



## NATIONAL FISHING WEEK – A BIG DRAW

This year National Fishing Week (NFW) was bigger than ever. The week ran from 19<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of July and in South West Area we had ten events in total, offering everything from sea angling in Ceredigion to coarse fishing in Bridgend.

The phenomenal success of NFW this year is all down to the many angling clubs and coaches who have worked very hard to organise events in their areas and over the week coached nearly 200 new anglers.



The Environment Agency has commissioned research by IPSO MORI amongst people attending NFW events in previous years which show that of 93 per cent felt motivated to go fishing again after attending an event, and that 57 per cent brought a rod licence. This demonstrates that NFW plays an important part in promoting the sport and introducing people to angling.



*"I am very pleased that the week has been such a success and I would like to extend a warm" thank you" to all the clubs, coaches and fishery owners who came*

*forward and got involved this year." Ida Tavner – Angling Participation Officer*

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## WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME SUPPORTS FISH PASS AND USE OF SUSTAINABLE WELSH WOOD

Environment Agency Wales with the support of the Welsh Assembly Governments Sustainable Fisheries programme, have just completed an innovative fish pass project at Treoes on the River Ewenny, near Bridgend. The pass was constructed from FSC certified sustainably harvested Welsh oak, rather than steel and concrete which have high energy and carbon costs.

The weir at Treoes has restricted fish passage since its construction, but improvements will ensure full and un-restricted access to 16km of the upper reaches of the river, helping safeguard salmon, sewin, brown trout, grayling and important conservation species like lamprey and eel.

Environment Agency Wales has forged strong links with Coed Cymru (Welsh Wood), who work to develop markets for sustainably produced wood products. Oak from broadleaf Welsh woods is helping to provide an alternative to the current coniferous plantation forestry that predominates in Wales.

*"Hopefully the improved access for fish to the upper Ewenny river will help to bolster migratory fish populations. The river Ewenny is a great little fishery in its own right and boasts a wide variety of fish species including grayling, a real rarity in South West Wales. Both habitat and fish passage improvement schemes such as this would not be made possible without the Sustainable fisheries funding the*



**Agency receives annually from the Welsh Assembly Government.” Dave Charlesworth – Sustainable Fisheries Project Manager**



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## ILLEGAL NETTERS CAUGHT

A man and woman have been reported by officers of Environment Agency Wales for illegally using a fixed beach net in the Sandfields area of Swansea Bay on Friday 2 May.

A six pound female sewin and a three pound mullet were taken. Netting in Swansea bay is banned from April to November to protect

migratory fish returning to the rivers of their birth to spawn.

**“The protection of vulnerable fish stocks is one of the Agency’s key objectives. This fish was on its way up river, and had it been returned would have hopefully completed its journey, spawned and returned to the sea. We must protect our threatened fish stocks and will be looking out for anyone who is thinking of doing anything similar.” Environment Agency Wales spokesperson**

In a separate incident, two men who pleaded guilty to the illegal netting of a sewin in the Llwchwr Estuary have each been ordered to pay £915 in fines and costs. The men were caught via a surveillance operation conducted by Environment Agency Enforcement Officers.

**“As Enforcement Officers for the Agency, we use our local knowledge and any intelligence information we get to target specific areas where we know this type of activity goes on. You may not be able to see us, but we will be watching.” Dafydd Williams – Team Leader, Environmental Crime Team**

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## FISHERIES MONITORING PROGRAMME 2008

The South West Area Fisheries teams will shortly be wrapping up their routine fisheries monitoring programme for 2008.

The programme involves the monitoring of 170 sites over 16 catchments to provide information on juvenile salmon and trout populations. A total of 28 new sites have also been surveyed this year to provide additional information under the Water Framework Directive.



# fisheries newsletter

Southwest Wales

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Progress with surveys this year has been hampered by wet weather experienced throughout July and August. July was the second wettest in 18 years, August was the wettest on record and September the wettest since 2000. As a result, a number of surveys have had to be abandoned due to wet weather and high flows. Nevertheless, the Area has been able to complete just over 90 per cent of programmed surveys. The data will be processed over the coming weeks and a report will be available in the new year.

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## NANT MYDDYFI FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENTS

The Fisheries team has been working in collaboration with the newly formed Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust (CRT) and Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) to improve conditions for fish passage on the Nant Myddyfi, an important fish spawning tributary of the River Tywi.

Three structures were identified as having a negative effect on the migration of salmon and sewin, severely restricting juvenile fish production and having a wider impact on the number of returning adult fish to the river Tywi.

The two culverts and one ford crossing were modified by the Rivers Trust, in consultation with the Fisheries team, who were instrumental in forging the partnership project between EAW, CRT and CCC. All three schemes have just been completed, using Welsh oak, sourced from sustainably managed woodlands by working with Coed Cymru (Welsh Wood). Oak is ideal in this type of application due to its robustness and is much more sustainable than steel and concrete.

The schemes will improve fish access to 8 km of good quality spawning stream, contributing to the sustainability of fish stocks in the Tywi and ensuring that the social and economic benefits derived from angling on the river continue to be realised. It is hoped that these schemes are the first of many we deliver in partnership with the Rivers Trusts of South West Wales.



