



April early morning at Barnhill Creek



Photo: Tim Lawson

## Water Level

We have now experienced one month with the water at top level. It is quite remarkable that, in the short period prior to the water reaching top level, that the margins and even the rock armour is gradually being re-colonised.



## Weather

Well, we know that March finished with a heatwave and it is usually this month which “comes in like a lion”. However, mother nature decided this year that this title would be inherited by April. On two different occasions there was quite a moderate snowfall accompanied by near gale force Northerly winds and some very cold nights with up to  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  being recorded in some prone areas.

This had quite a catastrophic impact on some wildlife including young fledglings which were found as little frozen corpses around nesting sites where the adults had turned them out. It also took out the new growth of many sensitive plants. I suspect, without actually taking the temperature, it had quite a serious impact on the water temperature as the entire cold period was accompanied by very strong winds.

## dates for your diary

13<sup>th</sup> May

Bank Match: Wadham Shield

27<sup>th</sup> May

Bank Match: Cutting Trophy

5<sup>th</sup> June

Boat Match: Club Championships

See our web site for a full list of matches:

<https://rwff.org.uk/information/matches-and-events/>



April snow

## Invertebrate Survey

This has been a very interesting exercise and, in reality has confirmed a great deal of the already existing anecdotal evidence.

So far, a total of 12 kick samples have been taken from 1 m depth in the margins of the lake. These have been from favourite, well fished, locations including, the Green Bank, Yellowstone, Carrot Creek, Transformer, Ernie's Point, Fantasy Island and New Zealand Point.

Without going into minute detail, it was quite clear from the results of these samples, so far, that the indigenous still water shrimp species, *Gammarus Pulex* and *Crangonyx Pseudogracilis* appear to have been totally replaced by the Demon Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus Haemobaphes*).

The other predominant species as you may well guess, are the Zebra and Quagga mussels. Examination showed that the samples that contained the most mussels also contain the most shrimps and this shows that they are quite clearly symbiotic - in other words are happy in each other's company.



See above for the invertebrate sample from the Green Bank.

The samples showed a limited number of caddis, which again, points to the anecdotal evidence of considerably reduced sedge hatches. These creatures, like the shrimps, are mobile and can move into the margins.

## RWFF on Facebook



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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/929836410468197>

It was interesting to see that, in a very short space of time after the rise in water level, both these creatures could be found adjacent to the rock armour.

What were conspicuous by their absence, were blood worms. The numbers of these will increase as the margins remain under water.

It was very pleasing to note that the plankton including Daphnia and Cyclops were found in the Fantasy Island sample and have also been found in the stomachs some of the rainbows.

These are such an important part of the rainbow trout's diet and hopefully will multiply despite the apparent absence of algal blooms. These creatures of course, will drift according to wind direction and hopefully will spread out and multiply.

The next survey will be carried out in June at the same locations to maintain continuity. I will be very interesting to note any ecological changes in that time including the hopeful reinstatement of blood worms to provide us with some buzzer fishing.

I'm sure you will infer from what the above, that the non-native species, the shrimps and zebra mussels, are very mobile and consequently very easily transmitted elsewhere whether in the cleat of your boots, landing nets, bass bags, drogues etc.

It is therefore essential that you check these items before going to fish anywhere else.

Remember, "**Check, Clean, Dry**"

# RWFF video links



A reminder of links to recent club video materials

Lindsay Simpson fly tying demo:

<https://youtu.be/YXoLV1VkLXE>

Iain Barr talk on Rutland's big Browns:

<https://youtu.be/IKtDitJbL2w>

## Diet

Most anglers who fished since the early part of the season would agree I'm sure, that the most effective fly patterns have been those tied to imitate the shrimp population. This would include a variety of hares ear examples with a little bit of orange or red on the head or tail.

Many people reported seeing very few fish moving. I think you'll agree that that this is a result of their present diet. So far, this has included shrimps, snails and tiny buzzers, a few terrestrials and daphnia.

