

Dapping on Loch Lomond September 2007.

A recent day out.

Having read the previous dapping article those fairly new to the Loch Lomond system might well be thinking, that was then, but what about now, sea trout stocks on many of our well known rivers and lochs are at an all time low!

The L.L.A.I.A has been trying hard to protect and sustain our own sea trout stocks in a variety of ways. We believe we have been successful in preventing our fish stocks from falling to critical levels like other places. This year has seen the results of such work with varying year classes of sea trout now starting to show through in the catches. Therefore we feel confident that the years ahead now look more promising than we may have expected. Throughout 2007 die hard sea trout fly fishers who fish the loch have been saying how good the sea trout fishing had been this year. Most anglers were simply passing this off as hearsay without really believing what they were being told. When Angus MacRitchie went out with Matt Stewart one day and between them rose fifteen fish landing five of them, there was disbelief; in fact some refused to believe it calling short of accusing Angus of lying!! On another day Angus and his boat partner landed 11 fish returning them all.

It is sad when things get to the point when fellow anglers do not believe the sport possible at that time. We believe you only get out of your sport what you are prepared to put in (unless you are wealthy enough to fish the top waters every day) so our chairman spent a day with Angus just to "prove a point" and hopefully end all doubt. We think he succeeded beyond even our expectations... read on!

A Red Letter Day for Angus.

On September 7th 2007 Michael Brady accompanied Angus for a day out on the big loch. Angus was attempting to persuade sea trout to take his killer Dapping flies, whilst Michael was attempting to shoot the events as they took place. We are not quite sure which one had the most difficult task ahead but after much deliberation we gave the vote to Angus. After all if Angus failed to rise any fish then Michael would..... have nothing to shoot?

Selecting the right flies for the day in question can make a huge difference to the end result.



Angus had his boat all prepared and was ready to set sail. "Where the hell is that man Brady?" By the time Michael arrived, Angus was itching to get out. As usual Michael can't function without doing several things at once! He had been out at first light checking the Endrick for signs of poachers or just poachers, before heading to Balmaha to meet up with Angus. "Another ten minutes and I was out without you!" shouted Angus. Angus had taken a spare rod with him and offered it to Michael to use but Michael replied... "just you get the fish and I will get the photo's", with a smile on his face that suggested this should be fun for the two of them.

Since Colin McCrory had been out the previous day and had risen lots of fresh fish all about 2lb to 2.5lb range, drifting into Inch Cruin on a south westerly wind, it seemed sensible to give that area a go first provided the conditions were suitable. The day was rough with a strong S/W Wind at least force four possibly even five. White horses were plentiful and neither of them felt the conditions were good for this particular area. On the positive side it was a nice grey day with low cloud which can be good for sea trout. On the negative side every time the wind died down the rain came on quite heavy, so it was tough going. For whatever reason the fish were either not there or were not interested (probably the latter) so it was decided to head for Inch Lonaig.

Inch Lonaig

Inch Lonaig generally holds fish throughout its northern shoreline. The northern shoreline can be divided into the western end, the mid bank area (the middle) and the eastern end.

Obviously Angus had been doing well in this area over a period of weeks so was keen to see if the fish were still there. Now under normal conditions a S/Westerly does not suit Lonaig but they both felt the wind was strong enough to provide a nice drift down the western side of Lonaig down to the mid bank if they were lucky. Often in less than perfect conditions this type of thinking and observations that can change a blank day to a successful day on occasions.

When they arrived at the island the conditions were much what they expected, so they drifted down the western side of the northern shoreline of Lonaig.

Angus raised a fish within five minutes but it did not connect! Then minutes later another one rises. It too failed to connect. "I doubt you will get any photos of these fish" said Angus, "they are lightning fast". Two rises and no fish to show for it. Another fifteen minutes passed and Michael said "If you would bring the fly over towards me or out more in front of the boat, I could at least see the fish rise!"

It was obvious the fish were rising quickly so connecting on to them would be difficult never mind capturing them on camera. But you know what they say, practice makes perfect and as the third fish rises to the dap, this time the fish is hooked and captured by camera.



The fish fought well and was duly landed. The first fish landed is crucial for those who form part of the "faithful few" who fish Lomond through the good and the bad times, the day is not going to be blank!



Another fish was raised at the western end of Lonaig. The wind was not ideal for dapping i.e. not quite strong enough but the shorter leader length helped to get the dap working sufficiently to interest a fish or two. Unfortunately by lunch time the rain was beginning to occur more frequently and as it did so the wind dropped..... time for lunch.



It was an extended break with the rain coming down in bucket loads. Angus had risen four fish and landed one, fairly average battling for most fly fishers who fish the dap or work the bob fly on Lomond. Fortunately they had taken refuge at the eastern corner of Lonaig where they managed to sit out the heavy rain by standing under a suitable yew tree. Brew up on this part of Lonaig prevents your boat being buffeted by the waves and gives peace of mind.