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## PEMBROKESHIRE SCOUTS EARN BADGE

**This year we have been able to extend our involvement with scout groups in Pembrokeshire and helped 22 scouts earn the Scout Angling Badge of merit.**

The children from four scout groups in Pembrokeshire have been practising their casting, fishing knots and fish identification, as well as learning how to keep safe and the dos and don'ts of fishing. The project has been carried out in partnership with the Welsh Federation of Anglers, Pembrokeshire Coaches and local angling clubs and fisheries, who have given time and resources to get the youngsters involved. This is the third year we have been working with Scout groups in Pembrokeshire and we are very pleased to note the success of the programme.



*"I would like to congratulate all the scouts who successfully completed the programme. The enthusiasm from the scouts and their leaders has been overwhelming and it has been nice to see so many scouts taking this opportunity to take the badge and hopefully gain a hobby for life. I would like to thank all the partners in this project, without their dedication the project would not have been possible." Roger Pratt – Fisheries Officer, Pembrokeshire*



Every year 450,000 boys and girls have the opportunity to learn the nation's favourite sport, and work towards the Scouts' Angler badge. We have supported this badge for many years, and in Autumn 2007 launched an updated course and learning materials. The great thing is that the Scouts is all about helping young people to realise their full potential; we hope that today's badge winners will be tomorrow's angling coaches and representatives.

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## ANGLERS ENCOURAGED TO 'CATCH AND RELEASE'

**According to scientific assessments, most salmon stocks in England and Wales are under threat. Further actions aimed at conserving and rebuilding stocks are urgently required if we are to ensure that future generations can enjoy the social and economic benefits associated with thriving salmon stocks.**

The Environment Agency, along with national game angler representative bodies in England and Wales, have long been advocating Catch and Release for salmon fisheries. We believe this is a highly effective conservation tool and should be further encouraged – particularly on those rivers where salmon stocks have been identified as being at greatest risk.

Over half of the salmon caught by rod in 2006 were returned to the river, compared with just 12 per cent in 1994.

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## ILLEGAL NETTING AND BUYER BEWARE

As a result of an illegal netting case, officers of the Environmental Crime Team carried out a 'buyer beware' campaign among fishmongers, hotels and restaurants in the Aberystwyth area. The campaign will eventually cover the whole of West Wales.

Its purpose is to raise awareness of offences under the Salmon Act 1986. There is a duty of care on professional fish dealers and the public alike to ensure their purchases are safe and they should be suspicious of any 'back door sales' offering budget prices. Commercial netmen and anglers will always be able to show any potential purchaser their Environment Agency net or rod licences.

### Don't Risk It!

Anyone who buys or sells Wild Salmon or Sea Trout needs to be aware of the following offences under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 and the Salmon Act 1986:

- Handling salmon or sea trout in suspicious circumstances at any time of the year;
- Trading in salmon between 31 August and 1 February or sea trout between 31 August and 1 March, unless you can prove that the fish are lawfully held;
- Trading in or being in possession of salmon or sea trout or even part of salmon or sea trout which is 'unclean.' This is a fish about to spawn, is spawning or has recently spawned and has not yet recovered.

**Conviction of these offences could mean a fine of £2,500 or more, or imprisonment.**

## OFFICERS RESCUE YACHTSMAN TRAPPED ON SANDBANK

Three Environment Agency Wales officers on a routine patrol in the Burry Inlet got more than they bargained for as they took part in a rescue operation to save a stricken yachtsman, in April.

On hearing a call for help, the crew of EAW vessel *The Osprey* sped to a yacht which had run aground on sandbanks and was in danger of being tipped over by the waves. As it was

too shallow to approach by boat, crew member Rhys Roberts volunteered to wade over with a line to rescue the yachtsman.

*"We were lucky to be in the right place at the right time. We are out here quite often patrolling these waters, but we didn't expect to be involved in a rescue operation."*

*"Once we got the call, our emergency training kicked in and we were happy to help out. We heard later that the yacht had rolled three times after we rescued him so we're glad he wasn't on board."* Huw Evans – skipper of *The Osprey*

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## NEW APPOINTMENTS WITHIN THE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PROJECT TEAM

The Agency has recently appointed Dave Charlesworth and Stephen Carter to the South West Area Sustainable Fisheries Project team. Dave takes over from Mark Potter as Project Manager and Stephen is the new project officer.



Dave has worked as the project officer in the area for the last 6 years and has assisted in the delivery of the riparian habitat work and fish passage improvements associated with Fishing Wales project and the Sustainable Fisheries Program. He is a keen angler and is very much looking forward to continuing working on the river catchments of South West Wales.

Stephen Carter has 12 years of technical and practical experience of both salmonid and coarse fisheries within the Wessex (South) area. He brings with him a wealth of experience and he will be working with Dave to deliver the priorities set out in the Sustainable Fisheries program. Stephen is also a keen angler and enjoys lure fishing for Pike and Perch, other interests include

outdoor pursuits, socialising and Rugby! Steve will begin his conversion into a Welsh rugby supporting, sewin angler in early December.



## RIVERS TRUST ARE UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

Perhaps the most significant development in recent times on our rivers in South Wales is the formation of both Carmarthenshire and Teifi Rivers Trusts and also the re-invigoration of the Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust. These 3 Rivers Trusts will be pivotal in the future delivery of improvement works on their respective river catchments. This year the 'challenge fund' was set up by the Agency to allow the Trusts to gain experience and build capacity in the delivery of riparian habitat work. All the Trusts involved have made great strides and a number of excellent schemes have been delivered as a result. We look forward to working with the Rivers Trusts in the coming year to improve the ecology and wildlife of our rivers and streams in South West Wales.





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