



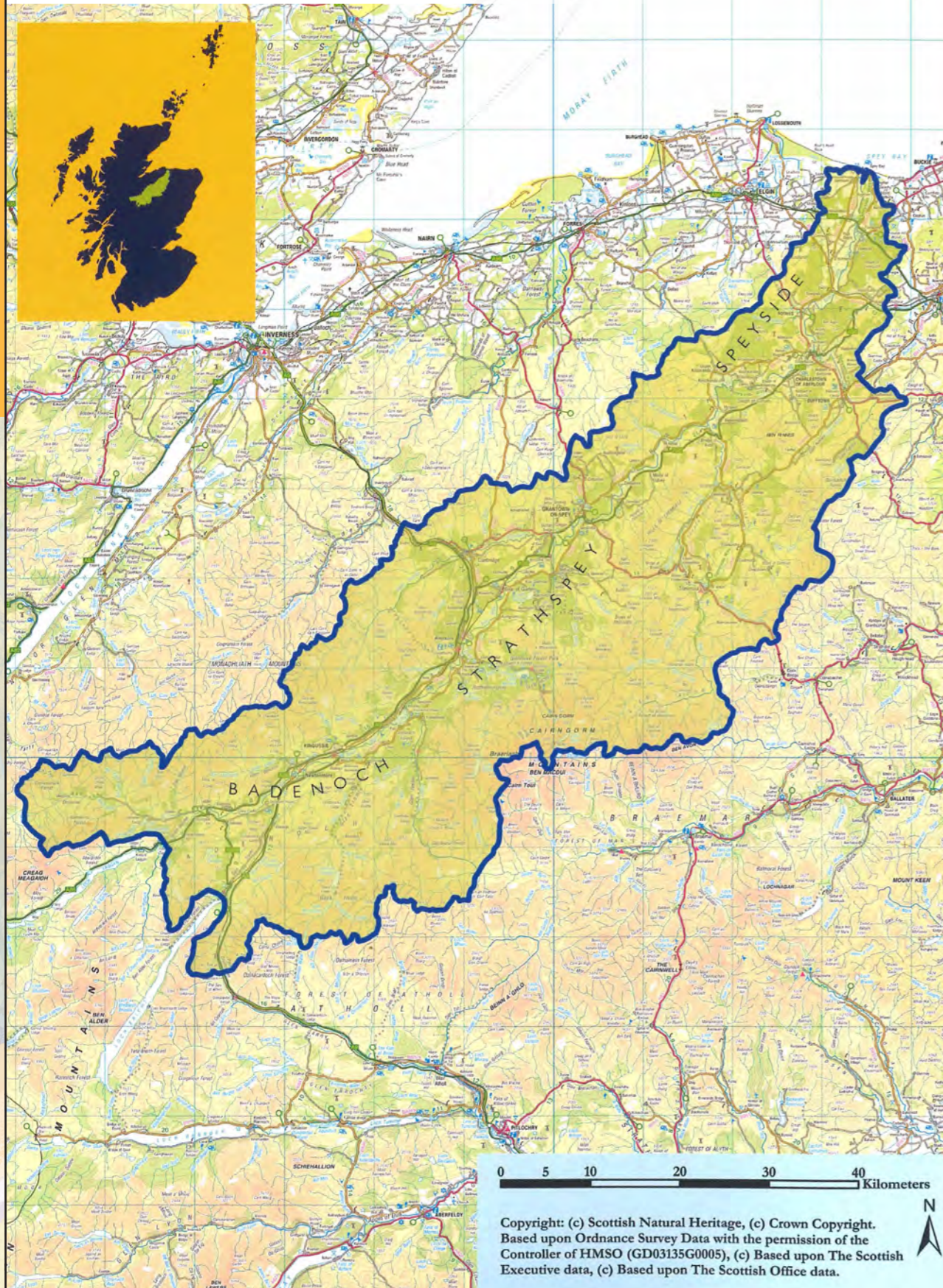
# River Spey

CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
PLAN

Review 2016



## River Spey Catchment



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## Acronyms and abbreviations

