



The River South Esk
Catchment Partnership

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Issue 9

Newsletter

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River South Esk Pearls in Peril LIFE work continues

Banks re-profiled to form a more natural bankside

On the 6th July Pearls in Peril LIFE started work removing artificial boulder bank protection on the River South Esk SAC in Glen Clova. So far, a total of 375m of boulders have been removed at Moulzie and the banks re-profiled to form a more natural bankside. The boulders have been placed on the lower hill slopes, from where they were originally taken to build the bank protection. Contractors VHE are now working on the White Water at Acharn and have been moving some enormous boulders. The work is being done from the bank to minimise any disturbance to the riverbed and clean cobbles/pebbles unearthed during the work are being used to “seed” the river. This aims to re-start the natural delivery of suitable substrate to improve downstream freshwater pearl mussel and salmonid (salmon and trout) habitat as part of a natural river process. This exciting work is due to finish in late August and in total 870m of riverbank will have been restored allowing the river to restart its natural process and provide valuable habitat for freshwater pearl mussels, Atlantic salmon and trout. More information on the Pearls in Peril LIFE project can be found at <https://www.pearlsinperil.org.uk/>

Before and after - a 57m section bank protection on the White Water in Glen Doll has been removed. ©@MoTheMussel.



New chief executive for Montrose Port Authority

Port looks towards the next stage of its expansion

Nicholas Scott-Gray has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Montrose Port Authority – bringing with him over 26 years’ experience within the port and shipping sectors.

Mr Scott-Gray (48) was most recently the Business Development Manager at Forth Ports Ltd where he successfully developed the company’s commercial strategy for the development of the ports under its umbrella. Prior to then he was Port Manager at Leith and Grangemouth. He has also previously held a number of prominent roles in shipping and marine logistics.

He succeeds John Paterson (67) who is retiring after nine years as MPA chief executive, during which time he oversaw an increase in turnover at the Angus port from £2.4m to £4.8m. The annual tonnage of shipping visiting Montrose exceeded two million tonnes for the first time in 2014 and the numbers of oil and gas vessels using the port has more than doubled since 2011.

Mr Scott-Gray said: “I am delighted to be taking over the helm at Montrose Port Authority at a time when it is enjoying strong growth and where it is



now firmly established as an important North Sea shipping and logistics hub. I am looking forward to the challenge of continuing this expansion so as bring further economic benefits to Montrose and the local economy.”

John Paterson said: “Nicholas has an impressive track record in port management and development, which will stand Montrose in good stead for the next stage of its expansion. We have a superb workforce and the local businesses that rely upon the port have always been tremendously supportive and open to new ideas and innovations.”

Nick Bradford, Chairman of MPA said: “Nicholas brings the experience and knowledge necessary to ensure Montrose builds upon its position as one of Scotland’s leading ports. I would also like to thank John for his superb leadership in driving the port forward and wish him well for his retirement.”

The last seven years has seen record investment at Montrose, including the recent £6m upgrade of berths six and seven on the north side of the port to ensure deep water berthing and enhanced quayside operational working space. This upgrade follows on from the £8.5m south quay development programme completed three years ago.

More information on Montrose Port Authority can be found at www.montroseport.co.uk



Montrose port from Ferryden. ©K A Dempsey.

Association of Salmon Fishery Boards welcome Scottish Government's salmon conservation proposals

Wild salmon stock protection measures announced

The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB) has welcomed the proposals for a new conservation scheme for wild salmon stocks announced by Scottish Government.

Under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 Scottish Government is proposing to introduce a licensing system for the killing of wild salmon in Scotland and to prohibit "the taking of salmon out-with estuary limits". In essence this will mean the end of all coastal netting.

The package, once it is approved by Ministers, will restrict the killing of any salmon to those fisheries that can provide evidence of a 'sustainable surplus'. It is recognised that fisheries operating on the open coast take fish from a number of 'home' rivers, and as such there is no current way of establishing whether the capture of such fish is sustainable. Salmon will now only be taken under licence and tags will need to be affixed to fish taken to demonstrate compliance with the new regulations.

