

Update from Hutton Rudby FFC on the 2014

The Tees Rivers Trust has continued the work to improve the wild life habitat of the River Leven at Hutton Rudby, described previously, through the 2014 season. Approximately a half mile now remains to be completed next season. The Trust has also continued its campaign to reduce the silt load in the River Leven and has started a programme of work to eliminate non-indigenous invasive plant species along the River Leven. All this work needs to be considered when assessing the latest catch returns as evidence for any improvement in fishing quality.

The latest key statistics for the catch returns by Hutton Rudby Fly Fishing Club Members for the last six years now include the data for the 2014 season and are shown below:

| | 2009* | 2010* | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|--|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Total number of members: | 66 | 56 | 52 | 52 | 48 | 46 |
| Number of potentially active members: | 58 | 49 | 44 | 44 | 40 | 38 |
| Total hours fished by members: | 882 | 582 | 497 | 685 | 554 | 600 |
| Average river occupancy : (angling hours/25x7x5 hours) | 1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| % of members who fished <3 times: | 40 | 32 | 32 | 42 | 48 | 49 |
| Total number of fish stocked: | 400 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total number of stock fish caught: | 185 | 103 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % of 400 stock fish caught: | 46 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stock fish caught as a % of total catch: | 13 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % of members who caught < 3 stock fish: | 85 | 82 | 100 | 100 | n.a. | n.a. |
| Total number of trout caught: | 1248 | 574 | 861 | 1282 | 874 | 2058 |
| Average number of fish caught per member: | 35 | 20 | 32 | 28 | 31 | 94 |
| Average number of fish caught per angling hour: | 1.6 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.6 | 3.4 |
| Average size of native trout caught (inches): | 7.5 | 6.7 | 7.3 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 7.2 |
| Number of trout >10" caught: | 231 | 51 | 121 | 130 | 8 | 244 |
| Native trout >10" as % of total catch: | 16 | 8 | 14 | 11 | 10 | 12 |
| Maximum number of fish caught by a member: | 206 | 141 | 222 | 221 | 194 | 644 |
| Maximum average catch rate by a member: | 4.6 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 6.0 |
| Number of grayling caught in the season: | 0 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 7 | 45 |

*400 11" to 13" brown trout stocked in 2009 and 2010.

In 2014 river levels were exceptionally low for much of the fishing season so fish were not easy to catch. Nevertheless the total number of fish caught and the average catch rate were the highest by a long way for the 6 years for which we have records. This has been partly, at least because we had some very keen, very skilful anglers fishing this season: seven members caught

85% of the total catch of 2058 fish. However the catch returns for 2014 are certainly encouraging and in particular:

- The number and % of the total catch for trout greater than 10” long in 2014 are comparable with those in 2009 and 2010, when the river was stocked.
- The total number of fish caught was 65% higher than the previous highest total in 2009.
- The average catch rate for all members was 100% higher than for previous years.
- 25 grayling less than 4” long were caught, providing the first evidence that grayling are breeding in the River Leven.
- A member reported catching a fish believed to be a seatrout.
- A guest angler caught a confirmed salmon parr showing salmon are breeding in the river – adding to the evidence provided by an E.A. electrofishing survey which found salmon in the River Leven in 2011.

There is no doubting the need for reliable statistics but the views of our members on the quality of their fishing are the final judgement on our work. Throughout the season e-mails from and between members has indicated some very happy anglers – with photographs of good and interesting caught fish:



On one cast!



Seatrout?

So at the end of the 2014 season we feel we have good reason to believe that our decision to stop stocking and the subsequent work on the river habitat are benefitting our members and it is worth while reflecting on the help the Club has had to achieve this:

- The Environment Agency strongly recommended the use of fishing logbooks to inform our stocking policy. It is this which has provided the evidence to drive the work in the right direction.

- The Wild Trout Trust advised the work that should be done to improve the river wild life habitat.
- The Environment Agency gave a generous grant for the work.
- The Tees Rivers Trust has carried out the work to date very effectively.
- Hambleton District Council has given a grant so that the work can be continued and extended into 2015. The Rudby Parish Council was strongly supportive of the Club's application for this grant and of other Club activities.

Our experience is that it is highly beneficial to a small fishing club to seek help from all these organisations, whose contributions have all been essential to the improvement of its fishing and we are pleased to have this chance to express our gratitude to them.

John Gifford, December 2014
