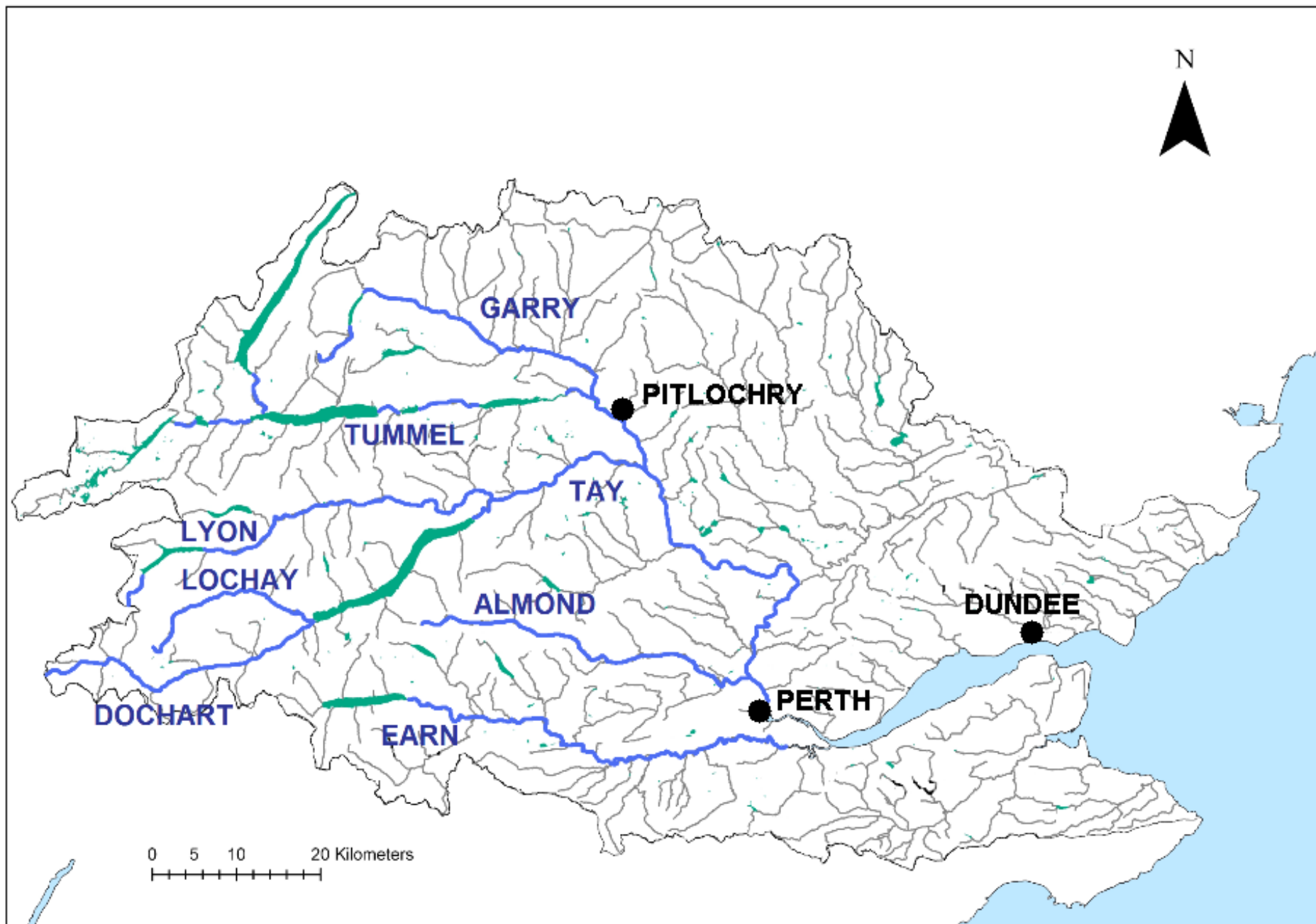


Bringing life back to the River Garry

Dr David Summers

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board



