



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT
SALMON FISHERY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025



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**1. River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board Members**

Chair:	Johnny Warrender	Benan, Pinmore, Board Member
Board Members:	Lord Richard Wellesley Francis Young Pam Dunlop	Knockdolian, Colmonell Balnowlart Glengennet
Co-opted Members:	Gordon Hyslop Roger Pirrie Francis Young	Colmonell Angling Club (Salmon Angler's Rep) Colmonell Angling Club (Salmon Angler's Rep) Balnowlart Beat
Associate:	Stuart Brabbs Struan Candlish Carolyn Bryce	Trust Manager, Ayrshire Rivers Trust Fisheries Biologist, Ayrshire Rivers Trust Biologist, Ayrshire Rivers Trust
Clerk:	Iain K Clark	Gilson Gray LLP, Glasgow

2. River Stinchar DSFB Members' Attendance

Date	Johnny Warrender	Gordon Hyslop	Roger Pirrie	Lord Richard Wellesely	Francis Young
26/03/24	✓	Apology	✓	✓	
18/06/24	Apology	✓	✓	Apology	
16/07/24	✓	✓	✓	Apology	
03/12/24	✓	✓	✓	Apology	
11/02/25	✓	✓	✓		✓



3. Report from the Chair

Welcome to the Annual Report of the River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board for the year 2024/2025.

This Board endeavours to rally as many Riparian Owners and other interested parties to these gatherings as possible. It is therefore gratifying to see some new faces and also to introduce you to two new members being proposed for election to the Board at our Triennial Meeting: Pam Dunlop from Glengennet and Francis Young from Balnowlart.

The 2024 season on the beautiful River Stinchar reflected a glimmer of optimism. Our returns were almost twice as good as the 2023 season. 162 salmon and grilse were caught and 99 seatrout. All of these were returned to the river. The previous season the catches were as follows: 83 salmon and grilse, (one killed) and 59 seatrout all returned.

There were 541 rod effort days recorded in 2024, just a little more than the 511 rod effort days recorded for 2023.

There are still some outstanding Catch return forms. I would implore those who have not yet returned their forms to do so promptly. Accurate rod records lay the foundations on which much of our knowledge and forecasting is built. An example of this forecasting is, that it appears that every fourth season the Stinchar has a larger number of fish returning. This summer marks one of those quadruple events.

The River Stinchar is graded, once again, as Grade 3. This means that ALL salmon, grilse and seatrout must be returned. Last year it was encouraging to see that 100% of fish caught were returned to the river. This good practice must continue.

The Board has been occupied by an on-going review of our historic practices. With the assistance of Gilson Gray and our Clerk, Iain Clark, we have brought our administration up to date. Efficiencies and greater accountability are now in place. I am very grateful to all who have embraced the changes and helped with their timely payments and records.

Next year there will be a Revaluation, and discussions are underway with the Assessor. However, it is for every Riparian owner to approach the Assessor themselves, if they feel there is good reason to have their rateable value reviewed.

Ayrshire River Trust (ART) continue to be our advisors and bring much scientific analysis and guidance to the attention of the Board. Both Stuart Brabbs and Struan Candlish are in close touch with other rivers throughout Scotland. They are well informed as to where funding can be found. It is this Board's aim to continue its good working relationship with ART and jointly pursue future projects identified by their fishery management plan. Much of their work is what you pay for and you will hear from them tonight regarding what they have been doing on your behalf.

I am very grateful to my fellow Board Member, Gordon Hyslop, for his tenacious pursuit for a licence to control predatory birds. Each year this essential management tool proves more difficult to get. However we will continue to do our best to navigate through all the obstacles that stand between us and the licensing authorities. In the meantime Gordon and Robert Elliot are once again organising the shepherding of smolts to the sea. This is an important operation and one that I would like to thank them both for organising.



This last winter's storms have caused erosion and collapse of river banks and I would remind all land owners that before any large restoration works are begun a licence does have to be applied for from SEPA. Our Board Member, Gordon Hyslop, would be able to provide appropriate advice.

As mentioned regularly, it is an obligation on all owners and anglers that participate on the water to adhere to the rules governing our code of practice. These updated guidelines will be circulated to every Riparian owner and posted on the website, including the details of the new Catch Return App developed by ART.

This Season the Board has appointed three river watchers and a co-ordinator. In the event of anyone seeing suspicious behaviour or malpractice, you are encouraged to ring Jack Warrender. He will then organise an appropriate response. The police, ART & SEPA have agreed to be on hand if it comes to the law having to be enforced. More details and publicity will follow.

Your support for the Board is gratefully appreciated. We are also here to listen and to help. We can all only do our best to responsibly look after this precious environment. Unfortunately, some things are out of our control. As often said 'Worse things happen at sea'. For now we must value what are rapidly becoming rare and precious trophies; our salmon.

Good Luck to you all this coming season and thank you to my fellow Board Members and the patient and hard working Iain Clark.

Jonathan Warrender
Chair, River Stinchar
District Salmon Fishery Board





4. Statutory Remit

The River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board was established under the 1862 and 1868 Salmon Fisheries legislation, as subsequently amended in the Salmon Act 1986 and the Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001. This legislation was later amalgamated under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 (“**the 2003 Act**”), which has subsequently been amended by the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Acts 2007 and 2013.

The River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board is empowered under Part 3 of the 2003 Act to manage the protection, enhancement and conservation of the Atlantic salmon and sea trout stocks in the River Stinchar. It also has a duty to ensure the general protection and improvement of the fisheries within their district.

(a) Aims of The Board

- Protecting and improving the fisheries within its district
- Increasing salmon
- Running a restocking programme in selected areas where low numbers of parr and salmon are identified.
- Encouraging responsible angling

The River Stinchar DSFB works to raise the profile of the economic, cultural and environmental importance of the River Stinchar to the local area, both among residents and visiting anglers.

The Board represents the interests of the River Stinchar at regional and national forums.

(b) The Catchment Area

The Stinchar has its headwaters in the Carrick Forest to the north of the Galloway Forest Park, and only one kilometre from the source of the river Girvan. It has a main drainage course of 54 kilometres and from its source initially flows north before turning south westward through Barr, Pinwherry and Colmonell to enter the sea at Ballantrae.

The river has a catchment area of 253 square kilometres, which includes the main tributaries of the Muck Water, the River Duisk, the Water of Tig and the Assel. The geology of the Stinchar catchment varies from the granite headwater hills to the limestone coal measures in the middle reaches. Water chemistry mirrors the geology ranging from low productivity and intermittent acidic conditions in the upper tributaries to the highly productive, alkaline tributaries downstream of Dalmellington.



5. Summary of the Work done by the Board

(a) Report from the Clerk to the Board

A summary of the work done in the 2024/2025 season is noted below:

1. Various calls and correspondence over some months with the former Clerk and his secretary regarding information and documentation required to complete the handover of the role; and to bring the Board's records up to date.
2. Dealing with the renewal of the Board's Registration as a data controller to process personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
3. Extensive correspondence and calls with various Riparian Owners, former Owners and New Owners, regarding outstanding Fishery Assessments; and preparing and updating a detailed Fishery Assessment Spreadsheet (on an almost daily basis) to update the Board's records, as payments were made, queries made and answered; and reporting to the Board.
4. Liaising with Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board to obtain Valuation Roll Extracts; and submitting updated records to have the Valuation Roll updated to reflect the updating of the Board's records
5. Letters to Riparian Owners and Tenants enclosing Fishery Assessment Notices, Reminders and Second Reminders
6. Detailed analysis of previous Assessment Rates and preparation of Reports for Board re Proposed Fishery Assessments Rates
7. Processing, and accounting for the payments of Fishery Assessments and Fishery Assessment Arrears and making payment of expenditure approved by the Board.
8. Review of financial position/Preparation of Finance Updates for Board
9. Correspondence with Azets regarding the preparation of the Draft Accounts to 5 April 2025 and associated Corporation Tax Return
10. Issuing Calling Notices, collating and issuing Board packs, taking and extending Minutes for Board Meetings, including publication on the Board's Website and liaising with Ayrshire Rivers Trust and Fisheries Management Scotland for publication on their websites
11. Updating the Board's Angling Code of Practice, as directed by the Board, and in liaison with Ayrshire Rivers Trust.
12. Liaising with various Board Members, Ayrshire Rivers Trust and Fisheries Management Scotland, in order to draft, revise and submit responses to various Consultations (see below)



13. Calls, correspondence and virtual meetings with Fisheries Management Scotland, and SEPA, supported by Ayrshire Rivers Trust, regarding a number of matters, including SEPA Sea Lice Framework Consultation.
14. Advising on the possible introduction of a River Watch Scheme.
15. Maintaining various Good Governance Documents and records including: Policy on Members' Interests, Meetings Protocol and Complaints Procedure.
16. Liaising with CE Project Management regarding proposed changes and updates and thereafter updating the Board's Website (www.stincharfishing.co.uk).
17. Receiving and sending all correspondence for the Board.
18. Providing general advice and support to the Board, as required, including consideration of matters relating to Assessments, promotion of the Board's Code of Practice; and liaising with other clubs, associations and other organisations, as appropriate.
19. Sending letters to Riparian Owners, Clubs and Associations enclosing new Annual Catch Return Forms, sending reminders; collating Annual Catch Returns, updating the Board's records, and preparing summary spreadsheet for inclusion in Annual Report.
20. Drafting, preparing and updating a *Fisheries Information Pack* for New Riparian Owners (to be circulated to all Owners, Tenants, Clubs and Associations); and uploading to Board's Website.
21. Preparation of the Draft Annual Report, including drafting and collation of reports from various Board Members and other contributors.

(b) Report on Fishery Assessments

Throughout the year, the Clerk to the Board prepared detailed Reports to the Board for their consideration. A summary of the key points to note from the Board's reasoning and decisions is below.

i. Introduction

The Board has the power under *section 44 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 Act* to impose Fishery Assessments, which are "...assessed at such uniform rate as is determined for all fisheries in the district by the board and shall be exigible according to the valuation of a fishery as entered in the valuation roll."

Therefore, the Board requires, each year, to determine the rate at which Fishery Assessments are assessed and issue Fishery Assessment Notices for payment by the Riparian Owners/Tenants. Ultimately, responsibility for payment rests with the Riparian Owners for the relevant year (which for these purposes, runs from 1 April to 31 March).



ii. Updating of the Board's Records regarding Ownership/Tenancies

It is critical that the Board's records are fully up to date, to ensure that the correct persons receive the Assessments, as well as other information issued by the Board.

Following the previous extensive work undertaken to comprehensively update the current Fishery Assessment List; the Clerk will continue to liaise with Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board to ensure that the Valuation Roll is updated in accordance with the Board's Records.

On many occasions this process is hampered by out of date information. A number of sales and transfers of ownership of land, associated Riparian Owners' rights and tenancies had not been notified to the River Stinchar DSFB or to the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

Could all Riparian Owners, Tenants, Clubs and Associations PLEASE notify us timeously of any change of ownership or tenancy, together with the date of transfer and any payment arrangements e.g. to apportion payment of Fishery Assessments. This will help us maintain accurate records and ensure that Fishery Assessments are sent to the correct persons.

Please also provide your email address and telephone contact numbers, which will aid more efficient communication with the Board generally (and help to keep costs down for the Board).

iii. Previous Fishery Assessment Rates – 2015 to 2022

In fixing the Annual Rate for Fishery Assessments, the Board considered matters in the context of previous decisions fixing the Rates of Fishery Assessment and the associated reasoning, summarised as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value of River</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Value from Assessments</u>	<u>Comments/Reasoning</u>
2013/2014	£50,225.00	30p	£15,067.50	
2014/2015	£50,225.00	34p	£17,060.50	
2015/2016	£50,225.00	34p	£17,060.50	
2016/2017	£50,225.00	34p	£17,060.50	Low Assessment rate agreed
2017/2018	£54,260.00	34p	£18,448.40	River Value increased by £4,035.00 after Re-Valuation
2018/2019	£54,260.00	34p	£18,448.40	
2019/2020	£54,260.00	34p	£18,448.40	
2020/2021	£53,860.00	12p	£6,463.20	River Value reduced by £400, Reduction of rates by 22p – poor season, COVID etc
2021/2022	£51,860.00	34p	£17,632.40	
2022/2023	£53,860.00	38p	£20,466.80	
2023/2024	£24,450.00	80p	£19,560.00	River Value reduced by £29,410 - equivalent of a 55% reduction
2024/2025	£24,450.00	80p	£19,560.00	Board decided to set same rate



iv. Fishery Assessment Rate for 2024/2025

Historically, the Board was aware that COVID-19 caused problems for everyone, including the fishing community. As a consequence of lockdown, falling catch numbers, lack of fishing effort and the fact that some clubs had been struggling, the Board took account of their decision in the previous year (2020/2021), for one year only, to set the Fishery Assessment Rate at a much reduced rate of 12 pence. It subsequently fixed the rate for 2022/2023 at 38 pence.

Upon review of the new Valuation Roll from Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (AVJB) with effect from 1 April 2023 (a reduction of £29,410 i.e. 55%) of the Value of the River to £19,560, the Board unanimously decided at its meeting on 10 July 2023, to increase the rate to 80 pence per £.

For the reasons noted above the Board has fixed Assessment Rates lower than the increases in RPI over the last few years. However, the decision last year also recognised the increase in cost of living, affecting all sectors, including the Board.

