Cromarty Firth Fishery Board

Monthly Report – August 2026

Electrofishing Surveys

With favourable electrofishing conditions continuing throughout August, the team were able to continue our extensive program of survey work. The team have now completed the surveys of the main Conon tributaries and recruitment has been encouraging. Staff are in the process of inputting all the data and will report on the results at a later date.

Figure 1 The team undertaking a survey on the upper Meig

Last year's surveys at the Marybank weir removal site on the Balnagown were repeated again in 2026. In 2025 a small number of salmon were recorded upstream of the weir, indicating that passage had been eased and new habitat created although densities were low. This year, however, there were good densities of fry recorded at the upstream site, further confirming that the weirs removal has eased passage and created valuable new spawning habitat.

Freshwater Pearl Mussel Training

Both members of the biology team attended a two-day training course on freshwater pearl mussel survey techniques. With the course now complete the team will be able to undertake pearl mussel surveys within the district. Freshwater pearl mussels are critically endangered and are dependant on migratory salmonids for parts of their lifecycle. If we can demonstrate the importance of the Cromarty Firth rivers as habitat for freshwater pearl mussels, The Board may be able to add further protections to the rivers which will have a benefit to both freshwater pearl mussels and Atlantic salmon.

Drone Training

We are pleased to advise that another two members of our enforcement team successfully completed their CAA Drone Training course and are now fully qualified to use drones for enforcement and survey operations within the district. Drones are a powerful tool at our disposal, and we are sure that these new operators will put them to good use.

The final two members of the team will be attending a drone course next month with members of staff from the Cromarty Firth Watershed Environment Trust.

Bailiff report

Fisheries enforcement patrols continued across the district during August. The patrols were carried out on foot as well as by sea kayak, the use of which allowed board staff to cover significant lengths of coastline.

During the patrols a total of 14 people were found to be fishing without permission. In each incident advice to the individuals concerned was given with no further action taken.

Figure 2 A survey site on the Meig