

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
RIBBLE FISHERIES
CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION
2017/2018

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	1
Council of Management.....	2
Pollution & Anti-Poaching Contacts.....	4
Activities Throughout the Year and the Role of the RFCA.....	5
Secretary's Report.....	6
Club/Fishery Reports	20
Pollution Reports Summary 2016-2017	26
Anti-Poaching Report 2016-2017	32
Annual Calder Catchment Group Report 2016-2017.....	33
Annual Hodder Consultative Report 2016-2017	33
Ribble Rivers Trust Report 2016-2017.....	38
Environment Agency Annual Report 2016-2017.....	40
Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association Business Plan Review 2016-2017	44
Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association Accounts to 31 December 2016.....	46
Ribble Fishery Migratory Fish: Annual Catch Statistics	49
Membership Form & Bankers Order	51

Acknowledgements

A sincere thanks to all those who have contributed in any way to this edition of the Annual Report. This includes club and fishery reports, information from our Pollution Officer and Anti-Poaching Officer, the RRT, the Hodder Consultative, the Calder Group, members of the Environment Agency and Angling Organisations. The very considerable help of Katharine Whitham in processing this report, is greatly appreciated.

J.W.W.

Council of Management

MEMBERS AS ELECTED RE-ELECTED AT THE A.G.M. 2016 OR AMENDED DURING 2016/7

Chairman:	J.Rawlinson, 85 Laneside Rd., Haslingden. BB4 6PG
Vice Chairman	Vacancy
Hon. Secretary:	J.W.Whitham, 58 Lingmoor Drive, Burnley. BB12 8UY
Hon. Treasurer:	A.J.Hooley, 23 West View, Clitheroe. BB7 1DG
Asst. Secretary:	Vacancy
Pollution Officer:	F.Higham, 99 Waddington Road, Clitheroe. BB7 2HN G.Parkes
Poaching Officer:	G.Hinks, 3 Patrick Avenue, Read, Burnley. BB12 7QQ

In order to improve communication and club representation clubs were encouraged to have two representatives - with only vote between them.

REPRESENTATIVES OF ANGLING ASSOCIATIONS

Bowland GFA:

D.Pilling & C.Heap

Ribchester & Dist. AA:

S.Dewhurst & D.Harwood

Castle Cement AC:

C.Ainsworth

Settle AA:

B.Garnett & vacancy

Clitheroe AA:

D.Jackson & vacancy

Whitewell FFA:

Vacancy & vacancy

Lancashire FFA:

V.Edmondson & vacancy

Yorkshire FFA:

J.Cowburn & N.Madden

Manchester AA:

M.Howarth & G.Platts

Burnley A. A.:

G. Hinks & vacancy

Mid Ribble AS:

E.N.S.MacKenzie & I.Parker

Hyndburn & Blackburn A.A.:

P.Lewin & G.Parkes

Mitre AA:

R.D.Halstead & I.Spencer

Loud & Hodder A.A.:

K.A.Ogden & vacancy

Prince Albert AS:

J.Rawlinson & T.Heaven

Bradford City A.A.:

J.Munden & vacancy

Ribblesdale AA:

F.Higham & C.Waddington

Stonyhurst College

B.O'Connor

Southport Fly Fishers

J.Smith & vacancy

REPRESENTATIVES OF FISHERY OWNERS

W.J.Wood,	Greenbank Farm, Gisburn Old Road, Blacko, Nelson. BB9 6RH
D.G.Jones,	Daisy Hill, Birtle Moor, Birtle, Bury. BL9 6TR
C.Yorke	Ingham & York, Low Moor, Clitheroe. BB7
VACANCY	

REPRESENTATIVES OF ROD AND LINE ANGLERS

VACANCY	
J.P.Lord,	Spring Bank House, Cow Ark, Clitheroe. BB7 3DJ
J.B.Wells,	Highwood, Church Brow, Walton-le-Dale, Preston. PR5 4BB
C.D.Hinks	3 Patrick Avenue, Read Burnley. BB12 7QQ

INVITED REPRESENTATION

J.Spees,	RRT
VACANCY	RRT
D.Vickery,	AT NW Freshwater Forum
B.Thomas,	Hodder Consultative
Dr M.Horner,	S&TC (formerly S&TA)
P.Hackett	Coarse Fishing

SOME LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CONTACTS

Steve Molyneux,	Area Environment Manager
Colette Whiting	Fisheries, Biodiversity, Geomorphology Team Leader
Darren Bedworth,	Technical Specialist
Graham Miller	Pollution Team Leader

Address:

Lutra House
Dodd Way
off Seedlee Road
Walton Summit
Bamber Bridge
Preston
PR5 8BX
Tel: 08708 506 506

NW ANGLING TRUST CONTACTS

Richard Bamforth	Fisheries Management Adviser
David Lees	Regional Enforcement Manager

Pollution & Anti-Poaching Contacts

**Please note:
E.A. emergency number is:
0800 80 70 60**

In addition, pollution incidents should be reported to:

Fred Higham
Pollution Officer RFCA
Tel: 01200 423 314
e-mail: f.higham@talktalk.net

Grahame Parkes
Tel: 01254 234 365
e-mail: grahameparkes1@sky.com

**In addition, suspicious activity or poaching incidents
should be reported to:**

The Police on
101
and
Grant Hinks
Anti-Poaching Officer RFCA
Tel: 01282 775 494
or
07930 807 980
e-mail: granthinks@btinternet.com

There are some principles that have been made very clear:

- No angler should put himself into a potentially dangerous situation, merely observe and report as soon as possible.
- Where any degree of Fish Poaching activity is observed the matter must be reported immediately to the E.A. on their number.

Please Note:

If the situation is either dangerous or potentially dangerous (e.g. threats of violence or actual violence being used) or where an offence is in progress, then the matter, if deemed appropriate by the caller, may then be a 999 call. For every report to either the police or E.A. always ask for a log number and note it down.

Then, if appropriate, ring other persons you may think have an interest in the matter Angling Club Anti-poaching Officer and/or Angling Club Secretary, Owner or RFCA Poaching Officer.

Activities Throughout the Year and the Role of the RFCA

This is my first Chairman's Annual Report since taking over from David last year. I remember saying what can possibly go wrong! Well I'm pleased to say nothing has gone wrong. In fact this last 12 months has been quite successful we have installed two new cameras up on Locks Weir and I would like to thank both Fred and Neil for the excellent work they both did in getting these cameras up and running. We also finally got the phone line at Winckley sorted out, after what must be three years of telephone calls and god knows how many emails? Once that was sorted the camera was re programmed and so is now up and running again. Many thanks to Fred and Neil to their efforts.

The fish pass on Waddow Weir has now been improved with new deflector bars which we all hope will help prevent future blockages. We also have the new fish pass on the river Hyndburn that was installed by the Ribble Rivers Trust which we all hope will improve the river.

We have also been involved in the new National proposed bylaws and NLO consultations for England, of which the RFCA and North West Fisheries have made a very valued contribution. These proposed national byelaws have now been suspended until 2019 and the river Ribble is no longer categorised at risk but are now probably at risk, which means we will be on voluntary catch and release not mandatory catch and release. But **we must maintain a 90% catch and release** if we are to remain voluntary catch and release in the future.

Throughout this report others will comment on a range of issues that have been dealt with by Officers, or Council, or through our affiliation to Regional and National Bodies. These include:

- Continuing concerns with Settle Hydro
- Issues with Whalley Hydro and the fact that it is difficult to monitor – even for the E.A.
- Fluctuating flows at Whalley
- Concerns about migration through the Hydro – up and down
- The amounts of monitoring undertaken by the E.A. both for an assessment of stocks and to ascertain the effects of the Hydro
- Blockages at Waddow
- Accuracy of fish Counts at Waddow and Locks
- Accuracy of data available
- Timings of data collection
- Contributions to Ribble Life
- Possible removal of Red Scar Weir
- Problems noted at Armford Weir
- Avian Predation
- Lack of E.A. Officers due to cuts and loss of Grant in Aid
- Accuracy of river classifications and the 2 Salmon Consultations
- Representation on arrange of bodies such as NWATFCC, Long Preston Group
- Flows in the Hodder
- Progress and the lack of it with regard to the re-introduction of gravels
- Ignoring Riparian Rights
- Colouration of the water in our rivers
- Ribble Fish Action Plan
- Volunteering for Trust Activities
- River Fly Surveys
- Alien Species
- Angling Trust River Watch for Cormorants

- Bird Counts
- Pollution incidents
- Assisting the Trust to deliver Projects e.g. Weir bypasses on the Darwen and Hyndburn,
- Monitoring of Canoeing activities
- Fish introductions
- Challenges to works planned by local authorities and LCC to ensure minimum disruption to fisheries and Riparian rights
- Improving communications to our members through Newsletters and circulars
- Co-operation across the country e.g. statisticians reports supported by the Welsh and the Border Esk Associations
- Re-establishment of the Several Fisheries Committee
- Etc

One of the biggest successes we have had this year has been the mobilization of anglers to respond to the two consultations – a very big thank you to you all. We have shown what might be achieved if we can all work together

At this point I would like to thank John, Fred, Anthony and Grant and David for all their support and advice over the last 12 months thank you very much.

All that remains for me to say is that I hope you all have a very successful season.

J.Rawlinson
Chairman

Secretary's Report

Many of the issues reported in previous years remain with us and demand **a concerted effort by us all** if we are to make any progress at all. Indeed there have been occasions when we have despaired at the lack of progress and the lack of understanding that has been shown by people that we would expect to support us. Alas, we must, if we are to preserve our rights, and our sport, be prepared to argue our case and argue it repeatedly if necessary. I make no apology for references within this report to ways in which we would hope that all members of the Association, and their members clubs, would assist and make a contribution.

We have continued, through Newsletters and circulated information tried to ensure that our members are as fully informed as possible so that they are able, as required, to lobby and make representations on behalf of all anglers.

Additionally, we have had two consultations that proposed radical changes to our sport so a big thank you to those of you who wrote objections and letters to MP's. It was most gratifying to see such support.

The continued cuts to the E.A. budget means that we have ever fewer Officers patrolling our rivers. These cuts cumulatively mean that the GIA has dropped to almost nothing, but we still cannot get any assurances that there will be any change soon.

These cuts have a drastic impact upon the work done by the Fisheries Department of the E.A. I must therefore thanks those that toil at the sharp end for their efforts to keep the service going – yet a further example of the fact that we, riparian owners and angling clubs and anglers themselves are going to have to do more to maintain our fisheries.

It has become increasingly obvious that the angling community will have to pay more and be prepared to **“get off its backside”** if we are to be able to enjoy our fishing as freely in the future. There are many local groups that are doing their best and working closely together for the benefit of the Ribble catchment but they cannot do it alone - be it bankside clean ups, assisting the E.A. with enforcement issues, or lobbying M.P.'s.

We must all be prepared to do our bit!

Our Chairman has already indicated the efforts that the various Consultatives, along with national organisations, are working on to safeguard our stocks and therefore our sport. However, the current austerity measures mean that riparian owners and clubs will have to be more involved and prepared to undertake tasks and protect their assets much more than they have done previously. It is for this reason that we cannot stand alone and must look to work co-operatively across the catchments and the region.

As last year, there will be no printed copies of this report unless specifically requested when a copy will be made and posted out but a contribution towards the cost will be requested. However, all members will either directly or through their own Association receive an e-mailed copy in pdf format. This will save the Association a considerable amount of money and time for myself.

BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan 2017 - 2018 has been reviewed and is included in this report.

WEBSITE

It had been intended to undertake a complete review and update the look and content of the website but we have been too busy dealing with other matters as you will be aware from our regular Newsletters.

However, it is still in the plan with the expectation that we will get onto this as soon as we can. The basic outline was agreed, which should include a public section stating what the Association stands for and how people can become involved – membership enquiries, Newsletters and recent reports etc. In addition, there should be links to the Constitution and our organisational plan.

Also, information about what the key issues are and on how we work closely with partners and similar organisations both locally, regionally and nationally. This would include web-links to the other organisations.

Over the year a tremendous amount of information is sent to members and even more the clubs and riparian owners on the Council. In order to facilitate this and put all the information in one place we envisage a Council member section – password protected – where all this information is put on a regular basis and where members of Council will have ready access to it as and when they want it.

As now, there would be a direct link – password protected – to the river cams, which have proved so popular as they provide essential information regarding river height and colour so that wasted journeys are avoided.

