

# RFCANews No. 11

August 2009.

## IT IS UP TO YOU!

What do ostriches and anglers have in common. They both have a reputation for sticking their heads in the sand while a 40-ton juggernaut comes up the rear end. Let me mention just three 40 tonners that we as anglers are struggling with at the moment both nationally and locally. As always pollution is a problem in all its forms and coping with it takes manpower and money, which is in short supply. Next, we have small-scale hydro projects, which are springing up everywhere. Thirdly, we have the problem of canoes and their push for unrestricted access to our rivers at no cost. What do anglers do in the face of these problems? They stick their heads in the sand and of course they whinge. Does anyone think if faced with such threats the RSPB would stick their head in the sand? No, they would mobilise their one million members and bring concerted pressure to bear on politicians. There are 4 million active anglers and we should be the most powerful lobby group but instead politicians rely on angler apathy and ignore us. At long last anglers had a chance of fighting their weight with the introduction of one angling body in the Angling Trust. Here was an organisation that could represent 4 million of us and speak with real authority and Government would have to listen. What do anglers do, nothing? Less than 1% of the 4 million anglers have joined the Angling Trust so already the AT has to lay people off and scale back its activities. What a message to send to Government, the polluters, the hydro developers, the canoeists. It's all right chaps we can do what we want since the anglers won't do anything, they are just ostriches. What's wrong with you anglers, for the price of a few pints of maggots or a fly box you could join an organisation, which is willing to fight for you and protect what we want to do. By the way they give you free liability insurance too - all for £20. It's not too late, join the Angling Trust and do something to lose the ostrich and whinging tag. IT IS UP TO YOU!

### Entrepose

Two clubs and one riparian owner with the help of Fish Legal are prepared to have a go at Entrepose and try and get some compensation for the mess Entrepose made of the fishing. Good for them, at least they are not being ostriches.

### Pollution

I mentioned pollution as one of the 40 tonners. Fortunately, since the last Newsletter there has not been any major pollution within the Catchment. This is the second Newsletter we have been able to say this so keep your fingers crossed. Clubs, through their Council representative, get regular reports on all pollution incidents. Relations between the E.A. Pollution Teams and the RFCANews are excellent and they do much good work. If you believe there is a pollution incident ring the hotline **0800 80 70 60** and then let Fred Higham, Pollution Officer for the RFCANews for the Ribble and Hodder, know on **01200 423314** and Graham Parkes for the Calder **07861 696813**.

### Poaching and River Watch

It's getting to that time of year when the pools are filling up with salmon that the poachers come out, especially if we get low water. The only way we can combat poachers is by being vigilant and reporting anything suspicious. All anglers last year should have received a small laminated plastic card telling you what to do if you think poaching is taking place. Signs were erected on the Ribble Way giving the same information to walkers. We have had a good meeting with the new Fisheries Team Leader and we were informed that the new small CCTV cameras, with good infrared qualities, have arrived and will be deployed. Since they are very mobile they will be moved around. Please report anything suspicious to the E.A. hotline **0800 80 70 60** and then let our poaching officer, Bruce Spedding, know on **07766441952**.

## Hydropower

This is another of those 40 tonners. The only project currently taking place on the Ribble is at Settle Weir but there are more in the pipeline. This project was extensively reported on in the May Newsletter. Work has started on the project and representatives of Settle Anglers and officers of the RFCA are keeping a watch on it, no ostriches there! We are particularly concerned if any sediment or other forms of pollution get into the river while it is being constructed. If any angler sees any please let the E.A. hotline know and then our pollution office for the Ribble, Fred Higham.

If anyone hears about any applications for more hydro projects please let the RFCA know. We heard about Settle from an angler who had seen it in the local newspaper.

RFCA Secretary - 01282 411340

## Canoeists

Here is another of those 40 tonners. There is a great deal of pressure from the canoe lobby to have open access for free to all our rivers. They have resurrected the Olympics of 2012 as a reason (another reason) as to why rivers should be open. There are meetings all over the country to consider the Water Recreation Strategy. This is a glorious opportunity for the canoeists to push their case since it is about increasing access to water for recreation. Officers and members of the RFCA attended some of the meetings in the North West. They came away extremely concerned at what they saw as a blatant attempt to push canoes as opposed to angling interests. Remember anglers already participate - as in 4 million anglers - so they can be forgotten. Please do not think the E.A. will defend angling. There is absolutely no chance of that. Most of the time it is a struggle to get them to protect the environment, witness the fight or lack of it against hydropower. In Wales the canoeists got 10000 signatures asking for free access to Welsh waters. The Welsh politicians are looking favourably on this. Belatedly Welsh anglers are trying to get a counter petition pointing out this tramples upon existing rights of anglers. They are struggling to raise a fraction of 10000, welcome to ostrich land. Who do you think the politicians will go with, the ones in the minority making the biggest shout or the ostriches?

