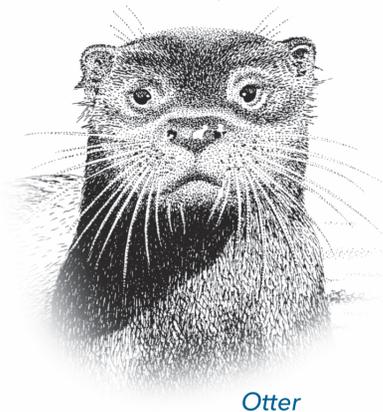


Life on the Skiach

The River Sgitheach (pronounced Ski-ach) drains the southern slopes of Ben Wyvis, running through open moorland and forestry. It is joined by numerous other streams, passing several waterfalls before reaching the southern end of the village, and flowing out into the Cromarty Firth.

ANIMALS

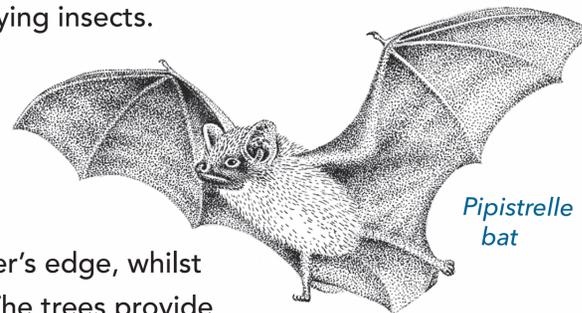
Otters are often seen along the banks and foreshore at the river mouth. American mink also use the river, but this non-native species can disturb or damage other wildlife. Many small mammals such as mice, voles and stoats can be found along the riverbanks. Pipistrelle bats may be seen flying at dusk around the trees. They dart in and out of the trees to catch insects - one tiny pipistrelle bat can eat up to 3000 midges in one night!



Otter

BIRDS

Many birds breed along the banks of the Sgitheach including grey wagtails, common sandpipers and dippers. Dippers can often be seen dipping into the water or bobbing up and down when perched on a rock. In late summer, swifts and swallows swoop across the river and its banks to catch flying insects.



Pipistrelle bat



Salmon

FISH

The Sgitheach is typical of all the clean and fast flowing Cromarty Firth rivers. Brown trout live along the length of the river. Atlantic salmon travel from the sea upstream to the mountain pools to lay their eggs. Sea trout and eels stay in the lower reaches of the river, downstream from Swordale.



Alder

TREES & PLANTS

Alder, and willow are trees that love the water's edge, whilst Birch, Oak and Sycamore like drier ground. The trees provide shelter and food for the birds and insects. The insects in turn provide food for some birds, bats and other animals.

In spring and summer, the many wildflowers including red campion, birds-foot trefoil and rosebay willow herb provide food and shelter for a variety of insects including butterflies and bees.



Red campion

In spring, bluebells carpet the ground. In late summer, hawthorn trees produce red berries which are inedible for people but loved by birds and small mammals. Bramble bushes forming huge tangled growths produce delicious black berries in autumn which are enjoyed by birds as well as people.

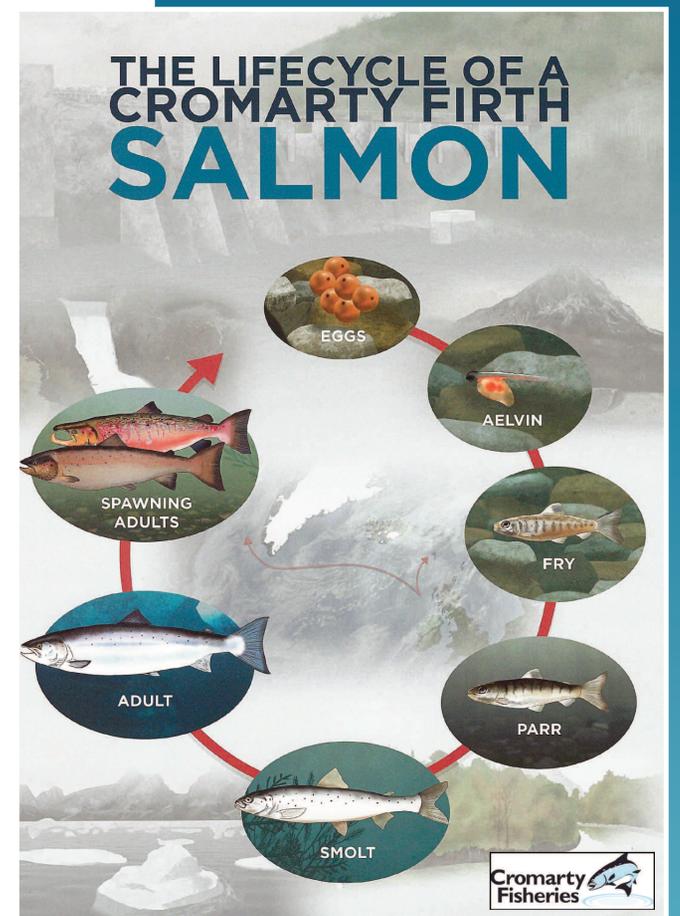
The Great Garden Escape

Look out for the attractive pink flowers of Himalayan Balsam. This plant originally from the western Himalayas was brought to the UK as a garden plant but made a great escape. This was easy along rivers because the seeds are carried downstream. A single plant can produce up to 800 seeds and the explosive seedpods can shoot these seeds up to 7m (22ft) away! As this plant spreads, it grows faster than native flowers, reducing the plant diversity of the area.



Bluebells

Remember... please treat the countryside with respect. Please don't drop litter, but take your rubbish home for disposal. Thank you.



Cromarty Fisheries

EVANTON
COMMUNITY TRUST

The Trust would like to thank the Postcode Lottery Trust, the Highland Council and Kiltarn Community Council for financial support.

