



RIVER EXE & TRIBUTARIES ASSOCIATION

[RETA-River Exe \(riverexefisheries.org.uk\)](http://riverexefisheries.org.uk)

Newsletter

November 2022

Hello and welcome to your River Exe and Tributaries Association (RETA) Newsletter.

In this newsletter we will be highlighting these topics:-

1. The season 2022
2. The Strategic Exe Weirs project (SEW)
3. Redds survey
4. Round-up of some on-going RETA projects
5. Junior fly-fishing tuition days
6. Fish The Exe
7. Auction and AGM
8. Website

The season of 2022

Best forgotten is how many will describe it. Drought conditions and temperatures up to 22 degC in the lower river. However, there has been a very good influx of fish now the river is in spate so we hope for a bumper spawning season. And so why not volunteer for redd counting? – see below.

Don't forget to file your catch return – it is the measure that the EA use to gauge how the river is faring. So, not many days fished = not many fish caught = the EA thinks there are no fish in the river and further reduces the “probably at risk” category.



Video - to prove there are actually fish in the river though, including large sea-trout, click [here](#)

This incredible and inspiring drone video was taken by the EA in a balancing pipe in a weir in the main stem of the river. Proof that there are still fish entering our river with many bearing the scars of a hard and perilous journey. Let's hope they make it up to the spawning grounds.

The Strategic Exe Weirs project (SEW)

The Strategic Exe Weirs programme (SEW) has had a successful delivery season, with the first constructed fish passage improvements at Bridgetown Weir in 2022. We are moving towards further 'construction ready' projects and making headway at the more challenging sites in Exeter.



Bridgetown Weir

A bespoke Larinier fish pass has been installed within the old fish pass channel. This will ensure that every salmon and trout that reaches Bridgetown Weir has the opportunity to continue upstream without delay.

The fish pass is accompanied by a new smolt chute and seasonal screening infrastructure. This will enable screens to be deployed for the smolt run and direct smolts back to the main river, removing delays and risk of damage.

The delivery was highly successful and an important step towards securing continued progress and external funding for further projects downriver.

Funding

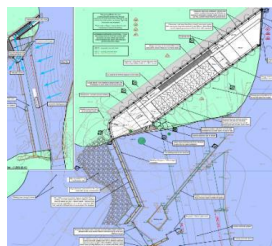
The installation at Bridgetown cost in excess of £200,000. This phase was fully funded, without using RETA members' donations, with significant contributions from the EA, SWW and Exmoor National Park. This demonstrates the value of working in partnership with other key stakeholders. The commitment by RETA and the funds raised by donations from its members were instrumental in obtaining the funds from those third parties.

Members' donations are vital as they are used to fund Phil Turnbull's role and to finance the planning stage for each barrier before construction which is very difficult to fund externally.

The SEW project is gathering momentum and we need to continue to show RETA's commitment. So thank you to all those who have donated and to all members, please donate to the SEW project to enable us to build on this initial success.

RETA asks YOU to donate to this very important project – please go to the [SEW donation form](#) or contact our treasurer Iain Stewart Hunter lpshunter@aol.com to discuss a way you can provide a benefit to the project. Thank you.

Other progress



We continue to make progress with designs at Bolham Weir and Bickleigh Bridge Weir, and have continued support to move to design stages for Helebridge Weir, subject to funding.

There is now a comprehensive video by Phil Turnbull explaining the reasons behind the project which can be seen [HERE](#) and there is a lot of info available our website - click [HERE](#)

Why not volunteer for redd counting?

Your river needs you! Get some gentle exercise in beautiful surroundings.

Nick Maye from the EA will be delivering a masterclass in how to identify a salmon redd in late November in preparation for the survey which takes place over December during the most lovely weather (otherwise you can't see the redds).