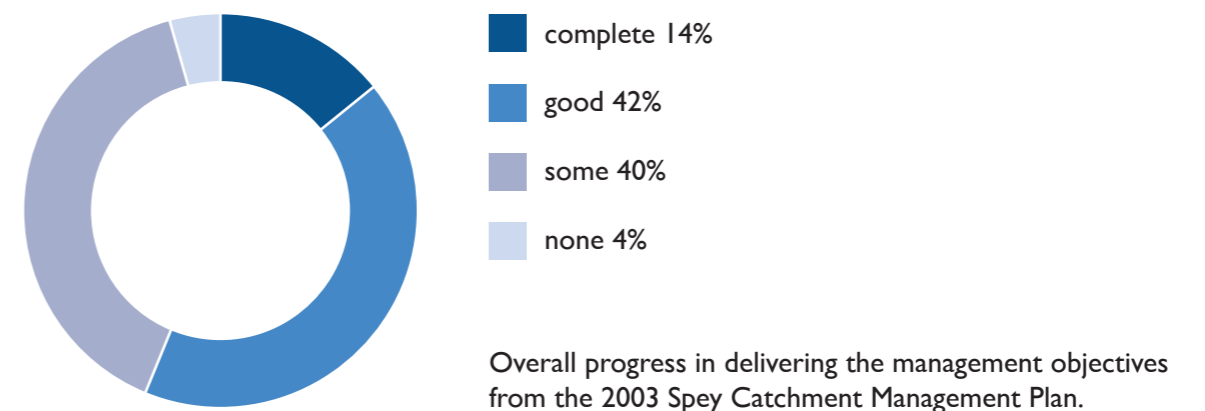
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	PAAS	Pike Anglers Alliance for Scotland
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand	PIP	Pearls in Peril project
CAR	Controlled Activities Regulations 2011	PVA	Potential Vulnerable Area
CEH	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	RAFTS	Rivers and Fisheries Trusts Scotland
CMP	Catchment Management Plan	RBMP	River Basin Management Planning
CNP	Cairngorm Nature Plan	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
CNPA	Cairngorms National Park Authority	RSS	Rural Stewardship Scheme
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
DMP	Deer Management Plan	SCA	Scottish Canoe Association
EC/EU	European Commission/Union	SCI	Spey Catchment Initiative
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area	SCSG	Spey Catchment Steering Group
FCS	Forestry Commission Scotland	SDFB	Spey District Fishery Board
FES	Forest Enterprise Scotland	SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
FRM	Flood Risk Management	SF	Spey Foundation
FWAG	Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group	SFCA	Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling
FWPM	Fresh Water Pearl Mussel	SFCC	Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre
GBR	General Binding Rule	SFGS	Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme
GTBS	Green Tourism Business Scheme	SL&E	Scottish Land and Estates
GPDO	General Permitted Development Order	SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
HAP	Habitat Action Plan	SRDP	Scottish Rural Development Programme
HC	Highland Council	SSE	Scottish & Southern Energy plc
IFM	Institute of Fisheries Management	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
JHI	James Hutton Institute	SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage System
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan	SW	Scottish Water
LDR	Long Distance Route	SWT	Scottish Wildlife Trust
MC	Moray Council	UKTAG	UK Technical Advisory Group
MS	Marine Scotland	WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme
NFUS	National Farmers Union of Scotland	WFD	Water Framework Directive
NFM	Natural Flood Management	WTW	Water Treatment Works
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone	WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant

## Executive Summary

The River Spey is an iconic river in an unique location, renowned for its purity and natural beauty. It is of national and international importance for its salmon rod fishery, whisky distilling industry and its wildlife. Running through all the main population centres of Badenoch and Strathspey and several significant ones within Moray, it provides along with its tributaries, all domestic and industrial water supplies in the catchment and contributes to the Nation's hydropower generation output. Nearly half of the Cairngorm National Park lies within the Spey catchment and the river's importance to the environment is recognised through its Special Area of Conservation status.

In 2003 the Spey Catchment Steering Group produced a Catchment Management Plan to set out a strategic framework for the wise and sustainable use of the water resource and for the protection and enhancement of water quality and natural heritage. The Plan highlighted the priorities for action with an emphasis on partnership working as a delivery mechanism.

Much has been achieved since 2003 and it is now timely to take stock of progress to date, review priorities for the future and develop a new plan for the Spey that will focus action for the next 5 years and beyond. This document provides a summary of progress against the original management objectives and actions which were focused under eight issues: Water Quality, Control of River Water, Fisheries Management, Habitats and Species, Farming, Community Economic Development and Access & Recreation. The finding from this review will form the basis for the development of a new Catchment Management Plan which will be published in autumn 2016.

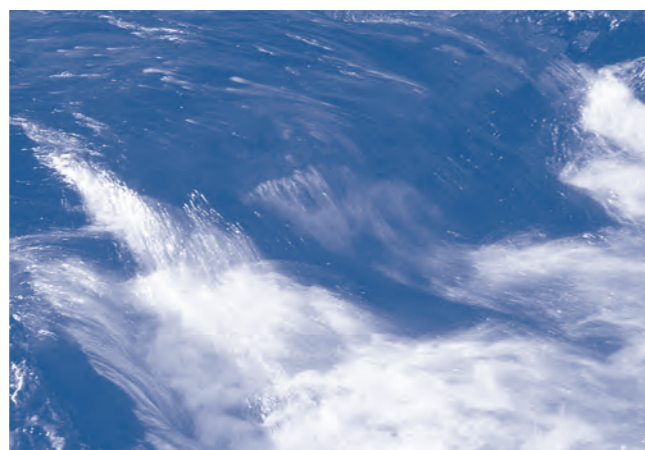


The River Spey is in as good a state as it has ever been however there is no room for complacency. Increasing pressures on it as a resource must be tempered with safeguarding its special features and its quality. The need to increase resilience to safeguard against the predicted impacts of climate change, particularly the more extreme flood events has never been greater. Legislation such as the Water Framework Directive and Flood Risk Act should be seen as opportunities for positive action which can be achieved through cooperation, collaboration and partnership working.

Spey Catchment Initiative Steering Group  
April 2016

# Water Quality Issues

Maintain and enhance water quality within the Spey Catchment



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Continue to maintain high water quality status within the Spey catchment
- Improve water quality in those areas where it is failing to meet good ecological status as per requirements of the River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland river basin district
- Continued awareness raising of statutory and non-statutory diffuse pollution codes of practice
- Address diffuse pollution issues through grant scheme funded solutions
- Increased integration between catchment management plan and RBMP process
- Deliver actions to meet the RBMP second cycle targets laid down for the River Spey catchment
- Deliver actions to improve water quality in sub catchments in respect of increasing pressures from industrial and agricultural sources

