

Week Nineteen

I started the week working from home as the truck was in for a service, the usual stuff catching up on emails and preparing for the week ahead.

On Tuesday I joined Martin and Stephen the Bailiffs to assist them with the catching of brood stock for the hatchery. Upon arrival at the Hatchery we readied the equipment for transporting any fish caught back to the hatchery. Once the equipment was ready we headed over the Newe weir to begin the process of catching the brood stock. Firstly we opened the sluice gates on the side channel to create a separate attraction flow and encourage fish to enter the sluice channel and pool. After ten minutes of backbreaking work on the sluice screws we left the channel open and returned to the hatchery to wait. After 45mins we returned to the weir and dropped the rear gate on the pool. This effectively traps all the fish in the sluice channel and pool. Then we turned the sluice screws and closed the channel down leaving the water at knee depth in the pool. It is then the job of getting in and scooping the fish out with a net. When the fish are caught they are quickly transferred to the transport tank. After 10 to 15mins all the fish are caught and the back gate is opened and the whole process is repeated.



Stephen and Martin opening the sluice gates



Stephen closing the back gate on the sluice pool and trapping the fish.



Stephen searching for fish in the sluice pool



A Salmon being netted from the sluce pool by Jim.

On the occasion that we opened the sluice gate on Tuesday we did not have any fish trapped in the sluice channel due to the low water levels up to that point and the lack of fish at the Weir. I would also like to thank the Don DSFB Team of Jim, Martin and Stephen for being so helpful, offering words of advice and encouragement and assisting me with various tasks over the past few months. I am very grateful for their help.

On Wednesday I was due to meet Caro Middlemass from Marine Scotland who is working on a project looking egg survival in one of the tributaries of the Don. Unfortunately given the worsening weather conditions I was not able to meet her on this occasion. But I did go along to the site and have a look at the equipment that they set up ready for their experiment.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday were all terrible days with extreme weather conditions the river rose dramatically over this period eventually stopping at 9ft higher than its average. During these days it was still possible to work at the Weir catching brood stock especially now that plenty of fish were present. Over these three days we carried out the same process of working the sluices catching the fish and recording their measurements and taking samples etc. In all we had over 80 cock salmon, 40 hens, 20 brown trout and 15 sea trout. Given the dramatic conditions it was a very successful few days. The Board team of Jim, Martin and Stephen are still up there working with the fish until they have adequate numbers of brood stock ready for stripping. Then the next stage of the hatchery work will begin, but that's another weeks Blog.

Next week, I'll be having a Health and Safety meeting with the Edwin Third river operations manager from the Dee, I'll also be out and about at the first of the schools involved with the Salmon in the Classroom project.

Cheers Jamie