

## 2022 SPAWNING SURVEY

### REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS

As part of RETA's ongoing efforts to obtain and evaluate conditions within the catchment and their effect on migratory fish stocks a second year of spawning surveys was carried out in 2021 building on the initial efforts made in 2020. As more volunteers were available far greater coverage was achieved and the information obtained has been fed into the GIS system maintained on RETA's behalf by WRT.

This year RETA hopes to replicate the success of the effort last year but that will require volunteers. The surveying period is from late November to mid-January and ideally, we aim to pair up volunteers and ask that you try and survey your "patch" once a week during this period preferably as a pair if possible, especially those assigned to the more remote reaches of the catchment. Of course, the ability to survey is highly dependent on the weather conditions which are not always optimal at this time of year but the days after heavy rain often prove productive in terms of sightings of redd creation.

Phil Turnbull from WRT will be advising on the stretches of river that need to be surveyed. The surveying effort is but one piece of the jigsaw and Phil will have regard to the other work in which RETA is involved including gravel cleaning, Riverfly, the electro-fishing surveys and the weirs removal (SEW) in determining where to survey. The data gathered can then be fed into the GIS system and analysed to try and extract trends for example, is the gravel cleaning a worthwhile exercise in terms of increased spawning and juvenile survival.

For those who have volunteered before we hope you will feel able to repeat your efforts this year. For those who have not been part of the surveying before and would prefer some training beforehand we will be asking Nick Maye of the EA to repeat his masterclass at Simonsbath again this year probably in early November. With luck we will be treated to a freshly cut redd as we were last year.

In the first instance if you are interested in participating, please can you let Alistair Langford know at [alangford100@gmail.com](mailto:alangford100@gmail.com). If you can indicate whether you would like to attend the training session that would be helpful together with details of your home location. Where possible we will try and assign volunteers to an area near to where they live. If you have your own water or access to other stretches of the river please let Alistair know that as well.

This is important work even if you don't sight any redds. It gives RETA additional information to support its efforts to improve conditions for migratory fish to flourish. Last year, for example, the adverse effect of trash dams on migration in certain parts of the upper catchment became apparent from the survey. Whilst it is not perhaps the easiest task in December it is worthwhile, and your committee would be grateful for your participation. If not hands on then it's certainly "eyes on" work that can make a meaningful difference taken together with RETA's other work.