

Bristol Water Fishery Report

29th May – 30th June



The opening week of June had a turbulent start across all our waters, with persistent westerly and south-westerly winds. Sadly, this led to the cancellation of several days of boat activity and a delayed start on one additional day. These necessary safety measures also affected two major competitions; The BRFFA Spring Shield and the ATTEFF England Qualifier at Chew, both of which were disrupted by high wind forecasts and rescheduled.

At Bristol Water Fisheries, we remain firmly committed to the safety of all anglers and staff. Each decision to cancel or delay fishing is never taken lightly. We fully appreciate the time, travel, and preparation anglers dedicate to their sessions with us, and we are always disappointed when the conditions prevent us letting anglers out. However, our top priority will always be ensuring everyone returns home safely at the end of the day.

Despite the weather challenges, there were some promising signs across the fishery at the start of June. At Chew, anglers reported good returns on Damsel nymphs and Bloodworm patterns, while Blagdon continued to produce fish on Buzzer tactics at top end. Over at the Barrow Tanks, Snail patterns and dries were catching, with anglers having success targeting trout feeding in the margins on flies like the black Booby.

Fishing reports have varied significantly depending on location, timing, and tactics, with clear water, visible feeding activity, the start of June was very productive all-round.

As the month progressed, we experienced some very hot spells, leading to the fishing becoming tougher as the weather heated up. All 3 waters had low returns with no specific tactic working more than others. This made for some very tricky competitions and some anglers exploring new tactics to try and tempt the canny fish.

Chew Valley Lake:

June is always a tricky month for lake angling. Increasing sunlight and heat changed fish patterns completely. Early morning feeding to escaping the light and heat meant on some days the fish seem to all but disappear. Although the lakes fished well in the first 2 weeks of June, the mid and later part of the month proved tricky. For those bold and skilled enough to try their luck, successful methods have been as follows:

When conditions turn calm and overcast, floating lines paired with traditional dry flies. Patterns such as Claret Bobs Bits, Carrot Flies, Hoppers, and Foam Daddies all taking fish across the lake. Short, accurate casts to rising fish and confident presentation were essential for converting chances into hook-ups.

In breezier conditions, anglers did well using Slow Tip Lines and teams of damsel nymphs fished with a fast figure-of-eight retrieve. Productive areas included the reed margins around Herons Bay, Villice, and towards Hollow Brook, where fish are feeding close to the edges.

The arrival of pin fry stirred interest among the resident trout, and with continued bright spells expected, fry-feeding behaviour is likely to increase. Anglers should be ready to switch to small fry patterns to take advantage of these changing feeding habits.

Those willing to adapt their approach are still enjoying success using a range of effective techniques:

b BRISTOL WATER

Fly Fishing Catch Return

Boat Number: 32

Permit Type: Predator Fly ☐ Trout ☒
Water: Blagdon ☐ Chew ☒ Barrows ☐

Booking Name: GRISEDALE/MORRIS
Date: 24/06/23

Fish Returned	Fish Dispatched	Total Bag Weight
25	4	10-00

Comments: (Flies / Lines / Areas Fished / Noteworthy Fish)
Villice Bay. Slow fished hoppers near weeds.
Biggest lot 3.1/4 lbs 2

Please place the completed return in the permit letter box

- **Top Patterns:** Claret Hoppers, Foam Daddies, Pin Fry, Damsels.
- **Best Areas:** Villice, Herons, Cages.
- **Rod Averages:** 5.46

Blagdon Lake

Dry Fly Fishing: Floating lines with Hoppers and CDC patterns have proven effective during calm or overcast conditions, offering visual, top-of-the-water sport when fish are rising.

Nymphing: A slow retrieve using Diawl Bachs and Damsel Nymphs on either a slow tip line or floating line has yielded consistent results, particularly when fished near the surface. The area in front of the Lodge and along Green Lawn has produced reliable action, especially for anglers targeting recently stocked fish.

For those seeking larger, resident trout, the top end of the lake continues to hold promise. Success here often requires a stealthy approach and precise presentation.

While conditions may be testing, Blagdon continues to reward thoughtful and flexible approaches with the first and last hours of light being the best time to fish – a great opportunity for anglers looking to refine their skills.



Barrows Tanks

Fishing at the Barrow Tanks has been tougher, with anglers only finding success by adjusting tactics to current conditions. With water on the lower levels, anglers have been taking advantage of the flows in each tank, where there is richer oxygen levels and bright sun is deflected. This is a popular area for fish to go to in these current weather conditions of bright hot weather.