Three clubs, who have taken out a block membership have managed to link the cameras to their website – again an advantage to their members.

If there are particular elements that members would like to see in our webpages then please contact the Secretary so that suggestions can be considered. We already have a number of club web addresses so if yours isn't included then please let us have the details if you wish it to be.

Another change that needs to be incorporated is a dedicated e-mail address for the Association- information@rfca.co.uk or secretary@RFCA.co.uk perhaps?

CANOEING

During 2017 there were several incidents of unlawful canoeing on the river – even a couple of organised events. This means that we must all be vigilant. WE have continued to push the case for Riparian Rights and the fact that there is no navigable right on the Ribble above the tide head.

Make sure you report any canoe activity to your club, since clubs should keep a log, and challenge any canoeist. All that is required is for you to say **“You do realise there is no navigable rights on the Ribble and what you are doing is unlawful”**. Do not get into an argument. The Angling Trust issued fresh guidance and this was circulated and brought to the attention of Council.

POLLUTION

Further details of pollution incidents are included in the Pollution Report. However, I must report that the reductions in E.A. staff and the movement of personnel has made reporting and keeping tabs on pollution ever more difficult this year. I am fearful that with the next round of cuts the E.A. will be able to do even less and will have to rely on the eyes and ears of anglers even more to be able to provide the service and protection that our rivers deserve.

Our scheme for reporting pollution incidents continues to work well but the E.A. are not always able to respond as we would like due to reduced resources. All too frequently, rubbish is allowed to fall, into or is dumped, into the watercourse; be it rubble, soil, household waste or plastics. The only way we will get this matter addressed is by reporting each and every incident to the E.A. so that they understand the problem and its severity.

The moves to control plastics is very welcome but we still see large numbers of bottles and other plastic rubbish dumped on the banks after each flood. This year saw the publication of a report on the effects of micro plastics on the environment. Although not all rivers were covered it clearly showed that there was a real national problem which is also affecting our seas.

Couple this with the increasing amount of umbilical spraying that is being done across the catchment, in many instances too close to watercourses and at the wrong times, and we have a very serious problem developing rapidly. Especially, when we have wet periods and the silage is washed into the streams and the main river doing untold damage to fish and their food chains.

The drop in reports of pollution in 2016 wasn't repeated in 2017 but reports were still down on those of 2012 – 2015. Perhaps it is a sign of the times with less anglers on the bank. However after further discussion with the E.A. we have started to get the reports again and these are included in the documentation for each Council Meeting.

I would stress that if incidents or suspicions are not reported they do not exist and therefore there is no problem. Remember, being the “eyes and ears” whenever you are on the river is a vital part of our overall strategy, so please be vigilant when out and about but remember to be safe as well.

If you see any pollution report it to the E.A. on the hotline 0800 80 70 60 and then to Fred Higham (Ribble and Hodder) on 01200 423314 and Graham Parkes (Calder) on 07861 696 813. They will follow up and we get regular pollution reports from the E.A. at Council meetings.

Following our request for clarification on in river works which cause a lot of problems the E.A. provided documentation on "Standard Fisheries Bio Diversity Geomorphology requirements for in channel works (Main River)" in 2016. We also suggested that the cuts in offices to undertake checks and anti-pollution work could be supplemented with checks done by anglers if we were allowed to be party to the rules and conditions imposed on works in the river and on its banks. Once again the advice is: Any incidents or suspicions or if you are in doubt ring the hot line and any RFCA Officer. Alas, there appear to be severe constraints on the amount of co-operation that the E.A. can undertake. Unfortunately Jackie Monk, who has been the mainstay for the Ribble Catchment, has been temporarily moved to another post and so there has been less undertaken.

BIO SECURITY & INVASIVES

Over recent years the E.A. has made available a number of pieces of information regarding invasive species and the RRT has worked on many of our waters to address the issue of invasive species. Regrettably RRT are no longer able to undertake this work but have held the odd course to support clubs who have volunteers to do the work.

Following the big floods of 2015 there has been a huge increase in Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed plants. The latter being particularly nasty stuff if you even touch it.

I have to report that there have been a number of issues discovered over the last year or two including zebra mussels, killer shrimps and invasive plants. To encourage anglers to become more bio-security conscious we circulated a clean and dry leaflet and mentioned these issues in our Newsletters.



Further information can be obtained through the following links:
<http://www.nonnativespecies.org//index.cfm?pageid=135>

The 'check clean dry' information is at this link
<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/index.cfm>

POACHING

The RFCA anti-poaching initiative continued to be developed with all clubs being provided with the necessary database for improving communications and reporting incidents. As time had elapsed since the inception of the scheme and there has been much repetition by way of reminders of the scheme and how it works.

Working together with the police and the E.A. has brought about some action to reports of illegal fishing on the river. With the reduction in E.A. enforcement officers the police will be needed to provide clubs and owners with the level of protection that we would all like to see. However, it must be recognised that the police themselves are stretched at times so it is important that all club members are observant and follow the guidance on the anti-poaching cards.

As with pollution we too urge all anglers to be vigilant and report anything suspicious no matter how trivial it might appear.

The introduction of the Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiff Scheme has meant that a number of people have received basic training, with some of them working closely with police and E.A. Officers. We also had the appointment of David Lees as AT co-ordinator. He has spent a considerable amount of time getting to know the clubs and how they operate and has addressed many angling organisations.

Regrettably this scheme has also run into difficulties and so will not develop as quickly as it had been hoped. This, in turn, will mean that with further cuts to the bailiff service clubs will have to look at ways to protect their assets, which may well mean working more closely together.

HYDROPOWER

In 2016 thanks to the regular reports and questions posed by clubs and individual anglers a considerable amount of monitoring was undertaken using the data available on the web. This resulted in a mass of questions and data being placed before the E.A.

This was especially relevant when the Settle Licence was up for renewal together with the introduction of a variable speed screw and significant changes to the site and to the method of operation. Objections were lodged which resulted in a long delay in the granting of the new licence.

A sincere thank you to all those of you who passed me information, which enabled me to build up a comprehensive picture of the operation of the site. We continue to monitor this as best we can but increasingly the Hydro Company are making this more difficult without visits to the site.

Alas, once the licence was renewed the Hydro removed all the cameras and the real time data from the Web making it much more difficult to ascertain when the site was actually operating, so we can't now check whether the conditions are being applied. More importantly neither can the E.A. until they get the operational data from the operator. This is a real case of the poacher also being the gamekeeper and demonstrates how the Fisheries department has been undermined in its statutory duties to maintain, enhance and improved fisheries.

More worryingly, we were informed that most of the smolts go down through the screw. Whilst this might be the most fish friendly type of screw it doesn't mean that they are not damaged or survive the decent through the turbine. We also understand that there are small side channels in the screw but nobody can give us any information about the effects that these have on the small smolts.

As far as Whalley Hydro is concerned it is much more difficult that there is no public access to the site and they don't have cameras available. We have still lodged a number of complaints regarding its operation in low flows and made several reports of fluctuations in the river height for no apparent reason. Although the E.A. has responded to these concerns the explanations are less than convincing.

Unfortunately the E.A. are, yet again, forced to rely on the internal monitoring systems and the data provided by the Hydro Company themselves with a few addition checks by the Agency. These checks did throw up a number of concerns and these have been taken up with the operator.

Following the poor fry surveys on Sabden Brook – formerly our only AA rates stream – we asked the question were migratory fish now unable to get upstream despite the provision of the fish pass. Despite repeated calls to the E.A. on these matters they are convinced that as it was built to the latest recommendations there can't be a problem. I don't know whether anyone told the fish!!!!

GRAVEL REMOVAL

Following a number of complaints about both disturbance and removal of gravels a request was made to the E.A. for clarification of the regulations and why there appeared to be discrepancies when the rules were applied.

Further following the floods we have had farmers who have deliberately tipped rubble and hardcore into the river channel under the guise of protecting the banks. This is often an instance of good intentions becoming a nightmare as sometimes this rubble is contaminated by alien species such as Knotweed and hogweed. Due to the fact that much is soft and loose the river then transports the aliens downstream with devastating results. Indeed the big floods in recent times have washed out many alien species, which have multiplied further downstream.



Giant Hogweed deposited by floods
Any angler walking into this lot could be seriously burnt by just touching it
Beware anglers who fish for seatrout at night

LONG PRESTON DEEPS /RIBBLE RESTORATION PLAN

The Long Preston Wetland project came to an end but has been resurrected under a slightly different banner but the potential for conflicts with angling interests' remains, so once again we must be watchful and work constructively and co-operatively to ensure that our rights are not diminished in any way.

The erosion of the banks continues to be a problem but through our representatives we continue to press the case for angler/fisheries involvement at the earliest stage. Following a serious collapse on the Deeps in 2016 the Ribble Trust, through Jack Spees, organised for all the club representatives affected by any proposals to meet on site and consider options and what was planned under the Ribble Restoration Plan. Such co-operation was welcomed by all those involved.

With further works planned it is hoped that the co-operation will continue so that awareness of fisheries and their rights become more widely recognised.

RIBBLE TRUST & THE FISH ACTION PLAN (FAP)

You will recall that it was hoped to write-up the work done, in collaboration with clubs, to produce the Fish Action Plan. Alas the necessary funding didn't materialise so the draft plans remain on the table. The Trust has had to re-structure its finance and has spent a considerable amount of time on the office work, during 2016 and the early part of 2017 year.

I can now report that the Trust is back into projects, which are much appreciated. I send out regular calls for volunteers to assist with their habitat works programmes. During recent months they have planted thousands of trees to slow down water run-off and provide shade and improved habitat. A more comprehensive report from the Trust is included later in this report.

FLOODS

The exceptional floods of December and January (2015-2016) did a tremendous amount of damage both the river channel and the surrounding land, which, in turn, had a devastating impact upon fish stocks – coarse and game - with many fish becoming stranded and redds washed out. The full impact will not be known for several years.

AVIAN PREDATION/BIRD COUNTS

In September we were notified that we had been successful in getting a renewal of the Area Predation licence but the number of birds was much as previously with only a minimal increase to cover the smolt drop. The allocation was much smaller than some other areas even though they are much smaller areas than the Ribble Catchment, which we understand is the largest area licence issued. Provisional initial allocations were made using the record from the previous year and the success of the previous year's activities both scaring and culling.

Once initial allocations were determined a meeting was called to discuss the licence operation and any adjustments that needed to be made. The meeting proved useful in that it provided an opportunity to talk through the systems required to operate the licence within the conditions imposed by Natural England and the necessary returns to be completed monthly.

Also discussed was the difficulties in keeping a paper trail of any changes in allocations as all too frequently when changes were made the birds had moved on. It was agreed that to speed up the process it may be necessary to do changes by phone with a confirmation to follow. The importance of the monthly return, or at the very least a phone call was stressed.

Initially most sites sent in their returns but this tailed off during the licence period so it became very onerous and difficult to ensure that the allocations were best used.

All site co-ordinators were reminded that they must continue to undertake scaring activities alongside shooting to kill. I can report that I am assured that this has been done.

For the Smolt Drop period April to mid-May were granted very few birds - 10 Cormorants and 8 Goosanders. **The latter being totally inadequate when one considers that Goosanders are frequently seen in groups of 20 or more but individual site may only be allowed to kill one bird.**

With the drive to maximise the numbers of smolts under the 5point approach we will need to look at losses during the migration period, with [particular reference to potential pinch points – areas where smolts are trapped/delayed on their decent to the sea. It is likely that these will be weirs or barriers or pools where the major tributaries join the main river.

The bureaucratic recording system and low numbers of birds makes one question whether it is worthwhile. However, I have to look at it in the light of the damage that the large number of these birds across the catchment do considerable damage to fish stocks during a year. It is therefore essential that we do all that we can to maintain the area licence whilst trying to convince Natural England that the allocation needs to be more reflective of the number of such birds found within the whole catchment.

One of those lessons that was learned during the past three years has been the need to improve and build up our database of numbers so I would urge all clubs to start keeping records, as they do for other things such as fly life, and then make sure that such information is passed on to me as co-ordinator for the catchment licence. To make this easier they should ask their members to note and record their observations whilst they are on the river during the season – not perfect but better than nothing.

