WILD TROUT TRUST

Advisory Visit

River Otter at Deer Park Country House, nr Honiton, Devon

April 2024

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Key findings

- Four weirs appear to serve no real purpose and consideration should be given to their removal (or significant adjustment) to allow fish passage and natural river processes.

- A degraded ditch presented an opportunity for the restoration of a tributary stream to become a salmonid spawning and nursery ground.

- At this location in the River Otter catchment, beaver activity appeared to be aiding the river in terms of trees and bank stability.

- Examples of excellent salmonid habitat were observed including fallen trees, trailing branches and gravel bars. No adjustment should be made to such features.

- Riverside fencing to control the extent of riparian grazing is required.

- A buffer strip to the arable cultivation is required to control fine sediment run-off.

1.0 Introduction

This report is the output of an Advisory Visit undertaken by Rob Mungovan of the Wild Trout Trust to the River Otter at Deer Park Country House, near Honiton. The visit was requested by the Ottery Fly Fishing Club and the River Otter Fisheries Association and was attended by two members, in addition to a representative from the Deer Park Country House, and the local Environment Agency Fisheries Technical Officer. The visit was undertaken on 8th April 2024. Comments in this report are based on observations made during the visit.

The main purpose of the visit was to advise on the suitability of the river for wild brown trout and to consider fish passage over a series of weirs.

Normal convention is applied throughout the report with respect to bank identification, i.e. the banks are designated left bank or right bank whilst looking downstream. Specific locations are identified using decimal latitude and longitude (e.g. 50.804106, -3.188921), which can be pasted straight into Google Maps to identify locations.

2.0 Catchment Overview

The River Otter rises in the Blackdown Hills, north of Otterford. The river flows southwest through Upottery and Monkton, then roughly parallel to the A30 road north of Honiton to flow under the road near Alfington before turning south and flowing through Alfington, Ottery St Mary, Tipton St John, Newton Poppleford and Otterton. The Otter enters the English Channel at Budleigh Salterton where the tidal mudflats and salt marshes of the Otter Estuary Nature Reserve are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The geology of the catchment is primarily an undifferentiated mix of sandstone, siltstone and mudstones with some greensand in the headwaters. The river drops approximately 200m over 32km, 150m of which occurs before the river reaches Ottery St Mary. The steep gradient of the upper catchment makes the river prone to powerful spate flows.

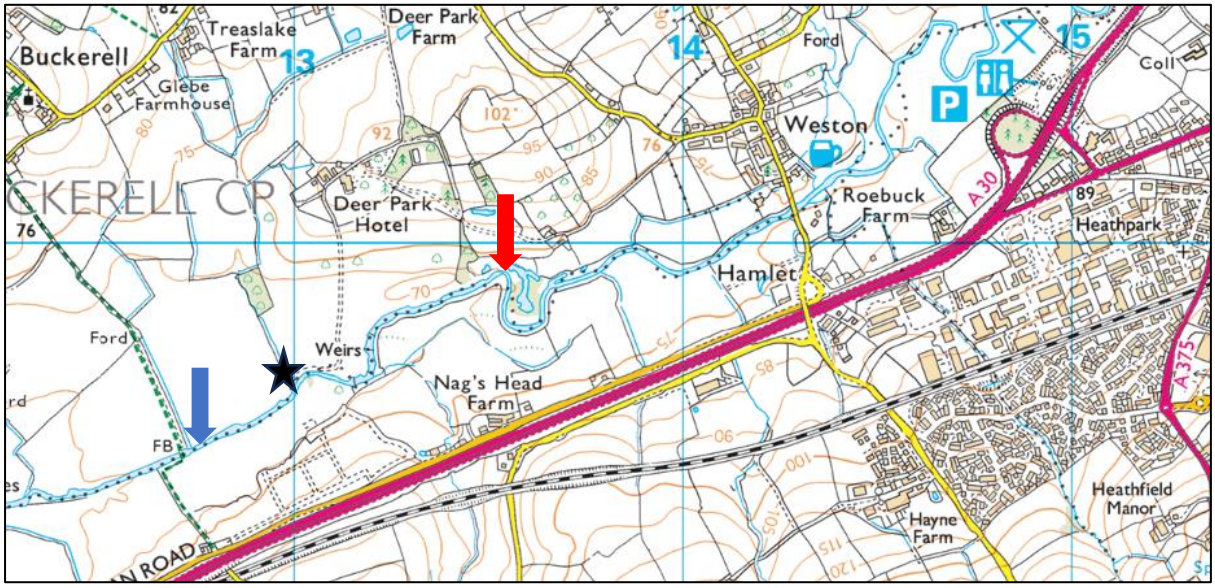
The Otter flows through a predominantly rural area, with the main land uses being intensive arable agriculture and sheep and dairy farming.

