

2012-2014

River Ugie Fishery – Season Extension Final Report



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**The Final Report
Angling Season Extension
River Ugie 2012 – 2014**

The River Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board were granted a licence in 2012 to extend the Angling season on the River Ugie by three weeks from the 1st November to the 22nd November and for a three year period 2012-2014.

The River Ugie has historically been a late salmon running river as reflected by its present close time of 1st November till the 10th February.

The aim of the study was to find out if the runs of salmon in the river were getting later and if there were sustainable amounts of stock available after the present close time. The findings would help the Board to consider the figures, to be better informed on the timings of salmon runs and availability of stocks, helping them to come to sound river management decisions in the future.

On our application for the licence we stated the following :-

During the extension period we would monitor the fish caught, assess them and release them back into the river. This would be done only on the lower reaches of the river and would help the board to come to some conclusions, as to the perceived changes relating to the runs of salmon returning to the river.

The evidence we already have suggests the river has for a long time been a late river for salmon returning to spawn, and that this is getting later year on year. Our season had been altered before many years ago to reflect this fact and all the observations that have been made are indicating that many salmon, very likely the majority of salmon are now entering the river after the angling season has ended.-see above

The extension will help us to prove how late the stocks are running, leading to a greater understanding of the runs of salmon, which will lead to better river management of stocks.

If we can satisfy ourselves as a board that a big percentage of the component stocks are as late as we expect, then the board would be much better informed when taking any management decisions on the river in future. As we said from the start this 3 week temporary extension period would be catch and release only and only applying to a small part of the lower reaches of the river. Looking beyond the extension period our thoughts, at the moment, are focused on giving up 5 weeks at the start of the season to get 3 weeks at the end of the season thereby protecting spring salmon which is perceived by all to be the stocks we need to encourage and protect. Again we need the trial extension period to finalise our plans and we would of course be prepared to look again at the wider scheme of things, once in possession of more current facts gleaned from the grant of the extension. We would expect to get a better idea from the fish caught and released during the extension period of:

- a) Numbers of fish caught after the existing end of season date*
- b) The condition of these fish*
- c) The numbers of grilse to salmon ratio entering the river at these times*
- d) If it would be viable to be fishing for these stocks without impacting the river system*
- d) We also would be taking scientific advice about the tagging of these fish or at least some of them, to see if we can find out anything about the distribution patterns of salmon between the North and South Ugie.*
- e) We would be seeking scientific assistance from Marine biologists to find out what else we could learn about the stocks from, perhaps scale readings, DNA reading etc. but we need to investigate this further to see exactly what could be done.*
- f) we would be willing to be guided by Marine Scotland as to any other course of action we could take alongside those already stated and of course would make any findings available to interested parties.*

In recent years the members of the Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board (UDSFB) have come to realise the importance of gathering sound, scientifically based Data when meeting together to discuss the status and welfare of the stocks of salmon and sea trout in the River Ugie.

In order to obtain the best possible figures of the numbers and availability of the different component stocks in the River Ugie, the UDSFB have financed and undertaken the following projects:-

- 1) An extensive, 3 year Electro fishing Survey 2010-2012, independently carried out by Ritchie Miller, Marine Biologist for the Deveron Trust, to calculate the status of the juvenile population of salmon and sea trout in the river.
- 2) The Board is financing and encouraging local angling volunteers to operate a hatchery, using brood stock caught each year in the River, with both salmon and sea trout being brought on and regularly introduced to feeder burns.
- 3) A great advantage to the UDSFB is that the upper proprietor on the board with by far the biggest stretch of angling beats on the River Ugie, also owns the netting rights at the mouth of the river. The board is pleased to see a much curtailed, voluntary reduction in netting effort, resulting in many more fish being allowed up the river to spawn.
- 4) Early in 2014 the UDSFB have financed and operated a Logie Fish counter on the River at a weir one mile up river from the estuary. Fixed on to a crump weir and monitoring three channels across the entire breadth of the river, we are beginning to collect accurate data of fish runs and abundance levels for the stocks of salmon and sea trout entering the river.
- 5) As stated at the start of this report and for the reasons given, a 3 week extension, to the last 3 years angling season, has just been completed and the results published in this report agree with the fish counter findings, that salmon are returning to the river much later than in previous years.

