



The Clwyd
and Conwy
Rivers Trust
Ymddiriedolaeth
yr Afonydd
Clwyd a Conwy

2010 - Winter Report

The Conwy/Clwyd - Latest Summary of Projects:

- 1) **Afon Melai - Tree blockage** at Grid Ref SH9005867826 and SH9008568352. Two timber blockages were creating a significant bed height difference within the channel with continual trapping of debris that potentially was causing long term problems of erosion and habitat change. Their removal has improved not only the immediate location but has also allowed a further 4.2km of improved access for spawning capability.



- 2) **Afon Wybernant – Improved Habitat**- creation of spawning beds along river stretch. Downstream limit- SH7812453631, upstream limit- SH7792853406. Severe spate events in recent times has washed out the bulk of the spawning gravel in this section of stream and therefore the construction of bed-check weirs and also the re-introduction of suitable substrate, new areas of improved spawning habitat has been extended by 400metres. Further coppicing and bankside enhancement by volunteer labour will further improve this section of river for both fish and wildlife.



- 3) Afon Las-** simple pre-barrage fish pass by a weir at SH8044674741. With this project a simple plunge pool has been created by the downstream instalment of additional stone to raise the head water level of the pool under all flow conditions. By so doing, salmonids now have an improved chance of negotiating the weir crest and thereby allowing greater access to over 2km of excellent spawning and juvenile habitat upstream.



BEFORE

AFTER
(STILL FAIRLY LOW WATER)

4) Upper Conwy – Fisheries and Habitat

Considerable work is ongoing with fisheries, water quality and habitat evaluation on the Upper Conwy. Aspects of the electrofishing work were included in last quarter's report and a final report is close to completion but awaits some historical data for completeness. The CCRT habitat surveys have not been fully completed as yet because of logistical issues of available manpower and problematic water flows but these will continue in 2011. Another current project being pursued by CEH is investigating trout decline on the Conwy. Although this is some way to go as yet, it will include a look at water quality issues amongst other environmental aspects.

Some of the provisional conclusions from the studies to date, indicate that general trout abundance is very low throughout the upper Conwy with low or absent recruitment in the highest sites i.e. in the SSSI. Conversely salmon abundance from natural breeding is moderately satisfactory in the same sections that suggest the water quality is not necessarily the main limiting factor. Salmon and sea trout are able to supplement stock on a seasonal basis from outside the locality whereas brown trout are less able to do therefore, may suffer from intermittent acid conditions or possible other episodic environmental pressures that may have greater influence on their long term wellbeing. There is still concern on the availability of spawning gravels for trout although if historical information is correct (i.e. that there were abundant trout in the past) this may not be the case. Another angle is that accessibility and flow patterns may be a key influence that still require further study. Liming is an option that is being considered for long term improvement of these upland areas but how this is undertaken or if it is undertaken, the verdict is still out.

5) Rivers Trust Invasive Weed Control programme – Update

CCW have continued to financially support the Invasive Weed Control Programme and this will continue well into 2011. A planned meeting of angling associations on the Clwyd is anticipated in January 2011 to advance the process and for the first time representatives from the Conwy will also participate and receive formal training. Improvements and streamlining of the training course will occur and invitations will extend to incorporate members from a range of different volunteer groups so that areas not presently covered by fishing clubs can be tackled just as effectively. There will also be additional elements that will be advanced to assist the programme of treatment on the ground. New volunteers, who would be keen to be involved in the Trusts Invasive Weed Control Programme and possibly potential trainees for the new schedules training course, are sought. We need your assistance and support. Please send any names through any of the contact links detailed below.

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