As with most rivers in Devon, the fish community of the Otter is predominantly resident brown trout, along with sea trout and Atlantic salmon. Historically, salmon and sea trout have struggled to migrate upstream of Tipton St John but the recent replacement of a poorly functioning 'pool and traverse' fish pass with a Larinier technical fish pass, has significantly improved fish passage. Other significant obstacles to

migration remain which limit the numbers of salmon and trout reaching the upper Otter. Other fish recorded in the Otter include dace, minnow, bullhead, gudgeon, European eel, with mullet moving relatively far upstream into freshwater.

Under the European Water Framework Directive (WFD), the river is classified as "poor ecological status" resulting in a failure under the WFD. Unfortunately, the river's fish community ("moderate" status) and its macrophytes and phytobenthos community (plants/algae, also "poor" status) are not as abundant or diverse as is expected, showing that all is not well with the river. With the parameters of oxygen, ammonia and temperature classed as "high", reasons for the river's poor ecological status are likely to result from its degraded physical form rather than its current water quality.

Importantly, the *River Otter Good Ecological Status Partnership Report* (EA & Devon Wildlife Trust, 2013) lists Fish Passage Priorities as one of the two key issues driving WFD failure for the river. It is clear that structures such as weirs pose a significant obstruction to migrating fish, and that the issue has been known for some time. Resource allocation, ecological evidence, and public perception are listed as reasons for inertia. The Club and Association should focus fresh attention on to the issue via the EA's Catchment Co-ordinator and Fisheries team.



Map 1 – The location of the River Otter at Deer Park Country House. Red arrow is upstream limit, blue arrow is downstream limit of visit. Black star marks the location of degraded ditch with potential for restoration. © Ordnance Survey.

Classification item	2019	2022
Ecological	Poor	Poor
Biological quality elements	Poor	Poor
Fish	Moderate	Moderate
Invertebrates	Good	High
Macrophytes and Phytobenthos Combined	Poor	Poor
Macrophytes Sub Element	Poor	Poor
Phytobenthos Sub Element	Moderate	Moderate
Physico-chemical quality elements	Moderate	Moderate
Ammonia (Phys-Chem)	High	High
Dissolved oxygen	High	High
Phosphate	Poor	Moderate
Temperature	Good	High
pH	High	High
Hydromorphological Supporting Elements	Supports good	Supports good
Hydrological Regime	Does not support good	Does not support good
Morphology	Supports good	Supports good
Specific pollutants	High	High
Arsenic	High	High
Chlorothalonil	High	High
Copper	High	High
Iron	High	High
Manganese	High	High
Zinc	High	High
Chemical	Fail	Does not require assessment
Priority hazardous substances	Fail	Does not require assessment

Table 1 - Data for [Lower River Otter | Catchment Data Explorer | Catchment Data Explorer]

	Waterbody Details
River	Otter
WFD Waterbody Name	Lower River Otter
Waterbody ID	GB108045009170
Management Catchment	Devon East
River Basin District	South West
Current Ecological Quality	Poor
U/S Grid Ref Inspected	SY 13563 99884
D/S Grid Ref Inspected	SY 12737 99457
Length of River Inspected	~1km

Table 2 - Water Framework Directive data for the River Otter near Honiton.

