

RUTLAND WATER FLY FISHERS

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April 2002 Newsletter

The season opened with the most perfect weather imaginable with cloudless skies, warm sun & light winds from the Southeast. This is quite a good direction for most of our local lakes. It opens up plenty of bank and spreads people out so that one place doesn't get too much hammer on the first day.

With the water temperature approaching 10 deg.C, the fish were quite likely to be active from the off: and so it proved with the first day figures showing what could be an all time record of seven fish per return. This was mainly attributable to the perfect weather and plenty of stock-fish. There was a tremendous turn out of anglers during the holiday.

We were spoilt for choice at Rutland this year with fish found in places as far apart as Tim Appletons and Normanton Church, Sykes Lane and Gibbett Gorse. However it was soon clear that "hot spots" were developing.

A services bank match gave a very good return and a number of anglers caught their eight fish limits containing a smattering of overwintered fish.

Very gratifying is the large number of newcomers to the sport this year. The writer was able give some of them a helping hand with casting and one or two eventually caught their first fish unaided.

Most consistently productive places seem to be the Stones and Three Trees/ Finches with a good smattering of fish in other areas.

One or two overwintered fish are showing up. At least some of last years December "skinflints" appeared to have wintered ok and are now in good shape and averaging 2¼ lb. There are one or two of these in the shallower areas and some larger specimens have also been found in the main basin. So, with these easterly winds some of these could turn up on the Dam or Fantasy Island. In some cases, especially where people don't wade, the fish are right under your feet! However, they are not yet showing on the surface in any numbers during the day. Although on the very warm evening of Wednesday 3rd there was an extensive rise in the Green Bank/ Stones/Old Hall area to a tiny olive buzzer.

Best methods from the bank seem to be heavy or "metallic" buzzers fished deep and slow on long leaders: then speeding up the retrieve prior to "lift off"

The writer has used the following unit on a twenty-foot leader with much success. 12 Black Buzzer Top Dropper, Bloodworm size 8 middle and size 8 black metallic buzzer on the point as an anchor. Then a diawl bach on the point for when they come up in the water. This system has also worked at Draycote and Grafham. It is very important to grease the tip of your fly line to take advantage of the wave to activate the nymphs while static, slow down the drop and keep your flies out of the rocks and roots.

Initially fish were feeding on sticks & stones as per last December. However, after this warm first few days they seem to have settled into some sort of pattern. In the shallows of the North Arm, bloodworms: in the South mainly a very tiny olive buzzer with odd bloodworms & Hog louse

The quality of stockfish is superb and with these abnormally high water temperatures are fighting like tigers. Interestingly, they seem to come in a variety of shapes and colours and are silvering up quite quickly.

The water remains some 18 inches down from top level but with the pumps on this could rise a little. Consequently, in these low water conditions, the water can get quite dirty in strong crosswinds. So look for off shore winds or stony banks. These are, it seems the most productive areas anyway.

The new stockie Browns are lovely fish with red spots and golden undersides and average about 1 ¾lb. Some resident browns have been caught. These are more reminiscent of fresh run Sea Trout being silver as smolts with "X" markings rather than spots.

How do you identify the "overwintered" rainbows? Well, when you gut them at home or in the gutting room - not on the bank please - they will be found to have no white "puppy fat" around the gut. The gut of overwintered fish is small

and purplish in appearance with the stomach the most prominent organ. This is the most reliable method of identification. External identifying features are a well-forked full tail often with a silver bloom on the rays. A very silvery appearance all over and generally slimmer than a stockie and often a well filled stomach. They have been in there all winter and know where the best feeding is to be had! Their diet being mainly snails & bloodworms.

Best in season fly patterns have been Black buzzers, bloodworms, diawl bach in the larger sizes, black & green lures and of course the ubiquitous Dawsons Olive.

Some season's back the writer was fishing on the Stones and his neighbour was catching steadily. A polite enquiry revealed that he was using an olive. The writer dutifully set up his leader with an olive nymph on the point and a Greenwells on the dropper. After another fruitless twenty minutes, during which time our friend had taken two more fish, the offending "olive" was produced by this well known season ticket holder and proved to be a size 6 Gold Head Dawsons Olive! So, it pays to ask all the right questions if you want the whole answer! Good luck to him! This seems to be a very effective lure pattern.

The tying is as follows: -

Gold bead head, Olive Marabou wing, Blue jay or kingfisher substitute throat, olive body over ribbed with gold tinsel, tail yellow or orange marabou. Best in size 8/10 long shank hook

The Ospreys have arrived and have been seen in both arms during the week. Next, listen out for the nightingales which are due about now and which can normally heard in Gibbett Gorse, Barnsdale & Hambleton Woods. The copicing of these plantations, including Armley Wood, which is now in progress, should greatly improve the wildlife habitat. Berrybut spinneys have now been "gridded off" from farm stock so as to allow the wildflower population to re-establish under the trees.

The bluebells are already showing a blue haze in Hambleton Wood

Boats

The boats are still catching well after an opening day bonanza. Best spots seem to be Sykes Corner, Yellowstone, Green Bank/Stones & Barnsdale. The usual methods are working. Mainly lures and the dreaded "blobs" on fast sinking lines. However those prepared to sit it out, nymphs on floaters and sink tips are also worth a try.

The Fishing Lodge catering facilities are superb and the writer's bacon buttie contained what looked like a whole side of bacon plus side salad! We wish Noel the boss and Dirk & Camille Op de Beeck - the catering managers every success. The writer is trying to persuade Dirk to try his hand with a fly rod!

Discussions are in hand for RWFF hopefully to avail itself of this facility for future Winter functions with attendant buffet.

Junior Member starts the season with a bang.

On the second day of the season Luke Shevlin aged 13 from Normanton had the shock of his life when he latched into a huge fish while boat fishing in the corner of the Old Hall Bay. The fish, which turned out to be a Rainbow weighing 10lb 8oz, was caught on a Silver "Blob" dressed by Luke on a barbless hook fished with two other droppers. Luke said that the fish fought hard for about ten to fifteen minutes and was finally netted by his boat partner Andrew Bell. The fish was caught under blazing sun in a flat calm. On examining the fish in the net Luke noticed somebody else's orange fritz blob. The frustrated owner of this orange version turned out to be Paul Wild who had an encounter with this same fish while fishing on his own in a boat near the buoy at the top of the Green Bank less than twenty four hours previously. While retrieving the drogue the fish had time to go round the mooring rope of the buoy and break free. Paul took it all in good heart.

This is by far the largest fish weighed in for the junior trophy and certainly one of the largest Rainbows entered by any member in the club's history. Terry Humphries has since smoked the fish for him.

For any further big fish catches the new 2002 specimen catch return forms are to be found by our notice board at the Lodge. See details of the trophies fished for during the season in the back page of your membership card.