

Trout and Salmon Report

River Tay

7 May 2024

“Ben Lui”

It is supposed to be said about March, but it was April which came in like a lion this year. The early part of the month was cold and the weather generally unsettled, even with some snow on the 5th. There were several rises in the first week or so, and lower river was frequently big and brown with only short fishable spells. There were more big rises to around 6 feet on the 9th, 11th and 15th and it continued cool with some days marred by strong wind. It was only after the 15th that rain gave way, and the river started a long slow fall, though it took some time to feel more spring like. By the 29th, the Tay was down to about a foot and a half, but this was broken on the last day with another rise, to around three feet.

With all the high water it isn't perhaps surprising that the lowest part of the river didn't see much activity in April, although Upper Redgorton had their first two lovely springers of the season towards the end of the month. However, Burnmouth's one, was the only fish reported from around Stanley. Even Taymount drew a blank for the month, but Stobhall had 6, with Colin Frood, Cameron Baird, Mick Dunne and Gwyd Williams being among the successful.

On Ballathie, Iain Wright's first Tay springer, a nice 11 pounder on the harled Tomic, was the only fish of the month. Cargill had three, which included a fly caught fish for Dr Richard Buckley and a 7 pounder for Neil French, who it was good to see back on the river.

April is usually the month that Islamouth comes into its own, but not so this year. The final score there was only 6, with these falling to Philip Taylor, Stuart Foxall, Kevin Andrews, Paul Dolman, Neil Mitchell and Roger Worth. The Meikleour House and Upper Islamouth beat had 9. Among those, a lady called Jane caught a nice 12 pounder, her first fly caught salmon. Lesley Reid also had a nice springer on the fly, while Yvonne Berg and her partner Chris Wong had a fish each of 10 and 13 pounds. Euan Innes had an absolute cracker of a 23 pounder while, young William Laing had a 10 pounder.

The high water of much of April obviously helped fish run. While I haven't had much reports from the Isla itself - the Keithick Mains beat had one - there was more action on the lower Ericht. The West Grange beat had a respectable 25, although sport became harder as the water fell towards the end of the month. Blairgowrie AC had fish too.

Conditions didn't help the middle Tay either for most of April. Kercock had one springer for the month, caught by Kenny Milne, while Burnbane had three: a fly caught 18 pounder for

Glenn Baikie and an 8 and a 9 pounder for Alistair Watkins and Jim MacDonald, both on Tay lures.

While Glendelvine had two, there were some better days for the Murthly beats towards the end of the month. The Murthly 1 beat finished with 7 and Murthly 2 had 9. Stenton also had three.

Newtyle did relatively well with 10 for April. The successful anglers there included Richard Henderson, who had his first fly caught salmon, Tara Spiers, Dave Maxwell, Gerald Davenport, Anthony Holloway and Hans Larsson. But special mention must go to Alan Coates who had two lovely springers on his birthday!

Above Newtyle, there was a smattering of fish. Dunkeld House had five, Dalmarnock had two and the two Kinnaird beats, two apiece also. On the upper Tay, Colin Millar had the first fish of the season from Pitnacree, a fish of about 10 pounds. Interestingly, it had no adipose fin, indicating it was a returner from clipped parr stocked in the River Lochay at the other end of Loch Tay. Findynate also reported one, Lower Bolfracks four, Lower Farleyer one and Upper Farleyer two. Peter Backhouse caught the Lower Farleyer fish, a cracker at 20 pounds. On Loch Tay, some anglers who scored included Robert McFarlane, Gary Henderson and Russell McLean.

However, the biggest success story for April was undoubtedly the River Tummel. East Haugh, for example, had an excellent month with 45. There, John Nevin had at least three springers, while Mark Thomson and Mike Smith had their first ever Tummel fish. Other successful anglers included James Graham, Graeme Black, Neil Sproull, Gary Weir, Gavin Ramsey, Don Reid, Lukasz Michalowicz, Kris Sloan, Dylan Shields, Scott Macpherson and George Renwick.

A little upstream of East Haugh, Pitlochry Angling Club's dam beat also did well with 40, its best April in over five years. Some of the more notable catches there included a 14 pounder for Jonathan Dent, a 20 pounder for Matti Rautio, two fish to 20 pounds for Martin Timmins, 12 and 16 pounders for Craig Masson, and a 17 pounder for Gordon Nichol. Iain McLaren, had three lovely fish of 12, 15 and 17 pounds, Tom Sprought and Martin Wilson had fish of 15 pounds, Dave Stewart had one of 16 pounds and Jack Pollard one of 18 pounds. But, towering above them all, Steve Watt showed how it's done with 8 springers to 14 pounds. On the club's Sawmill beat, Martin Wilson also had an 8 pounder and Martin Timmins had an 11 pounder. Good fish were also caught on the West Haugh and Dunfallandy beat. Young Brody MacQueen, seemed very chuffed with his first ever springer, an 11 pounder, while his dad, Robert MacQueen, had a cracker at 19 pounds. Jamie Broomhall also had a nice fish of 16 pounds.

The high water in the first three weeks of the month would have helped the Tummel, getting fish through without lingering long in the Tay. But people are asking me, could this

have been helped by the restoration of flow to and stocking of the River Garry? That has been going since 2018 and should now be bearing fruit. Time will tell, I guess.

Regarding the hatchery, I was saddened to hear a few weeks ago from Lesley Reid, that her mum, Mrs Jane Glass had passed away. Jane and her husband Duncan, were real stalwarts of the river, fishing every Monday on Burnbane. "Dunc", of course, was a powerhouse, a major driving force of the Tay Ghillies Association up to about 10 years ago. Without his efforts, there may never have been a hatchery. I, and I'm sure, everyone on the river, wishes Lesley, Donald and family our sincerest condolences at this time. We are also really grateful to Lesley for very kindly organising a collection on behalf of the hatchery.

Finally, what might we expect in the coming weeks? By June, when you read this, we are now into a transition month. The spring is past and we look forward to summer runs. Well, no so long ago we did. But, in recent years the summer run has become the main run and June can see some good catches, particularly, if the weather is favourable. A bit of water, but not too much, and not too hot. June fish used to run fast but nowadays the summer run seems to be a replacement for the old "autumn" run, and good fish seem also to hold up in the lower river more than before. I suggest you keep up to date with catches and conditions in real time on www.fishtay.co.uk which also has plenty of availability, should you have that last minute opportunity to go fishing.

Tight lines

Ben Lui