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**Phase 1 Salmon and Sea Trout  
Fisheries Technical Report**

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Firth of Forth  
Offshore Wind Farm Development**

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## 1 Introduction

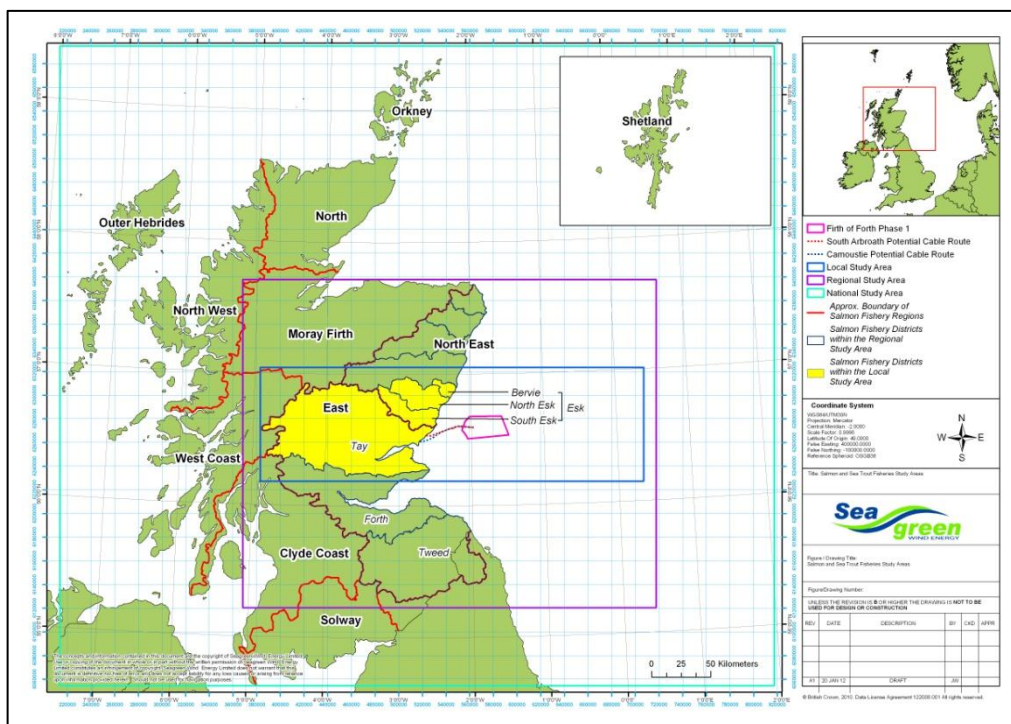
The following document constitutes the Salmon and Sea Trout Fisheries Technical Report for the Firth of Forth Round 3, Zone 2, Phase 1 proposed offshore wind farms development.

Salmon and sea trout are species of importance from a socioeconomic perspective on a local, regional and national level in Scotland. As a result of the nature of their fisheries, a separate approach, significantly different to that taken for the assessment of marine commercial fishing activities, is required.

## 2 Study Area

The area of study has been defined at a local, regional and national level (Figure 2.1). The local study area focuses on the salmon fishery districts located in the nearest proximity to the development: the Tay and the Esk (Bervie, North Esk and South Esk). The broader regional area takes account of all salmon fisheries regions located in the vicinity of the development including the East and North East regions. In addition, given the migratory behaviour of salmon and sea trout and the importance of the fishery across Scotland, data and information at the national level have also been briefly described.

**Figure 2.1 Salmon and Sea Trout Fisheries Assessment Study Areas**



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### 3 Methodology

The following guidance documents have been used for the undertaking of this technical report:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Draft Plan for Offshore Wind Energy in Scottish Territorial Waters: Volume 1: Environmental Report; Marine Scotland 2010;
- Offshore Wind Farms, Guidance Note for Environmental Impact Assessment in Respect of FEPA and CPA Requirements - Version 2; Cefas, MCUE, DTI, June 2004;
- UK Offshore Energy – Strategic Environmental Assessment; DECC, January 2009;
- Recommendations for Fisheries Liaison; FLOW, May 2008.

### 4 Data and Information Sources, Sensitivities and Qualifications

There is no standard methodology for the establishment of salmon and sea trout fisheries baselines in relation to offshore wind farm developments. A range of different data and information sources have therefore been used to inform this assessment. These are as follows:

- Marine Scotland Science (MSS);
- Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB);
- Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland (SNFAS);
- Relevant District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs);
- Atlantic Salmon Trust;
- Scientific papers and other relevant publications

#### 4.1 Data gaps, Limitations and Sensitivities

##### 4.1.1 Marine Scotland Catch Statistics

MSS catch statistics divide salmon catches into “salmon” and “grilse”. In this context, the term salmon refers to multi-sea-winter salmon (MSW) whilst grilse refers to one-sea-winter salmon (1SW).

The catch data used for the purposes of this assessment are as reported. Where there are no records of reported catches, it has been assumed that no fish have been caught. It is recognised that there may be a degree of error within the catch dataset due to misclassification of fish between the grilse and salmon categories. In addition, further errors as a result of misreporting of catches may also exist. The data used are as provided by Marine Scotland Science.

It should be noted that the analysis of fisheries statistics given below is not intended as an assessment of the abundance or state of the stocks, but as an indication of the

underlying population trends and relative importance of the fisheries of salmon and sea trout by region and fishery district in Scotland. The critical time for fisheries does not necessarily represent critical times for salmon and sea trout movement and catch data is limited in terms of presenting an accurate baseline of fish populations and fish migration outside of the time of fisheries. This also holds true for rod-and-line catches which do not account for the closed season and give no effort value.

***The catch data used in this report are Crown copyright, used with the permission of Marine Scotland Science. Marine Scotland is not responsible for interpretation of these data by third parties.***

Each fishery in Scotland is required to provide the number and total weight of salmon and grilse and sea trout caught and retained in each month of the fishing season. Rod and line fisheries are also required to provide the monthly numbers and total weight of those salmon, grilse and sea trout which were caught and released back into the river, this practice is known as “catch and release”. As a result, MSS catch data for the rod and line fishery is broken down into two categories, “rod and line” and “catch and release”. The total catch by the rod-and-line fishery is in effect the sum of the catches recorded in both categories. Data from both categories have been combined to give an indication of the total rod-and-line catch. Similarly, the catch by net-and-coble and fixed engines (bag and stake nets) has been combined in some instances to provide an indication of the total catch by the net fishery.

#### 4.1.2 Salmon Fishery Regions and Districts

Each salmon fishery district applies its own voluntary or statutory conservation code, closure times, policies and regulations and has in place different management and conservation schemes (e.g. hatcheries, fish counters, water quality control and monitoring schemes). In addition, different districts include varying numbers of rivers and tributaries within their jurisdictions and have different catchment areas.

The areas and names of some districts have changed over time. In the regional study area, for example, catch statistics are collected for the South Esk, North Esk and Bervie districts separately. However, these districts were superseded by the Esk Salmon Fishery District and abolished in 1988 (S.I. 1988/ 994). For the purposes of this assessment the former, smaller districts, will be used as they provide a better spatial resolution for analysis of catch data.

The boundaries of the salmon fishery regions and districts could not be provided by MSS as GIS data layers as a result of third party copyright ownership of these data. The district and region boundaries shown in the charts provided in this report were produced by geo-referencing a raster image. These should therefore be taken as approximate and for illustrative purposes only.

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#### 4.1.3 Data gaps

The distribution patterns, behaviour and migration routes of salmon and sea trout in the marine environment, particularly in waters off the east coast of Scotland are not fully understood. As a result, accurate estimates of the numbers, time period and origin of the salmon and sea trout potentially migrating through or otherwise using the development site or its vicinity cannot be made.

#### 4.2 Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with representatives of relevant District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs) and with representatives of the net fishery. These were as follows:

- Tweed District Salmon Fishery Board
- Forth District Salmon Fishery Board
- Tay District Salmon Fishery Board
- Esk District Salmon Fishery Board
- Usan Salmon Fisheries Ltd (Montrose)

In addition to the above meetings, questionnaires were circulated to all the District Salmon Fishery Boards in Scotland (DSFBs), through the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB), and to netsmen, through the Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland (SNFAS). This process was aimed at gathering information at a national level and to note the main concerns of the Boards and the netsmen with regards to wind farm developments in Scotland. At the time of writing, a sample of 17 Boards, netsmen and other organisations has completed and returned the questionnaires.

## 5 Salmon and Sea Trout Ecology

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) are both anadromous migratory species which utilise the freshwater and marine habitats during their life cycle. Salmon and sea trout fisheries exploit the migratory behaviour of these species intercepting fish both in rivers and coastal waters.

For the purposes of better understanding salmon and sea trout fisheries, a short description of the behaviour and ecology of the species, is provided below.

### 5.1 Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic salmon spawn in their natal rivers in late autumn. After a number of years in the river (most commonly two or three in Scotland) salmon undergo a transformation both externally and internally, which allows them to adapt to salt water. They are then known as smolts. Smolts move down rivers from April to June to start their marine migration. Once they enter the sea they are known as post-smolts, until the spring of the following year. After one or more years feeding at sea, salmon return to their



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home rivers to spawn. Fish that have spent one winter feeding at sea are called grilse (1SW) whilst salmon which have spent more than one winter at sea are known as multi-sea-winter salmon (MSW).

Salmon of different sea-ages tend to return at different times of year and often spawn in different parts of the rivers (Potter and Ó Maoiléidigh, 2006). In most countries salmon runs tend to only take place at specific times, normally during late summer and autumn. In Scotland, however, salmon enter the rivers throughout the year, resulting in the existence of a range of salmon runs. This is of importance to the salmon fisheries as it provides fishing opportunities over extended periods of time (MSS, 2010b).

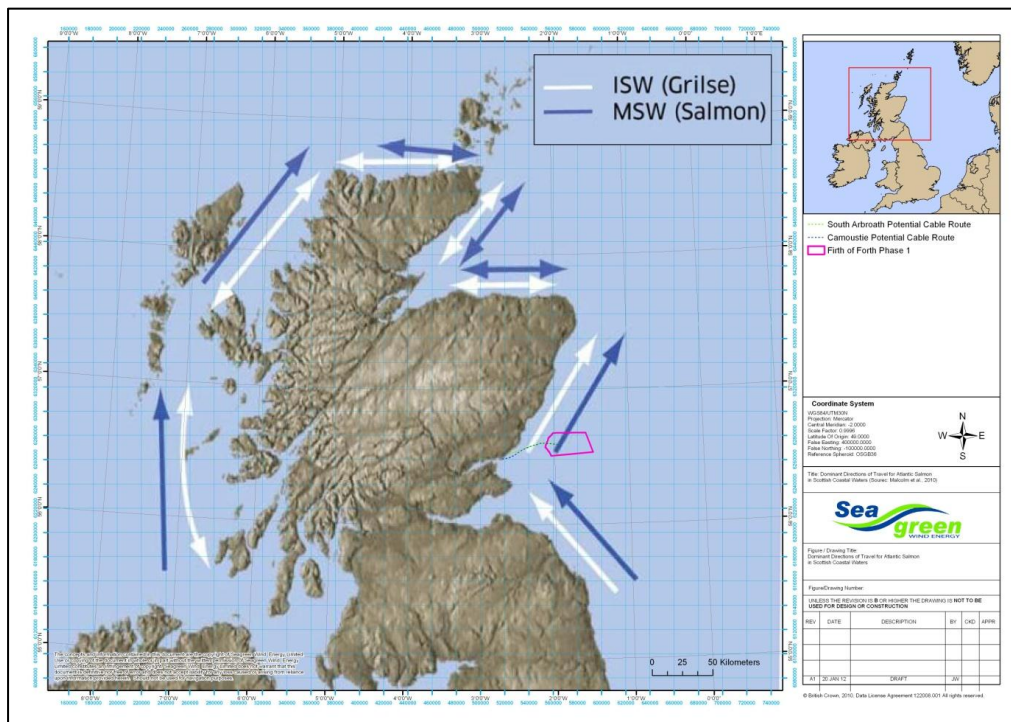
The majority of grilse (1SW salmon) enter the rivers from early summer until shortly before spawning in autumn and early winter. Many of the MSW salmon also enter rivers over that same period of time. River entry for the Scottish MSW salmon class as a whole, however, occurs over a greater period of time, extending back to the autumn months of the year before spawning (Youngson *et al.*, 2002).

The quality of salmon, from a fisheries point of view, varies depending on the run, with large spring-running MSW salmon being particularly highly prized (Potter and Ó Maoiléidigh, 2006). In the past, spring salmon runs made a major contribution to the Scottish fisheries, especially to those of the east coast and its rivers. Concern on the state of this component of the stock has, however, risen in recent years, as it has declined more significantly than other stock components (Potter and Ó Maoiléidigh, 2006; MSS, 2003; Youngson *et al.*, 2002; Smith *et al.*, 1998). In order to protect the spring salmon populations, measures such as total catch and release policies and delays in the start of the net fishery season have been introduced in many salmon fishery districts across Scotland.

The conclusions of the *Review of the migratory routes and behaviour of salmon, sea trout and European eel in Scottish coastal waters*, recently published by Marine Scotland (Malcolm *et al.*, 2010), suggests that for salmon originating in the east and north east coast rivers, the general direction of coastal movement is northerly and coastal migration may start as far south as the north east coast of England (Figure 5.1). This is in line with the model of adult salmon migration proposed by Shearer (1992) where it was suggested that from Aberdeenshire southwards, fish travel in a northerly direction having migrated south past their home rivers through the North Sea and approach the coast around Northumberland (Malcolm *et al.*, 2010). Assuming this is the case, there is potential for salmon originating in rivers within the regional study area, to transit through or in close proximity to the development site and export cable route.



**Figure 5.1 Dominant Directions of Travel for Atlantic Salmon in Scottish Coastal Waters (Source: Malcolm *et al.*, 2010)**



## 5.2 Sea Trout

The life cycle of the sea trout is similar to that of Atlantic salmon. Spawning generally occurs between mid October and January. Most sea trout populations in the UK become smolts after two or three years in the river. Smolts leave the river around the same time as salmon, between April and early June.

Most sea trout return to the rivers after twelve or more months at sea. These can be seen in the rivers between May and October (SNH, 2010). Some immature fish, however, return to the rivers after only a few months at sea, often in July and September (SNH, 2010). These are small fish, regionally known as ‘finnock’, ‘herling’ or ‘whitling’ and are found feeding in most Scottish estuaries as they move in and out with the tide (MSS, 2010a). Many gather in larger rivers and lochs, not necessarily in their natal systems, and over-winter in fresh water before returning to the sea in spring.

Unlike salmon, sea trout generally do not venture to offshore feeding grounds, remaining in coastal waters for the most part of their marine life. Long distance offshore migrations have however also been described for this species, suggesting that offshore migrations are also a feature of the life cycle of sea trout (Malcolm *et al.*, 2010).

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In the Tweed, sea trout tagging studies have been undertaken since the 1850s. The results of these suggest, based on fish tagged as finnock (locally known as Blacktail) in the lower river and in the estuary in the winter, that sea trout smolts from rivers to the north come south in winter to feed in the Tweed and in the rivers to the north (Forth, Tay, etc.) (The Tweed Foundation, 2008).

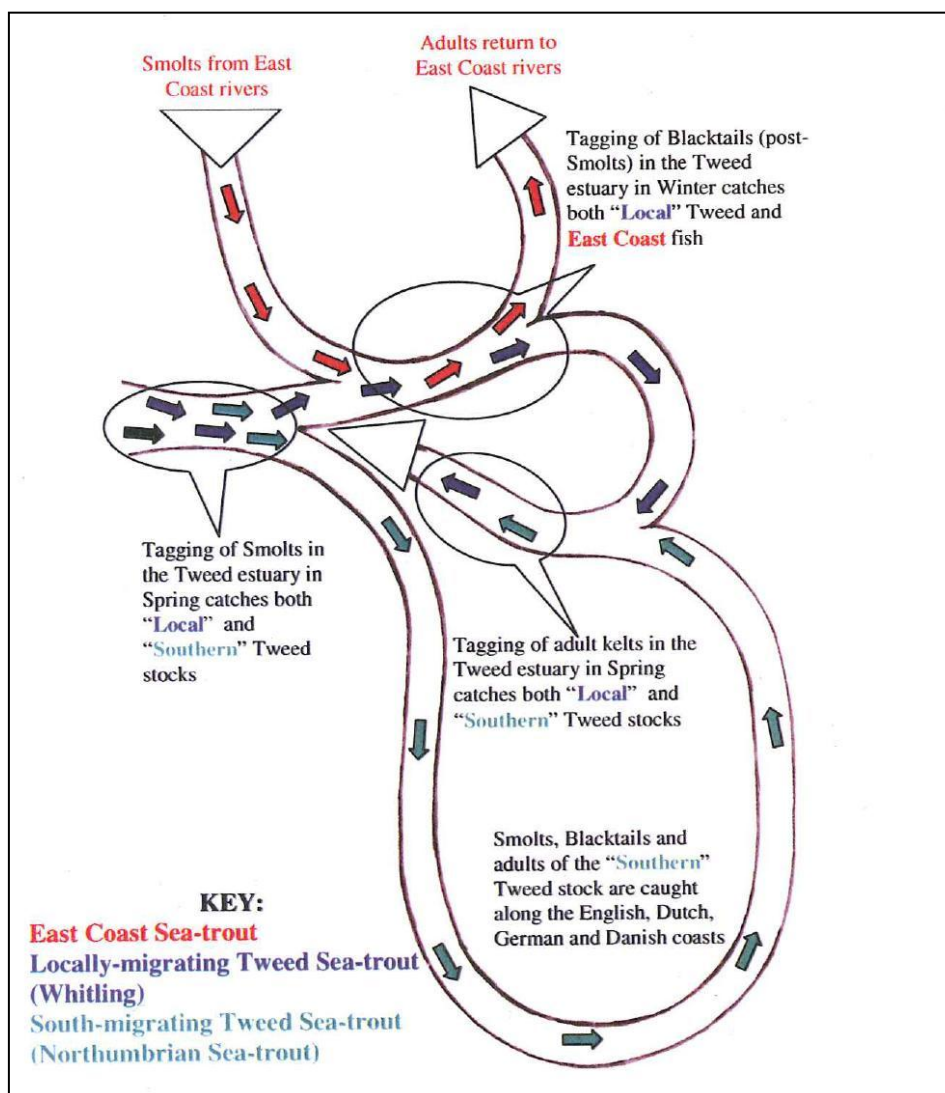
The distribution of recaptures of spent adult sea trout (kelts) tagged in the Tweed, suggests that this element of the sea trout population either remains in the Tweed or migrates south to the east coast of England and the southern North Sea. This southern-migrating Tweed sea trout would spend most of their time as post-smolts far from the Tweed and would therefore not be present to be tagged as finnock in the winter (The Tweed Foundation, 2008).

