

# RFCA NEWS No 9

March 2009.

## THE LAWS IN FORCE

The Spring Salmon Laws were reconfirmed by DEFRA. All salmon caught by rod and line before June 16<sup>th</sup> must be returned to the water with the least possible injury. This means that those two anglers? seen at Lower Hodder Bridge leaving the river with a dead salmon were breaking the law. There is every chance that the fish was

a kelt so that is two counts against them.

It is now also an offence to sell any rod caught salmon or sea trout. The tagging of the carcasses of all net caught salmon and sea trout is now obligatory. The netsman also has to record the details of all fish caught. Any fish offered for sale as wild must be carcass tagged and if not is likely to be illegally caught.

On the Ribble the bylaw allowing only 2 salmon to be killed by rod and line in a season is still in force. The end of the 2009 season will see the first review of this NLO. The voluntary pilot tagging scheme on the Ribble is in its last year and at the end of this season the EA will write up its official report. While this is a voluntary pilot it has the support of the RFCA and the EA. Those clubs who want their own tags to distribute should contact the Fisheries Team Leader, Richard McIlwain, at Lutra House 01772 714076. The tags will also hopefully be available at the same outlets as last season. That is Carters in Preston, Vareys in Clitheroe, Anglers All in Colne and Lutra House, Walton Summit. One new outlet has been added, Tightlines in Preston and it is hoped that the new angling shop just opened called the Complete Fisherman will also have tags. This is opposite the old Boundary Mill site on the outskirts of Colne very adjacent to the motorway. It is not expected the tags will be out for some time.

## SETTLE HYDRO PROJECT

The struggle with this project has been going on for over nine months. The RFCA is not opposed to well thought schemes which meet the criteria we laid out in our paper "Concerns with small hydro power schemes on migratory rivers". Despite contacting the organisers of the Settle scheme and making it clear what the priorities were it was not possible to get this through to them. The EA and ourselves were left with objecting at every stage. The project came to planning three times and on the third occasion the EA withdrew their objection but said there were still issues to be resolved. The EA believed they had taken that particular avenue as far as was possible from their legal point of view and would concentrate on the abstraction licence. We still objected to the third application and our Chairman spoke against the project at the planning meeting. Unfortunately the Councillors took the view that if the EA had withdrawn their objection then they would pass it. Certain concessions had been made by Settle Hydro, notably agreeing a compensation flow of 600lps down the fish pass and 100lps over the weir. This compared with their initial offer of 300lps. They also agreed to align the outflow from the Archimedean with the bottom of the fish pass. We still objected since no one could tell us if 600lps actually worked the fish pass, the hydrology studies had still not been completed, there had been no ecological studies to ascertain the impact on the large pool above the weir and there were no details on the in river works. Since the planning application meeting we have sent two lengthy letters to EA Consents. The first dealing with volumes of flow and the second with an analysis of the monitoring of the project we feel should be in place. We have also kept Fish Legal up to date so that if it does go wrong and we need to go to court they will have the background. We also put in a formal complaint to Craven Council on the way the planning meeting was organised. To no ones surprise Craven rejected our complaint. Its up to the EA to make sure they have the appropriate conditions in place as part of the abstraction licence.

## THE ANGLING TRUST

Finally we have a unified body to represent and lobby on behalf of anglers of whatever sort. Mark Lloyd, previously Chief Executive of the ACA, is the new Chief Executive and we wish him all the best. The RFCA had very good links with Mark when he was ACA and it is not that long ago he spoke at our AGM. The RFCA will be joining the AT and we urge all clubs to sign up as soon as your existing membership runs out. If you were an existing member of one of the organisations that have come together you can become a private member as soon as your old membership ceases. One of the advantages of being an individual member of the Angling trust is that your membership includes third party liability insurance, which you get **FREE**.

The ACA has become Fish Legal, an unincorporated association and this will deliver the legal protection and advice. A club needs to join both the Angling Trust and Fish Legal to gain all the benefits and protections. The joint subscription to both organisations is about the same as previously but the insurance cover has been doubled to £10m. The various subscriptions are shown at the end of this Newsletter.

## ENTREPOSE

Assuming their Barrister turns up they are in court March 16 for two or more days. It's worth remembering they have already pleaded guilty but want a second bite. Hopefully a large fine will result and then the action on behalf of the clubs and riparian owners can begin.

## POLLUTION

Since December there has not been any major pollution of the Catchment but the usual small case pollutions, which can do a lot of damage if they are not picked up and reported. Clubs, through their Council, representative, get a regular pollution report which not only says what pollutions have been reported to us and the E.A. but also what the EA has done. Relationship between the RFCA and the E.A. Ribble pollution team is excellent and they do a lot of unseen work. May we remind you of procedures? First ring the E.A. hotline **0800 80 70 60**, then ring Fred Higham for the Ribble and Hodder on **01200 423314**, and **Grahame Parkes for the Calder 07861 696813**. They will follow it up. It's up to everyone who cares about the environment and especially the Ribble Catchment to keep their eyes open and do their bit.

## POACHING AND RIVER WATCH

Keeping ones eyes open applies equally with this topic. River Watch was launched last year but it is not a one-year project. All anglers should have received via their clubs last year a laminated plastic card telling you what to do if you think poaching is taking place. Signs were erected along the Ribble way giving the same information to walkers and some CCTV cameras were deployed. The E.A. have invested in some very small CCTV with good infra-red qualities for night-time and these will be deployed at selected spots. Since they are very mobile they will be moved around. Please report anything suspicious via the EA hotline 0800 80 70 60 and then let our poaching officer, Bruce Spedding, know on **07766441952**

## SIGNAL CRAYFISH

This is another long standing problem that has been reported on in several previous Newsletters. The EA project on Buckill Beck now has a new team leader in a Mr Bond. Let us hope that a new broom will breath some life into this project which was getting nowhere fast.

