

Anglo-French experts try to save salmon

BRITISH and French scientists are working together to help save dwindling stocks of Atlantic salmon.

A massive 70 per cent decline in fish numbers over the last 30 years has sparked a major new research collaboration by experts from both the UK and France, who have decided to pool their expertise, resources and data to maximise current international research efforts and reverse the worrying trend.

This study, called the MorFish (Monitoring for Migratory Fish), will take three years and involves numerous charities and trusts, including the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. It is to be funded by the EU costing around £2.5m euros.

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Thieves ruin it for the kids

A CHARITY has been left devastated after thieves stole more than 60 fishing rods that were used to get underprivileged children into the sport.

Northern Ireland's Angling First has taught over 2,000 youths in the County Down area this year, but its future efforts are sure to be hampered following the incident.

Scheme co-ordinator Mark McGivern believes the charity may have to cancel events, and said: "We have several groups booked in but I'm not sure it will be possible to go through with them all. We can't believe someone would do this."

Win coaching from Dave

ONE OF the best match anglers in the country is giving his fans the chance to win a day's coaching.

Angling Times regular Dave Harrell, whose weekly article is to the right, runs his own tackle company, and any customers spending £25 or more before the end of the year will automatically be entered into the draw to bag a day's tuition for two people.

For more details on the competition visit www.daveharrellangling.com

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No bites? You need to adapt!

LAD ON THE NEXT PEG TEACHES ME A LESSON ON THE WYE

THE RECENT cold weather has seen anglers all over the country struggling for bites and it's hardly surprising when you consider just how low the water temperature is.

There's no need to pack the rods away until next year, though, as there is still some excellent fishing to be enjoyed if you go about things in the right way and carefully select your venues and pegs.

I have measured water temperatures for many years and always found that whenever there's a drop it has an adverse effect on fish. It doesn't always have to be sub-zero temperatures - a drop from 8°C to 6°C can have a big effect on how species like roach feed.

The recent River Wye winter league matches have shown just how venues can change as the temperature drops, and aside from the feeding side of things there's fish movement to contend with. Pegs that were good a couple of months ago have become difficult on some days and there were dry nets from the top two sections in the last two matches.

Days like these, when you just can't get bites, always make you wonder whether there are actually any fish in front of you, but it's been interesting to see how anglers have adapted to come back with returns instead of empty nets.

A couple of weeks ago I drew peg 20 at the top end and, after a biteless hour-and-a-half on a maggot feeder, I decided to spend the next hour fishing a big stick float with three or four small helpings of loosefed maggots introduced each time the float was running through the swim.

The rig was set at dead depth and hookbait was double red maggot on a size 16 hook. With two and a half hours of the match gone I had my first bite, which brought my best



Tom Lane, grandson of the late great Billy, gave me a proper mauling - and I was delighted to be shown how to do it.

Six winter tips

1 SLOW IT DOWN
If the water temperature is low you will often get more bites by slowing down your rig. With running line floats you can do this by easing the float through by controlling the line with your fingers. For even slower presentation, try a centrepin as it's a great way of catching fish in the depths of winter and will sometimes get you bites when other rigs fail. My team-mate proved this in the last winter league match by using a strung rig, two-foot overdepth and eased very slowly through the swim for 5lb of roach. Anglers around him all dry-netted!

2 TRY A STRAIGHT LEAD
I've lost count of the number of times I have caught fish on a straight lead when floatfished baits have failed to produce bites. I use a link of around six inches and a tail from 3ft to 6ft.



Only feed heavily once the shoals move in.

3 FEED CAREFULLY
Until you know there are plenty of feeding fish in front of you it's always best to err on the side of caution. Feed little and often - on some venues this might mean less than half a pint of maggots in five hours. If you start getting bites, build up the feed steadily. If you are getting a bite every cast you can be confident there are plenty of fish that want feeding.

4 EXPERIMENT WITH BAITS
If the river is clear it will pay to experiment with your hookbaits. Single caster is a great bait for roach, while maggots are best if the river is coloured. Don't ignore big baits like lobworms, especially if there are perch about.

5 KEEP GOING
During the depths of winter you will often find the last two hours of daylight are the best, so never give up.

6 WATCH SOME MATCHES
If you're intending to pleasure fish a venue where matches are held on a regular basis, take some time out to go and watch one or two before you go fishing yourself. This way you will find out which species are showing where, and what tactics are being used to catch them.



Tom's 44lb 1oz winning net of perch.

Dave Harrell

BRITAIN'S BEST RIVER ANGLER TELLS ALL - ONLY IN **AnglingTimes**

ever chub at 6lb 7oz! I tried for a further half an hour for another and then spent the rest of the match having 30-minute spells on the feeder, straight lead and stick float. No more bites followed but that fish gave me big team points in the section and helped our team into third.

Some would say that was a lucky fish but I don't agree. I knew it was going to be a hard day and I fished hard for what I always felt was going to be one or two bites from where I was. I also knew that there was a better than even chance that if I got a fish it would be a good one, so I resisted scaling

down. Even so, the 0.14mm hooklength I used came under severe pressure from the big chub and I'm pretty sure I would have lost it if I'd fished any lighter.

Last weekend was very difficult. Air temperature plummeted overnight and another hard match followed for many. I drew peg 74 upstream of the old railway bridge in the fourth round of the Wye Winter League and I quite fancied it for a few fish. In recent months this swim had thrown up good weights of roach, small chub, dace and perch but rarely a mixture of all these species at the same time. It was also quite a short swim.

The peg upstream of me wasn't in and on the downstream peg I'd got Tom Lane, grandson of the late Coventry tackle dealer Alan, for company.

It's been great to see Tom, a man in his early twenties, developing his river skills rather than just going for the commercial option. A win on the main match length at Hereford was eluding him, though...

We both set up running line and pole rigs and during the first hour it was pretty clear that everyone in our section was struggling to get a bite. Then Tom turned to his master plan! Switching to an 8m pole rig with a 6g flat float and a chunk of lobworm, he was soon into the first of what was to become a memorable bag of perch.

I had switched from the pole to a running line with a 4g Bolo float and landed a decent perch on three red maggots from just above Tom's peg. Then I had another and estimated I'd got almost 4lb in the net.

We were both introducing small balls of groundbait packed with casters and chopped worm, but over the next two hours Tom hooked into so many perch that he lost count!

If I couldn't come first in the section I needed to try for second, so I set up another pole rig with a 6g Cralusso Bubble float set overdepth on 8m of line. This was used on a 10m pole angled downstream on the same line as Tom.

I then began to introduce balls of groundbait crammed with casters and chopped worms. The ploy worked and at one stage I had a run of quality perch before they eventually turned round and went back home to Tom again.

My nine perch went an ounce under 19lb, which got me second in section plus the section prize by default, while Tom's 44lb 1oz gave him his first Hereford match win. I was delighted, despite the mauling, and I hope it's the first of many wins there for him - as long as I'm not next to him when he gets the next one!

MORE INFO
Dave Harrell is recognised as one of the country's best-ever river anglers and has devoted his life to learning different skills on running water. He has fished for England at World and European level and now owns his own tackle company, Dave Harrell Angling. For details of his products go to: www.daveharrellangling.com He is also available for one-to-one and group coaching sessions on the River Wye throughout the river season. For more details contact Dave at: info@daveharrellangling.com You can also follow Dave's daily and weekly exploits on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/DaveHarrellAngling and on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/dave_harrell



My best ever chub weighed 6lb 7oz.