

RFCANews

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First a Very Happy New Year and one in that we catch plenty of fish but more important at long last measures are put in place to help combat the decline of salmon rather than just penalising the rod angler.

Waddow Fish Counts 2017

	Waddow		Locks	
	Up	Down	Up	Down
January	4	2	6	2
February	3	9	2	2
March	17	5	5	2
April	27	0	25	5
May	167	31	61	33
June	815	35	102	18
July	447	18	53	28
August	264	6	23	1
September	769	24	72	11
October	785	28	111	8
November	106	16	112	34
December				
Totals	3404	174	572	144

December totals are awaited.

Nets Catches 2017

The nets reported a catch of 25 fish for 2017 - lower than had been feared. Possibly this was due to the much higher water levels than usual, making netting more difficult.

Rod returns for 2017

The RFCA has asked all clubs to send 2017 returns to David Hinks so he can as usual collate returns for the Ribble. It is crucial that in discussions with the E.A. that the RFCA has up to date figures since E.A. rod returns are extremely problematical. Stock Assessment in any river is now based almost exclusively on rod returns so every angler is urged to send returns in. So far only 5 clubs have sent information and the rest are urged to send a return asap. Compare this situation with the Derwent where they have their returns for 2017?

Tags

The tags will again be available through the usual outlets for those who need them as soon as we get them from the E.A.. Remember the situation regarding killing fish was re-iterated in the new NLO but we do encourage anglers to return their catch the basis **that the river need them more than we do as individuals.**

AT Consultation

We are still awaiting any result from the informal consultation last year. It was expected that a formal EA consultation would be up and running 2018. These consultations are not easy and can be very time consuming but the importance of this next one cannot be over stated. Basically it will probably decide if any river becomes 100% catch and release and that depends upon the assessment category it is in. Currently the Ribble is at potentially at risk and projected to be at risk. Remember this is based on rod returns so back to the item above. The Ribble would be a 100% catch and release river on current projections yet it has never failed its Conservation Limit!!!

Pollution

The human resource available to the EA is now extremely limited. It is vital that you report any suspected pollution incident to the EA on the Hotline 0800 80 70 60 and then to Fred Higham **01200 423314** (Ribble and Hodder) and Graham Parkes (Calder) on **07861 696 813**. They will follow it up and we do get regular reports from the E.A. It is vital that the above is followed since only by continual pressure will anything get done.

Anti-Poaching

Everything said above applies to poaching. This is the same hotline for the E.A. and then contact Grant Hinks on **07930 807 980**. Grant is the RFCA Anti-Poaching Officer and he will follow up. Apart from being linked to the E.A. he is also linked into the Police. Anglers just have to take responsibility in pollution and poaching and stop relying on the E.A.

Meetings with the E.A.

The RFCA has regular 8 weekly meetings with the E.A. These regular meetings are extremely useful since it means that they are not set against the background of a meeting called in a crisis. Numerous issues are discussed and what follows is a flavour. Pollution is always a regular issue and it can be depressing trying to get things done. Riparian interests are always on the Agenda since there is a constant neglect of a series of authorities to automatically consult with riparian owners. They seem to think that contacting the landowner is sufficient. This is a constant battle but is one the RFCA will always fight. Waddow weir is another focus with problems with the fish pass blocking. Hydro power with Settle and Whalley are virtually standing items. The RFCA have asked the E.A. to investigate a design side gap issue which may be present at Settle. The Voluntary Bailiff Scheme, VBS, AT inspired was reported on at the last meeting.

As everyone knows who deals with the E.A. that a constant problem is the movement of staff? Helen Dix, with whom we have had excellent relations, is moving to be Team Leader in the Planning and Strategic Overview Team. Helen will still be attending meetings where there are flood risk issues to be discussed. We wish Helen all the best in the next 12 months.

NWATFCC

It is this organisation which is leading the fight in the NW to improve salmon stocks. All the major salmon rivers in the NW are represented on this group along with the AT. The latest NW AT Forum is being held on Jan 27th at Stoneybeck Inn, Bowscar, 10:00am -3:00p.m. Details have been sent to all Club Secretaries, which we trust were circulated to all members of their respective clubs, and you can find information on the AT website.

Places must be booked since there will be lunch provided. This is an opportunity to let the decision makers know your views so we are hoping for a good turnout. We are hoping for the latest state of affairs on the E.A. 5 Point Plan.

Avian Predation

You will already be aware that we didn't manage to secure any additions to our allocations for either Cormorants or Goosanders. However we have again been told that if we want an increase we will have to provide evidence of the need. In this regard we have some reports with photographs from the river but more would be greatly appreciated as we know the damage that these birds can cause.

In addition, we have just held a bird count day and I am awaiting the results (which I hope will demonstrate the need for more birds) so that they can be tabulated as evidence.

The AT has again launched its Cormorant watch so any observations should be recorded there. They are also campaigning for an increase in the national allocation.

It is no good producing more fry, par and smolts just for them to be eaten by these birds!!!

Angling Trust

The AT is angler's national organisation. It has moved a long way from its small beginnings but needs to be able to do much more. It can only do this if more individual anglers join. The take up of clubs is fantastic but where are the individual anglers? In dealing with the Government it is numbers that count, see the RSPB! The AT needs your help if angling is to survive. Make it a 2018 resolution to join the AT and help fishing survive.

C.D.Hinks,
J.W.Whitham

