

Fowey Rivers Association

Newsletter 2017

2016 has seen a significant step forward for the Fowey. We now have a salmon hatchery at Colliford and are in the process of securing the Treworkey estate water in the Draynes valley in perpetuity as a sanctuary. Hatchery first: you will see a hatchery timeline from Richard Grieve, hatchery manager, in this newsletter. As I speak we have over 22,000 ova and enough broodstock to achieve the contracted 30,000 fry. FRA Ltd now has a formal signed agreement with SW Water to manage the hatchery and SWW is providing £30,000 per annum to run it. Huge thanks to everyone who has been involved and contributed in getting this project off the ground. We are very fortunate in having a fantastic facility. This can only operate with the help and commitment of our volunteers, so heartfelt thanks to them. If anyone would like to be involved, please contact Richard.

Next, as previously mentioned, we are in the process of buying the Treworkey water in the Draynes valley. This will secure sanctuary water over half the Draynes valley. It would not have been possible without the grants provided by our 2 largest clubs. Safe spawning beds for our sea trout will ensure we continue to enjoy the excellent run we now have.

Counter figures for 2016 show that runs of both salmon and seatrout are down below the 10 year average. The declining salmon run is a worry and hopefully new IFCA netting restrictions proposed for the estuary will help. The NLO is up for review next year and we will be working to get it reduced to zero.

Due to cash flow we were unable to commission the fry survey this year. However, it will be undertaken next year, adding to our accumulated data. It will be interesting to see whether or not the work improving Ladyvale Bridge has made a difference. Coping work and bank improvement will also be undertaken over the winter by SWW as part of their commitment to improving the St Neot.

EA fishing returns from 2015 show a catch and release rate for seatrout of 75% and for salmon of 71%. It is important we continue to achieve these excellent results otherwise there is a real risk of an imposed 100% C&R under the new EA 'Five Point Approach' to restoring salmon in England.

Finally, I would again like to thank everyone who has helped and supported FRA and the river during the year. You are too numerous to mention but you know who you are. May I wish you all the compliments of the season and tight lines for 2017.

Bill Smith. Chairman

SOUTH WEST RIVERS ASSOCIATION – THE VOICE OF THE RIVERS

Along with the other 19 river associations in the region FRA both supports and relies on the work of SWRA – a key player at local, regional and national level. SWRA's work is increasingly important with reductions in Environment Agency staff and fisheries funding, and a diminishing number of salmon and sea trout anglers to influence political decisions affecting our interests.

Much of the Association's work is in support of the 20 individual member river associations, especially fighting developments potentially damaging to their interests - a sort of insurance scheme – the Fowey has benefited directly from our opposition to proposed trout farming in the sea and in Hawkstor Pit at the head of the Warleggan.

In addition to giving direct support to FRA on the hatchery and local netting, SWRA has been especially active in two areas directly affecting the Fowey:

National Salmon Strategy

The Environment Agency and Defra have adopted a Five Point Approach to restoring salmon stocks, including:

- Improve Marine Survival;
- Further Reduce Exploitation by Nets and Rods
- Remove Barriers to Migration and Enhance Habitat
- Safeguard Sufficient Flows; and
- Maximise Spawning Success and Juvenile Survival by Improving Water Quality

I am a member of a national group advising the EA on voluntary measures to increase catch and release numbers and improve survival of returned salmon. We are very clear that there should be no more mandatory restrictions on anglers who do so much to conserve salmon.

IFCA Byelaw Review

SWRA is actively lobbying to ensure that the current review of sea fisheries byelaws by the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority produces the best possible protection for salmon and sea trout in estuaries and inshore waters – we are not yet confident that the Cornwall IFCA is taking its responsibilities for salmonids as seriously as its counterpart in Devon and we may have to take our concerns up with the Minister, George Eustice MP.

Further Details

I am retiring as Secretary at the 2017 AGM in April after 13 years but intend to continue as a FRA Committee member if elected. We are fortunate that John Tisdale, another FRA member, is carrying on the work on IFCA byelaw review and that Bill Smith and Jon Evans will continue to represent the Fowey on SWRA Council.

Roger Furniss furniss740@btinternet.com

The 2017 AGM will be held on 19th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m. at Boconnoc thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Fortescue. Beer and pasties will be available and everyone is welcome.