The Board requires to secure sufficient funds from Fishery Assessments to cover necessary expenditure to meet the Board’s statutory obligations for the purpose of the protection or improvement of the fisheries within the River Stinchar Catchment Area; and monies to help fund projects on the river, whilst also providing for some degree of contingency.

Taking account of all of the above, at its meeting on 3 December 2024, the Board fixed the Assessment Rate again at 80 pence per £ for season 2024/2025. Fishery Assessment Notices will be issued in May 2025.

v. Report on Fishery Assessments outstanding at 6 May 2025

Due to the significant disruption caused to the former Clerk and his secretary by furlough of personnel / COVID-19 constraints, the new Clerk to the Board required to undertake significant work, including a complete overhaul of the record-keeping, development of a new system of issuing, engathering and monitoring Fishery Assessments and Arrears of Assessments (some of them outstanding for several years). The position at 6 May 2025 is summarised:

	RECOVERED BY GGLLP	% RECOVERED	Total Outstanding	No of Beats Outstanding
Arrears 2020/2021 to 2022/2023	£15,784.00	98.69%	£210.00	2
Of which Arrears 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 remaining Queried/Disputed			£210.00	2
Arrears of Fishery Assessments 2023/2024	£19,304.00	98.69%	£256.00	2
Fishery Assessments 2024/2025	£18,608.00	95.13%	£952.00	8
TOTALS	£53,696.00	97.43%	£1,418.00	



(c) Consultation Responses

The Board considers that it is an important part of its role to respond appropriately to Consultations from Scottish Government, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and other organisations.

During 2024/2025, with assistance from Ayrshire Rivers Trust (“**ART**”) and liaising with Fisheries Management Scotland, when required, the Clerk continued to monitor ongoing work undertaken by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency Consultation on Sea Lice Risk Assessment Framework Consultation.

(d) Good Governance

i. Introduction:

The *Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013* requires all District Salmon Fishery Boards to operate in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

The River Stinchar DSFB has prepared this Annual Report in compliance with the Guidance on Good Governance Obligations:

- *Section 44 (1)* requires preparation of an Annual Report and a Statement of Accounts (which shall be audited) relating to the activities of the Board. The report and accounts are to be considered by an Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.
- *Section 44 (1A)* requires the Clerk of the Board to arrange for the final Annual Report and Audited Accounts to be published and a copy of these to be sent to Scottish Ministers. Publication is to take place as soon as practicable after the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.
- *Section 44 (1B)* defines the final Annual Report and Audited Accounts as those submitted for consideration at the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors or, if they are revised following that meeting, the revised versions.
- *Section 46A* requires that the Annual Report contains specific information: a summary of the activity carried out by the Board under their statutory functions in the reporting year; a summary of the proposed activity of the Board for the year to come; information on complaints made to the Board during the reporting period (their number, a statement of the nature of each and how it was disposed of); and a statement of how the Board has complied with the good governance requirements of the *Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003* (“**the 2003 Act**”) during the course of the reporting year and how they propose to comply in the year to come.



ii. Statement of Compliance:

The River Stinchar DSFB has introduced policies and documents, as detailed below, in order to comply with the good governance requirements of the 2003 Act. As part of this the River Stinchar DSFB voluntarily adheres to the Scottish Government's District Salmon Fishery Boards Guidance on Good Governance Obligations (August 2013) and proposes to continue to comply in the year to come in the same way.

In particular, the River Stinchar DSFB has operated as follows:

o Meetings Protocol

- The Board's Protocol on Meetings is published on the Board's website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
- Meetings of the Board were held on 18 June 2024, 16 July 2024, 3 December 2024, and 11 February 2025.
- 8 members of the public attended Board1 Meetings in 2024/2025
- The minutes from these meetings will be posted on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
- The Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors took place on 6 May 2025 at Colmonell Community Hall, 37 Main Street, KA26 0RY.
- A Calling Notice was issued to all Board Members and Qualified Proprietors. 8 members of the public chose to attend.
- The minutes from this meeting will be published on the Board's Website at <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
- The Annual Public Meeting is due to take place on 3 June 2025 at Colmonell Community Hall, 37 Main Street, KA26 0RY.
- This meeting will also be publicised on the Board's Website, and through the Websites of Ayrshire Rivers Trust and Fisheries



Management Scotland. A copy of the notice will also be sent to the Scottish Government.

- The minutes from this meeting will be published on the Board's Website at <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
- Declaration of Members' Interests
 - The Board's Policy on Members' Interest is published on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
 - The Register of Members' Interests and Declarations are retained by the Clerk to the Board and can be viewed on a written request to the Clerk
 - We have included a standing item at each Board meeting inviting Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.
- Complaints Policy
 - The Board has set up and maintains a Complaints Procedure, which can be viewed on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
 - The procedure is reviewed annually.
 - There have been no formal complaints during 2024/2025.
- Annual Report and Audited Statement of Accounts
 - This Annual Report will be published on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
 - The Audited Statement of Accounts will be published on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
 - The previous Audited Statements of Accounts have also been published on the Board's Website at: <http://www.Stincharfishing.co.uk/about-us/>
- Reporting to Scottish Government

Since these procedures have been introduced by the Board, the Board will be reporting to the Scottish Ministers using the following address: DSFBGoodGovernance@gov.scot



(e) Code of Practice

The Board regularly reviews and revises the Code of Practice when required.

The Draft Code of Practice is produced before the Board for approval as follows:



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board Code of Practice

Legal requirements and Conservation measures

River category

The Scottish Government has designated the Stinchar as “Poor (Grade 3)” river Conservation Status for the protection of the species. **This means that it is a criminal offence to kill any salmon or grilse within the catchment of the river.**

Legal requirements

Salmon and sea trout season - 25th February to 31st October inclusive.

1. Anglers must: -

- (a) **Release all salmon and grilse throughout the season.**
- (b) Release all unseasonable and gravid fish e.g. kelts, baggots and rawners.
- (c) Return to the water, any badly bleeding or any fish which dies after being caught.
- (d) Carry proof of current, written permission for inspection purposes.
- (e) Use a knotless landing net bag.
- (f) Sign *Gyrodactylus Salaris* Declaration Forms before fishing.

2. Owners of salmon fishing rights must: -

- (a) Ensure that all their anglers comply with 1 (a) to (f) above.
- (b) Complete a Return of Scottish Salmon and Sea Trout Rod Catches Form. This must be completed and returned to Marine Scotland, Inchbraoch House, South Quay, Ferryden, Montrose DD10 9UA **as soon as possible after the end of the fishing season and not later than 31st December each year.**

Failure to return a completed form within the required timescale, or to make a false statement is an offence. **The maximum penalty is £1000.**

- (c) Complete an Annual Catch Return for the River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board **as soon as possible after the end of the fishing season and not later**



than 31st December each year. **PROVIDING ACCURATE DATA** helps the Board make assessments on projects to manage the protection, enhancement and conservation of Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout stocks in the River Stinchar catchment.

- (d) All anglers are requested to record rod effort and to distinguish between Grilse and Salmon caught in their Catch Returns. The distinguishing break point between smaller Grilse and Multi Sea Winter Salmon is generally considered to be 68cm or approximately 26.5 inches in length.

3. **Conservation measures and best practice**

- (a) All sea trout and whitling must be released.
(b) Avoid deep and damaging hooking by using: -
i. One treble or single hooks only on Rapala-type lures
ii. One single hook only on "flying C" lures.
iii. Barbless or circle hooks when worming

4. **Safe landing and handling requirements**

Before you set off, make sure you have the following tackle for safe catch and release:

Suitable tackle - Use fishing tackle that is capable of landing salmon quickly to avoid exhausting them before release.

Barbless hooks – for quick release and minimised risk of bleeding when removing the hooks, always use a barbless hook. A size 8 (or preferably smaller) is recommended.

A knotless net – use a wide, soft knotless net to minimise damage by allowing the fish to lie flat as well as reducing damage to its scales.

Tip: to assist with a swift release make sure you have a tool, such as long-nosed forceps, at hand for prompt hook removal. Also, if you plan on recording or taking a photograph of your catch, make sure that you keep all the equipment close to hand so that this can be done quickly.

Landing the fish

It's vital not to lift the fish out of the water; research has shown that salmon which are exposed to air, even for a short period, have a significantly reduced survival rate. Certainly do not lift the salmon by the tail or gill cover, as this can cause internal damage as well as damage to tendons.

Recording your catch

If you want to take a photograph of your catch, keep the fish in the water or at least slightly above it and support the fish gently under its belly. When handling the salmon, always do so with wet hands to avoid damaging (burning) the fish's outer boundary layer of mucus – which protects it against disease and parasites. If you must weigh the fish, then weigh with the fish enclosed in the net or use a weigh net.

A tape measure or wading stick can be marked to record approximate length – this should be done while the fish is kept in the water. This can also be used against a chart to measure approximate weight.



Recovery and unhooking the fish

Gently remove the hook by hand or with forceps when the fish is quiet. If it is deeply embedded, then cut the leader as close as possible to the hook. Generally, fish can be released and survive with the hook still attached and this will cause less damage to the fish than if the embedded hook is removed.

Recovery may take some time, but it is vital for fish to be allowed to recover before they are released into clean, steady water.

Download a helpful Best Practice Guidance from Fisheries Management Scotland:

<https://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Best-Practice-Guidance-Catch-and-Release-January-2025.pdf>

5. Farmed Salmon / Pink (Pacific) Salmon

If you capture a farmed salmon or pink (pacific) salmon, it should be humanely killed and the Board informed on the above contact details. Scale samples (in the case of pink salmon, the whole salmon) should be taken and sent to Ayrshire Rivers Trust.

The capture should also be reported on the Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) Website Reporting tool at:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/1b8632f1d06c48c89bbac8901d084346>

FMS Guidance on identifying farmed salmon can be found at:

<http://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/200908-Aqua-Guidance-for-Anglers.pdf>

Ayrshire Rivers Trust's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwKwPv1yGBM&t=271s>

FMS Guidance on identifying Pink (Pacific) Salmon can be found at:

<http://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/210519-INNS-Statement-Pink-salmon.pdf>

6. Giant Hogweed / Japanese Knotweed / Himalayan Balsam

See Ayrshire Rivers Trust's leaflet at:

<http://www.doonfishing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ART-Invasive-Weeds-Information-30.06.21.pdf> *[to be updated for Stinchar]*

7. Catch Returns

Ayrshire Rivers Trust has helped the Board in developing a Catch Return App for use by anglers in the River Stinchar catchment. This allows you to record your Rod Effort and Catches and upload details of the date, time and location to a central location, which will aid the provision of official Annual Catch Returns to both Scottish Government Marine Inspectorate and the River Stinchar DSFB.

Download the Web Version of the App at:

<https://arcg.is/Hm1my>



Or use the camera on your phone to scan the QR Code:



Link to video produced by ART on how to download and operate the App:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/uJuE5uzvZCg?si=zE-41uc7g7GEILtB>

8. Safety

Be aware of safety on and around the River. Anglers approach the River at their own risk.

These Legal requirements and Conservation measures will be regularly reviewed.

Many thanks for your cooperation and tight lines!





(f) Scientific Report



Ayrshire Rivers Trust

working to improve Ayrshire's rivers and lochs

Stinchar DSFB Meeting – May 2025. 2024

ART undertook the annual timed monitoring of the River Stinchar and Duisck for the Board in the early summer of 2024. These results showed an increase in juvenile salmon numbers from the 2023 results which were disappointing, not just on the Stinchar but across Ayrshire.

The Stinchar had the highest average number of fry per minute of all the four DSFB controlled rivers in 2024. Whilst we always caution when comparing results from different rivers and sites due to their individual and unique characteristics, there is normally a correlation between these annual survey results and the 4 Ayrshire DSFB controlled rivers as they often follow very similar juvenile trends. Timed electrofishing results therefore often follow similar patterns of annual increases /decreases on these rivers, indicating that the marine survival element of the salmon's lifecycle influences in river production and all our rivers face challenges beyond the control of freshwater managers. A full report and breakdown of the electrofishing in 2024 will be provided at the next meeting. Anyone with questions or seeking to discuss the contents, may get in touch with the biologists at any time.

2023 was a poor year across the country for fry numbers and when compared with the results in 2024 the Stinchar has almost doubled its count of 8.6 fry per minute in 2023 to 16 fry per minute in 2024. This is encouraging.

When the timed data is analysed (since 2012), there does seem to be a higher number of salmon fry in every fourth year since 2013, the hope would be that 2025 ought to be a good year and with reported catches across Ayrshire higher this season the expectation should be that there ought to be good numbers of salmon fry however, until electrofishing is undertaken next summer this is just a hypothesis.

Spawning Activity

Whilst carrying out the Bird count ART staff noted several pairs of fish spawning which was very encouraging and in line with what we were seeing across other Ayrshire rivers. We will have to wait until the summer electrofishing to fully understand how success the spawning has been but we are buoyed by what we saw over the winter.

