

Rutland Water Fly Fishers



www.rwff.org.uk

April 2009 Newsletter

Fishing Report April 2009—Opening Day

Picture the scene: sunrise, a flat calm, birds singing, fish rising, a new super pontoon and the hum of insects. Sounds like an idyllic land of one's dreams.

No! Actually, this was Rutland Water on opening day. Ospreys in residence, chiffchaffs singing and the sighting of martins: all heralds of spring. It was a bonus that the fishing at this early hour was commensurate with the ambience.

Rutland Fishing Update ...

Following a very dry month the water level has gone down about a foot from top level. However we were still able to fish from dry land in many places.

The water is beautifully clear with a carpet of silkweed and all in all looks very fertile.

With such a big turn out following last season's great fishing, we were lucky in having the ENE wind which opened up most of the lake. So, no

one place got hammered. This still left plenty of virgin banks which will be available with a change of wind.

Fish were caught widely with only a few apparently blank spots: notably the Green Bank. The best of the fishing was up to 10am and after 6pm when they returned to the bank. There was no special pattern. Fish were caught on everything from black & green lures to copper buzzers.

JW tried for an hour or two with various dries without reward. Yet, a nymph or lure fished less than a foot below the surface, got immediate attention. It was nice to see a number of newcomers to the sport catching: two at least near JW caught their eight fish limits: all within 15 metres of the bank!



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There were a smattering of overwintered fish, lovely torpedo shaped specimens, fully finned with a bloom in the tail. There was no doubt when you hooked one of these as they had no trouble in taking you down to the backing! They seemed most likely to turn up last thing when everybody had gone with their limits of stockies!

It is many years since we caught such avidly feeding early season fish. They were almost without exception stuffed to the gills. The main diet was buff coloured daphnia, Corixa, tiny buzzers, fry, small olive and neutral and green coloured larvae and terrestrials: and in one case eyed ova.

The 20,000 Stock fish introduced pre-season are of excellent quality, ranging up to 4lb and are all joining in this feeding bonanza. (above right shows Nigel & Jamie stocking just below Normanton Church)

The close up photo below of the spooned contents of a fish caught by our Chairman, shows up clearly the variety of their diet. This must be one very interesting side of the sport missed by the catch & re-release angler.

This availability of food must to a



great extent have been engendered by the presence of weed beds in 2008 and consequent die back from that season. It is so good to see the Corixa back. It was these creatures that gave us such good sport on the Burley Reach between 1996 and 2000. If the fish keep feeding at this rate the survivors could reach 5lb by the backend of the season. Wow!

It does seem that the fish feed very well at low temperatures in Rutland. The marginal water temperature stands at 6.5 deg C (44F) in old money. This was a quick recovery from the icy 2 deg C recorded in mid February following the snow melt. 16 deg C, reached normally by mid June, seems to be the temperature cut off point for bank fishing. However in the last two wet cool summers the bank fishing has lasted a little longer. Then it is time to take to the boats!

If there was a prize for the smallest fish then JW should have won it with a 1lb fish! It was a perfectly formed overwintered or maybe semi-wild. More importantly, it made a delicious supper!

It was disappointing to hear some "anglers" boasting of catching up to 30 fish - equivalent of five limits - on



the first day. How about "eight fish & move" for "catch & release" anglers. What do you members think?

However, it was great to see so many friends and acquaintances on the bank again. This is a great social get together and combined with perfect weather conspired to make April 1st 2009 a memorable opening day.

Chris Elliott – Taxidermy - Thursday 19th February 2009



Chris brought in some breathtakingly "look alive" samples of his work including a Scops Owl, Snowy Owl and a Pike.

Chris gave us a brief history of taxidermy. First attempts were made around 1850 period, but were of inferior quality. He then outlined the rules regarding taxidermy as instituted by DEFRA and details relating to the sale of existing work. It was interesting to hear that if you come across a dead otter e.g. as a road kill it is illegal to pick it up.

Chris gave us a demonstration of preparing a bird for taxidermy and the need to have a detailed knowledge of its body structure. The material now used for filling out the

prepared body is "wood wool". Body grease is removed by tanning and the bird allowed to dry out. He suggested that you don't try drying small animals for taxidermy in the microwave as they are inclined to burst!