Area of main interest, from Struan to Dalnaspidal



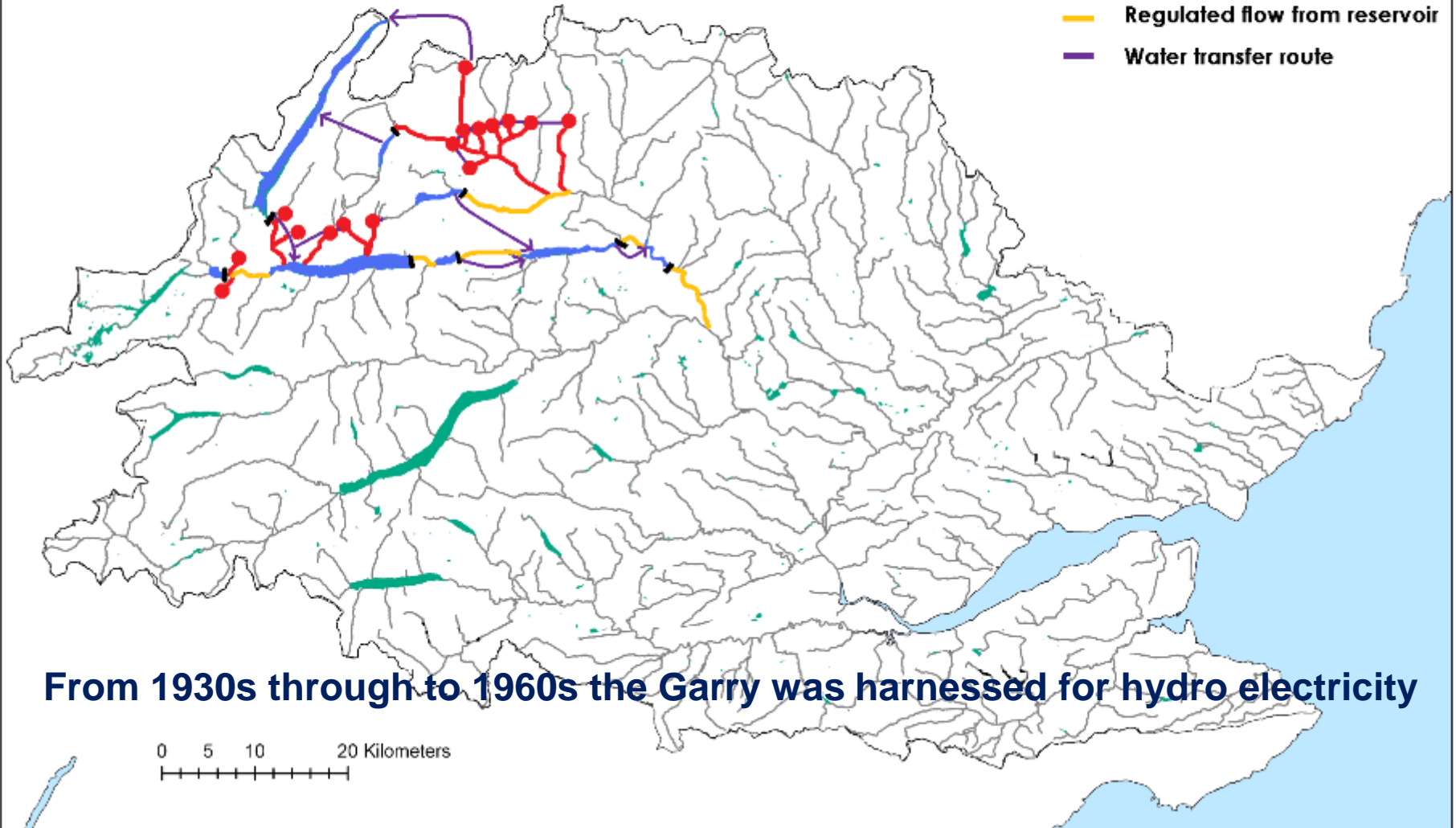
In 1920s, salmon were angled in the upper River Garry. Dalnamein Lodge.