Conclusions and recommendations

After looking carefully at all the data now available to us, from all the above mentioned endeavours, it seems that in common with many other rivers in Scotland, the RUDSFB have a responsibility to pay particular care and attention to the early spring runs of salmon, entering the river in the early months of the year.

We now have the evidence to suggest that the normal summer runs of salmon are more plentiful, but we have proved that many of them are now returning much later in the autumn than in previous years, with by far the majority now returning out with the present fishing season, which finishes on the 31st October.

When the Data we have in this report, is presented to the next board meeting of the RUDSFB, it is to be expected that the board might want to start a dialogue with Marine Scotland and the Fisheries Minister of the Scottish Government, to begin the process of altering the present Annual Close time, to reflect the findings of this report.

Extension Catch Figures - 2012

	Date	Caught	Weight	Anglers	Hours	Comments	Additional Anglers Comments
Week 1	01-08 Nov	3 Salmon	35 lb	21	134	1 Sea Trout in good condition also caught and returned	Fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning. One angler who didn't hook or land any salmon during the season, hooked and then lost a good fish (Ironic). One angler catches his first salmon of the year. Water very dirty and rising at the end of week 1.
Week 2	09-15 Nov	4 Salmon	43 lb	24	165	1 Grilse caught - 7 lb	River in perfect condition for fishing at end of week. Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning again. Fish showing at Buthlaw. The first 2 days of week 2, the water was coloured due to heavy rain. One angler did particularly well landing a cock fish > 20 lbs, having already caught a grilse of 6 lbs earlier that week.
Week 3	16-22 Nov	1 Salmon	14 lb	17	169	1 Grilse caught - 6 lb	River in perfect condition for fishing at end of week. Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning again. Fish showing at Buthlaw. The first 2 days of week 2, the water Fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods, worm, fly and spinning. One angler commented fish came to his fly, looked at it, but didn't take it. One angler felt that there appeared to be far more fishing running the river upstream in November than he witnessed during the normal fishing season.

Extension Catch Figures - 2013

	Date	Caught	Weight	Anglers	Hours	Comments	Additional Anglers Comments
WEEK 1	01-08 Nov	1 Salmon caught	8 lb	16	107.5	1 grilse also caught 3.5 lbs and safely retruned (cock fish)	Fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning. A few of the anglers didn't see any fish and the anglers who did see fish they were mainly showing in the Monyruy area of the river The river was in good condition for fishing. Compared to last season the first week's analysis isn't so good as far as fish caught and returned is concerned.
WEEK 2	09-15 Nov	1 Salmon caught	15 lb	16	99	1 grilse caught -4.5 lbs and safely returned 1 finnock caught and returned	River in perfect condition for fishing at end of week was rising at the beginning of the week Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning again. One angler tried the worm. Fish showing. Two fish hooked and lost .One of the fish was thought to be a big fish.
WEEK 3	16-22 Nov	3 Salmon caught	30 lb	11	132	1 trout caught - 0.2 kg	Fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods, fly, worm and spinning. One angler lost fish about 10 lbs Water in very good condition for fishing. Not every angler was seeing fish moving up-stream. One angler saw no fish. Overall the extension didn't appear to be as good as last seasons.