We managed to undertake a bird count this year with anglers and shooters being involved in these. Although the numbers of birds had increased significantly it is unlikely that we will get an increase even though the Ribble Licence covers the largest area and we don't have the birds allocated that much smaller areas have. However we shall apply for a renewal and an increase in birds and await developments.

Significantly the number of Goosanders reported was more than double what we have seen before and given the damage that these birds do to fry and parr it is highly probable that we do lose a majority of the smolts we produce, if recent research is applied.

WE are also convinced that Goosanders nest high up the catchment and so plunder the small fish in the side streams to feed their young – as many as twelve per clutch.

Therefore, in the absence of keepers on all beats, we are going to have to get much smarter in how these counts are done and how our limited numbers (**a total of 65 Cormorants and 18 Goosanders for the whole catchment** including most of the Hodder and the Calder up to Padiham).

DINCKLEY BRIDGE

In the flood of December 2015 the footbridge at Dinckley was severely damaged and has remained closed ever since. Having had problems with the recognition of riparian rights previously we stressed to LCC that they must consult riparian interests. Although contacts were established LCC deemed it appropriate to change the surveyor after relationships had been established.

Like the E.A. they appear to move people round so that there is little or no continuity to the job in hand - promises can be forgotten and agreements dismissed. This does little for the confidence in agreements made and frequently causes a loss of faith for many years.

Secondly, both the E.A. and LCC use data protection as an excuse to deny us the information needed to either make contacts or have any influence in decisions – we are left to make the best from a bad job. On this occasion the surveyor met both John Rawlinson and myself to agree a mode of operation that we felt respected riparian rights and the need to get the job done.

Alas, we were unable to have any real input until the project had gone out to tender and the contractor appointed and plans approved. This has meant that effectively we as riparian owner have been told that we are to be denied access to a piece of water and we have no say in the fact that known salmon lies may well be destroyed.

We have pointed out concerns about the potential for pollution and the effects on all the clubs below the works but it would appear that LCC are more concerned with getting the bridge replaced than meeting genuine concerns of owners. Indeed landowners are frequently given more influence than riparian owners.

For this reason we have informed Fish legal of developments and the possibility that there may be a legal challenge at some stage during the works. Also that should there be sediment discharges from the works these would affect all the clubs in the lower Ribble and could lead to a loss of amenity charge being laid against both the Contractor and LCC.

Furthermore, any such problems that adversely affect the assessment of the River could lead to a legal challenge from the whole catchment for loss of amenity and losses to capital values for years to come.

POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF RED SCAR WEIR

Early this year the Ribble Rivers Trust was approached about the possibility of removing Red Scar Weir to improve connectivity and the migration of fish.

The Trust called a meeting of angling interests and the matter was thoroughly discussed, but raised more questions than answers. These are still being looked at before final proposals are put forward. Regrettably, it could come down the coarse interests against the salmon interests – let us hope not and that a compromise can be found.

SALMON STRATEGY

Following the original Salmon Summit at Lancaster University we worked closely with Angling Trust and the regional bodies across the NW. WE continued to press for the promised follow-up annual meeting but this was delayed until January 2018.

At the follow-up meeting, - which was widely circulated – it was as though we were being presented with a fait accompli with the E.A. proposals being already approved by the E.A. Board. The previous December.

Attendees to the meeting made their views clear. It was stated that the proposals would be published in February and implemented in 2018. However it wasn't until March that the proposals were published with a closing date in early April.

On examination of the proposals there were several anomalies and this resulted in another advert extending the deadline by a week.

During this whole process the NWATFCC had made several proposals to help improve stock but these were always knocked back by the E.A. So we initially tried mobilise as many anglers as possible to respond to the proposals and provided information that could be used to support an objection. This was made more difficult because we were advised that any similar objections or an objection using a pro forma would be taken as only one objection.

Furthermore we were very concerned that the data that was used to determine the classification of a river catchment was flawed and therefore its use was grossly misleading and detrimental to getting the support of the angling community at a time when funding is being cut and the way to get maximum compliance is to have byelaws that Consistent, preserved to be fair to all and justifiable. Our view was that this was not the case with these proposals.

Through NWATFCC we organised an independent statistician's report to look at the validity of the process and the use of data. This was especially true for the Ribble which hadn't failed to meet its deposition target for 10 years but was classified in the lowest (At Risk) category, and therefore subject, under the proposals, to maximum restrictions. The situation was further compounded by the fact that some rivers that had only exceeded their spawning target on the odd occasion were classified as "Not at Risk"

During the consultation process the anglers in Wales who were the subject of similar proposals joined forces with the NW as did the Border Esk.

We understand that the number of objections received was well over a thousand – which is a vast improvement upon the usual response to such consultations of only tens of objections.

Due to the number of objections it became clear that both the E.A. and NRW could not complete the legal process to enact the byelaws in time for 2018 so the whole process has been deferred until 2019.

This in itself raises further question as any such byelaws would be framed on dubious and out of date data. Indeed, the latest word from the E.A. is that the number of rivers in the At Risk category has, after the inclusion of the 2017 provisional data, has been drastically reduced. I therefore pose the question do the E.A. have to re-advertise their proposals before they can be sent to the Minister for 2019.

Through the working Groups and representative groups that we have establish over this process we are continuing to work with the E.A. to try and come to an amicable solution that will help the salmon but not destroy our fisheries.

You will remember that in 2017 the Ribble NLO was renewed for a further 10 years but we were assured that any national byelaws would supersede the NLO. It was, therefore, surprising to discover that the Eden and Esk were having their NLO review completed even though it was due to start at the same time as the consultation proposals, and that this would not be superseded by the national byelaws.

This represented another example of a complete lack of consistency across the Country to run alongside the application of the data to determine the river classifications.

BYE-LAWS

The proposals included specific controls on methods and the use of different baits that would be different for salmon and sea trout to those that applied for trout or pike. This made them almost unenforceable and were discriminatory against angler who spin; as they would mean that baits don't work (become unbalanced), mean that baits lose their hooking power or high water fishing is curtailed, etc.

This means that few fish will be caught which, in turn, will mean that rivers will be in a self-fulfilling failure mode. This would have serious consequences for viability of many fisheries for several reasons:

- The removal of the element of choice of method to suit prevailing conditions, including the terrain that is involved of the height and colour of the water.
- The restriction on methods due to, what I believe to be, discriminatory restriction on the use of particular hooks.
- Anglers pay high fees to go fishing to catch fish not just stand and cast, which could be done in any open space for free.
- The potential removal of legitimate methods to catch fish will result in fewer anglers, which in turn reduced club memberships, and therefore the viability of clubs and fisheries.

Bye-laws are constantly being updated so I would urge all anglers to avail themselves of the opportunity to use the E.A. website – recently updated to check what regulations are applicable wherever they go to fish, especially on different catchments. It is highly probable that in addition to different club rules there may well be different bye laws that apply.

On our catchment, there have been a number of long standing Ribble specific byelaws that anglers do need to take note of – reduced hook sizes in September and October for example; but at least they apply equally to whatever the method used.

MEETINGS WITH THE E.A.

These meetings take place about every 8 weeks or so and a report is presented to Council at the following meeting. To give members a flavour of the topics discussed I have listed the items as reported to Council.

June 2017

- 5 point Approach
- Update on the power situation at Winckley used to support our camera
- Whalley Hydro and our concerns
- Pollution Report
- How are police staffing problems affecting their relationship with the E.A.?
- Voluntary Bailiff Scheme within the Ribble catchment

- Project to alleviate problems with the Waddow Counter blocking
- Validation of catch statistics – what multipliers are being used for the Ribble?
- Update on the works at Long Preston
- Feedback from special meeting to discuss Witcherwell monies
- Possible discussions with UU on the problems facing the Hodder – gravels, colouration, flows
- Possible arrangements to meet UU

September 2017

- Fish passage, the need for more monitoring to each developmental stage
- Damage and predation - pinch points in the catchment to migration.
- Pollution past present and future
- Settle gravels update
- Settle Hydro pinch point?
- Whalley Hydro any further info as to damage to fish
- Hodder gravels
- Alleviation works Waddow fish pass - Project submitted
- Winckley services
- Pink salmon
- Consultation statistics and variance in application of criteria used to determine status
- Changes in local E.A. staffing
- Halite discharges

November 2017

- Salmon Returns on line any publicity material
- Ribble classification variance in application of criteria used to determine status
- Dinckley Bridge
- Pollution past present and future
- Hodder gravels
- Settle gravels update
- Winckley services
- Settle Hydro – any developments re fish coming down the screw
- Alleviation works Waddow fish pass - Project submitted
- Reducing nitrate levels

January 2018

- Settle Hydro – any developments re fish coming down the screw
- Ribble collection of totals for Salmon & Sea Trout as previously
- Current situation undermining good will of anglers anti-poaching pollution watch etc.
- Concerns on data used for river classification
- Maximising smolt output
- Avian Predation
- Pinch points
- Tags for the Ribble & Eden
- Morecambe Bay discharges – monitoring and criteria for action if things go wrong.
- Lack of consistency across the national scene - stocking - gravels, river classifications etc.
- Ribble classification variance in application of criteria
- Alleviation works Waddow fish pass - Project submitted

- Further changes to personnel
- Cuts in personnel to undertake responsibilities
- What element of salmon licence monies is spent on enforcement
- Pollution - past present and future - local and national (e.g. Neonicotinoids)
- Reducing nitrate levels
- New farm regulations
- New charging scheme consultation effect on environmental programmes
- Barriers, water flows and abstractions
- Dinckley Bridge repair/replacement
- Winckley services again
- Waddow blockages again
- Hodder Gravels – no progress
- Update on gravel pile by Settle Hydro intake

April 2018

- Settle Hydro fish coming down the screw
- Morecambe Bay discharges
- Bailiff cover
- Anomalies contained in the proposals
- Damage to Winckley Fish Counter wall
- Club catch return totals and effects on data calculations
- Instances of pollution - feedback
- Update on Dinckley Bridge input from Fisheries Dept? Advice to contractors re riparian rights
- Planning applications and the lack of consultation with Fisheries Dept.
- Possible removal of Red Scar Weir
- Alleviation works to Waddow screen
- Hold tags in abeyance awaiting consultation decision
- Hodder gravels still no progress

June 2018

- Thanks to works to Waddow Fish Pass
- Future of Locks Fish Pass
- Dinckley Bridge Works
- Progress on notice for works
- Conditions applied to contractors for in river works
- Red Scar Weir removal plans
- Damage to Winckley Fish Pass and Weir.
- Fears concerning Whalley Weir and Hydro raised at last Council
- Problems identified and corrections?
- Whalley Hydro
- Whalley problems sudden changes in flows?
- Monitoring of Sabden Brook?
- Timing of fry and parr monitoring?
- Salmon Tags
- MRAS given out
- Remainder to Grant Hinks to get to distributors.

- State of stocks
- Club Catch data supplied to Brian
- Where has the 1.32 multiplier come from?
- Predation
- Pollution
- Problems with proposed byelaws
- Methods
- Hooks
- Hodder Gravels
- Settle Hydro
- Effects on Smolts
- Update proposed alterations
- Long Preston/Ribble Restoration Plan
- Any more works planned
- Any developments regarding discharges into Irish Sea from Halite
- Funding for migratory work in the future
- VBS Update
- Potential bogus bailiff
- Padiham Flood Defence works

CHANGES TO THE LICENCE

In October 2016 we received and circulated information regarding the changes being made to the licence structure with effect from 1st April 2017.

It is also understood that licences will run for a 12 month period from the date of issue. This raises a number of concerns:

- Will anglers remember to renew their licence on what amounts to flexible dates?
- How will the system of catch returns work as you are required to state that the licence will no longer be used once the return is submitted – very difficult if the licence runs from say – June to June?
- Is the data from returns going to be even more difficult to collect and therefore be even less reliable?
- With free licences for juniors how will they stand without an actual licence – can you tell a 16 year old from a 17 year old?
- What happens when they attain 17 part way through a free junior licence?

I have posed these questions to the E.A and still (June 2018) await their response.

The purpose of these changes was to spread the workload over the year and to encourage migratory fish anglers to make the legal returns. This in itself would appear to be a major stumbling block with the potential for returns to be even more delayed or forgotten. It was pointed out that if anglers use the on-line facility their returns will only count when they state that they will not be fishing any more on the licence concerned. This means that for a licence running from June to June a return couldn't be signed off until June of the following year. In addition, that return could contain catches that fit into two different seasons – a more complicated system for the E.A. and one that will only lead to more inaccuracies.

