

**River Ugie District Fishery Board**  
**Conveners Report 2013**

Without doubt the 2013 season has been the worst season in living memory. Both the salmon and the sea trout runs have been notable by their absence, it's a real concern for everyone with interest in and responsibility for the management and welfare of the stocks in the River Ugie.

On a positive note the research done in the river has once again shown an abundance of juvenile fish with goods reports on the densities of both salmon and trout parr in every part of the river that samples were taken. This begs the question why is the numbers of returning adult fish so low?

It points to something drastic that is taking place in the sea before the salmon and trout return to the river. What is happening to these fish in the sea we can only guess. Seals pollution climate change netting in the sea all have a part to play but these factors we have lived with for many years, without the decline in numbers we have experienced this year.

We are, as always, basing our estimates on the state of the stocks of adult fish returning to the Ugie on fishing effort and observations of fish movement in the river. These are our only indications of the stocks available and are not the most reliable or accurate means to provide data for the management or conservation of the rivers stocks. No one knows with any degree of accuracy the numbers of salmon and trout in the river making decisions on river management very difficult.

We are in the second year of a three year extension to the angling season to try to glean more information about the runs of salmon and trout and will be making a full report available after the third years results are collected. Initial findings on the first two years are showing no great amount numbers of salmon entering the river in November and as expected no fresh run trout showing at that time of year.

Much work is being done on the river to improve the habitat and the banks, we all realise the importance of the ecology of the river to the welfare of the stocks. It is a major concern to the board that in many places the farmers adjacent to the river are showing a disregard for the code of good practice for cattle and sheep grazing near to a water course, and we are actively pursuing these cases with SEPA with a view to stop animals gaining access to the river banks.

The work of the board continues with many new challenges facing us, as we seek to comply with all the information we need now by law to collect and make public. With the employees of the board and the board members determined to do our utmost to carry out our duties to the best of our abilities, the welfare of the salmon and trout in the river Ugie will continue to be uppermost in our minds and in our actions.

My thanks to Bob Davidson, Donnie McLean and the members of the board for their time and effort in the day to day running of the board and for all they do to promote the interests of the River Ugie.

Joseph Yule (Convener)

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