	Date	Caught	Weight	Anglers	Hours	Comments	Additional Anglers Comments
WEEK 1	01-08 Nov	1 Grilse	5lb	16	63	1 grilse also caught 5.0 lbs and safely returned (fresh fish not liced)	River in perfect condition for fishing at end of week. Fishing methods mainly fly and spinning again. Fish showing at Buthlaw. The first 2 days of week 2, the water Fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods, worm, fly and spinning. One angler commented fish came to his fly, looked at it, but didn't take Not a lot of fish evident moving upstream. Fishing methods mainly spinning. Water rising . A few of the anglers didn't even n see any fish. One fish was lost in Johnstone's pool. The river was not ideal for fishing -strong wind . Unlike this week last season when the condition of the river was ideal for fishing Fish caught is the same as last season for week 1.
WEEK 2	09-15 Nov	2 Grilse 1 finnock 1 sea trout	1 x 3lb 1 x 5 lb 1 x 0.5lb 1 x 2.0 lb	19	110	2 grilse caught and safely returned both hen fish and in good condition. Worm and returned Fly and returned	River in better condition for fishing. Fishing methods being used, worm, spinning and fly. Not a lot of fish showing Two other fish were hooked and lost both by anglers using the fly method.
WEEK 3	16-22 Nov	4 grilse 1 salmon 3 sea trout 1 brown trout	1 x 3.0 lbs 1x 4.5 lbs 1 x 4.0 lbs 1 x 6.5 lbs 1 x 8 lbs 1 x2.5 lbs 1 x 2.0 lbs 1 x 3.0 lbs 1x 0.75 lb	9	54	One spinning , three on worm. All four fish described as being in good condition the very high water eight fish were caught using only one of these coloured. good condition (fat fish) two were described as being spent. Caught on fly. One finnock lost.	Water very high, parks flooded, however despite this eight fish were caught. These were caught using spinning, fly and worm methods. The three sea trout -two of which were described as spent were all caught using worm . All fish were safely returned to the river. There was not much fish showing despite anglers covering most of the upper reaches in search of fish. This week proved to be the best week for fish caught and returned.

Extension Catch Figures - 2014

Extension Weekly Analysis - Week 1

	Fish caught & returned.	Comments	Anglers	Hours	
Week 1 01-08 Nov	<p>2012 : 3 salmon (35lbs) 1 sea trout</p> <p>2013 : 1 salmon (8lbs) 1 Grilse (3.5lbs) (cock fish)</p> <p>2014 : 1 Grilse (5lbs)</p>	<p>During the three year trial 2012 appears to have been the most successful as far as fish caught is concerned as one can see in the adjacent column.</p> <p>The sea trout was in good condition.</p>	54	316.5	<p>In total 54 anglers took part in the trial over the three year period spending a total of 316.5 hours on the river in search of fish. However included in that figure may have been anglers who also took part in earlier years .The actual breakdown of time spent on the river by anglers is listed below. During week 1 of the three year trial the angler’s experienced all types of weather and river levels. On the first two years of week 1 of the trial, fish were evident moving upstream unlike season 2014 where not a lot of fish was evident. During the three year trial all types of fishing methods were employed, usually dictated I would imagine by the water levels on the river. On week 1 (season 2012), it was ironic that one angler who didn’t hook or land any salmon during the season, hooked and then lost a good fish, and one angler caught his first salmon of the year. One can conclude if there had been no extension to the season neither of these two anglers would have had the experience of hooking and playing a salmon. Certain variables obviously may affect how enjoyable and successful fishing is going to be. The water levels and conditions during the three year trial varied quite a lot. During this week of season 2013, the river was in excellent condition, whereas seasons 2012 and 2014 the conditions were described as not being ideal for fishing as there were strong winds and high water levels. This could have accounted for the fact that that there were more fish caught in season 2012 than there were in seasons 2013 and 2014 as detailed in the column headed fish caught.</p>

Week 1 Analysis

Week 1 analysis concluded that season 2012 was the best of the three seasons extensions for this particular week for weight of salmon caught (35 lbs).

2012 : 21 anglers spent 134 hours on the river in search of fish.

2013 : 17 anglers spent 119.5 hours on the river in search of fish.

2014 : 16 anglers spent 63 hours on the river in search of fish.