Alasdair Laing, Chairman of ASFB said "We welcome these proposals, which provide a clear signal that Government are taking the threat to migratory fish populations posed by mixed stock fisheries seriously. We appreciate that the decision to move forward with these proposals has been a challenging one, but it is the right decision and is founded on good fishery management principles. The Association looks forward to engaging further on this process and ensuring that the licence and tagging system which will permit sustainable exploitation for other fisheries is based on good evidence"

Full details of the Scottish Government proposals are available at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence>

Montrose goose migration record broken twice in a week

Record numbers of pink-footed geese flocking to Montrose Basin



Pink-footed goose. ©Adam McClure.

The record for the number of pink-footed geese flocking to Montrose Basin was smashed twice in a week last autumn. Volunteers counted a record 70,153 geese at the Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve last October. A new survey as part of the Icelandic Breeding Goose Census has now recorded 78,970 birds at the site. The geese had migrated 1,200km (745 miles) from Iceland and Greenland for the winter. The previous record, set in 2010, saw 65,060 geese arrive at the Angus reserve. The Icelandic Breeding Goose Census is now carried out at more than 120 sites across the UK, Ireland, the Faroe Islands and Norway.

Scottish Wildlife Trust reserves manager Rab Potter who was interviewed by the BBC back in October said it was hard to know how long the geese would remain in the area in such large numbers and that the number of pink-footed geese at Montrose Basin had taken everyone by surprise. He noted that "pink-footed geese outnumbered people in Montrose by almost seven to one." Around 372,000 pink-footed geese spend the winter in the UK, thought to be about 90% of the world's population.

More information on Montrose basin can be found at www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/montrose-basin/

Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme Community Benefits

Angus Council pioneering a community benefits plan

Angus Council is pioneering a community benefits plan as part of the Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme; the aim of this plan is to bring wider community benefits to the local community, beyond the construction work.

As part of the community benefits Morrison Construction is attending a number of events at schools in Brechin, promoting engineering and Health & Safety to local children.

Angus Council and Morrison Construction are working together with the Institution of Civil Engineers to arrange for a hands-on engineering challenge to be set up for students at local Brechin schools to attend.

A local artist has been commissioned to design five mosaic panels which will be installed on the new flood wall in River Street. The mosaic panels are being designed with input from students at schools in Brechin and the local community. Once the designs are confirmed, local schools and the community will have the opportunity to assist in creating the mosaics.

Angus Council is working in partnership with the Ranger Service to install a number of Bird, Owl and Bat boxes in the Brechin area. Local schools will have the opportunity to participate in constructing the boxes and learn about the natural environment and local ecology.

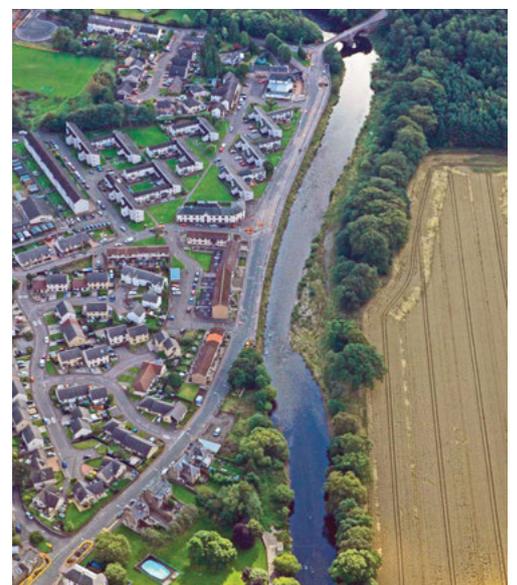
As part of the Scheme design, a new play park at the Inch will be installed, which will represent a substantial enhancement to the old park play.

Where possible Angus Council has instructed Morrison Construction to recycle and reuse material. The material planed out of the carriageways in River Street and Witchden Road has been reused in Zones 3 & 4. Stonework removed from Zone 1 has been set aside for reuse. Where required new stone will be brought in from local suppliers to provide the best match.

For more information please contact Brechinflood@angus.gov.uk



Old road exposed in Zone 1 from the Bleaching Greens / Paperies. ©BFPS.



River Street and the Inch. ©BFPS.

Biological control agent for Himalayan balsam in UK

Trials of rust fungus underway

For the last few years the not-for-profit research organization CABI has been working on a project to identify a suitable biological control agent for Himalayan balsam. A rust fungus *Puccinia komarovii* var. *glanduliferae* was found to be the best option, and after initial field trials in 2014 a nationwide release and monitoring programme has begun at 25 sites across the UK in 2015. Senior Scientist at CABI, Dr Robert Tanner, says:

“The release of the rust fungus against Himalayan balsam is a result of over eight years of research evaluating the safety of its use against the target species. Over time, we should see a decline in the Himalayan balsam populations along our rivers, with native plant species recolonizing these degraded sites.”