John Whitham
Secretary

Club/Fishery Reports

MID RIBBLE ANGLING SOCIETY

The early months of the 2017 were cold so there was limited hatches of fly so angling proved difficult. Once the weather warmed we had several spates which left the river dirty so spinning proved most successful - whether this was by design or accident I do not say. The dirty water lasted until the sea trout started to arrive but they were not in significant numbers early on. Once they did arrive the river appeared dead on many occasions but just before dusk the fish appeared as though out of nowhere. Their activity lasted until just after dark when they disappeared again. Many members had already gone by the time the fish showed so the amount of effort put in for sea trout was probably much reduced. August was quite dry with just a couple of very low floods which didn't appear to bring many fish up. However, fish did show in early September despite the low water, but they were difficult to tempt.

Salmon: Despite conditions proving difficult during much of the season we had a very productive back end (August, September & October). Due to the fluctuating river levels spinner and bait really came into their own. We maintained our recent average catch with a return rate of 98.55%.

Sea Trout: Sea Trout were caught mainly between June and August with fish up to 8lbs being recorded, but were fewer than usual. There were some very productive days on the Hodder when it was carrying about a foot of water to small spinners, especially once the river came up in August. The numbers caught after the season finished (30th Sept) was lower than usual and confined to the lower beats. Our overall catch was slightly down and we had a return rate of 94.80%

Trout: Much lower than normal number caught about half to two thirds – reflecting the reduced stocking. More fish caught on the Hodder, where we haven't stocked for 5 years, but members commented that they were very small (fingerlings). The majority were caught between mid-April and the end of July in areas that had received stocking.

Of the fish caught, some 223 indicated what the method was used in their capture. Some members indicated that they caught trout "by accident" whilst salmon fishing.

Grayling: Catches were between March and October on all beats apart from Long Preston, probably because no-one fished up there until much later in the season. There was no indication of angler effort during the close season. Of the fish caught, they were between 6 and 12 inches but 2 reported well over a lb.

Mainly caught on fly but twelve were caught on spinner whilst salmon fishing. In addition, one was caught on a large tube fly, again whilst salmon fishing. Most productive areas were between the Hodder Place Weir to Jumbles.

John Whitham
Hon. Secretary

BOWLAND GAME-FISHING ASSOCIATION

Trout fishing showed a reduction in catches from the 2016 season with a small decrease in catches reported from both the Ribble and Hodder again with a 16% reduction in fishing effort by the membership on both Ribble and Hodder beats. With 100% of the trout caught were returned. The Paythorne beat was as usual the most popular on the Ribble with the Lower Hodder beat also having the highest number of visits of our three beats on the Hodder. The best brown trout reported was 4lb fish, from a Hodder beat.

The visits by members also reduced from 1224 in 2016 down to 1036 during the year a reduction of 16% in fishing effort.

Sea trout figures show that catches were also down from 187 in 2016 compared to the 106 this season with a drop in fishing visits once again affected by the summer weather. The majority of sea trout caught were returned giving a 97.8% return rate. The best sea trout reported were two fish just over 5bs from the Hodder.

The Ribble beats also were fished for sea trout and 24 fish were reported compared to 20 in the 2016 season.

Grayling catches again showed a drop this season year with 669 fish reported from all of the catchment beats– but still another good result following concerns about stock levels particularly in the Ribble. Several were reported around 2lbs and all would be prime breeding stock and thankfully all grayling caught were returned.

Salmon our total catch returns for the season showed better catches of salmon than in 2016 (48 caught) with 110 fish reported this season and the figures show a 98.7% catch return rate for all of our Ribble and Hodder beats. Of these fish one was taken by a guest and a second fish was killed by a member who claimed it as his first salmon. The largest salmon reported was reported as 30lbs plus caught by a member who was trout fishing. Three other salmon were reported as being between 20 and 26lbs.

We continued to support the Ribble Rivers Trust and our Association retains its membership of the Angling Trust, Salmon and Trout Conservation and the Atlantic Salmon Trust. We continue to be represented on the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association and regularly attend the Council of Management meetings.

Pollution incidents are still a concern for the Association but progress as always is made in these matters through co-operation with Fred Higham and Grant Hinks within the RFCA. The Association's Ribble and Hodder river keeper, with the assistance of artisan members continues to carry out routine maintenance work on the Ribble and Hodder systems keeping a close watch on stiles and bridges, and repairing or putting up new shelters and seats, weeding car parks and other essential river works. BGFA signs have been renewed on all the Association beats and these now include references to the Association's website. Considerable habitat has been completed and more work is planned for the 2018 season.

The support that Bowland receives from its membership continues to be excellent. All of our members continue to be updated on relevant issues from the catchment by regular updates of the association website www.bgfa.org.uk and now the majority of the membership also receive other information via e-mail.

David Pilling
Secretary

SETTLE ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

The 2017 trout fishing season started with some very cold and at times very strong easterly gales which at times brought fishing to a standstill, it was May before temperatures became more reasonable for fishing, later in their month the rains arrived and we experienced good fishing levels throughout the rest of the trout and salmon seasons, good numbers of salmon passed through our waters on their way up river and there were plenty of fish to be seen at Stainforth Foss. A good number of salmon were landed on our various stretches of river from around Halton West up to Stainforth and as far as I am aware all were safely returned to the river.

The huge pile of stones brought down river by Storm Desmond in 2016 and formed an island on top of Settle Weir still antagonises Settle Hydro Ltd would like to remove some of the stones which they feel are affecting the water intake for the hydro plant but they do not have access to the riverbed, fortunately this stone island acts as a barrier deflecting the passage of smolts over the weir and away from the hydro screw, the secondary advantage of the island is to increase the central flow of water over the weir thus improving the fishing in that area.

Avian predation particularly by goosanders still remains a serious problem and it is now realised that many pin fry, parr and salmon smolts are lost to these predators, although not as numerous are the cormorants, their numbers are much less on our waters tending to work alone or parties of two or three but I am sure they do untold damage to the smolts as they return downstream to the sea.

All in all 2017 must go down as one of the better fishing years, there were very few days when some sort of fly fishing could not be undertaken and with all the extra water the number of salmon and trout moving upstream through the counters showed a good increase on recent years.

Bob Garnett
Secretary

WHITEWELL ANGLING ASSOCIATION

Brown trout fishing continues to slowly improve since the association stopped stocking a number of years ago. Over 100 trout were reported in 2017, of varying sizes. Nearly all were returned. Similarly grayling fishing continues to improve, with over 200 fish recorded, up to approximately two and a half pounds.

Some sea trout anglers did very well in June, and those who happened to arrive when conditions were right had good sport on a falling water. Few large specimens were reported this season, and many night fishermen were frustrated by unsuitable conditions in July and August. A small number of sea trout were taken for the table, but the majority were returned unharmed.

Despite a modest final total, salmon catches were the best for several years. As far as I am aware, all fish were caught on fly and all were returned.

David Rawkins
Secretary

CLITHEROE ANGLING ASSOCIATION

Brown trout fishing continues to slowly improve since the association stopped stocking a number of years ago. Over 100 trout were reported in 2017, with specimens up to approximately 3lbs recorded. Nearly all were returned. Similarly grayling fishing continues to improve, with over 70 fish recorded, with an increasing number of fish over 1lb recorded.

Some sea trout were caught by salmon or trout fishermen in June, but night fishermen were often frustrated by unhelpful conditions, and a lower than usual total number of fish was recorded. Few large specimens were reported this season, with the exception of a beautiful 12lb sea trout which was caught on fly one night in late August. A small number of sea trout were taken for the table, but the majority were returned unharmed.

Salmon catches were the best for several years, falling a little short of three figures in total. All but two of these fish were returned unharmed. All fish were caught on fly.

David Rawkins
Secretary

RIBBLESDALE ANGLING ASSOCIATION

With so much water over the 2017 season the fish had plenty of opportunities to run the river and our club did reasonably well for salmon. I record the river heights daily at Waddow and up at Locks weir and from Feb 1st until October 31st during the fishing season the river registered over a meter at Waddow on forty occasions. As these big waters dropped away and the fish moved through our beats our members enjoyed many days of excellent fishing conditions. There is always a downside and this season it was the lack of good and prolonged sea trout night fishing due to too much water and the river holding a lot of peat stain. The brown trout fishing also suffered due to these same conditions, saying that our Nappa beats did reasonably well with some big browns and a good number of grayling being caught and returned. With no trout being stocked on our waters now the trout have grown bigger and our waters are holding a good head of well-conditioned fish.

Fred Higham
Chairman

SAWLEY & PAYTHORNE

Sawley, more fish caught this year. Largest salmon 20 pounds, largest sea trout 7 pounds. All fish returned.

90% caught on fly.

Paythorne was rarely fished.

Roger Wood
Riparian Owner

PRINCE ALBERT ANGLING SOCIETY

Our 2017 season overall was very good on most of our beats, reported good fishing both for Coarse fishing and Game fishing, and in particular, the brown trout fishing and grayling fishing around Ribchester and on the River Hodder and Calder where better than previous years, which is excellent news. As for the salmon and sea trout our members had quite a good season overall which again is good news.

The Prince Albert open day at Ribchester was once again a big success and I would like to thank all the people who came along and support us it' makes all the hard work worthwhile thank you.

Finishing off on a lighter note I believe the Hodder yeti has left our beat and was last seen up river on Ribblesdale Anglers water. Now if I may say he doesn't usually cause a problem but he does like meat pies so no meat pies and you could have a problem don't tell me you haven't been warned.



John Rawlinson
Ribble Co-ordinator

BRADFORD CITY ANGLING ASSOCIATION

BCAA had a reasonably successful 2017 though membership fell back slightly from the high-water mark of 1300 in 2016. Only a very small proportion of members, however, fish our Ribble fishery at Skirbeck. Nevertheless, angling frequency – particularly by coarse anglers – seems to have risen. This may be due to reports throughout the year of good trout, grayling and chub from our stretch on the Preston Deeps. Not all anglers compete the returns book, but reports did include two salmon of 14.8lbs (September) and 16lbs (June), a sea-trout of 7lbs (July), brown trout to 5lbs, chub to 5lbs and grayling to 2.5lbs, though mostly on baits rather than fly. BCAA took part in all the RFCA-organised counts of predatory birds in 2017 and early 2018, seeing quite a few goosanders though no cormorants. BCAA has had 100% C&R for all fish except pike under 5lb for some years, and in 2018 it is 100%, including all pike. Hence the ongoing debate about voluntary C&R is not of interest to us.

From a wider perspective, BCAA generally struggles to find the administrative support necessary to run a large club. We lack assistance for such jobs as issuing membership, leading and organising work parties and getting many of our members to help out – though of course we're not the only club to report such problems. However, there does seem an increasing trend for anglers just to want somebody else to 'pick up the pieces' and to provide high-quality, intensively stocked fishing for them. This often goes against our policy and objectives: we seek to improve environment rather than stock fish into rivers; to manage our coarse stillwater fisheries sustainably and to stock them conservatively; whilst providing some challenge for anglers.

Much of our environmental focus has been driven by the immense efforts and leadership of our Fly Secretary Phil Bailey, and the expert guidance of Jonny Grey. Jonny is not only a Wild Trout Trust Conservation Officer and their research supremo, but also a member of the BCAA Committee, beyond compare. Phil and Jonny between them have continued to lead an extensive programme of fencing, in-stream structures to diversify river flows and enhance spawning habitat, tree-planting and other such work on both the Aire and the Wharfe. This work culminated on 19th May 2018 with the WTT's annual get-together at Gargrave, where Jonny and Phil were able to showcase their work. On 2nd June we then had an Open Day for all Fly Anglers, just downstream, held at Broughton.

BCAA is always very happy to support the work of the RRT if we can, and we'd love to see similar developments at Skirbeck. However, we are at the mercy of local landowners' wishes (or not) to improve the river, availability of large grant funding and our priority to develop local fisheries for our largely Yorkshire-based membership. Together, these stand in the way of our achieving significant improvement to our Ribble-based fishing, but we always try to have something 'on the shelf' in the hope that a surprise opportunity 'comes up'.