A decision had to be made, do they head for home as the rain looked like it was on for the rest of the day, or do they tough it out and wait? After about an hour of "waiting and seeing" the rain eased off so it was time to resume.

Sometimes when the rain stops the fish come out to play... sometimes. So no surprises when a sea trout rises in the lighter wind now prevailing.



A sea trout rises in the lighter wind.

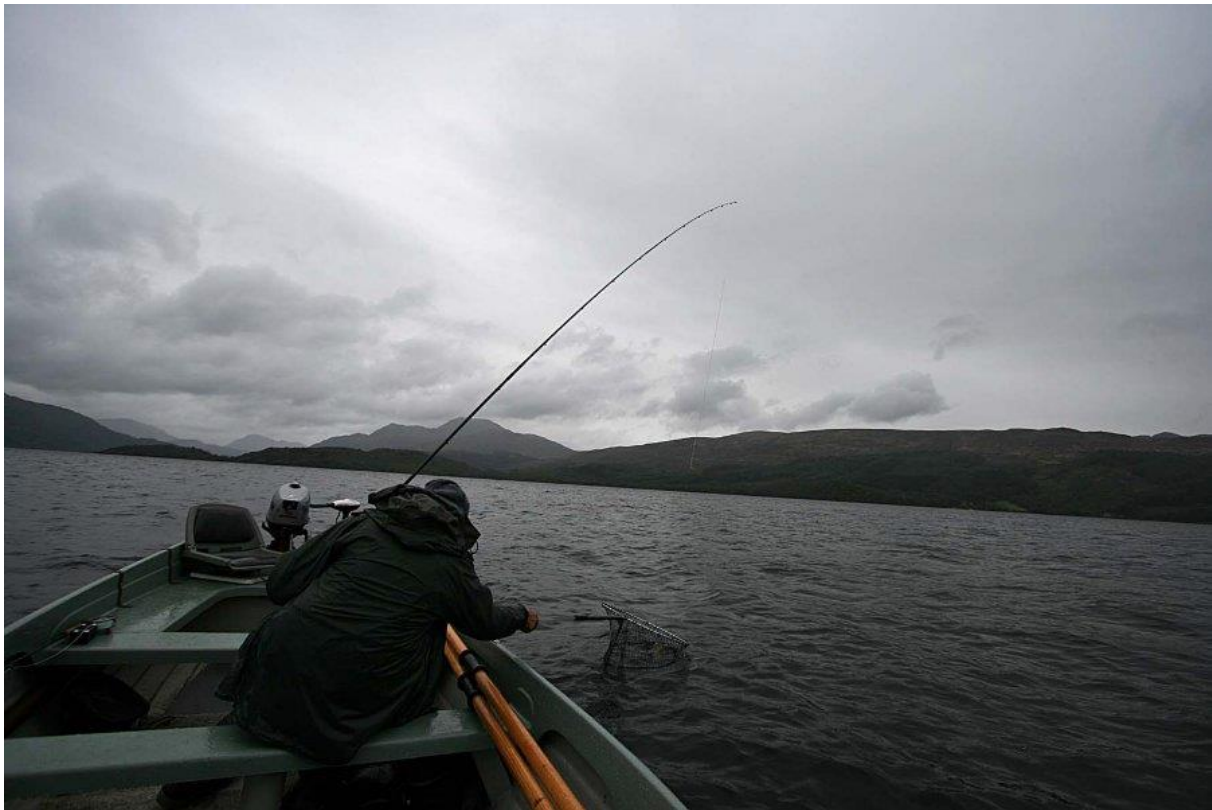


And instantly realizes its mistake!.

Its five risen and two landed so far. However the wind has shifted round more to the west now, this looks promising, but we know through experience never to expect from Lomond, far better to hope!

The wind picks up and the rain eases off. "This is looking better all the time" says Michael, "Look at the light, it's ideal". "For what?" says Angus "You mean a fish?"

Ten minutes later and Angus rises his sixth fish.



And shortly after that another one is risen



The seventh fish rises to the dap and becomes the 4th landed.



We are now up to seven fish raised and four landed. Pleased with the results we decide to stick to Lonaig, there is only one other boat fishing.

Within a short time Angus had raised his eighth fish... and hooked it!





The conditions continued to look good and the wind was now steady and producing a nice wave, ideal for the dap. Within a short time number nine rose, and it too was landed.



The ninth risen and number six is landed.

After seeing a lot of action, the dapping fly is half submerged and sitting in the water instead of on top.



Angus is rapidly running out of flies. Time is running out too but the conditions remain good. With the wind now turned more north westerly it would give a nice drift into the eastern end of Lonaig. Tension was high as was the expectations but the drift was blank. Undeterred they decided to give it another go.

It is a while before the tenth fish is risen but it is a cracker and we both know it just by the rise!!



Lomond at its best providing first class sport with a 6.5lbs sea trout hooked.



Each jump it made it twisted and turned in an effort to throw the hook.



Hang on in there you might just land it Angus!