Floating and Slow Tip Lines

Small pin fry imitations such as the Pin Fry Cormorant and Bunny Hare's Ear, fished on floating or slow tip lines, have been particularly effective. A quick figure-of-eight retrieve to sighted fish has resulted in confident takes.

Snail Patterns

Fishing a heavier fly on the point with a bare Black Booby on the dropper has worked

well to imitate snails. This method is best fished slowly or allowed to drift naturally in the tank flows.

Lures and Attraction Flies

Patterns like Minkies and Cats Whiskers have continued to produce fish, especially when fished with a fast retrieve to target moving or sighted trout.

These approaches have provided reliable results for both regular visitors and those new to the Barrow Tanks.

Competitions:



Tony Donnelly Memorial Match 2025 – Summary

Chew Valley Lake hosted the 2025 Tony Donnelly Memorial Match on Saturday 31st May, in honour of our much-missed former Fisheries Manager, Tony Donnelly. A warm and muggy day greeted the anglers, with early cloud cover and a light south-westerly breeze helping to bring trout to the surface and set the scene for a strong morning session.

Teams from Blagdon Fly Fishers and BRFFA took to the water in great spirits, with dry fly and Di3 booby tactics proving most effective. At the mid day break, Blagdon held a narrow lead of 12 fish before returning for a well-earned lunch, generously provided by Hannah Wellman and Sara Golding.

The afternoon saw tougher fishing as the trout turned cautious, though standout catches from Mark Miles (15 fish), Graham Currie (14) and Paul Morris (11) helped seal a win for Team Blagdon. The final scores reflected a strong and friendly contest filled with laughter, sportsmanship, and shared memories of Tony.

It was especially meaningful to welcome Tony's family to the lodge for part of the day. As always, our thanks go to the anglers, organisers, and the Bristol Water ranger team for making the day such a success.

Evening League:

Evening League 3 Jun 17.00-21.00					
Position	Angler	No. of Fish	Points	Time of 1st fish	Time of 3rd fish
	Alan Williams	7	22	17.37	20.07
	John Piper	6	19	17.25	17.51
	John Bowen	6	16	18.33	19.10
	Adam Drescher	6	13	19.02	19.58
	Graham Currie	4	11	17.31	18.40
	Paul Brace	4	9	17.40	18.57
	John Otter	4	7	18.03	19.06
	Paul Golding	4	5	17.38	20.02
	James Roberts	4	3	19.32	20.40
	Paul Roach	4	1	18.50	20.45
	Steve Ellis	3	1	18.50	19.47
	Wesley Stevens	3	1	18.45	19.55
	John Humphry	3	1	19.35	19.59
	Richard Walker	3	1	19.22	20.09
	Jim King	3	1	17.40	20.47
	Andrew Maisey	2	1	17.10	
	Dave Gregory	2	1	17.16	
	Tony Coxhead	2	1	18.10	
	Ethan Roberts	1	1	18.37	
	Luke Cox	1	1	18.38	
	Gordon Smith	1	1	19.26	
	Mark Kennedy	1	1	19.50	
	Tony Torrington	1	1	20.00	
	John Gumbleton	1	1	20.05	
In the event of a tie, position was calculated by time of 1st and 3rd fish					
Total Fish Caught:		76			
Average per rod:		2.70			
(this average is based on a 4 hour match)					

The first of our June Evening League matches took place on Tuesday 3rd June at Chew Valley Lake, drawing 28 anglers for an evening session between 5pm and 9pm. Conditions were far from straightforward, with gusty south-westerly winds creating a real test of skill and adaptability. Despite the blustery weather, the fishing proved to be productive in the right areas, resulting in a respectable rod average of 2.7. Most anglers concentrated their efforts around the more sheltered zones, particularly along the margins of Villice and Herons Bay. These areas provided some refuge from the wind and held feeding fish close to the banks. With the evening league being restricted to floating or tip lines Damsel Nymphs and Buzzers fished tight into the edges did much of the damage. The conditions demanded accurate presentation and persistence, but those who found the right drift were rewarded with steady action. Congratulations go to Alan Williams, who adapted perfectly and took top rod of the evening with a strong bag of seven fish. A big thank you to all the anglers who braved the weather and helped make it a great evening of competitive fishing and to the evening leagues organiser, Graham Currie.