Elsewhere, our agreement with Colne Water Angling Club is bearing fruit. Increasing numbers of BCAA anglers are using the subsidised access we have obtained for day-tickets on the CWAC stillwater trout fisheries at Churn Clough and Laneshaw. We continue to have poaching problems on the rivers, however, though bailiffing patrols are now being organised a little more effectively on some rivers. We have been successful in organising systematic surveys and repeated spraying of the noxious Giant Hogweed in the upper Aire catchment, funded by long-term E.A. monies. BCAA put up, and organised, a great deal of resistance to suggestions for vastly-increased E.A. permitting charges – which have (thank goodness) been knocked back for organisations like fishing clubs and environmental charities. More negatively however, we have a current problem with a seal, decimating (or more) stocks of barbel and salmon on the Swale at Topcliffe, more than 50 miles from the sea at Goole, with three unsuccessful multi-agency relocation attempts as at the end of May. We also saw some local issues in early 2017 with Flood Management contractors removing in- and beside-river trees, without any consultation with landowners and fishing clubs, and often impacting ish habitats. But despite such challenges as these, we hope for a successful 2018, and for our ongoing work programme to continue to improve both habitat for fish and catch-rates for anglers."

Jim Munden
Press Officer

MITRE ANGLING CLUB

The main concern has been the situation with Elslack Reservoir. Unfortunately it appears that Yorkshire Water have decided they want to decommission this reservoir within the next five years - allegedly because the ongoing maintenance costs will be too high. Currently, by cutting off the top stream inflow, they have lowered the water level by up to two metres. During the warmer weather, this has resulted in de-oxygenation of the water, forcing the fish down to the deepest levels. We think that this action has adversely affected the fishing. The proposed closure is of course being opposed by us.

We have been consulting with both Fish Legal and the E.A. to see if anything can be done to reverse the decision, but it does not look hopeful. In the short term, to improve the fishing, we plan to increase the number of fish we stock, particularly over this winter period.

We now have an agreement with Barrowford Anglers to fish their upper stretch of Pendle Water (a tributary of the Calder). We have been looking at ways to promote ourselves. There was an article about the club in Fly Fishing and Fly Tying Magazine earlier in the year. Also, we took out a classified advert in Trout & Salmon magazine.

The River Calder, in common with many post-industrial rivers, has again fished very well this season. It is our best fishery and record numbers of Grayling have been caught this year.

Greg Smith
Chairman

Pollution Reports Summary 2017-2018

I am pleased to be able to report that after early difficulties we have managed to get the pollution Reports for our Council Meetings.

Due to the reduction of angling effort over the season it is suspected that there may have been a significant number of pollutions – particularly agricultural pollutions that have escaped detection. It has been emphasised that the reduced E.A. cannot either detect all the pollutions or are able to attend in all cases. Therefore, it is imperative that we educate all anglers so that any instances seen are reported immediately – so that action can be considered and - just as importantly – the number of instances recorded to that the size of the problem can be truthfully stated.

MAY 2017

Serious and Significant

Sewage Fungus at Withnell Fold

In February we mentioned in this report that the River Lostock near Withnell Fold had extensive sewage fungus in it. Due to underground drainage in the area we didn't find the source. However, we followed up with some of the farms and asked them to check their infrastructure to make sure there wasn't any chronic release of silage liquor or slurry. The problem has now eased but this is something we need to keep a close eye on.

Slurry at Lower Hodder

In April there was a significant release of slurry to the lower River Hodder prior to the confluence with the River Ribble. The Ribble was discoloured at least as far as Dinkley. Thankfully there were no fish found dead but the bed of Hodder and Ribble was coated with organic matter for some distance which may have some delayed effects. A short tributary that feeds the Hodder was severely affected. We know the source of the slurry and we are investigating further. We'd be interested to hear from anyone who witnessed this pollution on the 4th April to help us establish a timeline of the event.

Fish Kill at Worston Brook

There was recently a fish mortality incident in Worston Brook near Clitheroe. Despite a Fisheries Officer getting to the brook soon after the report we weren't able to find the source. The pollutant was unknown and showed no evidence in the water with it running clear with no obvious smell. About 100 bullhead and 10s of brown trout died. We have followed up with a visit to the most likely source but we found no evidence of pollution.

Minor Pollution and Compliance Issues

Langcliffe Mill, Settle

We recently received a report of pollution from the activities at Langcliffe Mill. Having visited in early 2016 and given pollution prevention advice we hadn't had a report for over a year. Following the report received in February we have visited again. Further work was needed in March and more permanent solutions should be in place in June. The operator at the mill has submitted planning permissions to build infrastructure that will help further.

Improvements at a Farm on the Hodder

We have secured infrastructure improvements at a farm on the River Hodder. The farm in question had been struggling to cope runoff in wet weather. We've also been working with the local Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer who has been advising on soil compaction.

Mitton Hall

We are aware of a repeat of sewage pollution issues near Mitton Hall.

Haslingden Old Road, Oswaldtwistle

A pile of poultry manure has been stored on land at Oswaldtwistle for a number of months. If manure is kept for too long in one location it can begin to cause problems with polluting runoff and nuisance issues. We have spoken to the farm in question who has agreed to spread the manure to land for soil improvement as intended.

Final Thoughts

As we move into summer and everyone heads outdoors we're expecting to get more reports of pollution. River levels will be lower meaning there will be less dilution for any pollutant as well as temperature increases effecting oxygen levels leaving watercourses vulnerable to organic pollutants (sewage/slurry/silage).

So far this spring has been dry which may cause low flow problems as the summer progresses. Our ecologists, fisheries officers, and pollution officers will be working hard to protect the environment from the stress caused by low flows. We will need help from members of the public with reports of environmental incidents.

Please continue to report pollution or any other environmental incident to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. We can't promise an immediate on-site attendance to all reports, as we prioritise the most significant, but all the information is useful to us nonetheless.

SEPTEMBER 2017

Serious and Significant

River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park

In late August we had reports of fish dying in the River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park in Leyland. Our officers attended this straight away and after some extensive investigation have traced the source to a farm further up the catchment which had had a slurry spill. Unfortunately, we were not able to prevent the death of 100s of fish of various types. It is still the early stages of a legal investigation but we will be pursuing enforcement action. The incident happened in the same stretch of the Lostock which suffered from extensive sewage fungus earlier this year.

Slurry at Lower Hodder

We are still investigating the circumstances that led to the release of slurry to the lower Hodder in April. Our thanks go to those that reported the incident and have helped us so far. We remain very interested in further reports of farm pollution in the area of the lower Hodder prior to the confluence with the Ribble. Please report to us on the usual number - 0800 80 70 60.

Mearley Brook, Clitheroe

In early July we had reports of dead fish in Mearley Brook. Despite attending within a few hours of the report we only found fish that had been dead for some time, possibly from the day before. It seems likely that an unknown pollutant had already passed through which means it is almost impossible to find the source. The pollutant appears to have killed bullhead and trout but left the minnow population largely untouched.

Minor Pollution and Compliance Issues

Langcliffe Mill, Settle

I'm pleased to say that we have had no further reports of pollution from Langcliffe Mill. There have been infrastructure improvements on site, some of which required planning permission. Hopefully the lack of pollution will be sustained.

Bashall Brook

In August we had a report of Bashall Brook near Clitheroe turning brown. Clearly this was of interest to us following the slurry pollution to the lower Hodder in April. However, on this occasion the source is neither a farm nor sewage. Investigations continue.

Pig Hill Brook, Mitton

In June Pig Hill Brook was impacted by a farm pollution which caused the brook to turn grey/brown and foamy. On attending we didn't find any obvious source but inspected a farm in the area which could have been the culprit. It appears that heavy rain had washed a build-up of farmyard muck into the brook. Advice was given on better housekeeping. Fortunately the impact was minimal.

West Bradford Brook

We had a report of a small number of fish dying in West Bradford Brook. The cause of this is unknown but is likely to be oxygen related. The brook at this point is susceptible to filamentous algae and we have seen fish death here 2 years earlier during a warm spell.

Green Brook

Green Brook runs from near Burnley Cemetery to Padiham where it joins the River Calder. In recent weeks we have received several reports of the brook turning brown and impacting the Calder. This brook has a bit of a rough time of it as near the cemetery it has an input from drainage from the old mine. We know of one other source of pollution from near the cemetery which we are working with our colleagues from waste regulation to resolve. However, there may be another source as the reports from Padiham town centre of the brook turning brown are some way from the cemetery. Any further information is useful to us and can be reported on 0800 80 70 60.

Final Thoughts

With lower flows and warmer weather it is not unusual for us to get more reports of fish mortality in the summer months as any pollutant effect is exacerbated. In spring we feared that any continuation of the dry weather would give us low flow problems. However, we had a moderately wet second half of the summer. The main Ribble has been relatively quiet for pollution reports in recent months and our attention has been in responding to some significant pollutions in the River Douglas catchment.

As we move into autumn we will be continuing with our targeted farm inspection programme and our regulatory audits at the sewage works. Hopefully a quieter period.

Thanks for all the reports of pollution and please remember to act early and report as soon as you become aware of an environmental incident. You can report to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. We can't promise an immediate on-site attendance to all reports, as we prioritise the most significant, but all the information is useful to us nonetheless.

DECEMBER 2017

Serious and Significant

River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park

In late August we had reports of fish dying in the River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park in Leyland. Unfortunately, we were not able to prevent the death of 100s of fish of various types. Our enforcement investigation is nearly complete and we expect to pass the matter to our legal team before Christmas.

Slurry at Lower Hodder

We have almost concluded our investigations into the circumstances that led to the release of slurry to the lower Hodder in April. Activities in this area remain a concern and we have had further reports recently of poor slurry spreading practice. We remain very interested in reports of farm pollution in the area of the lower Hodder prior to the confluence with the Ribble. Please report to us on the usual number - 0800 80 70 60.

Marsden Park, Nelson

In November a farm near Nelson overspread slurry on a wet field. Further rainfall caused this to be washed into Hendon Brook and through an ornamental pond in Marsden Park. Most of the fish died in the pond. We have found the source and are considering our enforcement response.

Construction Site Pollution, Clitheroe

Some time ago a construction site near Clitheroe caused significant sediment pollution. We have been investigating and have recently had an offer of an Enforcement Undertaking. This is yet to be agreed. An Enforcement Undertaking is a relatively new approach to enforcement. It is a Civil Sanction where a company accepts responsibility for the offence they caused and puts money back into the catchment area to make amends for it. We can accept or reject the offer, but if accepted, it is a legally binding written agreement between the offender and the Environment Agency. We will let you know the full details of this when it is agreed.

Minor Pollution and Compliance Issues

Construction Site, Longridge

We have concerns on sediment pollution caused from a construction site at Longridge. We have provided advice and expect the issue to be sorted without us having to result to an enforcement response.

Dean Brook, Hurst Green

We have had a recent report of pollution in Dean Brook. A blockage at the United Utilities sewage pumping station caused a minor and short lived discharge to the brook. This was swiftly dealt with by UU with little or no impact.

Ribble tributary, Clitheroe

We have had a report of sewage fungus in a short tributary of the Ribble at Clitheroe. We were sent a photograph by the reporter which has helped us to assess this remotely. I would encourage all reporter to do this. Investigations continue.

Bashall Brook

In August we had a report of Bashall Brook, Clitheroe turning brown. Clearly this was of interest to us following the slurry pollution to the lower Hodder in April. However, this turned out to be caused by a burst United Utilities water supply main. The fresh water flowed over the ground picking up sediment on the way before entering Bashall Brook. There was a quick response by UU which help mitigate any issues.

New 'farming rules for water'

From April 2018 all farmers in England will need to follow a new set of farming rules for water. We're making regulations which will give these rules legal force from then. The rules will:

- promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures
- encourage land managers to take reasonable precautions to prevent diffuse pollution from runoff or soil erosion
- require soil tests at least every 5 years

You can read more about this at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-rules-for-water-from-april-2018/farming-rules-for-water-overview>

Final Thoughts

It is the winter season and we have already been involved in a significant flood event. When this happens we help out our colleagues in the Flood & Coastal Risk Management department to manage and mitigate the effects of high rainfall. This draws us away from our pollution role but we recognise how important it is that the Environment Agency provides the best possible response to flooding.