Further north, tagging studies carried out by Shearer (1990) at Montrose (Esk district) have found that the majority of recaptures were in the river North Esk and adjacent South Esk and rates of recapture declined with distance north and south outside these areas. Smolt recaptures were however obtained as far north as the Spey and as far south as the Northumberland coast and finnock recaptures as far north as the Spey and as far south as the Tweed. In addition, adult fish were caught as far away as Lewis, Denmark and the Swedish coast (Malcolm *et al.*, 2010).

Comparison with the results of the tagging of sea trout smolts in the North Esk supports the idea that Tweed sea trout and of rivers to the south have different migration patterns to those rivers to the north. On this basis, it has been suggested that the Tweed is the southern limit and the Spey the northern limit of migration for sea trout originating north of the Tweed (Tweed Foundation, 2008).

Based on the above, it appears clear that there is potential for sea trout from rivers north of the Tweed to transit the development site, export cable route and their vicinity as part of their migration. A summary of the interpretation of sea trout movements in and around the Tweed as derived from the results of tagging experiment is given in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2 Suggested Life-histories and Migrations of Sea Trout in and around the Tweed (The Tweed Foundation, 2008)**



### 5.3 Threats to Salmon and Sea Trout

Salmon and sea trout populations are subject to a number of threats in both the freshwater and marine phases. Atlantic salmon stocks are currently considered under threat across their northern hemisphere range and sea trout populations are considered in decline throughout the United Kingdom (Crawley, 2010). In fresh water, degradation of juvenile and spawning habitat, and land use, in particular intensive agriculture, are thought to be having the greatest effect, whilst in the marine phase there is concern over the recent decline in post-smolt marine survival rates (Hendry and Cragg-Hine, 2003; ICES, 2009).

It should be noted that efforts made in the rivers to maintain and conserve salmon and sea trout stocks (e.g. removal of obstacles to migration, fishing codes of practice,

river management and water quality schemes, etc.), although considerable, are limited in their effectiveness as a result of stock management measures implemented in coastal waters and in the high seas and by changes in the state of the stocks caused by increased sea mortalities and other such factors.

In this context, an aspect of relevance is the persistence of Multi Stock Fisheries (MSFs) in Scotland, which target fish from more than one stock/river (e.g. coastal netting). These fisheries can be damaging because they have potential to intercept any salmon or sea trout in their vicinity, regardless of where those fish are heading or the strength of the population in their natal rivers (Crawley, 2010).

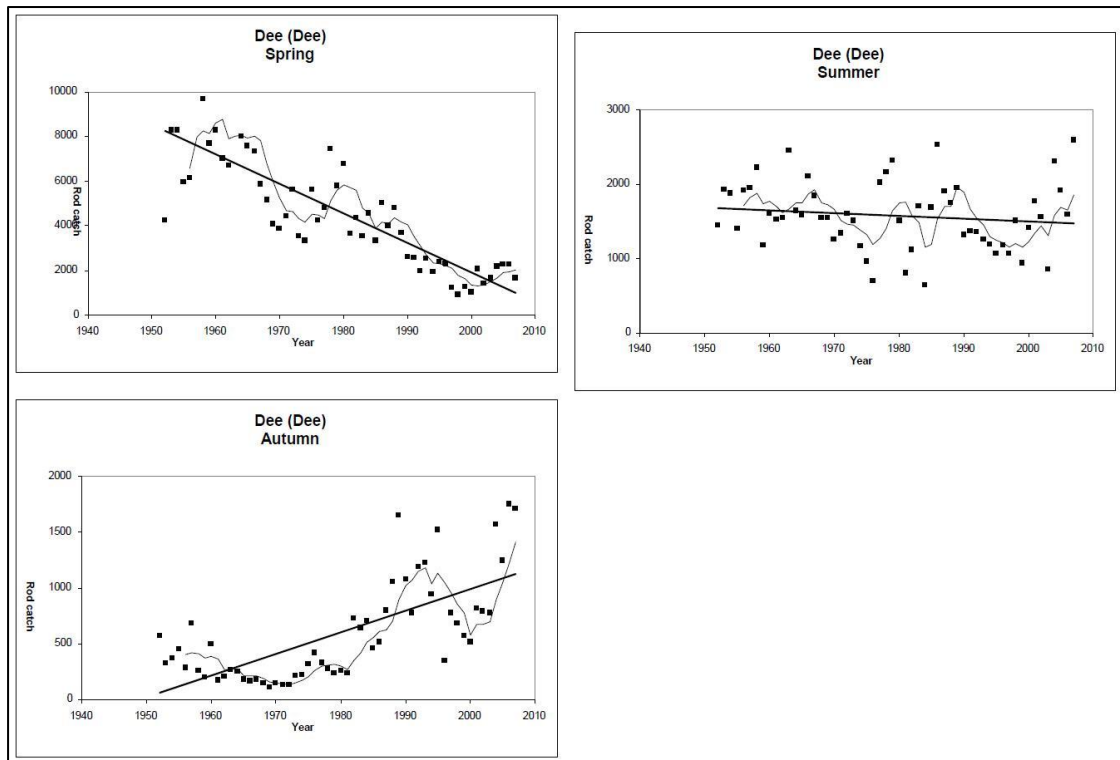
#### 5.4 Conservation Status

Atlantic salmon is listed in Annexes II and V of the EU Habitats Directive as a species of European importance.

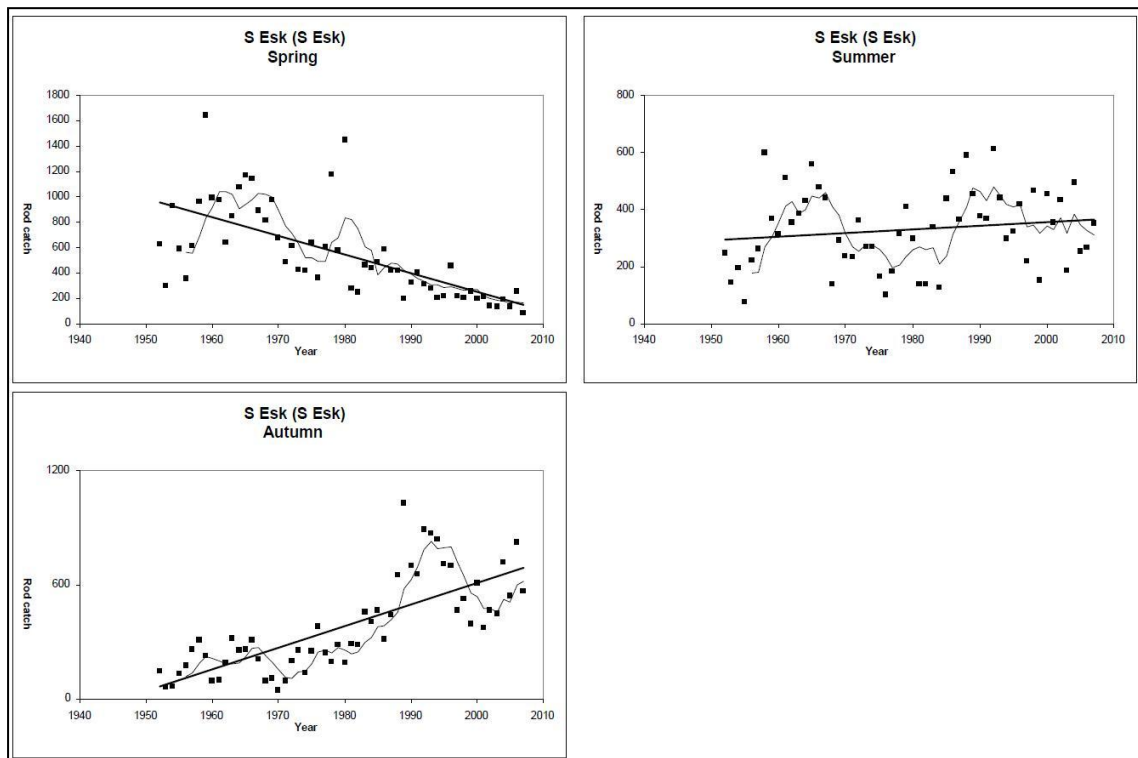
Through the implementation of the Habitats Directive and as a result of the European importance of Scotland's salmon populations, 11 Scottish rivers have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), for which salmon is a primary reason for selection of the sites. Of these SACs, four (the Dee, South Esk, Tay and Tweed) are located in the regional study area. In addition, in the river Teith, a tributary of the Forth which is also a SAC, salmon is a qualifying reason for selection of the site.

An indication of the current state of the principal salmon sub-stock components (spring, autumn and summer) in the salmon SACs within the regional study area is given in Figure 5.3 to Figure 5.7 below based on rod-and-line catch data (Crawley, 2010). The trend in spring salmon is one of a decline in the five SACs, especially in the Dee, the South Esk and the Tweed, whilst for autumn salmon the trend appears to be one of increased catches.

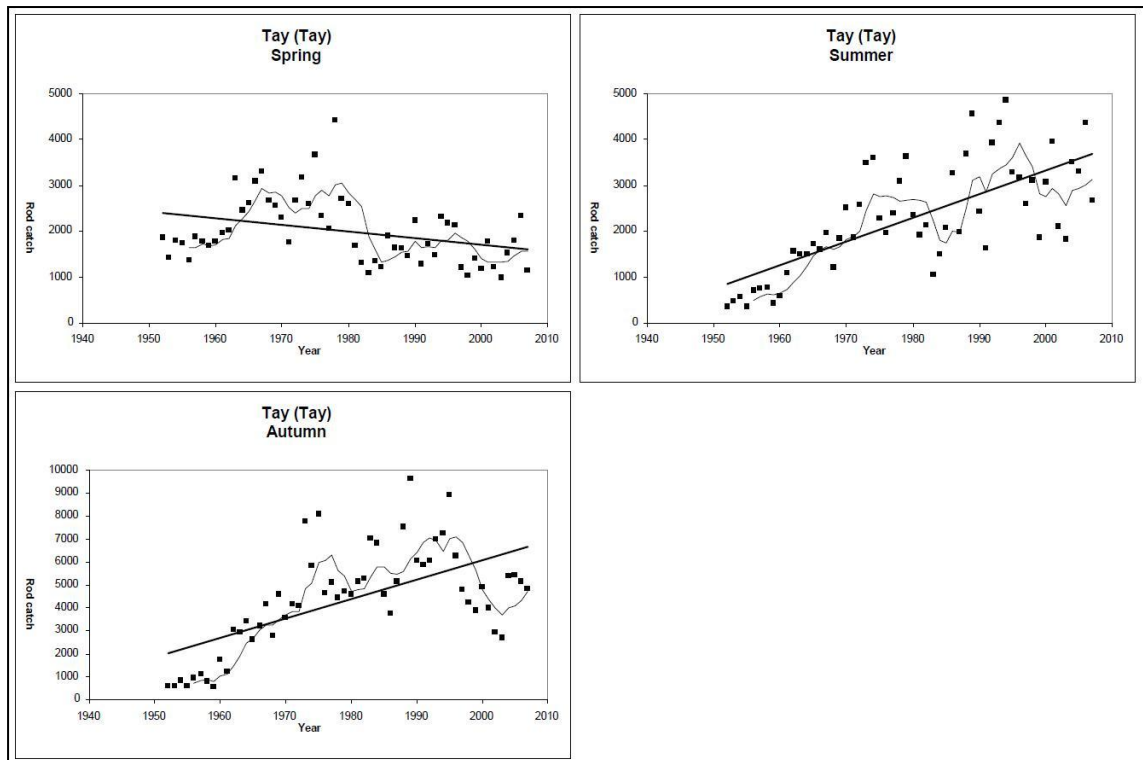
**Figure 5.3 Salmon Rod Catches in the Dee SAC (Crawley, 2010)**



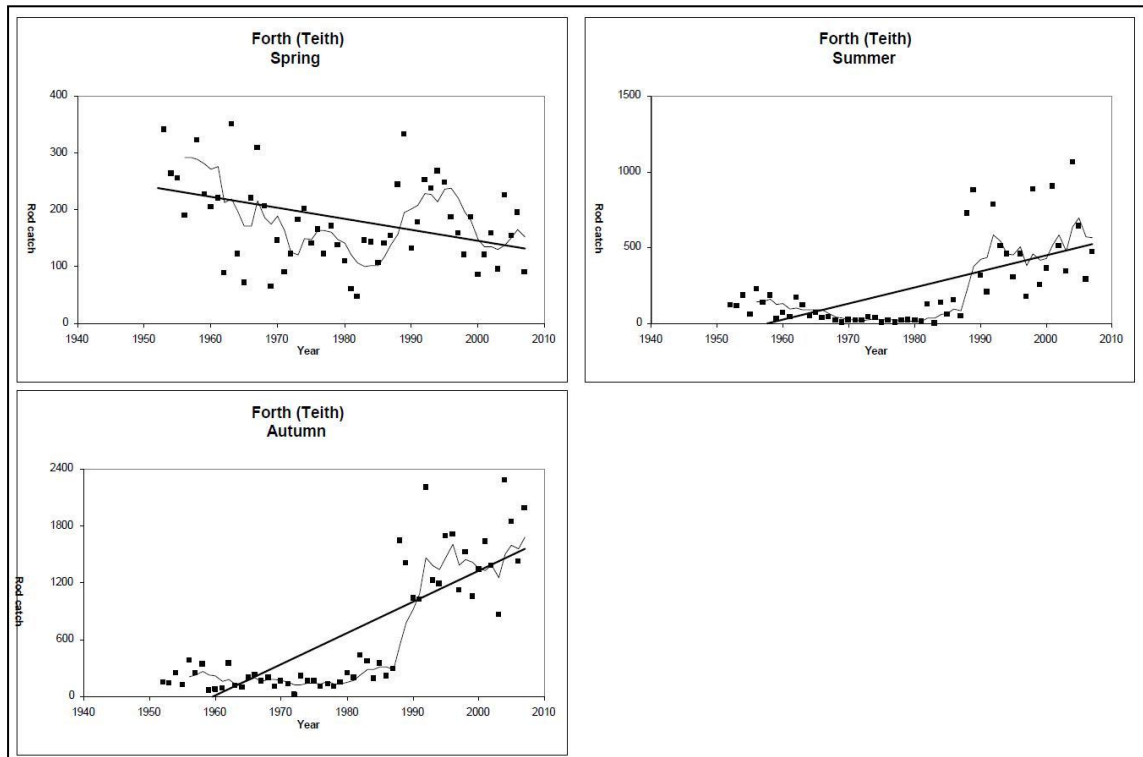
**Figure 5.4 Salmon Rod Catches in the South Esk SAC (Crawley, 2010)**



**Figure 5.5 Salmon Rod Catches in the Tay SAC (Crawley, 2010)**

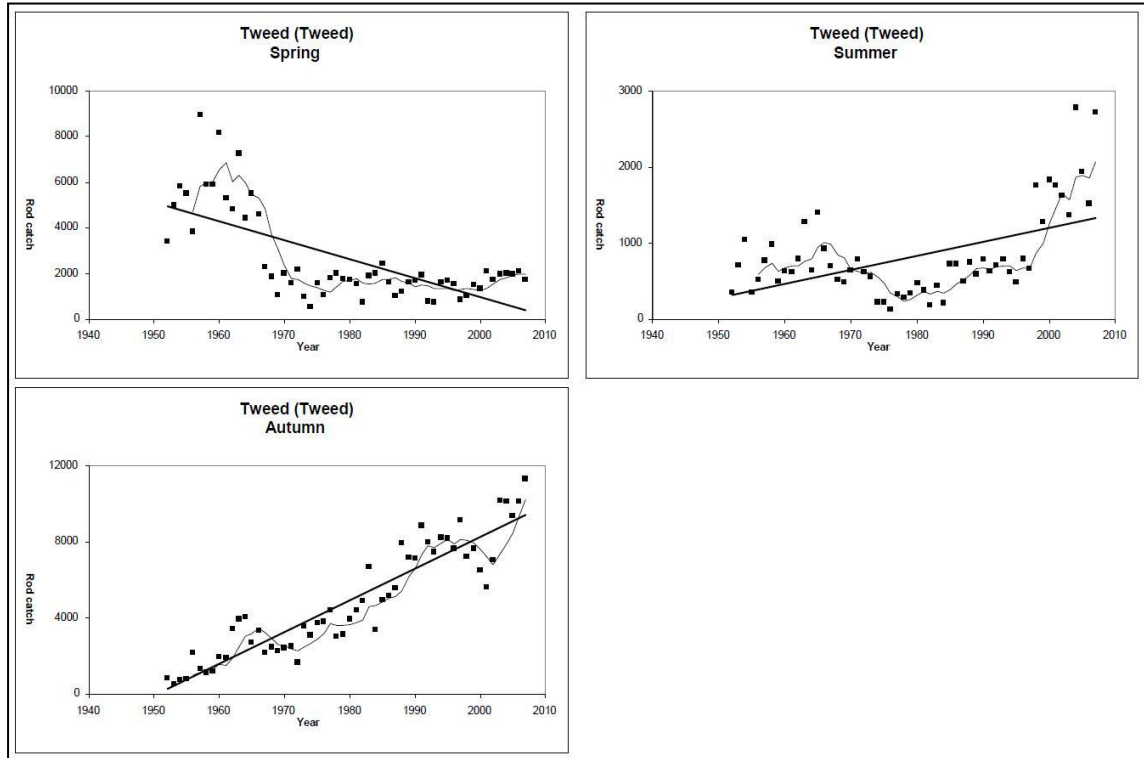


**Figure 5.6 Salmon Rod Catches in the River Teith (Forth District) SAC (Crawley, 2010)**





**Figure 5.7 Salmon Rod Catches in the Tweed SAC (Crawley, 2010)**



In addition to the protection given under the EC Habitats Directive, Atlantic salmon is listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species and is protected at the international level by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), an inter-governmental organisation devoted to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of wild salmon in the North Atlantic (Curd, 2010).

