

Game Stocking Strategy 2022

Background

In 2021, WADAA had a complete reset of its game stocking strategy in response to pressures it faced:

- Extended dry, hot conditions in spring and summer
- Increasing predation from otters
- Increasing predation from cormorants (with no ability to effectively protect fish stocks on High Newton, Ghyll Head and High Fairbanks)
- Ever present danger of oxygen crashes caused by high algae levels due to excess nutrients and increased sunlight and temperatures

These combined factors resulted in high levels of fish loss, estimated at up to 30% (though it could have been even greater). As costs of stock are increasing, continuation of previous approaches was completely unaffordable and would have resulted in either future reductions in stocking levels or significant increases in member fees. This would be in addition to the emotional stresses and reputational damage caused as a result of fish kills.

The club took a variety of approaches to mitigate these effects:

- Use of barley straw and blue dye to reduce algae growth

- Implementation of mechanical aeration
- Deployment of temporary, pumped aerators in high stress periods
- Use of cormorant control measures where permitted
- Managing stocking densities of no more than 300lb/acre
- Focusing of winter stocking on a subset of venues that can be effectively protected
- Commencement of a winter stocking of larger fish
- Increasing the average size of standard stock fish from 2 to 2.25lb.
- Introduction of otter protective fencing where appropriate

The effects have been very successful:

- Catch rates across all venues are improved over previous years (all catch returns can be viewed via members new 'MYWADAA' login)
- Overall fish losses have reduced
- Very low fish deaths, despite unprecedented water temperatures during the summer drought.

Paddle wheel aerator at Farletonview



Otter protective measures at Capernwray



Otter protective fence at Capernwray



Fish costs vary by sub-species, with larger fish incurring a higher cost per pound.

In order, costs escalate as such:

1. Rainbow Trout
2. Blue Trout
3. Spartic/Tiger Trout
4. Brown Trout

Brown trout are approximately twice the cost of Rainbow Trout.

Fishery Plans

As a result of the success of these measures, the approaches will be continued into 2022 with some significant additions. These are best summarized on a venue by venue approach.

Bigland Tarn – Day Ticket/Members

This popular venue offers the advantages of a wild fishery whilst benefitting from managed fishery facilities (which significant recent investment has further improved). The large venue size creates lots of options, however the shallow water makes it very susceptible to excessive summer water temperatures and algal blooms.

Licenses allow cormorant numbers to be managed on this venue.

- Spring and summer stockings will ramp-up quickly from March
- The venue will receive the highest variety of trout sub-species:
 - Rainbow Trout
 - Blue trout
 - Spartic Trout
 - Brown Trout
 - Tiger Trout
- Stocking will focus on 2.25lb average fish
- No stockings will occur in the peak of summer
- Autumn stockings will ramp-up quickly from September
- Winter stockings will be on a monthly basis and include quantities of 4-5lb class Rainbow Trout

Capernwray Tarn – Members Only

Due to its small size, both otter and cormorant predation is manageable, with the necessary control licenses in place. However, its proximity to both the coast and nearby large gravel pits means cormorant predation is an ever-present threat. Its location also means it avoids the worst of the winter weather making it ideal for year-round fishing. The ever-running inlet stream also mitigates the worst effects of summer temperature.

- Stockings will occur on a 2-weekly, little-and-often basis throughout the year
- Spring and autumn stockings will include a high ratio of 2.25lb Rainbow Trout
- Winter Stocking will include a high ratio of 4-5lb Rainbow Trout
- No stockings will occur in the peak of summer

Hall More – Day Ticket/Members

A new protective fence reduces the threat of otter predation, though its location and the presence of a nearby caravan park mean that cormorant control is more difficult and no permits are in-place. Its location also means it avoids the worst of the winter weather making it ideal for year-round fishing. Being spring-fed, water levels are maintained throughout summer.

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- Winter Stocking will include a high ration of 4-5lb Rainbow Trout
- Stockings will include a number of larger fish up to 7lb
- No stockings will occur in the peak of summer

Farletonview – Day Ticket/Members

This venue benefits from cormorant control licenses and it's location slightly further inland offers some protection. However, without a protective fence, otter predation from the nearby river cannot be avoided. It's location also means it avoids the worst of the winter weather making it ideal for year-round fishing.

However, the December and January winter closure limit winter fishing and the lack of any inflow create high risk conditions in summer.

