

AFT Biologist's Report – October to February 2019

Summary Points;

2018 Fieldwork Programme completed with exception of Nutrient project (Carcass replacement programme)

Some remaining commercial contract work to complete before end of March

MSS Government contracts completed

Aquaculture EMPs / Habitat projects under development

North catchments summary

Improvement in numbers of adult salmon returning 2018 over 2017 low

Poor distribution and low density of salmon fry in Awe catchment in 2018

Historical report of sea lice on sea trout at Dunstaffnage / Loch Etive sites underway

MSS tagging smolts continued – no report to date

Temperature logger network continued.

South catchments summary

R. Ruel habitat Improvement – meeting to discuss funding from SSE

SEPA to undertake E-Fish survey in Aray and Fyne in 2018

Historical report of sea lice on sea trout at Loch Fyne / Loch Riddon / Carradale sites underway

Wider distribution and higher density of salmon fry in south catchments (compared to north) in 2018

Eachaig E-Fish survey & report 2018 completed

Carcass replacement / nutrient Study – Fisheries Project

To understand the role of nutrient (& fish) loss in headwaters, experimental introduction of nutrient source is proposed in candidate rivers; R. Creran, Upper R. Fyne, Kinglas Water, R. Etive & Tulla Water (Awe).

Summer 2018 – baseline e-fish survey not completed due to high water / contract priorities

Spring 2019 – baseline invertebrate survey & carcass replacement treatment (March – April)

Summer 2019 – follow-up e-fish survey

National E-fish programme & Interactions contracts (MSS)

Marine Scotland Science funding a total of 30 e-fish sites with coverage all over Argyll & Islands to support salmon conservation limit process. Summary report to follow. (£12.2 K)

Ten rivers fished to collect genetic samples of juvenile salmon for farm / wild interactions study (£2.5 K).

Commercial contracts

Contract work completed contracts for; Ederline Hydro (£3 K), Carraigh Geal Wind Farm (£12 K), Eas a Ghail hydro (£0.85K)

Contract work remaining; Kinglas Hydro (£0.85K), SNH FWPM (£1.6K)

Aquaculture - Environment Monitoring Plans (EMPs)

To provide environmental data (e-fish in local rivers & sea lice burdens of sea trout) to support EMPs that are required for ASC standards and A&BC planning permission related to biomass increases. AFT biologist undertaking a review of sea trout lice burdens and feedback mechanism to fish farm management (Tarranger et. Al. 2012)

EMPs under discussion with MHS for Carradale and Loch Melfort with help from DSFB / FMS.

EMP in discussion with SSC in lower Loch Fyne.

Freshwater Habitat Improvement

MP working on development of habitat improvement projects;

£4K for Upper River Etive riparian tree regeneration in 2019

Application to Ruel wind farm Trust / SSE for further work on R. Ruel in 2019

Identifying location in the Awe catchment for tree regen / woody debris and other projects