

AFT Biologist's Report



ADSFB AGM March 2025

AFT & DSFB Activities 2024-25

Assessing status of salmon populations -

- ASSES & Juvenile fish surveys

Understand factors affecting fish populations

- ABSTP, EMPs / Sea lice surveys

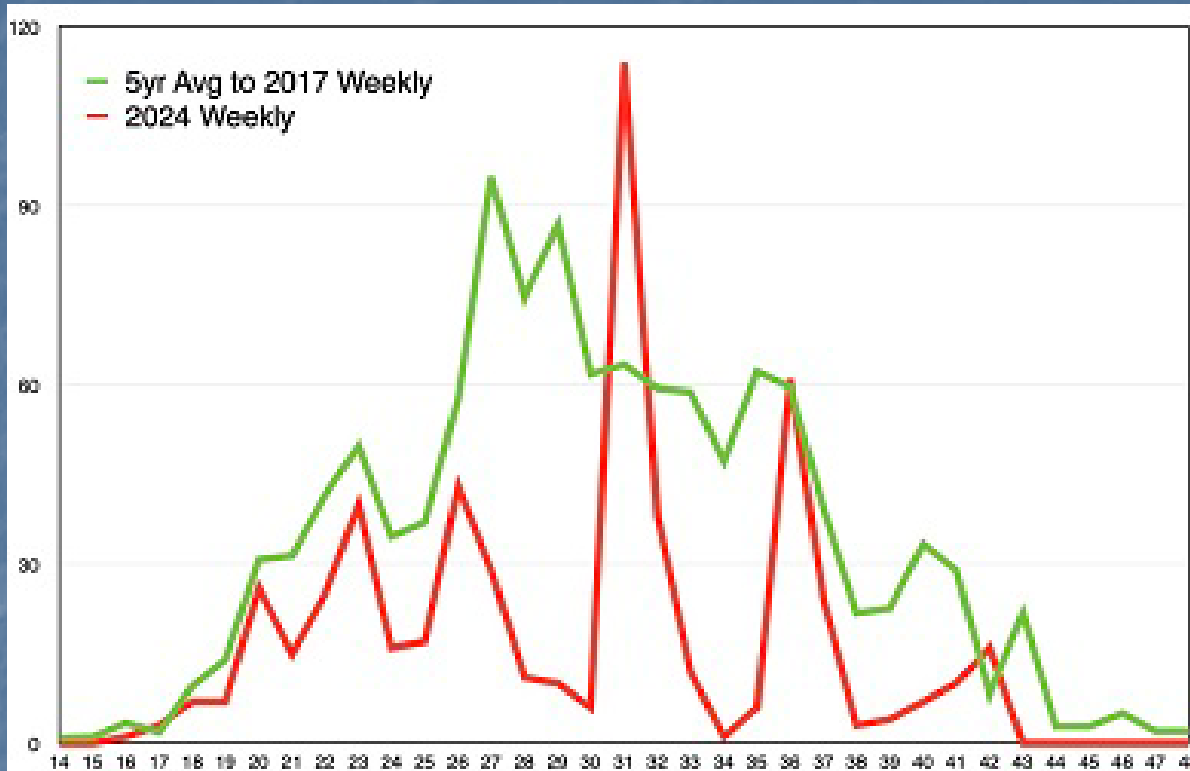
Restore productivity of habitats

- Cowal River Habitat Improvement Works
- Creran Nutrient project

Conserve existing stocks

- Managing exploitation
- Ruel Living Gene Bank
- Consultation & Representation

Status of Salmon in Argyll

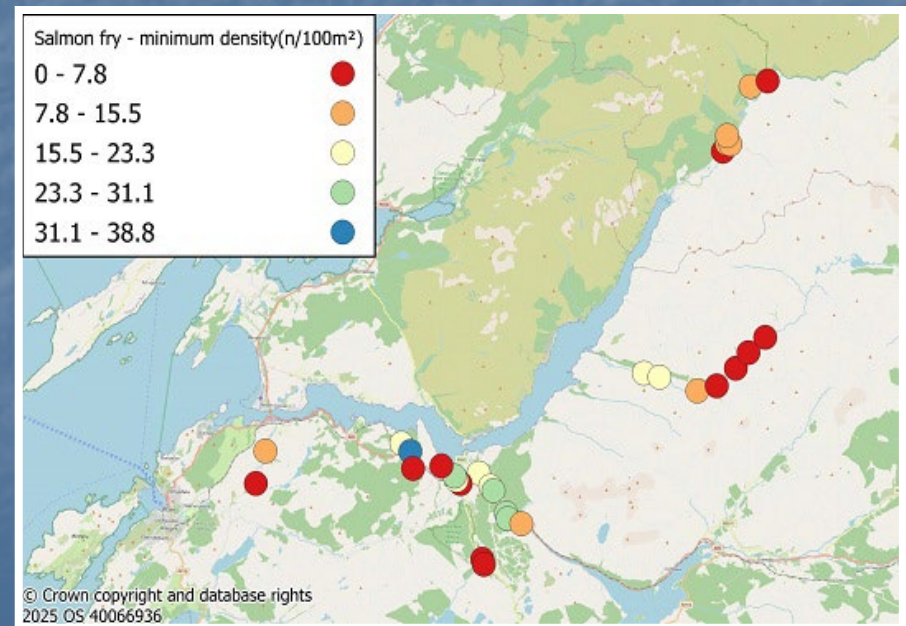


- Awe salmon count ~ 526
- Salmon 'endangered' IUCN Red list