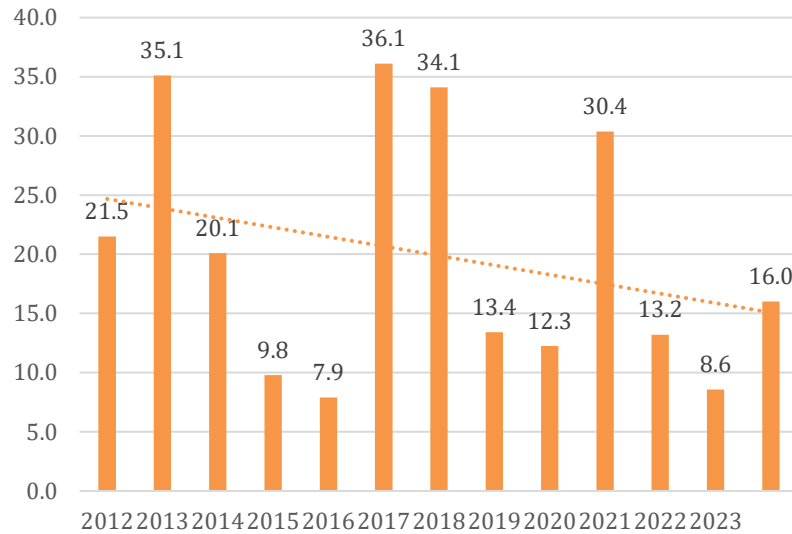
Electrofishing Surveys/Monitoring 2024

2024 Timed Classification	
0	Absent
0.2 - 3.6	Very Poor
3.8- 8.2	Poor
8.3- 13.1	Moderate
13.2-21.3	Good
>21.4	Excellent

River Stinchar main stem timed salmon fry survey results 2003-2023															
Site	Location	Salmon/m In	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TSM18	u/s of Water of Tig near Balnowliart	Fry			4	2.2	1.3	12.8	5.8		5.6	8	6	4	3.2
TSM17	Kirkhill, u/s Colmonell Bridge	Fry	29.2	47.4	6.4	12.2	10.2	5.2	2.4	12	9.6	16.2	10.8	10	22.8
TSM15	Craig House	Fry	13.4	18	19.2	5.3	5.2	33.8	23	15	18.8	11.4	13.2	3.4	14.4
TSM3	Hallowchapel d/s Duisk	Fry	21	42	22	6.3	7.6	33.6	37.8	26.4	18.6	7.8	13	9.2	22.8
TSM12	Laggansarroch	Fry	18.4	36	8.4	2.6	4.2	15.8	12.8	7.2	7.8	32.4		4.4	12
TSM4	At Pinclanty Mill	Fry	25	48	31.8	17.8	9.4	34.8	46.4	29.8	11.6	45.8	7.2	8.2	12.4
TSM6	Downstream Auchensoul Bridge	Fry	24.6	24.6	31.8	18.2	11.0	27.2	44.2	13.4	18.8	21.2	22.4	16.8	16.8
TSM11	Upstream Barr, close to Milton Bridge	Fry				11.7	8.0	25.2	32.4	6.6	9.2	17.8	14.4	5.8	15.2
TSM7	At gravel extraction point	Fry	18.2	40.2	17.4	12.4	7.8	47.8	22.2	16.6	13.4	40.2	18.4	15.6	22.8
TSM16	Aldinna	Fry								2.2	9.2	32.2	13.4	8.2	9.6
Mean		Fry	21.5	35.1	20.1	9.8	7.9	36.1	34.1	13.4	12.3	30.4	13.2	8.6	16.0

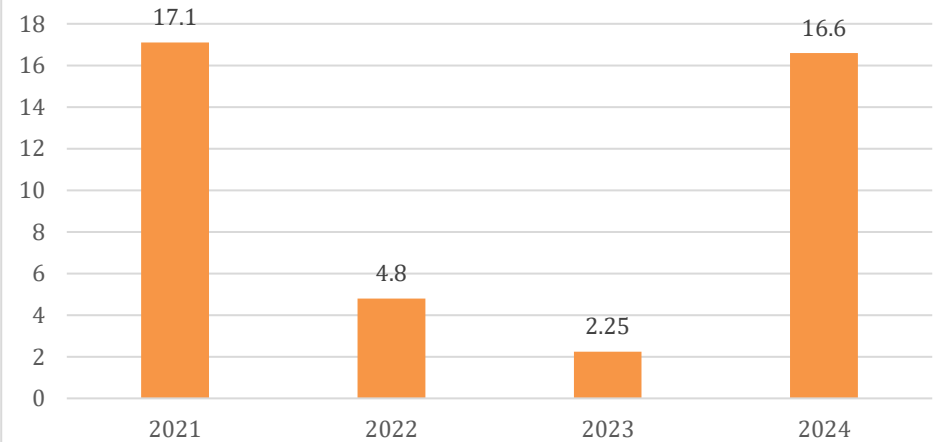


Stinchar: Average Yearly Salmon Fry Since 2012



Duisk Timed Efishing					
Location	Site	2021	2022	2023	2024
Barrhill cross Water confi'	TSDM1	17	N/R	0.5	15.2
	TSDM2	17.2	4.8	4	18
Average		17.1	4.8	2.25	16.6
4 year average			10.2		

Duisk: Average Yearly Salmon Fry Caught since 2021





Windfarm Development Monitoring

ART undertook several surveys to monitor the fish populations potentially impacted by the development of infrastructure associated with Arecleoch and Chirmorie Windfarms. Invertebrate populations are also monitored alongside fish populations as invertebrates are long term indicators of water quality. ART collect and analyse spring as well as autumn samples from each site as the communities found in spring and autumn are subject to natural seasonal variability. The results from the development monitoring will be detailed in the Electrofishing Report which is currently being produced.

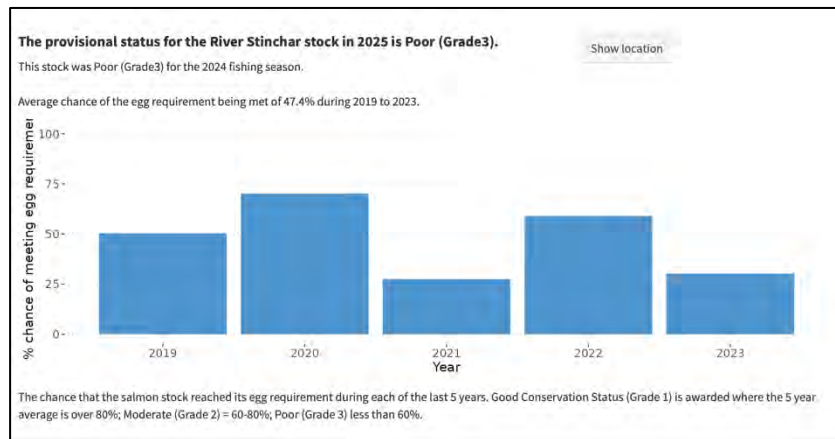
Japanese knotweed control

ART undertook JK control on the Stinchar to the value of £3000 (staff time and chemical). This was carried out from Barr down to Auchensoul, Hallowchapel and downstream of Colmonell Bridge. Every year of control is bringing significant improvements, it also brings us into contact with landowners we wouldn't ordinarily have occasion to speak with. This has been valuable in helping build relationships and demonstrates that the Board is delivering valuable proactive works on the catchment.

See attached maps.

River Categorisation

Scottish Government are changing the classification of the grading system in 2025, with what was category three being rebranded as poor, category two as moderate and category one as good. This will not have any material impact on anglers with the same mandatory catch and release required of poor/cat 3 rivers.



The Stinchar will remain a category 3/poor grading in 2025.

Funding Applications.

ART have prepared and submitted a first stage funding application to Carrick Futures for the control of JK across the Stinchar Catchment. If successful, the project would bring around £75,000 of investment into the catchment over 3 years. If granted this funding, we would look to bring in match funding to improve the reach and longevity of the project. Whilst a contribution from the Board would be required this would be less than the current rate of JK control the Board invests in annually and would help free Board money up to deliver other priorities across the catchment. We will also be seeking match funding from other sources with interests on the Duisk catchment.

We should know if we are to be invited to submit a full application by May 2025.

Catch records and returns – the new recording App for anglers



The Clerk and Board have been keen to streamline the official catch return process that is often poorly completed. Both the DSFB and the Marine Directive (MD – formerly Marine Scotland) require the same data on different forms at the same time of the year which can lead to confusion. With MD requiring anglers to record their rod effort now added to annual catch reporting requirements, ART have developed a new phone app that should make these data easier to submit and collate.

Using GIS (Global Information Systems), our new web-based App will allow anglers to report their catches in real time to the Board using their mobile phones. Catch reports submitted by anglers can now include length and weight of fish, the beats and or pools fished, rod effort, photos of any fish captured, signs of disease or pollution discovered and all submitted in real time. SEPA should always be informed of pollution points directly but we encourage anglers to let ART know too. We are happy to take suggestions from anyone using the App if they feel improvements could be made.

Anglers will still be required to submit returns to the proprietors/clubs but in time the App may offer a suitable alternative once fully adopted. The app is currently being tested by a limited number of beats but should be available to roll out for wider use soon. Only time will tell how the anglers take to reporting directly using their phones but we hope this will be seen as beneficial by all owners, clubs and anglers and encouraged.

ART have produced a short video demonstrating how to use this that can be shared widely amongst clubs/syndicates. We can have download codes in fishing huts to prompt anglers to download and start using the app.

River Stinchar Catch Returns

Legal requirements and Conservation measures
 The Scottish Government has designated the River Stinchar as "Poor (Grade 3)" river Conservation Status for the protection of the species.

This means that it is a criminal offence to kill any salmon or grilse within the catchment of the river.

Legal requirements
 Salmon and sea trout season - 25th February to 31st October inclusive.

Anglers must:

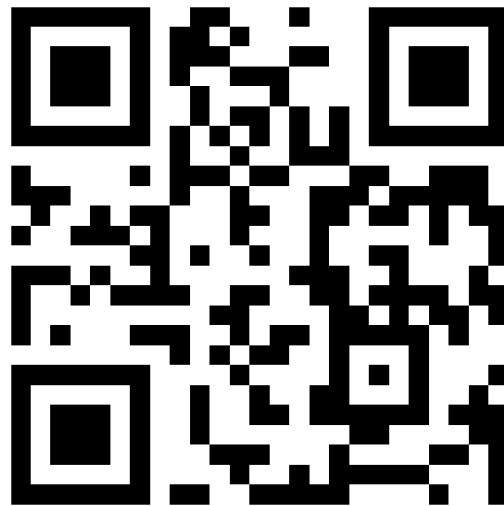
- Release all salmon and grilse throughout the season.
- Release all unseasonable and gravid fish e.g. kelts, baggots and rawners.
- Return to the water, any badly bleeding or any fish which dies after being caught.
- Carry proof of current, written permission for inspection purposes.
- Use a knotless landing net bag.
- Sign Gyrodactylus Salaris Declaration Forms before fishing

By submitting this form, you consent to the River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board and Ayrshire Rivers Trust storing and using your personal information for 1 year, after which personal information will be deleted. Catch return records will be sent back to the appropriate beat on your behalf.

Name*
 Please provide your full name for the catch return records.

Date

4/17/2025



National Park Proposal

There is a proposal for a Galloway National Park that could potentially cover the Stinchar catchment. We have attended and discussed the proposal with NatureScot representatives and whilst there is little detail on this at the moment the Trust are fully engaged with the process and will keep inform the DSFB of any developments/consultations.

Pinmullan Burn Tree Planting

ART staff have completed the planting of 350 native broadleaf trees across the lower reaches of the Pinmullan Burn.



Figure 1: The upper section of the Pinnmullan Burn - the area is fenced but had very little tree growth.

We secured a grant of £952.50 towards the cost of trees, guards and stakes – a species mix of alder x100, willow x100, crab apple x65, oak x35, birch x32 and wild cherry x18 to supplement the budget the Board had committed to this work. We still need to improve the water gates at

this site (as was part of the Boards agreement) and we will look to do this ASAP.

Over and above the grant from the Biosphere we have a cost of £1911.00 to deliver this work – with further spend to make good the water gates.



Piscivorous Bird Licence

Unfortunately, the Board has been refused the cull licence submitted prior to Christmas. We have spoken with the Chair of the Ayr Board and various others from across the country to understand where they are getting success for their licence applications. We do believe that it is worth pursuing this, but we need to increase the evidence level. This means more counts over the year to justify the licence. We suggest a monthly count would make it very difficult for NatureScot to refuse providing that there are enough to warrant a cull licence. Having increased surveying efforts for one year should help secure a licence for next winter.



We have produced a recording sheet for the smolt shepherding that the Board will be undertaking this spring that should aid with the application for a piscivorous bird licence later in the year. More frequent counts are crucial to obtaining a licence for the 2025/2026.

Baliffing Fund

Fishery Management Scotland (FMS) developed and submitted a bid for equipment to the Marine Fund that each of the Boards and Trust's were invited to submit a request for various pieces of equipment from including thermal binoculars, scopes, drones etc. We sent a request for equipment to FMS for various pieces of equipment on behalf of the Board – we will inform the Board ASAP once we know the outcome of this application.

Pink Salmon Surveys

In the summer of 2023 SEPA and ART, on behalf of Fishery Management Scotland (FMS) undertook e-DNA samples for pink salmon at sites on the River Ayr and River Stinchar. The sampling that we undertook for Scottish Government in late August 2023 had no DNA matches with pink salmon. SEPA however sampled in early August (closer to pink salmon spawning time) and had a 'inconclusive detection' at the lower site at Ballantrae. This means that there was a signal detected, but the signal was insufficient to be conclusive. Our advice is that all anglers and particularly those in the lower river should be vigilant for these fish and if captured they should be dispatched and reported to Fishery Management Scotland, ART and the DSFB. Pink salmon have a biennial life cycle and may be expected in our rivers in 2025. We would strongly recommend anglers be extra vigilant through the early summer this year.