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Maintain the current high water quality standards in the River Spey catchment and address local enrichment issues as they occur. Determine the ecological requirements and tolerance limits of SAC qualifying species, particularly sea lamprey and FWPM.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High water quality standards continue to be maintained, although increasing pressures from urban, industrial and agricultural development</li> <li>• Ecological standards for FWPM established under the RBMP process. Tighter phosphate standards introduced in 2013</li> <li>• The RBMP process has established new bioavailable environmental quality standards for metals which is waterbody specific. Sites now assessed against new standards</li> <li>• FWPM Eco-toxicological levels established for pollutants</li> <li>• Study into water quality in relation to freshwater pearl mussels between Grantown and Aviemore undertaken 2014 (SCI, see Cooksley and Blake 2014). Further actions recommended</li> </ul>
Improve effluent discharges where pollution is occurring and ensure no deterioration in ecological status for the River Spey and tributaries. Ensure that WWTP have sufficient capacity to cope with any planned (industrial or residential) expansion, prior to approval of any such proposal.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality standards required to maintain good ecological status have been set by the RBMP. Compliance is reported annually by SEPA</li> <li>• First cycle of River Basin Management Planning (2009 – 15) now complete</li> <li>• Effluent discharges regularly assessed to ensure good status is maintained</li> <li>• WWTP infrastructure new build programme along the Spey; Aviemore (2005), Grantown on Spey (2008), Newtonmore (2011), Kingussie (2014) &amp; Boat of Garten (2015) (Scottish Water)</li> <li>• SUDS are now a legal requirement for most developments</li> <li>• Pearls in Peril EU Life+ project addressing diffuse pollution issues in sensitive areas (2012-16 SNH led)</li> <li>• Monitoring of water quality carried out by SEPA, with improved phosphorus monitoring introduced during 2015</li> </ul>
Set discharge consents for distillery cooling waters.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality standards are now defined and set through the RBMP ecological status classification system</li> </ul>
Raise awareness of diffuse pollution issues from land management practices and provide better support mechanisms for combating the problem. Ensure good ecological status is achieved through best practice management.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAR GBRs introduced (2005) to improve water quality include specific rules to address diffuse pollution, pesticides and farm waste</li> <li>• Ongoing awareness raising of best practice promulgated by multiple organisations (SEPA, SFB, SNH, SWWI, SCI)</li> <li>• Farm Waste Management plans now required as part of grant scheme applications</li> <li>• Publication of "Constructed Farm Wetlands Design manual" by SEPA (2008)</li> <li>• SUDS schemes required for all new developments</li> <li>• 2015 Agri-environment scheme includes improved incentives to tackle diffuse pollution issues</li> <li>• "Productive Forestry &amp; Water management" published 2015 (Forest Research)</li> </ul>
Develop a better understanding of the implications for water quality and freshwater ecology of forestry management within the catchment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant issues found following critical load analysis for forests within Moray</li> <li>• Forestry Water guidelines published 2011 <a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs/water">www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs/water</a></li> <li>• SEPA now review forest plans as part of planning process</li> <li>• Continued monitoring at Allt a Mharcaidh ECN site contributes to better understanding of forestry and water quality ecological interfaces</li> </ul>
Determine the extent of the problem of contaminated land and restore any such areas to beneficial use.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on contaminated land held by Highland and Moray Council</li> </ul>



# Control of River Water Issues

Addressing the challenges of managing water resources at catchment and local level



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Facilitate holistic decision making to maximise potential multiple benefits of any physical works across multiple strategic aims
- Continue to develop a catchment-wide, strategic vision for flood management and identify areas appropriate for natural inundation, and areas for which flood controls are appropriate
- Deliver actions outlined in 2016 Local Authority 6 year flood risk plans
- Ensure impacts of climate change predictions (of increasing rainfall) are considered in decision making process and mitigated for in future ground work activity
- Undertake catchment wide information dissemination on the risks/benefits of various approaches and contributions to flood management