3.0 Habitat Assessment

The visit started at the downstream end of the reach, near to a bridge crossing of a public footpath (pic 1). The bridge footings were armoured with concrete bagwork which offers little in the way cover but indicates that channel stability is a concern.

Pic 1 – The river at the downstream end of visit, note the concrete bagwork providing bank armouring.

The river was ~8m to 10m wide with arable cultivation on the right bank and sheep grazing on the left. There was no fence to control the extent of grazing, consequently tree cover was denuded and saplings scarce. The few alder saplings observed were at the water's edge where grazing was more challenging. Bank slumping was evident, suggesting why concrete bagwork had been used to strengthen the bridge footings.

The arable cultivation retained no buffer strip and, following the recent inundation of land by floods, soil erosion had occurred (pics 2, 3 & 4). It is poor practice to cultivate land to a river's edge. The establishment of a buffer strip would bring benefits to the river in terms of reducing silt and nutrient input, as well as conserving soil for future cultivation.

Pic 2 – Cultivation of the floodplain leaves it prone to soil erosion.

Pic 3 – Erosion pathways (brown arrow) result in fine sediment entering the river which can smoother important spawning gravels and reduce aquatic invertebrate production.

Pic 4 – In the absence of bankside grazing the true left bank (right in picture) had greater tree structure and species diversity. Soil erosion clearly presents a risk to the river (and arable land).

Powerful floods have resulted in bank scour, whilst a positive natural process, it has resulted in trees becoming unstable. If trees fall into the river they should be retained where they fall. If there is justified concern for them moving and potentially blocking bridge structures, then consideration could be given to stabilising them but the hydraulic forces upon whole trees will be very large and any fixing used would have to be suitably strong. The issue of tree management was discussed on site, if the hawthorn in pic 5 was coppiced then it would have less tendency to topple. But, with beavers active on this reach of river they are very likely to reduce the height of riparian trees and so the occurrence of some toppling trees should be seen as an ecological opportunity for diversity of habitat in this case. As trees fall into the river they will cause it to meander, potentially lengthening the channel, lessening is longitudinal gradient, ultimately aiding channel stability.

Pic 5 – This hawthorn is likely to topple into the river - not necessarily a bad occurrence.

Whilst a few trees were in the process of toppling, the majority stood firm and their roots contributed significantly to bank strength (pic 6).

Pic 6 – Tree roots significantly increase bank strength, and ultimately channel stability.

The presence of the invasive non-native species (INNS), Himalayan balsam was noted (pic 7) at 50.788581, -3.237568. Himalayan balsam grows prolifically, out-competing native species creating a monoculture. It dies back in the winter, leaving banks bare and vulnerable to erosion. It should be controlled by pulling plants up where possible.

Pic 7 – Himalayan balsam should be eradicated by pulling.

Boulders used to armour the left bank became apparent (pics 8 & 9). The approach has been observed on other reaches of the Otter. As is usually the case, much of the armouring has been ineffective, resulting in boulders standing proud. The use of boulders and riprap to protect the toe-of-bank simply deflects erosive forces to adjacent areas of the bed and bank, leading to scour where it was not foreseen, often resulting in less suitable flow pathways for fish or pools with unnatural flows of water into them preventing fish from resting.

Pic 8 – Boulders and riprap have been used to armour the bank in the past (red ovals), yet this location is now depositional with a vegetated berm having formed which naturally protects the bank.

Pic 9 – Trees have established amongst the boulder armouring (red oval). The tree roots now give the bank the strength it requires to maintain its grade.