Sea trout is not subject to the same level of protection as salmon in Europe, although it is listed as a UK BAP priority species and, in Scotland, is currently protected under the same legislation as Atlantic salmon. This is a result of the definition of the term salmon in the Scottish legislation including both species. Under the Salmon (Scotland) Act 1986 the term salmon means: *all migratory fish of the species Salmo salar and Salmo trutta* and commonly known as salmon and sea trout respectively or any part of any such fish”.

Further to the above, the marine part of the life cycle of both Atlantic salmon and sea trout is included in the draft list of Priority Marine Features recently compiled by the SNH (SNH, 2012). This takes account of habitats and species considered of greatest marine nature conservation importance in Scottish territorial waters.



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## 6 Salmon and Sea Trout Fisheries

### 6.1 Introduction

The definition of salmon under the Salmon Act 1986 includes both Atlantic salmon and sea trout. Both species form an important part of Scotland's natural heritage and support and maintain the existence of commercial and recreational fisheries which are of importance to the Scottish economy.

A study undertaken by the Scottish Executive (Radford *et al.*, 2004) estimated that game and coarse anglers spent a total of £131m in Scotland of which 65% (£73m) corresponded to salmon and sea trout fishing. In the Tweed, one of the most important salmon fishery districts in Scotland and in the regional study area, an economic survey carried out in 2007 (RTC, 2007) estimated that the economic impact, the output generated in the Scottish Borders and that could be attributed to fishing on the Tweed system, was just under £18 million and that this supported around 457 full time jobs.

### 6.2 Salmon Fishing Rights, Administration and Regulations

#### 6.2.1 Fishing Rights

The right to fish for salmon in Scotland, whether in inland waters or at sea, is a heritable right<sup>1</sup>. The taking of salmon without the right or written permission to do so is prohibited under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Protection) (Scotland) Act 1951.

The rights originally belonged to the Crown, however the Crown has made grants of salmon fishing to others and ownership is now widely distributed among private individuals, companies, local authorities and others. The rights can be bought, sold or leased independently of land except in Orkney and the Shetlands (Williamson, 1991).

The Crown still owns areas along the coast and in rivers. Since the late 1980s, however, the Crown Estate has supported a policy of conservation. There are therefore, no longer any coastal netting stations let by the Crown and none are actively fished (The Crown Estate, 2010); the existing working netting stations were therefore granted or sold the heritable title by the Crown Estate before the late 1980s (Crawley, 2010). Salmon fishing rights in coastal waters originally extended up to the 12 nm exclusive territorial limit. Restrictions introduced to regulate fishing activities have however resulted in salmon fishing in Scotland being limited to a short distance from the shore, further discussed in Section 6.3.1.

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<sup>1</sup> The right to fish for salmon is one of the *regalia minora* (proprietary rights of the Crown which can be alienated) and a legal separate tenement which the Crown may grant or lease to a party other than the owner of the (water-covered) land over which the right is held. The right is a type of incorporeal heritable property and as such an interest in land which can be registered in the Land Register.

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### 6.2.2 Fisheries Administration

Salmon fisheries in Scotland, both inland and at sea, are managed by their owner or leaseholder under a framework of regulations laid down by central government.

For the purposes of salmon fishery management Scotland is divided into 54 statutory Salmon Fishery Districts each with a catchment area including a river or group of rivers (ASFB, 2010). Today, almost without exception, every district has formed a District Salmon Fisheries Board (DSFB) made up of the owners or leaseholders of the fishing rights. These boards manage the rivers and coastal netting zones, being able to appoint bailiffs with the power to enforce regulations and restrictions, as well as establishing other practices for improving and maintaining fish stocks, and monitoring and controlling river conditions. Each salmon fishery in each district has a value, which is calculated by the district assessor. Individual boards are self-financing and generally raise money by taxing rights' owners within their district. This often works on a sliding scale, according to the number of fish caught. In 1999 the government made a revision to the constitution of the boards to allow for wider representation, by bodies such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage or others such as local angling clubs and associations (ASFB, 2010).

Boards hold powers relating to the introduction of new regulations on the fishery, the purchase of property to acquire rod or net fisheries, the imposition of fishery assessments on the fishery proprietors, etc. (SPICe, 2000). Whilst the Boards themselves have no ability to make legal restrictions on fishing, applications are made to Scottish Ministers by the Boards for changes and new regulations to be introduced.

Salmon fishery districts, as formalised by the Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Acts 1862-1868, are shown in Figure 6.1. As explained in Section 4.1.2 above, some districts have been joined together and superseded by larger districts, resulting in the current 54 districts.

In addition to the Boards, Marine Scotland (within the Scottish Executive Environment Directorate) oversees the fishery as a whole, promoting legislation and making regulations under the various Salmon and Fisheries Acts passed by the devolved government. The Inspector of Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries monitors the effects of legislation and the operation of the fisheries. Marine Scotland Compliance (formerly the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency) enforces regulations at sea and helps the District Boards with local, coastal enforcement (Williamson, 1991); Marine Scotland Science's Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory provides scientific advice on salmon and their fisheries.



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of the Conservation of Salmon (Prohibition of Sale) (Scotland) in 2002, it is prohibited to sell, offer or expose for sale any salmon that has been taken by rod-and-line.

There is no direct limitation on fishing effort within open fishing periods, although there are restrictions in place which act as indirect controls:

- Restrictions imposed on the various fishing methods;
- The exclusive right of the salmon fishermen through ownership or tenancy to decide fishing effort in their fishery;
- Regulations established and enforced by individual District Boards.

Salmon fisheries are saleable and netsmen or companies may acquire fishing rights over relatively large areas. Other interested parties may also purchase rights. For example, the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust has historically bought coastal sites to close them down as a conservation measure in order to halt coastal netting activities. Similarly, rod-and-line interests may buy up river netting rights to close them down, often through the District Boards.

#### **6.2.3.2 Inland Waters**

The only lawful fishing methods in inland waters are rod-and-line and net-and-coble. Fixed nets/engines are prohibited.

#### **6.2.3.3 At Sea**

It is prohibited to catch fish by enmeshment. Troll or long-lining is also illegal. Effectively the only lawful methods are net-and-coble, fixed engines or rod-and-line.

### **6.3 Fishing Methods**

The principal methods for catching salmon in Scotland are as follows:

- Fixed Engines (Bag and Stake Nets);
- Net-and-coble;
- Rod-and-line.

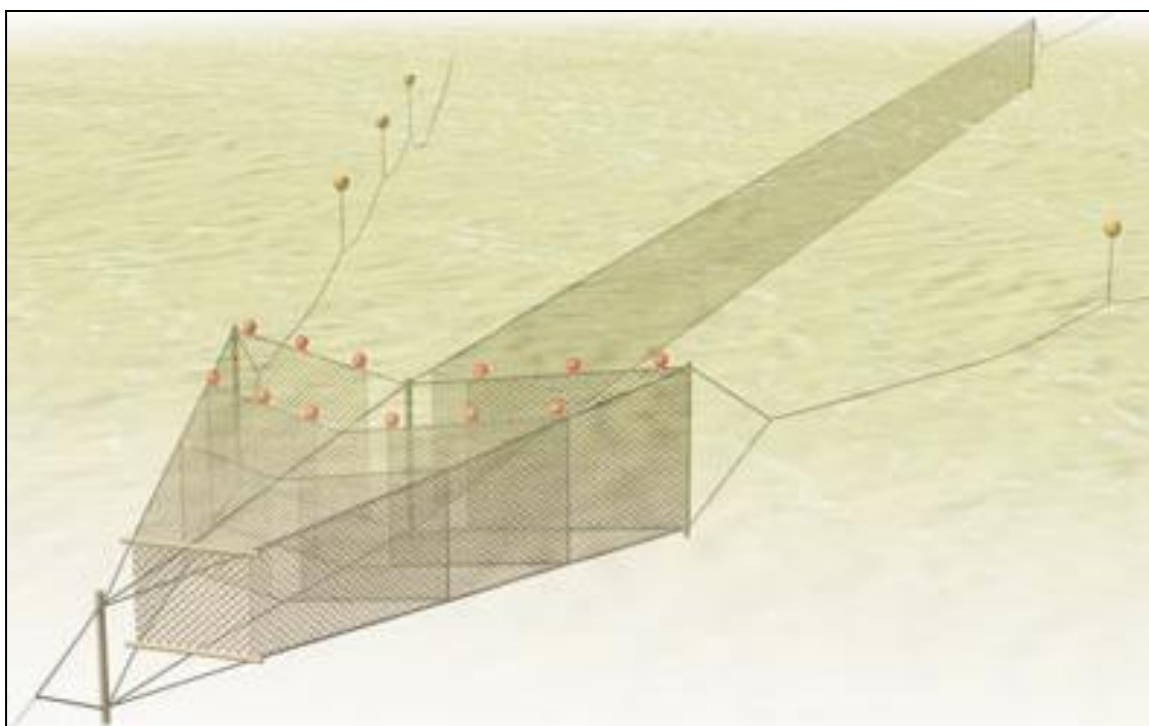
#### **6.3.1 Fixed Engines (Bag and Stake Nets)**

Bag and stake nets are the most common types of gear used to catch salmon in Scottish coastal waters and are commonly referred to as fixed engines. Salmon fishing using this method is not permitted in inland waters (rivers above the estuary limits).

Bag nets are set to fish just below the surface in rocky coasts where they will not ebb dry at low tide. They may be set singly or in a line extending seawards from the shore. The entire net or line of nets is not permitted to extend more than 1,300m from the mean low water mark, excluding mooring warps or anchors. The nets must not be operated between 6pm Friday until 6am Monday. Catches are generally removed from the nets at slack tide (Galbraith and Rice, 2004; SI 1992/1974).

No part of the nets may be set with the purpose of catching fish by entanglement. The minimum mesh net size is 90mm. Nets are designed to target fish swimming close to the surface while following the coastline. The gear is made up of two principal elements, the trap and the leader. The trap is approximately 13.5m wide and 4.5m deep at the mouth, tapering to about 3m in width and 2.5m in depth at the head. The leader may not exceed 300m in length. The configuration of a typical bag net is shown in Figure 6.2 below.

**Figure 6.2 Bag Net showing the Trap, the Leader and Moorings**



Stake nets are similar in design and operation to the bag nets except that they are set on sandy beaches, supported on stakes driven into the sand, where the receding tide exposes the nets. The maximum allowed leader length and total gear length are similar to those specified for bag nets.

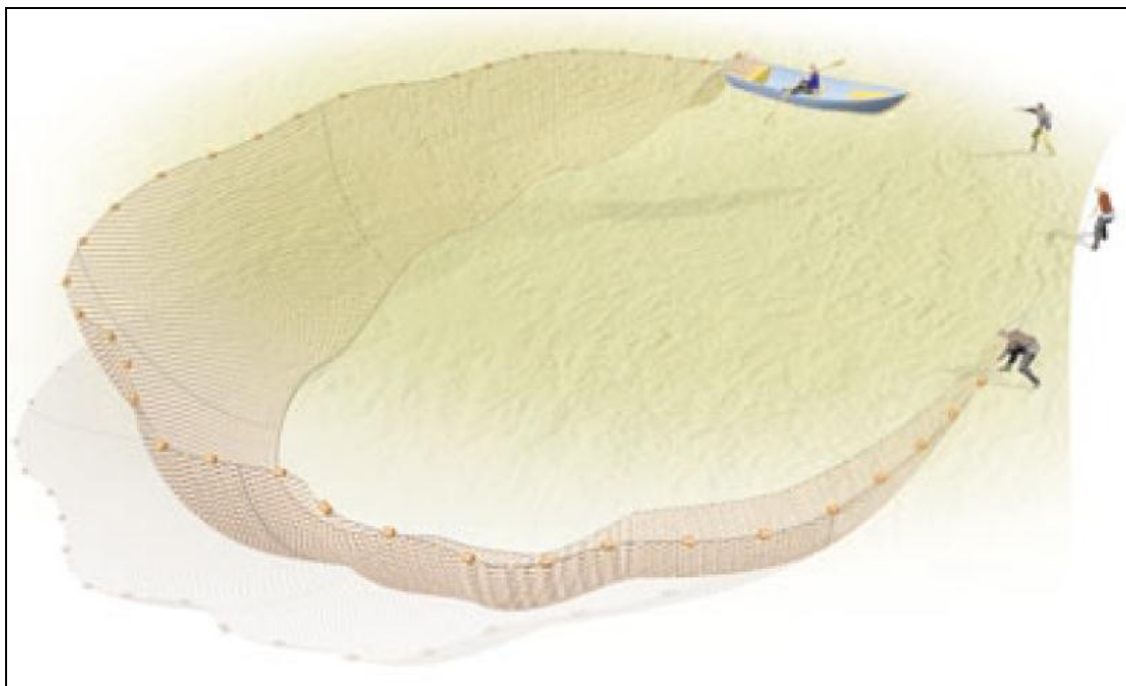
#### 6.3.2 Net-and-Coble

Traditionally nets are operated from cobbles, small flat bottomed, open boats, with a shore party assisting in operations. A member of the shore party holds the upstream hauling rope and the net is paid out from the stern of the vessel, as shown in Figure 6.3. The net must not be stationary or allowed to drift at any time and must be constantly 'swept', surrounding the fish and drawing them towards the shore. No other objects or obstructions may be used to aid fishing and adjacent netting operations must be at least 50m apart (Galbraith and Rice, 2004).



Net-and-cobles are generally operated in estuaries and the lower reaches of rivers, although small numbers are also used in coastal waters (Potter and Ó Maoiléidigh, 2006).

**Figure 6.3 Net and Coble Fishing**



### 6.3.3 Rod and Line

At present, recreational rod-and-line fishing is the most common method of fishing for salmon. The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2003 defines rod and line as: “*a single rod and line (used otherwise than as a set line or by way of pointing, or by striking or dragging for fish) with such bait or lure as is not prohibited*”. DSFBs can apply to Scottish Ministers for regulations specifying baits and lures that may not be used for rod-and-line fishing in their district to be made whilst in some cases voluntary restrictions are set by the boards. Usually the restrictions prohibit the use of shrimps, prawns or worms as bait and the use of lures bearing multiple sets of hooks (SPICe, 2000). The use of fish roe, fire or light as bait or lure is also prohibited (Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Protection) (Scotland) 2003).

Salmon and sea trout are generally not caught by rod-and-line at sea, but along river beats. Most DSFBs operate and police a catch and release policy. Due to its popularity, the sport makes a significant contribution to both local and regional economies.

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## 6.4 Fisheries Data

The information given in this section is principally based on reported catches of salmon, grilse and sea trout recorded from 1952 to 2010 by region and by salmon fishery district within the regional study area from 2001 to 2010. These were kindly provided by Marine Scotland Science. In addition, information gathered during the consultation process has also been included in this section where appropriate.

As previously mentioned in Section 4.1, it should be noted that the analysis of fisheries statistics given below is not intended as an assessment of the abundance or state of the stocks, but as an indication of the underlying population trends and relative importance of the fisheries of salmon and sea trout by region and fishery district in Scotland. The critical time for fisheries does not necessarily represent critical times for salmon and sea trout movement and catch data is limited in terms of presenting an accurate baseline of fish populations and fish migration outside of the time of fisheries. This also holds true for rod-and-line catches which do not account for the closed season and give no effort value.

### 6.4.1 National

#### 6.4.1.1 *Historical Data*

An indication of the current trends in salmon, grilse and sea trout catches in Scotland with respect to historical levels (1952 to 2010) is given below broken down for the rod-and-line (including catch and release) and the net (net-and-coble and fixed engines) fisheries respectively.

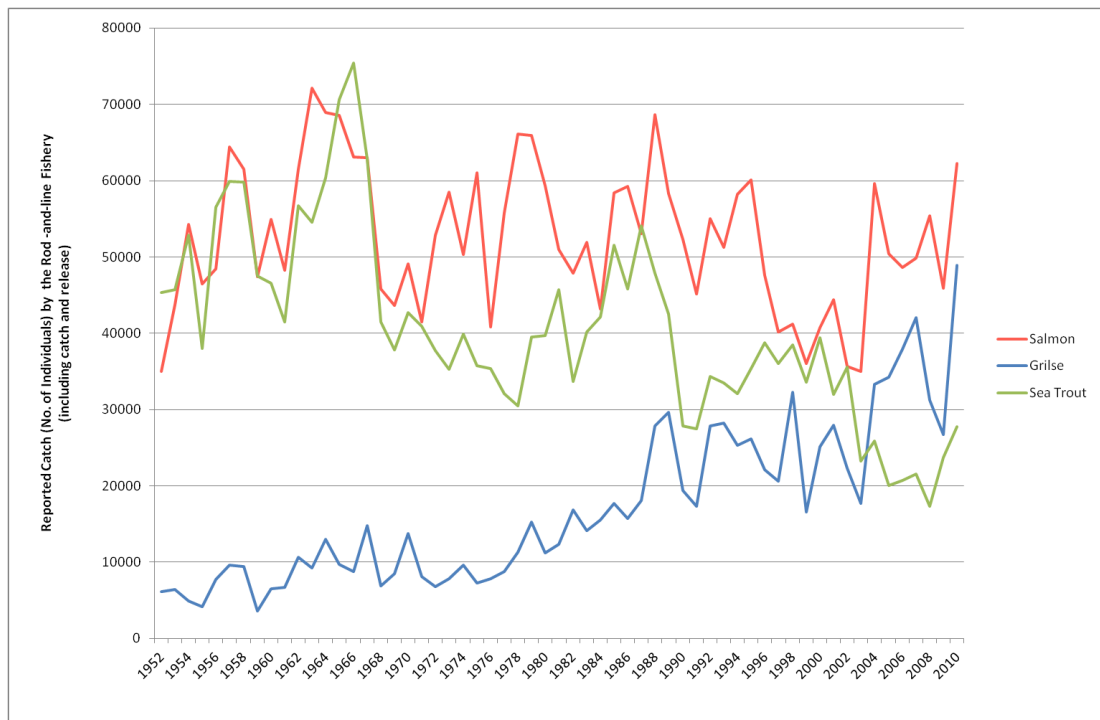
Current salmon catches by rod-and-line are in line with historical levels whilst there has been a slight increase in the total annual catch of grilse, particularly during the second half of the time series. The overall trend in the sea trout catch is one of a decline, with current catches being more than half from those recorded at the start of the series (Figure 6.4).

