

## **POLICY**

*We aim to provide high quality recreation at reservoirs and land holdings and to achieve a balance both between different activities and between recreation and conservation. We will encourage all sections of the community to use our facilities and we will make special provision for the disabled.*

### **Trout fishing 2008 season**

Very wet weather in the previous autumn saw all Bristol Water lakes near top level at the start of 2008. The mild weather continued and there was very little in the way of cold conditions throughout the winter, an ideal scenario for the two weeks of pike fishing arranged for the end of January and early February. Pike fishing has become increasingly popular and demand for boat and bank places far exceeded the number available. And the reason became clear once the trials began as numerous very large fish were taken again. Ten fish weighing over thirty pounds were landed and many more twenty pounders came to the net.

After the fantastic trout fishing at the start of 2007, expectations were high for a similar bonanza of big, overwintered rainbows when Chew and Blagdon opened in March. Although plenty of fish were taken the hoped for six and seven pound fish were fewer at the start.

April continued mild and the fishing was very good, but when May arrived the weather took a turn for the worse with strong winds, heavy rain and very cold conditions, far from ideal for trout fishing. In fact the fishing remained good but many anglers decided that staying at home was more sensible than going fishing on many days through late spring and early summer.

It was late July before things settled down and proper fishing resumed with fly hatches, moving fish and evening rises. The lakes had continued to be stocked throughout the previous months and anglers found excellent fishing through the summer due to the high densities of fish. Autumn is usually a good time for catching trout especially for the bank anglers. But the fishing never lived up to expectations probably due to the exceptionally high water levels. The Barrows continued to fish well but Chew and Blagdon were disappointing right to the end of the season.

October saw the return of the pike fishers and the wonderful fishing enjoyed in the early sessions continued through to the end of November. Another eleven 30s were taken, five from the boats and six from the shore. The biggest fish of the season was a fish of 36lb 12ozs. Chew Valley was one of the few pike waters in the country that didn't see a decline in the pike fishing last year. In fact it fished better than ever and is now considered by many to be the best in the UK.

So, a more difficult year than 2007 mainly due to the very poor weather experienced during what should have been the best period for trout fishing. Even so all of the Bristol Water lakes produced more fish than the previous years. Chew Valley saw its biggest ever rainbow trout taken, a fish of 14lbs 2ozs and many other

fish weighing more than ten pounds. Blagdon had a rainbow of 10lbs 3ozs caught from the shore and the Barrows produced their biggest fish for many years when a 7lb 14oz brown was landed from number 3 tank. More than 95,000 fish were stocked into the waters and hopes are high that many of these will over-winter and be there for 2009.

Bob Handford  
Fisheries & Recreations Manager

**CATCH RESULTS 2008**

Lake	Fish Caught	Av.Weight (lb)	Best Brown	Best Rainbow	Rod Returns
<b>Chew Valley</b>	23,178	2lb 6oz	12lb 10oz	14lb 2oz	6,963
<b>Blagdon</b>	19,032	2lb 6oz	8lb 4oz	10lb 3oz	6,573
<b>Barrows</b>	7,098	1lb 12oz	7lb 14oz	4lb 4oz	2,721
<b>Litton</b>	1,558	2lb 8oz	6lb 3oz	10lb 0oz	427
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,866</b>	<b>2lb 5oz</b>	<b>12lb 10oz</b>	<b>14lb 2oz</b>	<b>16,684</b>

**Sailing**

**Chew Valley Lake**

Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club – 2008

2008 will be remembered for some ample deposits of rain which, for us lake sailors meant another year of sailing without having to worry about hitting the bottom. Usually we also had plenty of wind to push us around.

Once again our membership was filled in April and the waiting list was cleared. Our committee undertook a membership questionnaire to discover and understand the views of the members and to identify the areas where action might be needed. We were pleased to note that there was a general feeling of satisfaction with the Club and its facilities and appreciation of how lucky we are to sail on such a beautiful lake. The Club have invested in another robust dinghy for members to hire which was identified as an area of need.

Our Frostbite Racing series from January to the end of March draws the most enthusiastic racers who enjoy plenty of breeze and our full sailing area to play in. The water is freezing so warm clothing is essential but, once afloat and racing, the adrenaline kicks in and most participants return ashore with the warm glow that a close race can generate. We welcomed a handful of keen visitors from Sutton Bingham Sailing Club as their water levels had been allowed to drop for maintenance work. The more the merrier! All agreed that the 2008 Frostbite was one of the best ever.

The winter social scene for members less keen on the chilly water consisted of a series of Inter-Fleet skittles matches in Saltford. The Wednesday Warriors, that keen bunch of often retired sailors who populate the Club all

year round on Wednesdays, rattled out the winners. Most gave no credence to the grumbles that it was not a coincidence that the chief scorer was the Wednesday captain!

