



Ecological Appraisal

Monitoring ecosystems; identifying pollution causes & impacts

- **Cost benefit analysis**
- **Ogwen Salmon Action Plan (SAP)**
- **Dee mitigation**
- **Merging of Ecological Appraisal Team (EAT) and Monitoring & Data (M&D)**

Cost benefit analysis

Analysis has been carried out on four tributaries of the Dee. These are Abbey Brook, Morlas Brook, Alyn and Wych Brook. Weir removal on the Wych appeared to have little impact on salmonid production, but looked positive for coarse fish. The other weir removals would create excellent benefits to the Dee salmonid fishery.

Ogwen Salmon Action Plan (SAP)

Discussions are beginning on the production of the Ogwen SAP. Data are just beginning to be looked over by the anglers and the Environment Agency, and we are planning a joint meeting in April.



Abbey Brook Weir



Juvenile salmon being released

Dee mitigation

EAT have been working closely with Fisheries Technical, Fish Culture and the DSAP (Dee Stock Assessment Program) team to look at the Dee stocking mitigation. From this work we will get a better understanding of juvenile survival rates, focus our stocking efforts, and monitor the results more consistently.

Merging of EAT and Monitoring & Data (M&D)

EAT and M&D are being joined to form two new teams. Sample & Collection will now collect all field data (biology, water quality, fisheries). The other team members will be in the dedicated Analysis and Reporting team. This new system will lead to an increase in electro-fishing trained staff and will enable us to carry out more projects in the future.

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Environmental Crime

Reducing illegal fisheries and waste activities in North Wales.

Major issues over the last 3 months:

- **Illegal fishermen net £3,345 fine**
- **Rod licence results**

Illegal fishermen net £3,345 fine

In February 2009 at Holyhead Magistrates Court three men were fined a total of £3,345 for setting illegal nets in the Inland Sea, Holyhead.

Following information received by members of the public the three defendants were observed by Environmental Crime officers retrieving fish from the illegally set nets, in two separate incidents during September 2008. All fish, nets and equipment were confiscated.



Fish and nets seized



Officers on licence patrol

Rod licence results

In March 2009 two North Wales men were found guilty of fishing without a licence and were ordered to pay over £500 each at Mold Magistrates Court.

The two men were caught fishing by Environmental Crime Officers during Summer 2008 as part of an ongoing campaign by the Environment Agency.

During the 08/09 season, 2,696 people were checked of which 144 were found to be fishing without a licence.

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Technical Fisheries

Maintaining and improving fisheries

Major issues over the last three months:

- **Migneint project**
- **GIS mapping of fisheries knowledge update**
- **Redd counts on the Afon Merddwr 2008/09**
- **Habitat maintenance summary**

Migneint project

The fisheries team visited the Migneint, part of the National Trust's Ysbyty Estate; to see their work that will help prevent the spates that have affected the disappearing wild brown trout populations of the Rivers Conwy and Serw. Open ditches are being filled with peat and heather to encourage the growth of vital sphagnum mosses, retaining carbon and raising the water table.



Ditch closure at Migneint

GIS mapping of fisheries knowledge update

The initial program to record our fisheries officers' knowledge in GIS is complete. Information recorded includes salmon and sea trout spawning areas, salmon and sea trout redd locations, priority areas for future habitat work and man made / natural barriers.



Spawning area Afon Merddwr

Redd counts Afon Merddwr 2008/09

Afon Merddwr redd counts, from November to December 2008, are the highest recorded to date. Most of the redds, 23 salmon, 6 sea trout, were observed in the recent habitat restoration section below Pentrefoelas. This area showed a marked increase in the 2008 survey raising it to class B category.

Habitat maintenance summary

The 2008/2009 program of reviewing existing habitat sites with anglers to list repairs has concluded. Sixty-five sites were visited across North Wales; twenty-one had livestock incursion. The response of angling clubs, to help maintain these habitat sites, has been extremely positive.

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Technical Fisheries

Maintaining and improving fisheries

Major issues over the last three months:

- **Rhyl Cut project update**
- **Welsh Federation of Coarse Anglers**
- **Habitat on Afon Llafar**
- **European funding bids**

Rhyl Cut project update

A feasibility study is in progress for Rhyl Western Cut. Site investigation work has taken place to ensure the ground is suitable. One of the main tasks in future is the major clean up operation of the land surrounding the cut. Local volunteers and environment groups will work with trained waste operators to clear the site.