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Identify 'Flood Risk' areas in Local Authority Development Plans, with appropriate policies for controlling development and mitigating impact.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Risk Management Act passed 2009</li> <li>• Scotland wide flood maps launched 2013 and available online (SEPA)</li> <li>• Local Plan Districts and Potentially Vulnerable Areas identified, impacts costs and risks quantified (SEPA) (SEPA 2012)</li> <li>• Highland Council's Flood risk management strategy published (2015)</li> <li>• Highland and Moray councils developing 6 year local Flood Risk Plans</li> <li>• Flood risk now considered as a key element of planning development process</li> </ul>
Improve the way that data about flood events is stored and disseminated to help identify flood-prone locations within the River Spey catchment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of information on flood risk areas is now freely available in the public domain via SEPA's website at <a href="http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm">map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm</a></li> <li>• Flood risk warning information is available at <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding">www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding</a></li> <li>• Direct Floodline warning service launched 2011 (SEPA). Information available at <a href="http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/">www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/</a> or call 0345 988 11 88</li> <li>• Natural Flood Management handbook published (2015) and available online at <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/163541/sepa-natural-flood-management-handbook.pdf">www.sepa.org.uk/media/163541/sepa-natural-flood-management-handbook.pdf</a></li> </ul>
Develop a strategic vision for flood management. Identify areas suitable for natural inundation those where flood controls are appropriate. Reach agreement over a definition for 'emergency' in the context of flooding and ensure bodies work to a common control framework.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive nationwide strategic plans developed following Flood Risk Act of 2009 have led to broad catchment visions. (SEPA 2015)</li> <li>• SEPA flood maps identify potential areas (at a 1km2 scale) for natural flood management opportunities (2014) <a href="http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm">map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm</a></li> <li>• Guidance issued by SEPA as to what is considered an 'emergency' situation in relation to flooding and Controlled Activities Regulations</li> <li>• Good Practice Guides on various aspects of river engineering works published by SEPA. <a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/engineering/engineering-guidance/">www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/engineering/engineering-guidance/</a></li> </ul>
Ensure that an effective flood warning system continues to operate in the River Spey catchment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floodline provides an effective warning system for the catchment, with vulnerable properties able to sign up to an alert system (SEPA)</li> <li>• Data from water level monitoring stations throughout the catchment available at <a href="http://apps.sepa.org.uk/waterlevels/">apps.sepa.org.uk/waterlevels/</a></li> </ul>
Reach agreement for definitions of 'maintenance' and 'de minimus'. Ensure that regulatory bodies work to a standard development control framework.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAR licensing introduced in 2005. Requirements published in Controlled Activities Regulations – A Practical Guide</li> <li>• Opportunities for catchment management licenses introduced</li> <li>• Collation of historical data on previous erosion control schemes would be useful</li> <li>• Local area working groups were established at various times to address specific issues, eg Feshie Group and a stakeholder Lower Spey Management Group</li> </ul>
Gain a better understanding of the overall water resource capability of the catchment and establish the optimum low flow mitigation measures for the catchment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Spey Abstraction report by Envirocentre (2008, commissioned by SDFB)</li> <li>• Spey water quality and hydrology review completed 2014, mapping the available water resources in the Spey Catchment. (SEPA)</li> <li>• Ongoing work to improve manipulation of flows at diversion features for various scenarios including periods of low flow or for the benefit of river functioning or ecosystem downstream</li> </ul>
Establish an integrated approach for assessing future water supply demand.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water resource knowledge developed in accordance with RBMP classification system</li> <li>• Sustainable levels of abstraction are ensured through CAR licensing process</li> </ul>



# Fisheries Management Issues

Supporting effective fisheries management whilst ensuring the long term sustainability of native aquatic species



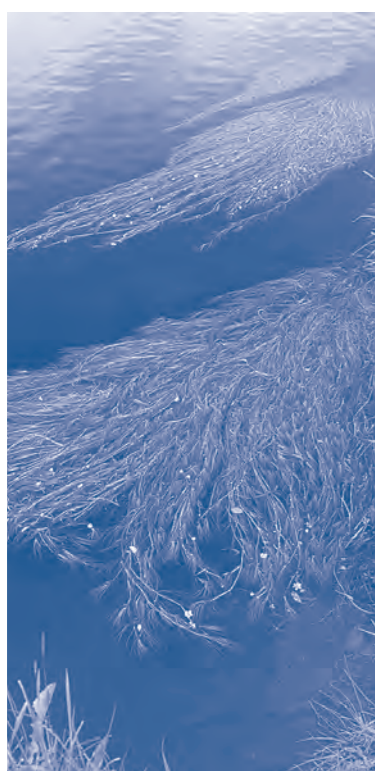
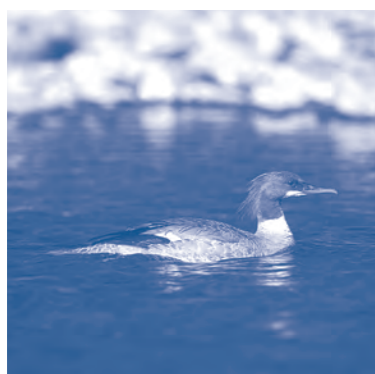
### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Promote and encourage agricultural practices which maintain or enhance in-stream conditions for aquatic species
- Improve control measures to deal with Non Native Fish Species
- Tackle Invasive Non Native Species, particularly Ranunculus, that impact on or threaten the long term condition of salmon habitats
- Quantify the impact of water abstraction & diversion on fish species, such that mitigation may be provided through improved flow regimes & restoration measures
- Mitigate for the impact of climate change on fish species, particularly increased summertime water temperatures
- Build the resilience of the aquatic environment to cope with increased rainfall and flood events
- Promote conservation policies for the long term sustainability of salmon and dependent species

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Conserve Atlantic salmon stocks in the River Spey through implementing plans and policies which safeguard and enhance freshwater salmon habitat, access and migration, and also mitigate against over-exploitation and predation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust 5 year fishery management plan programme now in place (SFB)</li> <li>• Annual rolling monitoring programme of adult and juvenile fish now well established</li> <li>• Stocking policy reviewed annually (SFB)</li> <li>• All artificial obstructions within catchment mapped and significant progress with removing or mitigating fish passage obstructions (CASS &amp; SFB)</li> <li>• Juvenile habitats reviewed, enhancement opportunities identified and some habitat enhancement /restoration works undertaken (SFB &amp; SCI)</li> <li>• Highly successful implementation of voluntary catch and release conservation policies</li> <li>• Introduction of disinfection procedures contributing to disease prevention</li> <li>• Moray Firth Seal Management Plan concluded and operational (SFB)</li> <li>• Moray Firth Sawbill Management Plan being progressed (SFB)</li> <li>• Extensive ongoing negotiations with operators of impoundments (SEPA &amp; SFB)</li> </ul>
Improve knowledge and understanding of trout distribution and biology within the catchment and co-ordinate management with other fisheries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved data collation on sea trout through catch returns to SFB</li> <li>• Improved dialogue with Scot. Gov. agencies and angling clubs over trout stocking</li> <li>• Juvenile trout stock distributions within the catchment now monitored through rolling electrofishing programme (SFB)</li> </ul>
Further the knowledge and understanding of the impact of rainbow trout on native fish species and co-ordinate fish farming with other fishery activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of disinfection procedures contributing to disease prevention</li> <li>• Continued dialogue with operators has led to some success in reducing escapees from and disease within trout farms</li> </ul>
Promote & manage pike fishery more effectively. Prevent the introduction of non-native fish species through live baiting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codes of conduct on live bait have been superseded by Scot. Gov. legislation</li> </ul>
Improve baseline knowledge of other fish species and safeguard the remaining eel stocks within the catchment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now illegal to kill eels except under licence from Scot. Gov.</li> <li>• Distribution of lampreys established through surveys in early 2000s. Status of populations continually monitored</li> <li>• Introduction of non-native coarse fish species now regulated by Scot. Gov. legislation</li> </ul>
Raise awareness of the economic and ecological importance of the River Spey catchment's fish and fisheries and improve marketing of the resource		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing awareness of economic value of fishing to the wider economy</li> <li>• Commercial letting websites have become an effective mechanism for promoting fisheries tourism within the catchment</li> <li>• Effective training programmes on best practice now exist for employees within the sector</li> <li>• Salmon Go To School programme has been hugely popular &amp; is regularly oversubscribed</li> </ul>