This report was produced by Stuart Brabbs, trust manager and Carolyn Bryce, senior biologist.



Ayrshire Rivers Trust

River Stinchar

Electrofishing Report 2024



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1. Introduction

Ayrshire Rivers Trust (ART) was formed in 2000 to provide a source of local fisheries management and biological expertise in Ayrshire. The Stinchar DSFB helps to fund ART each year and in return receives management advice based upon survey work. A major part of the survey work involves examining the distribution and density of fish populations through electrofishing at a network of sites throughout the Stinchar catchment. The sites visited in 2024 by ART were examined as part of a long-term monitoring strategy, to investigate stocking success and to address specific issues arising over the previous year.

The aims of the 2024 electrofishing survey were:

- To examine salmon fry production in the main stem of the River Stinchar
- To monitor changes in fish density elsewhere in the catchment, at both good and poor-quality sites, as part of a long term monitoring strategy
- To investigate fish stocks at sites where developments may alter spawning success or juvenile survival
- To collect water quality data at electrofishing sites
- To provide the Stinchar DSFB with the information from these surveys and make suggestions on where improvements can be made

1.1 Salmonid fish and fisheries

Migratory salmonids; Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*) and other native fish populations commonly use freshwater habitats for breeding and development of early life-stages. Typically, juvenile salmon and trout spend between one and three years in freshwater before migrating to sea as smolts. Salmon may spend between one and three years in the Atlantic Ocean before returning as mature fish to spawn within their natal river, at or close to their original hatching site. Sea trout differ from salmon in that they are part of a resident brown trout population and migratory forms are made up of a high proportion of females. Sea trout may spend less time at sea and, unlike salmon, remain in nearby inshore marine waters to feed. The use of both marine and freshwater habitats during their life-cycle makes migratory salmonid populations vulnerable to deterioration or loss, from or in a wide range of habitats.

Isolated resident brown trout populations may also be present upstream of waterfall barriers that prevent access from the sea. These populations form an important part of a functional ecosystem and are likely to contribute to the wider population through downstream migration.

1.2 Biodiversity

Other than Atlantic salmon and brown trout, native fish such as lamprey (*Lampetra spp.*), stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) and European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) also utilise freshwater habitats. Fish and freshwater habitats also support a range of other native flora and fauna and consequently mitigation measures to protect water resources for such species are likely to benefit a range of other biodiversity and conservation objectives.

2. Methods

2.1 Data recording

ART is a full member of the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (SFCC), which is an association of Scottish fisheries management organisations including Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS), Marine Scotland Science (MSS), and the local District Salmon Fishery Boards. The electrofishing surveys carried out for this report were completed following the SFCC's protocols for this technique using SFCC accredited surveyors. The SFCC also provides electrofishing training to its members, and ART staff are experienced and qualified to lead and design electrofishing surveys to SFCC protocols. Wherever possible ART surveys are therefore carried out to the standards required by the SFCC and data are recorded using the agreed format. All electrofishing data are securely stored on the SFCC database, accessible only by accredited member organisations.

2.2 Techniques

Fish populations at each site were assessed using electrofishing. This is a widely used technique to examine freshwater fish communities. The method uses electricity to attract and stun fish, which allows operators to remove them from the water. The fish are transferred to a holding container until they have recovered and then anaesthetised using a mild solution of MS222 (Tricaine Methane Sulphonate). Each individual is then identified, measured and returned unharmed to the area from which they were captured.

Battery powered backpack equipment (Hans Grassl model IG600) was used at most sites, however occasionally generator powered equipment (Electracatch model # WFC – 7) was used to provide sufficient power to enable efficient fishing in high conductivity water. Smooth DC was used at all sites, to maximise catch efficiency, while minimising potential damage to fish and other wildlife. A minimum voltage of 200V was used, to ensure efficient fish capture.

Two different techniques were used to relate the number of fish caught to actual fish densities: in stream area delimited and time delimited surveys. In smaller watercourses, it was possible to cover the entire survey area accurately, and the number of fish captured could, therefore, be related to the wetted area of the site. However, for the larger main stem sites, the full area of the river could not be electrofished effectively. In these cases, the ART survey followed existing guidelines and carefully timed the electrofishing runs to obtain a figure for fry caught per minute. Protocols in both cases were followed to SFCC standards, a standard protocol for timed electrofishing having been agreed in 2007.

2.3 Timed surveys

Biologists are increasingly finding that timed surveys are an effective and efficient way of examining fish production, particularly in larger watercourses. While timed fishing does not provide an absolute value for fish densities, it can be extremely useful in comparing different parts of a catchment or wider area, provided that catch efficiency does not change between sites. This potential source of error can be minimised by ensuring that an identical protocol is followed at every site and by using a standard team of fully trained personnel.

Sites for this part of the survey were chosen to cover suitable salmon fry habitat throughout as broad a geographic range as possible up the main stem of the river. It is particularly important to examine

these habitats because in many rivers the majority of salmon spawning and juvenile production is likely to take place in the main stem of a river, rather than smaller side tributaries. Restricting electrofishing surveys to smaller watercourses, using area-based surveys, may, therefore, fail to identify important factors affecting salmon populations.

Shallow run and riffle areas were targeted, preferably with a maximum depth of 30 cm. Electrofishing runs were timed, with a single 5-minute run being carried out at each site, all within typical fry habitat. The timer was started at the beginning of each run and only counted when the anode was switched on in the water, meaning that the 5-minute period covered only the time spent truly fishing. The electrofishing operators proceeded in an upstream direction throughout, working in a zigzag pattern to avoid covering the same area twice and staying in shallow areas suitable for fry production. In some cases this meant that the whole channel width was not covered, however, because the fish numbers were to be related to time, rather than area, this could be accounted for.

2.4 Density surveys

For the density surveys, the survey sweep began at the downstream end of the section and moved back and forwards across the channel so that every part of the bed was covered. The type of net used depended on the specific site - at fast flowing sites with small substrate a banner net was used to ensure no stunned fish were carried downstream past the operator. However, in slower flowing water, or where the substrate was made up of many large boulders, a hand net was generally found to be more effective.

Salmon and trout were separated into year classes on the basis of length frequency histograms. As fish grow at very different rates between sites, this was repeated for each site individually. Age classifications were also checked by examining the number of annual rings on scales taken from fish of a range of sizes. Fish densities were then separated into fry and parr for the presentation of results. Fry refers to fish less than one year old, resulting from spawning at the end of the previous year, and parr to older fish.

Where a fully quantitative survey was not required, a one run, semi-quantitative protocol was used. While this method does not provide the absolute accuracy on fish densities, it is commonly used as a relative comparison between sites or at the same site between years.

3. Results Classification

3.1 Timed sites

In order that the results from one river or site can be compared easily with others, a results classification scheme has been introduced. The results from all the timed-electrofishing sites surveyed across Ayrshire from 2020 to 2024 were collated and the total salmon fry densities figures ranked and split into 20% divisions, excluding sites where no fry were recorded. The groups were then assigned a classification indicating the relative number of salmon fry caught per minute. The timed results classification score was revised this year to include the five year average scores, with the 2019 results dropping out to be replaced by the 2024 results. It should be noted that this does not allow for comparison of classifications outwith the 5 year period stated due to the yearly update of breakpoints.

Table 1: 2020-2024 Ayrshire timed sites salmon fry classification

Salmon fry breakpoints (No/min)	Classification
0.0	Absent
0.1 – 3.6	E – Very poor
3.7 – 8.2	D - Poor
8.3 – 13.1	C - Moderate
13.2 – 21.3	B - Good
>21.4	A - Excellent

If salmon fry are absent this often indicates that salmon cannot access this area, or that there are other serious problems preventing survival or discouraging the use of this habitat.

3.2 Density sites

The results from surveys where fish densities are obtained (area based surveys) are now classified according to the SFCC Scottish national classification scheme which was derived using data from over 1600 Scottish sites covering the period 1997-2002 (*Godfrey, 2005*). This allows ART and the reader to interpret local fish populations in a Scotland-wide context. The national classes should be periodically revised as fish populations will inevitably change over time, even on a national scale.

Table 2: SFCC classification salmon fry and parr density breakpoints

Salmon fry (No/100m ²)	Classification	Salmon parr (No/100m ²)
0.0	Absent	0.0
<4.7	E – Very poor	<2.6
4.7 -<10.3	D - Poor	2.6 -<5.1
10.3 - <20.3	C - Moderate	5.1 - <9.1
20.3 - <42.1	B - Good	9.1 - <15.8
>42.1	A - Excellent	>15.8

Table 3: SFCC classification trout fry and parr density breakpoints

Trout fry (No/100m ²)	Classification	Trout parr (No/100m ²)
0.0	Absent	0.0
<2.5	E – Very poor	<1.6
2.5 -<5.3	D - Poor	1.6 -<3.1
5.3 - <12.4	C - Moderate	3.1 - <5.6
12.4 - <30.3	B - Good	5.6 - <10.4
>30.3	A - Excellent	>10.4

3.3 Electrofishing survey limitations

Electrofishing is a common means of obtaining data on juvenile salmonid populations (*SEERAD 2007*); however, it is only effective in shallow streams.

The survey sites chosen were selected to be representative of the general habitat type present within each sub-catchment and to include a range of flow and substrate types. The SFCC protocol recommends that the minimum survey length is six times the mean channel width at the site, with a minimum of 20m length (SFCC 2007). If the site selected is representative of the local habitat the survey should provide a robust estimate of local fish populations. However, it is possible that, if fish populations are low or have a clumped distribution, the data from an electrofishing site may not adequately sample the full range of fish species present in that area.

It is usually impossible to capture all the fish present within a site, therefore depletion sampling, where fish are removed from a site in a series of successive electrofishing runs, is used to provide an estimate of the total fish population present. The rate of decline in each run and the total number of fish captured are used to estimate fish stocks. However, if fish numbers are low (less than 40 per site) then the confidence limits will be wide and the depletion estimates will be unreliable (Schnute, 1983).

It is considered impossible to prove the absence of fish by electrofishing, therefore, whilst the failure to capture fish at a site may indicate that the population is low, it cannot be assumed that fish are necessarily absent. Similarly, the absence of individual species from electrofishing results should not be assumed to be indicative of the overall status of the species as many factors may contribute to the results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Timed Electrofishing Sites

In total, ART examined 12 timed sites in 2024 in the Stinchar catchment. Habitat quality at all sites is considered to be suitable for salmon fry. The results are shown in the tables and map below.

The mean timed results for 2024 were 16.1 fry per minute taken from across all 12 sites and 16.0 fry per minute when the 2 sites on the Duisk (TSDM1 and TSDM2) are excluded. Excluding the 2 Duisk sites has been done to allow for better comparison between years when these 2 sites were not monitored as they are recent additions. As such, the comparisons between years within this report exclude these 2 sites unless stated otherwise. These results are a big improvement on the 2023 results of 8.6 fry per minute (across 10 sites). However, they fall below the 10 year average running from 2015-2024 of 18.2 fry per minute.

When comparing this year's site specific results to 2023 the numbers are encouraging, with 8 out of 10 main stem sites showing higher numbers in 2024. Both TSM17 Kirkhill, upstream of Colmonell Bridge, and TSM3 Hallowchapel, downstream of the Duisk confluence, moved from "moderate" classification to "excellent". TSM7 Gravel extraction point also moved up to "excellent" from "good" categorisation in 2023. The gravel extraction site was the highest performing site this year with 28 salmon fry per minute. Both TSM15 Craig House and TSM11 Upstream Barr, close to Milton Bridge, moved up in category from "poor" in 2023 to "good" in 2024. TSM12 Laggansarroch improved from "poor" in 2023 to "moderate" in 2024. TSM4 at Pinclanty Mill and TSM16 Aldinna, although not improving in categorisation, did show increased fry numbers from 2023.

The sites that did not improve were TSM6 downstream of Auchensoul Bridge, which produced the exactly the same "good" numbers as in 2023, and TSM18 upstream of Water of Tig near Balnowlart where the classification dropped from "poor" to "very poor".

In addition to the 10 main stem sites, the 2 sites on the Duisk (TSDM1 and TSDM2) both showed a great improvement. In 2023 both sites were classified as "very poor", with TSDM1 producing very low results (0.5 salmon fry per minute). In 2024 both sites have moved up to "good" classification, which is very encouraging.

The lower Stinchar sites produced slightly higher results (16.5) than the upper Stinchar sites (15.7). The Stinchar was the only catchment out of the 4 DSFB catchments that ART surveyed where the lower sites produced higher results than the upper catchment sites. These upper and lower figures being so close to the catchment average is encouraging as it does not point to the same levels of pollution accumulation that is implied by the other catchments, where the lower catchment results are often considerably worse.