- Reduced fecundity
- Potential loss of genetic diversity & health in small populations
- Potential failure of smolt production



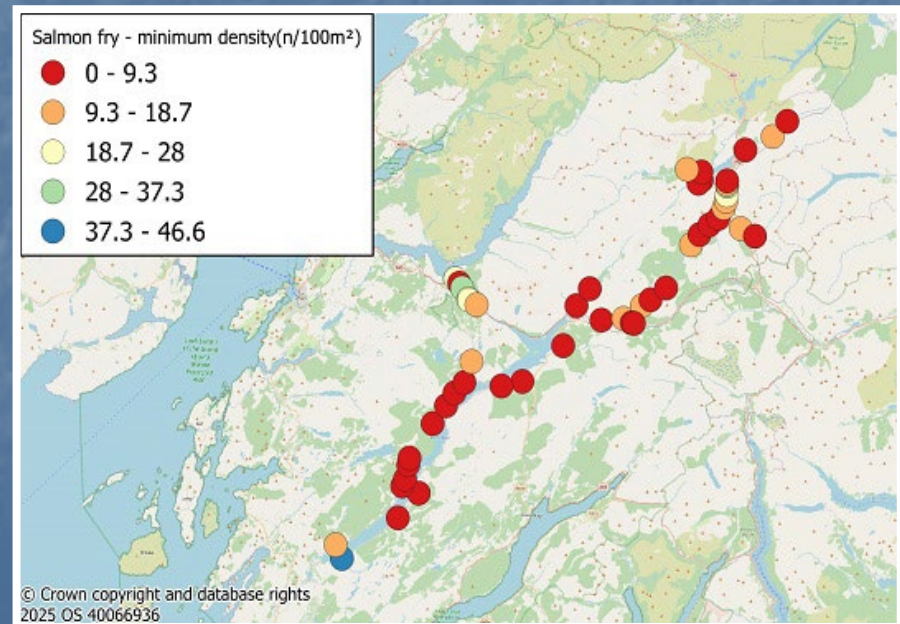
Assessing status of salmon populations - Loch Etive 2024

- 30 sites surveyed across Loch Etive
- Inform status of salmon / EMPS
- Fry present at 90 % of sites
- Parr present at 97 % of sites
- Fry > benchmark at 24 % of sites
- Parr > benchmark at 44 % sites
- R. Etive - low but close to avg. fry densities
- R. Kinglass - 50 % below avg. fry densities
- R. Nant - 50 % below avg. fry densities
- Genetic samples collected



