

# SALMON & TROUT ASSOCIATION

Game anglers for fish, people, the environment.

## EAST SUSSEX BRANCH

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## NEWSLETTER 2010

**Dear Member,**

2009 proved to be a very busy year for the Branch and I will try to outline some of the things we have been involved with.

**Shows:** Once again we had stands at the South of England Show, Michelham Priory Game Fair and the Autumn Show at Ardingly. We offered the public information on Fly Fishing as well as the opportunity to "Have a Go" at Fly-casting or some tuition to improve casting technique. The Environment Agency sponsored us by donating a Fly rod to be won by one of the "Have a Go" participants at each show. **Please consider volunteering to help out at one or more of the shows? You will get an opportunity to see the rest of the show and it is a good opportunity to meet fellow members.**

**Courses:** Once again Alan Purnell arranged a series of Junior and Adult Courses, which proved very popular and were all well attended with many of the participants showing a serious interest in continuing to fish.

**Match with the Fly Dressers Guild:** This year it was our turn to host the annual match with the Fly Dressers Guild. We held it at Yew Tree Fishery near Rotherfield and the day was very well organised by Geoff Taylor. It was rather windy and the fishing proved quite hard going. It was an enjoyable day and the Fly Dressers retained the trophy for another year. Let's hope we can do better this year.

**Colin Godman's:** We had an excellent day at Colin Godman's in April with almost everyone catching 4 fish. The day in October was much harder work. Alan Purnell had 4 fish in no time but everyone else had more difficulty. However it was a really enjoyable day. If you haven't been, come this year and if you have been, come again, it's usually an excellent day.

**River Teise:** Don't forget our exchange arrangement with the River Teise Anglers and Owners Association (TAOA). It is not far away and provides a different challenge to those of us more used to lake fishing. If you are interested, please contact Robert Nathan (01825 769320) in advance to arrange a day permit.

**Reservoir Act:** Tom Todd brought to our attention to a disturbing article in the Trout Angler earlier this year. It detailed an amendment to the Reservoir Act proposed by the Government to reduce the minimum volume of banded

water covered by the Act from 25,000 cu.m. to 10,000 cu.m. The owners of dammed lakes covered by the Act will be required to have annual inspections carried out by accredited engineers. This would involve significant costs to the landowner, which would be passed on to the any tenant. It is inevitable that this would, in turn, be reflected in the costs to anglers. We have written to local MPs and met with Nicholas Soames MP. S&TA Headquarter initially believed that charitable status precluded their taking up this matter on behalf of members, however, following the recent Branch Officer's meeting at Fishmongers Hall, this position has changed and they are pursuing this matter with MP contacts. We have conducted a survey with other S&TA Branches in order to try to establish the extent of members who might be facing a similar threat but the response to date has been limited. We have also written to the CLA, Countryside Alliance, Angling Trust and as many other organisations that we feel might have some interest in order to enlist support. Needless to say, this matter is ongoing and is of importance to all anglers.

**Branch Constitution and Branch Agreement:** The change of the S&TA to charitable status has necessitated a new Branch relationship with HQ. We were not comfortable with the documents sent from HQ and so we have re-drafted them. After several redrafts these were eventually agreed with HQ and have now been signed.

### Water Resources Report:

We have all been disappointed at the poor performance of our syndicate fisheries this last summer and autumn. This was principally due to extremely low rainfall with consequent lack of discharge from the supply springs, coupled with high water temperatures. As game fishers, you will be aware that trout will only thrive in relatively cool and well-oxygenated water. Such conditions did not prevail in our lakes from the end of July onwards. We were not alone in having such problems. Many small Stillwater fisheries in the South East were also affected. This may be a trend associated with climate change and if so we will have to learn to live with it.

J.E.S.T.Pierre – Water Resources Officer – East Sussex Branch.

