

Anglers can help important salmon research



Cramond Falls near the mouth of The Almond where salmon can be seen. Picture Nigel Duncan Media

Hundreds of Atlantic salmon will be tagged and released back into the water as part of a new study aimed at increasing the understanding of the routes they take and the conservation measures needed to protect them.

The Scottish Government research project will run for up to 15 weeks during which 750 salmon will be caught and acoustically tagged off the north coast of Scotland with a network of receivers deployed around the country to detect where those fish then go.

The scientific study will look to find out how coastal fisheries link to different rivers, as well as increasing our understanding of salmon homing behaviour and breeding spots.

Roseanna Cunningham, Environment Secretary, said: “We know Atlantic salmon can migrate thousands of miles from home rivers to high seas feeding grounds and back to spawn. Exactly how they find their home river again remains a mystery

“While a number of historic tagging studies have shown that fish captured in coastal nets at one location have then been recaptured in nets much further around the coast, our knowledge of how they came to that point is still very limited.

“This new study will look to provide us with further insight into this iconic species’ behaviour which will help to determine whether we are striking the right balance between

conservation and the interests of those who fish for salmon and what further action might be needed to protect stocks for future generations.”

Alan Wells, chief executive of Fisheries Management Scotland, said: “This important research is the largest project of its kind to be undertaken in Scotland.

“The involvement of local fisheries managers has resulted in over 60 acoustic receivers being deployed in around 26 Scottish rivers in addition to helping facilitate more detailed surveys of rivers in the autumn.

“We are encouraging all anglers in Scotland to be on the lookout for tagged Atlantic salmon.

“By removing these externally placed acoustic tags and returning them to Marine Scotland, anglers can play a crucial part in increasing our understanding of the coastal movements of salmon.

“Increasing our knowledge of how salmon come back to Scotland will help us to manage this fragile resource.”