



GAAFFS

GRANTHAM ANGLING ASSOCIATION FLY FISHING SECTION

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 2021

Welcome to your September Newsletter.

It hardly needs saying that it has been a difficult eighteen months, as I am sure all of you are aware. In 2020 we didn't start the season until the 13th May.

Fortunately, it proved to be a good season with the returns showing a notable catch.

The 2021 season, based on reports received from members and information gleaned from the member's Facebook site, indicates that most beats have been fishing very well with some members catching more than a dozen trout per visit, and occasionally trout of over three pounds coming to the net

Fly-fishing, generally speaking, isn't a numbers game and catching fish, though important, is only one of the many reasons why we go fishing.

BARBLESS HOOKS. AND DISCARDED LEADERS!

It is very important to look after our fish stocks, so can we remind members about the importance of using Barbless hooks at all times? It is after all one of our rules, few, though they are. It is simple enough to buy barbless hooks today and a moment to de-barb a hook with pliers. Ben, a committee member has, on the GAAFFS Facebook site and on more than one occasion, emphasised the importance of using barbless hooks and retrieving flies. Much to his disappointment he has found and retrieved a number of barbed hooks which have been left or discarded.

IF YOU ARE USING BARBED HOOKS YOU ARE BREAKING A CLUB RULE

Please make sure you retrieve your bush and tree snagged flies and leader: Wherever possible please make the effort. There are plenty of gadgets that can help you retrieve your line, and wallets available to store unwanted line. If my memory serves me correctly, long standing GAAFFS member Nick Fitton designed and produced such a wallet; and very useful it proved to be. I still have mine.

I have witnessed, first hand, the horrendous effect that discarded line and flies have on wildlife, and no right thinking member would wish to see such things on our rivers.

FISH HANDLING

Please handle fish as little as possible, if at all. Unhook them in the net. Keep them in the water. If you must photograph them, do it in the net in the water. Don't touch them with dry hands. Wet hands, wet fish. Since at least 2015 we have not been allowed to introduce breeding trout into the rivers. It's worth reading the science behind this decision. Stocking with Triploids is really not a great idea, so at the moment we rely solely on good recruitment through continuous habitat improvement. That is why it is so important to look after our fish stocks in every way we can. Recruitment is the best guarantee of a future for the fish and ourselves.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HANDLING FISH

We've probably seen the last of the extreme hot spells for this year. However as climate change takes affect it has become a regular feature of the summer to have days, if not weeks, where temperatures exceed 30C, and as a result the water temperature soars. Caught fish struggle to recover when water temperatures hit 20C and above, and they can die. Please bear this in mind next year when we will no doubt experience more such hot spells. During these periods it would be worth checking water temps and, if they are at, or exceed 20C please think again and consider the safety of our fish stocks.

GRAYLING FISHING

As you are no doubt aware, when the trout season ends on the 29th October, members can still fish for Grayling between the A607 Bridge and the end of Beat I until the END OF JANUARY 2022 ONLY. There might also be the odd grayling on the Belton Park beats. Grayling fishing is of course fly only on the GAAFFS beats and WADING of any sort is STRICTLY PROHIBITED to protect trout breeding activity. Any trout caught must be returned immediately.

There is Grayling sport to be had by all GAAFFS members on the GAA coarse water on the Witham, where all legitimate methods may be employed. The Coarse fishing season dates apply here. Please use your GAA Parking Permit when fishing the coarse waters.

If anyone is interested in starting a Grayling Fishing Whatsapp Group for the club please let the Secretary know, and we may get one going so that members can share ideas on how to enjoy this particularly interesting element of our sport.

RIVER NEWS.

For those of you who fish our little River Chater you will know that it has not been at its best. Possible causes for its frequent colouring up and lack of fish and fry in some areas are the subject of on-going investigations by the Wild Trout Trust and the E.A We can expect a detailed report in November. Any necessary work will be co-ordinated by Alan G. Jackson. We have a team of willing members who live locally to the Chater and Welland beats. Himalayan Balsam pulls have recently been organised successfully.

River Welland:

We are looking at the possibility of obtaining more water on the Welland. At the moment we are only researching potential water and establishing contacts. Committee members Alan G. Jackson, Rob Scoffin, Neil Gregory and, Eliot Deag, have been looking into this on GAAFFS behalf.

River Witham:

Most of you will be aware that we have acquired a new beat on the Witham- Beat P - Papermill Farm to Dysart Park. Our Head River Keeper, Stuart Scotton was instrumental in acquiring this beat. It initially needed a lot of hard work that Stuart and the GAAFFS contractor carried out, much to their credit, very quickly. Reports reach me that it has fished quite well, and it will be a good asset for the club.