To volunteer please contact Alistair Langford **by 21st November** at alangford100@gmail.com



Round-up of just some of the other on-going RETA projects

Geographic Information System (GIS)

We are organising a huge amount of historic data into a GIS database and this will enable us to map trends and detail with illustrative graphics and far greater efficiency than ever before

The GIS data should be fully up to date by Spring 2023 and some select example maps will be available then. Following this there will be created the ArcGIS Online map for open access and querying by RETA.

Gravel Cleaning

A programme of gravel cleaning in the River Exe catchment has been completed with funding from RETA with the use of a local contractor Tom Stephens. This is the first year a contractor has been commissioned for this work.

Six sites were specifically cleaned for students from the University of Plymouth who are looking at the immediate impact of gravel cleaning (e.g. change in sediment profile and impact on invertebrates). The results will help indicate gravel cleaning efficacy and where the technique may best be employed.

Junior Tuition



Another brilliant day out for the young from 8yo - 16yo was organised by Fred Leach as an introduction to the gentle art of fly-fishing. Held at Exe Valley fly fishing in September the day was a great success. All participants under 16 automatically qualified for **FREE membership** of RETA and Dulverton Anglers Association (DAA) for one year.

"Thank you all for organising the day. Harry enjoyed it and he picked up some new fishing skills. He was very excited to catch a fish and we have just had it for dinner tonight".

Contact Fred to enquire about next years' courses at fredleach@bampton.eclipse.co.uk

Auction



Our auction will once again be held on-line in March 2023. There will be excellent lots on offer but we always **need more** so if you have anything that you think could aid the cause; a weekend retreat, a cellar-full of old but interesting wines, a collectors' item of tackle or a fishing or shoot day, please contact newsletter@riverexefisheries.org.uk.

All the money goes towards the SEW project which will help 'Put More Fins in the River', which was the litmus test for a project according to SWRA co-founder Poet Laureate Ted Hughes.

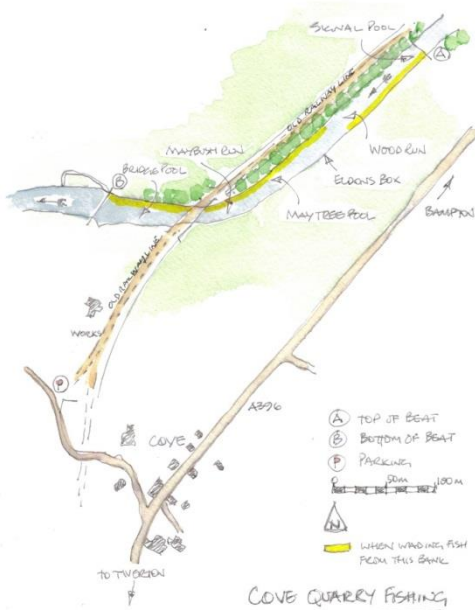
AGM

The annual AGM is to be held at the Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham at 6.30pm (doors open at 6pm) on Friday 10th March 2023.

The main speaker will be Nick Paling from WRT who will let us know what is happening with water resources and the management thereof within our region – most topical. There will also be a raffle and the usual excellent complimentary buffet.



Make a date in your diary for it.



Fish The Exe

Got The Winter Blues? Go Grayling Fishing!

Check out the brilliant beats available through the Fish The Exe scheme and on the DAA beats at [Fish the Exe Day Tickets \(riverexefisheries.org.uk\)](https://riverexefisheries.org.uk)

Fish for grayling for £10/day on some of the most exclusive beats on the Exe. All proceeds go towards the SEW project.

Tight lines and happy fly-tying

Tight lines for the grayling season. Fishing is officially good for you and your mental health. It's prescribed by our wonderful NHS. And don't forget time spent fishing or fly-tying is not deducted from your life-span.

Let us know any feedback at newsletter@riverexefisheries.org.uk and don't forget to look at RETA's website [RETA-River Exe \(riverexefisheries.org.uk\)](http://riverexefisheries.org.uk) where there is much more detail on these and the many other projects we are working on.

River Exe and Tributaries Association

Aiming to restore the river to the best salmon fishery in the South West – The River Exe.

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