

Wye Salmon Association

Newsletter 15



Wye Salmon Association

www.wyesalmon.com

September 2015

SNR Pond Project Final

As you will know from our last newsletter during February 2015 our final permitted stocking of 37500 was made to our ponds. During May 2015 these fish were released into the river Wye to travel to sea and hopefully return to continue the recovery of our salmon stocks.



We continue to seek evidence of returning fin clipped salmon from the project. Two fin clipped fish have been recorded so far this season, the latest reported being a 4lb grilse caught at Bigsweir on 18th July.

However we fully understand in the excitement of the catch checking for fin clipping would be the last thing on angler's minds. In order to bring it to anglers attention a small sticky plastic label has been produced and circulated by WSA. This can be stuck to rod butt or landing net handle as a reminder. Anglers need to provide as many details as possible; date and time of capture, where caught [beat and pool if possible], length of fish from nose to fork of tail, bait used, water conditions and most importantly a photo showing clearly fin clipping. Data collected will be passed to SNR Team and

NRW Scientists for analysis. If you have not received a label contact us by email to enquiries@ wyesalmon.com and we will post to you free of charge.

I am sure you all understand the importance of catch data collection in establishing results for our project.



NRW Hatchery & Stocking Review

The situation regarding NRW Hatchery and stocking is now clear. What a great pity given the opportunity to see real impact on our stocks and the efforts of a large number of very committed WSA supporters. We could also of course, given the project had run for its minimum planned 5 years and complimented by proposed DNA sampling, learnt from and confirmed once and for all the potential that could be derived from best practice [SNR] stocking.

However these decisions by NRW have not blunted our enthusiasm and we are currently working with several groups across Wales to continue pressurising NRW and WAG to review their decision and allow third party hatcheries and privately led initiatives to determine recovery strategies rather than dictating them themselves.

A representative of these groups attended the recent NRW Board meeting held on 9th June in North Wales to listen to the debate on NRW's management options for declining salmon and some sea trout stocks. It was apparent that the Chairman and CEO had taken heed of some of the representations and correspondence and a reasonable debate took place. There was agreement for further consultation with stakeholders and a workshop was held on 2nd Sept, more on this later, to start this process. Peter Gough discussed the management tools that NRW had at their disposal explaining that in his opinion in order to maximise recruitment total C&R was necessary. He also touched upon the difficulty in removing 'heritage nets' from our rivers and restrictions on methods that can be used. The socio economic value of salmon fisheries was raised, it was suggested the loss to Wales following total catch and release should not be understated.

The Board generally agreed the major problem for salmon stocks to be marine survival/exploitation.

[Editors Note- it's a pity NRW has not taken notice of the NASCO finding at the meeting in Edinburgh 2012 where it was agreed that to counter marine losses there was a need to produce more smolts. Iceland was used to demonstrate how effective this is through the use of hatcheries. By closing hatcheries NRW has removed the most effective management tool!]

It was pointed out by a Board member during the coffee break 'that anglers in Wales need to make themselves visible to the Welsh Government', suggestion being there is far too much angler apathy and we need to be seen to be standing up for our rights.

Request government agencies enable private initiative and allow us to determine recovery strategies rather than dictating them themselves

The same board member had recently spoken at the Menai Bridge meeting and had opposed the hatchery closure decision but was challenged with another insisting there was clear evidence of harm and NRW and third party hatcheries had to close immediately

[Editors note- none of the papers in the bibliography supports this. Unsubstantiated figures from the Taff stocking influenced the final decision].

In recent correspondence with Emyr Roberts (NRW CEO) our representative pointed out the information presented to the decision makers was inaccurate and was designed to influence the decision makers to agree with hatchery closures. In his responses Emyr Roberts has chosen to ignore the allegations of malfeasance in public office. We at WSA along with groups from other Welsh river organisations are preparing an action plan to be launched once we have attended to workshop in Sept.

NRW Stocking Workshop 2nd Sept

The workshop was attended by representatives of WSA, Prince Albert Angling Society, Seiont Gwyrfai & Llyfni Anglers Society, Dee Fishery Association, Conwy Valley Fisheries along with our technical adviser Dr David Cragg-Hine. NRW and EA were represented along with their academic advisers Professor Carlos Garcia de Leaniz, Swansea University & Dr Philip McGinnity, University College Cork. The Welsh Assembly Government were represented by Jeremy Frost.

Attendees found the workshop interesting but were clear what was presented was not evidence of harm from hatcheries, it was just opinion or as the title of one paper used as reference says 'a consensus of opinion' based upon observations from specific research which cannot be substantiated as typical for all river systems operating small scale mitigation schemes.

