

## Message from the Chairman - March 2021

Spring is now upon us and with restrictions on travel beginning to ease I hope we can look forward to some glorious days on our magnificent waters. As the days lengthen, the journeys we are allowed to make will also begin to lengthen, resulting in a significant increase in angling pressure.

With fewer trips abroad and more holidays in the UK - we can expect the Lake District to be busier than ever, if we continue our route out of lock-down.

Consistent with HM Government guidelines, WADAA fisheries have remained open since January. However, travel restrictions have meant that only members and guests living in the local area, close to our waters, are likely to have taken advantage of this situation. Many members, including myself and other WADAA Directors have had to wait patiently whilst others have enjoyed a flying-start to the year.

If you have followed reports on our website, via email and on social media, you will have seen that fishing has been excellent on both coarse and trout waters. This is partly as a result of measures we have taken to monitor catch rates and modify our stocking accordingly - although a colder winter will also have helped, with good over-wintered fish featuring in most trout catches.

Mindful of the unusual situation facing us this year, we have held back some trout stock, to give a 'boost' from Easter onwards, as more anglers return to our waters. This should give them a flying-start to their fishing-year, after having to 'stay local' over the past few months.

Not only will bank space be at a premium, but parking will be as well. In many cases there is very little we can do about this. I would therefore like to appeal to those members who have enjoyed fishing, whilst others have remained at home, to please think about reducing their fishing a little over the next month or so. This will allow members who are only able to venture out for the first time, a better chance of finding a parking space...and a space on the bank.

This is not a new rule, simply a request for members to be considerate and share limited resources during this difficult period.

I will conclude by thanking Nick, Joanne and Jim, for their continued hard work for WADAA Ltd. Whilst they are all paid to work on your behalf, they give many additional unpaid hours to help improve our Association. Members of our Coarse and Game Committees, together with our directors and a small band of volunteer members, also continue to play an important role within WADAA Ltd.

Enjoy Spring - tight lines

Thank you.

David Blacow.  
Chairman.

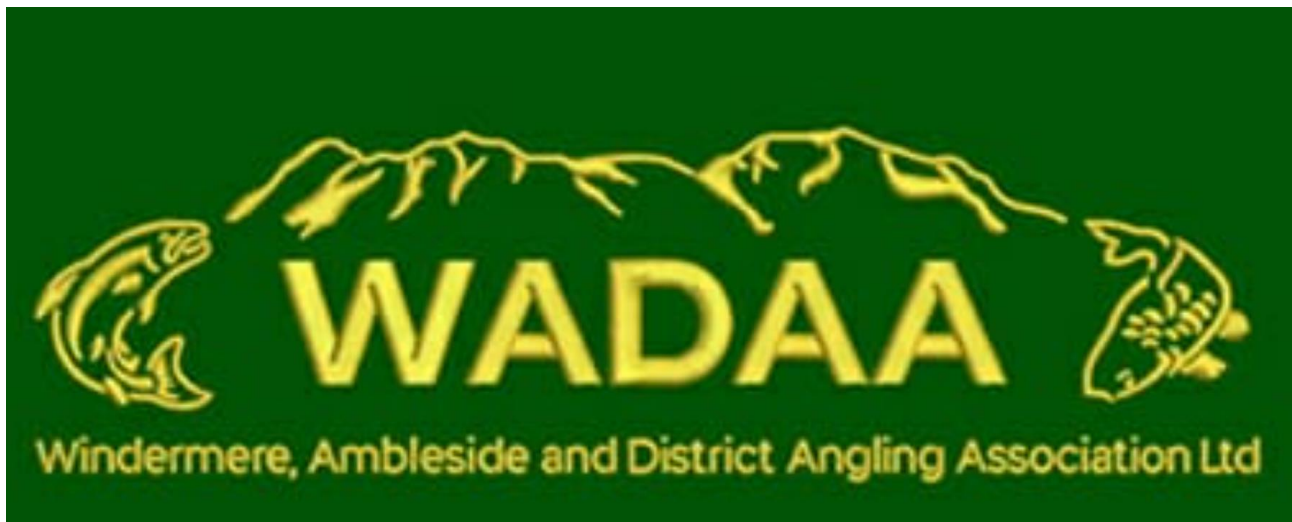
Fisheries Update  
Nick Butterfield  
WADAA Manager

For the last 12 months now we've been regularly updating members on the activities involving the club and the work going on around all our venues. I hope members have found this both interesting and informative.