**Cinder Hill Troutng Syndicate:** The end of the season was disappointing. The year started well with good catch

returns until the hot weather in July. We stopped stocking, as planned, when the water temperature got too high. Towards the end of August it dropped and so, unlike last year, we put fish into the lakes. Sadly, we were not rewarded with any improvement in catch rates. We stocked regularly for the rest of the season but catches were consistently disappointing. However, we have not been alone and we understand that most still-water fisheries have experienced similar problems. We are sure that this is due to the water temperature, the negligible flow of water through the lakes, the numbers of Cormorants and the increase in ammonia levels in the middle lake at Cinder Hill due to the ducks. Peter Neave has regularly posted stocking information in the Fishing Huts but the level of our communications to members has not been satisfactory. To remedy this we now have a new Communications Officer to improve things this year. It has also been agreed with our Landlord that we can extend the season at Piplyc until the end of November this year and we have also managed not to increase the annual subscription for yet another year. We will try to deal with the weed problem ourselves if we have enough manpower to cope with it but, if not, we have found a contractor who will do it mechanically. We are desperate to improve the running of the Syndicate but we can't do this without the help and support of our Members. We need volunteers to help with the Working Parties at the beginning and occasionally during the season. Remember, the voluntary work that is undertaken in providing a clean, clear fishing environment is for the benefit of everyone and helps to keep the subscriptions down. We also need Members to let us know when things are not working properly and sometimes help to put things right. Please try to attend some of the working parties before the season begins.

We have been impressed by the help and information that has come from the Angling Trust and so, because of our concerns about the proposed amendment to the Reservoir Act, the Syndicate has now taken up Club membership of the Angling Trust and we would suggest that as many people as possible take up individual membership of the Trust.

**STOCKING REPORT FOR 2009:** Previously, when our Season has begun on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, stocking has commenced in early February to allow fish to acclimatise and numbers to build up through several deliveries, in preparation for opening day.

I have observed early this year that cormorant numbers were high and because February is the gamekeeper's month for "catching up" at the end of the Season, predator control and human presence around the lakes is always low, they were left undisturbed and I had no wish to provide them with easy feeding.

Stocking commenced, therefore, late in the month and I think this provided well-stocked lakes and a good start to the Season. A steady supply of fish of varying sizes continued until the end of June when deliveries were suspended until a modest improvement in water quality in late August and early September. Then the water supply and quality fell off the proverbial cliff, delivery and

stocking were suspended as water temperatures rose to 19°/20°, and catches slowed and finally stopped. Approximately 2,250 fish were released up to the beginning of September, out of a planned release total of just over 3,000. You will all have seen the catch returns pinned up in the huts so I need not visit these figures on you again, but your Chairman's comments above refer to the strong start to the Season.

The plan for next year is to follow the path set down for this year, but putting the cost savings from the stocking budget this year into larger fish for the whole of next Season. There are, after all, only so many fish that can be stocked healthily into what are, relatively, small lakes. In the early part of the Season there is little natural food for the fish and they are supplemented with pellet feed provided by our fish supplier, spread upon the waters by yours truly. It is surprising how quickly moorhens, ducks and cygnets/swans realise that here is more free food. I welcome constructive 'phone calls and my number is above, but whingers beware!

So, there was 2009. A good beginning with a strong middle and a damp squib for the end – that's fishing.

Peter Neave  
10.11.09

#### Gentle Reminders:

- Please volunteer to help on some of the working parties. It improves your facility and helps to keep subscriptions down.
- Please park considerately at Piplyc so that as many cars as possible will fit into the space available.
- Please never take any vehicle beyond the hut at Piplyc.
- Please do not take 2 wheel drive vehicles beyond the car park at Cinder Hill if the ground is wet.
- Please, also, do not take vehicles down to the hut at Cinder Hill if you are fit and able. The space at the hut is limited and should, therefore, be available for less able members.

**AGM:** The AGM will be held later this year in the hopes that the weather may be slightly better and more people will attend.

**Acknowledgements:** Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who has helped us at our various events throughout the year. Without these volunteers, who give up their valuable time, the Branch and Syndicate would cease to exist.

My personal thanks must also go to all the members of the Branch Committee for their help and assistance throughout this year.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a better 2010 and more importantly some good fishing.

Tight lines.

Rod Vuill

Branch Chairman