GESC, Tummel - Garry and Gaur schemes

Types of Intakes

- SSE - Total abstraction
- SSE - Some mitigation present
- Regulated flow from reservoir
- Water transfer route

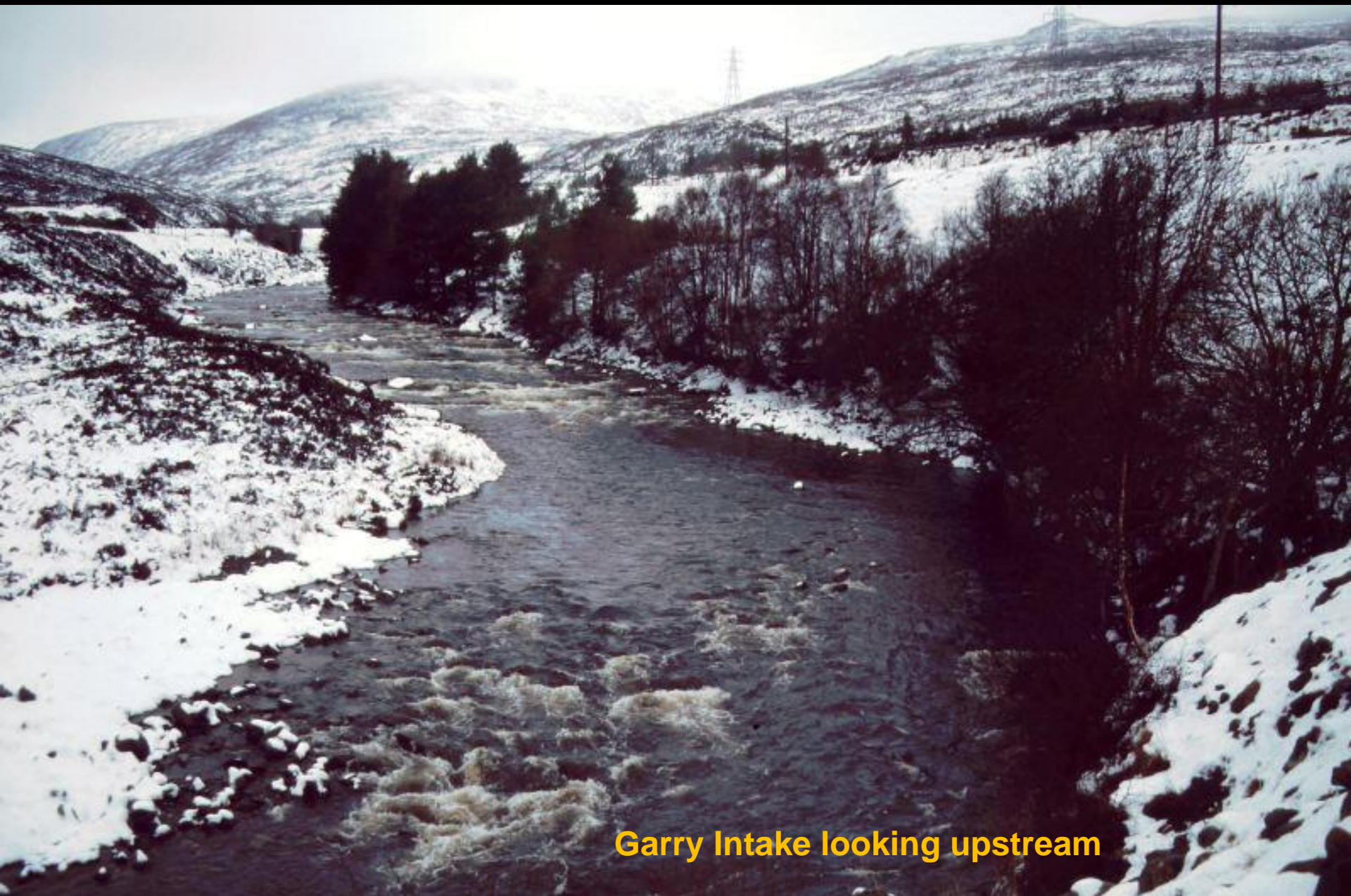




**Example of hydro intake.
"Garry Intake"
Weir built across river.....**



**Garry Intake.
All flow normally diverted
into tunnel**

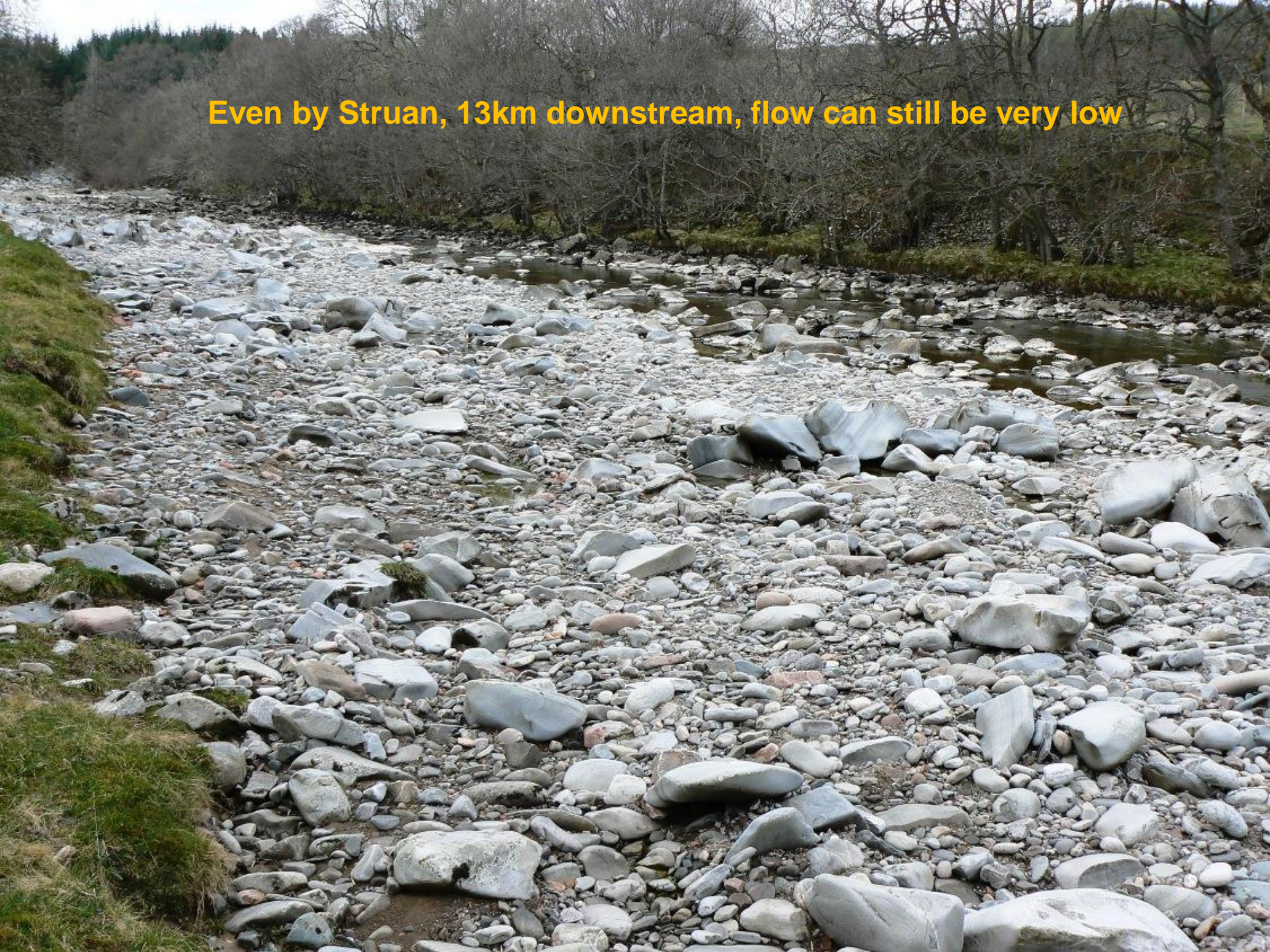


Garry Intake looking upstream

**Garry Intake looking downstream.
Same day as previous slide.**



Even by Struan, 13km downstream, flow can still be very low



Struan Weir was built to stop adult salmon ascending Garry



Water Framework Directive

- Provided first genuine opportunity for restoration in 50 years.
- Heavily Modified Water Bodies to be restored to Good Ecological Potential – i.e. practical mitigation to be done so long as not **significantly** impacting on the water use (i.e. electricity generation).