It should be noted that the fisheries statistics given below do not take account of fishing effort. The popularity of rod-and-line fishing together with the improvement of the catch reporting system may have, to some extent, contributed to catch values for salmon and grilse remaining in line with historical levels.

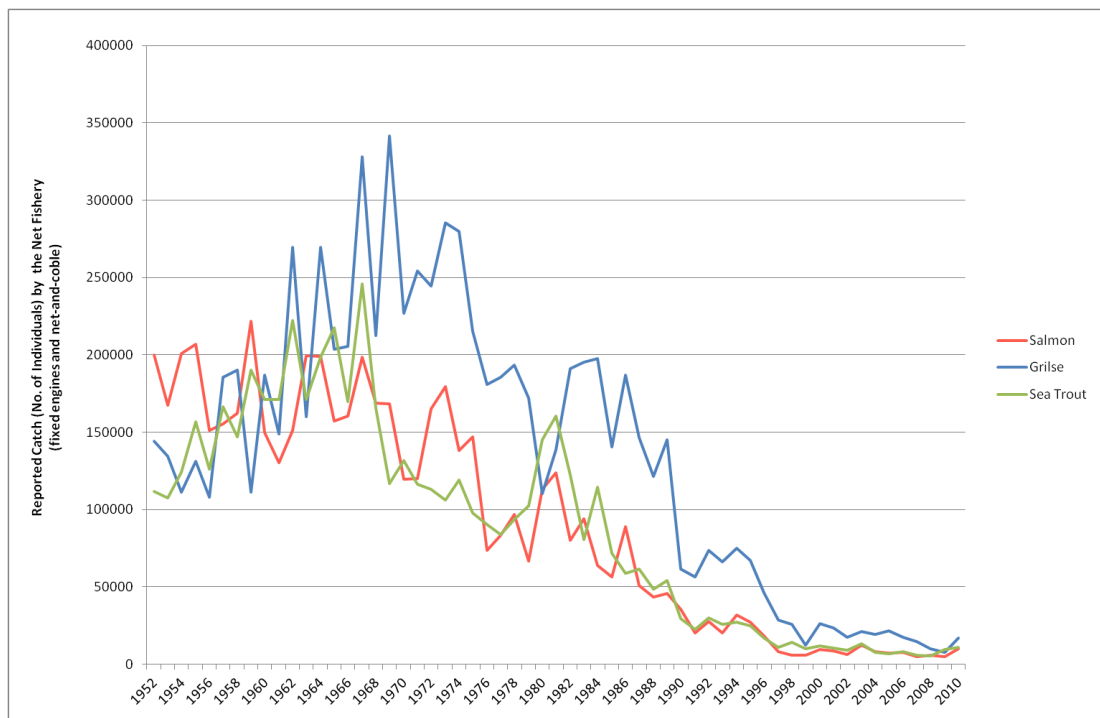
Catches by the net fishery (net-and-coble and fixed engines) have shown a marked decline in the last decades with respect to historical levels (Figure 6.5). This decline is associated with a decrease in fishing effort observed in recent years, principally resulting from the buyout and closure of coastal netting stations, changes in abundance of salmon and the fall in the market price of wild salmon caused by competition from the aquaculture industry (MSS, 2008). This may, to some extent, also be contributing to the current catch values recorded in rivers by the rod-and-line fishery.



**Figure 6.4 Rod-and-line Fishery (including Catch and Release) Reported Catches (1952 to 2010)**

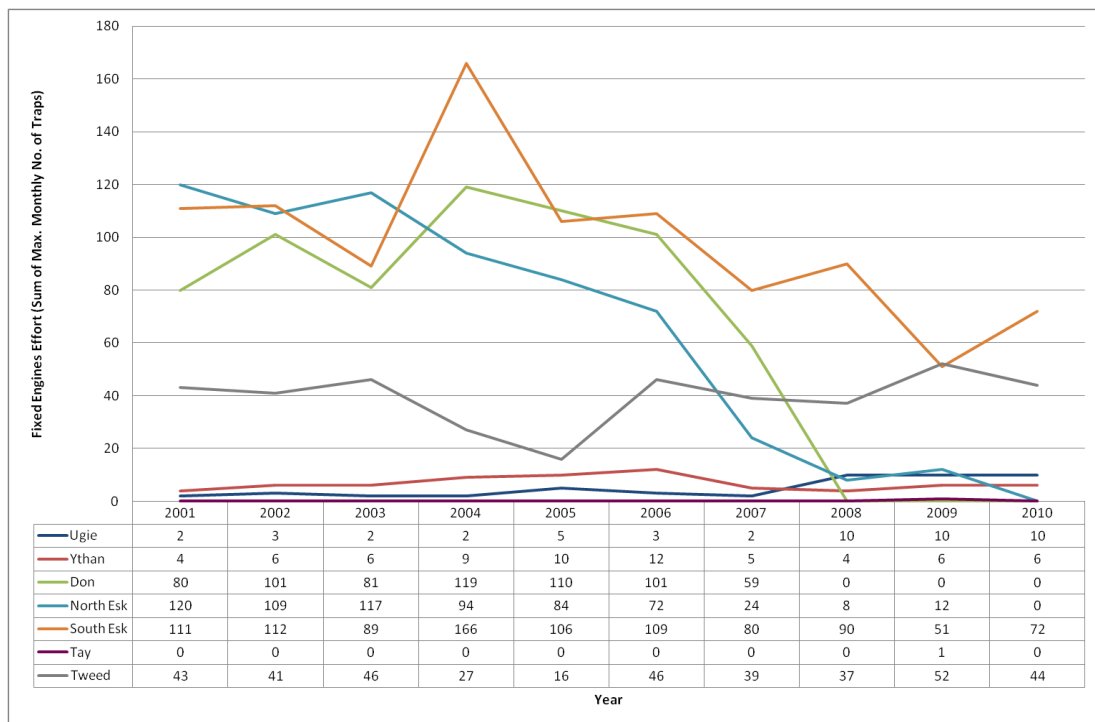


**Figure 6.5 Net Fishery (Fixed Engines and Net-and-coble) Reported Catches (1952 to 2010)**

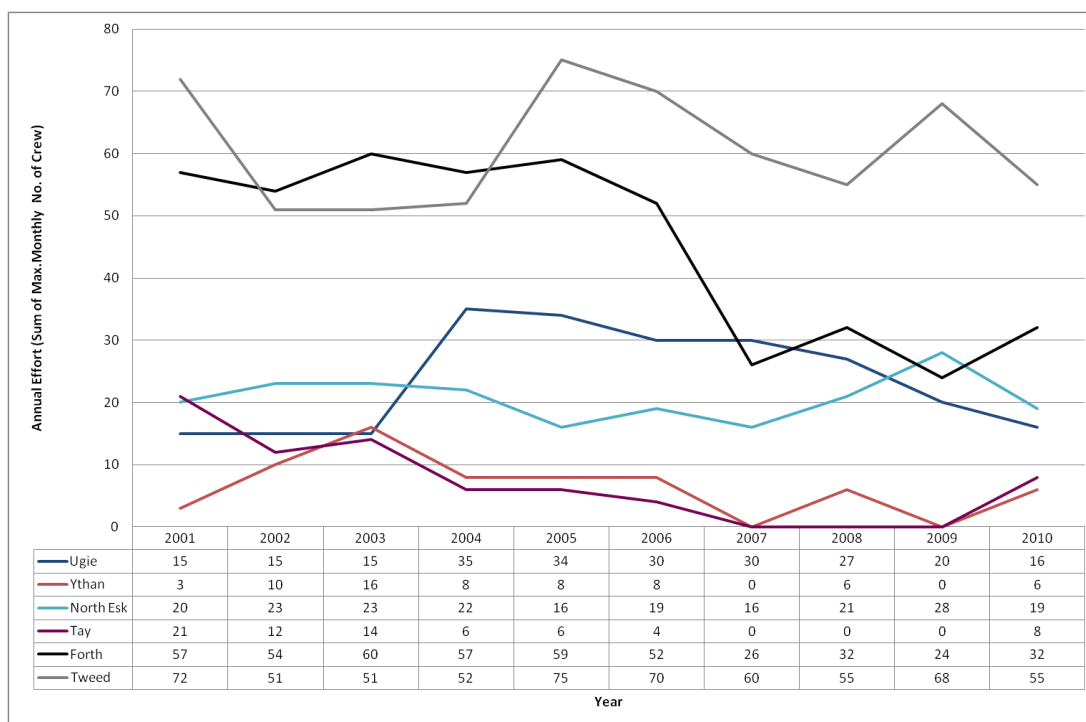


An indication of the annual variation in fishing effort by net fisheries in the regional study area, broken down by fixed engines and net-and-coble in districts where these methods are used, is given below in Figure 6.6 and Figure 6.7 respectively (2001 to 2010).

**Figure 6.6 Annual Fixed Engines Effort (Max. No. of Traps) by SFD (2001 to 2010)**



**Figure 6.7 Annual Net and Coble Effort (Max. Crew) by SFD (2001-2010)**



#### 6.4.1.2 Current Trends

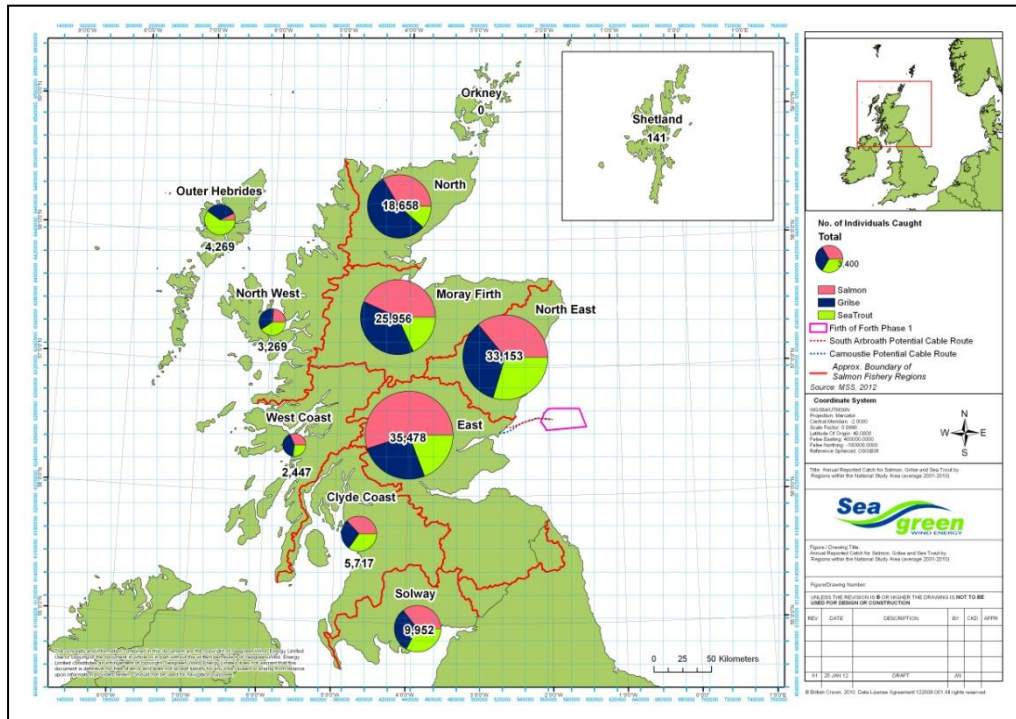
An indication of the relative importance of the fishery by region is given in Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.9, based on annual average catches (2001 to 2010) by species and method, respectively.

Overall, reported catches tend to be higher in the east coast, with the East and North East fishery regions recording the highest catches at the national level, followed by the Moray Firth and the North (Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.9).

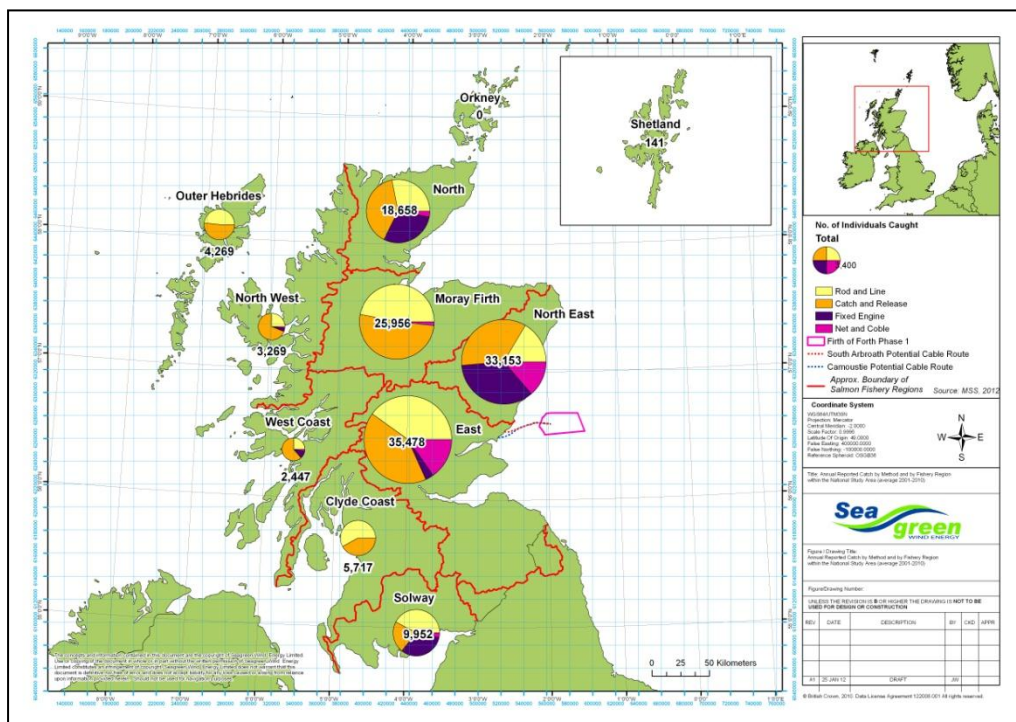
In general terms salmon and grilse account for the majority of the catch, with the exception of the Outer Hebrides, where sea trout catches are comparatively higher than those for grilse and salmon combined (Figure 6.8).

Rod-and-line (including catch and release) is the principal method used in most regions. Netting by fixed engines and net-and-coble is of relevance in some regions, principally in the North and North East (fixed engines) and in the East (net-and-coble) where the percentage of the catch by these methods is comparatively high. The netting component of the total catch is of special importance in the North East Region, where the combined catch by fixed engines and net-and-coble accounts for a similar percentage of the total catch (48.6%) recorded by the rod-and-line fishery (including catch and release) (51.4%). The net fishery is further discussed in Section 6.4.2.1.

**Figure 6.8 Annual Reported Catch (No. of Individuals) by Species and Region (average 2001 to 2010)**



**Figure 6.9 Annual Reported Catch (No. of Individuals) by Method and Region (average 2001 to 2010)**



#### 6.4.2 Regional

This section provides an overview of the salmon and sea trout fishery in the districts within the regional study area, including the Ugie, Ythan, Dee, Don, Esk (North Esk, South Esk and Bervie), Tay, Forth and Tweed. Whilst the information provided below is principally based on MSS catch data for the period 2001-2010, data gathered through consultation with fisheries stakeholders has also been used.

The annual reported catch (average 2001 to 2010) for each salmon fishery district within the regional study area is shown in Figure 6.10 and Figure 6.11, by species and method respectively. Note that for the Esk district catch statistics are broken down by former districts (North Esk, South Esk and Bervie).

The Tweed and the Esk (South Esk, North Esk and Bervie combined) are the principal districts in terms of total catch with annual catches (average 2001 to 2010) of 21,622 and 19,913 fish respectively, followed by the Tay with 10,417 fish caught.

Salmon is the principal species caught in the Don, Dee, Tay, Forth and Tweed, with grilse and sea trout making similar contributions to the remaining of the total catch in these districts.

Grilse is the principal species caught in the North and South Esk, with salmon and sea trout accounting for similar percentages of the total catch in these districts.

In the Ythan, Don, Forth, Tweed, and more significantly the Dee and Tay, rod-and-line (including catch and release) fishery accounts for the majority of the catch, whilst in the North Esk, South Esk and Ugie, a greater percentage of the total catch comes from netting (net-and-coble and fixed engines). The net fishery in the Tweed, particularly by net-and-coble, is also of relative importance. The net fishery is further discussed in Section 6.4.2.1 below.



