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To: [Redacted
Cc: [Redacte
Subject: River Stinchar
Date: 09 May 2025 16:35:58
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Good afternoon Peter,
Thanks for the call. Here is the information you would need to share with the necessary stakeholders.

Information

At the mouth of the River Stinchar south of Ballantrae a large shingle gravel bar (~25m wide) has formed across the river preventing Atlantic salmon smolts from leaving the lower tidal pool.
Salmon populations in Great Britain have declined between 30-50% since 2005 and are expected to fall 50-80% between 2010-2015 (IUCN Red List, 2023). As such Atlantic salmon in Great Britain were reassessed by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in December 2023 and reclassified from 'Least Concern' to Endangered'.
The management of existing and emerging pressures to wild salmon has been identified as a priority action under Objective 4 of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030. Encompassed within this plan is the Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy which sets out the vision, objectives and priority themes for action to protect and support the recovery of wild Atlantic salmon populations in Scotland (Marine Directorate, 2022). Atlantic salmon is protected under Annex II (animal and plant species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation) and Annex V (animal and plant species of community interest whose taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures) of the Habitats Directive.
These salmon smolts are under threat from increased predation, thermal stress and disease such as Saprolegnia while they are trapped within the lower reach of the river. As there is no rain forecast for the next two weeks it is unlikely that this will be resolved naturally in a time frame that will prevent large losses of salmon. The river level is extremely low due to several months of abnormally low rainfall, SEPA are currently providing water scarcity reports due the severity of the situation across Scotland. Ayrshire Rivers Trust staff attended the site this week and witnessed hundreds of trapped smolts which are at risk of being lost. Manual netting or removal of the smolts is not viable due to the sensitive nature of the smolts and risk of potential damage. Manual movement or digging of the sediment is also not possible.

River Stinchar Sediment Management Methodology.

A single ~13t excavator will be unloaded in Ballantrae village and tracked along the water's edge to avoid disturbance to birds/wildlife. The operator is a qualified and experienced operator. It is proposed that a 1m deep single channel will be cut using a 54 wide inch/ 1.4m wide bucket. The sediment will be kept on site and moved to the side to redistribute naturally. There will be no other machine works required other than the forementioned machine. The estimated time to do this work is 2hours on site. Ayrshire Rivers Trust intend to have the trust manager on site during the work.
Peter can I ask that you reply to Stuart who is cc'd in as I am away on annual leave as of today.
kind regards,
Carolyn Bryce (She/Her)
Biologist
We have recently moved - see below for our new address!