The grazed left bank still supported fewer trees than the right. Where occasional trees grow, grazing pressure has caused them to grow lop-sided, ultimately leading to their instability, accelerating bank collapse, resulting in further fine sediment supply to the river. Where riverbanks have an extensive network of riparian trees, banks will hold firm, eliminating the need for boulder armouring, allowing the balance of sediment supply to be better matched to that which erodes from a reach. Stable bed sediments are important for salmonid spawning (fish recruitment), for aquatic invertebrate production (fish food) and for channel form stability in terms of pools and riffles (which provide fish habitat). When these three parameters are in balance, and are supported by good water quality and quantity, fish populations will be healthier and more resilient without ecological bottlenecks to populations forming (figure 1).

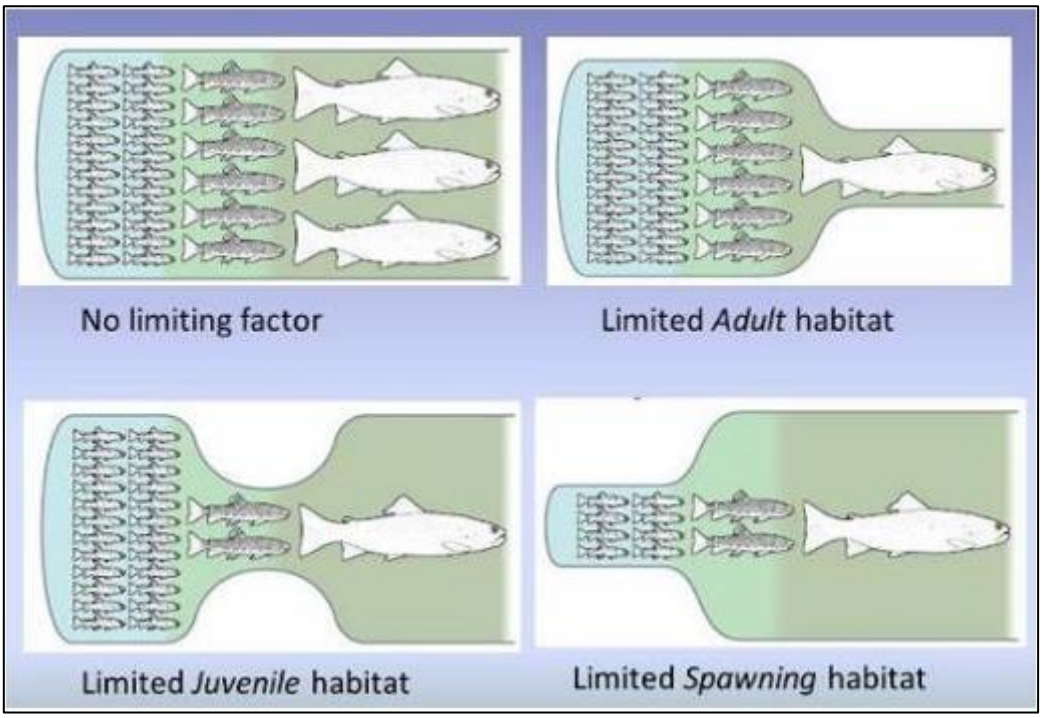


Figure 1 - Obstacles to fish passage combined with sections of river lacking in submerged and overhead cover could lead to a 'population bottleneck' at the spawning and/or juvenile trout life stages. Fish unable to reach good quality spawning/nursery habitat will have a substantially reduced chance of successfully spawning or of their offspring surviving. The end result is a river that is unlikely to support as many fish as it could.

At 50.788500, -3238080 the right bank was actively supplying coarse sediment (gravel, cobbles and small stones) to the river. Interestingly, the material was very angular (pic 9) contrasting with the more rounded stones found in the river. The abundance of rounded stones mid-channel suggests that many have travelled far down the catchment, becoming rounded and smoothed in the process.

Pic 9 – Angular stones contrast with the rounded stones found mid-channel.