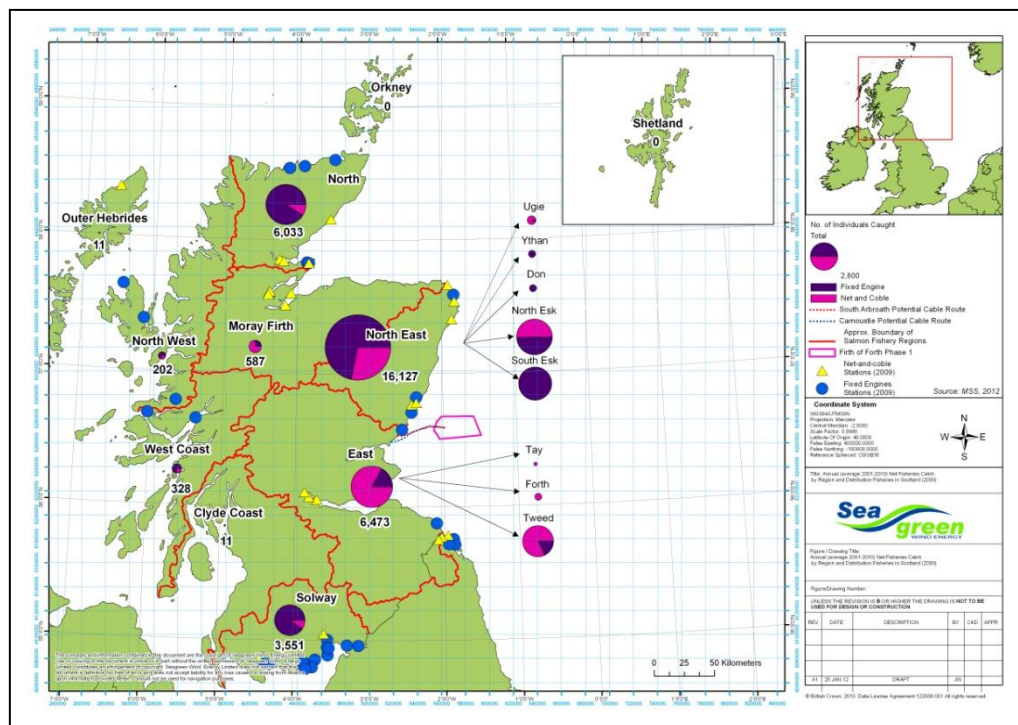
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#### 6.4.2.1 The Net Fishery in the Region

The annual reported catch of the net fishery (net-and-coble and fixed engines) by salmon fishery region is illustrated in Figure 6.12 below. Catches in the regional study area, including the North East and East region, have been further broken down by individual district. In addition, the location of active net fisheries in 2009 (MSS, 2011) is also shown in the figure.

It should be noted that as illustrated in Figure 6.5, the national trend in netting is one of a decline and it is likely that average values for the 2001-2010 period will, for the most part, overestimate the current levels of exploitation of the net-and-coble and fixed engine fisheries.

**Figure 6.12 Annual (average 2001 to 2010) Net Fisheries Catch by Region and Distribution Fisheries in Scotland (2009)**



The North East is the principal region in terms of netting activity within a national context. The majority of the catches in this region concentrate in the Esk district (North and South Esk). The South Esk in particular, supports significant fixed engine fisheries. The principal fishery in that area is the Usan Salmon Fishery (Montrose) (see Section 6.4.3).

The net fishery is also of relative importance in the East Region, especially in the Tweed district where it is predominantly undertaken using net-and-coble. There are



five active netting stations in the Tweed, all of which operate at varying degrees on a part time basis (Consultation, 2011b). In addition, there are five to six heritable rights along the Tweed's coastline, the majority of which are leased by the Tweed Trust from the heritable right holders (Consultation, 2011b).

In the Tay, netting is limited to a few net-and-cobles which operate upstream of Dundee and to coastal nets in the northern reaches of the district, where the Usan Fishery also has rights (Consultation, 2011c). As shown in Figure 6.12, there are currently active net fisheries in the area relevant to the export cable landfall options. Net fisheries located within the local study area are discussed in more detail in Section 6.4.3.

In the Forth there are over 60 netting stations, however, most of these are dormant and netting activity is limited. Six netting stations are currently active of which only two (at Fallin and Alloa) are fully operational. No coastal netting by fixed engines is currently taking place.

#### **6.4.2.2 Seasonality and Annual Variation**

An indication of the seasonality and annual variation in the rod-and-line (including catch and release) and the net fisheries (separated into net-and-coble and fixed engines) by species and district is illustrated in Figure 6.13 to Figure 6.18, based on average monthly reported catches and annual catches for the period 2001-2010.

It should be noted that the national trend in catches with respect to historic levels, as shown in Section 6.4.1.1 above is one of a decline and that given the relatively shorter period of time considered in this section (2001 to 2010) the data given are only intended to provide an indication of recent changes in the fishery and current annual catches rather than an indication of trends in the state of the stocks. In addition, it is recognised that the seasonality of the fisheries will to some extent be influenced by the length of the open season in different districts and further seasonal voluntary or statutory restrictions in place for some methods (e.g. delays in the start of net fisheries to protect spring salmon). The lack of recorded or low catches in some months will to some extent be a result of this. Furthermore the assumption that the species are not present in this period should not be made.

##### **6.4.2.2.1 Rod-and-line Fishery Seasonality**

Rod-and-line salmon catches peak in September and October in most districts within the regional study area with the Tweed also recording high catches in November. Whilst relatively lower, salmon catches are also of importance from March to July, particularly in the Dee, Tay and Tweed, reflecting the diversity of salmon runs in the regional area (Figure 6.13).

Grilse are principally caught from July to October with peak catches recorded from August to October in most districts. In the Tweed, as for salmon, relatively high grilse catches are also recorded in November (Figure 6.13).

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In the districts within the regional study area sea trout are principally caught from May to October, with highest catches being recorded in June, July and August (Figure 6.13).

#### 6.4.2.2.2 Rod-and-line Fishery Annual Variation

In the Ythan, salmon catches have remained relatively stable, peaking in 2004, after a low recorded in 2003. Salmon and grilse catches in the Ugie have fluctuated over the years, remaining comparatively low.

In the Don, salmon catches have fluctuated over the period 2001-2010, with lows recorded in 2003 and from 2007 to 2009, followed by an increase in catches in 2010. Catches of grilse peaked in 2004 and 2010, remaining comparatively stable. Salmon and grilse catches in the Dee have shown a general increase from 2001 to 2010, with catches in 2010 representing almost double of the catches recorded at the beginning of the time series.

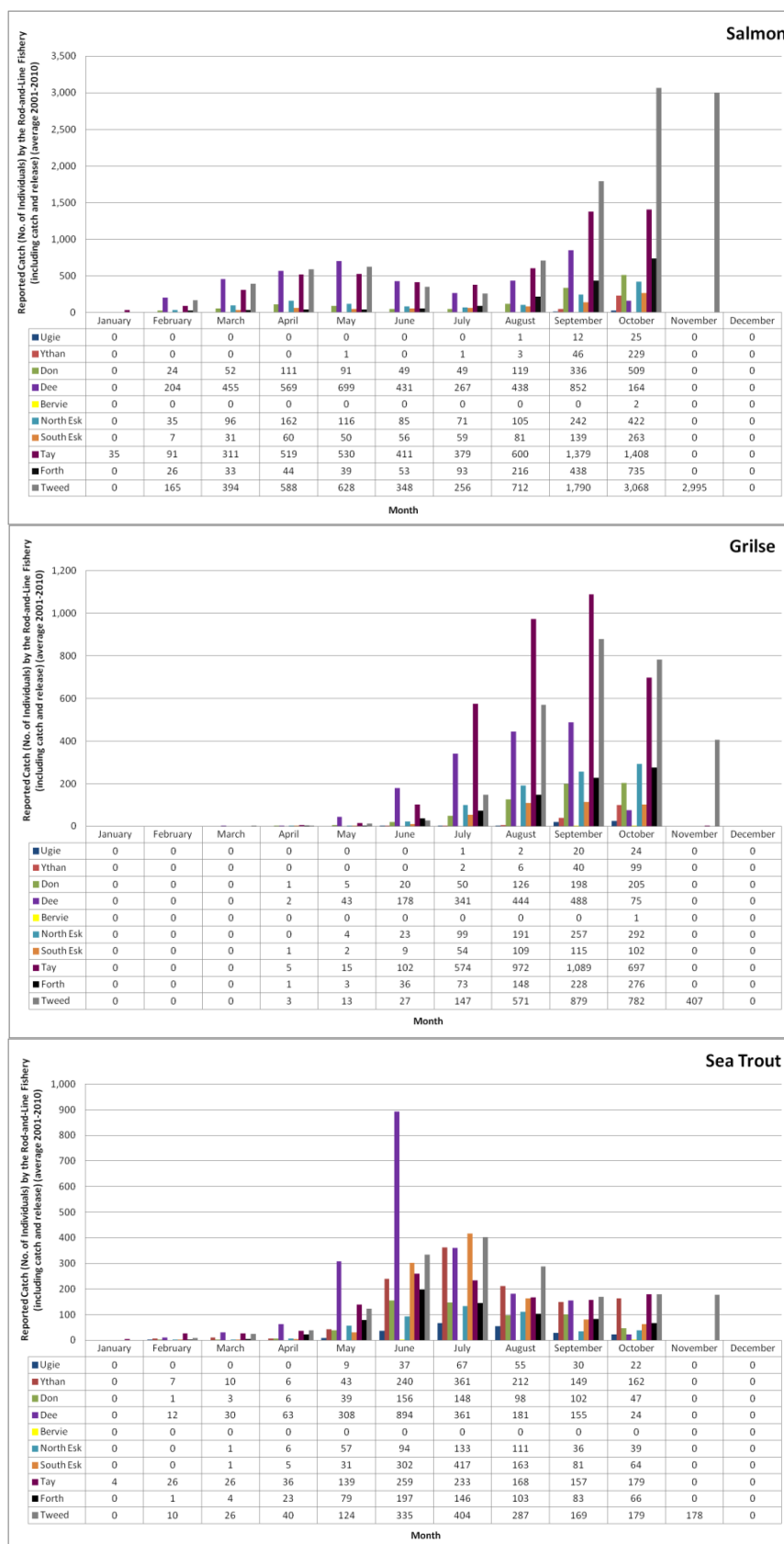
In the North Esk salmon catches have shown ups and downs over the years, whilst for grilse there has been a relative increase in the catch, with 412 grilse caught in 2001 compared to 1,471 in 2010. In the South Esk, salmon and grilse catches by the rod-and-line fishery remained comparatively low, with no clear trend apparent from 2001 to 2010.

In the Tay, salmon catches remained stable with the exception of the lows recorded in 2002 and 2003. Grilse catches peaked in 2006, decreased to a low in 2009 and duplicated again in 2010. In the Forth, salmon and grilse catches have fluctuated over the years, with salmon catches peaking in 2004 and grilse catches peaking in 2004 and 2010.

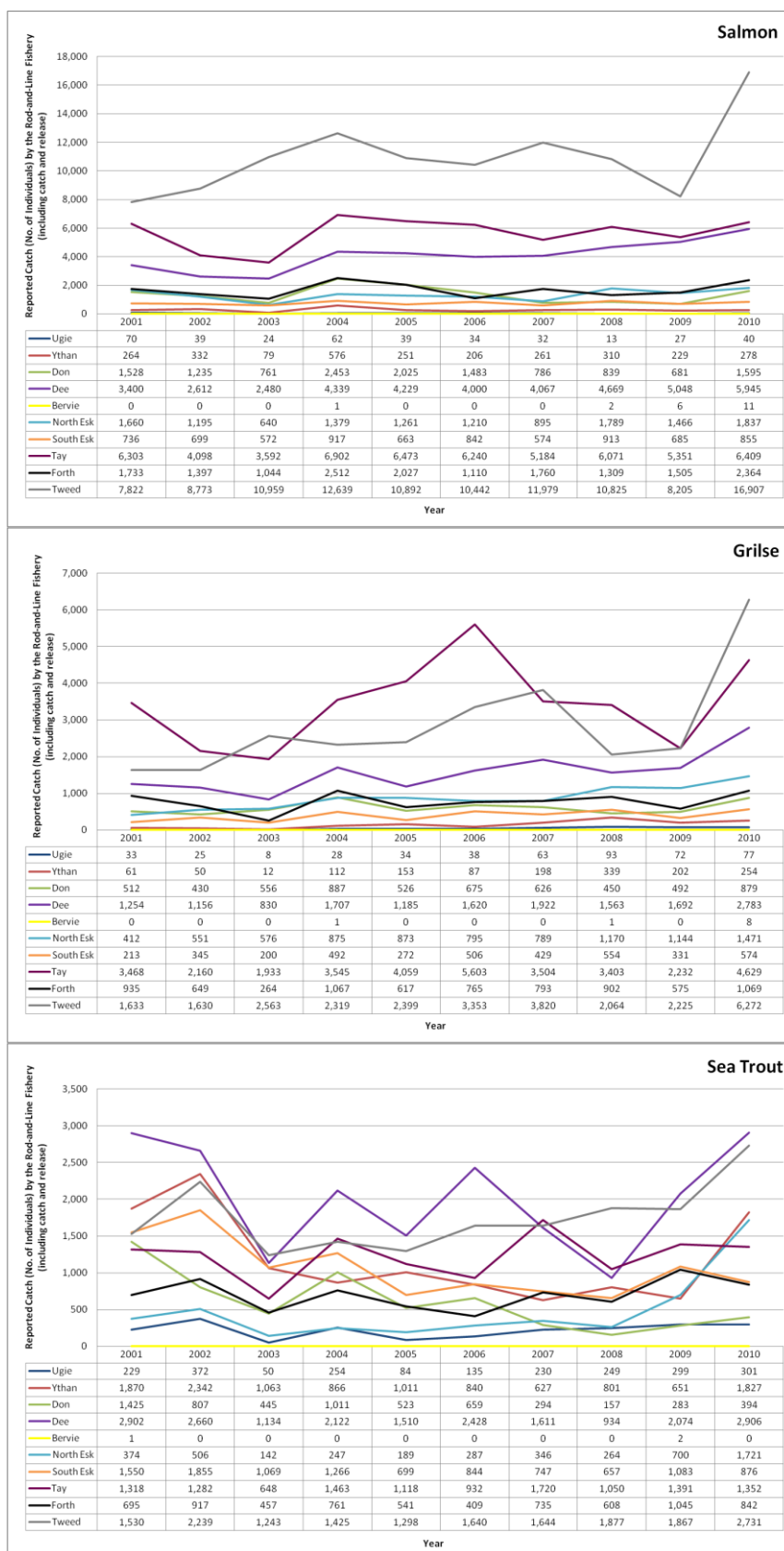
In the Tweed, rod-and-line salmon catches peaked in 2004, 2007 and 2010. From 2007 to 2009, there was a decrease in the catch, with 2009 having catches similar to those of 2001, the year recording the lowest catch within the ten year period under consideration. In 2010 salmon catches increased significantly, with 8,205 individuals caught in 2009 and 16,907 individuals caught in 2010. Grilse catches in the Tweed have shown a similar pattern, with an overall increase from 2002 to 2007, relatively lower catches in 2008 and 2009, and significantly higher catches in 2010.

Sea trout catches have shown a general decline during the first years of the time series, with a low being recorded in all districts in 2003, after which the general trend has been one of an overall increase. An exception to this is the South Esk and the Don where there has been a decline in the sea trout catch.

**Figure 6.13 Seasonality of the Catch (average 2001 to 2010) by the Rod-and-Line Fishery (including Catch and Release)**



**Figure 6.14 Annual Variation (2001 to 2010) of Catches by the Rod-and-Line Fishery (including Catch and Release)**



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#### 6.4.2.2.3 Net-and-coble Fishery Seasonality

Net-and coble principally takes place in the North Esk and the Tweed districts, and to a much lesser extent in the Forth, Ugie and Tay. In the Tweed, salmon are caught in highest numbers by net-and-coble from June to September. Similarly, for grilse the highest catch values are recorded from July to September. Sea trout is caught in relatively high numbers from June to September.

In the North Esk, salmon catches by net-and-coble are recorded from April to August, peaking in May. Peak grilse catches are reported in July and August with peak sea trout catches reported during May and June.