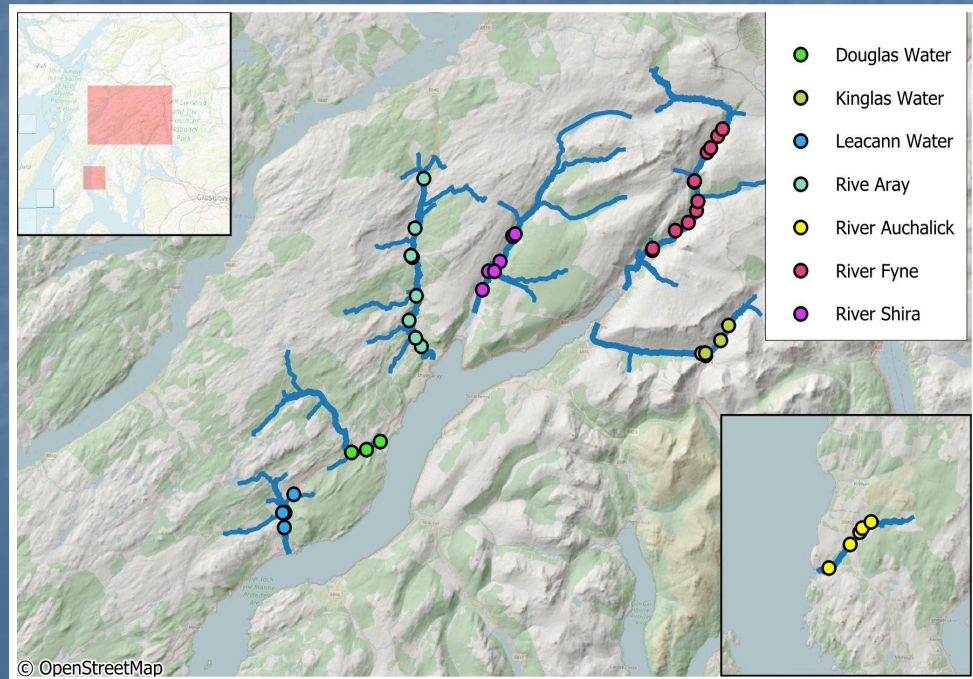
Assessing status of salmon populations - Awe catchment 2024

- 50 sites surveyed
- Inform status of salmon / EMPs
- Fry present at 70 % of sites
- Parr present at 78 % of sites
- Fry > benchmark at 7.5 % of sites
- Parr > benchmark at 12.5 % sites
- Most significant decline in L. Awe & upper Orchy tributaries
- Declines linked to adult returns
- Climate driven change in L. Tulla tributaries
- Genetic samples collected



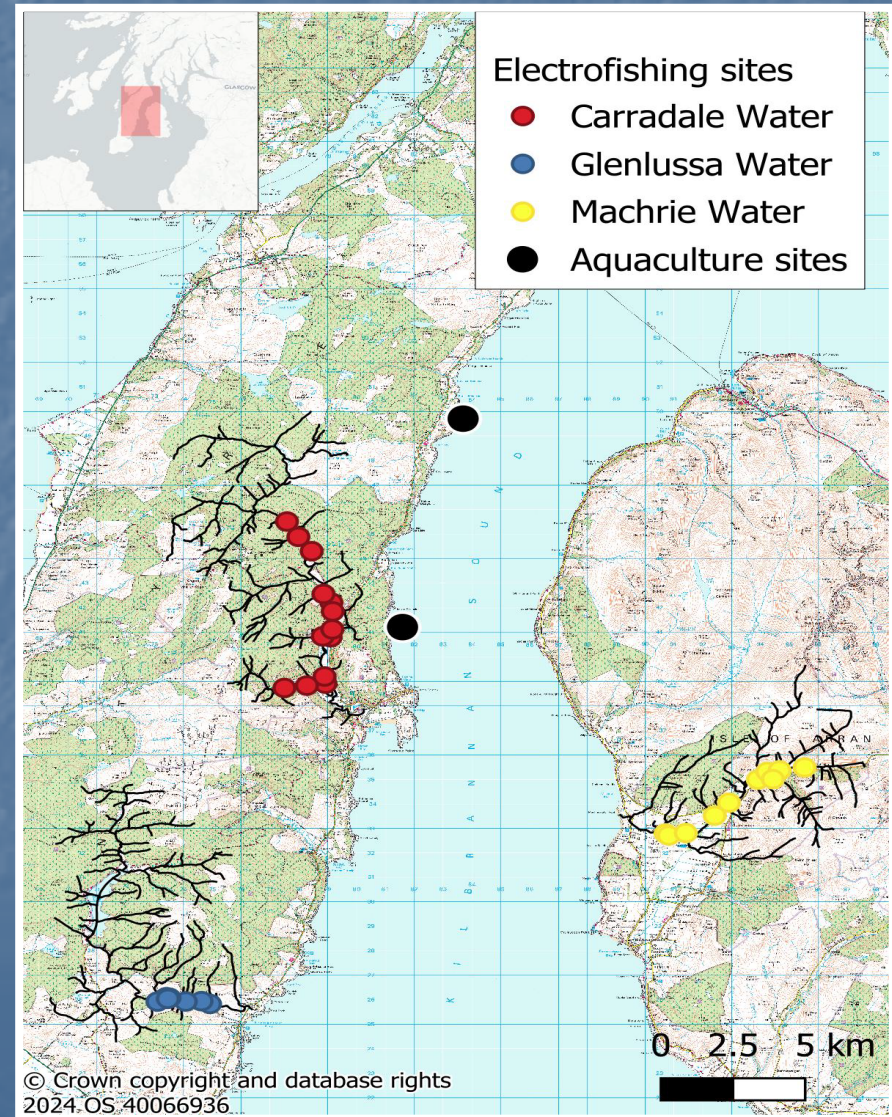
Assessing status of salmon populations - Loch Fyne 2024