A secondary flood channel was observed on the right bank (pic 10). Whilst currently dry the channel would offer cover from high flows during spates. Such habitats are important for floodplain diversity and invertebrate production. The location supported ash trees on the higher, drier ground, with osier and goat willow growing on damper ground.

Pic 10 – Topographical variations within the river corridor are important for habitat diversity.

At 50.788958, -3237142 the river showed how dynamic it could be, with a recent large deposit of gravel forming a mid-channel bar (pic 11). Importantly, the bar has provided a lodge point for a large tree (or it may be the case that the lee of the fallen tree has enabled gravel to become deposited. Whichever way round, it illustrates the inter-relationship of woody material and gravel within the river). With the tree grounded it provides excellent cover for a range of trout life-stages (illustration 1).

Pic 11 – Active deposition of new coarse bed substrate, a positive process.

The occurrence of fallen trees and similar woody features are referred to as Large Woody Material (LWM). As trees grow, they will drop limbs into a river, and may ultimately fall in too. The occurrence of branches and tree limbs within a river, together with the organic matter that they collect, may look untidy to some, but the presence of such material is of great ecological importance. LWM leads to an increase in the surface area on to which a biofilm (algae, bacteria and other microbes) can grow. In turn, the biofilm may become a source of food for invertebrates, increasing the total biomass that a river can support. The occurrence of LWM also helps to slow the flow of water down the channel, thus providing a degree of Natural Flood Management (NFM). Untidy, or rather wild rivers, will support much more wildlife.

