



# You're so wrong about salmon, Mr Salmond

An article by Andrew Flitcroft in the Observer, Sunday 20 February 2011

## The new trade deal with China has terrifying implications for our wild fish stocks

Visiting trade delegations do not often register on my radar. However, the high-level Chinese visit to Scotland in January was different. Apart from the inevitable "gift" to the hosts, consigning two hapless giant pandas to a life of incarceration in Edinburgh Zoo, a new trade deal on Scottish farmed salmon between the two countries was signed, allowing access for the first time to the vast Chinese market.

First minister Alex Salmond crowed that the Scottish fish-farming industry may need to double salmon production to satisfy Chinese demand. The announcement a few days later that China was halting the import of Norwegian farmed salmon (China's retaliation, according to the Norwegian press, for the awarding of the Nobel peace prize to the imprisoned dissident Liu Xiaobo) lays Scottish government open to the charge that it is in effect supporting repression.

But cynical politics aside, the implications of increasing significantly, let alone doubling, farmed salmon production in Scotland are terrifying. Surely it is recklessly irresponsible to contemplate any increase without first rectifying the dire existing problems, particularly the spread of deadly sea lice, caused to juvenile wild salmon and sea trout in the west Highlands and Islands by current production levels. There is little doubt that the situation is set to deteriorate.

But first, for those who are not familiar with the war between the salmon farming industry on the one hand and those trying to protect wild salmon and sea trout runs on the other, here is a brief summary of the problem. Marine cages of hundreds of thousands of farmed salmon are breeding grounds for millions of sea lice; these parasites feed on the mucus, tissue and blood of their farmed salmon hosts. The companies employ a range of measures using highly toxic chemicals to combat the lice, in order to reduce the damage and stress caused to their captive hosts.

However, juvenile wild fish, which migrate from the rivers to the sea each spring, are simply not designed to cope with more than the odd louse. As these fragile young fish, known as smolts, run the gauntlet past the fish-farm cages conveniently placed on their migration routes down the sea lochs towards the open sea, they are ambushed by the unnaturally high concentrations of lice. The attachment of more than 10 lice is almost invariably fatal. The fish are literally eaten alive although death is usually hastened by secondary infections, which gain access through open wounds made by the grazing lice.

This is the environmental calamity that the salmon farming industry and Scottish government is so determined to deny. Make no mistake – there is no such thing as "sustainable" farmed salmon, no

matter what the evocative packaging on the supermarket shelves tries to convey.

Indeed, all such packaging should be approached with scepticism. M&S's Lochmuir salmon comes from an entirely fictitious location!

Now evidence is growing that salmon farms in Scotland are fast losing the battle against sea lice, mirroring the situation in Norway, where the head of the Directorate for Nature Management (the equivalent of Scottish Natural Heritage) has just called for a 50% cut in salmon production because, for the second year running, the average number of lice on each caged fish in several regions of Norway has exceeded the official limit of one mature female louse or five lice in total with increasing resistance to chemical treatment. He said that such a cut might not be enough to save Norway's fragile wild salmon stocks as: "The problem is very big and it is not under control."

It is perhaps no wonder the salmon farming industry in Scotland is so sensitive on the sea lice issue. Witness their gagging of Scottish government last year to prevent publication of Marine Scotland's farm inspection reports. Analysis of these reports, obtained by Salmon and Trout Association's Guy Linley-Adams under Freedom Of Information, confirms instances where sea lice have been completely out of control, necessitating early slaughter on several farms.

Compared to five years ago, Scotland's salmon farms are using far greater quantities of pesticides to kill sea lice on farmed fish as the chemicals become less and less effective and the lice develop immunity. Some are adopting desperate measures and two managers of a Shetland farm have just been charged with animal cruelty following the death of more than 6,000 farmed salmon last August.

Given these problems, it is galling that Scottish government continues to trot out the same tired mantra that salmon farming is "sustainable" and there is no proven damage to wild fish populations, aided and abetted by the nauseating spin peddled by the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, the front for the Norwegian companies that dominate the industry in Scotland. Most galling of all is the prospect of an even bigger industry.

There is one ray of hope. Solicitor Guy Linley-Adams, acting for the owners of the Ullapool river, has just submitted a formal 80-page complaint to the EU, detailing the failure of the authorities to designate an appropriate number of west coast Scottish rivers as Special Areas for Conservation for salmon under the EU Habitats Directive. The complaint also details the failure of the Scottish government to rein in the salmon-farming industry to provide proper protection for wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout in the west Highlands and Islands. The gloves are starting to come off.

**ANGLERS WHO ARE ALARMED AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE DAMAGE CAUSED TO OUR WILD FISH POPULATION BY SEA LICE ARE BEST ADVISED TO JOIN THE ANGLING TRUST – THE SINGLE ORGANISATION TO REPRESENT ALL GAME, COARSE AND SEA ANGLERS AND ANGLING IN ENGLAND**

## BASS FISHING

Brian Hendry has volunteered to organise (as far as is possible!) some days for fly-fishing for bass and possibly mullet. He is currently working out the most favourable times for the outings in which many of you have expressed interest.

Provisional dates will be advised in due course to those who have expressed interest – if you want to join in let him know on 01273 463126 or e-mail [roygurney@ntlworld.com](mailto:roygurney@ntlworld.com).

Generally we meet at Carat's Café car park, on the eastern end of the southern (sea) side of Shoreham Harbour, with a back-up plan if the sea is rough to relocate to the river at Norfolk Bridge, Shoreham – free parking at Adur Recreation ground.