Water Framework Directive

- Between *ca.* 2002 and 2005, SEPA given powers to make changes to historic abstractions.
- Remedial works to be presented in RBMP and supposed to be complete by 2012 (later 2015).
- Garry was identified as a priority from very early on.
- Early 2000s – Dundee University study among other things led to some opportunities for raising issues.
- Once CAR regs in place (2005), SSE came up with a proposal (2006).

SSE 2006 Proposal

- Proposed 0.5 cumec flow from main Garry intake. Increase abstraction from upper Spey in exchange.
- We objected because considered 0.5 cumecs insufficient. No consideration of tributaries.

DEATH OF A RIVER

ANDREW GRAHAM-STEWART reports on the historic destruction of the River Garry – tributary of the Tummel – and reveals how you can help bring it back to life



THE TERM A9 is, I am sure, highly evocative for a great many T&S readers. It is, of course, the main artery to the Highlands and a great wealth of fishings – from the mighty Spey to dozens of smaller salmon rivers and myriad lochs. North of Perth the A9 tracks through Strathguy and then up the Tummel to Pitlochry, beyond

An almost dry River Garry – the incongruous view that greets visitors to Scotland as they enter the Highlands on the A9.

which the landscape becomes starker and increasingly wild in character; to many, this marks the start of the real Highlands of untamed mountain and moorland dissected by tumbling burns and rivers. But then, suddenly, the traveller is confronted with a spectacle that is hugely at odds with expectations. After Blair Atholl and just south of the House of

Bruar, the A9 crosses the River Garry and, for anyone attuned to nature, alarm bells should start ringing: the lack of real flow seems strangely incongruous given the width of the riverbed. By the seven miles on, one reaches the start of the dual carriageway – leading to Drumochter Summit, the Garry is essentially dry (except for a few days a year) and completely devoid of life; the

Garry campaign finds unlikely ally

SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN Energy shareholders arriving for the annual meeting in Perth were handed leaflets calling for restoration of water to the River Garry, writes Ken Bell, angling correspondent.

And one of the protesters handing them out was 83-year-old Willie McGregor, the last ghillie to work on the affected stretch.

"We used to get our first salmon around April," Willie said, "and they tended to be big fish."

But within four years of installation of a weir to divert water for hydro power, no more were seen.

Now the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board is campaigning to have the river restored under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) – and it may have an unexpected ally in SSE chairman Sir Robert Smith, who told the meeting of the impact the sight of the waterless river had on him.

During the meeting, TDSFB fisheries manager Dr David Summers raised the question of the Garry, suggesting it be restored to support a stock of fish with little loss of hydro generation.

Dr Summers said any loss could be made up by the output from two wind turbines.

An SSE proposal to restore some flow with water taken from the Spey catchment was described as "cosmetic" by Dr Summers and he suggested it would be a good PR exercise to restore the flow.

He was told SSE had been aware for some time of the situation and the need to increase flow. Discussions on river basin management schemes which are part of the WFD were under way.

● Dr F. Reid of St Andrews suggested instead of SSE putting in a new line of super pylons between BSE and Denny – now subject of a public inquiry – an alternative might be to construct a road with the cables in a trench alongside.