Welsh Federation of Coarse Anglers

The WFCFA has new executive officers. Bernie Farr, South Wales, is Chairman; John Taylor is Vice Chairman; and Tony Rees is Treasurer. The new Secretary is Nick Massey from North Wales. The WFCFA look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with the Federation of Welsh Anglers and the Environment Agency.



Rhyl Western Cut cleared of weed



Afon Llafar

Habitat on Afon Llafar

Repair works were recently completed on the Afon Llafar. The Llafar was the first habitat scheme to be constructed on the upper Dee in 2002 and has held up well to the elements. The Llafar is part of the Welsh Assembly Government funded Catchment Sensitive Farming scheme and, importantly, has provided a good wildlife corridor over the past 7 years.

European funding bids

The Wild Fishing Wales project was approved. It provides £2.6m over 5 years, offering training for angling guides and project grants for habitat and infrastructure, throughout Wales. The European Fisheries Fund bid is in process. The Environment Agency Wales will focus on fish passes while Afonydd Cymru, with the Wye & Usk Foundation, discuss a bid for habitat works.

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Technical Fisheries

Maintaining and improving fisheries

Major issues over the last three months:

- **Greenfield Valley Heritage Park**
- **Infrastructure at Pen y Ffridd fishery**
- **Classroom hatchery project**
- **Eisteddfa Fishery access improvements**

Greenfield Valley Heritage Park

Flour Mill Pool, part of an Environment Agency partnership project with the Greenfield Valley Heritage Trust, was created as a community fishery through improvements to fishing pegs and the embankments. The habitat in the coarse fishery is being improved through an infrastructure grant to install floating reed rafts and marginal plants to provide cover.

Infrastructure at Pen y Ffridd fishery

Three years after converting this trout fishery into a coarse fishery, facilities on site required up grading. Through application for an Environment Agency infrastructure grant, the fishery has undertaken a project to increase access and improve the facilities for both able and disabled anglers.



Flour Mill Pool, Greenfield Valley



Classroom hatchery project

Classroom hatchery project

The project involves setting up a fish tank in a classroom. Primary school children can then watch as the salmon eggs hatch out, go through the alevin stage and become fry. Several schools in the Clwyd and Conwy catchments have been involved this year.

Eisteddfa Fishery access improvements

Eisteddfa Fishery is a popular mixed fishery venue for both local and visiting day ticket anglers. An infrastructure project, to improve access to a new trout pool for disabled and able bodied anglers, is being undertaken by the owners with a Sustainable Fisheries Project grant.

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Fish Culture

Mitigating damage to fisheries

Major issues over the last three months:

- Smolt stocking on the Dee
- Smolt stocking on the Mawddach and Lledr
- Construction of new Freshwater Pearl Mussel Hatchery

Transfer of smolts to semi-natural rearing ponds

Throughout February the Hatchery and Fisheries Technical Teams transported over 17,000 salmon and sea trout smolts from Mawddach Hatchery to three different release sites, two on the Mawddach catchment, and one on the Lledr. All fish were fin-clipped.

On the Dee catchment, 34,000 salmon smolts have been stocked into Maerdy smolt release pond on the Ceirw, and The Tryweryn trap site below the Celyn Dam. All the fish have been fin-clipped.

All these fish will remain in the ponds until late April/early May when they will be released into their respective rivers for their onward journey to the sea.



Loading salmon smolts onto the fish transporter



Freshwater Pearl Mussel Hatchery

New Freshwater Pearl Mussel Hatchery for Mawddach Fish Culture Unit

At Mawddach Hatchery a new Freshwater Pearl Mussel (FWPM) rearing unit is under construction. The unit when fully operational will be able to hold up to 7 different river populations of these endangered mussels.

Building on the experience of the last four years, the mussel growing unit has been designed to hold both adult and juvenile mussels. It will have purpose built facilities for infecting juvenile fish with glochidia (mussel larvae) and a vivarium, where the juvenile mussels will be grown.

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