Unfortunately, lockdowns have continued into 2021, though it looks with the vaccine roll-out, we may be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. The club has maintained a strict policy throughout of adhering to the guidelines published by both the government and the Angling Trust and this will continue to be our stance. It will be down to individual members to decide their own approach to following the regulations.

Work on both the game and coarse side of the business have proceeded at a relentless pace and I'll cover the highlights of each in turn.

Given the focus and quality on both our game and coarse fishing, the club has redesigned it's logo. Working with suggestions and ideas submitted by members, we evolved a new design which has been received very positively. To celebrate, we've launched a range of branded clothing which can be purchased through the 'shop' on the club website. These have proven popular to date and with over 1100 members, if everybody could purchase something, it would make a huge difference.



## **Coarse**

To some degree, the major rebuilding effort over the last couple of years has been completed, though there still remains a huge amount of work to be done.

## **Castlehead Fishery**

Following the creation of the stone bund as part of the otter protective measures last year, the venue has been extensively restocked. This has focused on 2 species; bream and carp, with all stockings of fish in excess of 2.5lb. We will carefully monitor this stock and make further decisions next winter on any adjustments we may need to make. We anticipate that the stocking levels will have a significant impact on water colour which should in turn reduce the threat from cormorants and also suppress weed growth – both of which have been historic problems at the venue.

2 caged refuge areas have been installed at either end of the island. These will add protection for the resident perch population and also for the juvenile fish as they develop (we expect the recent stocking of bream to successfully spawn). These refuges will shortly receive a floating island top to the same design as at Ratherheath Tarn.

In April we will also build a solar powered aerator at the venue. This will be important in maintaining the health of the stocked fish in the summer months.

### **Cleabarrow Tarn**

A lot of work has been done here recently. Building on the section of raised walkway completely last year, 2 further additions have been made. All of the historically boggy areas can now be crossed on the walkways and the whole venue is far more comfortable as a result.



A toilet has been constructed – particularly important on this venue given it's popularity with overnight anglers.

Both the toilet and the walkway were high priority requests coming out of the survey we conducted last year.

Given it's shallow nature and relatively high fish stocks, the tarn's stock is one of the most 'at-risk' from low dissolved oxygen levels and as such, we have deployed our first aeration solution here. Given there is no mains power, we have had to engineer our own solar solution. Oxygen levels are at their lowest in the early hours of the morning, so the challenge is creating a solar set-up which works when there is no sun.....We have engineered our own power storage solution and the system will run on a timer, coming on at 3am and running until about 8am, the batteries will then recharge during the day. We realise that there may be some disturbance here, but the pay-off will be worth it.





Not only supporting fish life, enhanced oxygen levels should bring other benefits too. Fish metabolism will be higher, resulting in more feeding activity and there should be an accelerated breakdown of organic matter, hopefully mitigating silt build-up, which in-turn reduces the threats of ammonia generation.

There are 2 pieces of work left to complete at Cleabarrow, both of which we'll aim to get done before the summer. The area around peg 9 (the stone bench) gets very wet as a result of overland water flow. We'll be adding a channel to control this and moving the flow away from the peg and preventing it from under-cutting the otter fence.

And finally, a layer of stone will be added to the bivi-pitches. Access at Cleabarrow is very poor, so logistically this is difficult. We'll need to get a digger in to do this and as such, the surrounding land needs to be dry and firm.

Though already well stocked, the venue has received 2 additional stockings of small carp and crucian carp.