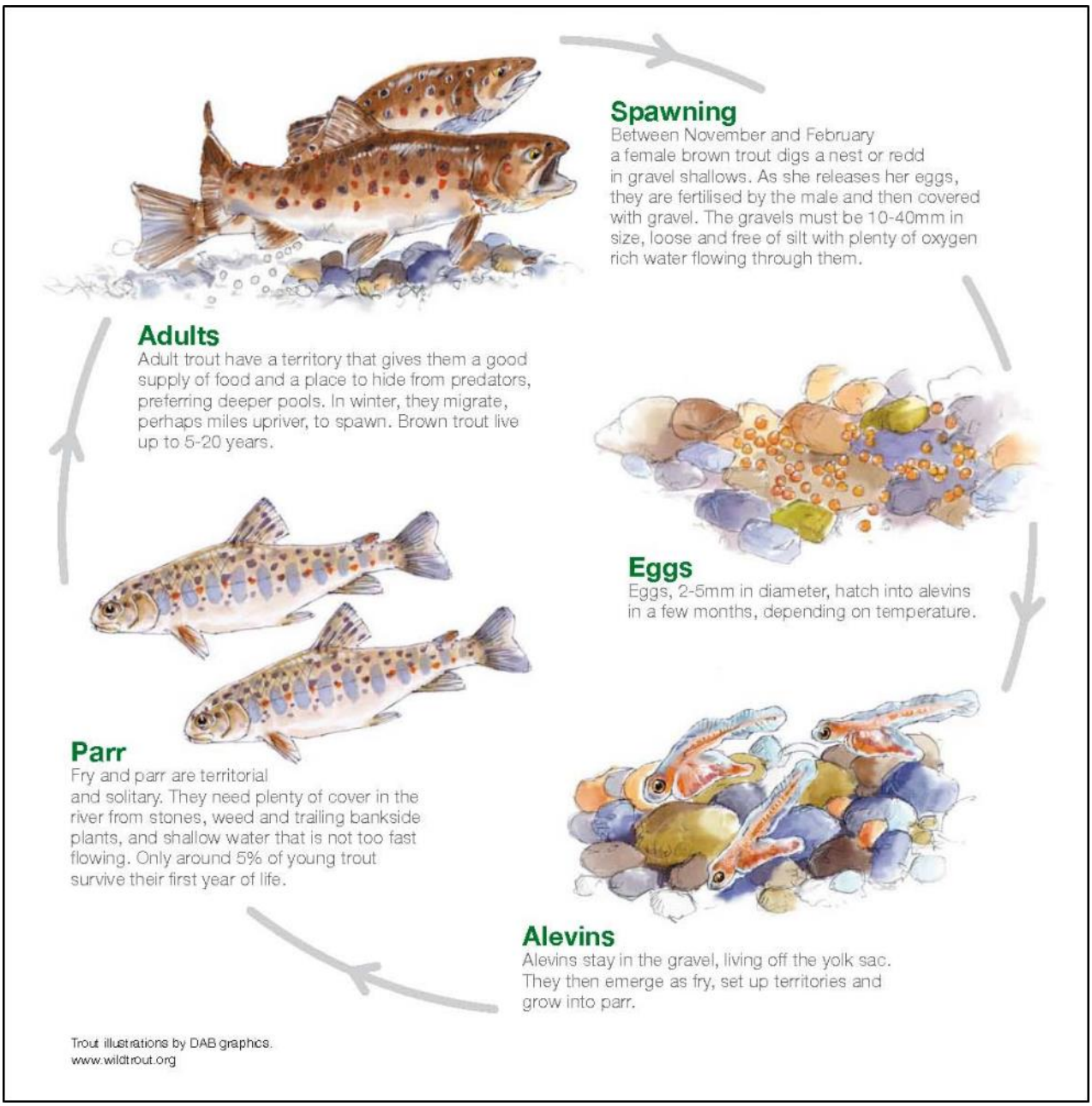


Illustration 1 – The life cycle of the brown trout.

Beaver activity demonstrated how their "coppicing" (pic 12) limited the extent of top-growth (which could cause toppling) and encouraged low-growth with roots striking back into bank, aiding bank stability. At this location in the River Otter catchment beaver activity appeared to be aiding the river in terms of trees and bank stability.

Pic 12 – Control of tall woody growth by beavers will make trees less prone to toppling, and should encourage a strong root network resulting in greater bank stability.

Further excellent examples of complex cover provided by fallen trees (pic 13) and deposited LWM was observed (pic 14). Adult trout, sea trout and salmon will all seek out dense cover in which to rest. Sunken root balls provide multiple opportunities for fish of all ages to find cover and prey whilst being protected from predation. On no account should these types of features be removed from the river.

Pic 13 – Tree cover above water provides excellent salmonid habitat.

Pic 14 – Complex cover provided by sunken LWM provides important cover allowing fish to rest safe from predators.

Similarly, trees with limbs trailing to the water (pic 15) will also increase the number of lies available for fish. The greater the number of fish lies, together with cover for all life-stages of salmonids will ultimately result in more fish within the river presenting better angling.

Pic 15 – Trailing branches present important lies for salmonids. Interestingly, although using such areas as boltholes when scared, fish will generally feed in alternative, more open areas, where they are accessible to angling.

Another large deposit of gravel and stone was observed at 50.789174, -3.236715 (pic 16). Given its colonisation by young alders it was estimated to have been in-river for ~10 years. The gravel bar has clearly been subject to high erosional forces, yet it has remained in place, illustrating the strength of roots to hold firm previously loose substrates (pic 17). By holding material that would have otherwise been mobile within the channel, the river will have scoured material from mid-channel creating important depth habitat in glides.

Pic 16 – A large gravel bar, stabilised by young alder trees.

Pic 17 – Note the extensive fibrous roots with erosion occurring between them.

On the left bank it was apparent that the roots of blackthorn provided enough strength for a vertical face to be maintained (pic 18). The steepness (as opposed to slumping) slows down the input of fine material. It is quite normal for areas of vertical bank to be present along rivers, the bare exposed face provides potential nesting opportunities for birds such as

kingfisher or sand martin. Only a short distance upstream there is no woody growth on the bank-top and slumping has occurred (pic 19).