## Habitat & Species Issues

Maintain, conserve and enhance the unique natural heritage that exists within the waters and wetlands of the River Spey catchment



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Safeguard the future of the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel within the Spey catchment through research, education and conservation activities
- Manage to achieve and then maintain, “favourable condition” for the protected species and habitats of designated sites
- Support land managers to benefit breeding wader populations
- Tackle diffuse pollution for the benefit of priority species and habitats
- Enhance the conservation and natural heritage value of the riparian zone
- Further develop the Moray Firth Sawbill Management Plan
- Encourage the strategic development of habitat networks throughout the catchment, linking riparian, floodplain, wetland and native woodland habitats and de-conflicting potential incompatibility between specific species requirements
- Continue to raise awareness of the impact of invasive non-native species on watercourses
- Continue to research realistic potential management techniques for Ranunculus
- Promote awareness of wildlife crime and the reporting of suspicious activity through the River Spey Riverwatch scheme

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Conserve and enhance the Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, freshwater pearl mussel (FWPM) and otter populations of the River Spey and its catchment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Spey SAC expanded to include specific tributaries</li> <li>• Conservation objectives developed for specially protected species and ongoing site condition monitoring now in place. Survey protocols for sea lamprey and FWPM developed</li> <li>• Considerable awareness raising across multiple sectors about the importance of FWPM including a police campaign in 2014</li> <li>• Significant research into ecological requirements of the FWPM (Conserving Natura 2000, Rivers Life project, Cooksley and Blake 2014). FWPM transfer within the river system has been trialled by CNPA and is now being monitored</li> <li>• Some progress has been made in collating data regarding otter habitat features but mainly in response to development requirements</li> <li>• Continued establishment of good riparian habitat (Landowners, SRDP, SCI)</li> </ul>
Conserve and enhance the fragmented and endangered water vole populations of the River Spey catchment based on an improved understanding of their distribution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant reductions in American mink populations through Scottish Mink Initiative</li> <li>• Water vole conservation has been progressed via the mink control programme. RSPB have surveyed Insh Marshes and their reserves</li> <li>• Guidance on water vole protection has been produced by SNH</li> <li>• Actions to benefit water voles incorporated into SRDP packages</li> </ul>
Conserve and enhance the riverine bird populations of the River Spey catchment based on an improved understanding of their distribution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant conservation and awareness raising effort to enhance populations of through the Strathspey Wetlands and Wader Group (RSPB)</li> <li>• Nest boxes are provided for Goldeneye and their breeding success is monitored annually by the Goldeneye Study Group</li> <li>• Improved knowledge of riverine birds in the catchment with regular surveys carried out eg Sawbill counts by Spey Foundation</li> </ul>
Resolve the contentious issue of the management of sawbill ducks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SNH is now the licencing authority and advice is sought from Marine Scotland re damage to the fishery on a case by case basis</li> <li>• The Moray Firth sawbill management plan is being progressed (SFB lead)</li> <li>• New research on the impacts of piscivorous birds on salmonid populations and game fisheries in Scotland is due to be published in 2016 (SNH)</li> </ul>
Conserve and enhance the specialist river shingle invertebrate populations of the River Spey catchment based on an improved understanding of their distribution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving awareness amongst relevant land managers of the impact of management actions on rare river shingle invertebrates</li> <li>• 'Gravel working in Scottish salmon rivers' leaflet produced by SNH</li> <li>• "A strategy for Scottish Invertebrate conservation" published by Buglife (2009)</li> <li>• Northern February red stonefly noted for focused action in CNP 2013-18</li> <li>• National Biodiversity Network data compilation completed Jan 2016</li> <li>• CAR licensing process now considers overall impacts on gravels</li> </ul>
Develop, promote and support a strategic approach towards the control of invasive riverine species		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant amendments to the law to address problems with Invasives. Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011</li> <li>• Continuing invasive non-native species awareness raising - events, codes of practice (2012), leaflets, educational materials (Highland Invasives forum)</li> <li>• Considerable work ongoing to find effective control mechanisms for Ranunculus fluitans in the River Spey</li> <li>• Lower River Spey surveyed for non-native riparian species in 2012 (SDFB)</li> </ul>