The only other time that fish have shown has been during flat calms when the surface was covered in slough which was obviously carrying some food items, however small, but the fish proved very difficult to interest: but, the old adage has it: "While you can't catch 'em they're growing".

It was interesting to note that a considerable number of overwintered rainbows suddenly turned up between Stockie Bay and Whitwell creek.

Three 4lb fish caught were found to contain approximately, 200 shrimps each. On that occasion a huge amount of these fish appeared in the margins in the evening and quite understandably were totally sated and therefore very difficult to catch. However frustrating that might be, it is very pleasing to note that despite all reports, guesswork and suspicion, these overwintered fish are still here.

I refer you to Grafham in the mid-70s where those who were present then will recall the fact that the reservoir even by the end of May 1975, seemed totally devoid of fish. Then in early June, came two hot days, the lake bloomed up and we all had some of the best bank fishing for overwintered rainbows in the reservoir's history. Most of these fish were in the range 2 ½ to 6lb and you needed a hundred metres of backing or that was the end of your fly line. Ping!

The only snag was that, despite having lovely red flesh, they were totally inedible, having spent the whole winter grazing on caddis and earthworms.

I finished up taking all the fish in my deep-freeze: some 80 of them, to the RSPCA kennels in Radcliffe on Trent. To judge by the racket upon my arrival and the staff preparing the fish for consumption, the resident felines and canines there must have thought all their Christmases had come at once!

It was quite clear from this experience why there was no evidence of rising fish and I'm quite sure, that might well be the reason at Rutland Water this season with them grazing mainly on shrimps and snails.

So, don't despair, I'm sure they'll put in an appearance around the banks sooner or later: only, this time round, they will have been grazing shrimps and will no doubt be very tasty!

## Boat Fishing

This, in contrast has, on the whole been very rewarding and understandably, with the recently exposed margins, fishing at least hundred metres out from the bank has been more productive than close-up.

Boat anglers, whom I have spoken to have been most successful with buzzer patterns. These have also counted some fine brownies with a number of fish in the 7lb category being taken.

## Boat Fishing cont

Some of the best boat catches have been in the region of Cardiac Hill and Dickenson's in the North Arm and some locations in the top of the South Arm.

## Brown Trout

Some tremendous specimens have already been caught this season including the 11 ½ pound fish caught from the bank at New Zealand point.

It looks at the moment, as if the average size, excluding the new stockies, is in the region of 5lb. Where else could you find that kind of sport in a public reservoir fishery?

I think we all agreed that the main reason that they prosper, is that they have a good food source and that we return many of them to the water.

However, to maintain this healthy stock it is still incumbent on all of us to treat these beautiful creatures with the greatest respect.

Sometimes, the battle can be long and hard and is very important that, upon returning the fish to the water, it is nursed within the net prior to being allowed to leave the bank or the boat.

It is at this point, that any game fish is vulnerable to predators. In the case of Rutland, of course, there are some very large pike which were no doubt observing proceedings and would be very grateful to accept a 5lb brownie.

Brownies are very catholic in their tastes. There have been many days, when the rainbows have been impossible, that an obliging brownie has turned up.

Stocking session at the harbour >



John Wadham's 6lb first day Brown at the Transformer on 14 GRHE

## Seasonal Specimen Fish Trophies

This season we have two specimen fish trophies to be fished for. One is for the best Rainbow trout and the other for the best Brown trout.

We have already agreed that the reason our Brownies do so well is that we put them back. So, there is absolutely no necessity to kill a fish just to secure the trophy. It will be on an honesty basis, ideally, witnessed with a photograph. Please email details of your catch to Gordon Alleyne on-: [gordonalleyne@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gordonalleyne@hotmail.co.uk)

A big thank you to Gordon for all the work he's done in making some order out of the club trophies chaos. They are all cleaned, engraved, named and now located in the trophy cabinet at the cricket club.

*John Wadham, April 2022*