### **Ratherheath Tarn**

Though again, having had a huge amount of work completed there last year, activity has continued this winter. A further set of refuge cages has been deployed between pegs 21 and 32 and this will shortly be topped with a floating island.

These refuges, alongside the floating manikins and a lot of vigilance from us, has seen a significant reduction in avian predation this year and as such, we expect to see fish stocks continue to rise significantly – but more of this later.

Having completed the essentials, the biggest of which was the fence, we've had some time to focus on the 'comfort' items. All of the wet and boggy paths have now either been bridged or stoned. This was some task – shifting 60 tonnes of stone, 500m to the back of the tarn over rough ground was not easy and the members who completed this task did a fantastic job.



Work remaining for the spring will focus around margin planting to offset the harsh looking new paths. Our efforts in this respect last year were met with mixed results. The variable water levels on this venue killed some of the younger plants. We'll be taking a different approach this year. We also have some stone walling to tidy, particularly where the otter fence crossed through. This is, understandably, very important to our landlord and we must get this completed quickly. I'd be grateful of assistance from any members with walling skills – please get in touch if you can help.

There has been a massive stocking effort this winter, building on the many improvements we have made. The EA have provided us with about 4500 fish, free of charge. I often read a lot of unwarranted criticism of the EA, they have given us nothing but support. We have had significant stockings of roach, rudd, skimmer bream, tench, carp and crucian carp. These are all fish which will define this venue for the future. The rise in the number of silver fish should also see the re-emergence of the monster perch the tarn held a number of years ago.

In addition, we've added 200lb of large 4-7lb bream to underpin the original stocks and 4, 20lb plus carp.

### **Rydal Water, Blelham Tarn, Grasmere**

Though what we can do here is very limited, we have focused on increasing our bailiffing patrols with Jim Duncan doing an excellent job of keeping on top of things. We've managed to give members some options for parking on Rydal water (as previously communicated) and are still working on boat storage options for Grasmere.

On a general note, all of the work completed can be quickly undone with single acts of carelessness. Otter fences only work when the gates are closed. I cannot emphasise enough how these creatures will find and exploit the smallest weaknesses. We have had several occasions already this year where gates have been both unlocked and worse, left open. This is one of the most serious breaches of club rules and when caught, anglers will be removed from both the venue and the club immediately.

### **Game**

Development and improvement work has focused heavily on the coarse waters over the last 2 years – this was simply as a result of prioritization and necessity. However, activities on game waters are now ramping up. The club recently announced details of a major investment effort.