## CALDER CATCHMENT GROUP.

The group is active and hold regular meetings. They also have representation on the main RFCA Council. In this way information about the Catchment in general gets to the Calder Group and Calder matters come to full Council. Any clubs who have water on the Calder and wish to join are encouraged to contact the Secretary, Dennis Halstead 01282 692261. Several clubs on the Calder have organised clean up days, one is trying to arrange junior fishing while Trout in the Town goes from strength to strength.

## DIPLOIDS v TRIPLOIDS

The opposition to stocking only with Triploids will not go away. The vast majority of clubs on the Ribble who stock are opposed and the same applies throughout the North West and the North East. There is a meeting of a small group set up by RFCA in early March. Andy Hurst from the Lune and Wyre is going to outline what he thinks is the problem. Andy has read quite a few of the papers that Professor Ferguson read and come to a different view than the eminent Professor. One would have to say that the chance of the EA scientists saying they got it wrong is remote in the extreme. Privately you will find that the EA will admit they made a mess of this. The moral of the story is that if you want people to do something, first consult them properly, secondly explain what you are trying to do and why, listen to what people are saying and if your arguments are good enough you will win them over, even if reluctantly. But just don't go ahead and then try and persuade people afterwards.

## THIS IS FISHERIES TIME

I cannot remember a time when so much is happening on a regional and national front that involves Fishery interests. I don't know what it was like when the 1975 Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act was on the go but I bet it was not like now. Perhaps we will have to wait another 34 years for our time to come again? All the information I will allude to briefly has gone to club reps.

Firstly we have the new laws referred to above. We have the new Marine Bill going through its stages. There is the Fish Passage Consultation taking place. Dear to our hearts are the new draft Guidelines for Low Head Hydropower. There are new proposed regulations for Smelt and Lamprey, new proposals for Marine administration and the big one. The consultation, taking place on the Water Framework Directive and specifically the draft River Basin Management Plan for the North West. By big one we really do mean big since it is over 2500 pages. The WFD is concentrating all minds and will set the agenda for the next 20 years. In simple terms if it isn't in the plan there will be little chance of it getting done. Some may argue if it is in the plan there will still be little chance of it getting done but let us not be too pessimistic and think positively. Our initial first draft for the WFD is out with clubs and riparian owners to ascertain their views. Hopefully by the 16<sup>th</sup> March it will be with the EA. Some people would say why bother, I just want to go fishing? We couldn't agree more but want to ensure that in the future our sons, daughters and grand children can also go fishing if they wish. Its that important

## WEBSITE AND WEBCAM

Matters have moved on from those reported in the last Newsletter. There have been meetings with the EA and webcam developer at Waddow Weir. Just to remind people of the intention it is to put a webcam at Waddow Weir which will show the state and height of water. This will be housed on the RFCA website [www.ribblefisheriesca.co.uk](http://www.ribblefisheriesca.co.uk) with its own dedicated page and will update every five minutes. RFCA members will be able to access it for free but there is likely to be a small one off yearly fee for non members to help pay for the costs. The RFCA website will be updated at the same time so members can access all papers, minutes and see what is happening. Everything is now in the hands of the E.A. the developer and the RFCA website manager. Fingers crossed between them they get a move on. While on the subject of websites can we recommend Manchester Anglers Keeper daily blog on - <http://keepersblog.manchester-anglers.org.uk/> - Colne Water Angling Club blog on - <http://colnewaterac.blogspot.com/> and the Ribble

Conservation Catchment Trust Fisheries Scientist, Jack Spees, whose blog is on <http://www.ribbletrust.blogspot.com/> - all provide a fascinating insight as to what is happening in different parts of the Catchment.

## STATE OF THE RIVER AND COUNTER FIGURES.

In our last newsletter we gave the 2007 return figures with the Ribble again in the top six rivers in England and Wales for salmon and sea trout. A major contribution to this must be the catch and release figures, which saw the Ribble top again for salmon and sea trout release in the top six rivers. That's an awful lot of fish being released to spawn. We now have the 2008 figures for fish running Waddow Weir and at 5460 are the best for six years. This compares with 2007 of 4986 and that was a good year. All the hard work on the Ribble Catchment is now paying off and lets hope it continues.

The figures for the Hodder at Winckley are not available in a verified form. The counter has malfunctioned but the E.A. are pretty certain they can retrieve the data and we will publish it when we have it.

Tight lines from the RFCA for 2009.

# The Angling Trust - Subscriptions

Subscription	Cost
Adult (17 and over)	£20
Junior (16 and under)	£5
Life Membership	£400

Category	Annual Subscription	Category	Annual Subscription
Clubs 1 - 50 Members	£50	Commercial Fisheries	£250
Clubs 51 - 200 Members	£100	Consultative/River Association	£50
Clubs 201 - 500 Members	£150	Charter Boats	£50
Clubs 501 - 1000 Members	£200	Angling Trade	£50
Clubs over 1000 Members	£250	Individual Riparian Owner (not for profit)	£50

Category	Angling Trust	+ Fish Legal	= Total
Club 1 - 50 Members	£50	£55	£105
Club 51 - 200 Members	£100	£110	£210
Club 201 - 500 Members	£150	£168	£318
Club 501 - 1000 Members	£200	£326	£526
Club over 1000 Members	£250	£546	£796
Commercial Fisheries	£250	£168	£418
Riparian Owner (not for profit)	£50	£55	£105
Riparian Owner (commercial)	£250	£168	£418