Now the all important bit to us ... fish. These are his guide lines so as too keep the fish intact:

- Handle it as little as possible to avoid removing scales.
- Freeze the un-gutted carcass – laid flat - as soon as possible
- Take plenty of pictures as soon as possible after capture

He then gave details of preparation for mounting. Fish apparently take longer to mount than birds & animals. Colouring is now done with an air brush & water based paint. Highlights & spots are done manually. He had set up everything from catfish to small roach (mainly



accompanying a pike as prey). He gave us an idea of costs: An 8lb fish could set you back £750 – with bow-front case £950. It was interesting to learn that good quality work appreciates in value over time. All creatures mounted last



RWFF's



WADHAM TROPHY

(Members Only)

**EVENING BANK MATCH, FRIDAY
15th MAY 2009**

**BOOK IN AT THE LODGE FROM 1700
FISH 1800 HOURS – 2130 HOURS**

WEIGH IN BY 2200 HOURS

8 FISH LIMIT

PRIZE FOR BEST BAG

PRIZE FOR BEST FISH

CAKES & ALE at 2200 HOURS

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longer in a case rather than exposed to air.

He showed us a variety of precast models in polystyrene including a stoat. He has mounted Wallabies, Flora, Eels & Snakes but was not too keen on setting up domestic pets. He related the story of the family who had their pet pug mounted. It looked so real that the owners mistook it for their live one which they thought had come back to life!

Small birds are normally freeze dried to preserve them. He outlined his career in the trade adding that he has always regarded taxidermy as an art form.

Martin Cottis – New Zealand – Thursday 5th March 2009



Following a one year sojourn down-under, Martin gave us an enlightened view of New Zealand, its scenery, rivers, people and climate with particular emphasis on the South Island.

We had breath taking scenic views and mouth watering pictures of crystal clear rivers from rushing torrents to quiet shallow streams.

These rushing torrents were no surprise to Martin given the amount of annual average rainfall of around 120" - if we get more than 25" it has been a soak: some other parts of the island receiving up to twice this amount.

Martin preferred the rivers but warned of the necessity, due to the risk of getting lost in the dense bush to stick rigidly to the riverside "paths". You should also avoid what they called the "bush lawyer: a prickly climber in which it is easy to get entangled.

Accommodation was in the form of rentable homes resembling square Nissen huts! Coal mining seemed to be the main industry – not sheep as one is led to believe! The locals eat mainly steak!

The beaches are strewn with log litter and bathing is prohibited in most areas due to the dangerous inshore currents. But you can go on Whale or Hector's Dolphin watches. Martin and his family were lucky enough to witness killer whales teaching their calves to hunt!

There was little evidence of what we call health & safety: as witnessed when they passed a rocky outcrop about to be blown up! There are also disused mines which abound in interesting insect life including giant spiders and are a regular spot for visitors apparently at their own risk.

Breeding Birds

These are apparently few and far between.

Flora

There were masses of Fox Gloves and of course the national emblem – the “Tree Fern” up to 40 ft tall.

Fishing

A \$65 licence allows you to fish some 95% of inland waters. Although some were reserved for the Maoris for which you needed a separate licence. After passing them by, Martin found that the highland lakes were free fishing and offered some very good sport.

Whitebait Bashing

This was aimed at the swarms of fry of a local native fish and leads to an annual pilgrimage for many with some Heath Robinson or sophisticated and hi-tech equipment for their capture. It is interesting to note that it is illegal to sell game fish in New Zealand.

We visited some rivers where there was little fly life but the fish depended on terrestrials such as cicadas for their diet. When fishing up a river you were most likely to find the best fish – Browns to 10lb – at the eye of pools. Eels apparently can weigh 90lb. These and many other fresh water & sea-water fish are caught on steak.

Tackle

A rod length of around 9' #5/6 was suitable for most fishing. Martin suggested taking spinning kit as well, mainly for sea fishing. You need to be prepared to walk long distances during a day. With trout this size and such wonderful scen-

ery it must be well worth the effort. You can of course join the wealthy and do it by helicopter! Unfortunately there are very few fly fishing tackle shops here: so come well kitted out.