Thanks for all the reports of pollution and please remember to act early and report as soon as you become aware of an environmental incident. You can report to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. We can't promise an immediate on-site attendance to all reports, as we prioritise the most significant, but all the information is useful to us nonetheless

MAY 2018

Serious and Significant

Major Fish Mortality at Top Lock, Wigan

Between Christmas and New Year we dealt with a major fish kill near to Top Lock on the Leeds / Liverpool Canal at Wigan. This killed 2,500 coarse fish. We know the pollutant was organic in nature as it caused the oxygen levels in the canal to plummet. We used forensic analysis to help find a potential source several miles away 'upstream'. Our enforcement investigation will take time to conclude and we will update again at a later date.

River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park

In late August we had reports of fish dying in the River Lostock at Cuerden Valley Park in Leyland. Unfortunately, we were not able to prevent the death of 100s of fish of various types. Our enforcement investigation is complete and we await the legal process.

Construction Site Pollution, Clitheroe

Some time ago a construction site near Clitheroe caused significant sediment pollution. In previous reports we mentioned that we had received the offer of an Enforcement Undertaking (EU) from the company responsible. We can now reveal that the company involved was Bloor Homes. They admitted to the offence and offered an EU of £35,000 to contribute to Ribble Rivers Trust's Brilliance project. You can read more about this project on the internet here: Brilliance - Ribble Rivers Trust

Oil Spill on A59, Clitheroe

In March a tanker carrying kerosene went over on the A59 at Clitheroe. The Fire and Rescue Service attended the scene within 10 minutes and quickly deployed their pollution control equipment to help contain a spill of 1000 litres of oil in the Worston Brook catchment. Our officers were able to advise on the clear up.

Minor Pollution and Compliance Issues

Whalley Construction Sites

We have received several reports of sediment pollution from various housing developments at Whalley. We have visited the area but would appreciate reports of any further instances of pollution to help us form a picture of what's going on.

Slurry and Farmyard Run-off at Slaidburn

We have been working with a farmer near Slaidburn to get them to improve the infrastructure of the farm. They had been polluting several tributaries of the River Hodder. It is pleasing that they are investing a significant amount of money to improve their operation to meet the requirements of a Farm Action Plan that they agreed with us. We also expect improvements to land management practices in the coming months.

Other Various Minor Reports

It's been a busy time with lots of reports of pollution. Fortunately most were minor events. These include - hay and dog dirt to Tom Dale Clough, Baxenden; slurry at Sabden Fold; a pond near Hanson Cement, Clitheroe with a yellow dust on it; slurry to Flash Brook, Darwen.

Final Thoughts

Spring is here and this is a time when we begin to get more pollution reports through. People are out and about more and are looking at the rivers and streams. The river levels will also begin to drop revealing some pollution issues as they do. With the bank vegetation not yet fully grown now is the time to spot some things that aren't quite right.

Thanks for all the reports of pollution and please remember to act early and report as soon as you become aware of an environmental incident. You can report to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. We can't promise an immediate on-site attendance to all reports, as we prioritise the most significant, but all the information is useful to us nonetheless.

E.A. Reports to Council

Anti-Poaching Report 2017-2018

Another year is now over with from the point of view of reporting. It appears that 2017 was a very good year for the Ribble Salmon which in the current climate can only be a good thing.

Several incidents were reported although I believe that still we have clubs and individuals who do not report? There was one rumour of an angler taking 5 salmon in a day from a day ticket stretch which was investigated but no evidence found. It is better to be safe than sorry.

There were several other incidents which didn't get reported to me but appear to have occurred. Some of these were reported to the E.A. but appear not to have been reported at all. Several other incidents have been reported and checked out.

I'm sure the lack of incidents being reported for the 2018 season is down to periods of no angling activity.

Please always be vigilant and safe; never put yourself in danger when trying to report incidents.

No incidents have been reported from the Hodder.

There was one incident reported on the Calder of 3 members of one of the clubs attempting to use spinners out of season. This was dealt with.

Given the lack of E.A. Fishery Officers due to cut backs it is crucial that clubs put systems in place to properly monitor their water. If you do not do it who will? Please follow the guidelines supplied by the RFCA.

Grant Hinks
RFCA Anti-Poaching Officer

Annual Calder Catchment Group Report 2017-2018

2017 proved to be an interesting year on the Calder with several lots of work carried out by various contractors/organisations. Some good some not so good.

Works to the bank at Altham to try to stop the pavement eroding seem to have failed again as the erosion is now worse than before.

Major works at Whalley to stop one garden flooding using massive rock armour. This contractor also claimed he could do what he wanted and removed a gravel bank without permission.

Bridge works at Whalley on the A59 road bridge these seemed to have worked.

It appears that the numbers of Grayling in the Calder is on the increase. This shows the quality of water is improving.

Other issues involving the Calder see Calder Minutes.

One issue that has repeatedly been of concern to the Calder Group has been the effects of the Whalley Hydro, especially as this cannot be monitored as was the case with Settle. These concerns have been raised with the E.A. at the regular meetings.

The E.A. supplied details of their stock surveys but these raised further questions which are still being followed up.

The apparent fall in juvenile numbers in Sabden Brook is a major concern as it could indicate that the Hydro is preventing migration but without definitive data it is very difficult to get the E.A. to take action or monitor the situation closely.

These matters have also been taken up by RFCA Council and are being raised at the regular E.A. meetings.

I would like to thank those members who always turn up for meetings of the Calder Catchment. A lot of good information is shared.

Grant Hinks
Secretary Calder Catchment Group

Annual Hodder Consultative Report 2017-2018

May 2017 Meeting

At the first meeting of 2017 it was confirmed that the Consultative was responsible for the closure of the smolt ponds so discussions took place to finalise plans for their closure to ensure that they were not a hazard to anyone in the future. Bob Thomas informed the meeting that the Langdon pond had now been completed but the agreed £200 had yet to be paid. It was further agreed that a visit would be arranged to determine what actions were necessary to close the Dunsop Pond, especially as Chris Heap indicated that the feeding chamber would need filling in.

There followed some discussion on the best site for gravel deposition and this was followed by a full discussion of how gravels might be cleaned in Barn Gill, However, Vince Edmondson raised concern about the discharge of farm waste into the stream. It was then suggested that a site just below Slaidburn might be suitable so it was agreed that this would be investigated further.

The Secretary had received assurances from UU that the gravel from the Langden would begin in June but no specific dates had been agreed.

There then followed a lengthy discussion about the proposals submitted by LFFA which included:

- Depleted gravels, although it was noted that recent works above the Bridge at Newton and the have resulted in a substantial gravel bed that was used by numerous salmon last winter. The flood of 2015 have also deposited large amounts of gravel at the confluence of Foulscles Beck and the main river.
- An old weir/fish pass above Newton (just above Easington beck) constructed of large rocks/metal bars that is in a state of disrepair. This weir is thought to be an obstacle to fish migration and gravel movement. The gravel above is compacted.
- A groin above the bridge at Newton that is thought to be responsible for the deposition of large amounts of gravel beneath the bridge relief arch and above.

Discussions had taken place with the E.A. (DB) and their Geomorphologist (Emma) has visited the areas of note. Consent has been granted to remove the groin and the weir and introduce gravel in an area downstream of Newton.

The Trust had been approached about funding as the work would be expensive but unfortunately no funding was available for the Hodder at this time.

It was suggested that perhaps UU might be able to come up with some monies.

It was also noted that unfortunately the promised money from the sale of Witcherwell didn't materialise.

A meeting had been arranged with the E.A. to discuss concerns about the sale of Witcherwell and the fact that the promised monies would not be forthcoming.

Under any other business it was suggested that a business plan might be appropriate for the Consultative.

It was reported that two poachers had been apprehended fishing with rod and line above Newton Bridge

Meeting with E.A. re Witcherwell Monies

Reason for the Meeting

The meeting was convened after the sale of the Witcherwell Hatchery. The local fishing Associations, namely the Hodder Consultative & the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association, were present and represent the majority of fishing and riparian interests on Ribble & Hodder catchments. All were of the impression that the Witcherwell facility was the final product of compensation determined by two Acts of Parliament which enabled the construction of the Stocks Reservoir.

On completion of the reservoir, amounts of £4,000 & £2,000 were empowered by the Acts to compensate for loss of habitat for returning migratory salmonids to the Hodder and Ribble catchment. The dam was completed in 1930. The recipient of the compensation sums was the competent authority at the time of construction of the reservoir. Several changes in the name of the Competent Authority have been made over the years since the Acts were established e.g. Ribble Board of Conservators, Lancashire River Board, North West Water, National Rivers Authority and the current Environment Agency. However, we are not aware that any changes have been effected to the terms of the Acts of Parliament. Therefore, it is considered the product of the compensation awarded by the Acts is still valid since United Utilities are still operating the Stocks facility and are in receipt of revenues from the sale of water and resulting damage caused to fisheries.

The product of the sale, £78,000, has been deemed as an asset of the E.A. and determined by the E.A. Accountants to be the property of DEFRA. This is disputed by the Hodder Con. & RFCA on behalf of angling & riparian interests of the Hodder & Ribble catchments.

Background

The compensation funds determined by the Acts of Parliament were initially used by the competent authority at the time to create the Dunsop Hatchery and migratory fish were bred there and released in the headwaters of the catchment. In addition, migratory fish were sourced from Scotland to compensate for the losses due to the damming of the Hodder.

Sometime later, the decision was taken by the competent authority of the day, to sell the Dunsop Hatchery into private ownership. The sale details were known only to that authority at the time as indeed as to where the funds received from the new private owner were deposited. The Dunsop Hatchery became The Dunsop Trout Farm and was used for the commercial rearing of trout for the table and stock fish for angling clubs.

The NRA in recognition of the need to compensate for the considerable losses of migratory fish, created the purpose built salmonid hatchery at Witcherwell. This was considered by the angling fraternity to be the product of compensation mentioned in the Acts of Parliament.

For many years, the hatchery produced large quantities of salmonids at various life stages for release in the many streams in the Hodder catchment.

For a time, the Witcherwell facility was rented to Lakeland Smolts, the company rented the facility purely as back up for their salmon smolt rearing activities. It was never used by them for this purpose. The hatchery was then used by the Hodder Consultative for the rearing of smolts. The E.A. decided to cease their operations and close the hatchery but allowed for a short time, the Hodder Con. to use it in a smolt rearing process in conjunction with the Dunsop Trout Farm. Fish were trapped with the help and guidance of the E.A. The eggs were hatched and the fingerlings reared and subsequently stocked out to a number of smolt release facilities.

The Agency recently issued national stocking guidelines which meant the numbers of fish consented by the E.A. were not viable. Although the Agency did not technically stop the Hodder Propagation Scheme, the new guidelines and the withdrawal of E.A participation in the collection of brood stock, made it impossible to carry on.

Prior to the sale of the Witcherwell facility, the E.A. were petitioned by the Hodder Con & RFCA, to use monies raised by the sale of Witcherwell for projects to mitigate for the loss of habitat as mentioned in the Acts. Witcherwell was regarded as the remaining product of the compensatory sums intended to mitigate for the loss of migratory fish stock resulting from the construction of Stocks reservoir.

Local E.A. officers based at Lutra House had agreed that monies from the sale of Witcherwell could be used in various projects to be determined as beneficial to the Ribble catchment. The Ribble Trust would also feature in the facilitation of such projects.

Then came the bombshell. E.A. Accountants had informed the officers at Lutra House that Witcherwell was regarded as an asset valued at £80,000 and the product of the sale would go directly to DEFRA. In consequence, the local E.A. was in deficit in the sum of £2,000.

The Meeting

Steve Molyneux, on behalf of the Lutra House Fisheries Team, expressed regret over the confusion regarding the sum raised from the sale of Witcherwell, indeed, his officers had acted in good faith with regard to the intention to use the product of the sale of the former hatchery for improvement projects. In his view, there was nothing could be done to reverse the decision to change the ruling that all assets were the property of DEFRA and the matter, as far as the E.A. was concerned was closed.

Chris Heap for the Hodder Con. and supported by the R.F.C.A. said the matter was one of interpretation of the Acts of Parliament and open for debate. This was agreed by all parties' present. He also reiterated that all fisheries representatives believed that the E.A. officers based at Lutra House, had acted in good faith regarding the outcome of the sale of Witcherwell and genuinely believed the product of the sale could be used for projects to mitigate for loss of habitat in the catchment.

It was asked what support the E.A., in the spirit of the 5pt plan, might be able to offer to support for work on the catchments - particularly the Hodder, which appeared to have had an almost complete loss of salmon although there were increased numbers of sea trout?