Fowey Rivers Association officers

Chairman: Dr Bill Smith, Treasurer: Paul Jordan

Secretary: Jon Evans

Polgeel, Polbrock, Washaway, Bodmin PL30 3AN

01208 812447 / 07732 921015 [/jonrevans@aol.com](mailto:jonrevans@aol.com)

Website www.riverfowey.com

FRA Treasurer's Report: December 2016

The FRA finances have come under increasing strain during 2016. This reflects

- A reduction in the SWW grant income from £12,500 pa to £5,000 pa as the 5-year agreement for additional funding lapsed in April 2016. This equates to a 60% reduction in income for FRA. This reduction in income will considerably change the scope of work that the FRA is able to commission and fund going forward.
- With the decision to progress the Colliford Hatchery in April 2016 significant negative cash flows have occurred as FRA Ltd provided upfront funding for necessary capital purchases. These amounts have since been recovered from SWW.
- With the signing of the Colliford Hatchery agreement (In October 2016) FRA Ltd now receives payment for operating costs (capped at £30,000 pa) from SWW. *These funds are non transferable.*
- With the decision to purchase a large proportion of the Draynes sea trout sanctuary FRA capital reserves will be significantly depleted and the reduction in SWW grant income (see above) means that the capital reserve is unlikely to be replenished.

FRA Ltd has met its mandatory filings with HMRC and Companies House for the financial year to June 2015. Accounts for the year to June 2016 have been prepared and sent to the Company Accountants (Keen Dicey Grover) for approval and filing at HMRC and Companies house before the March 2017 deadline.

1. 2016 Income (1st January – 1st December 2016)

The FRA and FRA Ltd remain solely dependent upon the grant scheme from SWW and on donations from Clubs and private individuals for the income to fund its activities. Income from donations was significantly up at £1,280.00p and SWW grant payments during the period totaled £18,618.20p. * (Includes advance opex payments to January 1st 2017).

Total Income for the period was £19,898.20p.

Donations increased by 88% (year-on-year) due primarily to the generosity of the Restormel AC, LDAC, Glynn Syndicate and National Trust (Lanhydrock). Individual donations amounted to £150.00p. It is important to note that donations are key in sustaining the FRA - grant money from SWW *only* covers direct costs associated with river improvement projects and the hatchery. Overheads must be funded from our other income streams.

For those members who can make a donation there is a Banking Form to fill in at the end of this newsletter. Any amount is important in helping to sustain the FRA and the work it does.

2. 2016 Expenditure (1st January – 1st December 2016)

Total expenditure during the period was £15,776.74p and includes

- Second payment for WRT Fry Survey (2015 part II)
- Hatchery manpower costs and hatchery supplies,
- Legal costs *and*

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BANKER'S ORDER FORM

To the Manager

.....Bank

.....

.....

.....

Account Name.....

Account No.....

Sort Code.....

Please pay on the(day)
of.....(month).....(year)

and each month/year, thereafter, the sum of £....., until further notice.

To: Fowey Rivers Association Limited

At: Barclays Bank plc
Saltash Branch

Account No: 93991415.

Sort Code: 20-74-20

This cancels any previous standing order paid under the same reference.

SIGNED.....

DATE.....

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

Paul Jordan, Treasurer, Fowey Rivers Association Limited
Lower Hollycombe, Drift Lane, Twowatersfoot, Liskeard, PL14 6HH

Estuary netting Byelaw review.

As you are probably aware the Cornwall and Devon & Severn IFCAs have been reviewing the byelaws relating to the use of nets for fishing in our estuarine waters. Most of us would say, "not before time", given the significance of estuaries to the life cycle of both salmonids and bass. Given the critical status of the stocks of both salmon and bass, any legal or illegal, intentional or accidental netting of either species is potentially disastrous. The mortality of netted fish is virtually 100% even if returned to the water.

Both of our local IFCAs have consulted widely with stakeholders and are now considering their response. D&S seem to have acted very professionally and have elected to support the proposal to ban all forms of netting. This proposal will now go forward to DEFRA for approval, hopefully. Cornwall IFCA is somewhat behind in the process and a decision is expected in early December.

The proposed byelaws are not perfect from an angler's perspective but if accepted would be a massive improvement on the current situation. Many individuals from both the game and sea fishing communities have lobbied in support of the proposed byelaws. The FRA and SWRA have been actively involved in providing evidence in support of the proposals and particular mention must be made of Roger Furniss's work on our behalf in this respect.

We hope to be able to report some good news on this matter in the New Year

Dr John Tisdale

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- Overhead for the Company and Association (Insurance, Angling Trust Membership, SWRA membership, accountancy fees and other expenses).

3. Outstanding Commitments (as at 1st December 2016)

FRA Ltd has outstanding commitments for the Draynes sanctuary purchase (£15,000*) and the associated legal costs (est. £1,500). Additional commitments within the current reserve balance include manpower costs for hatchery activities in December (£1,970) and hatchery consumables/expenses (estimated at £300).

Total commitments (estimated) amount to £18,770.00p. (*A proportion of these costs will be reclaimed from the remaining balance in the FFRG grant reserve fund).

4. FRA Reserves (1st December 2016)

As at 1st December 2016 the cash balance (FRA and FRA Ltd) stands at £28,025.21p. The FFRG Grant Reserve balance is £9,641.00p.