Himalayan balsam. ©K A Dempsey.

CABI would like those regularly exposed to balsam to watch out for the rust fungus in their localities as it is currently at an important establishment phase. If you see what you believe to be the fungus then please contact CABI to make them aware and leave the patch of balsam in situ.

More details on the biological control project and how to ID the rust fungus can be found here at <https://goo.gl/IsPguA>

Conservation and land management practices in Norway

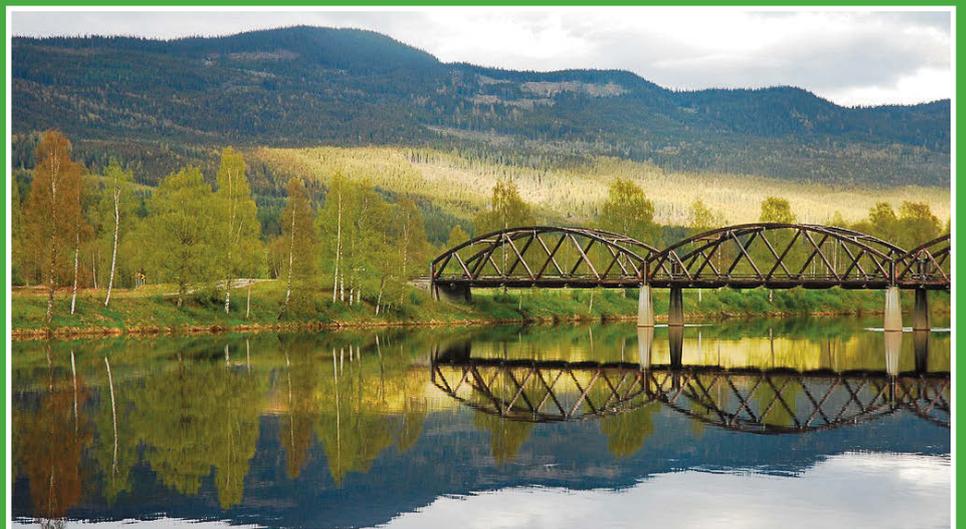
Learning lessons from our North Sea neighbours

In May 2015 the partnership project coordinator took part in a structured training programme in Norway, organised through ArchNetwork, a Scottish Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) which promotes learning and development in natural and cultural heritage between Scotland and other European countries. The programme was funded through Erasmus+ which is managed in the UK by the British Council and Ecorys UK. The group consisted of six conservationists from a variety of NGO's and backgrounds.

The objective was to develop our understanding of conservation issues and exchange ideas through meeting experts and seeing practical examples of research and wildlife and land management in Norway. The groups host for the week was Marius Kjongsberg, lecturer for the Applied Ecology and Agricultural Science Facility at the University of Hedmark at the Evenstad campus, located in the south east of Norway on the banks of the Glomma. The University co-ordinated a great variety of topics and arranged for pertinent site visits and talks and a great deal was learned that hopefully can be applied to the management of our own natural resources.

This report aims to provide summary of our experiences and insights from the trip.

The group created a report which can be read at http://archnetwork.org/norway-2015-joint-report/#_Toc422079170 and there is even a video created by one of the participants <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VG3d19RvDOY>



Norway's longest and largest river the Glomma. ©K A Dempsey.



Habitat created by beavers in Hedmark, Norway. ©K A Dempsey.

Future of beavers in Scotland to be decided by Minister

Final report sent to the Scottish Government

The "Beavers in Scotland" report, published earlier this summer by SNH is one of the most thorough assessments ever done for a species reintroduction proposal. The report draws on 20 years of work on beavers, including information from the Scottish Beaver Trial, a five-year trial reintroduction in Argyll which finished last May; the study of more than 150 beavers living in the wild in Tayside and work on the impact of beavers on salmon and trout and on areas of productive farmland. It also refers to the experiences that many other European and North American countries have had of living with beavers, presents findings on biodiversity and beavers and looks at where they might recolonise if allowed to stay.