Dry Fly on still waters in the UK

Martin indicated that this method was ideal for beginners as they can see the action and any nervous water around the fly and the fly is much easier to cast.

Martin recommended #4 rod for best presentation: the lightness of the tackle allowing for more confident takes.

He reflected the view of many of us that you should keep quiet in a boat and not bang box lids or dump the anchor etc. He drew attention to the lack of Olives at Chew. He then passed around his fly boxes for our perusal – interesting selection.



This was a very enjoyable evening given by one for whom catching fish was not the essential element but the enjoyment to be got from being in the fresh air and amid wonderful scenery with the family: who proved to be very competent anglers!

Pre-season Dinner – Fox & Hounds - Exton

This was a very pleasant occasion in a very nice ambience with excellent food. We would like to thank one member of their staff for helping us in with the Trophies.



John Maitland thanked Sean Cutting for making the arrangements with the hotel and then went on to present the prizes assisted by John Wadham.

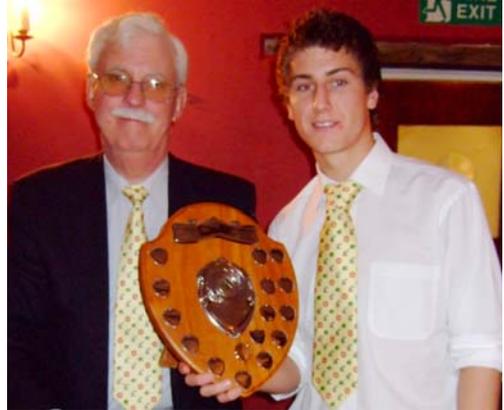


Prize List

The Trout & Salmon Trophy for the best Brown of the season was won by Mike Barrett and received on his behalf by Jayne Alecock as

he was away in Australia visiting his Brother in law with no fishing!!!

The Trout Fisherman Trophy for the best Rainbow was won by Jim Watts and received on his behalf by Peter de Kremer.



The Fario and the Mike Ellis junior trophies were won by Tom Cooper (shown above).

The Loch Style Trophy was won by Paul Wild & Nigel Goodson and received by Paul Wild (below).



The Loch Style best fish trophy was won by Phil Brown.



The Loch Style Runners up were Gordon Bloodworth & Al Owen and received by Gordon Bloodworth (above).



Taylor & Andy Wells was received by Roy Taylor (above).



The Wadham Trophy was won by Paul Wild (above).

The Cutting Trophy was won by Phil Brown.

Junior member Angus Smith had weighed in two good rainbows for the junior trophies and as runner up for the Mike Ellis Trophy was awarded a tackle voucher for his efforts.

The Hanby Cup was won by Roy



Future dates for your diaries as printed in membership books ..
 Wadham Trophy - evening members only 'bank match' on Friday 15th May 2009 - see the poster.

Cutting Trophy - evening members only 'bank match' on Friday 5th June 2009.



RWFF's Litter Pick 2009

Twenty members of Rutland Water Fly Fishers and their families shown above turned out on an overcast but mild Sunday morning for their annual litter pick from the around the shores of Rutland Water.

Neil and his staff at the Waterside Restaurant, Normanton provided an excellent breakfast before the off.

John Seaton - Anglian Water Services Senior Warden then briefed us on the safety aspects of the job. Some 30 bags of litter were collected.

RWFF is sponsored by Anglian Water Services Ltd and the proceeds donated to The East Midlands Immediate Care Scheme (EMICS). RWFF and Anglian Water would

like to thank all those who took part. Photographs were taken by Jonathan from Rutland Times/ Stamford Mercury.

Fishing Report Update ...

A week after opening the fish seem to have fallen into a pattern of feeding. Fish caught up to 10am had empty stomachs. Whereas those caught after 4pm had well filled stomachs. This is associated with the prolific hatches of tiny buzzers and Corixa activity and the fish coming into the banks after grazing on daphnia in open water and warming of the surface.

Just wading into the margins caused Corixa to fan out across the bottom. This could bode well for the shallows of the North arm later.

