

Fishery Report - 29th May - 7th July



The past month has been rather bittersweet for us at Bristol water fisheries, it can only be described as a mixed bag!

Chew hosted the Tony Donnelly memorial to celebrate the life of our past fisheries manager and friend. It was great to see the local clubs, anglers, staff past and present all muck in to make it a great success!

We saw some incredible catch returns through the month as well as some more modest numbers showing how changeable summer reservoir fishing can be!

The BRFFA have been hard at work with the youth pathway welcoming young anglers into the sport, helping them hone their skills with the help of the angling trust.

Our ranger team have been running on full tilt down the farm battling ever changing water sources as the springs start to slow, all the lakes have been stocked and the net cages have now been filled on Chew ready for the summer stockings!

We have also seen the biggest algae blooms in memory for the Bristol water staff, forcing our hand to make a very difficult decision to suspend angling and sailing on Chew.

Extraction swapped from Chew to Blagdon meaning the levels have now started to drop on Blagdon, this changes the fishing areas for our anglers as Rugmoor becomes more exposed and the top end shallows.

Both lakes have had incredible numbers of Damsels this year making for some interesting fishing with the trout being very close to the bankside.

The main food sources still seem to be Damsels and Corrixa with some buzzer in the mix!

Chew Valley

Chew has had a stocking of over 2500 fish since our last fishery report despite its closure.

Our rod average in the first few weeks on the month topped at 9.48 for the week commencing the 3rd and 8.82 for the week commencing the 10th!

As previously mentioned, all fishing and sailing was ceased on Chew on Saturday 15th June due to high blue-green algae levels in the lake, this was an incredibly difficult decision for the team to make.

The decision impacted two major competitions in our calendar the Garafit Cup and Airflo Celtic League as well as our day ticket and season ticket holders alike.

A special mention to the Garafit cup organiser Mark for his sterling efforts taking everything in his stride! This was already a rescheduled date for this competition, which has now been set again for the 19th October 2024.

The ranger team have been monitoring and sampling every few days through the closure with the help of the senior water quality scientists; Collecting samples from pre allocated points around the lake. This data has been invaluable in allowing us to make informed decisions to safeguard our anglers, other water users and staff.

Chew's closure left us all desperate to get you back on the water, with conditions improving towards the end of June we were pleased to announce the restrictions lifting on the 7th July for both boat and boat.

A big thank you all for the patience, understanding and support you showed to the team over the past few weeks.

Chew Pike Fly

Our predator fly anglers made the most of the cool conditions at the end of May and early June with gentle winds and cloud cover we saw numerous 30lb+ fish being reported to us including this 31lb specimen for Alex Mason along with a number of 20lb+ fish.

We will be closely monitoring water temperatures and dissolved oxygen levels as we move into summer, as it stands despite the bloom the oxygen levels are still very high on Chew thanks to its large surface area.



Tony Donnelly Memorial Match – BRFFA Vs Blagdon FlyFishers – 01/06/2024



Changeable weather greeted the Blagdon Fly fishers and BRFFA on the annual “friendly” to celebrate Tony’s life, with a bright start and brisk North easterly winds the two teams had congregated in the Woodford carpark, loads of laughing and joking could be heard as competitors did their best to fill their teammates in with the going tactics and methods whilst simultaneously pulling the wool over anyone’s eyes trying to listen in!

The boats split into two packs at the jetty with some heading for Herons green and the others turning upwind towards the Dam and North shore!

It didn’t take long for both teams to be on the score board with fish being caught at the dam before the drogues had even settled!

Callum Russell capitalised on the early action landing 16 fish by just 10.30am! An incredible display of angling by the BRFFFA member! Graham Currie was hot on his heels landing his 16th fish by 11.00am another impressive display!

As the morning went on the fish seemed to come up in the water and the sinking lines coupled with blobs and fabs were swapped for tips and floating lines with nymphs.

At 1.00pm the competitors all returned to Woodford to enjoy a spread put on by Hannah Wellman & Sara Golding. The scores showing that the Blagdon fly fishers were just pinching the lead!

After the competitors had refuelled, exchanged stories of the morning and hatched a new line of attack they took to the water once more.