Ian Ross, Chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage said: "The report sets out the links between the evidence gathered and the risks and benefits of the various options. It also considers management approaches to help mitigate the risks and maximise the benefits, should beavers be permanently reintroduced to Scotland. This comprehensive report will therefore help inform the decision on the future of beavers in Scotland." A decision is expected later this year.

Four management scenarios have been submitted for Scottish Ministers to consider. These range from full removal of all beavers to the widespread reintroduction of beavers across Scotland. Ministers asked for the report to help them decide whether to permanently reintroduce beavers to Scotland.

Beavers are thought to promote more varied woodland growth by creating clearings that allow young trees to establish. Their formidable dams — one at the Argyll trial is 18m long and 1.6m tall — create bodies of water that drain to become lush meadows when the animals move on and so is very beneficial for a range of biodiversity. A number of independent scientific studies, reports and reviews on beavers have also been published. The findings are included in the Beavers in Scotland report. An online copy of the Beavers in Scotland report is available at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=2273>

New Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Action Plan

Water, wetlands & marine and coasts input wanted

The new 10 year Local Biodiversity Action Plan need input from you as to what actions you deem most important in our aquatic environment over the next 10 yrs. The plan aims to formulate a wide range of new collaborative short and long term visions and actions that contribute to enhancing and protecting Tayside's aquatic environments and species. Do you have ongoing projects that may be the inspiration for new actions? Or new actions you would like to have considered? Please contact info@theriversouthesk.org with any suggestions.



Partnership twitter account

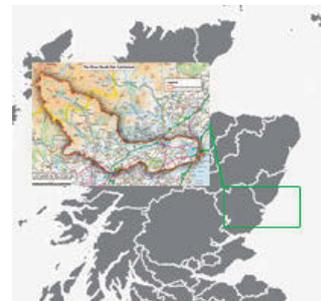
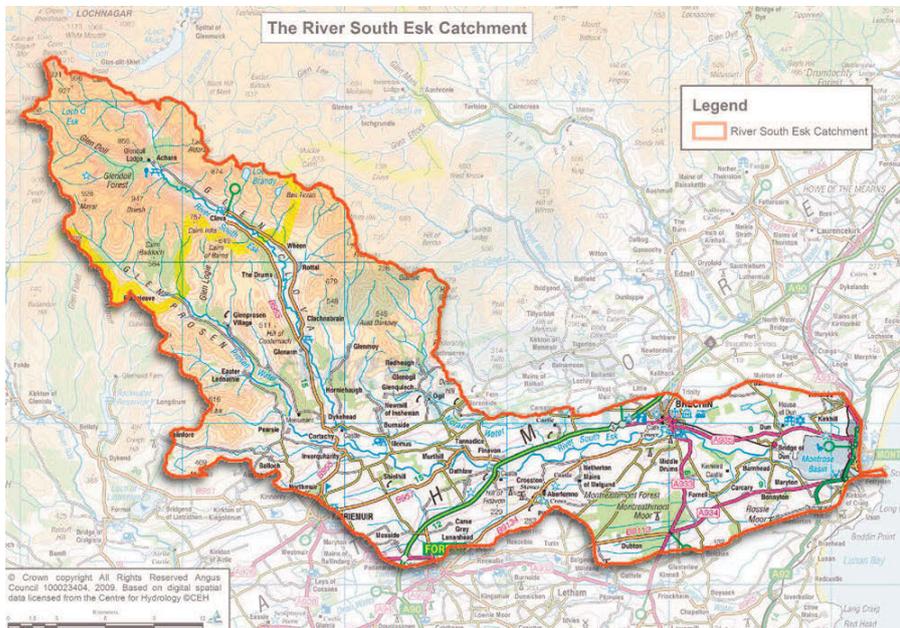
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About The River South Esk Catchment Partnership

To address the many issues which affect the South Esk catchment, representatives of some organisations have been meeting regularly since 2004 with the development of an integrated Catchment Management Plan at the forefront of their aims. This plan was published in 2009 after an intensive two year consultation phase which captured people's views on what they considered the key environmental, social and economic issues to be within the catchment. These views were used to form the basis of the plan's strategic aims, catchment objectives and actions.

The River South Esk Catchment Partnership would like to thank all its funders and supporters. Without them it would be impossible to carry out the work we are undertaking. For more information on the partners please visit www.theriversouthesk.org/partners/



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