In reply, it was pointed out that the E.A. only had the monies allocated to it for specific tasks that they had to undertake. Concern was expressed that the E.A., as a result of the continual cuts was in grave danger of being unable to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

Len Morris also said there were moral reasons as to why the compensatory payments were still applicable since the reasons for the inclusion in the Acts of Parliament were especially relevant today in view of the diminishing returns of migratory fish to the Hodder. He suggested that the water gathering activities of United Utilities were responsible for the depletion of spawning gravels and measures to increase the amount of gravels caught up in the various catch-pits at water abstraction points should be returned at various points to be identified in the Hodder. These gravels should be in addition to the small pilot scheme already operating in the Langden. In the spirit of the enabling Acts for Stocks Reservoir, he believed there should be a financial sum administered by a body representing all parties from angling interests, including the E.A. and United Utilities.

Chris Heap suggested Keith Ashcroft meet with his opposite number in United Utilities to see what could be done to arrest the current decline in salmon stocks in Hodder.

September 2017 Meeting

There was again much discussion about the implementation of gravels and the cleaning of gravel proposals. Jack Spees had confirmed that the suggested site on the Langden was a spawning channel and gravel was required further upstream to entice fish further up.

Jack also confirmed that there was an Agri Agreement now in place to improve the situation in Barn Gill but temperature was a real problem.

There was then discussion on how Tweedy's culvert could be improved on the Loud.

The meeting were asked to note pollution incidents on Easington Beck which had wiped out the beck – RRT had undertaken surveys and drawn a blank.

After due consideration it was agreed that there should be a membership fee for the Hodder Consultative and this was set at £50.

There was further discussion about the LFFA proposals.

The meeting received an update on the Witcherwell monies developments, which Fish Legal were looking into.

RRT outlined works planned for Rough Syke and funding had been secured for works with farmers on the Loud.

The Chairman indicated that he wished to relinquish the Chair at the next meeting.

March 2018 Meeting

The spawning channels on the Dunsop had been walked to ascertain what works were needed to improve their performance. It was reported that the main concern was the build-up of gravels at the entrance to the channels, which were restricting water flows.

The Treasurer presented the Association Accounts to the meeting and gave a detailed account of income and expenditure. The accounts were unanimously approved by the meeting.

It was noted that Whitewell had taken over the former Duchy fishing in the upper Hodder.

Regrettably, there was still no progress on the gravels situation despite repeated promises. To try and rectify the situation a meeting had been arranged by the E.A., involving themselves, the Hodder Consultative, Ribble Fisheries Consultative, and United Utilities,

LFFA reported that they had the necessary permissions and the funds to allow their proposals to be activated.

- RRT gave an update on their works in the Hodder catchment which included:
- Rough Syke Tree planting and fencing.
- Increased farm visits
- RRT and UU planning a major project in 2020 to regulate phosphate pollutions from Chipping SWT – pollution not related to agriculture.
- Greystone Weir is to be re assessed.

It was reported that Judge J.Rawkins had been approached by Len Morris about becoming Chairman of the Consultative. He then explained who J.Rawkins was and proposed that he be invited to become Chairman. This Proposal was endorsed by the meeting.

Bob Thomas
Hon. Sec. Hodder Consultative

Ribble Rivers Trust Report 2017-2018

2017/18 was a very busy year for RRT, after 2 years of planning and a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding we were awarded the grant in March 2017 and started delivering in April and May. This HLF project is our largest single programme of work to date. 4 years in duration, it includes 14 fish passage projects, the creation of 30 riparian woodlands and habitat schemes, a large grip blocking project, 15 wetlands, an education programme and wider engagement with the public on improving and protecting their rivers. In year 1 (2017) we delivered 6 of these fish passage projects, 13 woodlands, 7 wetlands and the grip blocking! More detail about this programme is available on the project website:

<http://ribblelifetogether.org/>

We have continued with our work to improve the water quality of the Ribble Estuary through engaging, advising and providing grants to farmers to reduce the amount faecal matter, nutrients, and sediment entering the estuary, which is important given that many of our angling quarry species swim through the estuary on their way upstream.

<http://ribbletrust.org.uk/projects/tidal-ribble/>

Diffuse pollution from agriculture continues not only to be a focus, but a growing focus of our work to improve the river. We have continued to work with the Loud Farm group, and are currently working with the farmers, the E.A. and United Utilities to develop a project that will commence in 2020 to significantly improve the Loud.

<http://ribbletrust.org.uk/projects/river-loud-farmers-group/>

This group is now complemented by another farm group in Ribblesdale, with whom we hope to develop a significant project to improve the Yorkshire part of the Ribble over the next 12 months. Our work with Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming also continues, providing advice and support to farmers on how infrastructure improvements (and land management) can be implemented to benefit the river and the farm

<http://ribbletrust.org.uk/projects/farm-advice/>

After a year of planning and consultation, we delivered another phase of flood plain works at Long Preston, setting back a significant length of flood embankment to improve riparian habitat, reduce erosion and improve water quality. This was significantly hampered by the wet summer, and works to fence off the length have only just completed, and some tree planting in consultation with Staincliffe Anglers will be delivered in 2018.

A problem on site on the River Roddlesworth (a tributary of the river Darwen) set back our large de-culverting and "close to nature" river channel project, which we now hope to deliver in 2019. In the meantime works have started on two other weirs on the River Darwen, and we hope that a recent funding application will see work to a third weir made passable this year.

<http://ribbletrust.org.uk/brilliance/>

2017 was the busiest year on record for RRT, and 2018 looks to surpass that. It is fantastic to see so much work being delivered by the Trust, but also by our partners. So a big thank you to the RFCA, the Angling Clubs, the E.A., United Utilities and all of our other partners who are too numerous to name here.

Our work is possible and effective with your and their support. If you can't tell from the number of links above, our website is a wealth of information on the river, and the work we have done, and are doing, to improve our river - well worth spending some time visiting!

Finally, our newsletter covering 2017 has received amazing feedback in terms of quality and information, we hope you have read it, and encourage individuals to join the Trust to support what we are doing, but also to find out even more about the difference we are making for our fish and our river.

**Jack Spees,
Director & Scientific Officer**

Environment Agency Annual Report 2017-2018

My sincere thanks to the Environment Agency staff for the provision of this data.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY SURVEY REPORTS FOR RFCA 2017

Fish Counters

The counter figures for both Waddow and Locks counters are displayed below. Please remember that the movements over the fish counter are indiscriminate of the species and the size splits listed in the table 1 are only estimates using a counter algorithm.

Table 1. Waddow Weir Fish Counts 2017

2017	Ups	Downs	Fish < 50cm ⁺	Fish > 50 cm ⁺
January	4	2	2	2
February	3	9	2	1
March	17	5	9	8
April	27	0	20	7
May	167	31	88	48
June	815	35	506	274
July	447	18	262	167
August	264	6	126	132
September	769	24	280	465
October	785	28	344	413
November	106	16	19	71
December	15	22	3	12
TOTALS	3,419	196	1,661	1,600

* These figures are net up counts (ups – downs) between 31st March and 1st December. Up counts only 1 Jan – 31 Mar and 1 Dec – 31 Dec (downs not subtracted due to kelt movement).

Table 2. Locks Weir Fish Counts 2017

2017	Ups	Downs	Fish < 50cm ⁺	Fish >50 cm ⁺
January	6	2	6	0
February	2	2	1	1
March	5	2	4	1
April	25	5	20	0
May	61	33	31	0
June	102	18	32	52
July	53	28	7	18
August	23	1	5	17
September	72	11	24	37
October	111	8	32	71
November	112	34	17	61
December	22	55	9	13
TOTALS	594	199	188	271

The fish counter at Locks weir worked well throughout 2017 and remains as part of the licensing conditions for the Settle weir Hydro scheme.

Rod Catch Summary

Unfortunately at the time of the completion of this report, the final rod catch data was not available to be included, however the net catch summary for the Ribble estuary for 2017 is displayed in table 3 below.

However, thanks to the Owners and Clubs, we do have an indicated catch for most of the river, and this we will use to validate the figures as supplied by the E.A.

Table 3. Ribble Catchment (Final) Rod Catch/Release Figures 2017 provided by the E.A.

River	Salmon catch	Salmon released	% Salmon released	Sea Trout catch	Sea Trout released	% Sea Trout released
Ribble						
Hodder						
Calder						

*These figures are not currently to hand

The net catch summary for the Ribble estuary for 2017 is displayed in table 4 below.

Table 4. Net Catch Summary 2017

	Method	Total	Weight (lbs)
Salmon	Drift	26	289
Sea Trout	Drift	0	-

Fisheries Surveys

Due to the favourable water levels throughout the summer months in 2016, a full complement of the quantitative sites were sampled on the Hodder. Only 1 of the surveys the other Ribble was missed. The results of all sites surveyed are shown in table 5 and 6 with the classification table displayed in table 7.

Table 5. River Ribble Quantitative Site Results 2017

		Salmon 0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Salmon >0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Trout 0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Trout >0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade
Long Preston Beck @ Holmbridge SD 842 582	2016	23.19	C	4.7	D	1.34	E	0	F
	2017	61.4	B	1.7	E	18.6	B	3.7	D
Swanside Beck @ A59 road bridge SD 774 455	2016	0	F	1	E	0.4	E	5.8	C
	2017	16.2	D	0	F	11.5	C	9.6	C
Cragghill Farm SD 807 707	2016	0	F	2.14	E	0.19	E	1.83	E
	2017	Not Fished							
R.Ribble @ Paythorne Bridge SD 831 512	2016	0.19	E	2.91	E	0	F	0.1	E
	2017	Not Fished							
River Ribble Hollins Barn SD 817 613	2016	0	F	0.13	E	0	F	0.1	E
	2017	Not Fished							
Swanside Beck @ A59 road bridge SD 774 455	2016	0	F	1	E	0.4	E	5.8	C
	2017	Not Fished							
R.Ribble @ Giggleswick Beck SD 811 634	2016	Not Fished							
	2017	Not Fished							

Table 6. River Hodder Quantitative Survey Results 2017

		Salmon 0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Salmon >0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Trout 0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade	Trout >0+ /100m ²	NFCS Grade
R. Hodder @ Slaidburn Green SD 713 523	2016	4.71	E	4.6	D	0	F	1.32	E
	2017	4.4	E	1.6	E	2.4	E	0.59	E
Langden Brook D/S Losterdale Confluence SD 632 511	2016	6.66	E	8.95	C	12.95	C	11.23	C
	2017	Not Fished							
R.Dunsop @ Footholme SD 65235 52430	2016	0	F	7.59	C	1.6	E	7.39	C
	2017	0.4	E	2.4	E	2.4	E	9.4	C
Croasdale Brook @ Slaidburn SD 712 526	2016	7.67	E	6.49	C	3.16	D	2.17	D
	2017	50.3	B	4.6	D	6.10	D	3.1	D

Table 7. The Densities (Number per 100m²) of Juvenile Salmon and Trout & Corresponding NFCS grades

NFCS Grade (Level 1 classification)	Salmon Densities (no./100m ²)		Trout Densities (no./100m ²)	
	Fry (0+)	Parr (>0+)	Fry (0+)	Parr (>0+)
A	>86	>19	>38	>21
B	45-86	10-19	17-38	12-21
C	23-45	5-10	8-17	5-12
D	9-23	3-5	3-8	2-5
E	0-9	0-3	0-3	0-2
F	0	0	0	0

Compiled by: Daniel Atkinson,
Analysis & Reporting Team, Environment Agency

Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association

Business Plan Review 2017-2018

RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANISATIONS DEALING WITH FISHERY INTERESTS AND ENVIRONMENT

Serious considerations have been given to looking at the problems of salmon in particular across the NW and this had meant that a close working relationship has been developed

Target: Work closely with all the groups involved in the Ribble Catchment e.g. Hodder Consultative, Calder Catchment Group, River Ribble Trust and Ribble Life.

Review: *We have continued to work closely with all groups. We continue to work closely with RRT under our Memorandum of Relationship with the RRT. We continue to be a visible presence at Ribble Life and working with them we have made critical responses to the consultations.*

Target: To work closely with all Fishery interest groups, e.g. AT, Salmon and Trout, NWATFCC to ensure a Ribble voice is heard and a NW voice.