Prior to the workshop we received copies of three papers declared by Peter Gough of NRW as emerging new evidence. One of the papers questions the results of previous research due to a lack of consistency in methodology and perhaps more significantly too small a data sample to base any conclusions on.

A letter was presented to NRW from Wye Salmon Association [WSA], Campaign for Protection of Welsh Fisheries [CPWF], Welsh Salmon & Trout Association [WSTA] & River Wye Gillies Association [RWGA] representing clubs and some 33,742 anglers fishing the rivers of Wales registering in the strongest terms, our opposition to NRW's decision with regard to banning properly regulated stocking initiatives on Welsh rivers. We considered NRW's decision particularly irresponsible given the recently published 2014 season assessment of salmon stocks indicating that in all 23 principal salmon rivers stocks are classified as either 'at risk' or 'probably at risk' of remaining so in 2019 with the trend in all classified as 'uncertain'. Similarly the assessment of sea trout stocks indicating in the 28 principle sea trout rivers, 12 are classified as either 'at risk' or 'probably at risk' and 7 'probably not at risk', meaning two thirds of sea trout stock levels in principle river are uncertain.

We noted the three basic conditions under which hatchery operations can play a role in river conservation, these being (i) recovery (ii) mitigation (iii) enhancement. Given the status of 23

significant Welsh rivers, we asked they provide us with written confirmation of why the use of hatcheries to assist “recovery” from at risk status has now been rescinded, providing clear written confirmation in the form of working papers, indicating they have considered and then discounted the need for hatcheries to assist in the recovery of “at risk” rivers (as opposed to assisting mitigation strategies).

We indicated that their actions in relation to the banning of hatcheries, lack scientific evidence and popular support amongst anglers and those directly involved in fishing on Welsh rivers. In this respect, their decision is undemocratic, unscientific and indicative of government involvement in contributing to the decline of Wales’ once great fishing assets.

We asked they pass copies of our letter to their Chairman & CEO’s for their comment. We await with interest their response.

Get More Rods on River Scheme

Again this season WSA have offered salmon anglers, with the kind permission of a number of riparian owners, the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the river by offering various days and beats free. This is available to all WSA members and subscribers on a first come first served basis, fishing must be pre-booked at least 2 days before and is not transferable!



You can benefit from this scheme by joining WSA online at an annual cost of £10, or by sending a cheque to Wye Salmon Association, Penyhil, Felindre, Brecon, Powys LD3 0SU.

The scheme continues to prove very popular so if you wish to take up the offer and help fill the river with salmon anglers once again contact WSA by email at enquiries@wyesalmon.com to discuss availability. Usual beat controls will be placed on anglers using the scheme and beat maps and conditions applying, directions & parking along with advice on tackle and baits will be provided. A number of these beats offer double rods and WSA are in some instances able to offer gillies or guides to anglers if required.



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Salmon Skills Course

Techniques & River Craft Essential Skills The Red Lion Hotel, Bredwardine

Building on our very successful Spey Casting courses we ran an Essential Skills course at the Red Lion [Moccas] beat on May 9th. The one day course took place on the famous Red Lion allowed 19 anglers to experience a variety of fly fishing techniques under the guidance of gillies from RWGA with additional skills training provided by GAIA Instructors.

Anglers on the course were very appreciative of the river craft provided by the gillies present, their knowledge and know-how shared in a very friendly manner. The Red Lion provided a first class breakfast and lunch-time buffet. In all very enjoyable day, and I am sure we all came away much wiser.

The day was clearly a great success and thanks must go to Mick O’Keefe and his WSA team of helpers, Geoff Franks and the RWGA gillies and Mark Roberts and the team of GAIA Instructors



The Red Lion [Moccas] Fishery was provided for the event with kind permission of the owner Mike Taylor.

Schools Education Programme

We have continued to develop our angling education programme. During 2015 we have successfully expanded our activities to include courses at 5 junior schools in Herefordshire, with over 150 children receiving an introduction to river ecology and fly fishing, beginning the day in the classroom and culminating in an afternoons fishing on the river or a local stillwater. These courses are very well received with children, teachers and indeed our coaching assistance alike enjoying the days proceeding hugely.

We are now planning our activities for next year and in order to support need volunteers to assist in their running. The requirements for these volunteers are enthusiasm and a knowledge of fly fishing plus, and in order to comply with educational authority requirements and indeed our own WSA professionalism, our helpers need a minimum basic set of skills in organising and carrying out training of children.

In order to assist our partners, The Game Angling Instructors Association [GAIA], is considering running a two day Assistant Coaching course early in 2016 to provide this training. The course will be in a relaxed and friendly environment and would comprise a number of elements including basic understanding of how to communicate angling skills to children, how to run a course along with a refresher in the single handed casting techniques needed to teach children. It would also deal with any documentation required.