Table 4: Results from the Stinchar catchment salmon fry timed surveys 2024

*Codes for other species are: Tr = Trout, SL = Stone loach, M = Minnow, E = Eel, L = Lamprey, ST = Three-spined stickleback, L = Lamprey

Site	Location	Grid Ref E N	Date	Salmon fry caught per minute	Classification	Other species*
TSM18	Balnowlart at Tig	211150 583805	19/07/24	3.2	E	E, M, L
TSM17	Kirkhill, upstream Bridge Pool	215113 585722	19/07/24	25.8	A	E
TSM15	Craig House	217130 586693	19/07/24	14.4	B	-
TSM3	Hallowchapel	219600 586900	19/07/24	22.6	A	-
TSM12	Laggansarroch, upstream bridge	220028 588881	19/07/24	12	C	E, M
TSM4	Pinclanty Mill	223450 591500	19/07/24	12.4	C	Tr, E, M
TSM6	Downstream Auchensoul bridge	225750 592800	19/07/24	16.8	B	Tr
TSM11	Upstream Barr, close to Milton Bridge	228880 595678	19/07/24	15.2	B	Tr, E
TSM7	At gravel extraction point	232150 595750	19/07/24	28	A	Tr
TSM16	Aldinna	234497 595521	19/07/24	9.6	C	Tr
TSDM2	Duisk u/s Barrhill	223825 581970	19/07/24	18	B	Tr, E
TSDM1	Duisk u/c Cross Confluence	223325, 582548	19/07/24	15.2	B	Tr, E

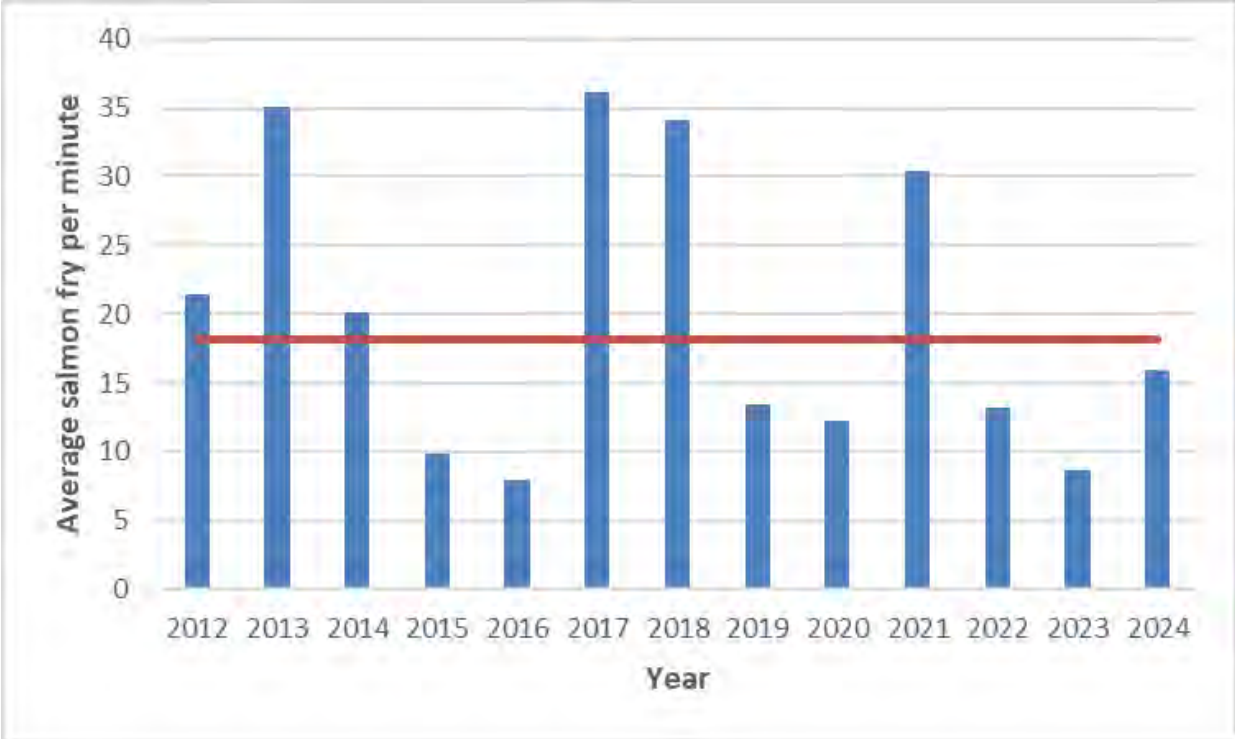


Figure 1: Comparison of the Stinchar electrofishing results from 2012 to 2024. The red line represents the 10-year average (2015-2024) of 18.2 fry/minute.



Figure 2: Comparison of Stinchar electrofishing results from 2012 to 2024 split into upper and lower catchment sites. The red line represents the most recent 10-year catchment average (2015-2024) of 18.2 fry/minute.

Table 5: Colour coded Salmon fry/min 2003 to 2011

(Black = Absent, Red = Very poor, Orange = Poor, Yellow = Moderate, Light Green = Good, Dark Green = Excellent)

River Stinchar main stem timed salmon fry survey results 2003-2011											
Site	Location	Sa/min	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TSM18	u/s of Water of Tig near Balnowlart	Fry									
TSM17	Kirkhill, u/s Colmonell Bridge	Fry						11.6	9.4	13.2	22.2
TSM15	Craig House	Fry					8.6	9.8	8.2	7.8	9.4
TSM3	Hallowchapel d/s Duisk	Fry	5.7	5	11.8	26.2	12	10.2	8.3	9.8	9.6
TSM12	Laggansarroch	Fry					7.6	9.6	8.8	3.4	12.8
TSM4	At Pinclanty Mill	Fry	8.7	4.2	31	6.8	10		15.2	19.2	16
TSM6	Downstream Auchensoul Bridge	Fry	10.7	10.4	16.4		7.4		9	9	5.6
TSM11	Upstream Barr, close to Milton Bridge	Fry				4.2					
TSM7	At gravel extraction point	Fry	16.7	8.2	16.8	9	4.8		25.2	26.2	11
TSM16	Aldinna	Fry									
Mean		Fry	9.1	7.5	14.2	9.3	8.0	8.7	11.2	11.6	11.7

Table 6: Colour coded Salmon fry/min 2012 to 2024

(Black = Absent, Red = Very poor, Orange = Poor, Yellow = Moderate, Light Green = Good, Dark Green = Excellent)

River Stinchar main stem timed salmon fry survey results 2012-2024															
Site	Location	Sa/min	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TSM18	u/s of Water of Tig near Balnowlart	Fry			4	2.2	1.3	12.8	5.8		5.6	8	6	4	3.2
TSM17	Kirkhill, u/s Colmonell Bridge	Fry	29.6	47.4	6.4	12.2	10.2	33.2	2.4	12	9.6	16.2	10.8	10	25.8
TSM15	Craig House	Fry	13.4	55	19.2	5.3	5.2	33.6	23	15	18.8	21.4	13.2	3.4	14.4
TSM3	Hallowchapel d/s Duisk	Fry	21	42	22	6.3	7.6	35.6	57.8	23.4	18.6	75	13	9.2	22.6
TSM12	Laggansarroch	Fry	18.4	20	8.4	2.6	4.2	45.8	42.8	7.2	7.8	22.4		4.4	12
TSM4	At Pinclanty Mill	Fry	20	49	31.8	17.8	9.4	34.4	46.4	24.6	11.6	45.6	7.2	8.2	12.4
TSM6	Downstream Auchensoul Bridge	Fry	28.6	24.5	31.4	18.2	11.0	37.2	44.2	13.4	18.8	21.8	22.4	16.8	16.8
TSM11	Upstream Barr, close to Milton Bridge	Fry				11.7	8.0	35.2	32.4	6.6	9.2	17.8	14.4	5.8	15.2
TSM7	At gravel extraction point	Fry	36.2	38.2	37.4	12.4	14	57.6	52.2	16.6	13.4	43.2	18.4	15.6	28
TSM16	Aldinna	Fry								2.2	9.2	32.2	13.4	8.2	9.6
Mean		Fry	21.5	35.1	20.1	9.8	7.9	36.1	34.1	13.4	12.3	30.4	13.2	8.6	16.0

Table 7: Comparison of timed results for Ayrshire DSFB river catchments during 2024 fry/min

River Ayr Results		River Doon Results		Water of Girvan Results		River Stinchar Results	
Site	2024	Site	2024	Site	2024	Site	2024
TAM4a	0	TDM9	3.6	TGM13	2	TSM18	3.2
TAM14	0	TDM4	10.8	TGM14	4.8	TSM17	25.8
TAM15	3.8	TDM25	13.2	TGM20	9.6	TSM15	14.4
TAM11	3.6	TDM23	28.8	TGM11	11.6	TSM3	22.6
TAM13	4.4	TDM8	12.4	TGM15	8.2	Lower Stinchar Average	16.5
TAM3	2.8	Lower Doon Average	13.8	Lower Girvan Average	7.2	TSM12	12
Lower Ayr Average	2.4	TDM13	8.2	TGM17	21.4	TSM4	12.4
TAM16	1.4	TDM15	13.8	TGM3/3a	18.6	TSM6	16.8
TAM9	12.2	TDM20	9.4	TGM9	37.8	TSM11	15.2
TAM1	10.2	TDM27	29.2	TGM2	20.2	TSM7	28
TAM18	9.2	TDM24	22.2	TGM8	22.8	TSM16	9.6
TAM19	12.2	Upper Doon Average	16.6	Upper Girvan Average	24.2	Upper Stinchar Average	15.7
Upper Ayr Average	9	Overall Doon Average	15.2	Overall Girvan Average	15.7	Overall Stinchar Average	16
TAL2	10.2						
TAL7	3.4						
TAL15	0.4						
TAL18	12.2						
TAL6	0						
Lugar Average	5.2						
Overall Ayr Average	5.4						

The results in table 6 show that more salmon fry per minute were caught in 2024 across all four catchments when compared to 2023. The overall mean fry/minute for the River Ayr was 5.4 in 2024 compared to 3.5 in 2023; 15.2 fry per minute in the Doon in 2024 compared to 12.3 in 2023; 15.7 fry per minute in 2024 for the Water of Girvan compared to 8.1 in 2023 and 16 fry per minute in the River Stinchar in 2024 compared to 8.2 in 2023.

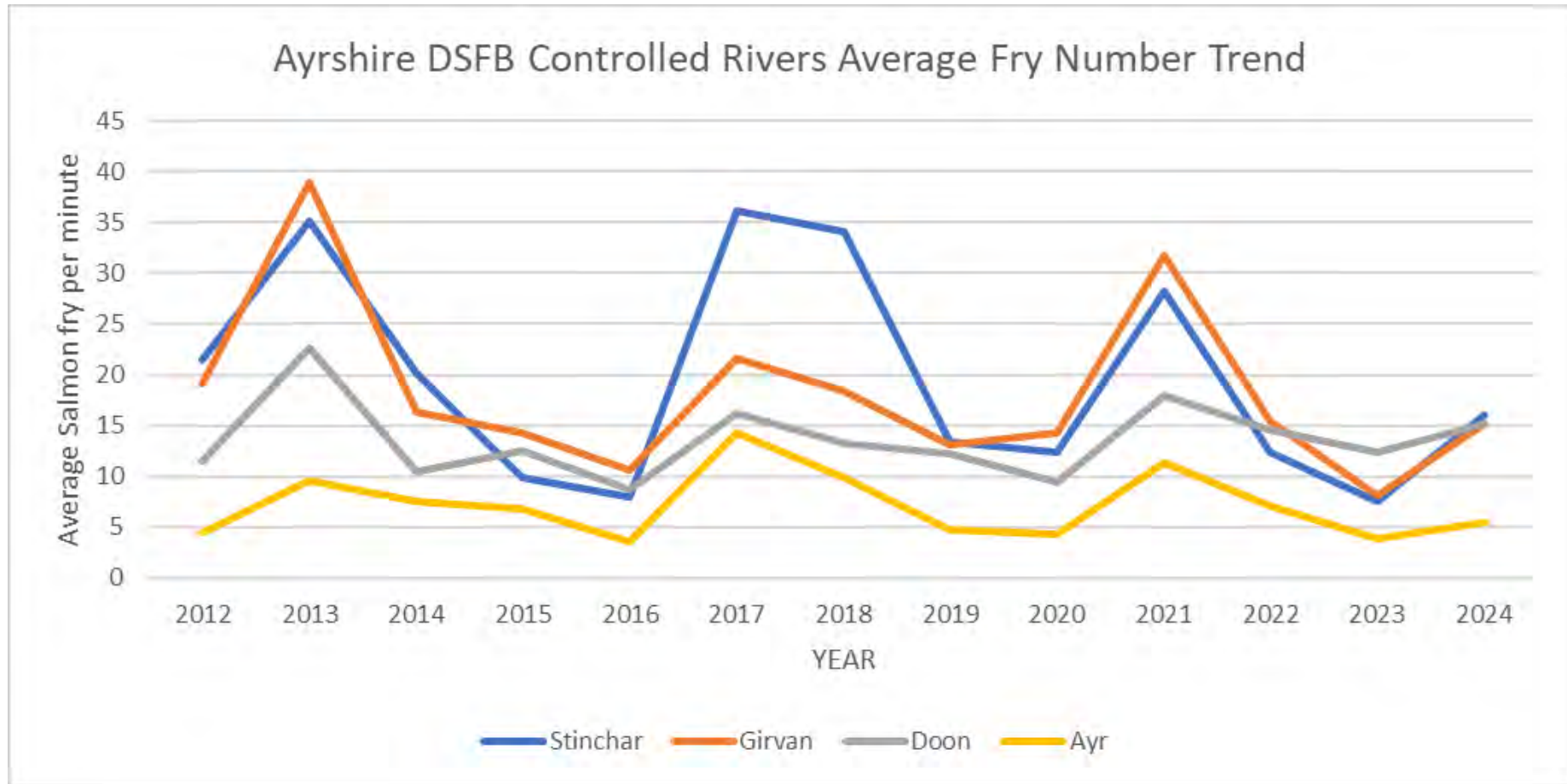


Figure 3: DSFB Rivers: Timed results 2012 - 2024 trends.