Airflo Celtic League – Round 3

AIRFLO CELTIC LEAGUE 2025							
Chew Valley Lake							
Team Placings							
		22nd Mar	4th May	14th June	21st Sept	19th Oct	
Pos	Team	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total
1	TEAM TIGHTLINES	32	53	55	0	0	140
2	FULLING MILL NYMPHOMANIACS	79	72	42	0	0	193
3	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	60	80	57	0	0	197
4	FUNKY FF	43	101	110	0	0	254
5	WELSH WIZARDS	92	82	111	0	0	285
6	BLAGDON FF	115	70	130	0	0	315
7	OSPREYS FFA	104	85	129	0	0	318
8	TEAM EGLWYS	106	103	119	0	0	328
9	SNOWBEE	104	124	125	0	0	353
10	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	139	134	90	0	0	363
11	DRIFTERS	124	166	102	0	0	392
12	RED LION	177	136	131	0	0	444
13	VALLEY CORMORANTS	192	137	164	0	0	493

The third round of the 2025 Airflo Celtic League took place on Saturday, 14th June at Chew Valley Lake, with 52 competitors from across the league battling it out in bright, testing conditions. Despite the weather, the event delivered some exceptional angling and a strong sense of camaraderie throughout the day.

Anglers initially spread out between Herons Bay, the net cages, and False Island. Early tactics largely favoured dry flies, with claret hoppers, carrot flies, and shuttlecocks proving highly effective. Others found success using traditional Nymph patterns such as Diawl Bachs and Damsels, while a few committed to pulling colour around the cages. Notably, during the final two hours of the competition, Villice Bay came alive, with one competitor Allen Hughes recording seven fish in a late surge.

Team Tightlines continued their dominant form in this year's league by securing another team victory, reinforcing their reputation as the team to beat. However, with two rounds remaining, the overall standings remain competitive and open.

On the individual leaderboard, Tom Pitchford (Fulling Mill Nymphomaniacs) claimed top honours with an impressive 12-fish haul. He was closely followed by Martin Burgess (Team Tightlines) and Stewart Watkins (E.N. Fluff Chuckers), who both recorded 10 fish.

A special mention goes to Iain Shanahan, who celebrated a significant personal milestone by landing his fish on a dry fly at Chew. The day showcased not only the tactical depth of the anglers involved but also the quality of sport Chew continues to offer in top-level competition settings. Bristol water would like to thank all participants and organisers for contributing to a smooth and enjoyable round.



Evening League 17th June 17:00 - 21:00					
Position	Angler	No. of Fish	Points	Time of 1st fish	Time of 3rd fish
1	Alan Williams	7	22	17:12	17:36
2	John Bowen	6	19	18:36	19:33
3	Dave Gregory	5	16	18:06	18:30
4	Dave Reynolds	5	13	17:06	19:35
5	Paul Golding	4	11	17:45	20:35
6	Joe Donlin	3	9	17:09	19:55
7	Steve Ellis	3	7	18:09	20:21
8	Tony Torrington	3	5	19:40	20:25
9	Graham Currie	3	3	19:28	20:40
10	Ethan Roberts	3	2	19:29	20:43
11	Robin Parker	3	1	17:23	20:47
12	John Otter	2	1	17:38	
13	Ali Pearson	2	1	19:45	
14	Pete Yarrow	2	1	19:47	
15	Mark Kennedy	1	1	17:35	
16	Paul Roach	1	1	18:05	
17	Paul Brace	1	1	18:10	
18	Dave Banks	1	1	18:39	
19	Gary Jarvis	1	1	19:00	
20	Jim King	1	1	19:26	
21	Gordon Smith	1	1	19:55	
22	Andrew Maisey	1	1	20:00	
23	John Gumbleton	1	1	20:34	
24	John Richens	0	0		
25	James Roberts	0	0		
26	Tony Coxhead	0	0		
27	John Humphrys	0	0		
In the event of a tie, position was calculated by time of 1st and 3rd fish					
Total Fish Caught:		60			
Average per rod:		2.73			
(this average is based on a 4 hour match)					

Tuesday the 17th of June saw another fantastic turnout for our Evening League, with 14 boats heading out onto Chew between 17:00 and 21:00 for what proved to be a very enjoyable and tactical session.

Despite bright conditions, the anglers who took part adapted well and brought in some strong results, with a total of 59 fish caught by 22 anglers and a solid rod average of 2.68. Early in the session, boats were spread out between Villice Bay and the net cages, with plenty of pre-match chatter suggesting a big evening for dry fly tactics. Popular patterns included Claret Hoppers, Ginger Bits, Carrot Fly, and Foam Daddies. However, as the evening developed, many anglers turned to Damsel patterns, with a few fish also taken on Blobs and Fabs. By the halfway through the competition, all boats had gradually shifted into Herons and Villice Bay, making the most of the steady westerly breeze, which created ideal drifting conditions from inside the bays out toward Denny Island.

Top rod honours once again went to Alan Williams, who landed 7 fish – a brilliant performance and a model of consistency across the league.