The course will be for people of any age or gender and we would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in participating and subsequently offering a few days support to our ongoing programme.

If you are interested or wish for more details contact Stuart Smith by email at stuartsmith@wyesalmon.com or Jerry Odie at jerryhome@fsmail.net

WSA calls upon tidal lagoon company to prove turbines are fish friendly.....

In a letter to The Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd [the company planning to build the Swansea Lagoon] on 9th June and copied to the WAG, WSA expressed its concerns regarding the likely impact of the currently proposed Swansea Bay and subsequent tidal lagoons on migrating fish stocks in Severn Estuary rivers.



Believe large numbers of migrating fish will inevitably be caught in the lagoons, having no choice but to pass through the turbines, WSA requested Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd to confirm they have carried out baseline characterisation surveys and research in respect of salmon and sea trout behaviour in Swansea Bay.

Our understanding is the impacts of the project remain inadequately determined. We urged them as the developers to provide us with independently-verified evidence proving you have found ways to make your turbines safe and that they will not kill fish. Significant harm to migratory fish stocks in the Severn Estuary and its many rivers would have a huge impact on thousands of anglers, those employed in the sport and affect the asset values of those owning such fisheries. These provide vital contributions to the local economy and jobs in South Wales estimated at £10m and 120 respectively for the river Wye alone.

We further asked that they provide us with information on how they intend mitigating or offsetting any damaging impacts expected to occur throughout the lifetime of the project.

We confirmed we understood tidal lagoons could play a significant part in the UK's energy mix but there will be environmental consequences and it's essential that they are properly assessed and understood before any decisions on the sustainable nature of these lagoons are taken.

Full text of letter can be seen at.....

<http://www.wyesalmon.com/our-letter-on-tidal-lagoons/>

The Reply from Graham Hillier MD is here

<http://www.wyesalmon.com/graham-hillier-md-tidal-lagoon-power-ltd-response/>

Our local AM & MP's are following up a response from WAG Natural Resources Minister Carl Sargeant on our behalf.

Green Paper on outdoor access

The Welsh Assembly Government published its green paper 'Improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation' on 10 July. They are seeking your views and opinions on proposals to improve opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation.



The purpose is to explore the potential for simpler more integrated legislation on access to the outdoors and public rights of way. Full Biodiversity, Climate change, Rights of Children and Young People, Poverty, Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments will be exercised on the proposals during the consultation period. The closing date for replies is 2 October 2015.

You can read full paper at.....

gov.wales/consultations/environmentandcountryside/improving-opportunities-to-access-the-outdoors/?lang=en

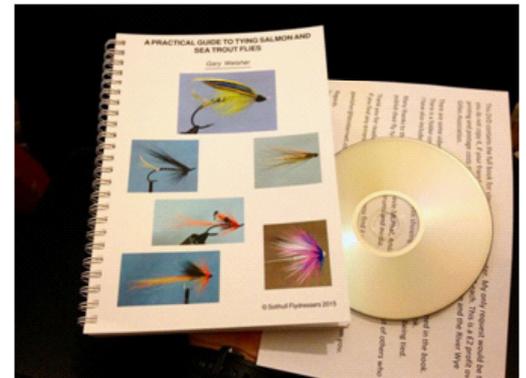
Book Review

Fly Tying by Gary Welsher

Just received a copy and can highly recommend this book as a practical guide to tying salmon and sea trout flies for beginners and the more experienced tyers out there.

Easy to follow, straightforward instructions are ideal for all standards of tyers with a great section at the beginning on the materials required for the beginner to get cracking.

A good collection of flies with an easy reference, clear menu's, colour photos and turn by turn instructions make it an essential for the fly tying bench.. The large font size is a real plus, so easy to read.



The book is 200 pages in A5 format, wire bound to lay flat on the tying bench. It has 22 pages of hints and tips on materials, tools and hooks/tubes and there are 177 fly dressings in written step by step instructions.

A DVD is also included in the package containing the full book in pdf format, all of the fly photos in full size and various instructional videos on techniques and patterns. All together a highly informative and excellent tying guide on a range of salmon and sea trout flies.

Book can be purchased by Paypal to gwelsher@gmail.com (as a gift) or by sending a cheque payable to Gary Welsher to 31 Inchford Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 9QD. Price per book is £12 non posted, £13.50 UK post, £16.50 Europe and £20 the Rest of the World.

Please include your address.

The book is very good value and profits from sales of £2 per book will be donated to the Wye Salmon Association [WSA] and River Wye Gillies Association [RWGA] development funds.

All the best from the Wye Salmon Association.

Stuart Smith- Editor
Peter Chilton- Design and Production

You can subscribe to WSA at <http://www.wyesalmon.com/join-us/>
please join us and help support our aims.