## ENTRIES FOR OUTINGS

Please don't leave it to the last minute to book your place on any of our outings. We know some of them may seem to be in the dim and distant future, but it is essential that organizers know what sort of support they can expect in order to confirm arrangements with the venues hosting events – and also some are filling up rapidly, so you might lose out!!

Of course commitments such as holidays can change but provided sufficient notice is given, any deposit will be refunded or cheque cancelled.

Get your diaries out and note the dates from our programme – and then send off your booking form to the organisers!!

## Green Johanna

*By John Plowman*

Now that trout fishing is well under way I have the perennial problem of what to do with the fish waste (head, guts etc). My local council have moved to a two week collection so after a successful day's fishing (these do occur occasionally!) I have the prospect of storing fishy waste for a long time in the hot days of summer. In the past I have resorted to keeping the waste bagged up in my freezer until the bin men call.

However, last September I purchased a "Green Johanna" which is a sealed composting bin that claims to compost all organic material including fish, meat and dairy waste. The manufacturers also claim that it is odour free and rat resistant. So far the composter has performed perfectly. There has been no unpleasant odour nor have flies and rats been a problem (twice in the past they have been with my normal garden compost bin).

The only difficulty was the assembly: a cross between Lego and MFI. Finally, since I have not yet filled it completely, I have had no need to empty it but with a removable panel at the base I am hoping this will not be a problem.

## March Newsletter

A few members received two front sheets of last month's newsletter and no second sheet. Let me know if you are missing pages 3 and 4 and I will send them to you (or pick them up on a Thursday night).

*Roy Gurney*

## Service par excellence

I, like most, am quick to complain about poor service, which appears to be becoming more prevalent these days, so I thought I would share my experience of some excellent service from Snowbee.

Just over two years ago my wife brought me a Snowbee Waldron Pedestal Vice, a wonderful gift for a struggling fly tyer. The vice came in a very smart case with several compartments. After approximately six months a tag on one of the two zips of the pedestal base compartment broke off - no real inconvenience as I could use the other zip. Unfortunately a few weeks ago the same fault occurred on the second zip. I e-mailed Snowbee explaining what had happened and asked if it was possible to repair the zips. Within 24 hours I received an email from Matt Churchward at Snowbee stating they had not heard of this problem previously and that a new case would be sent to me, first class that evening. Next day a brand new case arrived.

Well done Snowbee!

*Terry Tullett*

## Committee Day

The chairman hosted a day at Moorhen Fishery for committee members and other helpers. Blessed with better weather than might be expected for March, a good day was had by all, being greeted with bacon rolls and coffee on arrival (even for the latecomers!). The water was cloudy as a result of micro-chalk addition and fishing was therefore "blind" and a bit patchy. Nevertheless most caught their fish, with only one pair failing to wet their nets – must have been the delayed car journey that put them off! To cap it all, one of them (who shall be nameless) managed to break the tip piece of his prized newly won Hardy Demon on a back cast.

Best fish of the day at 5lb8oz went to Ray Love, who pipped Bill Black right at the end of the day.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

No, I'm not chasing you already!!

However, a number of members have asked if they will be able to combine their Guild and Branch subscriptions when next due.

Contrary to the information circulated last year, I can confirm that this can be done in future if you wish, though the rate of £18 for Guild membership will apply, as opposed to £15 if paid by standing order.

The rate for Branch membership remains at £12, so the combined cost will be £30 if paid through the Branch. Family membership is £28 + £15 = £43 if paid through the Branch, or £25 by standing order plus £15 for the Branch.

The choice is yours!

*Roy Gurney (Treasurer/Membership Secretary)*

## NEW DIARY DATES

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June:** Carp on the Fly at Passies Pond - Paul Davis - £9 per rod

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August** – match v. Crawley F F, at Chalk Springs – Bill Smith





# Sussex Branch Newsletter



## APRIL 2011

### CASTING CLINIC Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May

A casting clinic will be held on the playing fields in front of Patcham House (opposite "The Black Lion"). We hope Albert Horne will be fit enough to demonstrate how to cast a full line with what appears to be a mere flick of the wrist, but our other qualified instructors will be there anyway. We will start soon after 6.30 pm, and continue till the light fades. Just bring your rod and line and improve your skills.

### Show Demonstrations

How about volunteering to help manning the stands at the various shows we attend to demonstrate the art and fun of tying flies? You don't have to be a prize winner to participate – the whole purpose is to show what we teach and do at our Thursday meetings in the winter.

They are great fun and we try to have sufficient numbers manning the stand to enable long breaks to visit the rest of the show. Check the programme and contact Tony Woolnough on 01273 483833 or e-mail him at [tony@fishways.com](mailto:tony@fishways.com)



At Michelham Priory in 2010

### FLY-TYING COMPETITION 2011

The winners of this year's competition are: -

**Novice:** Nigel Duckworth

**Intermediate:** Peter Neave

**Open:** Paul Bond

**Pike/Salt Water:** NO ENTRIES

**Salmon:** NO ENTRIES

. Many thanks to those who took time to enter, but a very disappointing total number of entries, and where were all the experts?

### BIG FISH TROPHIES

Early entries for the above are already coming in – it looks like a good season ahead if these are an indication. Keep them coming!

The categories are:

Best fish from Sussex water

Best fish from Sussex reservoir (including Bawl)

Best brown from Sussex water

Best brown from Sussex reservoir or river.

The closing date of catching is 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010 for browns and 31<sup>st</sup> December for other categories.

Trophies will be presented at the Annual Dinner.

### And just to prove it.....

We might even forgive him his tifter for these two fine rainbows each of 6 lb 4 oz taken on the same March day at Arlington by Ray Fisher