The fish had switched off slightly in the bright afternoon sun. Both teams started to put in the work to grind out each valuable fish as the clock ticked down: even

though this was a “friendly” competition, pride was at the forefront of everyone’s minds!

As the boats returned to the jetties for the final scores it was incredibly close, but it was starting to look like the BRFFA had taken the title!

The event was a great success, and it was wonderful to see both clubs working together to raise money for Tony’s Family and the England Youth Team. Well done to all those that helped with the event, took part and contributed.

Congratulations to the BRFFA the winners of the 2024 Tony Donnelly Memorial match.

Full scores as follows:

BRFFA								BFF								
TOTAL NO. FISH	Total C&R Weight	FINISH TIME	LBS	OZS	LBS	OZS		TOTAL NO. FISH	Total C&R Weight	FINISH TIME	LBS	OZS	LBS	OZS		
Andy Stones	16	32	15:47:00	4	0	36	0	Paul Golding	16	32	16:39:00	2	8	34	8	
Ron Howard	16	32	12:35:00	10	8	42	8	Jay Curry	16	32	16:15:00	3	0	35	0	
Tim Wellman	16	32	16:54:00	2	0	34	0	Jeff Mason	12	24	N/A	0	0	24	0	
Bill Pugh	11	22	N/A	0	0	22	0	Geoff Lambert	4	8	N/A	0	0	8	0	
Gordon Smith	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	Sean Glover	14	28	N/A	0	0	28	0	
Paul Roach	16	32	11:55:00	12	0	44	0	Dave Reynolds	16	32	17:20:00	1	0	33	0	
Arwel Williams	9	18	N/A	0	0	18	0	Alan Williams	16	32	15:37:00	4	8	36	8	
Seb Pecchia	16	32	15:28:00	5	0	37	0	John Humphry	8	16	N/A	0	0	16	0	
Mark Miles	16	32	15:24:00	5	0	37	0	John Piper	16	32	14:58:00	6	0	38	0	
Barry Hawyes	15	30	N/A	0	0	30	0	John Gumbleton	11	22	N/A	0	0	22	0	
Dave Drake	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	Graham Currie	16	32	11:30:00	12	8	44	8	
Will Wellman	16	32	15:04:00	5	8	37	8	Joan Russell	16	32	16:08:00	3	8	35	8	
Dan Vince	16	32	17:35:00	0	8	32	8	Alan Clark	16	32	14:23:00	7	0	39	0	
Martin Barrett	16	32	16:54:00	2	0	34	0	John Harris	16	32	15:35:00	4	8	36	8	
Matt Russell	16	32	17:15:00	1	0	33	0	Luker Cox	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	
Callum Russell	16	32	10:33:00	14	8	46	8	Dale Burges	16	32	11:39:00	12	8	44	8	
Lee Williams	16	32	17:37:00	0	8	32	8	Jesse Gale	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	
						LB	OZ							LB	OZ	
						Total Weight	568	5						Total Weight	527	0

BRFFA Youth Pathway



The start of June saw the first BRFFA Youth Pathway event here at Bristol Water Fisheries, in partnership with Bristol Water, The Angling Trust as well as support from Airflo and Turrell.

This initiative is aimed at getting youngsters into the sport and guiding them all the way from the basics of how to set up a rod and reel to them catching fish from both bank and boat and even tying their own flies!

