



Angling Trust North East Fisheries Forum (Tees)

March 29th 2017

in association with the Environment Agency

The Dolphin Centre

Horse Market, Darlington, DL1 5RP

Meeting Notes

Tees Rivers Trust Update, including The Your Fisheries Project - Ben Lamb from the Trust explains how their work has been helping to improve fish stocks in your area.

Q – With the increased amount of sewage from the new houses being built in Darlington, is there a way to get Northumbria Water on board to take care of it?

A – Northumbria Water are involved and I'll take your concerns back to them and ask the question.

Ben explained Northumbria Water was fined £340,000 last year for 7 category 2 and 2 category 1 pollution incidents. On the Tees where we had a huge pollution, the river still hasn't come back.

Q – What have been your findings with Japanese Knotweed?

A – It's too early to say yet. We have Himalayan Balsam and there are projects going on to combat them.

Ben explained the Trust is very keen and happy to hear from anglers and clubs if you have an idea or comment/criticism.

John Cheyne encouraged clubs to talk to Ben if you want to make improvements and that these guys want to hear from you regards habitat improvement projects.

Q – Can I help with habitat improvement projects?

A – From October on the Skern there will be opportunities with electrofishing and there are always opportunities to help out with combatting Non-Native Invasive Species. Water Rangers is another good scheme to get involved with:

<https://www.nwl.co.uk/your-home/environment/water-rangers.aspx>

Environment Agency Fisheries Update, including the Tees Barrage – Paul Frear, EA, Fisheries Officer will demonstrate their work to improve fisheries locally

Q – What about that fish pass at Broken Scar?

A – Every time we go to build it the price goes up, the last time it went up to £400,000.

Q – Why can't the water company pay for the fish pass at Broken Scar?

A – Because they pay a fortune for their abstraction licence.

Q – Who do I need to write to about getting the work started on the fish pass at Broken Scar?

A – You can write to me and I'll see that it's forwarded to my superiors. One of the problems is that when we have funds available for habitat improvements we look to get as many improvements done as possible for greatest effect and for the kind of money needed for Broken Scar many other improvements on other rivers are prioritised.

Q – How can we approach the Broken Scar fish pass problem from a different angle?

A – The Tees is a Catchment Failing River for Salmon Five Point Plan!!
John Cheyne recommended clubs work together with the Environment Agency and Rivers Trust to write a letter to Mark Lloyd.

Q – Would it be good to get a petition together for the work to commence on Broken Scar fish pass?

A – You can do but the cost is the problem, when we can get bigger wins on other rivers.

Q – When are the Barrage gates open?

A – They are not open in the spring but we can ask if they can use the fish rule a month earlier. We could also influence the Canal and Rivers Trust to operate the fish rule 24/7. The fish rule is when gate one opens, so does gate four.

Phil Rippon explained acoustic seal scarers will be trialled in the navigation lock and there will be a trial at neap tides

Q – My club has invested £27,000 in the Tees over recent years and we have now pulled out of it and we know it's a non-recovering river!

A – In the 80's there was no sign of salmon in the Tees tributaries and now there are – isn't that a recovering river!

Q – Before the barrage we caught salmon and now we don't catch them.

A – I live in Croft and I have seen at least 5 salmon.

Q – What's stopping the improvements to gate 1 on the barrage?

A – The Canal and Rivers Trust consider cost, functionality and usability.

Q – Why is maintenance allowed to take place on the barrage during peak times of the salmon run?

A – We ensure that at least one of the gates is open during peak times.

Angling Trust Update, the latest Campaign and Enforcement News – John Cheyne and Giles Evans give all the latest news and updates

John Cheyne covered the Angling Improvement Fund in his presentation and during the Q&A afterwards a club wanted to say that they have raised £77,000 for improvements to their lake and £5,000 of this came from the Angling Improvement Fund.

With reference to fish passage at Broken Scar the MP for Northumbria does read his letters and he does reply. If you write in your own words, I think it has a bigger and more effective impact.

Q – Do you need to give a regular commitment to be a Volunteer Bailiff?

A – We just require that when VB's go fishing, that they report exactly what they see. There isn't a commitment, it's a voluntary commitment.