Fishery interests are being urged to make voluntary agreements with canoeists. Ignore the fact that the BCU doesn't keep agreements or exercises any control over its members. Why should anglers give away for free, rights they have paid for when the law backs up that right? Isn't it time that fishery interests counter campaigned for all canoeists to be licensed and that money to go to the E.A. same as fishing licence money. It could be used to do something about the demands of the Water Framework Directive for a start and all waters achieving good ecological status. Canoeists should band together in clubs same as anglers and negotiate with riparian owners for the right to canoe on certain parts of the river, same as anglers. They would have to put up with close seasons same as anglers. Once we have a level playing field we might respect their case for more access and they might learn to value the rivers and the environment more and do something to protect it. After all they will have a monetary interest to defend same as anglers. Do not rely on the existing law to protect your rights, for example there is no navigable right of way on most rivers above the tidal reach but that doesn't stop canoeists from breaking the law. Given enough pressure laws can be changed and to give them their due canoeists are good at creating pressure. Not for them the ostrich mentality and fair dues to them. Wouldn't it be great if we had a national organisation that could mobilise 4 million anglers to fight our corner, wouldn't it just. **IT IS UP TO YOU**

## Beavers

In the last Newsletter we reported on the daft idea of reintroducing beavers into Bowland rivers. Lib Dem MEP Chris Davies had called for a public consultation. We immediately sent a letter protesting at this idea to his office but have had no reply. Obviously we are not public enough to be considered for a reply. Contrast this with our local MP Nigel Evans who always replies and has helped with several problems.

## NLO and TAGS

This is of course the last year of the voluntary tagging system **BUT NOT THE 2 FISH KILL BYELAW**. Some people still confuse the two, which considering all the publicity is a surprise. The Ribble is doing well and as reported in the last Newsletter has moved into the top category within the 63 principal salmon rivers in England and Wales. This is not the time to slacken efforts in helping the river and particularly so in catch and release. The Ribble has an excellent record in this respect and it is a major factor in the improvement. Nationally there is evidence of the catch and release percentage slowing down and that would be bad news if translated to the Ribble. We only have one river and need to look after it since we know no one else will.

## RCCT Catch and Release Scheme.

Given the above it is good news that the RCCT have their scheme up and running. It was reported briefly in the Trout and Salmon Magazine August. It is very simple send the information of your release of a salmon plus £2 to the Trust Offices at Castle Cement and you will receive your badge. More information will be posted on their bog very shortly.

## Trout in the Town.

This small group of people are doing a lot of good work for this project. They ran a stand at the Trawden Show to publicise their work. If you go onto their blog you will see examples of the work they are doing to protect and improve the river and its ecology. No ostriches there either.

## State of the River and Counter figures.

All the rivers in June were low with a severe shortage of water but that didn't stop record figures of fish going through the counters. The majority of which would probably be sea trout. July was a different month with a lot of rainfall and while catches were not spectacular they could be described as steady although not a lot of anglers were about at the beginning of the month.

The counter figures for the year are given below. The E.A. has put new strips in at Winckley and are confident the figures are accurate.

<b>Waddow</b>	Up	Down	<b>Winckley</b>	Up	Down
January	5	17		95	4
February	5	2		23	4
March	18	9		42	12
April	37	2		84	30
May	163	8		309	31
June	837	43		2190	237
July					
August					
September					
October					
<b>TOTAL</b>	1065	81		2743	318

These are the best June Waddow figures since 2003 and the Winckley June figure is the best since records have been kept.

## Casting Tuition

Repeatedly we are asked by anglers, both new and seasoned, where they can get some tuition to improve their casting, perhaps as they have taken up a different branch of our sport. We are fortunate to have in our locality a qualified casting instructor in Jim Fearn. Jim can be contacted by phone on **01254 824650**, by letter to **9, Billington Gdns., Billington, Clitheroe. BB7 9LU** or by e-mail to **jamesfearn@tiscali.co.uk**

## Webcam and Membership

The webcam at Waddow weir has been well received and many anglers have said what a great service it is especially for anglers coming some way. If we had gained 100 new members we intended to put the next webcam at Winckley Weir and the next one after that at Jumbles. That way we would have a visual view of the state of the water on the Ribble above the Hodder, the Hodder and the Ribble below the confluence of the Calder. Unfortunately, we have only gained an extra 30 members plus some sponsorship from the Complete Fisherman in Colne. It is expensive to install and run webcams and without more members we cannot go ahead. We have a special rate of £7-50 per member if a club makes all their anglers members of RFCA. Two clubs on the catchment have done this and we thank them, no ostriches there. If only one or even better two more clubs did the same we could get additional webcams and provide an excellent service for anglers on the current state of the river. If it saved you a wasted journey you have made your membership fee. You may say I cannot join both the Angling Trust since it is all of £35 for the two. Given the benefits you would get from the two organisations I would say it was cheap at the price. But if you cannot join both then at least join the Angling Trust. Ask your committee if you belong to a club how many of them belong to both organisations. If they belong to neither ostriches of the world unite.

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**STOP PRESS**

We have just learnt Entrepouse are back at Nappa having to re-do some of the work.  
**Please, can people out there keep their eyes open and report any problems.**

We have just had a reply from the office of Chris Davies, MEP, welcoming our letter and views?