ATTEFF Qualifier – Chew Valley Lake, 22nd June 2025

Chew Valley Lake hosted the ATTEFF Qualifier on Sunday 22nd June, drawing 26 skilled anglers from across the region in pursuit of national team qualification. Despite recent reports of challenging fishing, spirits remained high as boats launched at 10:00 AM.

Conditions throughout the day were dynamic and demanding. Anglers were met with a steady westerly wind that fluctuated from light to gusty, interspersed with passing rain showers and occasional bright sunshine. These changing elements tested not only technique, but also the adaptability and perseverance of all participants.

After a hard-fought day on the water, John Braithwaite emerged victorious with a remarkable catch of five fish, demonstrating his extensive experience and in-depth understanding of Chew's unique challenges. Jeff Mason secured second place, with Mark Kennedy following closely in third – congratulations to all on a truly commendable performance.

A special congratulations also goes out to the top ten anglers, who have now successfully qualified for the ATTEFF National, an outstanding achievement given the tough conditions.

Bristol Water would like to thank all anglers for their participation and professionalism throughout the event and extend appreciation to John Horsey for his invaluable support in the organisation and smooth running of the qualifier.

ANGLING TRUST TEAM ENGLAND QUALIFIER				
CHEW VALLEY LAKE - 22nd June 2025				
Anglers:	25			
Total fish caught:	17			
Rod average:	0.68			
Average fish weight:	2 lb	14 oz		
Largest fish:	3 lb	9 oz		
Best Total Bag with bonus:	13 lb	0 oz		
			Name: MARK KENNEDY	
			Name: JOHN BRAITHWAITE	

Individual Results				
	Fish	Total Weight		
1	JOHN BRAITHWAITE	5	13 lb	0 oz
2	JEFF MASON	2	5 lb	11 oz
3	MARK KENNEDY	1	3 lb	9 oz
4	PAUL ROACH	1	3 lb	5 oz
5	DAVE JOHNS	1	3 lb	3 oz
6=	ALEX BOBBA	1	3 lb	2 oz
6=	LEE WILLIAMS	1	3 lb	2 oz
8	JOHN GOLLOP	1	3 lb	0 oz
9	DAVE MINALL	1	2 lb	14 oz
10	ANDY COTTAM	1	2 lb	12 oz
11	DAVID PERKS	1	2 lb	8 oz
12	TONY CHIPMAN	1	2 lb	5 oz
25	MARTIN BARRETT	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JOHN BOWEN	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	MARTIN BURGESS	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	PAUL GOLDING	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JOHN GUMBLETON	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	ANDY HASKINS	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JOHN HUCKINGS	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JOHN HUMPHRY	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	BEN JAILER	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JIM LETHAM	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	DEVE NEWING	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	JOSH RICH	0	0 lb	0 oz
25	RON THOMAS	0	0 lb	0 oz

Pike Fly



A huge congratulations goes to local angler Tom Harvey, who celebrated the summer solstice with an exceptional catch – a 22lb+ pike landed from North Shore. This impressive specimen was in outstanding condition and is a true testament to Tom's skill and dedication as an angler. A memorable way to mark the longest day of the year!



The North Shore area of Chew Valley Lake produced an exceptional day of pike fishing on the summer solstice, with impressive catches reported by seasoned anglers Andy Cheetham and Adam Chambers. Andy landed five double-figure pike, including two standout specimens weighing 32lb and 33lb – both in fantastic condition and photographed below. His boat partner, Adam Chambers, also enjoyed a superb session, banking four doubles with notable fish weighing 20lb, 21lb, and an impressive 27lb (Shown above). This memorable day highlights the outstanding quality of Chew's pike fishing and marks June 21st as one of the most productive dates of the season so far.



Temporary Suspension of Pike Fly Fishing – Chew Valley Lake

Both Chew and Blagdon are regularly monitored for both temperature and dissolved Oxygen this responsibility falls to our ranger team for our staff to make an informed decision.

We have been blessed with excellent water clarity this spring, tremendous weed growth, low nighttime temperatures and blustery conditions all contributing to exceptionally high dissolved oxygen content.

Even at the time of writing this our oxygen readings are still exceptional for this time of year although with the temperatures creeping up so will the biological metabolism of our fish.

After the warmer period of June, Pike fly fishing at Chew Valley Lake has been suspended to elevated water temperatures recorded during our latest monitoring checks.

Bristol Water Fisheries places fish welfare as our highest priority.

To safeguard the health of these apex predators and ensure the long-term sustainability of pike angling at Chew, this temporary measure is necessary.

This does not affect the Trout angling at this time.

