 8 and Lower Bolfracks had 6.

Fishing on the tributaries appears to have been relatively quiet, perhaps not that surprising given the weather. On the Tummel, for example, East Haugh reported two fish, but nothing was reported by Pitlochry Angling Club. The South Chesthill beat on the Lyon reported five fish, while on the Isla, the Keithick Streams beat reported two, and West Haugh on the Ericht reported one.

So, all in, what is the total likely to be? Maybe something like 900 fish from the Tay and its tributaries for October. Maybe more? Only the odd fish wasn't colouring, though I heard of some fresher fish being seen on the late lift of water right at the end of the season. While this is nothing like what we would have expected 15 or 20 years ago, it's the best for several years and crowns what has been a really encouraging season since July at least. My guess is that we should end up with over 6,000 for the season and that would have been over 7,000 anyway had the spring not been such a let down. So, we are talking about the best summer/autumn for around 10 years. We can only hope that 2025 gives us more of the same!

Tight lines

Ben Lui