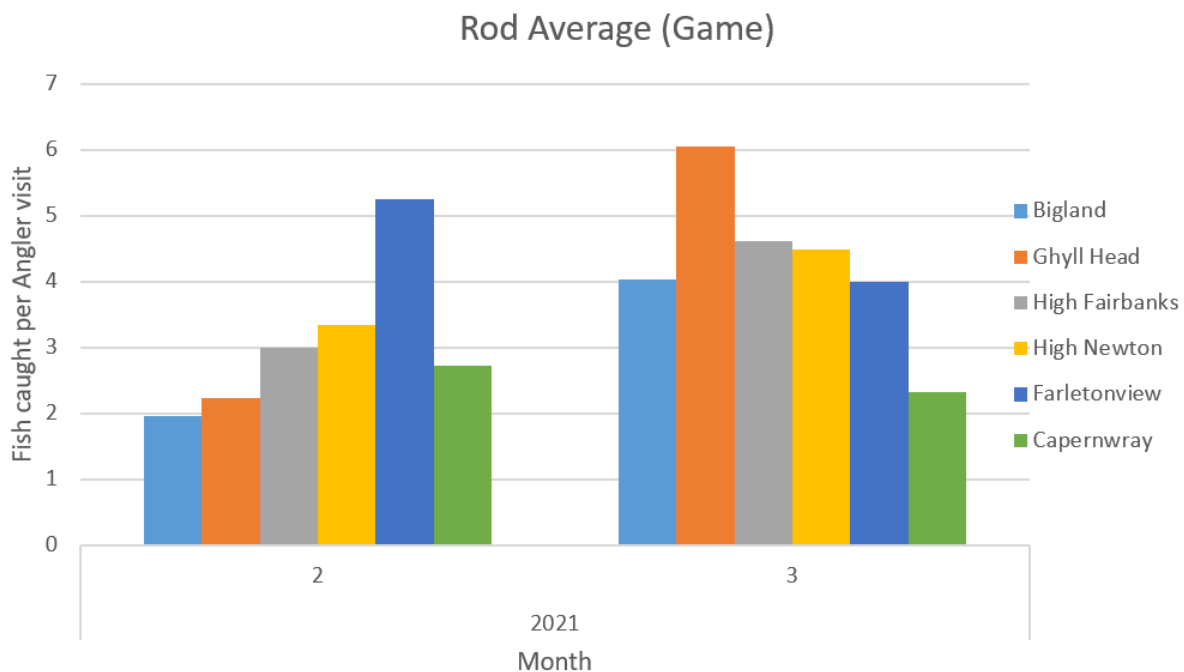
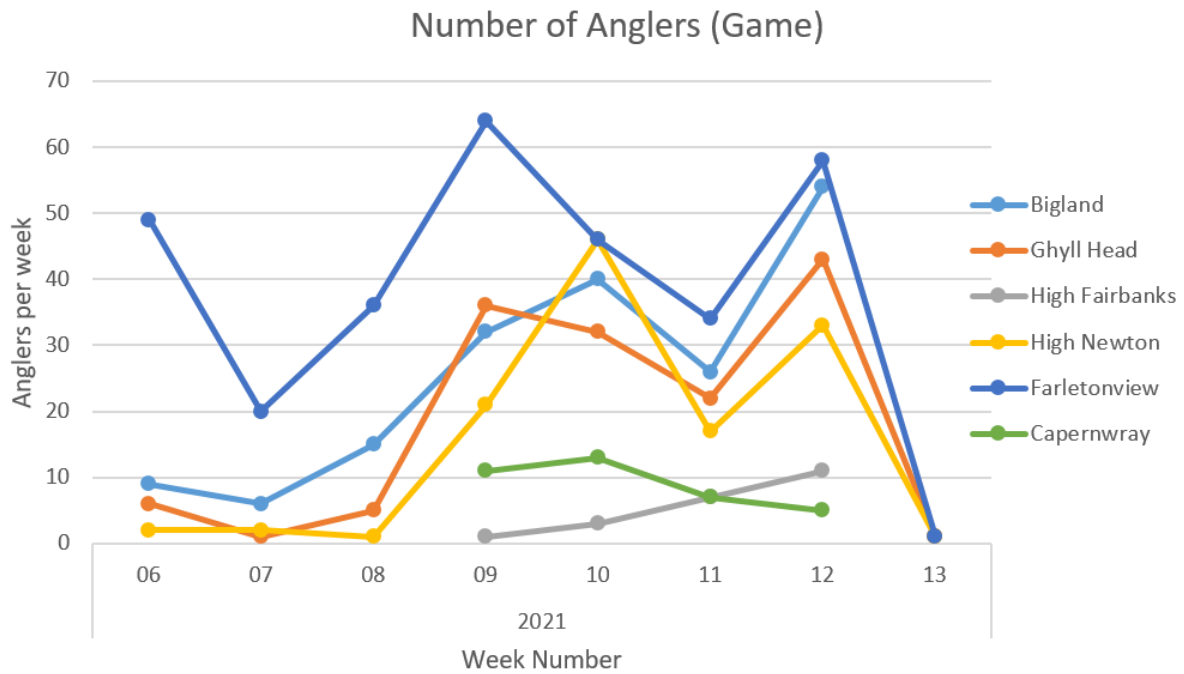
Last year the directors and committees spent a long time studying our stocking plans and strategies, which resulted in a new approach for 2021 – again, details of this have been previously communicated. The main elements of this plan involved the introduction of a new fish supplier, more regular stockings of fewer fish, a larger average fish size and an overall stocking target of 300lb/acre.

