

Dear Member,

As we have previously communicated, the summer months have been completely contrasting in terms of the management of our 2 fishing disciplines, game and coarse. While the coarse waters have fished fantastically, the summer temperatures have created severe problems for the game.

Once water temperatures exceed around 21 degrees, trout stop feeding. Over the short term, this is not an issue, however, over 12 weeks and temperatures of 27 degrees are! The club was as prepared as it could have been, benefitting from the earlier decisions to invest in aeration. Together with our enhanced monitoring of water conditions and catch rates and a very considered stocking plan for 2021, the combined effects of this was that we didn't (miraculously) experience any severe fish kills - when the weather did eventually break, I think we were only days from this catastrophic state.

The severe difficulty this year was caused by the combination of a complete lack of rain (which cools water and creates flow) and constant very high temperatures over a 3 month period.

As we entered the late spring period our waters were 'fully stocked' and we had experienced some of the best spring catch returns ever. This equates to around 1500 fish in each of the 3 large waters, about half of that number in Farletonview and High Fairbanks and half that again in Capernwray.

Though we avoided any significant kills, the fish in the venues had effectively 'shutdown' and it looked for all intents and purposes that venues were devoid of fish. Whilst this torpid state effectively saves the lives of the fish by significantly reducing their oxygen demand, their condition deteriorates very rapidly. This is also at the time of year when waterborne bacteria levels are at their highest, leaving them susceptible to infection and fungal attack, as well as being very easy predation targets. Subsequently sport was very slow (or non-existent!) and any fish which were caught were highly likely to die subsequently. We are hugely grateful for the sense of our members to restrict fishing during this period.

As water temperatures have slowly fallen (they were still over 17 degrees this week!), we have been able to resume our stocking programme. A combination of this and the easing of conditions, has seen catch returns improving.

However, we are not out of the woods yet. The venues contain a significant number of poor condition fish – we have had numerous reports of this from members. Bizarrely, this is a good thing. The only way that these fish will recover is by feeding (which they hadn't done for months). As they feed, they will however get caught. The appearance of these fish will be poor, possibly showing signs of infection and likely to put up a poor fight.

These fish can and will recover and this will be accelerated as water temperatures drop below 15

degrees. Though this is something of a journey of discovery for us, we'd ask our anglers to adopt some special care for these fish:

- Play them fast and get them in quickly
- Unhook the fish in the net, in the water – don't handle them in the air
- Take time supporting them in the water on their return

Some members have reported killing these fish on the basis of their bad condition. Whilst this is understandable, we'd like anglers to do the exact opposite and return these fish very carefully to the water – we do think that their condition will improve rapidly throughout October. Following the resumption of stocking, there are now plenty of good condition fish that can be taken for the table.

Though the 'performance' of these fish is poor at the moment, they do take up the stocking capacity of the venue. As a result, even if we wanted to, we can't simply pile in more fish in on top of these.

We'll continue to monitor conditions carefully and take any necessary actions to improve things as we can. Completing catch returns and reporting on fish conditions is absolutely critical – our only feedback is information we get from members – help us to help you!

Of a different note, all the work we carried out at Capernwray in the early spring is now maturing nicely

and the venue and facilities are looking fantastic and whats more, is fishing brilliantly too.



As I previously mentioned, the coarse venues have performed fantastically all year, with some incredible catches being made. This has recently been capped by some notable catches. Ryan Davies-New broke the carp record at Ratherheath with a monster 24lb fish. This is an old fish and clearly enjoying life in the revamped tarn, having put on over 2lb in weight in the last 18 months. Interestingly, this fish at some point in it's past has had a brush with an otter and has a piece of tail missing. Though in an ideal world we all wish there was no need for protective fencing, fish like this remind us of the benefit of the work we've done.



It is not only the managed venues fishing well, Peter Ogden, Kevin Cruikshank and his son have recently taken tremendous roach and perch catches from Grasmere.



And finally, we have been working to diversify the stocking at Cleabarrow Tarn – a venue which has traditionally only really contained carp and tench. We're now seeing these efforts coming to fruition, with member Paul Blackburn focusing on these newly emerging residents.



There are just some final short notes for members to finish with.

1. We still get numerous calls from people who have 'forgotten' gate codes. These are issued out with membership packs. Please make a note of the codes and remember them and **do not** ask for codes over social media.
2. All of our trout waters contain small numbers of coarse fish, mainly rudd and perch. We've had some reports of these fish being killed when 'accidentally' caught. **This is strictly forbidden.** These fish must be returned to the water unharmed.
3. Estate shooting events will soon restart at Ratherheath. The dates are attached with this update. Members **MUST NOT** enter the venue on these days
4. We are entering the time of year where otter predation increases. Many of our venues are now fenced. Unfortunately the weak point is anglers. Be aware that gates must be closed and locked at all times. **Propping them open while carrying tackle to pegs is strictly forbidden.**
5. Work to replace the perimeter fence at Capernwray will begin on Monday 4th October. It will take about a week to complete and disturbance should be minimal.
6. Many day to day updates/rule reminders etc are issued via the club Facebook page. Please register

to use this. Additionally, we see members breaking rules that they were 'unaware of'. Please take time to read the general and venue-specific rules – we deliberately keep these as simple as possible and there is a good reason behind every one. These can be found on the website – as the police say – 'ignorance is no excuse'.

7. Details for this year's AGM in December will be issued shortly. After the disruption of last years event caused by the pandemic, it would be great to see a good member turnout.

Amongst other issues the club has to deal with, predation of fish stocks is a growing problem. Dealing with this effectively and within the law is complex and requires a venue by venue approach. Preventing cormorant predation on game waters is particularly challenging. Please read the club's approach to managing this attached with this update

As the weather cools, some sport will tail-off, whilst others will take-off. Please keep us up to date with your progress by posting successes on the Facebook page. Keep using the 'Catch Return' system and email the club with any questions or queries that you may have.

Nick Butterfield

Fishery Manager