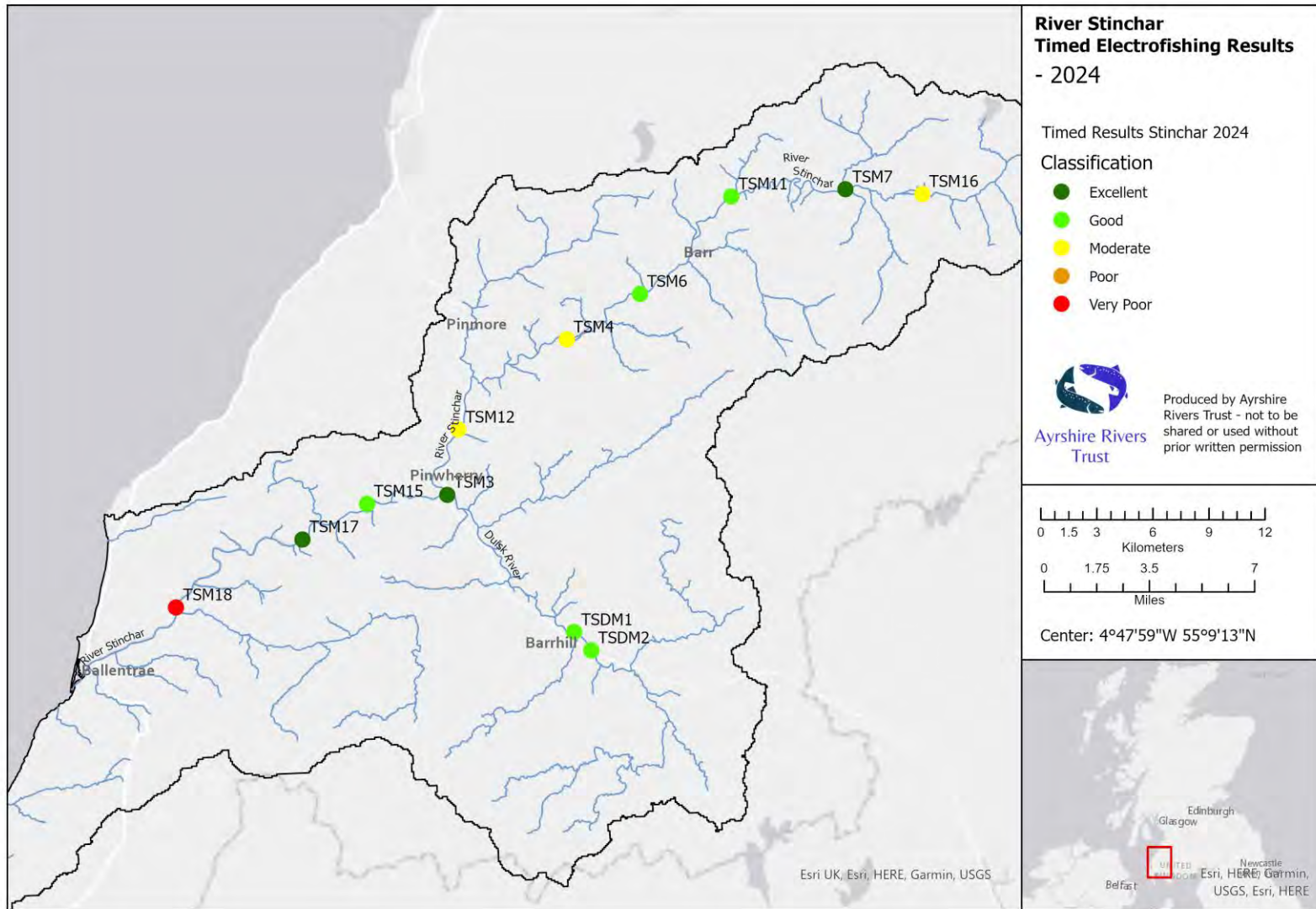
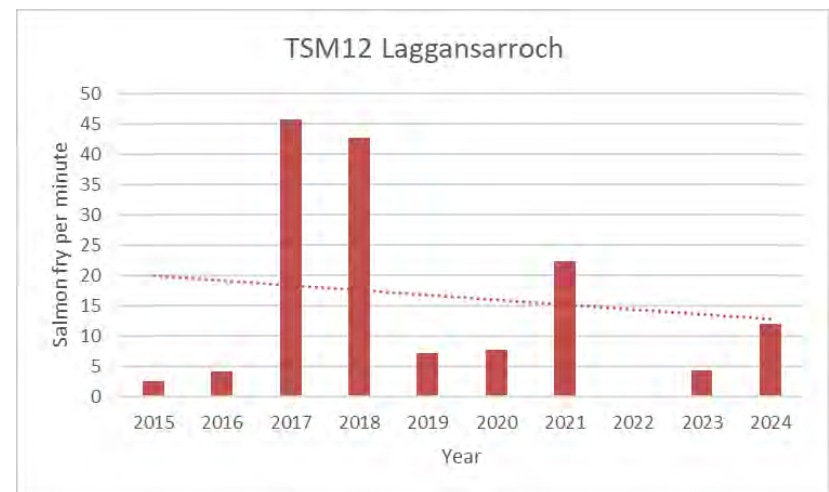
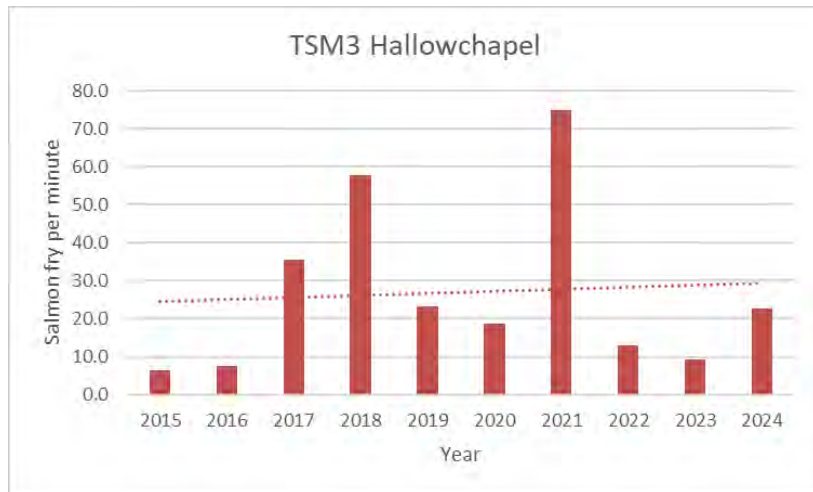
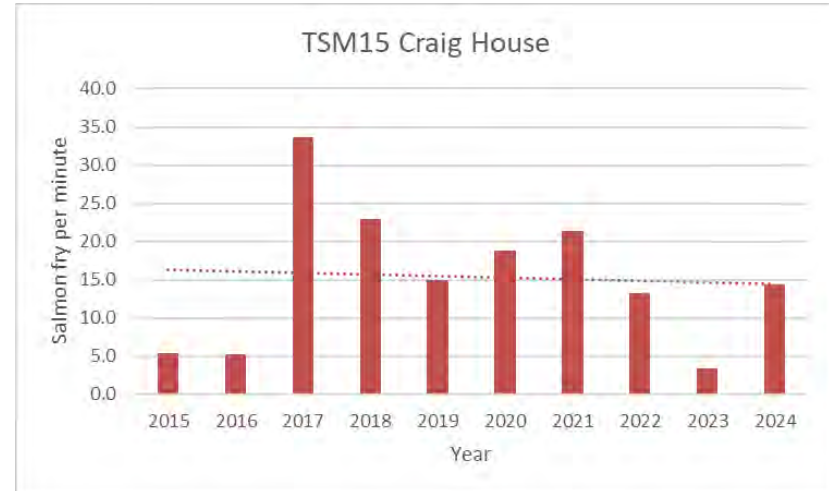
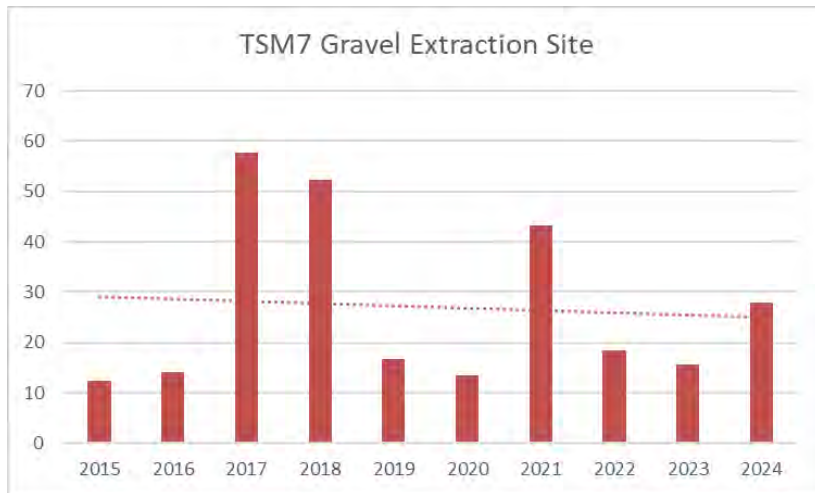
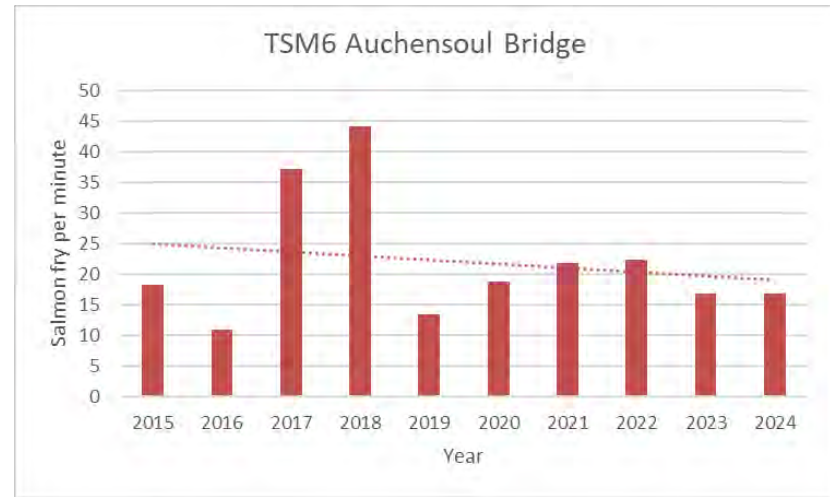
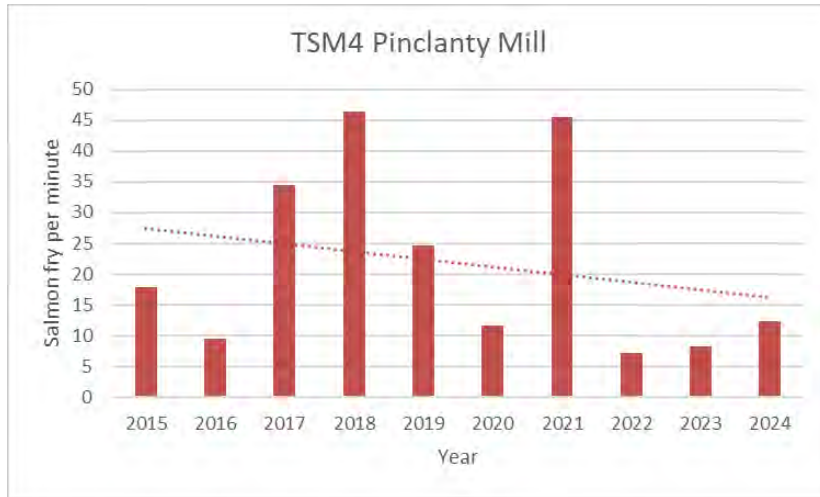


Figure 4: Map displaying site location and results of timed salmon fry surveys for 2024

Figures 5-11: 10 Year Timed Electrofishing result trends
 2015 - 2024 timed survey results





Timed electrofishing charts showing 10 year trend (2015-2024) from 7 sites with long term data sets. A general decline in salmon fry is observed across all sites except for Colmonell and Hallowchapel.



Figures 12-18: 5 Year Timed Electrofishing result trends
 The 5 year trend shows a decline in salmon fry numbers at most sites apart from Colmonell and the Gravel Extraction site.

A slight change to our protocol for timed surveys was introduced in 2012 along with new equipment that allowed increased levels of accuracy with this type of assessment. While it doesn't allow density calculations, it allows us to identify trends in juvenile productivity which is perhaps more useful on the scale this survey covers. We have now completed 13 years of surveys since these changes were introduced.

With reference to the 10-year average charts above (figures 5-11), we can see fry numbers fluctuate but that the general trends are declining, with the exceptions of the sites at Colmonell and Hallowchapel.

Similarly, the 5-year trends, which cover approximately one salmon lifecycle, also show a downward trend, with all sites apart from Colmonell and the Gravel Extraction site showing a downward trajectory (figures 12-18). Whilst having some variation amongst the sites is a positive, the general trend is discouraging.