Extension Weekly Analysis - Week 2

<p>Week 2 09-15 Nov</p>	<p>2012 : 4 salmon (43 lbs) 1 grilse (7 lb)</p> <p>2013- 1 salmon (15 lbs) 1 grilse (4.5lb) 1 finnock</p> <p>2014 : 2 Grilse 1 sea trout (2lb) 1 finnock (0.5lb)</p>	<p>One of the fish a cock salmon in excess of 20 lbs.</p> <p>Both hen Fish, good condition, safely returned. Indeed all of the fish listed were returned safely to the water.</p>	<p>57</p>	<p>374</p>	<p>Right away one can see slightly more time was spent by anglers during the three year trial period of week 2 ie 57 anglers spent 374 hours on the river in search of fish. This may have been due to river conditions being better during all of the three year trial period for this particular week of the three year trial. It was described in the 2012 report that the river was in better condition for fishing as had been during week 1. Fish were more evident and moving upstream especially during seasons 2012 and 2013. Fishing methods being employed were worm, spinning and fly. In addition to the fish listed adjacent as being caught and returned safely to the water four other fish were hooked and lost during this week of seasons 2013 and 2014. One of these was thought to be a big fish. That was during the trial period (week 2) of season 2013. One angler did particularly well hooking and landing a big cock salmon, in excess of 20 lbs, having already hooked and landed a grilse earlier on in the week. Fly fishing was proving to be the most popular, probably due to the improved river conditions and two of the fish that were hooked and lost during this week of the extended 2014 season were by anglers using the fly method.</p>
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Week 2 Analysis

Week 2 analysis once again proved that season 2012 was the best of the three seasons extensions for this particular week for weight of salmon caught (43 lbs).

2012 : 24 anglers spent 165 hours on the river in search of fish.

2013 : 16 anglers spent 99 hours on the river in search of fish.

2014 : 19 anglers spent 110 hours on the river in search of fish.

Extension Weekly Analysis - Week 3

Week 3 16-22 Nov	<p>2012 : 1 salmon (14 lb) 1 grilse (6lb)</p> <p>2013 : 3 salmon (30 lb) 2 small grilse (2.5lbs each) 1 small brown trout</p> <p>2014 : 1 salmon (8 lb) 4 grilse 1 @ 3lbs 1 @ 4½lbs 1 @ 4lbs 1 @ 6.5lbs</p> <p>3 Sea Trout caught 1 @ 2½lbs 1 @ 2 lbs 1 @3lbs Brown Trout @ ¾lb</p>	<p>Very good condition both caught on fly,</p> <p>Very good condition –described as being a fat fish All in good condition only one described as being coloured. All three caught with worm bait the other with the rapala spinning lure.</p> <p>All of the sea trout were caught using worm as bait. Two of them were described as being spent.</p> <p>All sea trout and brown trout Were returned safely to the river.</p>	40	379	<p>Interestingly although only 40 anglers spent time on the river during this particular week of the trial period covering 2012-2014 the amount of time spent on the river by the anglers was more than any of the other trial period weeks. Fish were evident moving upstream although not so much for season 2014 which is not surprising as the water was very high and parks flooded. During the extended period for this particular week of season 2012 it was generally felt that there appeared to be much more fish running as had been during the season proper. Various methods of fishing were employed during the trial period covering all three seasons for this particular week. Fish were caught using spinning, fly and worm methods. All of the three sea trout caught in the extended 2014 season (week 3) -two of which were described as spent were all caught using worm whereas the seven grilse caught during the entire trial period (week 3) were caught with worm, fly and the rapala spinning lure. All fish were safely returned to the river. Although there was not fish showing in the extended period of season 2014 for this particular week, despite anglers covering most of the upper reaches in search of fish this week proved to be the best week for fish caught and returned for 2014. However the extended trial period for week (3)of season 2013 proved to be the most successful when three salmon, two small grilse and one brown trout were caught and safely returned to the river.</p>
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Week 3 Analysis

Week 3 analysis proved that this time that season 2013 was the best of the three seasons extensions as far as this week was concerned for weight of salmon caught(30lbs).

2012 : 17 anglers spent 169 hours on the river in search of fish

2013 : 13 anglers spent 139 hours on the river in search of fish.

2014 : 10 anglers spent 71 hours on the river in search of fish.