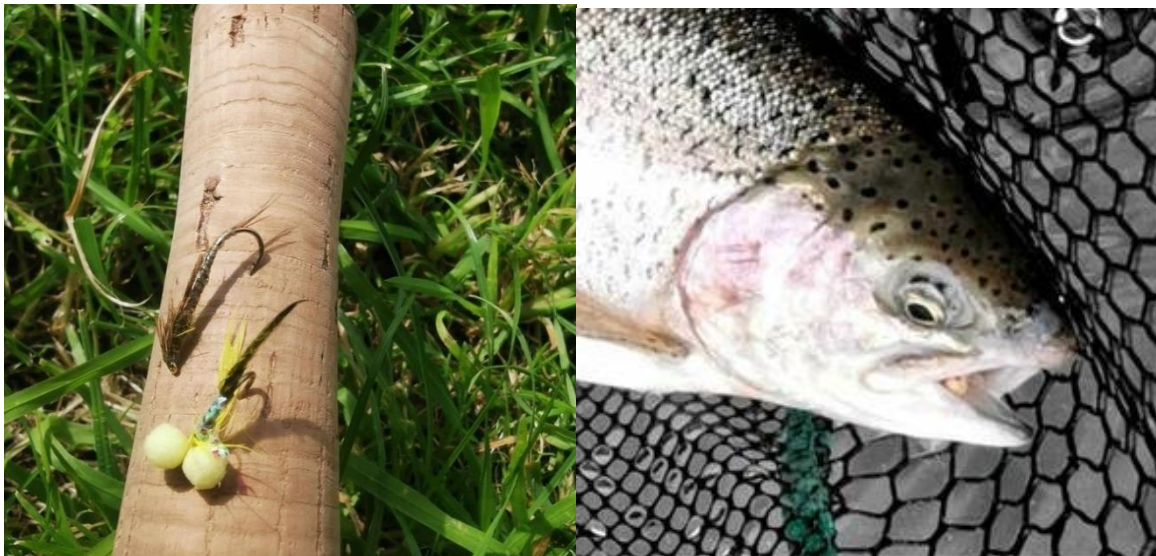
The four juniors pictured have just passed their bronze fishing award over two days with the instructors, hopefully setting them up for a lifetime of enjoying angling and the beautiful surroundings here at Chew Valley and Blagdon lakes.

Blagdon

Blagdon has had a stocking of 4000 fish since our last fishery report. Including a bumper 1500 in one day to help bolster the stock with Chew being closed. Rod averages have been hovering around 4.71 on the Boats and 4.75 for the Banks through the month.

The fish at Blagdon seemed to be localised to a few spots but short feeding spells kept the anglers having to really put the effort in to catch consistently through the day. Damsels seemed to be the main food source especially at the top end with many fish keeping tight into the banks and tree lines to gorge on the emerging nymphs.

A washing line fished with a Damsel Boobie on the point and a few olive nymphs was hard to beat especially when fished tight in!



Away from the bankside fish could still be caught in open water, Damsels were still an effective fly choice but Diawl bach and Crunchers really came into their own especially when fished with a small Boobie on the point and Fab on the top dropper.

The fish have been feeding close to the surface, so the addition of the Fab helps keep the flies high with a bit of colour which in the later part of May seemed to make a difference! Dries have also been very effective late in the afternoon with Big Reds, Daddies and Bob's Bits all taking fish.

With Chew closed water extraction swapped over to Blagdon, this gave the production team a window to monitor the Algae. This meant the levels started to drop away with

the weed coming up and water dropping. The fish slowly moved out of the now shallow top end with Rugmoor bay becoming holding areas.

After the recent stockings the Green lawn and Rainbow point have also proved to be consistent for our bank and boat anglers alike. We have also started to see fish moving down the lake with catches in front of the lodge.

This trend is likely to continue as the summer water levels and temperatures leave the fish looking for deeper water. The dam end offers exactly that with more consistent water temperatures.

Although don't be fooled into thinking you need to be pulling the plug out! The rainbows on both lakes seldomly feed in anything more than the top third of the water column, obviously their will be exceptions to this rule, even the large browns can be caught up in the water!

Barrow Tanks

Barrow has had a stocking of 600 fish across all three tanks since our last fishery report.

The Barrow Bullets have been making up the majority of the catch returns over the past few weeks, but we have also had some lovely over wintered fish.



Steffan Williams had this cracking overwintered specimen weighing in at 4lb 8oz! (Left)

Mark Warne landing this lovely 5lb 6oz Rainbow! (Right)

The usual last light has remained the best times to be on the bank with many choosing to focus their attention on the last few hours of the day.

The inflows have been the hotspots with fish taking emergers, buzzers and dries as well as lures deeper down. A small buzzer fished just under a large dry like a foam daddy has also been deadly and can often trip up one of the larger residents who have seen it all!