



# Sussex Branch Newsletter



August 2015

## Fly Tying Season 2015

Welcome to your August Newsletter. It is nearly time to get your fly tying kits out once again, and tackle those accreditations. We start back on **3<sup>rd</sup> September** with a speaker. Speaker to be confirmed.

The evening starts at 7.45pm, with tea and raffle at the mid-point. £3 charge on the night inclusive of raffle ticket

## iFish 2015

The iFish show this year will be held at a much more suitable venue ie Ardingly Showground which has more space, plenty of parking, indoor casting and many other benefits, all it lacks is visitors. So will you **please** download the front and back pages of the Show leaflet and ensure that YOU and your friends and contacts attend the Show.

Tony W

## AUCTION 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Preparation of the catalogue for our second auction for this year is now under way, so get your surplus tackle and any fishing related items ready now. Entry forms can be downloaded from the website: [www.sussexflydressers.org.uk](http://www.sussexflydressers.org.uk) and should be submitted by **16<sup>th</sup> September** either by post to:

Roy Gurney  
29 Capel Avenue  
Peacehaven BN10 8NB

or by e-mail to

[fdgsussex@capel29.plus.com](mailto:fdgsussex@capel29.plus.com)

Hard copies are available on request.

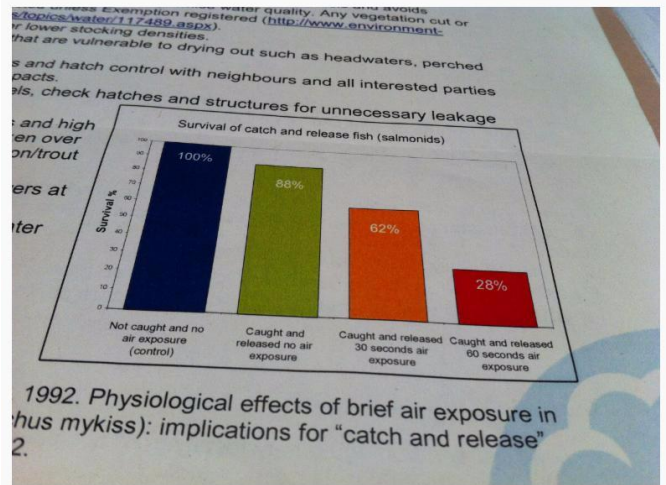
*The following is a recent article by Simon Cooper (who will be our speaker on 1<sup>st</sup> October):-*

## Are we accidental fish killers?

Whatever your views on the Environment Agency, the government arm of the Department of Farming and Rural Affairs tasked with looking after fishing, you can't ever fault them when it comes to sending out letters guaranteed to scare the living daylights out of you. One such letter arrived last week entitled "Advice note to river and stillwater fisheries - Protect fish and wildlife in dry weather".

Now my eye was immediately drawn to the graph in the letter (reproduced below) that is alarming to say the least. It is stating that over one third of trout caught and released after 30 seconds of air exposure will die.

Double the time in air and seven out of ten fish will die. This is no hooky survey, but rather from the much cited study by Canadians, Ferguson and Tufts back in 1992 that examined the physiological effects of brief air exposure in exhaustively exercised rainbow trout and the implications for catch and release.



Somehow this survey doesn't seem right to me. Here at the teaching lake at Nether Wallop Mill I'd guess we catch and release at least fifty rainbows each week, most of which are taken out of the water before being unhooked and released. Are they out for as long as a minute? I doubt it, but thirty seconds seems a reasonable estimate so do I see fifteen or more floating belly up each week? No I don't. Maybe one or two, but even that is unusual. So what's this all about?

I guess we all assume catch and release is a relatively new concept, but actually it was first proposed way back in the early 1800's and the first formal regime for recreational angling I can find was introduced to the Penobscot River, Maine, USA in 1873 for Atlantic salmon. That said it was not until the 1950's that anyone started to question the mortality rates and since then there has been a surprising amount of science about it all.