Sir Robert said that with the public inquiry ongoing, he could not comment, but said that the platform had listened to Dr Reid's comments.

elings running high over dried

e grows to flow of once – rich Garry

JUHART

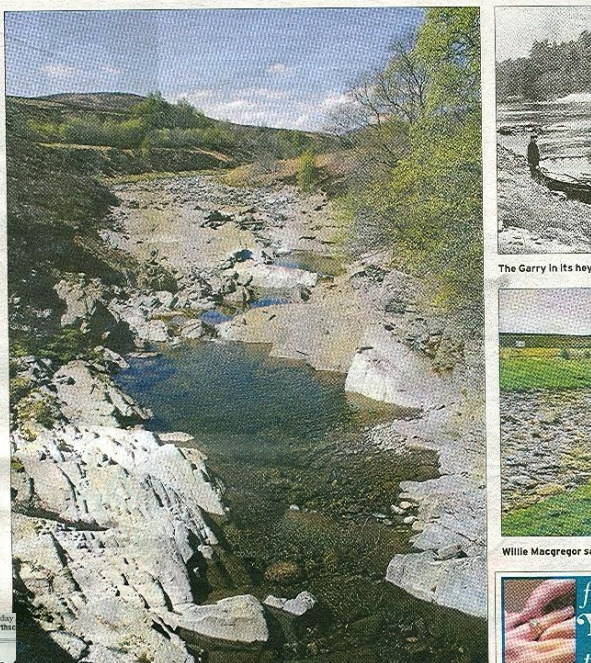
hille Willie Macgregor recall the days when ry in Perthshire was a raging torrent, th salmon, after days n.

pper River Garry was destroyed as a fish- ore than half a cen- the advent of er leaving a 13-mile d-up and rock-strewn of water abstraction

years on, Mr Macgregor ded to back a new y by the fisheries board e watercourse to its e.

s a fishing river, ac- o the Tay District heries Board, may ac- e reduction of six six- entire spring run. rd is now behind a ned to force Scottish nty Energy (SSE) to be responsible for ex- e Garry's water to re- ver to its former glory y the new Water Frame- ctive which obliges member states to re- nge caused by over- s of water.

gregor, now 83, said: "I behind the board, pped to the Garry is it was one of the finest ers in Scotland. But it



The Garry in its hey

Willie Macgregor

NEWS



FULL FLOW: Ghillie Willie Macgregor, 83, helps launch the campaign to restore the River Garry to its former glory

Campaign to bring river 'back to life'

ENERGY FIRM URGED TO HELP RETURN WATERS TO NATURAL STATE

BY ALISON HIDDLETON

OVER-ABSTRACTION of water. Since the 1960s, virtually all the water in the Garry has been systematically abstracted for electricity-generating purposes.

For most of the year a dry riverbed is exposed along a 13-mile stretch of the A9 between Loch Garry near Drumochter and Struan near Blair Atholl.

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board fisheries manager David Summers said: "Scottish and Southern Energy, the company that takes all of the Garry's water, realises that it may soon be subject to a legal requirement to reintroduce some flow into the river."

"Clearly mindful of this, the company has made what amounts to a pre-emptive strike by offering to release some water.

However, the amount of water it is proposing is truly minimal and would be of almost no practical value in terms of allowing easy access for adult salmon to spawn.

"To make a significant difference, the Garry requires at least 60% more flow than that which SSE proposes and a short period of even higher flows in the autumn.

"We are convinced that this would significantly increase the number of adult salmon returning the Tay, Tummel and Garry."

Peter Donaldson, renewable generation manager at Scot-

Plan save units critic

summers added: "Ultimately, it is the Scottish government which has to take the decision on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. But we intend to apply maximum pressure to ensure that SSE accept their moral and legal responsibility to bring the Garry back to life.

"Our proposals would have a major additional benefit. Renewable energy has a better environmental footprint than fossil fuels. However, the proposed A9 – one of Scotland's most important tourist arteries into the Highlands. Visitors

The River Garry on a normal day. A 13-mile stretch is rock-st

would no longer be confronted with the incongruous spectacle of a boulder-strewn dry riverbed. The Scottish government, the renewable generation manager for Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) the role of regulator and the responsibility of finding where the correct balance is, taking into account the conflicting interests.