- 44 sites surveyed
- Inform status of salmon / EMPs
- Fry present at 59 % of sites
- Parr present at 46 % of sites
- Fry > benchmark at 34 % of sites
- Parr > benchmark at 19 % sites
- Most significant decline in:
 - R. Kinglas (obstacle)
 - R. Auchalick (?)
 - Upper R. Fyne (Climate?)
 - Leacann Water (obstacle?)



Assessing status of salmon populations - Kintyre 2024

- 30 sites surveyed
- Inform status of salmon SSSI
- Fry present at 70 % of sites
- Parr present at 83 % of sites
- Fry > benchmark at 23 % of sites
- Parr > benchmark at 23 % sites
- Most significant decline in:
 - Glenlussa Water
 - Carradale trib. (obstacle)



Assessing status of salmon populations – **ASSES 2021-24**

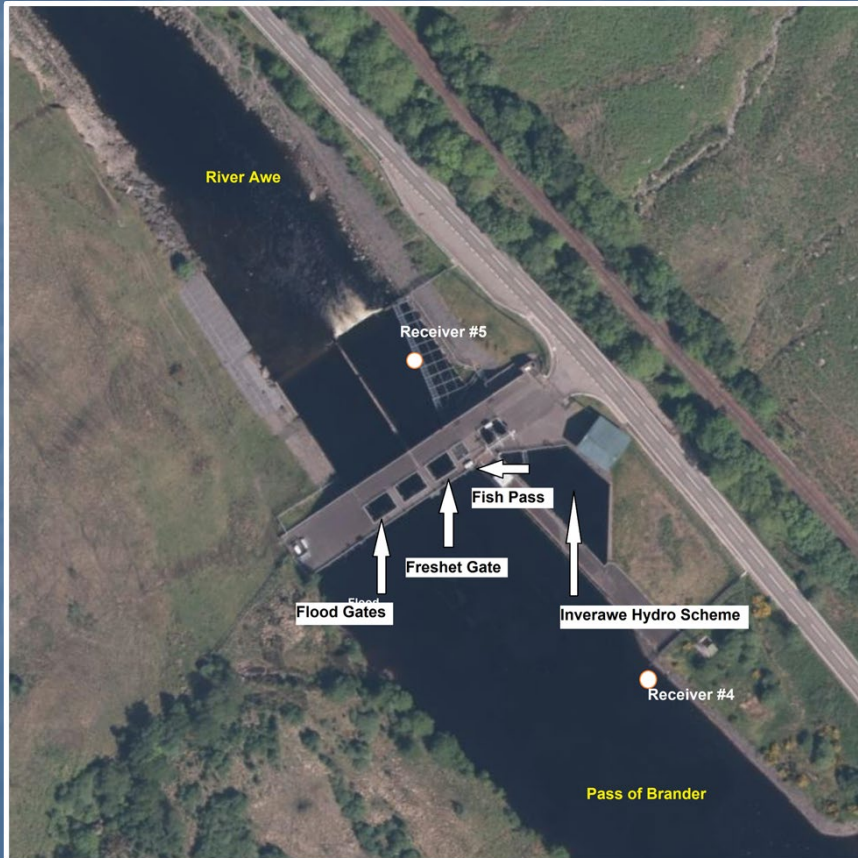


Adult Salmon Scale Sampling 2024

- 3rd year of MSS Project
- April-September
- River Awe - 30 adult salmon sampled in 2024