Extension Weekly Analysis – Observations

Observations From An Angling Perspective

The overall conclusion is that the three year trial period was a success. The anglers enjoyed being able to fish longer as it was generally thought that fish are tending to run later these days. Although there were not a lot of fish caught and returned safely to the water the extended 2014 season surprised and pleased a lot of anglers as anglers had been disappointed by the lack of success in October yet nine fish were caught in the extended period and safely returned to the river. If there had been no extension to the season it would have ended with not much optimism that fish were running the river to spawn. With the fish counter now also in place we will be able to know exactly how much fish are making their way up stream. The advantage also of the trial period is that those anglers who have successfully hooked and landed fish can see first hand the quality of the fish being landed and the report above indicates that mostly the fish are good quality shape and most are fresh and have not been in the river long. Most of the fish caught being in the main river and not after the river splits into two. It was also interesting to note that sea trout had already successfully spawned and they too were in reasonable shape.

Reported Salmon and Sea Trout Catches 2012-2014

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Year	District	Month	Month No	Method	Wild Salmon		Wild Grilse		Sea Trout		Finnock	
					Number	Weight(kg)	Number	Weight(kg)	Number	Weight(kg)	Number	Weight(kg)
2012	Ugie	May	5	Rod and Line	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.8	0	0.0
	Ugie	June	6		0	0.0	0	0.0	17	18.3	0	0.0
	Ugie	July	7		1	4.1	3	6.6	55	50.9	0	0.0
	Ugie	August	8		4	17.9	4	6.9	7	7.0	0	0.0
	Ugie	September	9		4	22.4	5	8.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ugie	October	10		16	68.6	4	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
				Rod and Line	25	112.9	16	30.7	82	80.1	0	0.0
	Ugie	April	4	Catch and Release	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0
	Ugie	June	6		0	0.0	0	0.0	6	7.9	0	0.0
	Ugie	July	7		0	0.0	2	4.3	8	9.3	5	2.2
	Ugie	August	8		0	0.0	3	5.6	23	29.0	6	2.5
	Ugie	September	9		3	5.6	4	6.4	26	25.4	10	4.6
	Ugie	October	10		4	18.2	3	5.7	13	19.1	16	6.8
				Catch and Release	7	23.9	12	22.1	77	91.6	37	16.1
2012				Sum:	32	136.8	28	52.8	159	171.7	37	16.1
2013	Ugie	April	4	Rod and Line	1	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ugie	May	5		0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.4	0	0.0
	Ugie	June	6		0	0.0	0	0.0	5	4.9	0	0.0
	Ugie	July	7		0	0.0	1	1.6	2	2.6	0	0.0
	Ugie	August	8		0	0.0	0	0.0	7	8.9	0	0.0

	Ugie	September	9		1	3.6	1	3.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ugie	October	10		7	34.5	9	22.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
				Rod and Line	9	41.7	11	26.5	16	18.7	0	0.0
				Catch and Release								
	Ugie	May	5		0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.0	2	0.8
	Ugie	September	9		0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.2	6	2.6
	Ugie	October	10		0	0.0	3	7.6	14	13.0	25	10.9
				Catch and Release	0	0.0	3	7.6	18	17.2	33	14.3
2013				Sum:	9	41.7	14	34.2	34	35.9	33	14.3

2014	Ugie	May	5	Rod and Line	0	0.0	1	1.4	2	2.6	0	0.0
	Ugie	June	6		0	0.0	0	0.0	11	16.1	0	0.0
	Ugie	July	7		0	0.0	0	0.0	8	8.9	0	0.0
	Ugie	August	8		1	4.5	2	4.5	14	18.1	0	0.0
	Ugie	September	9		2	8.2	2	4.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ugie	October	10		3	15.9	3	5.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
				Rod and Line	6	28.6	8	15.9	35	45.7	0	0.0
				Catch and Release								
	Ugie	February	2		0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1	0	0.0
	Ugie	April	4		0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	2.0
	Ugie	August	8		0	0.0	3	3.6	22	26.4	12	4.7
	Ugie	September	9		0	0.0	1	1.6	12	14.7	6	2.6
	Ugie	October	10		2	7.5	8	14.2	15	16.7	4	2.3
				Catch and Release	2	7.5	12	19.4	50	59.0	28	11.6
2014				Sum:	8	36.1	20	35.3	85	104.7	28	11.6

Ugie Fish Counter Totals