Campaign to help bring water back to the River Garry

GRAEME SMITH graeme.smith@thehighland.co.uk

A CAMPAIGN to bring a dry Highland river back to life for the first time in more than half a century has been launched. Since the 1950s, virtually all the water in the Perthshire Garry has been taken out to generate electricity. As a result, for most of the year a dry riverbed is exposed along a 13-mile stretch of the A9 between Loch Garry near Drumochter and Struan near Blair Atholl.

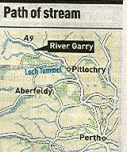
Until recently, there was no legal mechanism to challenge Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), which takes the water, but recent EU legislation has changed that.

The Water Framework Directive obliges member countries to remedy damage caused by over-abstraction of water. SEPA is due to publish a national plan detailing remedial action in 2009.

Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board wants to see the Garry restored to its former glory as one for growing and juvenile fish and has condemned an offer by SSE to release some flow.

Dr David Summers, fisheries manager for the board, said: "SSE realises it may soon be subject to a legal requirement to reintroduce some flow into the river."

"Clearly mindful of this, the company has made what amounts to a pre-emptive strike by offering to release some water. However, the amount it is proposing is truly



Path of stream

pitiful and would be of almost no practical value in terms of allowing easy access for adult salmon to spawn.

"We have no doubt, SSE's proposal fails to address the fundamental problems. To make a significant difference, the Garry requires at least 60% more flow than that which SSE proposes and a short period of even higher flows in the autumn.

"We are convinced that this would significantly increase the numbers of adult salmon returning the Tay, Tummel and Garry. There is now a historic opportunity to restore parts of the Garry system for spawning and juvenile fish.

"We intend to apply maximum pressure to ensure SSE accept their moral and legal responsibility to 'bring the Garry back to life'."

Peter Donaldson, renewable generation manager for SSE, said, in Scotland, SEPA was responsible for finding the correct balance, taking into account conflicting interests.



What happened next?

- Proposal shelved.
- SEPA said they would “review the licence” themselves - but didn't.
- SEPA then invited SSE to apply for a licence variation. New proposal from SSE advertised in 2010. SEPA commenced long deliberation. Re-advertisement required due to admin error.
- Lot of discussion and debate over following years over interpretation of flow standards. Definitions became clearer as to what GEP was to mean. In 2011 Government proposed that a 2% cut in generation would be allowable.
- In early 2014 SEPA proposed flows lower than SSE had proposed. We contested!
- Then few months later SEPA proposed 0.941 cumecs in main river and 0.21 cumecs in Allt Glas Coire. Now much greater flows than ever proposed.
- We were happy. SSE objected. SSE withdrew their application in autumn 2014.
- SEPA threatened to initiate own review. Didn't happen.

Towards a solution!

- Late 2014 SSE approached us to see if we could agree some form of compromise to put to SEPA / SG.
- We suggested an idea to reduce generation losses might be to reduce the amount of flow released when flows from surrounding catchment were naturally high (i.e. when raining) and flow in the river could be provided by natural flow. Such devices had been incorporated in some of the intakes on the River Lochay.
- SSE would consider potential.

A solution at last!

- So, during course of 2015/16, a plan was worked up between SSE, SEPA and TDSFB.
- General flow to be released at Garry Intake (in dry weather) will be *ca.* 0.941 cumecs.
- In wet weather, flow from Garry Intake will reduce, so long as a flow about 1 cumec is maintained at a point downstream (either Dalnacardoch or Dalnamein...still to be confirmed).
- Dry weather, will also be no abstraction in Glas Coire Burn until flows > 0.21 cumecs. Similar wet weather arrangement as at Garry Intake.

Work starting.....

- SSE proposed starting engineering work to intakes in spring 2017 to allow completion by autumn 2017.
- Made announcement on River Tay Opening Day to that effect. Work will start very soon now.

Lessons Learned

1. Regulatory / policy driver crucial. No WFD, no chance of water.
2. Provide quality input to process. Ideally you must know as much about the issue (or more) as the official regulators and the regulated. Your views must matter and must be held in respect. You must be considered integral to process.
3. Campaigning / lobbying may help, depending on circumstances. Links to 1. Must know when to stop and engage as in 2.