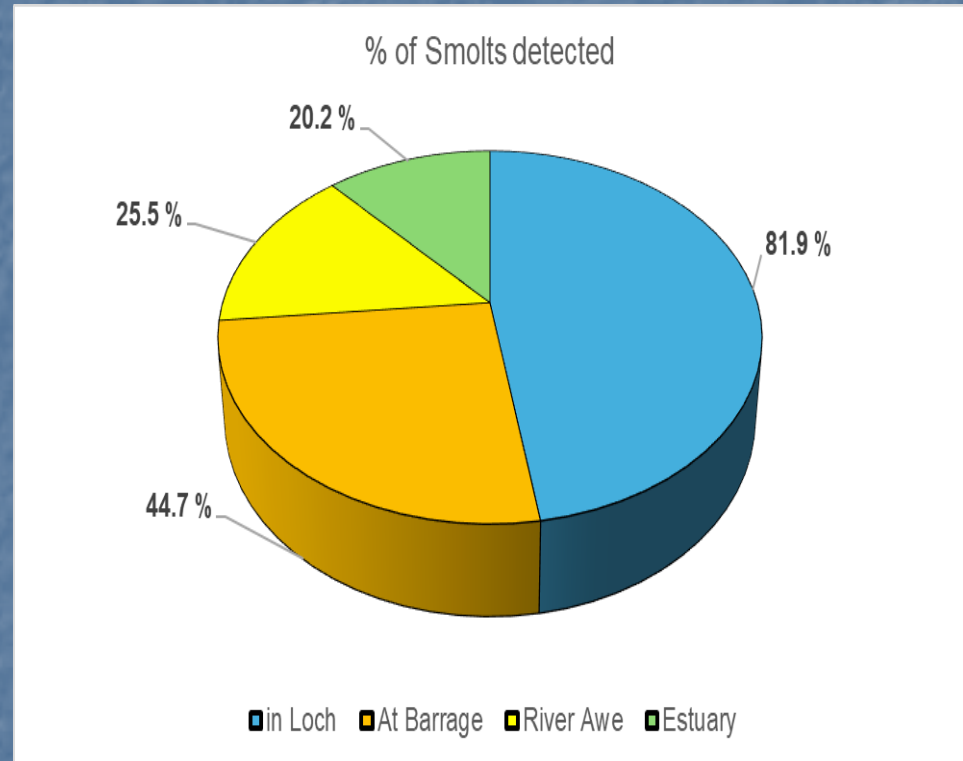
River Awe downstream fish migration Study 2024-2026

- Trap / Tag / Release 100 smolts in the River Orchy
- Track smolts migration through Loch Awe & River Awe
- Understand influence of Inverawe hydro scheme
- Understand influence of Cruachan PSH



Smolt migration Study - 2024 summary Results

- 82 % (77) smolts reached Loch Awe (18 % lost in the River Orchy)
- 44 % (42) smolts reached the Awe barrage (54 % of remaining smolts)
- 25.5 % (24) smolts passed into the River Awe / Inverawe scheme (57 % of remaining smolts)
- 20.2 % (19) smolts reached the estuary (79 % of the remaining smolts)
- 6 of 20 (24.4 %) of predator tags activated
- 20 (26 %) other tagged smolts likely to have been predated = Avg. ~25 %



Understand factors affecting fish populations – Sea lice / Sea trout Monitoring

11 Marine locations surveyed in 2024

Lower Loch Linnhe EMP 2 sites (SSF)

Loch Etive EMP (DF)

Sound of Shuna EMP 1 site (Mowi / Kames)

Loch Fyne / W. Mull / W. Arran / Gigha / Ardyne
(BFS)