Review: *We are members of all above and attend all meetings and contribute papers to all discussions - especially with the Eden, but with other principal Salmon River catchments. Working with the other Consultatives and the Angling Trust and S&TCUK there were follow up discussions and consultations following the seminar held at Lancaster University to examine the plight of the Salmon. Our two representatives continue to take an active role in the work of the Angling Advisory Group and have been heavily involved in the examination of the data used to classify the status of rivers. Jointly with other members of the NWATFCC we continue to explore ways to protect the future of the salmon and develop more appropriate models for stock assessment and Conservation targets. We have attended conferences on the status of salmon stocks and held many meetings with the E.A. and the Angling Trust.*

Target: To have a professional working relationship with the E.A. and act as a critical friend.

Review: *We have regular meetings with the E.A. to discuss a whole range of issues and try and plot a way forward. The outcomes and concerns are then shared with all members of RFCA. We have challenged the data that the E.A. use to determine the status of stocks at local, catchment, regional and national level. Where we felt there was an injustice or that a decision couldn't be verified we have sought legal advice and other professional assistance.*

Target: To work closely with the E.A. Teams on the ground particularly Fisheries and Pollution.

Review: *We continue to have good relations with the E.A. Teams locally and at Regional level. Our Pollution Officers and Anti-Poaching Officer continue to work closely with the E.A. and police.*

Target: To be involved in all consultations, bye laws or other issues affecting riparian rights.

Review: *We believe we have been involved in all consultations, We have continued to address concerns as they arise and have persuaded the E.A. that our opinions are worthwhile. We have worked with other national groups so as to provide guidance to our members and give robust response to each consultation*

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLUBS, RIPARIAN OWNERS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

Target: To constantly update our membership records and data base.

Review: *The data bases are under constant review and update*

Target: To push the importance of riparian rights.

Review: *We continue to seek to stress the importance of riparian rights,*

Target: To provide a service to all above by ensuring good communication of issues and a web cam service on the catchment.

Review: *Regular Council meetings, provision of single issue items, provision of speakers on topics, provision of webcams on the Catchment. Regular Newsletters to members.*

Target: To have a fully functioning website.

Review: *While efforts were made last year more was necessary. Further work will be done in the near future.*

RFCA ORGANISATION

Target: To ensure the RFCA is fit for purpose.

Review: *Officers frequently review structures and purposes. Financial accounting is carefully monitored. We have Pollution Officers and Anti-Poaching Officer. We now have a fully functioning anti-poaching data base. Regular poaching and pollution reports are produced. Members are kept informed on a wide range of issues and are encouraged to write letter where it is deemed appropriate.*

Target: To have an outline succession plan to ensure that the RFCA will continue irrespective whoever holds office.

Review: *Limited progress on this issue. Our new Chairman, J.Rawlinson took over from C.D.Hinks at the last AGM but C.D.Hinks was elected to the Council as a Rod and Line Representative so that his knowledge and expertise was still available to the Association.*

We still look to appoint a Vice Chairman and an Assistant Secretary as soon as possible

Our overall aim is to represent and fight for fishery interests on the Ribble Catchment.

Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association
Accounts to 31 December 2017

Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2017

	2017 £	2016 £		2016 £
Capital				
Balance brought forward	22,571	22,205		
Surplus for the year	2,181	366		
	<u>24,752</u>	<u>22,571</u>		
Represented by				
Fixed Assets				
Webcams: at cost				
Web-cam Waddow Weir - b/f	1,678	1,678		
Web-cam Jumbles - b/f	1,807	1,807		
Web-cam Settle Addition (After Settle AA Donation £150)	1,020	-		
Cost c/f	<u>4,505</u>	<u>3,485</u>		
Accumulated depreciation				
Depreciation b/f	(3,462)	(3,150)		
Depreciation @ 15%	(309)	(312)		
Depreciation c/f	<u>(3,771)</u>	<u>(3,462)</u>	734	23
Barclays Bank Plc current account	14,204	13,974		
Debtors	11,030	8,400		
Prepaid expenses	180	180		
Creditors	(1,396)	(6)		
	<u>24,752</u>	<u>22,571</u>		

The accounts were approved on 12 June 2018

Schedule of Association Subscriptions

	2017 £	2017 £	2016 £	2016 £
Angling Clubs and Associations				
Bowland Game Fishing Association	130		130	
Clitheroe Angling Association	-		-	
Lancashire Fly Fishing Association	130		130	
Manchester Anglers Association	65		65	
Mitre Anglers Association	130		130	
Settle Anglers Association	130		130	
Yorkshire Fly Fishers Club	130		130	
Prince Albert Angling Society	170		170	
Ribchester & District Angling Club	170		170	
Southport Fly Club	130		130	
Stonyhurst College	65		65	
Mid-Ribble Angling Society	-		-	
Ribblesdale Angling Association	-		-	
Whitewell Fishing Association	-		-	
Hyndburn & Blackburn Angling Association	170		170	
Loud & Hodder Angling Clubs	35		35	
Burnley Anglers	55		55	
Norbreck AA	35		35	
Bradford City Angling Association	170		170	
		1,715		1,715
Riparian Owners				
DAG Threlfall Estate	100		100	
Standen Estate	100		100	
Stonyhurst Estate	100		100	
Ellerslie Estate	100		100	
R S Wood	100		100	
J F Kay Estate	100		100	
Ribble Valley BC	100		100	
Lancashire County Council Estates	100		100	
Downham Estates	100		100	
Duchy of Lancaster Estate	100		100	
D Jones Estate	100		100	

Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association
Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017	2016		2017	2016
	£	£		£	£
Income			Expenditure		
Subscriptions			Subscriptions		
Angling Clubs and Associations	1,715	1,715	Salmon & Trout Association	60	60
Riparian Owners	1,200	1,200	Anglers Co-operative Association	5	5
Individual Subscriptions	2,899	2,919	Coastal Anti-pollution	3	3
			NW Fisheries Consultatives	50	50
			Angling Trust	55	55
			Administrative Expenses		
Donated mileage expense	1,359	1,859	Printing, stationery, postage, telephone & travel	787	501
			Website hosting & maintenance	120	-
Donations	10	25	Mileage expense	1,443	2,038
			Broadband Web-cam	1,080	1,080
			Repair damaged web-cam - Waddow Weir	250	-
			Electric - Winckley Cabin	12	-
			Miscellaneous Expenses		
			Ribble Rivers Trust	-	1,923
			Atlantic Salmon Trust Donation	100	100
			Legal re Winckley Lease	-	787
			Accountancy fees	462	438
			Gratuity	266	-
			Depreciation Webcam	309	312
			5,002		7,352
			Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	2,181	366
	7,183	7,718		7,183	7,718

Ribble Fishery

Migratory Fish: Annual Catch Statistics

Year	Salmon Catches			Sea Trout Catches		
	Rod	Net	Total	Rod	Net	Total
1944	163	610	773	304	-	304
1945	92	481	573	444	-	444
1946	83	932	1015	679	-	679
1947	46	774	820	569	-	569
1948	217	1770	1987	1164	-	1164
1949	99	1229	1328	792	-	792
1950	257	1714	1871	1342	-	1342
1951	48	1204	1252	316	-	316
1952	101	1166	1276	481	-	481
1953	87	291	378	488	-	488
1954	227	641	868	675	-	675
1955	51	346	397	130	-	130
1956	82	106	188	130	-	130
1957	88	360	448	373	-	373
1958	339	358	697	526	-	526
1959	33	476	509	91	-	91
1960	87	441	528	274	-	274
1961	72	146	218	488	-	488
1962	143	523	666	415	-	415
1963	208	992	1200	365	-	365
1964	114	745	859	240	-	240
1965	200	645	845	276	-	276
1966	362	845	1207	504	-	504
1967	173	1314	1487	180	-	180
1968	126	849	975	85	-	85
1969	47	756	803	120	-	120
1970	227	654	881	185	-	185
1971	108	260	368	307	-	307
1972	146	429	575	330	-	330
1973	359	518	877	540	-	540
1974	888	666	1554	628	-	628
1975	365	633	998	277	3	280
1976	375	633	1008	199	3	202
1977	315	514	829	382	2	384
1978	370	319	689	334	7	341
1979	550	649	1199	494	9	503
1980	956	725	1681	826	22	848
1981	704	810	1514	571	18	589
1982	462	252	714	513	26	539

Migratory Fish: Annual Catch Statistics cont.

Year	Salmon Catches			Sea Trout Catches		
	Rod	Net	Total	Rod	Net	Total
1983	338	432	770	526	55	581
1984	384	507	891	433	54	487
1985	339	395	734	602	44	646
1986	452	434	886	574	23	597
1987	586	508	1094	700	18	718
1988	713	839	1552	848	17	865
1989	202	502	704	96	22	118
1990	295	239	534	391	26	417
1991	383	206	589	631	24	655
1992	433	107	540	461	26	487
1993	660	195	855	810	25	835
1994	925	347	1272	952	70	1022
1995	329	160	489	431	22	453
1996	659	172	831	920	22	942
1997	293	69	362	952	20	972
1998	787	118	905	1635	16	1651
1999	624	210	834	1422	18	1440
2000	827	176	1003	1511	21	1532
2001*	349	130	479	499	37	536
2002	692	237	929	1282	15	1297
2003	556	155	711	1296	11	1307
2004	1442	295	1737	1294	32	1326
2005	1094	250	1344	1313	8	1321
2006	1054	119	1173	683	10	693
2007	1062	265	1327	1173	15	1188
2008	1368	64	1432	798	1	799
2009	1005	165	1170	1182	13	1195
2010	1160	95	1255	1460	34	1494
2011	904	98	1002	1044	6	1050
2012	909	53	962	1479	2	1481
2013	616	42	658	1153	4	1157
2014	605	48	658	1676	2	1678
2015	459	99	558	1443	2	1445
2016	432	52	484	1365	0	1365
2017	TBC	26		TBC	0	
2018						
2019						
2020						

*Season affected by Foot & Mouth

Membership Form & Bankers Order

Dear Prospective Member

Thank you for your enquiry about membership of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association. The aims of the Association are best summed up as:

“To safeguard and promote the interests of owners, lessees of fishing, and anglers, by developing sustainable fisheries and maximising the riverine environment through consultation with the environment Agency and other bodies with similar aims and objectives.”

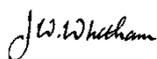
This is done through providing anglers and riparian owners with an opportunity, either individually or through their clubs to express their views on a range of angling issues. We publish regular newsletters so that members are kept up to date with developments within the Ribble catchment and further afield. Similarly, we operate a website providing information and access for members to a webcam (provided in conjunction with the Environment Agency) so that anglers can check the river conditions on their own computer.

Currently, individual subscriptions are £20 unless they are part of a whole club block subscription when they are £8.00.

In order to become a member please complete the form below and send it to the Secretary together with either your cheque or completed bankers order mandate.

Thank you for your interest and I look forward to welcoming you as a member of the RFCA.

Yours sincerely,



John Whitham
Honorary Secretary

Please enrol me as an individual member of RFCA. I enclose my first annual subscription by way of cash, a cheque, bankers order form (delete as appropriate).

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

e-mail:

Return to: J.W.Whitham, Pendleside, 58, Lingmoor Drive, Ightenhill, Burnley. BB12 8UY

BANKERS ORDER

To: Bank PLC

.....
.....

Account No.:

Please pay to Barclays Bank PLC, St. James St., Burnley, for the credit of RIBBLE FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION, Account No. 20 15 70 00746630 the sum of pounds (£ .00), the first payment being made on and subsequent payments on the first day of January in each year until further notice from me in writing, and debit the amounts so paid to my account. This order replaces any previous order for the benefit of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association (formerly Ribble Fisheries Association).

Date: Signature:

Name (BLOCKS).....

Address (BLOCKS).....

.....
.....

Postcode.....

Subscription Rates 2016 →

Individual (Minimum)	£20.00
Individual (Association En Bloc)	£8.00
Riparian Owner	£100.00
Stillwater clubs	£55.00
Clubs with up to 30 members	£35.00
With 31-50 members	£65.00
With 51-200 members	£130.00
With over 200	£170.00

N.B. Please return this form direct with your details slip to the Secretary

J.W.Whitham, Pendleside, 58, Lingmoor Drive, Burnley. BB12 8UY

who will send it to your bank at the address at the top.

REF: RFCA/DIS/BANKORDA/JWW/96
AMMENDE02/07, 3/09, 7/11, 7/15