



## Analysis & Reporting

Monitoring ecosystems; identifying pollution causes & impacts

Major issues over the last three months:

- Eel monitoring programme - Dee
- Eel passes
- National fisheries monitoring programme
- Eel virus survey

### Eel monitoring programmed – Dee

The eel monitoring programme is carried out biennially on the Dee. In 2011 sources stated there had been improved runs of elvers. Three of our rivers saw significant improvements however seven others declined to half that caught in 2009.

### Eel passes

Due to the new eel legislation the Environment Agency has to provide access over our hydrometry weirs for eels. The weirs are barriers due to the rapid uniform flow they produce, and lack of substrate for eels to crawl up. Bristles are attached to the walls of the weirs which allow the eels to migrate. Eel passes have been attached on the Llyfni, Erch, Clywedog and Alyn.



Title: Eel pass on the Llyfni



Title: Eel monitoring on the Dee

### National fisheries monitoring programme

The general picture from this years monitoring is positive. The main areas of monitoring were on the Conwy and Dee. Tributaries on the lower Conwy performed well however the Lledr was poor. Some smaller tributaries on the Dee were frozen over the spawning period and this has led to no salmon fry this year. Salmon are thought to have spawned in the main river instead. The Alyn was also surveyed and trout numbers were good in the upper section however salmonid numbers dwindled in the lower sections as in previous surveys.

### Eel virus survey

We have been working with Fisheries Technical Services to collect blood samples from wild eels on the Dee to investigate the occurrence of eel herpes virus and other important viral disease. The sampling they do is entirely non-destructive.

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## Environmental Crime

**Reducing illegal fisheries and waste activities in North Wales.**

**Major issues over the last three months:**

- **Illegal Netting**
- **Cockle Enforcement**

### **Illegal Netting**

In August Environmental Crime Team (ECT) officers were carrying out low water patrols in the Bagillt area of the Dee Estuary.

During the patrols a small boat was seen coming out of Bagillt dock with one man onboard. He was observed as he set a net across the low water channel from bank to bank directly in front of the dock.

This was an illegal activity, the net and fish were seized and the man was reported for fishery offences.



**Title: Nets seized by ECT Officers**



**Title: Officer checking weight of cockles**

### **Cockle Enforcement**

During the Summer two operations were carried out by Environment Agency Wales Officers and Merseyside and North Wales Police at Thurston. The purpose of the operation was to monitor and weigh the catch landed by the licensed cocklers.

The daily quota for licensed cocklers is 300kgs per person.

As a result of the operations nearly 10 tonnes was seized and 4 licensed cocklers were reported for being over their quota.

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## Technical Fisheries

### Maintaining and improving fisheries

#### Major issues over the last three months

- Tyddyn Sargent open day
- Youth Justice youngsters fishing
- Llay community fishery

#### Tyddyn Sargent open day

Having benefited from access improvements at the fishery, Tyddyn Sargent hosted an open day on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, attended by coaches from the Federation of Welsh Anglers. There were 35 members of the public present, with everyone catching plenty of fish. The improvements now allow anglers of all abilities to safely access the fishery.

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Wild Fishing Wales is an Environment Agency Wales initiative part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Assembly Government and a component element of the Countryside Council for Wales' Communities and Nature strategic project



Title: Open day at Tyddyn Sargent



Title: Eisteddfa Fishing Event

#### Eisteddfa youth fishing event

The Environment Agency, the Youth Justice System and Caernarfon Police funded 3 fishing events aimed to help at risk youngsters be involved in a sporting activity. The young people that attended tried coarse and game fishing at Eisteddfa fishery and a number have now taken up the sport.

#### Llay Reservoir Community Fishery

Works were carried out to Llay Reservoir over the summer to repair a worsening leak which had seen the levels in the fishery drop and resulting in some fish deaths. The fishery has over 100 junior members and is now back up and running as an important asset to the local community.

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## Technical Fisheries

### Maintaining and improving fisheries

#### Major issues over the last three months:

- **Caergwrle fishpass completed**
- **Assessing survival of stocked Seiont salmon**
- **Lady Bagot's natural fish way completed**
- **Himalayan Balsalm Working Party**

#### Salmon for Tomorrow Caergwrle fish pass

At the Caergwrle weir a fishpass was constructed in the summer of 2011. The fishpass is made up of Larinier baffles and a bristle brush eel pass, built onto the weir structure. It now increases access for all fish species to 21km of river habitat on the Alyn.



**Title: Caergwrle fishpass completed**

#### Assessing survival of stocked Seiont fish

In September we assessed survival of salmon fry and parr that had been stocked out in to the headwaters of the rivers Arddu and Hwch in early May. Results from the survey were encouraging and will be used to manage the Enhancement Stocking Programme for river Seiont.