At the same time we launched the new online 'Catch Return' system. Though some anglers may have been put off by the approach, it has been hugely popular, with us now receiving hundreds of reports each week. This has multiple benefits. We can provide anglers with detailed information; venue attendances, catch rates etc, while at the same time, monitor the performance of each venue.

It is vitally important that anglers complete these catch returns and as such they are compulsory for both members and day ticket anglers and this is regardless of whether fish have been caught or not.

Sat behind the data is a series of complex calculations which allow us to accurately estimate the stocks in each venue. We are able to make week by week adjustments to the stocking plans as a result.

This 'smart stocking' approach has so far produced some excellent results. We are now edging towards the more challenging period in the year for game fishing and we hope we will continue to see the full benefit.



## Capernwray Tarn

Following the merger with CDAA, this venue is now ‘up and running’. As previously detailed, there is a significant development plan for this water as we want to create a disabled access and coaching venue for fly fishing. We see this as a way of getting more anglers into this branch of the sport.

Major progress has already been made with a new bridge, casting platforms and coaching pegs and the addition of a toilet facility. This work has been completed very quickly and has benefitted from brilliant help from members. This is hugely appreciated as it means things get completed quicker and also means that we can focus our limited funds on things we can’t do ourselves.





After Easter, the venue will close for a short period as we deploy some heavy equipment to create a car park and paths.

Following this we anticipate running some organized events at this venue throughout the summer.



## Farletonview

Efforts at Farletonview are focused on water quality improvements. Throughout the winter we have been developing aeration solutions for the venue. Given it's size and the relatively high demand for oxygen that trout have, anything we deploy must be mains powered – solar powered solutions are just not 'man enough'.

The first job was therefore to get power down to the lake and across to the island. This has now been completed. Concurrently, we have developed a combined aeration solution using diffused air and a paddler. We anticipate having both of these installed by mid-April, ready for the warmer weather.





As in previous years, we'll continue to use blue dye in this venue. And again, to reduce algal growth, a full set of barley straw 'sausages' have been added to the water.



### **Bigland Tarn**

As part of a larger holiday estate, developments at this venue have to be in-keeping with the other activities on-site. Late last year we agreed a series of actions with the owner and we expect to see these commence shortly. There will be a number of significant enhancements for the benefit of our members.

The old bridge structure across to the first island will be removed and replaced. At the same time the walkways and smaller bridges at the top of the tarn by the dam will be extended and rebuilt to cover wet and boggy ground.

Building on the success and popularity elsewhere, an angler's loo will be added adjacent to the cabin.

Again, water quality here is critical. This venue saw the highest water temperatures of all our game venues last year, to the severe detriment of stocks. We have already deployed this year's barley straw following the excellent results previously.

Similarly to Farletonview, the landowner has agreed to install a lakeside power supply and following this, we'll be building mechanical aeration solutions into the water.

These should be all completed by early summer

## **High Fairbanks**

More and more anglers are appreciating the beauty of this venue matched with the excellent sport on offer. The limiting factor here is decent parking, especially in wet weather.

Though sensitive because of its location, we've agreed a solution to 'firm-up' the parking spaces and we'll be cracking on with this as soon as we can.

## **Ghyll Head and High Newton**

Development potential on these water is clearly limited. However, following the theme of our focus on water quality improvement, we've held a number of discussion with United Utilities (the venue owners) regarding mitigations for phosphates, nitrates and ammonia in this venue. All of these substances either directly or indirectly harm fish stocks.

We have agreed a plan of action and again, will expect to see things develop throughout 2021.

And finally, if you haven't already done so, can I encourage all our members to sign-up to the club Facebook page. It is not only a source of great member-generated information, but it is also a really convenient way of quickly getting information out:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1737176763192645>