The one thing everyone seems to agree is that barbless hooks reduce mortality for all the obvious reasons. Surprisingly some studies rated treble as better than single hooks but this was only for certain species (not salmonids) like striper bass who tend to swallow a single hook. Where in the body is best to be hooked? Well, the jaw by far with 98% survival as against 18% survival when hooked in the gills. Should you cut the line rather than struggle with a hard to remove hook? The answer is yes; the distress is less and fish will shed hooks over time.

The biological characteristics such as size, age or gender hardly features in any of the analysis, whereas there has been a great deal of work on temperature. For instance it is critical for Atlantic salmon that the water temperature is in the 8-18C range for survival. The reservoir anglers amongst you might be in for something of a shock; the depth at which you fish your fly has a significant impact on trout survival - hooked on the surface 98%, hooked on a lead line 92% and with downriggers 85% survival.

I must admit I never thought very much about what happens to a fish once it swims away; my assumption has always been that if it swims away with a healthy kick of the tail all is well. Apparently not. There is plenty of evidence of delayed mortality, though statistics are hard to come but I did see one study where nearly half of all bonefish died due to sharks preying on the fish during the post-release recovery phase. But that is really a habitat issue.

The critical thread that runs through every study you'll ever read on catch and release is that the biggest killer of trout is exposure to air; however gently you release your fish it is the air that kills them. There is plenty of disagreement as to what is the critical time period for different species but for trout more than two minutes seems to be the point of no return. The fish may swim off, but there will be too many physiological changes for long term survival. Clearly every second counts. We might debate whether thirty seconds is twice as bad as fifteen seconds but ultimately once a trout starts gulping air the clock is ticking. One of our Guides likes to tell pupils to hold their own breath for as long as the trout is out of the water. It is a good way to make an important point.

*Simon Cooper*

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

**It's that time of year again!  
Just a reminder that both Guild and Branch subscriptions  
are due on 1<sup>st</sup> September.**

You will find attached to (or enclosed with) this newsletter an Application/Renewal form.

If your details are unchanged from last year, it is not necessary to complete and return this with your subscription – just send your cheque or cash.

If you have changed address, telephone or e-mail either fill in a form or let me know.

You will see that both subscriptions are once again the same as last year – at least that's a relief!

**Don't forget**, those who pay the Guild direct only have to let me have the Branch subscription (but you may find it is much easier if you pay both together via the Branch).

*Roy Gurney (Membership Secretary)*

## Stillwater Challenge 2015

In July 2000 Lee Redman organised the first Stillwater Challenge, ably assisted by Chris Croucher, who took over the highly successful running of this event after a couple of years. Chris was unable to do so this year, but we were delighted to see him back on the bank, without the distraction of organising everything. His trusty sidekick for many seasons, Ian Dunk, provided the BBQ and we are grateful for his hard work in making the day a success, despite the atrocious weather which threatened to douse the BBQ!

The rains came, the wind blew, but most anglers caught (though for a few it was just another wet week-end). Fittingly, it was Chris himself who took the best fish with a fine 8lb 8oz rainbow, with Paul Davis close behind with a 6lb 11oz fish. Best brown of the day went to Nigel Duckworth at 5lb 6oz and he and Paul Davis took the Jim White pairs trophy with a total bag of 22lb 3oz.

This prestigious event is such a great day out and it is down to the "back-room boys" such as Ian and Chris that everyone has a good time – and not forgetting Bill and his flans (or is it the other way round and forgetting the flans?).

Thanks too to John, the Chalk Springs bailiff, who was a great host – despite not being able to control the weather! Roll on next year's challenge!

**RG**

## Increase to minimum size for Bass

Following several successive years of stock decline and a vigorous campaign by recreational angling organisations, the

countries of the EU have finally agreed to raise the minimum size at which bass can be harvested by both commercial and recreational fishermen.

The Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) for bass will increase from 36cm to 42cm across all northern European waters in an effort to protect stock and allow female bass to spawn.

This completes the package of measures for 2015 aimed at dramatically reducing bass fishing mortality. Other parts of the package included a ban on winter pelagic trawling for bass, a three fish per day bag limit for recreational anglers and monthly vessel limits for commercial bass fisheries.