Carradale EMP (Mowi)

Loch Riddon (FMS)



Restore productivity of habitats - Habitat Improvement Projects



Green Bank Revetment (GBR)

- River Ruel – 4th year of GBR
- River Eachaig – 3rd Year of GBR
- Increase riparian vegetation by fencing & tree planting
- £20K+ Grant funding 2024-25
- Support from RRIA & RES

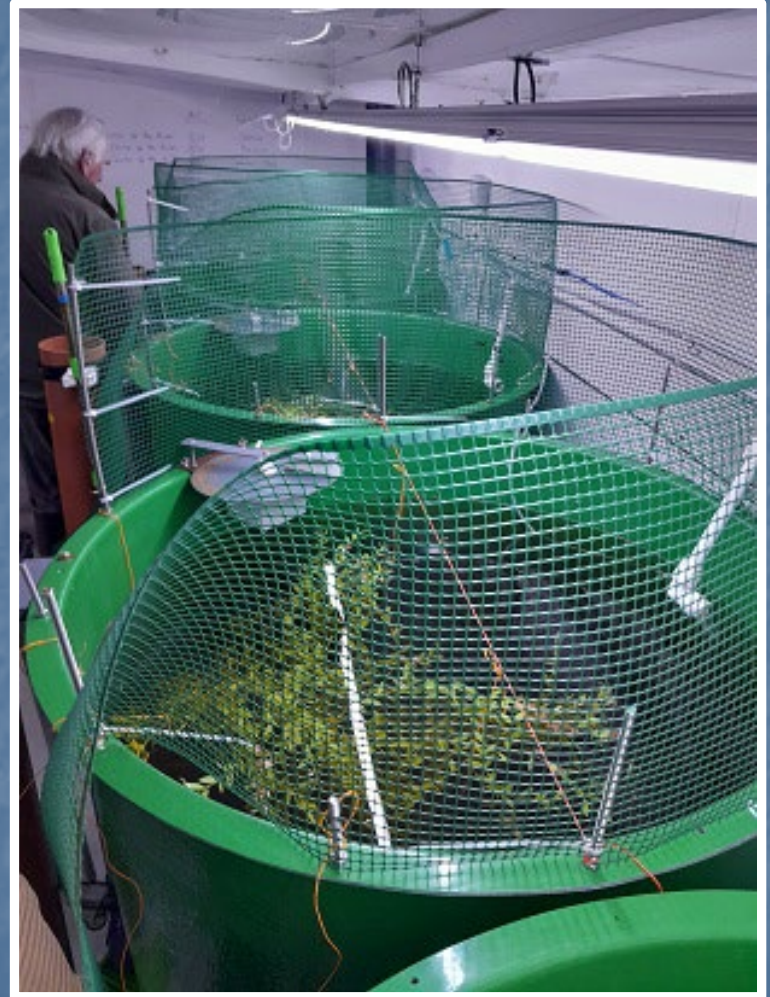
Restore productivity of habitats - Salmon Nutrient Project

- Experimental stocking of eggs from on-grown wild parr
- Loss of nutrients due to low adult salmon sea returns
- Feeding of marine pellets
- Fed & unfed control sites
- Electrofishing surveys of fish density / condition
- RCIA, AFT & Glasgow Uni.



Conserve Salmon populations- Salmon Living Gene Bank

- Experimental conservation project on the river Ruel
- AFT supplied 148 parr to Otter Ferry Seafish Ltd under license from Marine Directorate
- Parr expected to smolt in spring 2025
- On-grown to maturity in 2026
- Genetic analysis & PIT Tagging
- Release as adults / eyed ova
- Monitoring of subsequent generations
- Project funded by the Wild Fisheries Fund



- Hydro Surveys -
Loch Garbhaig (W. Ross)
River Creran (Allt Eilidh)
Allt Teanga (Mull)

- Wind Farm surveys
Deucheran Hill (Kintyre East)
Barr Water (Kintyre West)
Killeen (Kintyre East)
Barrachander (Loch Etive)

ADSFB Consultations –

- Aquaculture Development
- Renewable Energy Development
- Infrastructure Development

Protect existing stocks -
Commercial contracts



Thank you for your support



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