

Report of the Helmsdale DSFB for 2018.

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Chairman	Neil McCorquodale
Proprietors Representatives.	Sir John Nutting Bt QC Sir A Heber-Percy William Southall Alexander Darwall George Stephenson
Co-Optees	Donald Sutherland Robert Mackay
Clerk	Martin Mackay, Brodies, Dingwall.

Annual Catch.

The catch for 2018 was 1612 on the private beats, 23 on the Private Waters, and 244 on the Lower Helmsdale, total 1879.

Counter.

The counter figure was in the region of 8,000.

Conservation Policies and Catch and Release.

60 salmon in equal number of male and female were caught in the broodstock capture programme and 160,000 unfed fry returned to the river in March/April.  
Catch and release on the private beats was 96.5%.

Regulatory Measures Statutory or Voluntary.

Prevention of poaching. There were 3 bailiffs and one seasonal summer bailiff.

Surveys of Juvenile Fish.

Electro-fishing which was successfully carried out on 15 random sites selected by government computer. The Board did a further 15 of its own sites. Generally densities of salmon and sea-trout young fish were good. The Board carried out young fish survey work on the River Halladale under contract to the Forestry Commission.

Summary of Bailiff Activities.

Illegal nets — None  
Offences reported — None  
Court Cases — None

Main Pressures on the Catchment and Its fish.

Escaped farm fish hybridising with native Helmsdale salmon.

Habitat Improvements by the Board.

Clearing one blocked side-channel upstream of The Marrel.

Consented Stocking Activities

Broodstock capture target of 60 salmon broodstock was accomplished.

Complaints.

No complaints received in 2018.

Meetings — 2018.

Annual Public Meeting held at 10.45 in the Kildonan Hall on Saturday 12th May 2018.  
Annual Meeting of the Qualified Proprietors held at 10.30 in Kildonan Hall on Saturday 12th May 2018.

Annual Report.

The Annual report will be considered at the meeting on 11th May 2019.

Accounts.

The Accounts will be considered at the Board Meeting on 11th May 2019 and a copy submitted to the Scottish Government.

Members Interests.

Summary of Proposals for 2018

The Annual Meetings of the Qualified Proprietors will be held at 11am on 11th May at the Kildonan Hall.

The Annual Public Meeting will be held at 11.15am on Saturday 11th May 2019.

Fish Surveys — Continue Electro-fishing programme.

Habitat Improvements — Bank Repairs as necessary.

Priorities for bailiffs — Protection of salmon and disease control.

Stocking Strategy — Stocking as necessary in light of electro-fishing and Counter Runs.

END.