## Farming Issues

Promoting good farming practices and land management for the benefit of the immediate and wider water environment



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

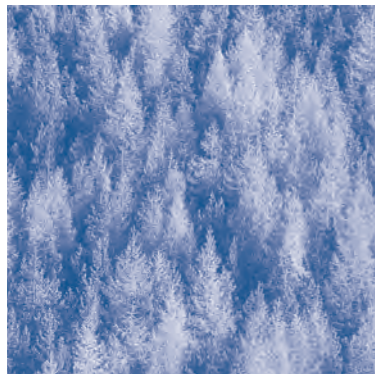
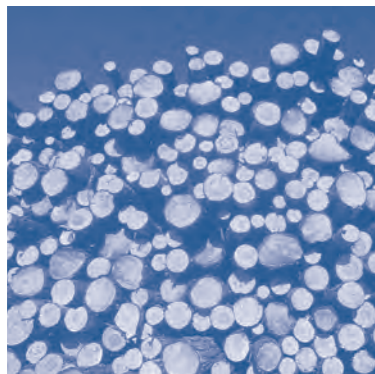
- Develop strategies at the highest levels to support improved freshwater and wetland management
- Maximise opportunities to enhance water margins and wetland habitats through use of Agri environment scheme options
- Promote best farming practice and compliance with national standards through water margin management
- Promote and encourage off stream livestock watering systems
- Continue to support and promote the work of the SWWI and prioritise efforts to halt the decline in wading bird populations
- Further investigate management practices on natural floodplains as part of catchment scale approach to flood water management
- Promote and encourage agricultural practices, which maintain, enhance and create wetland areas and ponds

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Promote, through agri-environment and other schemes, agricultural practices which benefit water quality and riparian and wetland habitats.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steady progress with fencing off affected water margins through CASS Life project (to 2008), Northern Periphery Programme (to 2013), Pearls in Peril project (2012-16) and SRDP schemes</li> <li>• SWWI &amp; CNPA lobbied Scot Gov to improve freshwater and wetland options in agri schemes</li> <li>• SWWI have made considerable progress within Badenoch and Strathspey in promoting wetland options to farmers</li> <li>• Extensive riparian fencing programmes delivered in parts of the catchment</li> </ul>
Develop and promote demonstrations of good farming practice which contribute to the aims and objectives of integrated catchment management.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm water and waste project delivered 2007</li> <li>• Good practice sites developed by SCI in upper catchment</li> <li>• Promotion of alternative watering systems through information leaflet and trial sites (SCI, SRUC)</li> <li>• Engagement and awareness raising with land users over the years both through planned projects and on an opportunity basis (CNPA SFB, SCI, SEPA, SWWI et al)</li> <li>• Biomass powered by rush briquettes trial by RSPB at Insh Marshes (2014)</li> </ul>
Investigate the scope for management of flooding and the river system by the use of natural floodplains.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floodplain mapping undertaken by SEPA. Flood map (published 2014) – NFM layer highlights areas of medium &amp; high potential for floodplain storage. <a href="http://www.map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm">www.map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm</a></li> <li>• Options for NFM actions included in new 2015 Agri-environment scheme</li> <li>• Wet woodland restoration projects at RSPB Abernethy (ongoing) &amp; Inshriach NNR (SNH &amp; SCI 2014)</li> </ul>
Assess the nature conservation value of breeding waders and wildfowl on farmland and water margins within the catchment and promote 'wader/wildfowl friendly' management practices.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wader survey programme within catchment continues to expand (RSPB &amp; SWWI). Strathspey surveys undertaken 2005, 2010 and 2015</li> <li>• SWWI partnership set up in 2009</li> <li>• Important areas for wading birds identified (SWWI)</li> <li>• Awareness raising programmes and best practice guidance in place (SWWI)</li> </ul>
Raise awareness of, and promote, moorland management practices which help to safeguard water quality and river habitats.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing awareness of need for upland tributary management actions as part of holistic catchment management</li> </ul>



# Forestry & Woodland Issues

## Managing woodlands for the benefit of the water environment



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Continue to promote appropriate sited wet woodland and riparian expansion
- Explore potential contribution of new/expanded woodlands to natural flood management throughout the Spey catchment
- Identify suitable sites throughout the Spey catchment where trees could contribute to water margin resilience (bankside stability) or natural flood management (slowing or absorbing the flow)
- Expand upland riparian woodland as part of landscape scale habitat restoration for the long term sustainability benefits that it will bring to protected species
- Consider the impact of any future beaver release programme in the Spey catchment, identifying appropriate resilient broadleaf woodland habitat