It certainly feels like it is well hooked.



Your heart is in your mouth at this stage!



What a fight!



Surely well hooked?



Landed. What a relief...



A well pleased angler with a sea trout of 6.5lbs landed.



Off it goes to fight another day and hopefully spawn.

Angus and Micheal reckon there is another ten minutes left maybe, so they decide to give the same area (the eastern end of Lonaig) another last drift. Can they land an 8th fish on their final drift?

You can see how they got on below; we think you'll enjoy it!



Another new daddy is floating nicely (highly) in the water when...



...a big fish rises to the dap.



Another big fish is hooked



The fish takes off heading for deeper water at a fair rate of knots.



Round the other side of the boat now as it bores deep.



A dangerous moment as the fish shows signs of tiring.



Will the hook come out near the end?



Coming to the net, an anxious moment.



Netted! Thank goodness, a big sigh of relief.



Heavier than I thought!



Too heavy to lift: Come on Angus.



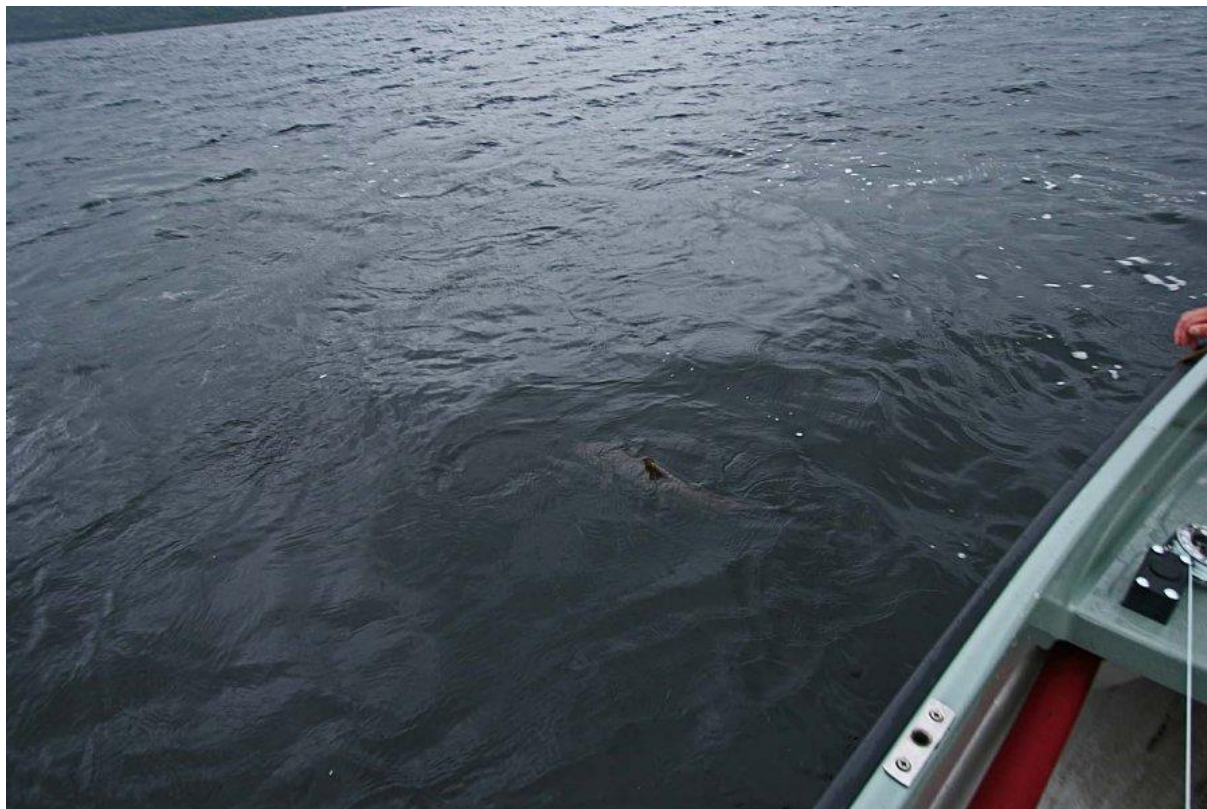
Sea trout at least 7.5lbs.



This is what it's all about!



11 fish risen and eight landed.



The last fish is also returned, it's the only option if we want sport like this in the years ahead perhaps?



These daddies certainly earned their keep today!!!



All in all a fabulous day. Eleven fish risen and eight fish landed the two best fish were around 6.5lbs and 7.5lbs. Incredible sport, this is Loch Lomond at its best. But this took place on September 2007 not in the mid eighties. This was the sport available today. Which only goes to show what sport was available in 2007 and the possibility for even better sport in 2008.

Our Thanks to Angus for being so damn fortunate to be at the right place at the right time. Well done to Michael..... How you managed to get those photos is beyond us, Well done lads.

LochLomondAngling.com 2007 All rights reserved. No reproduction without permission.