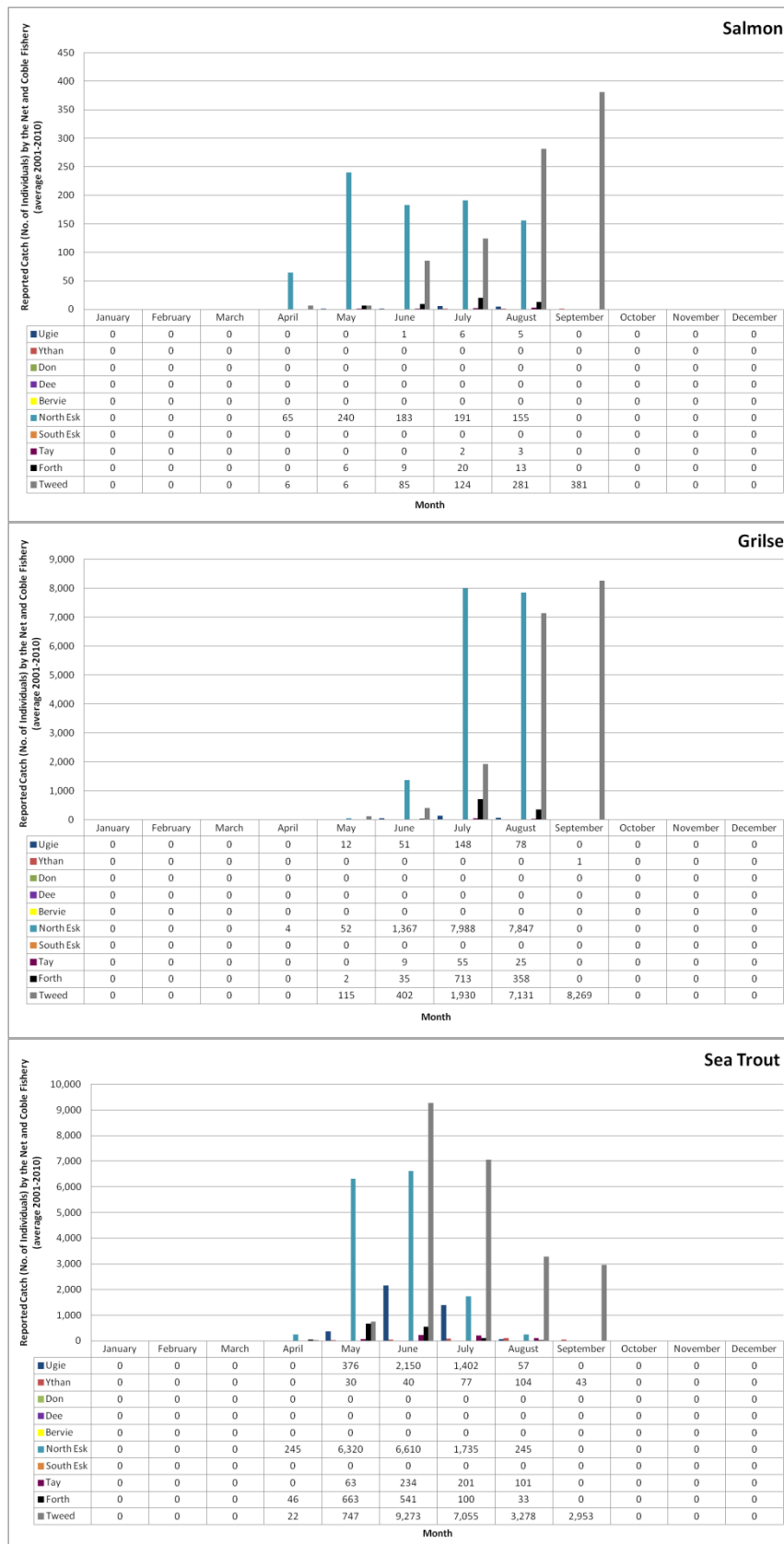
#### 6.4.2.2.4 Net-and-coble Fishery Annual Variation

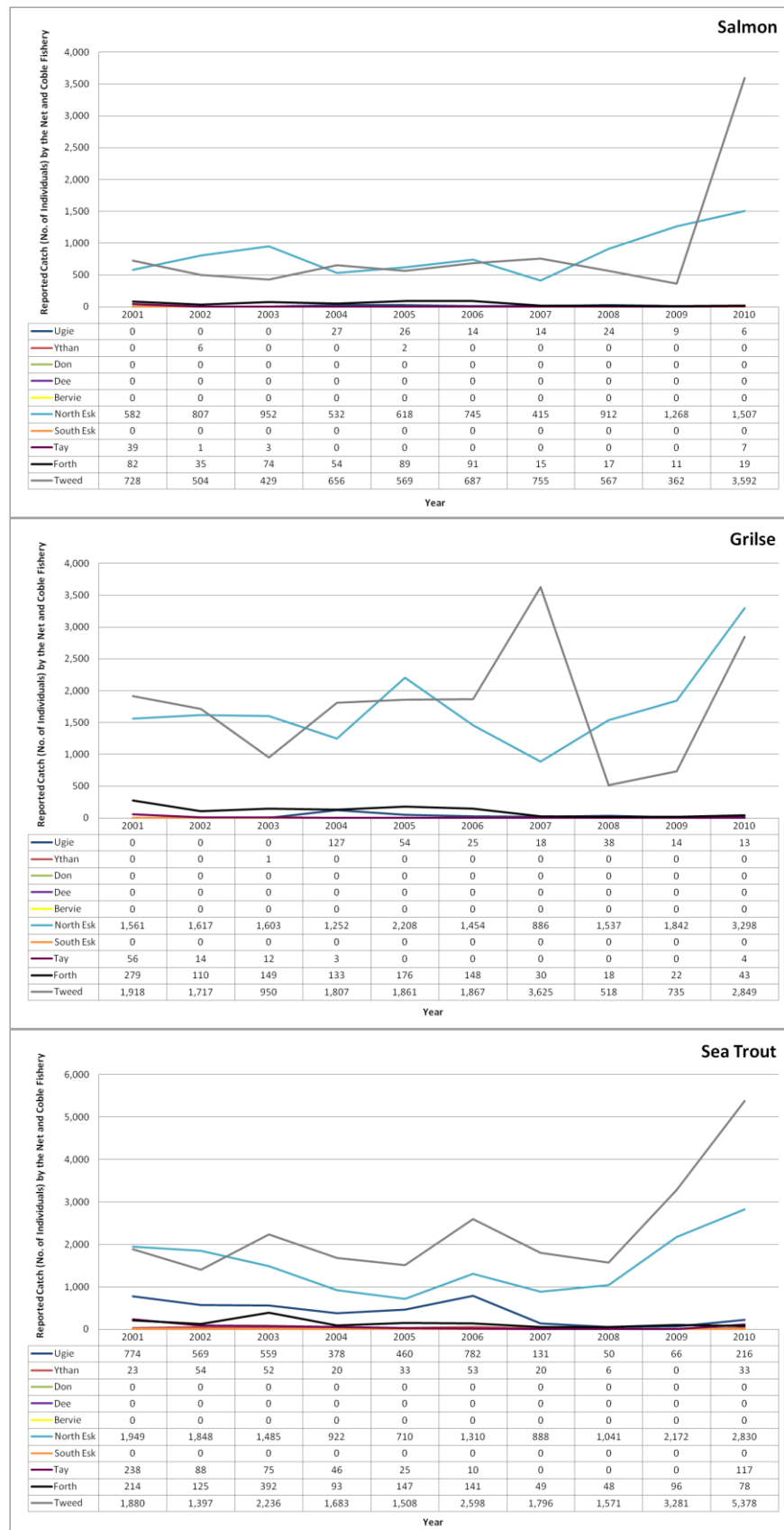
In the North Esk, salmon catches by net-and-coble have fluctuated over the years (2001-2010), increasing after a low in 2007 to highest values in 2009-2010. The grilse catch has also been variable over the years, with lows in 2005 and 2007, followed by an increase of catches to highest values recorded in 2010. Sea trout catches in this district showed a marked decrease from a peak in 2001 through to 2005. The trend has been one of an increase since then, especially in the last three years (2008 to 2010) which record the highest catch for the 2001-2010 period.

In the Ugie catches of salmon and grilse by net-and-coble have remained low during the period 2001 to 2010. Whilst catches of sea trout are comparatively high, with a peak recorded in 2006 and an overall decrease of catches since then.

In the Tay the salmon catch by net-and-coble has been low throughout the period, with no catches being reported from 2004 to 2009. Similarly catches of grilse and sea trout remained low and were absent for several years during the period 2001-2010.

In the Forth the general trend for salmon, grilse and sea trout net-and-coble catches has been one of a decline. Salmon catches by net-and-coble in the Tweed remained relatively stable during the period 2001-2009, but showed a marked increase in 2010, with 362 salmon caught in 2009 and 3,592 caught in 2010. Grilse catches have fluctuated under consideration, dropping from a peak in 2007 (3,625 individuals) to a low in 2008 (518 individuals) and increasing again to high values in 2010 (2,849 individuals). Similarly the overall trend in sea trout catches has been one of an increase since 2008, with 2010 recording the highest catches for the 2001-2010 period.

**Figure 6.15 Seasonality of the Catch (average 2001 to 2010) by the Net-and coble Fishery**


**Figure 6.16 Annual Variation in Catches by the Net-and-coble Fishery by Species and District**




#### 6.4.2.2.5 Fixed Engines Seasonality

Overall peak catches by this method are recorded from May to August for salmon, July and August for grilse and May and June for sea trout (Figure 6.17).

As previously mentioned, the majority of the catch by this method within the regional study area comes from the Esk district (North and South Esk), and to a lesser extent the Tweed. The Don, Ythan and Ugie also record comparatively low catches by this method.

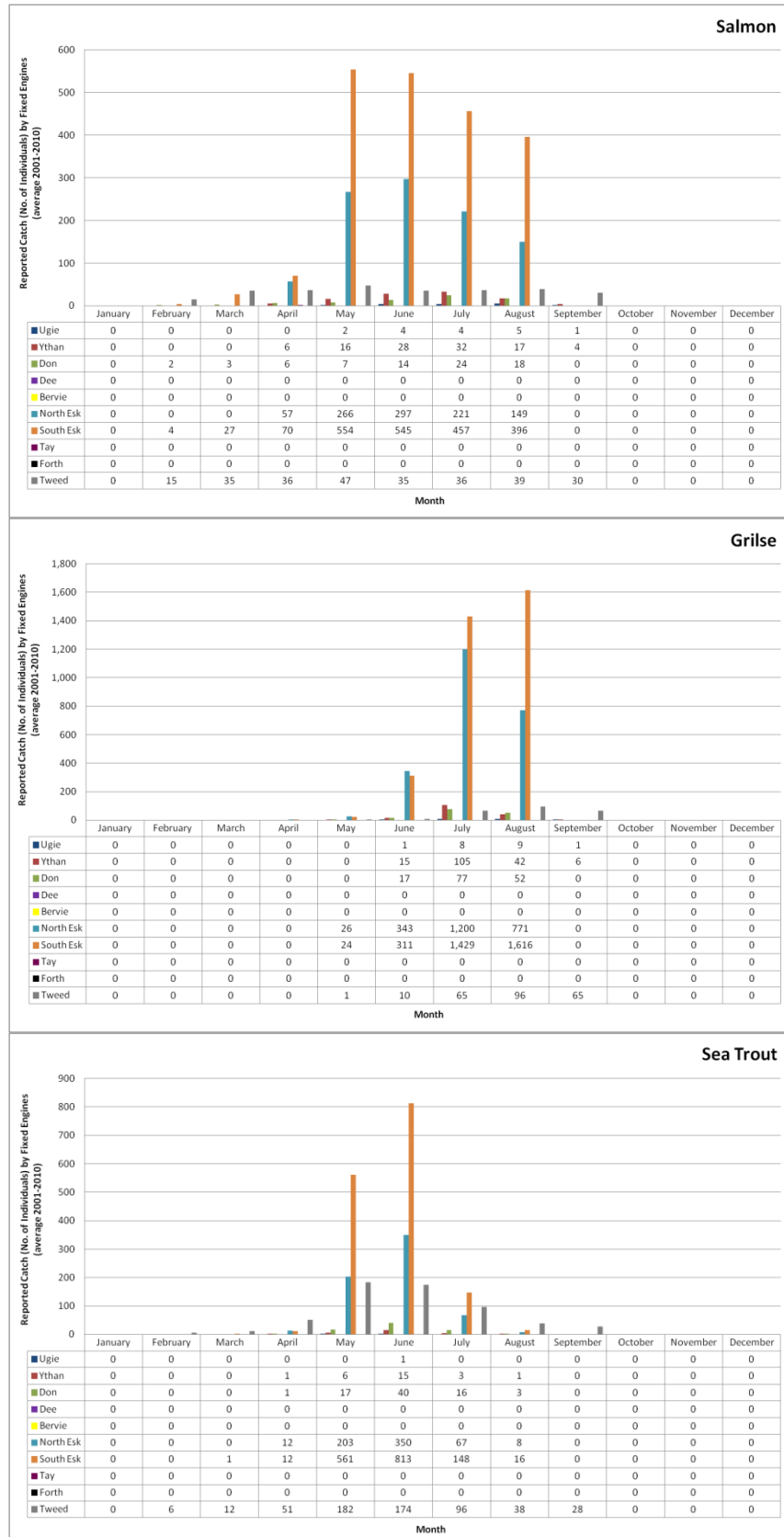
#### 6.4.2.2.6 Fixed Engines Annual Variation

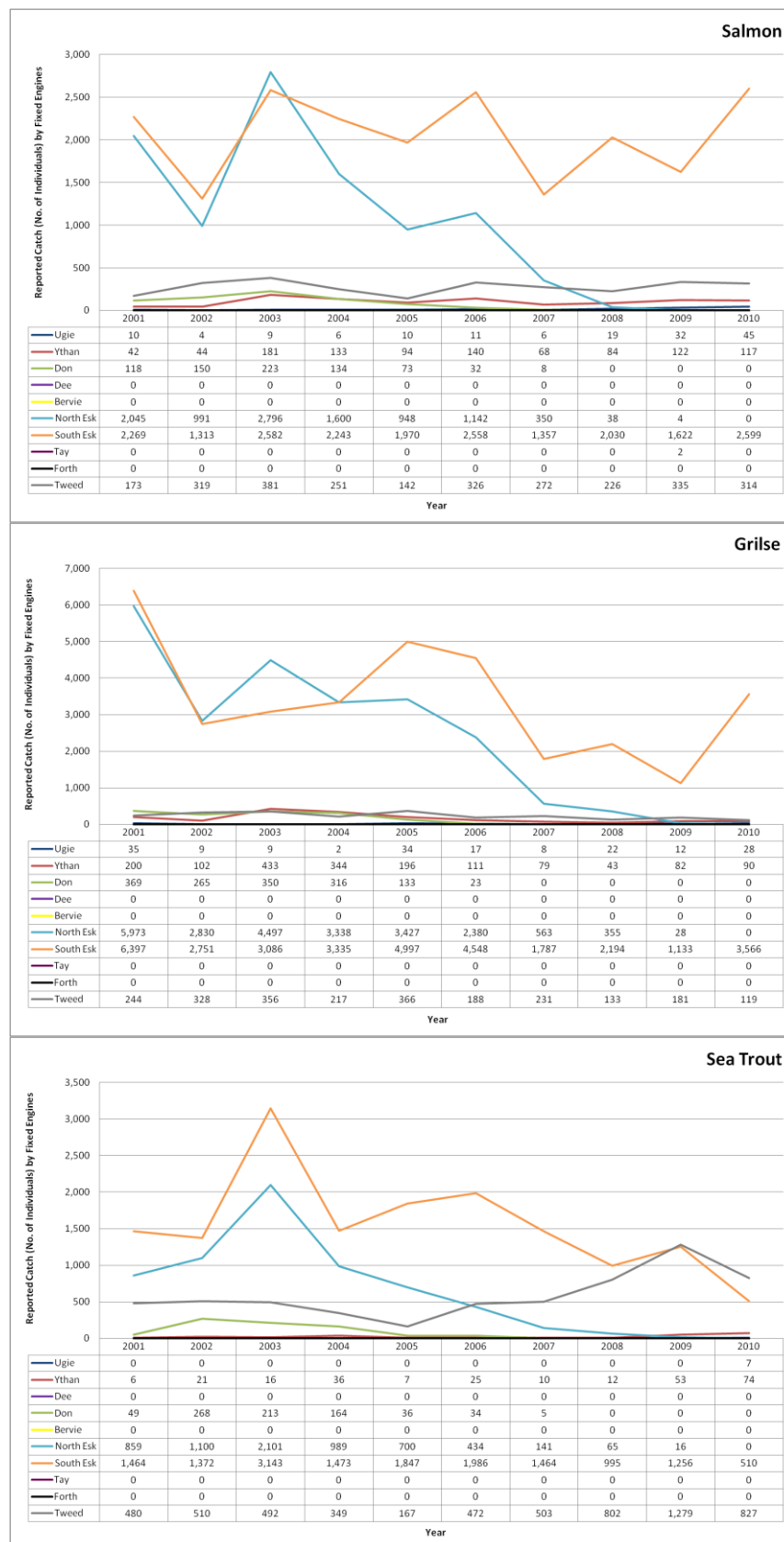
In the Don, there has been a general decline of salmon, grilse and sea trout catches during the period 2001-2010, reaching zero catch values in recent years. Salmon catches in the Ythan varied during the period 2001 to 2010, peaking in 2003. Overall grilse catches decreased, with catches in 2010 representing half of the ones recorded at the beginning of the time series. Sea trout catches remained low fluctuating over the ten year period, with a peak shown in 2010.

In the North Esk there has been a decline in catches by fixed engines over the years, with no catches being recorded in 2010, principally as a result of the buyout of the North Esk's coastal netting stations by the Esk District Salmon Fishery Board (Consultation, 2010). Despite the closure of the commercial coastal fishery in the North Esk, fixed engines are still commercially operational in the South Esk.

In the South Esk the salmon and grilse catch by fixed engines has fluctuated over the ten year period under consideration, whilst for both the overall trend has been one of an increase since 2009. Sea trout catches in the South Esk, have also varied during the ten year period under consideration, with 2003 recording the highest catch (3,143 individuals) and 2010 recording the lowest catch (510 individuals) within the ten year period.

In the Tweed the annual catch by fixed engines for salmon and grilse has been variable, with no clear trends being shown, whilst for sea trout, the total catch has shown an increase since 2005, peaking in 2009.

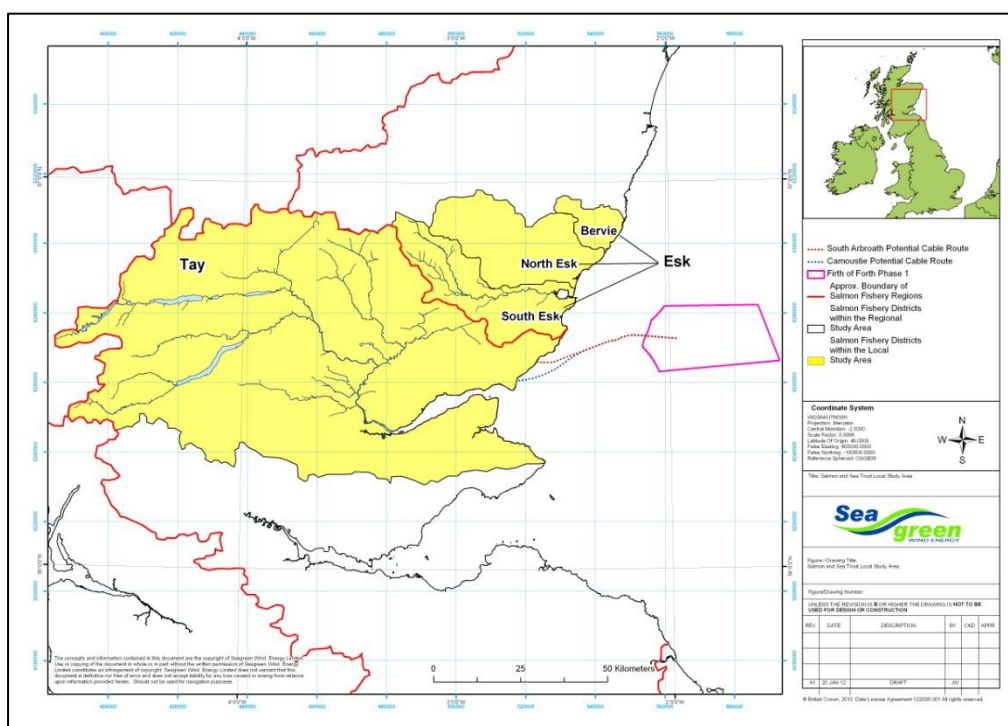
**Figure 6.17 Seasonality of the Catch (average 2001 to 2010) by Fixed Engines**


**Figure 6.18 Annual Variation in Catches by Fixed Engines by Species and District**


### 6.4.3 Local (The Esk and Tay Districts)

The approach has been to define a local study area including all districts located in the immediate vicinity of the development and its export cable route. The location of the development and its export cable landfall options are shown in Figure 6.19 below. Both landfall options are located within the Tay district, between Arbroath and Camoustie. Salmon has been a primary feature for SAC site selection of the river Tay and South Esk.