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Develop a vision for the contribution of woodlands to management of the catchment while promoting and supporting good woodland management practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple plans and strategies developed and acted on since 2003 including Scottish Forest Strategy, Cairngorms Forest &amp; Woodlands Framework, Forest of Spey project, CNPA Woodland expansion Plan and Moray Forest District Strategic Plan (2007-2017) Cairngorms Nature Plan (2013)</li> <li>• Grant and project schemes support and promote positive woodland management actions - Living Rivers Project (SNW 2009) SRDP Forest Grant Scheme (FGS 2015 -2020). Additional incentives for specific target areas within the Cairngorms National Park</li> <li>• Significant progress made with the restructuring of riparian silviculture. A large proportion of non-native conifers have now been removed from riparian zones throughout the Spey catchment</li> <li>• Works at Glenmore and Inshraich as part of the National Forest Estate Native Woods Programme</li> <li>• Numerous publications launched and best practice events held since 2003</li> </ul>
Consider the potential for floodplain and riparian woodlands to contribute towards flood control, river bank stabilisation and assist with water quality management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riparian woodland mapped through Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (FCS 2006-2013). National report released (2014) and comprehensive datasets (for areas over 0.25ha) available online at <a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/datadownload">www.forestry.gov.uk/datadownload</a></li> <li>• SCI collating information on the water margin riparian cover condition on a sub catchment basis (that which is not covered by NWSS datasets)</li> <li>• Research, trials and demonstration sites developed throughout Scotland to verify effectiveness of various resilience building and water management techniques, in part as a response to changing rainfall patterns</li> <li>• Various projects delivered within the Spey catchment to promote good riparian management including Forest of Spey project, EU LIFE Wet Wood project (2003) focused on Abernethy and Inshraich forests and SCI delivered Allt Lorgy, Allt Mor and Allt Mharcaidh projects (2012 – 2014)</li> <li>• Financial incentives to undertake riparian enhancement works incorporated into both Forest Grant and agri-environment schemes (water margin management 2015-2020)</li> </ul>
Conserve and enhance scarce or threatened tree species associated with the river system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local provenance species used wherever possible and promoted by many organisations and woodland grants schemes (FCS, SNH, CNPA)</li> <li>• Highland Aspen Group set up in 2004 to improve the future of Highland Aspen runs a free nursery as well as undertaking research and promoting aspen</li> <li>• Cairngorm Nature Action Plan addresses issues relating to priority species within the upper Spey catchment</li> </ul>

## Access & Recreation Issues

Promoting responsible access for all and expanding opportunities for enjoyment of the water environment whilst maintaining respect for species and their habitats



### FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Expand the core path network and the River Spey's place within that network
- Continue to promote responsible access, while protecting the natural environment
- Continue to balance the needs of and avoid conflict between, different river user groups through positive dialogue and actions
- Adapt and respond to opportunities presented through changes in legislation and introduction of new national strategies
- Work with nature based tourism companies to further promote the Spey catchment

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Ensure that rights of access (to river banks and other water bodies) are exercised responsibly and any new strategy for access to rivers and lochs is fully integrated with all other relevant interests		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Reform Act 2003 granted right of responsible access</li> <li>• CNPA outdoor access strategy published 2005, then reissued for 2007-12</li> <li>• River Spey upstream to Ballindalloch, adopted as a core path in 2010 (the first in Scotland)</li> <li>• CNP Core Path Plan approved by Scottish Ministers in 2015, including River Spey and access to the river <a href="http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CorePathsPlanFinal150727.pdf">www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CorePathsPlanFinal150727.pdf</a></li> <li>• Highland and Moray council core path plans established</li> <li>• Training provided to all ranger services in the catchment on Land Reform Act and promotion of responsible access</li> <li>• Tread Lightly campaign developed to promote responsible access including information for visitors <a href="http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/advice-guidelines/outdoor-access-advice/">www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/advice-guidelines/outdoor-access-advice/</a></li> <li>• Aviemore countryside park delivered by SCI (2012)</li> </ul>
Increase integration between the interests of anglers and canoeists on the river system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spey Users Group established, annual meeting now takes place between river users and fishery managers to promote best practice</li> <li>• Guidance for anglers and codes of conduct for kayakers published in 2008 and continues to be promoted by Scottish Canoe Association <a href="http://www.canoescotland.org/where-go/protecting-environment">www.canoescotland.org/where-go/protecting-environment</a></li> </ul>
Improve the integration of water and land-based recreation activities on and around lochs insofar as they impact on each other and on nature conservation interests, and consider the potential conflicts if motorised water sports took place		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCA now provide detailed advice for canoeists <a href="http://www.canoescotland.org/where-go/canoe-trails-routes">www.canoescotland.org/where-go/canoe-trails-routes</a></li> <li>• 'River Spey Canoe Guide' published 2014 and available commercially (N. Chambers)</li> <li>• Loch zoning as a mechanism to minimise disturbance to wildlife has not been pursued in the catchment</li> <li>• Motorised water sport continues to be managed at a local level through voluntary agreements to avoid conflict</li> </ul>
Improve the level of understanding of the volume, economic value, and the costs to the environment, of water-related tourism and recreation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Impact study report commission by SNH in 2004 <a href="http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/outdoored/spey_economic_impact_study.pdf">www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/outdoored/spey_economic_impact_study.pdf</a></li> <li>• A general Economic Review of the National Park was published 2007, however is not river centric <a href="http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CEDDS_Final_Report_Benchmark_Review_140228.pdf">www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CEDDS_Final_Report_Benchmark_Review_140228.pdf</a></li> </ul>

# Community Economic Development Issues

A healthy water course runs through all vibrant communities



## FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Continue to promote modern SUDS techniques and the additional benefits that can be realised. Develop functioning protocols between key organisations over the adoption of SUD systems
- Address discharge controls/ standards from existing private sewage systems
- Raise awareness of waste water best practice issues. Utilise existing education programmes developed elsewhere (such as Deeside's yellow fish and septic tanks) within the Spey catchment
- Place an economic value on the water and its worth to various users and communities
- Continue to raise the profile of the economic, cultural and environmental importance of the river Spey and its tributaries to residents and visitors
- Use the River Spey to promote tourism in all its forms throughout the catchment

Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Future Housing development in the catchment – develop greater co-ordination to allow for the linkages between housing development, water and wastewater capacity and environmental issues on quality, including water-saving and pollution minimisation measures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) introduced in 2011</li> <li>• Stricter controls &amp; standards on WWTP now in place</li> <li>• New WWTP installed for several communities (SW)</li> <li>• CNPA now incorporating these factors into Local Development Plan 2 (2015)</li> </ul>
Private Water Supply & Treatment – Improve the adequacy of private water supply and wastewater facilities to meet existing demand and comply with existing consent		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing awareness of need to improve outputs from private wastewater facilities</li> <li>• Enhanced treatment systems to reduce ammonia and phosphates within private applications now being promoted within CNPA</li> <li>• Increased understanding of the phosphate loading contributions of domestic septic tanks to river water quality (studies by CEH)</li> </ul>
Commercial and industrial developments – Prevent pollution from new developments at both construction and operational stages		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) ) obligatory for most new developments (2006)</li> <li>• Clear design specifications for SUDS now in place (SW manual "Sewers for Scotland" now in 2nd edition)</li> <li>• SUDS now part of planning process. Robust method statements and working practices now required. SUDS now a requirement for larger construction sites</li> <li>• SUDS included as part of Controlled Activities Regulations (2011)</li> <li>• Stricter planning conditions relating to pollution now in place for construction sites</li> <li>• Golf courses now required to comply with GBRs.</li> </ul>
Mineral Extraction – Increase awareness and understanding of the implications of permitted development arrangements arising from the River Spey SAC designation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Spey SAC integrated into CNPA NPP, LDP &amp; Cairngorms Nature strategy</li> </ul>
Roads and Railways – Prevent pollution or obstructions from significant structural works cross the river or from ongoing maintenance and repair works nearby		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust preventative preparation, planning and mitigation measures now in place delivered through planning (CNPA PPG5) and CAR licensing regulations</li> <li>• Good working arrangements &amp; partnerships in place throughout Spey catchment to deal with issues promptly and effectively as they occur (SCI, SDFB)</li> </ul>

## Community Economic Development Issues

## Who we are



Objectives	Progress	Summary of progress
Green Tourism Business Scheme – Mitigate the impact of higher numbers of visitors on both water supply and wastewater systems and also on the natural heritage and fisheries of the river system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water conservation policy now part of the Local Development Plans (CNPA)</li> <li>Now a key element of any development sustainability plan</li> </ul>
Distilling industry – Safeguard the quality and quantity of water in the sub-catchments of private distillery supplies and consider any positive application of heated water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tighter control and monitoring of output water temperature now take place</li> <li>Demonstrating safeguarding of /or improving water quality key part of any distillery upgrade/expansion approval process</li> <li>Scottish Whisky Association Environmental Group meets regularly to address these issues on an industry wide basis. Their environmental strategy is available at <a href="http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/what-we-do/environmental-strategy/">www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/what-we-do/environmental-strategy/</a></li> <li>Dalmunach Distillery has implemented more energy efficient processes that recover more heat from the water used (Chivas Bros)</li> <li>Ongoing nationwide research (and advances in) heat recovery from water technologies</li> </ul>
Raise the profile of the economic, cultural and environmental importance of the river and its tributaries among residents and visitors and establish a better basis for the sharing of information		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spey Catchment Initiative relaunched in 2010, undertakes a variety of education and awareness raising activities and events</li> <li>Speyside Way now extends to Kincaig</li> <li>Spey Interactive map developed (2011) and available on CNPA website</li> <li>School River boxes updated and relaunched (2011, SCI)</li> <li>Salmon Go to School Programme developed by SDFB &amp; regularly oversubscribed</li> <li>Pearls in the Classroom programme developed 2014 (PiP project/ SDFB)</li> <li>Robust public sector mechanisms now in place to share information and data</li> </ul>

A River Spey Catchment Management Partnership has existed in various forms since the early 2000s. In 2010 the Spey Catchment Initiative was established as a public/private partnership to take forward key actions from the 2003 Spey Catchment Management Plan. Run by a steering group of representatives from its partner organisations, the Initiative employs a Project Officer to deliver multiple benefit projects throughout the catchment relating to the water environment.

### Activity is focused on 4 priority themes:

- Planting/safeguarding riparian woodlands and enhancing wetlands
- Demonstrating natural flood management techniques
- Understanding how the river works – Catchment Management Process
- Education, awareness raising & getting people involved in the catchment

The SCI's strength lies in its ability to facilitate partnership working to get things done. Since 2010 it has delivered nearly £450,000 of projects, ranging from riparian enhancement works and river restoration schemes, to educational materials and community riverside access facilities. New projects (with £106,000 of secured external funding) are currently underway and due to be delivered by the end of 2016. Additionally the SCI Project Officer has developed £420,000 worth of a larger £3.6m Heritage Lottery funded landscape project for Glenlivet and Tomintoul which will be delivered in 2017-20.

### MEMBERS:

Cairngorm National Park Authority	CNPA
Diageo	D plc
Forestry Commission Scotland	FCS
Highland Council	HC
Moray Council	MC
Nation Union of Farmers (Scotland)	NFUS
Royal Society for Protection of Birds	RSPB
Scottish Natural Heritage,	SNH
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency	SEPA
Spey District Fishery Board	SDFB





**Spey Catchment Initiative**

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[www.speyfisheryboard.com/the-spey-catchment-initiative-intro](http://www.speyfisheryboard.com/the-spey-catchment-initiative-intro)

**Further copies of this report are available from:**

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Tel. 01479 810477

**This publication is available in electronic format at:**

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[www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)

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