

Pitfour Fly Fishing Club

Established 2011

1 March 2012

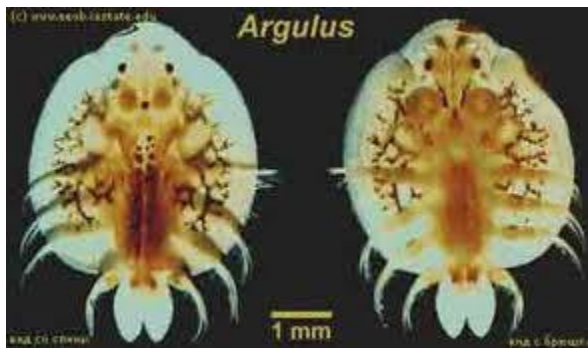
Argulus Foliaceus, Identification, Control Methods, Advice and contacts.

Pitfour Lake has been infected with a type of freshwater lice called *Argulus foliaceus*. This Louse has been present as far as we can tell for about 10 years, and left unchecked has multiplied significantly. During our first year at the lake, we noticed strange fish behaviour like splashing along the surface, and then later in the year we found lice on the fish. We were duty bound to inform Marine Scotland Laboratory and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and now with their help and support we have produced a [mission statement](#) detailing the actions and measures we intend taking to reduce the lice numbers.

Argulus live on the skin of the fish and feed on the fish's blood; they are NOT harmful to Humans, and indeed once a fish has been killed and laid on the bank, all the lice will leave the host within a few minutes, leaving it safe to eat.

The following information will help you identify Argulus and explain what needs to be done to help us to reduce the numbers of lice present in the lake.

Identification



The lice are fairly transparent, but as in the second picture they can appear green/brown when attached to a fish. Some fish have been found with as many as 2000 lice attached. Freshwater lice are convex-shaped and resemble a blob of jelly and vary in size from 1mm to 1cm.

Leeches Piscicola geometra are also present. Last season we stocked heavily in an attempt to lessen the leeches, but played into the hands of Argulus. Judicial stocking this year will help greatly.

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What to do

- Dip landing nets and boots in the dip tank next to the Bothy. It is very important to dip for as long as possible especially when leaving Pitfour, and to thoroughly dry fishing tackle, waders and nets etc. between locations to stop the spread of lice to other waters.
- This year we are operating a catch and kill policy with a 3 fish per day bag limit. Stress makes the fish susceptible to attack from the lice.
- Nets are only to be used for fish that will be retained. Any fish caught that will be released must be unhooked in the water as nets tend to transfer lice from one fish to another.
- Fish caught for the plate can be laid or rubbed on the grass and the lice will leave the host fish. DO NOT wash off in the lake.
- Fish caught with thousands of lice should be dispatched and logged in the bothy log book, and the fish put in the disposal bin at the Bothy. The remains will be frozen awaiting pick up by an approved disposal agent through the Fallen Stock System.
- Another log in the Bothy is for comments on lice numbers. Once you have finished fishing, please take the time to make a couple of notes to help us quantify the numbers of lice present. Some fish will be clear of lice and if that's the case then log them as clear.
- There are some small floatation Buoys at various points around the lake; these are attached to depth variable plastic panels to encourage Argulus to lay their eggs in a place that we can control. The panels will be removed and dried out on a weekly basis. Estimated numbers of lice will be assessed and logged.
- Weed removal is going to be critical and as part of the proposed plan we intend to remove as much as possible.
- We intend to stock in February and March. April and May are to be left as fallow periods, and we encourage members to take fish during these months. Stocking will resume when a significant number of fish have been taken.
- During winter months the lake level will be dropped by approximately 18", thus allowing the hard structures around the edges to FREEZE. This will kill off any eggs and interrupt the lice life cycle.

Contact Us

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