**Figure 6.19 Salmon and Sea Trout Fisheries Local Study Area**



The following sections provide an indication of the principal fishing methods, seasonality and annual variation of the Tay and Esk District salmon and sea trout fisheries.

It should be noted that whilst both salmon and sea trout make an important contribution to the fishery in these districts, the relative importance of each species may vary depending on the river under consideration. The Tay for example is primarily a salmon river, but the river Earn, located within the Tay District, has a significant sea trout run (Consultation, 2011c). In addition, the times and relative importance of different runs may also vary between different rivers within the districts.

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### 6.4.3.1 *The Esk District*

#### 6.4.3.1.1 The Esk District Salmon Fishery Board

The Esk District Salmon Fishery Board (EDSFB) is the statutory body with responsibility for the management of salmon and sea trout stocks in the Rivers North and South Esk. The Duties of the board include the protection or improvement of the fisheries within the district, the enhancement of salmon stocks and the stocking of the waters of the district with salmon. In addition, the EDSFB works closely alongside the Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust (ERFT), which aims amongst others to advance environmental protection and improvement by conserving and enhancing all species of freshwater fish and their environments primarily but not limited to the inland and coastal waters of the rivers and their tributaries. The Trust is made up of biologists, conservationists, farmers, fishermen and proprietors (ERFT, 2012).

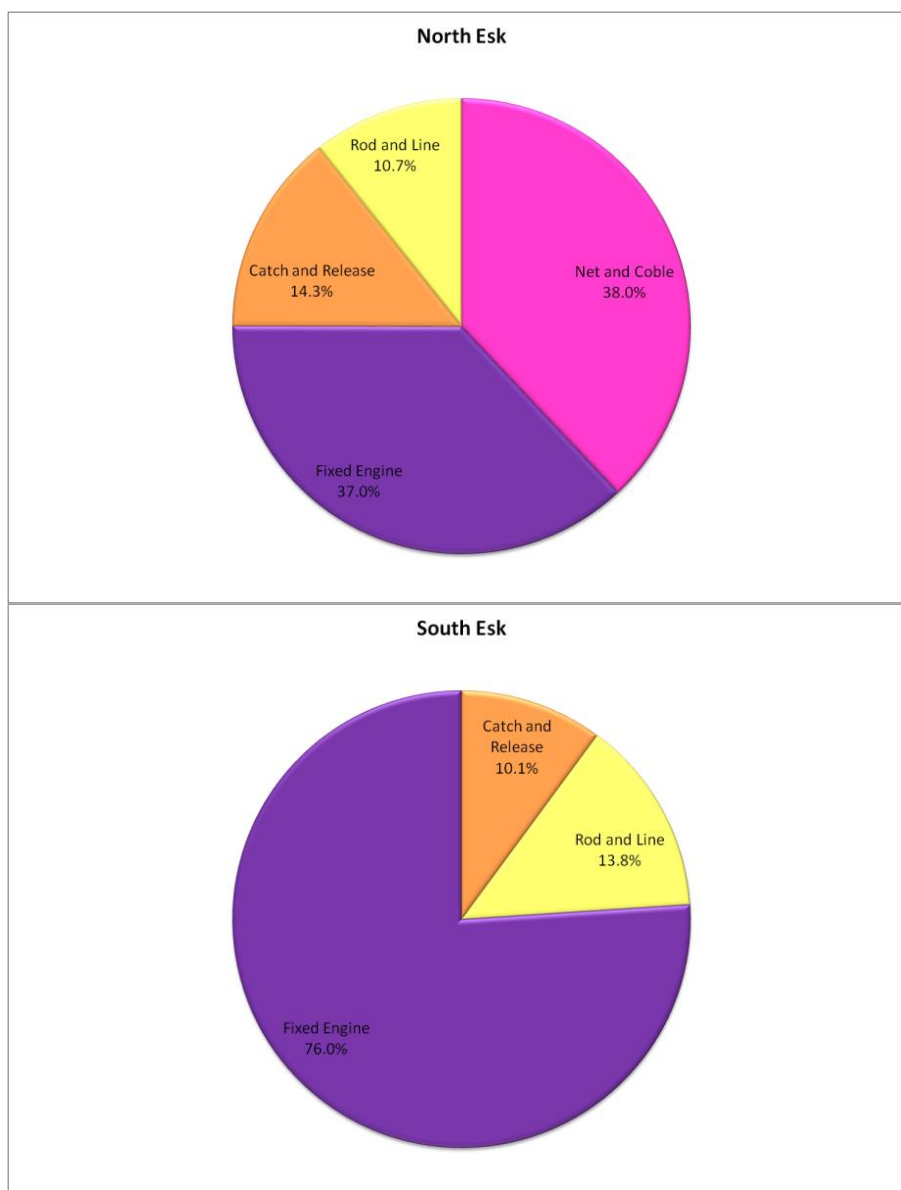
#### 6.4.3.1.2 Principal Fishing Methods

As mentioned in Section 6.4.2.1, the North East is the principal region in terms of netting activity within a national context. The majority of the catches in this region concentrate in the Esk district (North and South Esk). The Esk Rivers were originally sea trout rivers, but numbers have declined, and the rivers are now both salmon and sea trout rivers (Consultation, 2011a).

The distribution of the catch by method in the North and South Esk is shown in Figure 6.20 (2001 to 2010). Salmon and sea trout fishing in the Esk District is principally undertaken by fixed engines. Catches by net and coble also constitute a relatively high percentage of the catch within the North Esk District (38.0%).

However, as previously mentioned, the North Esk's coastal netting stations have been bought out by the Esk DSFB in 2007. Fixed engines are still commercially operational in the South Esk, with Usan Salmon Fishery (Montrose) constituting the principal fishery in the South Esk area.

**Figure 6.20 Distribution of the Catch by Method in the North and South Esk District (2001-2010)**



Usan Salmon Ltd is one of the last remaining commercial salmon netting stations in Scotland. The fishery has been operational since the 1960's but didn't move to Usan until 1983. The location of the Usan fishing rights relative to the development and its export cable route options is shown in Figure 6.21. Usan's fishing rights extend between Scurdie Ness lighthouse to the north and Auchmithie harbour in the south, extending into coastal waters of both districts; the South Esk and the Tay. They operate eight netting stations in total. Bag nets are predominantly set, although jumper nets (a type of stake nets) are used in Lunan Bay. A total of 18 fixed engines were employed in 2010. Nets are set up to 1,300m from the shore, in lines. Between 10 and 12 fixed engines can be set per line.



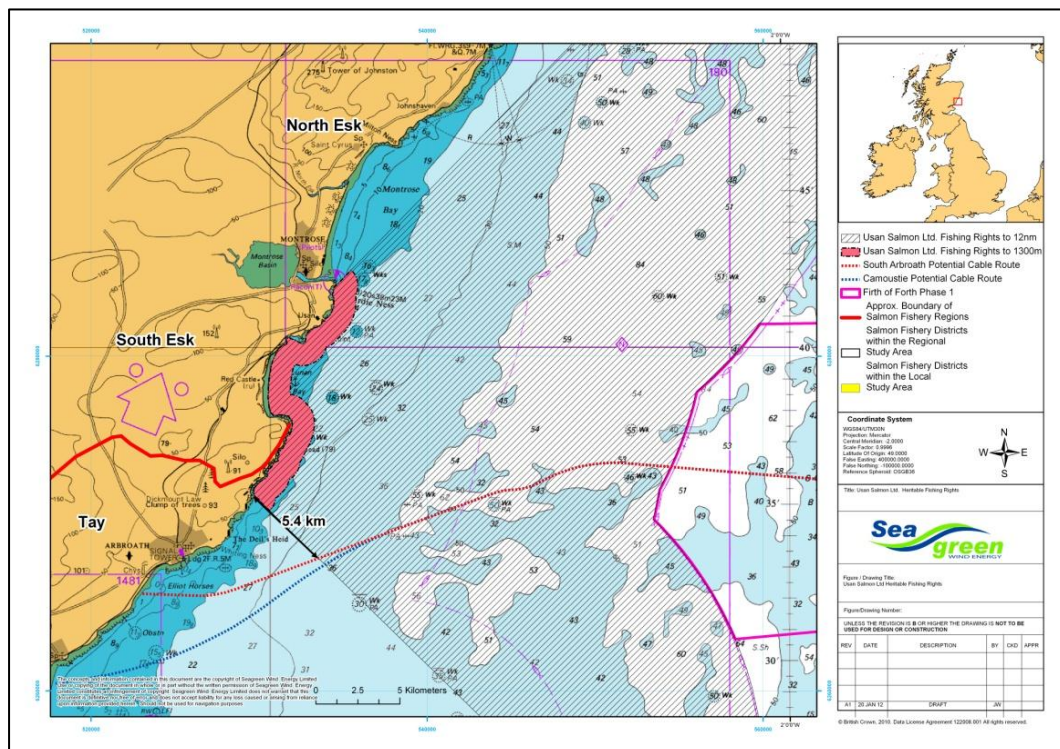
As mentioned in Section 6.3.1, although heritable rights extend to the 12nm limit, fixed engines are not permitted to extend more than 1,300m from the mean low water mark. As it can be seen from Figure 6.21, the area covered up to the 1,300m limit by the Usan Salmon heritable rights does not extend into the area of the development and its export cable route options.

The peak fishing season extends from the 16<sup>th</sup> February to the end of August, although since recent years Usan does not commence fishing until the 1<sup>st</sup> May for conservation purposes. Fish caught in Usan nets have originated from the Rivers Tay up to the Dee and Don.

Usan manufacture their own nets using purpose built onsite facilities. In 2010 Usan Salmon was awarded a grant, in excess of £100,000, under the auspices of the European Fisheries Fund for both the construction of a net and boat manufacturing and repair facility and three new power net washing beds (Consultation, 2011a; Usan Salmon, 2011).

It should be noted that the Esk fishery board is currently seeking new legislation that continues the conservation measure discussed above to prevent Usan catching salmon between the 16<sup>th</sup> February and the 31<sup>st</sup> May for a five year period (Fishing News, 2011).

Figure 6.21 Usan Salmon Ltd. Heritable Fishing Rights



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#### 6.4.3.1.3 Seasonality of the Fishery and Annual Variation

In the Esk District, rod and lining runs from the 16<sup>th</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> October and netting runs from the 16<sup>th</sup> February to the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. However, there is currently a voluntary agreement in place which bans netting in the Esk District up to the 1<sup>st</sup> May (EDSFB, 2012).

During the 2001-2010 period, grilse have been caught from May to October, with highest catches recorded in July and August. Salmon catches are recorded from February to October and peak in May and June. Sea trout catches have been highest from May to August, peaking in May and June (Figure 6.22 and Figure 6.23). As it can be seen from Figure 6.22 and Figure 6.23 overall combined salmon and sea trout catches are highest from May to August, indicating the importance of late spring and summer runs to the Esk fishery.

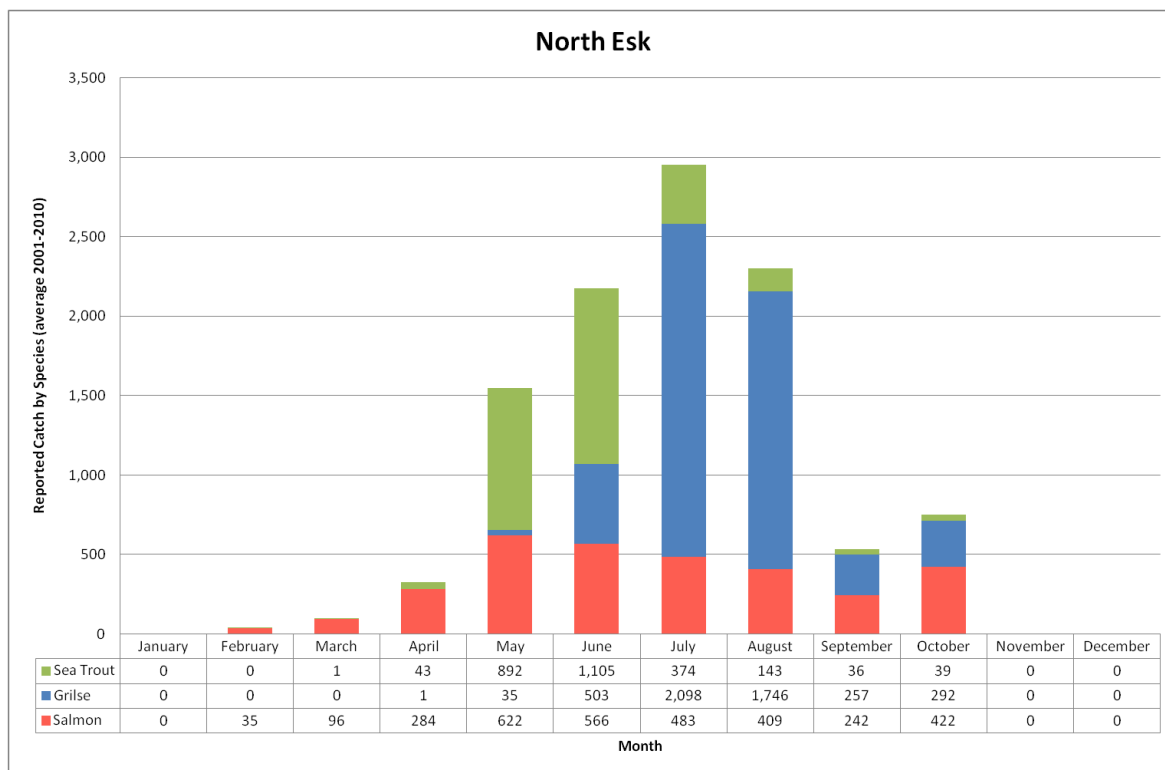
No catches are recorded from November to mid-February as a result of the annual fishing closure which extends in the Esk District from the 1<sup>st</sup> November to the 15<sup>th</sup> February (Figure 6.22 and Figure 6.23).

Salmon and grilse catches have fluctuated during the ten year period in the North and South Esk. The annual variation of salmon, grilse and sea trout catches in the North and South Esk District is shown in Figure 6.24 and Figure 6.25 respectively. As seen in Figure 6.24, overall catches in the North Esk decreased to a low in 2007, when coastal netting stations were bought out by the Board.

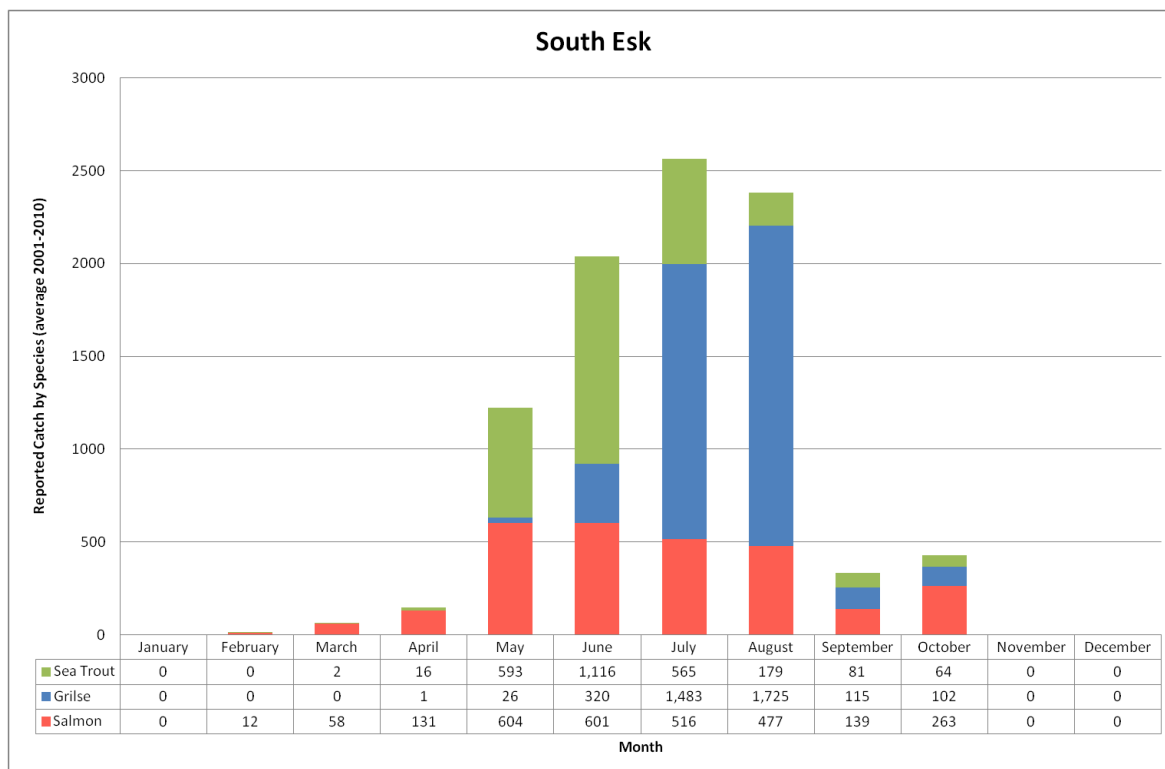
##### 6.4.3.1.3.1 Seasonality of Salmon, Grilse and Sea trout Runs

Salmon enter the rivers of the Esk District throughout the year, with the principal run of salmon occurring from May to October. Grilse arrive in rivers at the end of May, with the main run of grilse taking place from July to October. Whilst the principal runs of sea trout extend from April to June (EDSFB, 2012).

