

OUR REARING PROGRAMME

I am frequently asked: do we still rear any of our own fish? Well the answer is **YES**.



Ubley hatchery

Rearing our own fish is still a very important part of our overall stocking programme although to complement these we also buy in trout fry.

The stocking process

Come November / December we rely on our own wild stocked brown and rainbow trout to battle their way upstream (run-up) of the river Yeo to spawn. They are then caught at our Ubley Hatchery, stripped of their ova and returned to the lakes. In total we lay down (in trays) 60,000 mixed sex brown and 60,000 mixed sex rainbow trout ova.

Rainbow

Of the 60,000 rainbow trout ova stripped from our run-up and selected brood stock there is a gradual process of grading out the best fish to reach a final number of 35,000 mixed sex for early to mid-season stocking.

We then buy in another 30,000 x 5 gram triploid (sterile females) rainbow trout fry in January which become part of our pre-season stocking. During late summer another 35,000 x 30 gram triploid rainbow trout fry are also bought in. All these fish are then grown on for the following fishing season.

Brown

The final brown trout fry number 25,000 and are grown on for a further year when they are then graded, with 13,000 taken to our Litton rearing station for another year before being stocked into the lakes as 2-year-old fish in our pre-season stocking.



Checking the eggs



To complement our browns we have also started buying in 2,000 x 5 gram triploid brown trout fry each year to grow on. The first of these will be stocked as 2-year-old fish in 2004. During this two year rearing period our policy is to select the best quality fish to grow on to make good quality fighting fish for stocking, with any surplus fry and yearling browns being stocked around the lake margins at the appropriate times.

The results

All the above work ensures we have around 100,000 good quality fighting fish being stocked to the lakes each year with an average weight well of over 2 lbs. (this of course does not include the surplus fry or yearling browns). With the introduction of the triploid browns and rainbows during the mid to late stocking program any fish not caught should grow on and over winter to provide an even better quarry at the start of each new season.

Kim Lucas



Stocking from the lorry



Prize catch

CATCH AND RELEASE

Over the past few years catch and release has grown in popularity for trout fly fishermen. Many anglers catch far more fish than they could ever need for themselves, others don't like to eat trout at all, whilst some like to return all browns so that they have a chance of growing on. Whatever the reason it is very important to know how to look after a captured fish to give it the best chance of survival on its return to the water.

If the fish are feeding well and you are fortunate enough to catch and release several fish allow another angler to try the spot. Catching fish after fish from the same place using the same flies and method is no great test of skill. Moving to another place and or trying a different method will benefit you, other fishermen and the fish.



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The following are guidelines to help you and the fish!

- Always de-barb or use barbless hooks when fishing catch & release.
- Leave the fish in the water. Don't lift the fish onto the bank or into the boat. (Figure 1)
- Wet your hands before touching the fish and removing the hook. (Figure 2)
- Use of an unhooking tool means less handling and stress on the fish. (Figure 3)
- Once unhooked hold the fish in the water until it recovers enough to swim away. (Figure 4)
- If the fish has fought very hard and is exhausted leave it in the net for a few minutes and then release as above. (Make sure the net and fish is well under the water).
- Never attempt to spoon a live fish.

When pike fishing lay the fish carefully on an unhooking mat to remove hooks.

Always use a weigh sling to weigh your fish – never suspend the fish by the gills.

Catching and releasing fish at certain times and in certain conditions will almost certainly result in a high mortality of fish. The Company have decided that catch and release in competitions will only be allowed if there is a non-fishing boatman in the boat. All other competitions will be fished to a limit bag. The Company also reserve the right to stop catch and release at any time during the season.