

N.W.W.A.C.

Stillwater Report October 2019

presented by

John Wadham

Water Conditions

Above average summer rainfall in June(139mm), July(101mm), and late September (102mm) has enabled Rutland Water to be maintained at a high level during this period.

The dry period from mid-August to mid-September allowed a decline of approximately 1 M. This has since been replenished by high rainfall in late September and early October. At no time, however has the capacity dropped below 85%.

Bank Fishing

- The high water level throughout the period has allowed the fauna to re-colonise margins. This has, during cooler periods tempted the fish to feed close in mainly on shrimps sheltering in the rock armour.

Diet

- Of some concern is the absence of *Corixa* species which is the main autumn food item that attracts the Rainbows into the margins. This is under investigation. However fish, both Rainbow & Browns have been grazing on migrating *Limnaea* snail species and roach and perch fry up to 10cm over weed beds > 70 M offshore. This is in stark contrast to 2018 when fish still continued to fast.
- Also, absent from the margins, are weed beds to offer cover for fry, corixa and snails for the fish to graze.
- Another recent feature is the presence of a blue green algae (*Aphanizomenon*) which has led to an increase in *Daphnia* blooms.



Problems

- 1 Water temperature. While it has not been a hot Summer there have been intermittent heat waves with an above normal water temperature of 18C on 1st October.
- 2 Blue Green Algae. This not only affected fishing but has made it necessary to fish in offshore winds to secure clear water. But it has seriously affected all aspects of recreation at Rutland Water: including the periodic closure of the Aqua Park & Beach. Also the aerators were switched off. But, were a popular fishing area when re-started
- 3 Winter Draw down 2018/19 - This left barren margins during the spring and only allowed the Canadian pond weed to flourish well out of the range of the bank angler.

Brown Trout

- The prodigious growth rate of this species continues.
- There are a number of reasons
 - 1 They have a longer life span.
 - 2. Almost total catch & release is practised by anglers.
 - 3 Evidence of consumption of signal crayfish.
 - 4 Large coarse fish fry population
 - The average fish caught is around 5lb – This offers arguably some of the best public reservoir Brown Trout fishing in the EU.
 - 5 They don't appeared to be affected by Ergasilus

Parasites

- Ergasilus – (Gill Maggot) - It is pleasing to note that this, which affected seriously the Rainbows in 2019 has now virtually declined. This has resulted in fish feeding freely throughout the period resulting in a huge improvement in fish body weight and well silvered appearance
- Argulus (Fish Louse) – This also appeared to have declined.
- Most of these outbreaks appear to be weather related

Boat Fishing

- This has been of the highest quality due mainly to lower water temperatures.
- However there was a short spell after the August Bank Holiday heatwave when the fish ceased feeding and one competition gave a catch of only 1 fish per rod – but plenty of fish seen.
- Recently, with fish feeding over offshore weed beds, some large catches have been taken with Rainbows up to 6lb reported and a number of large Browns.

General

- Larger Rainbows - These are proving to be mainly females. This would seem to indicate that triploid specimens don't put as on much weight. If they did, Grafham, with its profuse shrimp population, would produce many larger fish than those reported. However, the triploids do appear to be vulnerable to various ailments.
- Stock - Rutland Water has a very large residual head of fish, both browns and rainbows: mainly, due to catch & release.
- Predator fishing – This is proving very popular with some good fish caught. It has proved very good source of income for A.W. during lean trout fishing spells.
- Cormorant/Pike damage – this appears less at present – mainly due to coarse fish and their fry acting as a buffer and the stocking of larger fish.
- Over view - A patchy season for bank anglers. But, very good from the boats.

Cormorant Damage





Access

- Rutland Water Partnership
- Following a meeting with Will Kirstein, A.W. Parks Manager and the local Highway Authority, permission has been granted for parking of cars inside Gate 26 on Burley Beach. This has numerous advantages viz.
 - 1 Cars will be more secure than parking on the roadside verge where there has been theft from vehicles.
 - 2 It complies with Highway Authority safety regulations prohibiting parking on the A606 roadside verges .
 - 3 There is a Season Ticket Holders lock on the gate

Rutland Water Fly Fishers

- This year is the fortieth anniversary of the club founded by the late Steve Parton
- Events and activities include:-
- Monthly Sunday Bank Meets – to try and encourage newcomers – especially youngsters into the sport.
- “Open weekend” in mid-August - providing “have a go” sessions at fly tying, fly casting and the opportunity to go out in a boat and catch a Trout. This takes a lot of organising and we are grateful to all helpers. This year it was “blown off” so AW allowed us to use the café.
- Litter picks – these are carried out annually in March in aid of a local charity.
- RWFF is grateful to Anglian Water for their generous support of these events.
- Water Aid Fly Fishing Challenge – RWFF supplies voluntary ghillies (guides) to take out novices out in a boat to fish. This year’s event raised some £8,000 The total funds raised over the 17 years of the event, is approaching £250,000. The charity advises on accessing clean drinking water and sanitation in underdeveloped countries.

Litter Pick



Water Aid Ghillies



Grafham

- Trout fishing
- The Dam Wall has been the most productive bank fishing area for most of the season. Mainly to the prolonged exposure of the littoral zone during 2018.
- As the shrimp has re-colonised the margins, Shallower areas such as the North shore, the Seat and Gaynes Cove have been producing fish.
- Blue Green Algae –as with Rutland this has necessitated fishing in clearer water.
- Predator Fishing
- This been particularly good in 2019 with a number of 20lb plus Pike and some large Zander caught recently.
- The Polish Angling Club held their annual match recently. All the boats caught plenty of Zander & large Perch