- Stockings will ramp-up quickly in support of the February opening
- 2lb average Rainbow trout will form the bulk of the fish stocked
- Stockings will include a small ratio of Brown Trout
- No stocking will occur in the peak of summer
- Stocking will ramp-up quickly to support autumn fishing
- Stockings will focus on higher numbers of smaller fish

High Fairbanks – Members Only

This is a remote venue and difficulties involved in stocking mean this is WADAA's only catch and release venue.

Due to elevation, summer conditions rarely present a problem.

Cormorant predation is an issue, with the venue susceptible to roosting birds from both the River Kent and Lake Windermere. Poor access means the venue is closed during winter.

Recent good over-wintering conditions have resulted in a significant number of fish surviving year to year.

- Stockings will occur twice a year in Spring and Autumn
- Spring and autumn stockings will include a high ratio of 2.25lb Rainbow Trout

High Newton – Members Only

A very popular venue with WADAA anglers which has been one of the mainstays of club game fishing. However it has no predation protection in place, with United Utilities policy preventing any cormorant controls.

As a result the venue suffers extensive cormorant predation, especially in winter when many birds visit on a daily basis. This situation is unlikely to change.

As a result, no winter stocking will occur on this venue. However, a lack of weed and some resilience to summer heating makes this venue most suitable for summer fishing.

- Stocking will ramp up quickly in Spring with a focus on 2.25lb Rainbow Trout
- No stocking will occur in the peak of summer
- Stocking will ramp-up quickly in late summer with a high number of 4-5lb class fish

Ghyll Head – Day Ticket/Members

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Take Limits

Given the variety of species and sizes the 2022 stocking plan introduces, changes need to be made to take limits.

With immediate effect, current take rules are as such:

- All Spartic Trout must be returned to the water
- All Tiger Trout must be returned to the water
- All Brown Trout must be returned to the water
- All Rainbow Trout over 5lb must be returned to the water
- All Blue Trout over 5lb must be returned to the water

Rainbow Trout 4lb class fish

A maximum of 1 fish to be taken per session and up to a maximum of 2 fish per week

Rainbow Trout 2lb class fish

A maximum of 2 fish to be taken per session and up to a maximum of 4 fish per week.

These catch limits are not incremental. For example, an angler may take 4-off 2lb class fish per week, or 2-off 4lb class – **NOT BOTH**. Or a maximum of 1-off 4lb class fish and 2-off 2lb class fish per week.

To assist anglers with fish identification, new boards will be displayed at venues.

Know the trout species in WADAA waters



Rainbow Trout are the most common of our stocked species. Typically stocked between 2 and 7lb, they provide good sport for anglers in all conditions. All Rainbow Trout caught over 5lb MUST be returned to the water.



Spartic Trout are a cross between Artic Char and Brook Trout. This is a rare fish and typically stocked in sizes around 2lb. All Spartic Trout MUST be returned to the water.



Blue Trout are a variant of the Rainbow Trout, though not as common, they are stocked to add variety, typically in sizes 2-3lb. All Blue Trout caught over 5lb MUST be returned to the water.



Tiger Trout are a cross between Brown Trout and Brook Trout. This is a rare fish and typically stocked in sizes around 2lb. They are aggressive feeders and a tremendous sport fish. All Tiger Trout MUST be returned to the water.



Brown Trout are commonly found in both stillwaters and rivers. Typically stocked in 2-3lb size, they are very popular with anglers. ALL Brown Trout MUST be returned to the water.

WADAA stocks a variety of trout sub-species into it's waters. This is for a number of reasons:

- It provides variety for anglers
- It maintains the chances of good sport across a variety of water and weather conditions
- It keeps a level of bio-diversification and resilience against the effects of climate change
- It encourages different angling approaches to target the feeding characteristics of the differing species

The costs and availability of these species varies greatly and therefore each sub-species has different rules regarding take limits.

The improvements made in 2021, focusing a baseline approach around 2.25lb Rainbow Trout has created a strong foundation for 2022.

The evolved strategy for 2022 builds on this and introduces greater variety in both species and sizes for the benefit of anglers, whilst maintaining affordability for the club and our responsibilities for good fish health and husbandry.

The use of the club 'Catch Return' system developed to help us manage game fish stocks is vitally important and all game anglers, (both member and day ticket) must complete a return for every trip.

WADAA Catch Return



**ALL ANGLERS MUST COMPLETE
A CATCH RETURN**