Stockie Bay, Sykes Monument, Normanton, Old Hall Point and Yellowstone seem to be the most produc-

tive areas. On the 7th an angler from South Yorkshire took his eight fish limit from the bank in Sailing Club Bay.

With such mild weather fishing into a light wind has been most productive. And with warmer water at your feet will keep fish close in. On cold days fishing with the wind at your back is likely to be more productive.

The fish are gradually taking more interest in what's on the surface: especially early and late.

A number of roach fry can also be seen where the wind is coming in. These have featured in their diet recently.

Last October's stockies have survived the winter. They are torpedo shaped, average about 1lb 12oz but are not total bars of silver. They are spotted, fully finned and with a slight bloom in the tail. However, the strength of their fight gives them away as does the absence of fat in their gut. This is probably the best survival rate for many years.

Strong winds with a max day temperature higher than the lake temperature will warm the water better than anything else and should galvanise the larger overwintered fish into action. Fish like one recently caught from the bank by Leon Smith. This fish was in peak condition and weighed around 4lb.

Boats

Like the bank anglers they have had a good time with most activity centred on the main basin.

Mitigation works

The bund at Tim Appleton's is nearing completion. More 'info' will be available in the next newsletter.

Fly Tying by John Maitland "Try a Dry"

How many of us regularly use a dry fly from the bank? I often do once the fish are feeding near the surface or in shallow water and get some good Trout caught on them, up to 4½ lb here last year.

This is a dressing which has caught a lot of fish when they are taking Black Buzzers near the surface. I remember John Wadham getting a 5½ pounder off the Stones one May on a size 14 I'd given him!

- Hook: Size 12, 14 or 16, but I will generally use a #14.
- Thread: Black 8/0.
- Body: Tying thread, ribbed fine pearl Mylar or silver wire.
- Thorax: Florescent Red Tying thread, I will use just a few turns to give a thin collar.
- Wing: I use the tips of 4 Cul de Canard plumes, natural Grey is best.



Notes: Firstly tie in the CDC and cut off the waste to leave a foundation for the Thorax. Use a reasonably strong hook, Kamasan B830, #14 will help the fly 'sit up' in the water just at the right angle to match the hatch.

Water Aid - Wednesday/Thursday/Friday - 10th/11th/12th June 2009

This is our opportunity to show to the world and those who would chose to interfere in our recreation that we care more about the needs of underdeveloped countries rather than just filling our bags with fish. Over the years we have helped to raise over £100,000 for this charity from this one event alone. RWFF have also been awarded the Voluntary Action Rutland Trophy for our services to local charities. In outline, the aim of Water Aid is to show other countries how to make the best use of their water resources and teach them the basics of sanitation

RWFF involvement

We had a very good turn out last year and this year we will again be featured in the press. At least thirty boatmen are needed on the Friday - but, the more the merrier. As boatmen you will be going out with novices. They are trying to do this on a one to one basis. An area will be set aside for the casting clinic in the field below the main Normanton car park where casting volunteers should assemble: all those needing instruction will be sent here on the day. You don't need to be a professional for the casting sessions. Just teach them the basics including safety aspects e.g. Eye protection, hat, life jackets & boat handling.

Tackle will be available from AWS on the day and for the casting clinic. The organisers want to avoid two novices going out in a boat together unaccompanied - a recipe for disaster - but at the same time want to get them out on the water on the day. Only we can do this. There is a trophy presented to the most successful volunteer boatman. A meal will be provided after the match. You will be apprised of progress. An itinerary will be sent to you as soon as this is in place

If you can help, please return the tear off slip at the bottom this page and post it to John Wadham at 6 Mendip Road, Oakham, LE15 6NN. Or contact: www.awwaffic.org. Any sponsorship from companies for any members work would be very welcome; as would items for the auction sale & raffle prizes. To contact John Wadham: 01572 771092 or mobile 07762 607630 or email john@ewadham.fsnet.co.uk

-----cut here-----

I can help on the following days:

	No. of helpers required	Tick
Wednesday June 10th		
Make up goodie bags/rods etc	6	()
Thursday June 11th		
Make up rods/fly boxes	6	()
Casting clinic till 1930 hours		
Friday 12th June 12th		
Boatmen – fish 1000 - 1700	30	()
Name & Address		

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