**Title: Lady bagot's natural fish way near completion**

#### Salmon for Tomorrow Lady Bagot's natural fish way.

We have successfully constructed a rock ramp fish way on the river Clywedog, downstream of Bontuchel fish pass. This fish way is a low gradient, natural looking structure, made up of strategically placed rocks, extending for 60m. It is ideal for all species of fish to use.

#### Himalayan Balsalm working party

Biodiversity and Fisheries staff helped volunteer anglers pullout Himalyan Balsalm on the Bryn y Pys beat on the river Dee in July. The 3 day working party designed to clear this invasive species from the river bank was organised by Chris Derwent ( Bryn y Pys Anglers), Ian Doyle (Prince Albert Anglers) and Keep Wales Tidy.

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## Technical Fisheries

### Maintaining and improving fisheries

#### Major issues over the last three months:

- Afon eden Fish Trap Removed
- Catch and Release – investing in the future
- Celtic Sea trout Project needs angler help

#### Afon Eden Fish Trap Removal

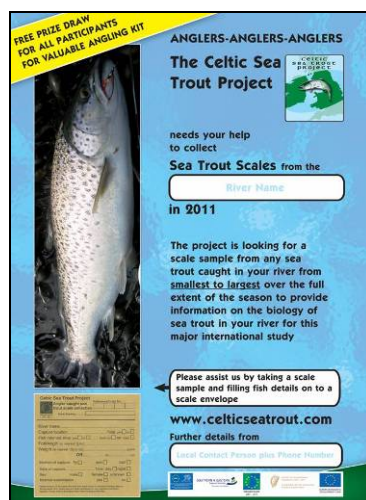
Environment Agency contractors recently removed a fish trap from the upper reaches of the Afon Eden a tributary of the Mawddach. The trap was removed because it was a dangerous hazard to water users especially canoeists. The structure was built in the 1980's as mitigation for the planned extension of the Trawsfynydd nuclear power station.

#### Catch and Release – Investing in the future

This autumn we have been asking anglers at local fisheries group (LFG) meetings to show maximum restraint in the numbers of salmon and sea trout they kill over the fishing season. Last year in North Wales 50% of salmon and 71% of sea trout were caught and released following capture. By highlighting catch and release at LFG's we hope to see improvements on rivers like the Dyfi, Dwyfor and Llyfni where release rates are low.



**Title: Contractors removing old fish trap infrastructure**



**Title: Celtic Sea Trout Project poster**

#### Celtic Sea Trout Project needs angler help

The project is an Ireland-Wales collaboration funded by the European Union. The work is describing the status, distribution, genetics and ecology of sea trout around the Irish Sea. The project uses scale samples from sea trout to determine the above and needs anglers to help collect scales from sea trout of all sizes across the angling season. Samples from welsh rivers are currently low so make sure to collect scale samples and send the packets to Dr Carys Davies, Celtic Sea Trout Project (CSTP) at Bangor University or contact Dr Carys Davies through the CSTP website for more information. [www.celticseatrout.com](http://www.celticseatrout.com).

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## Fish Culture

### Mitigating damage to fisheries

#### Major issues over the last three months:

- Arctic Charr graded and fin clipped
- Precocious parr to be used for ova fertilisation
- Big fish from Wnion semi-natural rearing pond netting
- Dee kelt reconditioning update

#### Arctic Charr fin clipped

In September 4300 Arctic Charr were size graded, and fin clipped prior to being stocked out from the Mawddach hatchery. The fish are clipped so that they can be identified in any future monitoring work. The fish will be stocked into Llyn Crafnant and Llyn Padarn. The overall survival from laying down of the ova to stocking out will be 79.6%

#### Precocious parr used for fertilisation

Studies have shown that precocious parr (sexually mature juvenile male fish) play an important role in enhancing the genetic make up of fish populations. As a result of these studies we will be fertilising up to 30% of all our salmon eggs using parr milt from the same catchments.



Title: Fin clipped Arctic Char



Title: Large trout from semi natural pond

#### Wnion semi natural pond rearing

Semi-natural rearing ponds, fed by natal streams, are used to help hatchery reared fish acclimatise and adjust to their future environment. After a period of 3-4 months, fish are allowed to leave the ponds to continue their natural life cycle.

#### Kelt reconditioning update

Kelt reconditioning is taking place again at Maerdy Hatchery. We have 11 reconditioned hens on site and they are a combination of rod caught kelts, and hens kept back from last years stripping. The aim of this project is to reduce the numbers of fresh wild hens we take from the river Dee to produce fish for the Dee mitigation program.

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