**In addition to retaining no more than three fish per day recreational anglers will now be required to release all bass caught below 42cm.**

## Invasive Non-Native Species Survey

Emily Smith, the Angling Trust's new Invasive Non-Native Species Manager, who joined us last month, has hit the ground running by launching a brand new survey looking into the awareness of British anglers of conservation issues which affect our waterways. The findings of Emily's work, produced in partnership with University College London, will be used to improve the information available to anglers about conservation issues and help anglers learn how to protect their fishing venues. The questionnaire takes less than 10 minutes> **Please help out at [www.anglingtrust.net/invasivesurvey](http://www.anglingtrust.net/invasivesurvey)**

## SOS - Save Our Salmon

In the July issue of Trout & Salmon magazine, readers were invited to vote for one of eight proposals, each supporting projects that aim to return the salmon to abundance. The Angling Trust won the Vote with its far-reaching campaign to urge UK, Welsh and Scottish governments to act to save wild salmon. Now begins the task of raising money for the campaign - they hope you will support them. Find out more at [www.saveoursalmon.org](http://www.saveoursalmon.org) and please donate at [www.anglingtrust.net/sos](http://www.anglingtrust.net/sos)

## Chairman's Chat

### Safety

Is an important consideration in the design of civil engineering structures including fish passes. These structures should be ...”safe to build and safe to maintain” but that is not the end of the story. “other factors” are also a consideration. See last month's Chat.

The view looking upstream shows a bottom baffle fish pass with separate elver and lamprey pass on the right hand side of the photograph. Steps are provided on the left hand side for maintenance access and cables are fitted to allow safety harnesses to be secured. The

resting pool in the centre of the pass is to allow ascending fish to recover from swimming up the lower run of baffles. Hydraulic calculations (on another project) to determine the necessary pool depth to obtain the correct energy dissipation, indicated a pool needs to be 7.0 m deep!! Such a pool would make an ideal trap to drown maintenance personnel. Consequently we limit pool depths to 1.5 m.

Consideration must also be given to other potential users for which the structure was **not** designed. An example of this use is shown in the example below. The upstream end of the pass shows a debris boom which appears to be designed to minimise the task of clearing floating matter of the vanes. In fact the real purpose of the boom is to keep canoeists from using the pass as a canoe ramp. Theoretically it is perfectly safe to “shoot” bottom baffle passes with a canoe BUT if the canoe turns over, the canoeist gets his face and head torn to pieces – not a safe design.

So worry not, you can paddle your own canoe in front of



one of our fish passes, without any concerns.

*Tony W.*





A funeral procession pulled into a cemetery. Several carloads of family members followed a black truck towing a boat with a coffin in it.

A passer-by remarked, "That guy must have been a very avid fisherman."

"Oh, he still is," remarked one of the mourners. As a matter of fact, he's headed off to the lake as soon as we bury his wife."

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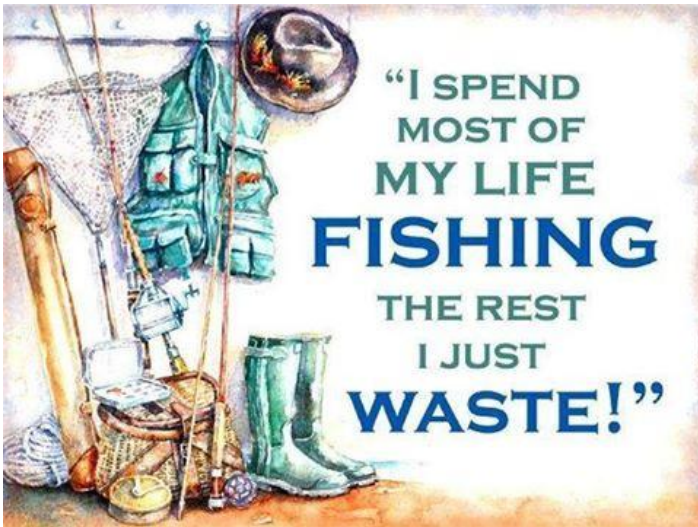
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*Published by the Sussex Branch of the Flydressers' Guild*

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