

West Wilts Fly Fishers Guild

River Frome Report November 2023.

Fishing returns:

Returns received from 10 River Members of whom only 2 had fly-fished. Several mentioned the difficulty of fitting in a trip to The Frome in between the extreme weather conditions.

See below.

(2022 figures in red)

- 3 (12) members made a total of 11 (28) fly-fishing visits
- Fly-fishing catch returns – 1 (36) rainbow trout, 0 (3) brown trout
0 (0) grayling 5 (18) chub 0 (0) dace
- Average of approx. 0.5 (2.0) fish on fly per visit.

Bank management:

3rd Feb – Tree removal at the Flume Pool.

19th Feb - Tree coppicing and removing flood debris on beats 4 to 9.

16th May - Clearing nettles, brambles etc on footpath & access points beats 1 to 9.

3rd June – Clearing footpaths etc of nettles/brambles on beats 1 to 11.

18th July – Bank work prep for our Coarse Week starting Wed 26th July.

25th July – Bank work prep for our Coarse week starting Wed 26th July.

Thank You

To the 10+ members who helped during the year with bank maintenance, access improvements and stocking etc; several on more than one occasion. It is very much appreciated. Although, with more help we could have had beats 11 to 13 accessible too.

Stocking:

12th June – 50 12"/14" Rainbows on beats 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10.

The total cost of stocking £400

Rainbows (all sterile Triploids) are stocked rather than brown trout so we know all brown trout caught are wild fish, which must be returned.

Fishing conditions through the year:

2023 had some exceptionally difficult fishing conditions – heavy rain in March resulted in the river being high, fast & coloured. This was followed by a cold easterly wind in April, at the start of our season. The river was still high in May and by mid-June we were in a heat wave with temperatures 26C + (similar pattern to 2022). June was dry but followed by a very, very wet July (which meant cancellation of our Coarse fishing intro session on 26th July) The Frome was high again until early August.

By mid-August although it was still high it was slower and less coloured so could be fly-fished. The river remained low until close of the season 15th October.

Fly hatches:

Mayfly began appearing around 16th May and in full 'carnival' by 22nd May (same as 2022) and from then until mid-June there were prolific hatches on most days from around 3pm.

There were no reports of other significant fly hatches.

If any member spotted good hatches of other fly-life such as Sedge e.g., Grannom in April, please let me know so we can amend this record to help members in future seasons.

Environment Agency Electro Fishing survey at Tellisford 24th August 2023

The survey is always taken from Beat 8 'The Flats' upstream to Beat 4 'High Bank'.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Numbers
Species	Length (IF)	Length (IF)	Length (IF)	Caught
Survey				
Totals				
Brown / sea trout [<i>Salmo trutta</i>]	233	358	293	7
Rainbow trout [<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>]	330	330	330	1
Barbel [<i>Barbus barbus</i>]	141	257	212	3
Chub [<i>Leuciscus cephalus</i>]	54	404	196	38
Dace [<i>Leuciscus leuciscus</i>]	85	241	147	23
Roach [<i>Rutilus rutilus</i>]	53	176	124	9
European eels > elvers [<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>]	280	620	450	2

Great news – Brown Trout increasing and Barbel returning - in 2013 only 1 Brown Trout and no Barbel found (apart from a solitary tiddler measuring 53mm).

River fly monitoring and Water quality testing:

We now have three fly-monitoring teams and three sites registered with the EA – the original one on beat 4 High bank, one on beat 10 (at the ladder) and one at Langham farm which is upstream of the packhorse bridge.

We have been fly-monitoring on The Frome since 2015.

Particular thanks to our members who have taken on this important work for the Guild.

Coarse Fishing Week 26th July – 2nd Aug

After all the planning and preparation by several members it was very disappointing to find the weather was against us and with more rain forecast we had to cancel the introductory session on Wed 26th. The river was high & heavily coloured and the bankside slippery so not pleasant or safe especially for novices.

Congratulations to those members who did coarse fish beats 1 to 11 despite the river conditions – some surprisingly good catches were reported.

Thank you to those who organised the week which we hope to offer again in 2024.

If members have suggestions to improve our river fishing experience on The Frome, please email Roger
-rogerhenderson@hotmail.com

Tight lines for 2024

Roger

River Frome Keeper.