It should be noted that flow conditions during surveys can affect results and while we attempt to perform these surveys at the same time of year and under similar flow conditions, some sites may be more susceptible to abiotic influences that result in poorer results.

The quality and quantity of exceptional spawning substrates across the catchment may cause the fluctuations in fry numbers from year to year. Whilst numbers of returning adult fish are the most significant factor in the juvenile recruitment there are so many spawning opportunities across the catchment that in any year productivity could be high and not necessarily seen in the e-fishing date. Typically other Ayrshire rivers don't have the same quality and quantity of habitats and as such fish have fewer options with regard to optimal habitat availability. Stinchar fish have more options/scope as to where to find optimal spawning habitat and with very few barriers limiting access across the catchment the vast majority of habitat is available to fish.

Natural population fluctuation is a feature of any salmon population, but generally this is overcome by increased survival in poorer spawning years and crossover of grilse and salmon between years. In recent years, it does appear that on two out of every five years, fry numbers are depressed, and we feel this can only be reasonably explained by poor adult numbers returning in the preceding year. Of course, there may be other explanations such as redd wash out, or poor spawning survival, however these alternatives appear unlikely. Water quality, spawning habitat and most other riparian components are all believed to be excellent in the Stinchar catchment.

Redd washout is a commonly cited explanation in poor fry productivity years and whilst there is no doubt that in some years this does have an effect in our experience this potential for this is limited particularly in areas where the river hasn't been altered or 'managed' in recent times. Dredging, levying and any other modifications to banks and the bed of the river/tributary act to destabilise the substrates leading to a cascade of changes downstream and upstream of a worked area. We've seen this at Aldinna which was dredged in 2018.

We believe the results illustrate the effects of reduced numbers of adult salmon returning from the sea and this is the main reasons for the decline in juvenile stocks and rod catches between years unfortunately this is beyond the DSFB's control.

Rod catch data largely supports this but of course angling effort, weather and run timings can skew results. As these data sets continue, a more distinct pattern may appear or stocks may improve, but we recommend that long-term trend assessment provides a more accurate reflection of the results than shorter.

4.2 Tributary sites

The results from the quantitative surveys that were completed in 2024 are presented in Table 7. Sites SDCW0, SDCW3, SDCW5, SD3, SD2, SWT12, SWT13, SWT14, SWT15, SDPG5, SWG6 and SDMW2 were surveyed for Arrecleoch wind farm development. Sites SWT3, SLB3, SLB4, SDWC5 and SDCW6 were surveyed for Chirmorie wind farm development.

Table 8: Stinchar catchment density electrofishing survey results including SFCC classifications. Where available, calculations of absolute densities are given, along with confidence limits, otherwise minimum densities are supplied and denoted by #.

Site Code	Location	Grid Ref		Minimum estimates per 100m ²			
		Easting	Northin g	Salmon fry	Salmon parr	Trout fry	Trout parr
SDCW0	Cross Water (Martyrs Tomb)	223212	581796	1.2#	0	22.5 (+/- 0.7)	13.5 (+/- 1.3)
SDCW3	Cross water at roadside u/s of falls	222200	580700	0	0	4.2#	3.2#
SDCW5	Cross Water u/s Railway Crossing	220503	579753	0	0	1.7#	3.5#
SD3	Duisk Water (d/s Cross Water confluence)	223278	582622	9.9 (+/- 0.6)	6.4 (+/- 11.9)	4.4 (+/- 0.5)	1.1#
SD2	Duisk Water (near Pinwherry)	219851	586803	32.1 (+/- 12.6)	10.0 (+/- 2.4)	11.9 (+/- 1.7)	1.0#
SWT12	Water of Tig (Arecleoch Forest: downstream of bridge)	218531	581409	0	0	7#	0.0
SWT13	Water of Tig (near Stinchar confluence)	211252	583608	14.6 (+/- 0.7)	1.3 (+/- 0.3)	0.4#	0.9 (+/- 0.6)
SWT14	Water of Tig	218353	582170	0	0	0	1.9#
SWT15	Water of Tig	218351	580996	0	0	1.3#	2.7#
SDPG5	Pollgowan Burn	225900	579300	0	0	7.3 (+/- 1.3)	10.6 (+/- 0.4)
SWG6	Water of Gregg	227604	594065	79.7 (+/- 12.8)	19.7 (+/- 1.4)	41.2 (+/- 4.9)	3.7 (+/- 4.8)
SDMW2	Muck Water (near Mark)	224616	587718	17.9 (+/- 13.0)	1.0#	15.1 (+/- 1.9)	6.1 (+/- 11.5)

SWT3	Water of Tig	218650	581500	0	0	7#	0
SLB3	Laggish Burn	220700	577500	0	0	55 (+/- 3.5)	0
SLB4	Laggish Burn	222100	578292	0	0	39.7 (+/- 3.6)	5.7 (+/- 0.4)
SDWC5	Cross Water	219309	578947	0	0	1.7#	3.5#
SDCW6	Cross Water	220492	579759	0	0	0	0

Site SDCW0 at Martyrs Tomb is accessible to salmon and sea trout and offers excellent instream habitat. Very poor numbers of salmon fry were recorded in 2024, with salmon parr absent. Good numbers of trout fry were recorded and trout parr numbers were excellent. This site is somewhat more suited to parr and adult numbers due to the large deep pool at the top of the site and as such salmon fry have either been absent or very poor.

Site SDCW3 on the Cross Water is above a series of impassable waterfalls and consequently salmon migration is limited to the lower 2km of the watercourse. Upstream of the falls there is a resident population of brown trout that will migrate within the upper reaches of the watercourse for the purposes of spawning, seeking habitat etc. Whilst there is fry habitat within the surveyed area, the habitat is largely deep glide that is best suited to adult trout. Trout fry and parr were both present in poor numbers which is typical of this site despite the good quality adult habitat.

Site SD3 is on the Duisk River near Barrhill and provides excellent mixed juvenile habitat throughout the site. Poor numbers of salmon fry were recorded here and salmon parr numbers were moderate. Trout fry numbers were poor and parr numbers were very poor. Eels were notably prevalent at this site.

Site SD2 is on the lower Duisk River near Pinwherry and provides good mixed juvenile habitat and excellent spawning opportunities in the vicinity of the site. Salmon fry and parr numbers here were good. Trout fry were moderate and parr numbers very poor.

SWT12 is in the very upper Water of Tig situated in Arecleoch Forest, upstream of several waterfalls and steep cascades. Historic electrofishing sites have revealed salmon can reach this habitat. However, records of salmon here are sporadic and will rely on the correct flow conditions to allow salmon to reach the upper reaches of this burn. A resident population of brown trout exists here and migratory sea trout may also utilise the habitat. Trout fry numbers here were moderate and trout parr were absent. Other Tig sites were similarly poor with regards to trout numbers.

SWT13 is situated on the lower Tig a short distance upstream of its confluence with the river Stinchar and is comprised of excellent mixed juvenile habitat and is accessible to salmon and sea trout. Salmon fry numbers were moderate and parr were very poor. Trout fry and parr numbers were very poor.

SWT14 is the furthest upstream site we have on this watercourse and the numbers of trout fry were very poor, with parr absent from the site. The habitat and water quality are both good for trout and it

is somewhat surprising that there is such a poor number of fish present here, but this is reflected at all other Water of Tig sites in 2024.

SWT15 recorded trout fry in the very poor category and trout parr in the moderate category with no eels or other species present.

Site SDPG5, is above a natural waterfall at Lochton Mill which anecdotally is passable to salmon and sea trout. However, ART has not recorded salmon upstream of the falls in any surveys. A resident population of brown trout exists in this upper section of the watercourse. Trout fry and parr numbers were very poor and moderate respectively. This section of the watercourse is named the Pollgowan Burn. Eels were prevalent, with 36 recorded during the survey.

Site SWG6 is on the Water of Gregg which joins the river Stinchar at Barr village. The Gregg is an important spawning tributary for salmon and sea trout and is comprised of excellent habitat and water quality. Salmon fry and parr were both in the excellent category with trout fry excellent and parr in the moderate category. The water quality and habitat are exceptional here – there are a difficult but passable set of falls at the top end of the village that fish do ascend however there will be others that do not make it over – these fish will spawn in the lower reaches of the burn.

Site SDMW2 is in the headwaters of the Muck Water on the Duisk side of the catchment. Water quality here is good as is the instream habitat. Salmon and sea trout are both able to access this habitat. Salmon fry were recorded in the moderate category and parr were very poor. The year prior, salmon fry and parr were absent from the site. Trout fry and parr were both recorded in the good category which is typical of this site.

Salmon fry were absent in all sites that were surveyed for Chirmorie, however this is expected as the Laggish Burn and Cross Water sites are above known barriers to salmon migration. The Water of Tig is known to be accessible to salmon, however records of salmon at this site are rare and their absence here is not unexpected.

The trout fry results from the control site SWT3 on the Water of Tig fell from good to moderate between 2022 and 2023. Similarly, trout parr numbers were below those recorded in 2022 and fell from a classification of good to poor. Trout parr were absent from the site in 2024 with fry numbers recorded as moderate.

At SLB3 on the Laggish Burn (most upstream site on this watercourse) trout fry numbers have returned to the excellent category. In 2023 trout fry were absent, however in 2024 numbers have climbed to 55 per 100m². Unsurprisingly with no trout fry at this site in 2023 there are no trout parr in 2024.

At site SLB4, both trout fry and parr numbers increased from good in 2023 to excellent in 2024. Eel numbers have remained stable over the surveys.

In 2022 only trout parr were recorded at site SDCW5 and in very low numbers. In 2023, no fish species were recorded at this site. However, one adult trout was recorded just upstream of the site as the team surveying were concerned at the lack of fish and surveyed upstream of the site to assess if there was a low-density trout population still present in this area of the burn. Encouragingly in 2024 trout fry and parr were recorded during the survey; fry numbers were poor and parr numbers were moderate.

No fish species were recorded at SDCW6 for the third consecutive year. It is likely due to obstacles such as culverts that brown trout do not utilise these upstream habitats. Acidic flushes may also

hamper production however without frequent water quality monitoring there is no way of assessing this.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 2024 mean timed results of 16 salmon fry/minute were an improvement on the 2023 results of 8.6 fry/minute, although lower than the 2015-2024 10 year average results of 18.2 fry/minute. The majority of sites were either “excellent” or “good” and only one site was classed as “very poor”.
- When including the 2 sites on the Duisk, the 2024 timed results rose slightly to 16.1 fry/minute.
- The site at the gravel extraction point (TSM7) produced the highest timed results in 2024 with 28 salmon fry per minute.
- The site at Balnowlart at Tig (TSM18) produced the lowest timed results in 2024 with 3.2 salmon fry per minute – this site is typically the poorest on the river and the habitat is less than optimal for fry.
- Timed results cannot be accurately compared between rivers and care must be taken when comparing between sites in the same river. Fry numbers in 2024 have seen improvements across all catchments, however 2023 was a particularly bad year for fry production and so this improvement is to be somewhat expected.
- The Stinchar produced the highest fry results of the four DSFB catchments surveyed by ART, slightly ahead of the Girvan which produced 15.7 fry/minute.
- The additional upper catchment site near Aldinna, added in 2019, that had been showing improvement, experienced a decline in 2023 in line with the rest of the catchment and has not bounced back in the same way that other sites have this year. However, this site is located in an area of the catchment with good instream juvenile habitat and water quality that is considered some of the best on the River Stinchar and so has the potential to be highly productive.
- The Water of Gregg at Barr continues to be an important and productive burn for the development of juvenile salmon and trout, with excellent numbers of both salmon fry and parr present.
- The IUCN red list of threatened species reclassified Atlantic salmon as endangered in Great Britain in December 2023. Previously salmon were designated as being ‘least concern’. Given the conservation status of these fish and the historical and current significance of these watercourses as productive juvenile salmon areas of the River Stinchar, it is important to carefully monitor all developments within this area.

- Unfortunately, due to a lack of available resources, the Scottish Government did not run the National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) in 2024 and there are currently no plans to run the programme in 2025.
- Increasingly there appears to be a similar trend developing across all four DSFB controlled rivers with every fourth year displaying a peak in salmon fry numbers across all catchments. Furthermore, where one river shows increases, all appear to follow that trend. This would indicate that there are common factors influencing juvenile recruitment and if so, then these are likely to be marine issues. Of course, there may be other common factors in the freshwater environment that affect survival.
- European eels continue to be a prominent feature of the electrofishing catch and the Trust regards the Stinchar as a stronghold for eels in Ayrshire. This is believed to be largely due to the comparative lack of barriers on the Stinchar, in the forms of weirs and dams. This allows relatively free migration across the catchment and much of the available habitat to be utilised.
- Several of the tributary sites that were surveyed for Arecleoch and Chirmorie Windfarms were beyond the natural reach of salmon and consequently rely on monitoring brown trout numbers. These developments do have the potential to create pollution that impacts on downstream water and habitat quality, and it is essential that these projects are monitored to ensure best practice is maintained at all times.
- Salmon numbers can be subject to greater fluctuations than trout due to their more complex lifecycle involving an oceanic phase, whereas resident brown trout reside in these watercourses year-round and aren't subject to the same range of environmental variables that Atlantic salmon are. This can make brown trout a better indicator of water quality issues/variations over the course of a year. Returning numbers of adult salmon can be highly variable, as is egg deposition and resulting numbers of fry produced.
- ART monitor macroinvertebrates as these are long term indicators of water quality. High scoring taxons of invertebrates, such as stoneflies, indicate that water quality is high, whereas species such as snails and hoglouse indicate the long term degradation of water quality. We monitor spring and autumn communities annually for invertebrates across the areas that have the potential to be impacted by developments such as windfarms. The details of these surveys have not been detailed in this report and if anyone is interested in learning more about this please get in touch with the biologists.