River Witham:

A flood plain lowering project in the Manthorpe area downstream of the Queen Elizabeth Park is due to start on 23rd September. I am informed by the EA that some slight milky discoloration of the water might occur as the result of the introduction of limestone gravels. I am told it will have no impact on the fish. Similar projects are planned for the Witham in the Colsterworth area.

Website:

We now have an operational GAAFFS website, monitored by our Webmaster Neil Gregory. It has attracted a good deal of interest and as a result we have received a good number of applications to join GAAFFS.

Facebook Page:

GAAFFS has a private Facebook Page with, currently 95 members. It's worth joining for the information you will get about our waters. Contact, one of the Admin team: Chris Moses, Stuart Scotton or Ben B. Davies to join.

Angling Etiquette:

Please respect other Anglers. There is plenty of room on our beats. Give other anglers a reasonable distance. Do not jump directly in front of them. Give them a couple of hundred yards before commencing to fish. If you see a card on a car dashboard that indicates an angler is fishing up or downstream it is for information purposes only, and should not deter you from fishing the beat. Individual anglers have chosen to use such a card. It is not a club requirement.

Parking and Access:

Please stick to the designated parking areas, and obvious riverbank paths.

Cormorant Control Group.

This is co-ordinated by Committee member and Licensee, Joe Beale. We have a licence from Natural England in place for the 2021- 2022 season and sufficient numbers of volunteers have come forward and have been included on the licence.

Bio Security:

It is very important to Check, Clean and Dry your fishing equipment, especially your waders, nets and boots to prevent the spread of invasive species and particularly if you have been visiting another river. Up to date information can be found easily on the Internet.

Wild Trout Trust Auctions

We have been actively involved in this. In the process several hundred pounds were raised for the WTT This season, Stuart Scotton and Alan Grice Jackson very successfully guided three WTT auction winners. Plenty of trout and Grayling came to the net and the winners of the Auction enjoyed a good days fishing.

MEMBERSHIP

We have currently, 161 members and GAAFFS attracted a good number of new members this year. We conducted two inductions successfully, for new members who were able to attend.

Subscriptions 2022;

There will be a £10, across the board increase in subs next season. This takes into consideration:

- The rent of a new water- Beat P
- An increase in our rents generally
- Spending on river improvements and maintenance
- Inflation.

Full membership has remained at £90 for a very long time. Compared to other fishing clubs in the area we represent very good value for Trout and Grayling Fishing.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE TREASURER ONLY.

No BACS payments for subs until early January 2022 please.

Catch Returns:

These are most important. They assist us in many ways with the management of the river. They go to our Treasurer and Catch Return Officer Tony Branson for analysis.

There is a section on the website for sending a GAAFFS Catch Return. If you have any issues please contact the Webmaster, Neil Gregory (Email: neil-gregory@btconnect.com), or The Treasurer, Tony Branson.

(Email: bsonofbran@btinternet.com). Returns should be in by 1st December 2021 at the latest.

THE COMMITTEE (For the present the committee is conducting all meetings via Zoom)

GAAFFS Committee Members:

Secretary: Chris Moses.
Chairman: Paul Kittson
Treasurer: Tony Branson
Head River Keeper: Stuart Scotton Ex Officio
River Keeper, Chater and Welland: Alan Grice Jackson
Cormorant Licensee: Joe Beale
New Members' Secretary: John Cuckson
Webmaster/Graphic Design: Neil Gregory
Minute Taker: Jon Pepper
Facebook Admin: Ben Brooks Davies
Gordon Brooks
William Hurrell
Welland and Chater Assistant: Rob Scoffin
Welland and Chater Assistant: Eliot Deag: (to be ratified)

Contacting the Committee:

The officers of GAAFFS, the Head River Keeper and the Webmaster can be contacted by using the contact box on the website. Other members of the committee can be contacted by mentioning their name in a message to one of those mentioned above.

Public Relations:

GAAFFS enjoys good working relationships with the GAA (Our Parent Body) the Farmers and Landowners and interested parties such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Lincs Rivers Trust/Witham Partnership. This is important to enable us to continue to function as a thriving Club

Beat P. Papermill Farm to Dysart Park:

We have experienced some hostility on P beat from one or two residents with houses adjacent to the river. We have the right to fish, but if confronted please be polite. I am sure most members will look upon any such remarks with common sense and decorum. The face we members show to the public is the one which GAAFFS will be judged by.

Our committee is made up of busy people, most of whom are in full-time employment All have families. All are volunteers who give up significant proportions of their free time in helping to run the club, providing members with the best fishing possible.

Should you have any questions or concerns, in the first instance, please contact the Chairman or the Secretary. They will do their best to answer them.

I hope you find this Newsletter helpful and I hope that I have been preaching to the converted, for the most part at least.

Best regards and tight lines,

Paul Kittson
Chairman.