

Floy Tagging

In 2016 the KSDSFB began a floy tagging project on rod and line caught salmon with the assistance of the ghillies on the Shin, Oykel and Carron rivers. The aim of this is to investigate how many adult salmon are recaptured by anglers, giving us an insight to the fishery's exploitation rate and how representative the numbers of rod caught salmon are of the numbers of fish entering the system.

During the 2016 and 2017 season ghillies tagged a number of salmon caught on rod and line in several of the Kyle rivers. In 2016 a total of 197 fish were tagged across the, Carron, Shin and Okyel. A total of 3 salmon were recaptured, all on the Carron at Braelangwell. Two were recaptured in May and one in July.

In 2017 less fish were tagged, records gathered show 104. A total of 5 fish were recaptured giving a total of 4.8%. While this is more than double the percentage recaptured in 2016, it should be noted the total number tagged is also nearly half that of the previous year. Across the two years 301 fish were tagged with an averaged recapture rate of 2.6%.

We have considered the possibility that Floy tags might detach from salmon over time due to wear and tear or injury to the fish. Studies have examined floy tag failure rates in several species, and in atlantic salmon failure rates of under 10% have been reported. Other studies have examined the failure rates of these tags in other species such as common octopus (20%) and striped bass (36%). Future work here could examine tag retention rates by double tagging or by floy tagging and marking some other way, although any results from such a study examining tag retention may be confounded by the extremely low recapture rates. Other potential sources of error could include non-identification by anglers, death of tagged fish or fish leaving the river. Based on an examination of other studies, we expect the impact of these sources of error to be negligible on the results overall.

River Catchment	2016			2017		
	Number Tagged	Number Recaptured	Percentage Recaptured	Number Tagged	Number Recaptured	Percentage Recaptured
Shin	32	0	3.1	6	0	0
Oykel	103	0	0.0	69	2	2.9
Carron	62	3	4.8	29	3	10.3
Total	197	3	1.5	104	5	4.8