Total Reserve is £37,666.21p, and after deducting commitments is £19,896.12p; a reduction of 26% year-on-year.

Paul Jordan Treasurer

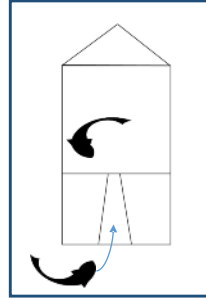
Colliford Hatchery Timeline

The Colliford Hatchery, built by South West Water and managed by the FRA, opened for business in October 2017. Richard Grieve is managing the hatchery on our behalf and we expect a successful outcome culminating in the re-population of the St Neot Stream.

Start

Broodstock collection – fish are collected from anglers who catch them using rod & line – or we collect the fish-trap at Twowatersfoot. We use both a tank in the back of a car or an insulated trailer-tank.

Collecting brood-



Nov

Oct

Sep

Stocking out takes place throughout August and September along the course of the St Neot River – at sites designated in conjunction with the EA.

The juvenile fish are now well-developed and ready to start their life in the river – and ultimately the sea once they reach Smolt stage.

Aug

Stocking out

Jul

Jun



The juvenile fish begin to feed – automatic, clockwork feeders ensure there is a constant supply of food.

As in nature the more dominant fish will take up the prime spots where food is most available.

This is when the **Fish Grading** process starts – and will go on for the remainder of the time in the Hatchery.

By removing the larger fish and moving them to another tank – the smaller fish get a better chance to develop.

The Hatchery layout changes several times during the year – so the right equipment can be used when it is needed and stored away when it is surplus to requirements.



Stripping and fertilisation

Stripping Fish is the process of mixing the eggs from the hen fish and the milt from the cock fish.

We use a process called 'Factorial Mating' where each hen fish is paired with 3 cock fish. This promotes a good genetic spread.

After fertilisation the eggs are laid down in egg trays where they will stay until they hatch



The hatchery timeline runs from brood-stock collection in October through to stocking out the resulting progeny in September the following year

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

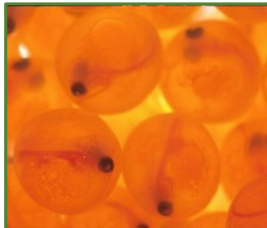
Apr

May

The eggs develop at a rate determined by the water temperature. The measurement of this is referred to as 'degree-days' Degree days are calculated by multiplying the water temperature and the length of time.
 $20 \text{ days} \times 10^\circ = 200 \text{ degree-days}$

Eggs will develop to 'eyed-ova' in 245 degree-days. They will hatch to the 'alevin' stage in a further 265 degree-days. The alevin to swim up stage takes further 290 degree days

Growing on



As the alevin use up their egg-sack they will rise in the water column looking for food – they gulp air from the surface of the water to fill their swim bladder and become known as 'swim-up fry'

Citizen Science and returning salmon



'Citizen Science' is one of the latest buzzwords used to describe those volunteer's who dedicate time to helping local rivers and fisheries. However, a wider group of people are now becoming actively involved beyond fisherman and the inclusion of scientific data, evidence, training and equipment allows volunteers to provide a greater role in protecting rivers locally.

One such example is 'The Riverfly Partnership' which is formed by a dynamic and successful network of organisations across the UK, hosted by Salmon and Trout Conservation UK, made up of conservationists, anglers, scientists, watercourse managers and people with an interest in their local river. The premise of the partnership is to establish a network of interested people who monitor their local rivers and streams for freshwater invertebrates. These are organised by the establishment of **Monitoring Hubs** which Westcountry Rivers Trust are now accredited to run. Trained volunteers are then able to form **Monitoring Groups** who will have shared responsibility to monitor their chosen river.

Freshwater invertebrates are excellent indicators of water quality, with most pollution sensitive invertebrates only being found in healthy river systems, therefore declines in water quality are reflected in declines in invertebrate diversity and abundance. Data can be collected across the catchment by '*Citizen Scientists*' and if results fall below an expected threshold, which can be benchmarked over time, a '**triggering process**' can begin to allow reaction to problems via the Environment Agency, who are the competent authority in the UK on water quality. Westcountry Rivers Trust are currently providing training for local groups including on the Tamar and there are plans to make this training available next spring on the Fowey catchment to establish a monitoring group.

Elsewhere on the Fowey salmon fry have been found on the Lerryn at Couch's Mill where a weir was removed in 2015. This is very encouraging news as salmon fry have not been found here for at least 2-3 years and it is thought that the removal of a significant barrier has allowed salmon to move more easily upstream and spawn in available gravels.

Upstream Thinking continues in the Fowey catchment, which is tackling issues such as soil erosion, slurry storage and bankside erosion through fencing. Water quality monitoring is also underway using a mobile kit to pinpoint areas of concern in the catchment.

Giles Rickard, Westcountry Rivers Trust- Senior Land and Fisheries Officer