

# *DEVON*

## *ANGLING REVIEW*

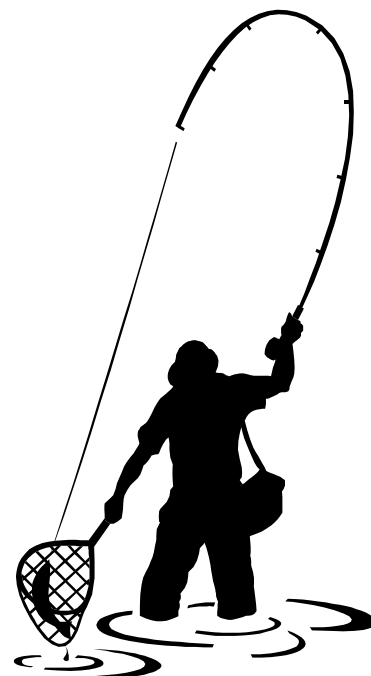
**The Newsletter of the Devon Angling Association**

### **Membership**

It is interesting and instructive, to look at historical membership records and make comparisons with the present day, for example:

- In 2013 we had a total membership of 383 comprising 36 juniors and 288 adults plus 59 who chose to take out the combined ticket to include salmon and sea trout.
- In 1983, just 30 years ago, there were 1064 members, of whom 389 were juniors.

The most immediate observation is the 91% reduction in the under 16 age group, the Association's junior membership. We must be concerned that youngsters are not being encouraged to take up angling; the benefits are obvious, fresh air, exercise and learning to appreciate and respect the environment. The River Devon remains a wonderful asset for our community and offers tremendous scope for walking and observing wildlife. Fishing on your doorstep in such surroundings and able to see kingfishers, red squirrels, otters, deer etc. is surely the nearest thing to Arcadia that we could experience. Your Committee is resolved to do all it reasonably can to develop the interest of young people, encouraging them to explore the opportunities and benefits membership can bring.



### **Salmon / Sea Trout Catch Returns:**

All 2013 salmon permit holders are reminded that salmon / sea trout catch returns, including nil returns, must be made to the Hon. Secretary. **A 2013 catch return will be required before any new permit is issued to the member for the 2014 season.**

### **Reserve at Fossoway**

The reserve on this section of the river is being lifted thus allowing fishing in season 2014. The continuing difficulties with the fish population in this area of the river have been commented on many times, the Secretary would therefore be grateful if anglers could report back on the quality of the fishing they experience or any other information relating to this part of the river they think is of importance. Periodic stocking of trout of varying size in the Dunning Bridge to Crook of Devon stretch has taken place over many years and electrofishing has been carried out quite frequently. The general impression, quite apart from past pollution incidents which have had serious effects, is that while there are still large quantities of invertebrates present in this part of the river, a sustainable population of brown trout capable of regeneration does not seem to be present. The Committee have for many years kept an eye on the situation and discussed ad nauseam what action to take. It has now been decided that independent professional advice should be sought and the Committee is planning to have an exhaustive study undertaken to determine the reasons why this part of the river, while being delightful to fish, is no longer as productive as we all think it ought to be. We hope this will lead to action which will address the problem in the longer term. A brief history of changes to the upper River Devon is included in this Newsletter.

## **2013 Fishing**

Due to the fine weather, the river was very low for long periods and the salmon fishing was confined to about two and a half weeks in October. Trout fishing was not nearly as productive as during the last two seasons (which were wet) but anglers who did persist had some good days. As far as the migratory fish were concerned, 22 salmon (mostly grilse) were caught, all but four were released. 14 sea trout up to 3lb in weight were caught, all were released. Two pollution incidents affecting the Alva Burn occurred during 2013. Both are being investigated by Scottish Water and SEPA.

### **Fossoway and upstream, a little history**

In 1905, at the inception of the Devon Angling Association, the river was very different from the form in which it appears today. On the negative side, industrial pollution which lasted at least until the 1960s, made the prospect of fishing the lower river most unpalatable. On the other hand, there was good trout fishing to be had right upstream to Glendevon and the Ochils. Also, at a time when labour was cheap and plentiful, riparian owners were able to contain the greater excesses of the river's tendency to flood by constructing defences in wood, stone and concrete.

The construction of the hill reservoirs, beginning with Glensherup (c1880) and Glenquey (c1909), had very little impact on the flow of the River Devon since they were sited on small tributary burns. However, following construction of Lower Frandy (1924) and the Upper Frandy (1955), some restriction to river flow was in evidence, especially during the summer period. With the completion in 1978 of Castlehill Reservoir the whole picture was drastically changed. First of all the Association lost several miles of highly productive trout fishing, but, more seriously, problems were being encountered downstream. Among these have been long periods of extremely low flows without any freshets leading to increased algal and weed growth, occasional massive and uncontrollable floods causing excessive erosion. Clearly the presence of the Castlehill Reservoir is inhibiting fish development.

### **Invasive Non-Native plant species**

Helped by the Devon Angling Association, the Ochils Landscape Partnership (OLP) have now completed the second year of their three year programme to reduce the level of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam invading the river banks of the river between Vicars Bridge and Dollar.

## **OLP Educational projects**

Primary school children along the Hillfoots are learning about the importance of invertebrates' in the local burns using teaching material produced by the OLP in conjunction with Buglife Scotland (The Invertebrate Conservation Trust).

The children learn about the invertebrates' role as indicators of water quality and their importance in the freshwater food chain. During the programme they collect and identify Invertebrates at sites on the burns. Classes are also undertaking monitoring tasks associated with the environment. This helps them appreciate the need to care for the wildlife and the environment in general.

Supported by OLP volunteers the River Forth Fisheries Trust is presenting its Fish in the Classroom project in Alva and Strathdevon Primary Schools. This is a very popular project with the children, where a class incubate fish eggs, monitor development and then at the appropriate size release them into a nearby burn. During the project they are taught about the River Devon, the life cycle of fish and their conservation. It is planned to extend this project across all Clackmannanshire primary schools in 2015.

### **Planned Hydro-electric scheme at Crook of Devon / Rumbling Bridge**

The Association supported by the River Forth Fisheries Trust raised objection to the planning application on the basis that the scheme would be detrimental both to the quality of riparian habitat and the indigenous trout population. However, it is probable that the application will be successful

### **River Work Parties**

Working parties have been active along the river clearing burns, mending stiles, bridging burns and ditches to improve access. The perennial problem of fallen trees is dealt with as far as is reasonably practical. Much of this is fairly heavy work but is necessary to the well-being of the River. If you would like to help you will be very welcome, just contact the secretary and he will let you know times, places and dates.

### **Devon Angling Association Website**

A new website [devonanglingassociation.org.uk](http://devonanglingassociation.org.uk) is at an advanced stage of development thanks to the efforts of Graham Owens. All being well the new site should be on-line for the start of the 2014 season. Once done the old site will be removed.