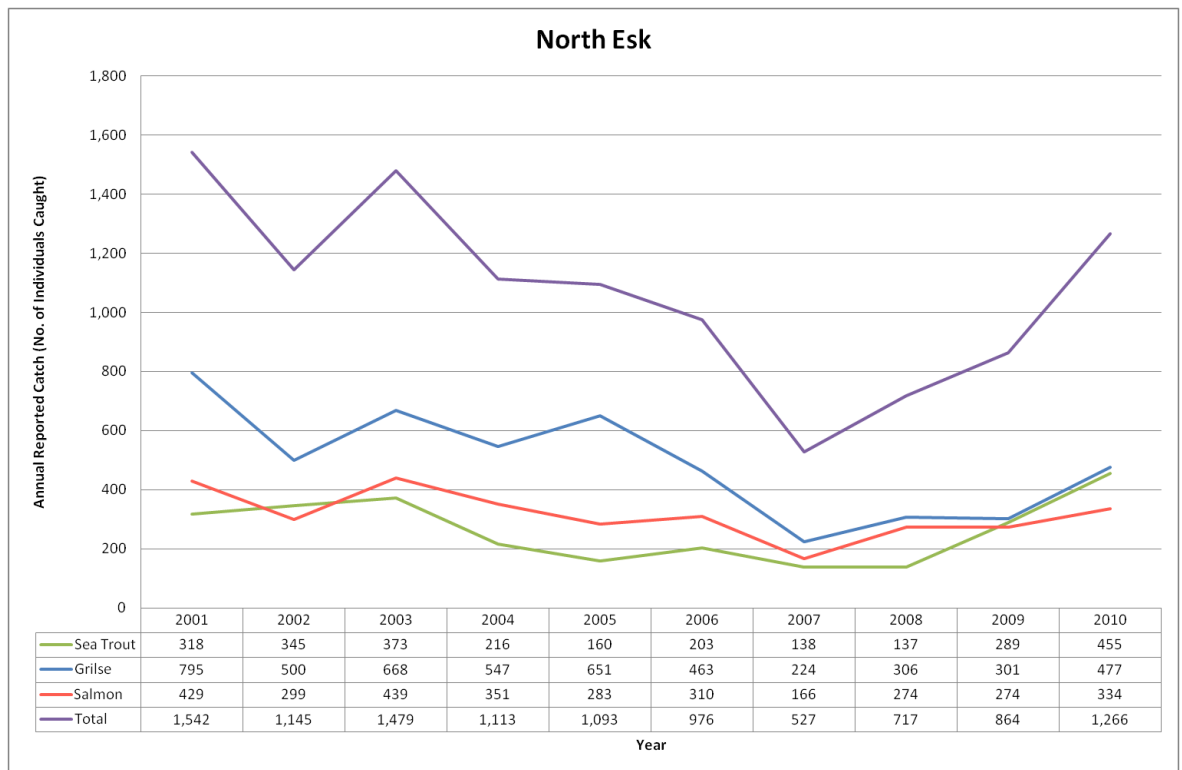
**Figure 6.22 Seasonality of the Salmon and Sea Trout Fishery in the North Esk District (average 2001-2010)**



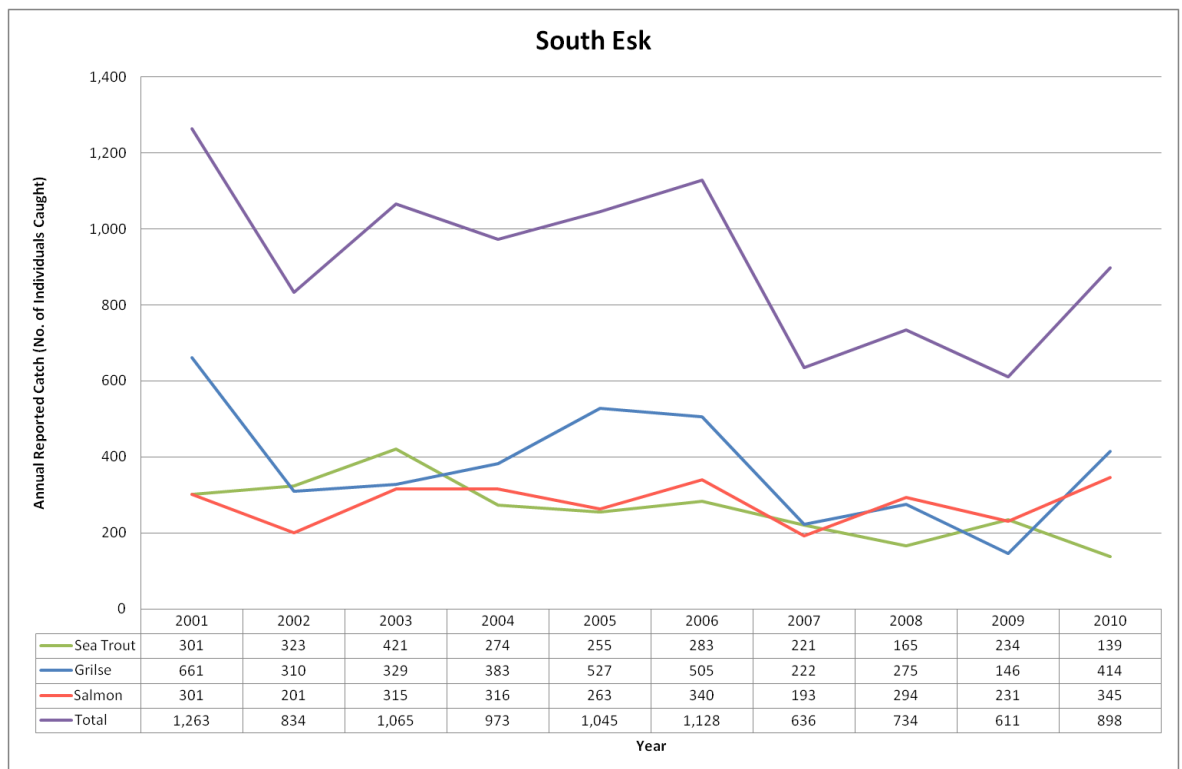
**Figure 6.23 Seasonality of the Salmon and Sea Trout Fishery in the South Esk District (average 2001-2010)**



**Figure 6.24 Annual Variation in the Reported Catch by Species in the North Esk District (2001-2010)**



**Figure 6.25 Annual Variation in the Reported Catch by Species in the South Esk District (2001-2010)**



### 6.4.3.2 The Tay District

#### 6.4.3.2.1 The Tay District Salmon Fishery Board

The Tay District Salmon Fishery Board (TDSFB) is the statutory organisation for the Tay Catchment responsible for the management of Atlantic salmon and sea trout. The Board is made up of riparian owners elected to represent the upper and lower parts of the catchment and coopted members who represent the interests of anglers, the Ghillies Association and the Tay Foundation. Together they look after over 5,000 miles of rivers, burns and lochs. Their work includes river management, conservation, scientific research and bailiffing (TDSFB, 2012).

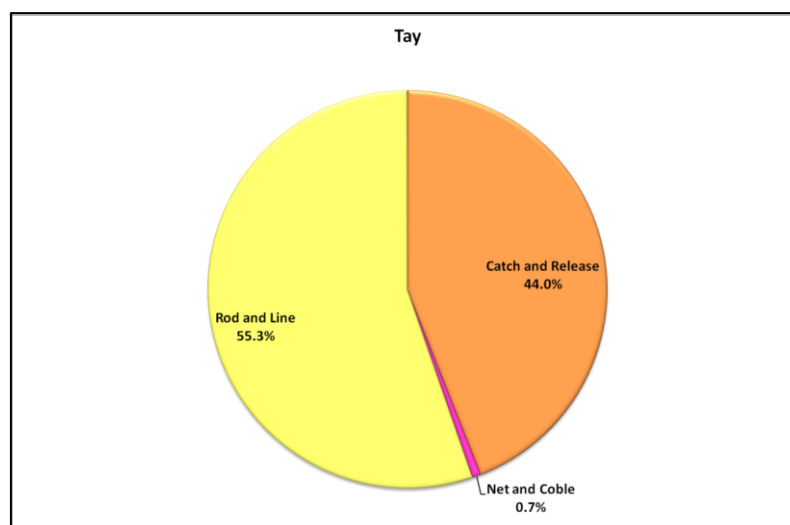
#### 6.4.3.2.2 Principal Fishing Methods in the Tay District

Salmon fishing is the most important fishery on the River Tay and its tributaries. Compared to some other rivers sea trout fishing in the Tay is of much lesser importance to salmon. The Tay itself has only a modest sea trout run. The best tributary for sea trout is the River Earn, which historically has been an excellent sea trout river (TDSFB, 2012).

Salmon and sea trout fishing in the Tay District is principally undertaken by rod-and-line (including catch and release). The distribution of the catch by method is shown in Figure 6.26 (2001-2010).

As mentioned in Section 6.4.2.1, netting in this district is limited to a few hobby net-and-cobles which operate upstream of Dundee and to coastal nets in the northern reaches of the district, where the Usan Salmon Ltd. has rights (Consultation, 2011c; see Figure 6.21).

**Figure 6.26 Distribution of the Catch by Method in the Tay District (2001-2010)**



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#### 6.4.3.2.3 Seasonality of the Fishery and Annual Variation

The salmon and sea trout fishery runs from the 15<sup>th</sup> January to the 15<sup>th</sup> October and extends to the 31<sup>st</sup> October in the Earn (Consultation, 2011c).

During the 2001-2010 period the highest grilse catches have been recorded from July to October. Peak salmon catches have been recorded in autumn in September and October. Sea trout catches have been highest from May to October, peaking in June and July (Figure 6.27).

As indicated by the catch distribution in Figure 6.27, the autumn run is the mainstay of the Tay salmon fishery. It provides the largest catches, the biggest rents and ultimately provides most of the revenue for the Board to conduct its activities throughout the entire district (TDSFB, 2012).

The annual variation of catches in the Tay District is shown in Figure 6.28. Salmon, grilse and sea trout catches have fluctuated during the ten year period, with lowest catches being recorded in 2003 (Figure 6.28). Overall catch values of salmon, grilse and sea trout remained relatively stable, with catches in 2010 representing similar catch values like those recorded at the beginning of the time series.

##### 6.4.3.2.3.1 Seasonality of Salmon, Grilse and Sea trout Runs

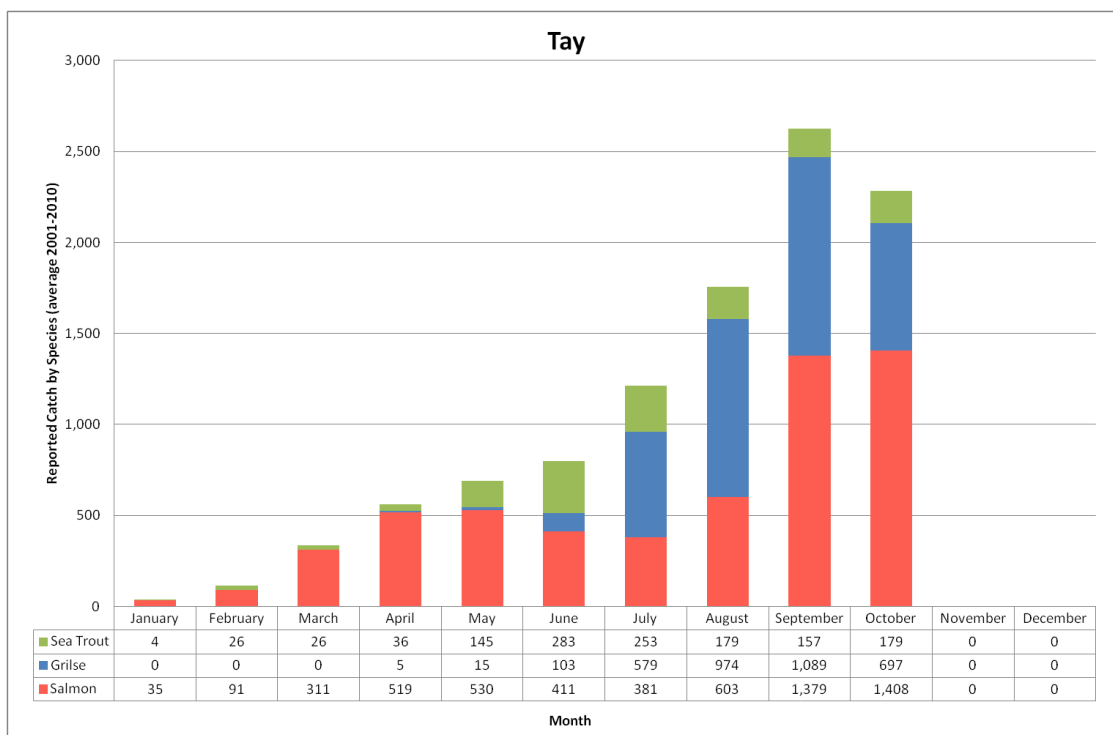
Salmon enter the River Tay all year round. The main first significant runs of “spring salmon” into the River Tay take place from late February/March and continue through April and May. Autumn salmon start to appear around August and fresh run fish can continue to enter the river right to the end of the season and beyond (TDSFB, 2012).

Summer grilse begin to arrive in May, with grilse numbers building up in June and usually reaching a peak in July. Autumn grilse appear from August onwards through to October and beyond (TDSFB, 2012).

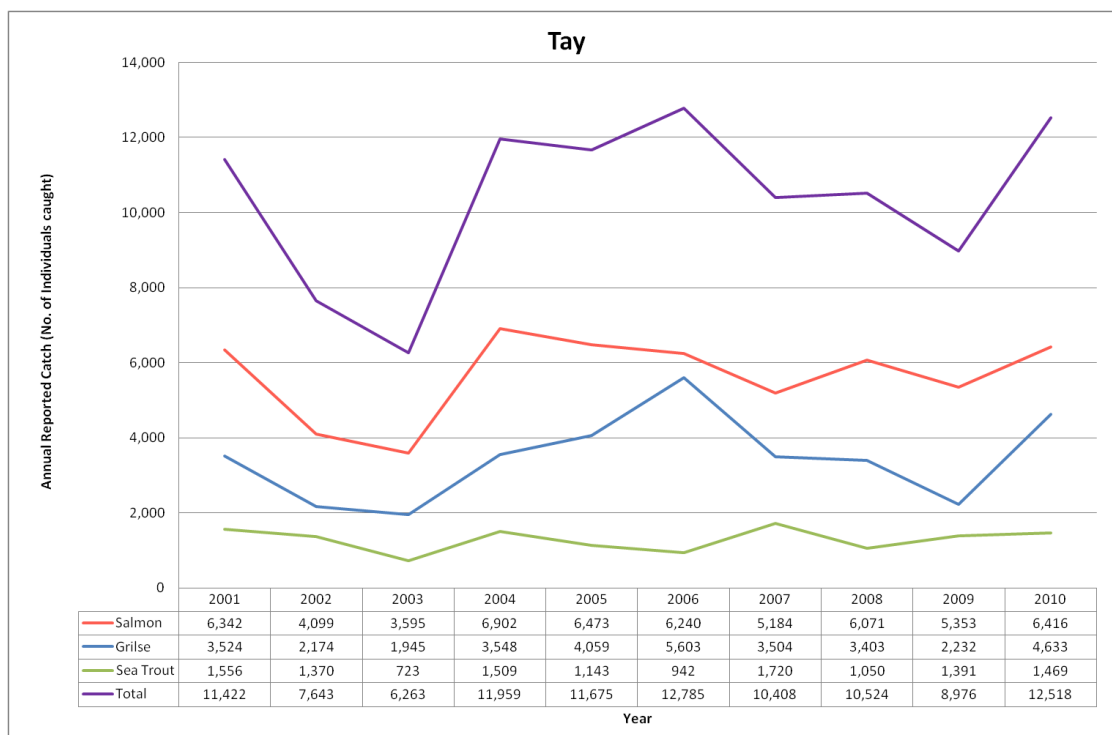
Sea trout enter the river Earn throughout the year with main runs occurring in late summer and autumn.



**Figure 6.27 Seasonality of the Salmon and Sea Trout Fishery in the Tay District (average 2001-2010)**



**Figure 6.28 Annual Variation in the Reported Catch by Species in the Tay District (2001-2010)**



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## 6.5 The Future of the Salmon and Sea Trout Fisheries

DSFBs throughout Scotland, generally in conjunction with Trusts and conservation groups, are making significant efforts to ensure the future of the industry and specifically the rod-and-line fishery, implementing programmes to maintain and improve upon the number and quality of salmon and sea trout in their rivers. Catch and release policies are also increasingly closely monitored.

A priority for the majority of Boards is the maintenance and development of rod-and-line fishing. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future, in line with the joint aims of the ASFB and other organisations. Parallel to the maintenance and development of the rod-and-line fisheries, a decrease in coastal netting activity has been the trend in the last decade. This is likely to continue to be the case, with river and conservation interests buying up coastal stations, as well as increasing statutory and voluntary restrictions and policies being implemented, all of which are considered effective stock management measures.

Scotland, together with England, Norway and Northern Ireland has come under increasing international pressure to establish a policy for managing Multi Stock Fisheries (MSFs), such as coastal netting. This is of particular sensitivity in Scotland, as fishing is prosecuted under heritable property rights, rather than as an activity licensed by Government, as in most salmon producing countries (Crawley, 2010). International advice is that there should be a presumption against operating MSF unless they can be shown not to contravene basic conservation policies (ASFB, AST and S&TA, 2009).

It should be noted that there are numerous constraints placed upon the degree to which potential losses and their significance to salmon and sea trout fisheries can be assessed over the operational life of the Firth of Forth Round 3, Zone 2, Phase 1 proposed offshore wind farms development. As it is the case with other commercial fishing activities, unpredictable and unrelated influencing variables such as natural fluctuations in stock levels or changes in legislation could significantly alter elements within the technical report.

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