While we recognise the disappointment this may cause, we trust anglers will understand the importance of protecting the future of this world-class fishery. We will continue to monitor the lake closely and will resume pike fly fishing as soon as conditions allow.

Upcoming Events:

Champion of Champions Competition – Chew Valley Lake

We're excited to announce our **new competition at Chew Valley Lake** – the **Champion of Champions**, an **invitation-only event** bringing together the **top 4 rods** from all major boat competitions held on Chew last year.

Event Details

- **Competition**
Date: Sunday
20th July 2025
- **Practice Day:**
Saturday 19th
July 2025 (boats
must be booked in
pairs)

With **67 anglers already signed up**, this is set to be one of the biggest matches of the year. Payments are now being collected, so to secure your place and reserve a practice boat, please call **01275 332339** as soon as possible.

We look forward to welcoming all qualifiers for what promises to be a fantastic weekend of competition and sport.

A teal-colored poster for the 'Champion of Champions Invitational 2025'. At the top, the title 'CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS' is in large white letters, flanked by 'b BRISTOL WATER' logos. Below this, it says '* INVITATIONAL 2025' and 'TEST YOURSELF ALONG SIDE THE BEST IN LOCH STYLE TROUT FISHING ON THE 20TH JULY AT CHEW VALLEY LAKE'. A silhouette of two anglers in a boat is in the background. The prize list includes: 'FIRST PRIZE - £1000 ALL WATERS ALL WEEK SEASON TICKET', 'SECOND PRIZE- £500 GIFT VOUCHER AT BWF', and 'THIRD PRIZE- £250 GIFT VOUCHER AT BWF'. It also states a '£50 ENTRY FEE'. The format is '2 FISH KILL, 12 RELEASE BARBLESS COMP' and 'INTERNATIONAL RULES WITH ROLLY POLLY'. Contact information for Woodford Lodge is provided: 'PLEASE CONTACT WOODFORD LODGE ON 01275332339 FOR OFFICIAL PRACTICE DAY BOATS ON THE 19TH OF JULY, & HOW YOU COULD QUALIFY FOR NEXT YEARS EVENT'. Logos for 'FISH LEGAL' and 'ANGLING TRUST' are at the bottom.

b **CHAMPION** **b**
OF
CHAMPIONS
*** INVITATIONAL 2025**
TEST YOURSELF ALONG SIDE THE
BEST IN LOCH STYLE TROUT FISHING
ON THE 20TH JULY
AT CHEW VALLEY LAKE
* INVITATIONAL ANGLERS HAVE QUALIFIED FROM 2024 MATCH RESULTS AT CHEW & BLAGDON
FIRST PRIZE - £1000 ALL WATERS ALL WEEK SEASON TICKET
SECOND PRIZE- £500 GIFT VOUCHER AT BWF
THIRD PRIZE- £250 GIFT VOUCHER AT BWF
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PLEASE CONTACT WOODFORD LODGE ON 01275332339 FOR OFFICIAL PRACTICE DAY BOATS ON THE 19TH OF JULY, & HOW YOU COULD QUALIFY FOR NEXT YEARS EVENT
FISH LEGAL **ANGLING TRUST**

New Feature: Live Lake Fishing Updates – Now Available on Facebook

To provide anglers with more timely and relevant information, Bristol Water Fisheries has introduced a new feature to our Facebook page: Live Lake Fishing Updates.

This initiative aims to keep the angling community informed with current conditions, productive areas, and successful tactics across our three primary waters: Chew Valley Lake, Blagdon Lake, and the Barrow Tanks. The updates are prominently displayed as pinned posts at the top of our Facebook page, ensuring ease of access for anglers planning their next session. These updates will be compiled and posted regularly based on real-time reports, ranger feedback, and field observations from across the sites. In addition, we're inviting our angling community to participate. Those who have recent success or insights on methods, fly patterns, or lake behaviour are encouraged to share their experiences. This collaborative approach will help ensure the accuracy and usefulness of the information. We hope this new feature provides added value to your visits and encourages more shared learning and success on the water.

Stocking

June 2025 Stocking Report

Summary of Stocking Numbers

During June 2025, our fisheries team carried out the following trout stockings across the Bristol Water reservoirs:

- Barrow Tanks:
 - 1,000 rainbow trout stocked, divided across the three tanks.
- Blagdon Lake:
 - 1,800 rainbow trout stocked.
- Chew Valley Lake:
 - 2,700 rainbow trout stocked.

At this time of year, with elevated water temperatures, we continue to stock little and often to ensure fish welfare during transportation and release. This approach helps maintain high fish quality and improves survival rates, giving anglers the best possible sport throughout the summer.