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(h) Annual Catch Returns

Summary of Data Collection

The Board used a new form of Annual Catch Return Form for the first time to capture the 2024 Annual Catch Returns. This was in addition to the statutory requirement upon all Riparian Owners to submit the full Rod and Catch Return Form to Marine Scotland.

Number of Beats

In total we have 34 beats on the River Stinchar. 1 beat was the subject of a transfer in an executry (Beat No 0370).

Number of Annual Catch Returns

We were expecting Returns from 33 beats out of 34 Annual Catch Returns this year. After Reminders were sent for outstanding Annual Catch Returns, we received 24 out of 34 Annual Catch Returns (71%).

Salmon Caught, Released and Killed

In term of the numbers of Salmon caught, 162 salmon were reported as caught. 0 were recorded as killed. That is 100% Catch & Release, as required by the Category 3 Status of the River. Previous Years' Returns will be populated for future Annual Reports.

Salmon Rod Effort

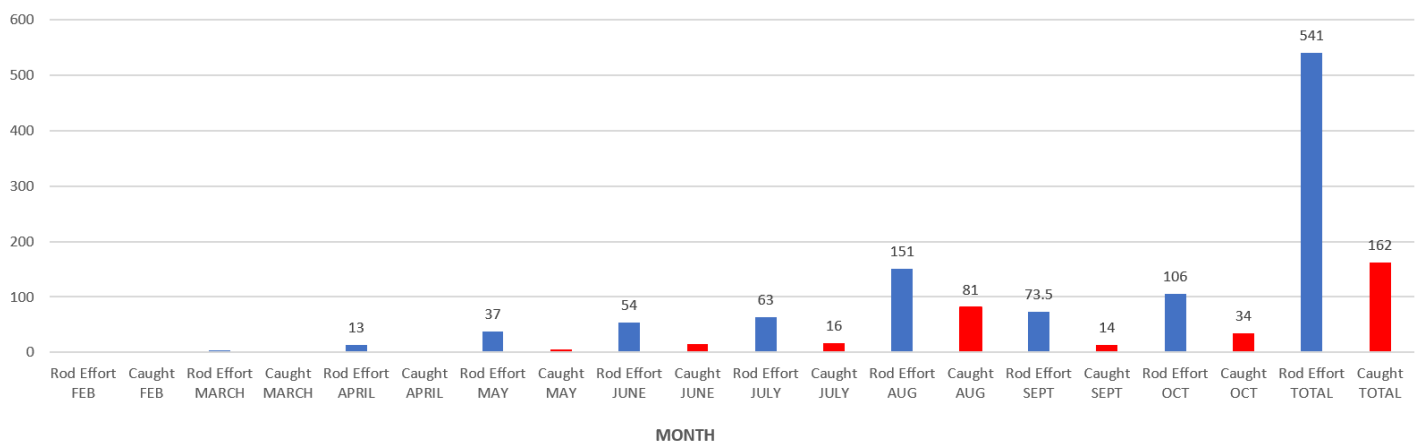
In terms of Salmon Rod Effort, 24 out of the 24 of the Annual Catch Returns received reported on Rod Effort, with 9 of those (37.5% of the total) reporting nil Rod Effort.

In terms of Rod Effort Days, the total sum reported was 541 days.

Monthly Salmon Rod Effort and Salmon Caught

Monthly Salmon Rod Effort was reported from March to October, increasing to the end of the season, with Salmon being caught from May to October, with July to September being the most successful. There were 541 rod effort days recorded in 2024, just a little more than the 511 rod effort days recorded for 2023.

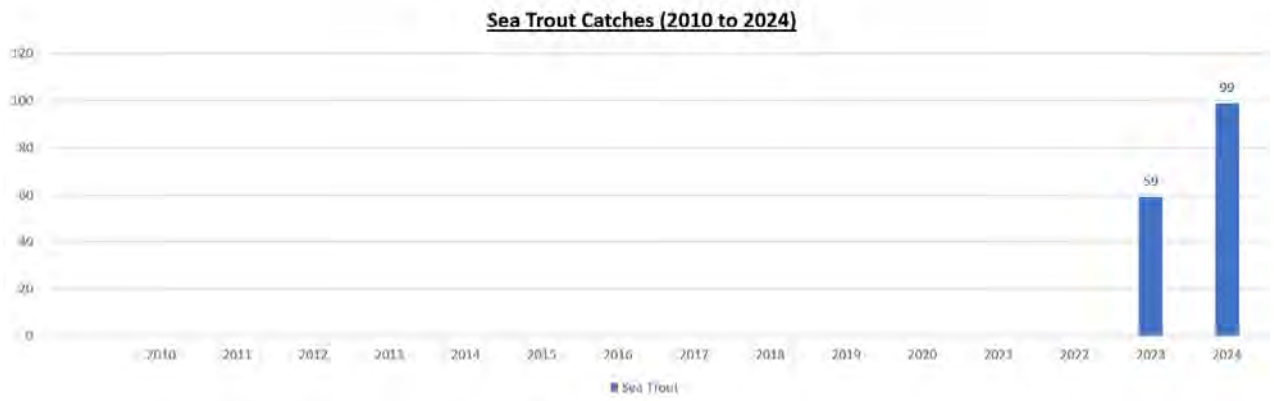
ANALYSIS OF ROD EFFORT & CATCHES PER MONTH 2024





Sea Trout Numbers

The number of Sea Trout reported as caught was 99.



Iain K Clark
Clerk to the Board

(i) Audited Statement of Accounts**RIVER STINCHAR DSFB**

The Audited Statement of Accounts to 5 April 2024 are produced here.

RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2025

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS**

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

We have examined the financial statements on pages 2 to 4.

Respective responsibilities of Members and examiner

The Board's members consider that the audit requirement of Regulation IO(1)(a) to (c) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the financial statements as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Board and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeks explanations from the members concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no other matter except that referred to in the previous paragraph has come to my attention:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
- (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
 - (ii) to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;

have not been met or

(b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Azets
3 Wellington Square
Ayr
KA7 1EN

Date:

**RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD****INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2025**

	Year to 05.04.25	Year to 05.04.24
	£	£
INCOME		
Assessments	19,598	19,517
Bank and building society interest		<u>§ 5</u>
	<u>20,074</u>	<u>19,582</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Fisheries Management Scotland Annual Membership	684	371
Knotweed Control	3,000	-
Ayrshire Rivers Trust annual contribution	6,546	6,175
Removal of Pike	-	3,396
Smolt Shepherding	1,760	1,760
Clerk's fee (incl. stationery and postage)	6,040	10,800
Accountancy fee	820	780
Donation	-	100
Website cost	298	-
Bailiffs Expenses	-	268
Sundry	<u>227</u>	
	<u>19,375</u>	<u>23,708</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	699	(4,126)
Surplus brought forward	<u>23,089</u>	<u>27,215</u>
Surplus carried forward		



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

STATEMENT OF FUNDS ON HAND

AS AT 5 APRIL 2025

	As at 05.04.25	As at 05.04.24
	£	£
ASSETS		
Current Account	-	10,944
Deposit Account	24,143	10,867
Debtors – unpaid assessments	<u>1,418</u>	<u>3,249</u>
	25,561	25,060
LIABILITIES		
Deferred Income		-
Accruals		
	<u>23,788</u>	<u>23,089</u>
Represented by:		
Retained surplus	<u>23,788</u>	<u>23,089</u>

The financial statements were approved by the board on 6 May 2025


Chairman



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- Except to the extent noted below, the financial statements include cash income and expenditure received and paid during the period.
- Liabilities and income outstanding at 5 April 2025 have been incorporated in the Financial Statements.



6. Future Work of the Board

(a) Updated Budget

TOTAL FUNDS HELD AT 11 FEBRUARY 2025	£23,203.55
<u>PLUS Income</u>	
PLUS Income from Fishery Assessments 11 February 2025 to 6 May 2025	+ £1,352.00
PLUS Interest on Deposit Account 11 February 2025 to 6 May 2025	+ £ 134.60
PLUS Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Grant Funding	<u>£ 952.50</u>
Total Income 11 February 2025 to 6 May 2025	£2,439.10
<u>LESS Expenditure</u>	
03/04/25 Paid Gilson Gray LLP – January to March 2024	£ 1,500.00
15/04/25 Information Commissioner’s Office – Annual ICO Certificate Fee	£ 52.00
30/04/25 Colmonell Community Association – Annual Affiliation Fee	£ 55.00
06/05/25 Fisheries Management Scotland – Annual Membership Fee	<u>£ 718.00</u>
Total Expenditure 11 February 2025 to 6 May 2025	- £ 2,325.00
<u>CURRENT FUNDS AT 6 MAY 2025 (in Deposit Account)</u>	£23,317.65
PLUS Estimated Recovery of Arrears of Fisheries Assessments	+ £ 900.00
PLUS Estimated Income - Fisheries Assessments 2025/2026	+ <u>£19,560.00</u>
Total Income expected to 5 April 2026	+ £20,460.00
<u>LESS Estimated Regular Annual Expenditure to 5 April 2026</u>	
Gilson Gray LLP – Balance of Clerk to the Board Services (regular fee)	£ 6,000.00
Azets - Annual Accountancy Charges – Accounts to y/e 5 April 2025	£ 820.00
Information Commissioner’s Office – Annual ICO Certificate Fee	£ 52.00
Colmonell Community Association – Annual Affiliation Fee	£ 55.00
Fisheries Management Scotland – Annual Membership Fee	£ 718.00
Ayrshire Rivers Trust - Annual Affiliation Donation 2025 * will be increased RPI	£ 6,840.15
Robert Elliott – Smolt Shepherding	£ 1,760.00



HMRC – Estimated Corporation Tax to 5 April 2025	£	200.00
Ayrshire Rivers Trust Web Hosting (and Domain renewal)	£	150.00
Estimated Domain Name Renewal Supplier	£	50.00
Payments to River Watch Coordinator	£	300.00
Payments to River Watch Patrol Coordinators (based on 7 months @ £50 x 3)	£	1,050.00
River Watch Scheme regular expenditure (Phone, printing, display boards etc)	£	<u>400.00</u>
Estimated Total Regular Annual Expenditure	- £	18,395.15

LESS Estimated Ad Hoc/Additional Expenditure to 5 April 2026

Gilson Gray LLP - Setup costs of River Watch Scheme	£	1,200.00
Other Expenditure for setup of River Watch Scheme	£	<u>600.00</u>
<u>LESS Total Estimated Ad Hoc/Additional Expenditure to 5 April 2026</u>	- £	1,800.00
<u>LESS Agreed Minimum Reserves</u>	- £	10,000.00

ESTIMATED FUNDS AT 5 APRIL 2026 BEFORE OPTIONAL EXPENDITURE £13,582.50

Optional Expenditure/Projects

Other Project Work:

Japanese Knotweed Control – to pay Ayrshire Rivers Trust	£	4,000.00
Potential Project: Pinmullan Burn treeplanting + bridge crossing (estimated)	£	5,500.00
Gilson Gray LLP – Provision for additional instructions	£	1,200.00
Estimated Total of Optional Expenditure/Projects		£13,500.00

**Iain K Clark
Clerk to the River Stinchar
District Salmon Fishery Board**

**6 May 2025
(Updated at 3 June 2025)**



(b) Proposed Works for Discussion/Agreement



Proposals for Future Work

Japanese knotweed Control

We recommend that £4000 towards Japanese knotweed control is allowed for in 2025 – we had an underspend of £1000 for JK control in 2024 and we will draw this down in 2025 and deliver £5000 of JK control.

We and the Board are currently exploring how we might gain funding for a feasibility study of the upper river to look at creating a spawning sanctuary upstream of Barr as well as greater engagement with landowners to facilitate the delivery of project work in the upper catchment. Part of this project may require an element of match funding from the Board to gain greater funding from a larger grant maker.

Stuart Brabbs, Trust Manager

7. Acknowledgements



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

Thanks the following for their support in its work:



Ayrshire Rivers Trust

working to improve Ayrshire's rivers and lochs

Stuart Brabbs, Trust Manager
Struan Candlish, Fisheries Biologist

Jennifer Garland, Office Manager
Carolyn Bruce, Biologist

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2 Crosshill Cottage
Mauchline
KA5 5HJ

Email: info@ayrshirerivertrust.org

Telephone: 01290 518130

Website: www.ayrshirerivertrust.org

www.facebook.com/AyrshireRiversTrust

www.youtube.com/user/ayrshirerivertrust

Funders and partners:

- All River Stinchar District Salmon Proprietors and Tenants
- Fishery Managers, Ghillies, Club and Association Committee Members
- Fisheries Management Scotland
- Accountants: Azets, Ayr
- Solicitors: Gilson Gray LLP, Glasgow
- Web hosting and Domain Renewal: CE Project Management
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Ayr Joint Valuation Board
- Peter Scanlan, Assistant to the Clerk
- The many landowners who allow access and work to be undertaken
- And other volunteers who give up their time to support our efforts

Clerk to the Board: Iain K Clark, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP
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