In April Chew hosted the Flying Fifteen Inland National Championships. These elegant racing keelboats are the only 'yachts' permitted on the lake and 40 of them enjoyed an excellent weekend of close racing and evening socials.

The year's largest event once again involved the Junior racers when we hosted the RYA South West Zone Junior Championships. 100 young sailors entered from all over the South West including the Channel Islands. So, with their family and friends also on site, the Club was delightfully busy. Much planning went into making the event a success, not least in the form of generosity from Bristol Water allowing us to use the field adjacent to Woodford Lodge for car parking, always a major headache at our big Open Meetings. Sadly, despite the planning, the weather confounded everyone and there was not the slightest breath of wind all weekend! I cannot remember any two day meeting at Chew when we have failed to get in a single race! However, the youngsters had a great time anyway with various shore-side competitions being arranged to keep them amused and the RYA bringing Olympic Silver medallist Joe Glanfield to give talks and sign autographs.

Generally our young members are well catered for with the Schools Regatta in July and the summer training extravaganza, this year entitled August Antics, having 70 keen young sailors enrolled. The enthusiasm of the adults is creating a myriad of opportunities for junior members to improve their sailing and racing skills.

Bristol University held their Bristol Brew team racing event in December. 20 teams of three boats racing against one another, on very small courses where each has to utilise the sailing rules to the full, makes for good spectator sport. Being students, the 'Brew' in the title is not idly chosen – they all adjourn to the Bristol pubs on Saturday evening to imbibe and return to recommence battle on Sunday morning, many looking considerably the worse for wear!

A particular highlight of the year was the culmination of some major fundraising by our disabled membership group CLADS. (Chew Lake Association of Disabled Sailors). Their hard work allowed us to purchase a lift so that they could gain access to the first floor of the Clubhouse where most of the public facilities are sited. This had long been a goal for them as a part of their drive to improve access to both the Club and the lake. With future plans for a disabled friendly pontoon as an objective, their fund raising efforts will be continuing.

2008 witnessed the three yearly change-over of flag officers, and marked the end of my term as Commodore. With new faces on our committee I am confident that the Sailing Club will continue to go from strength to strength. 2008 was another good year for us, and I am looking forward to 2009.

John Smalley, President CVLSC

**Cheddar reservoir**

Bristol Corinthians yacht Club

Building on the success of the 2007 trial “Onboard”, a scheme to introduce people, especially children, into the joys of sailing, was expanded during 2008. Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club (BCYC) arranged both training and taster sessions for schools, and organisations such as Scout groups. A small bursary has been established for under privileged children using monies from a local Rotary Club grant. This has proved so popular with schools that two have joined BCYC as Associate memberships in order to continue their training beyond the basic dinghy and windsurfer training. The schools’ enthusiasm is such that a limited number of “sailing weeks” are being investigated for 2009.

The BCYC’s young windsurfer group (Axbridge Animals) have again been enthusiastically supported. The youngsters have competed successfully in several events both at Cheddar and elsewhere.

The reservoir with its safe environment is ideal for sailors and several times during the year RYA zone squads – teams of promising young sailors from all around the south west of England, have had training sessions at Cheddar.

The relations between the three main groups using Cheddar Reservoir (sailors, bird watchers and fishermen) have been very cordial in 2008. A small fire near the clubhouse was identified by fishermen who called the fire brigade, preventing further damage. When unusual birds have been in one area of the reservoir, the birdwatchers have told the sailors, who tried to keep away from that area, and several times the sailors safety boat has rescued fishermen’s equipment for them.

R L Jones – Commodore BCYC

To find out more about the club and how to become a member go to

<http://www.bcyk.org.uk>

**Leased Fishing****Cheddar Angling Club**

The club continues to lease the Clay Pits from Bristol Water as well as controlling the fishing on Cheddar Reservoir. The Clay Pits are open to members only and they enjoy two beautifully maintained lakes. The match lake, which is occasionally used for competitions, is mainly used by pleasure fishermen who can catch anything from small roach & rudd to very large carp.

The specimen lake holds mainly carp and tench and fish have been caught weighing well over twenty pounds. There are a few small silver fish and some large trout have been introduced to eat these nuisance fish. These also offer a surprise catch to the dedicated specimen hunters.

The Reservoir is fished as a day ticket water and is famous for its huge tench and very large pike. Tench of under three pounds are seldom caught and double figure bags of fish weighing up to nine pounds are common. In the winter the attention is on the large predators and spinning and dead baiting is the main method.

**Knowle Anglers** lease Chew Magna, a small reservoir, and a stretch of the Upper River Chew. These are trout only waters, fly fishing only. The reservoir is stocked regularly with rainbows. The river has brown and rainbow trout. It is stocked but a large proportion of the fish caught are 'escapees' from Chew Valley Lake. These can often be fish of six pounds or more and can be challenging on very light tackle in the confined spaces of the tiny river.