

Loch Linnhe Smolt Netting Project

Description of Methods

A fyke net will be used to intercept salmon and sea trout smolts descending through Loch Linnhe to the open sea. A diagram of the net is shown below. Nets will be placed at three locations. Two of these are in Loch Linnhe, one at Camus na Gaul, the other 2.5km north of Corran on the west shore. The third net will be in the bay south of Kilchoan, Ardnamurchan.

The net will be positioned with the leader and fyke net lying perpendicular to the shore and the wings stretched at approximately 60 degrees to the leader. An anchor will be used at the end of the leader, each wing and the opening and end of the fyke. Float line will hold the leader and wings vertically in the water and two buoys will be used to suspend the fyke vertically. The bottom of the net will sit on the sea bed. The depth of water means that the nearshore end of the leader and wings may be deeper than the water at some points in the tidal cycle and so cover the entire water column. The fyke net will be submerged at all tides.

The net will be deployed in early May and checked daily. Checking will be done from a 12ft rowing boat and involve lifting the rear of the fyke and transferring any fish to a container on the boat. Any salmon and sea trout will be anaesthetised using MS222, weighted, measured and their lice counted before being allowed to recover. All non-target species caught and the recovered salmonids will be returned to the sea south of the net. In periods when the net cannot be checked, the rear end of the fyke will be left open to allow fish to escape. The net and all anchors will be completely removed by 31st July at the latest.