Mid-river contained a range of gravel sizes with many well-sorted and cleansed by winter flows. The mid-channel gravel, if stable, could provide spawning opportunities for salmonids. The presence of mature trees over deeper pool habitats provides valuable cover for adult fish during the spawning season.

Pic 18 – Blackthorn roots hold the bank near vertical. In the foreground of the picture the bed substrate was well-sorted and potentially suitable as a spawning ground.

Pic 19 – With trees absent bank erosion has occurred. The fallen and trailing trees present important cover.

A ford at 50.789497, -3.235820 presented a pathway for fine sediment to enter the river, and of greater concern was the proximity of muck piles (pic 20) that were leaching out into the soil, adding nutrients to the river. The Farming Rules For Water (2017) state that organic manures should not be stored on land within 10m of a watercourse Farming rules to protect watercourses - policy paper (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Pic 20 – The ford presents a pathway for silt and nutrients to enter the river.

A tributary watercourse was crossed at 50.789713, -3.235692. Most would not consider it much more than a ditch, but it is in fact a straightened stream with gravel deposits (pic 20). The value of small streams should never be discounted as spawning areas. This stream has potential as a nursery habitat if it were re-naturalised and restored to meander across the floodplain once again. However, at present it is disconnected from the main river by a drop as it emerges from a culvert (pic 21) making it challenging for fish to enter.

Pic 20 – This “ditch” contains gravels. It could present spawning opportunities for salmonids keen to spawn beyond the main river.

Pic 21 – The “ditch” is currently disconnected from the main river.

A stand of Japanese knotweed (red oval) was observed at 50.789874, -3.235223 (pic 22). It is another INNS with the potential to dominate habitat to the detriment of native species. It should be eradicated using herbicide by a suitably trained person.

Pic 22 – Japanese knotweed (red oval).

Further examples of failed boulder revetments were observed. With water having gotten behind the boulders, it has focussed scour against the bank resulting in washout of material, as opposed to protection (pic 23).

Pic 23 – Failed boulder revetment.

The first of four weirs was observed at 50.790144, -3.234839 (pic 24). Weir 1 was a boulder weir ~8m wide retaining a head of water ~1.2m. Due to elevated water conditions on the day of the visit, the weir was considered passable due to strong flows creating pathways for fish to utilise. But in low flows the water may become dispersed making it harder for a fish to find a pathway over the structure. The weir's form could be adjusted to improve fish passage, see recommendations. Removal is the optimum outcome.

Note that alteration to any of the four weirs has the potential to initiate upstream channel form changes as bed gradient and river velocity is altered. Careful consideration of next steps should involve the input of a geomorphologist.

The weir has acted as a trap to the natural downstream supply of bed substrate and the channel has filled with coarse sediment, leading to habitat uniformity (pic 25). The flow is relatively slow and open to warming by sunlight, both conditions unfavourable to salmonids.

Pic 24 – Weir 1 presents a barrier to fish passage and degrades both upstream and downstream river habitat.

Pic 25 – Weir 1 has filled behind it, no depth habitat remains. Salmonids will not occupy it.

Weir 2 was observed at 50.790009, -3.233474 (pic 26). It had already breached against the right bank. It was constructed of blockwork held by wire netting. The head drop was ~0.5m with the majority of flow focussed in the breach making fish passage relatively straight forward. The structure

should be reassessed in low-flow conditions to see if fish passage remains. Removal is the optimum outcome.

Pic 26 – Weir 2 has failed presenting opportunities for salmonids to pass it, and it has released trapped gravel to benefit downstream habitat.

Before weir 3 was reached, immediately downstream of it, further evidence of beaver activity was observed with the felling of a medium sized willow into the river (pic 27). The action has created complex habitat that will benefit fish through additional cover and flow diversity. Felled willows should be able to re-root resulting in further low-growing willows as beavers "coppice" them.

Pic 27 – Excellent cover provided by beavers felling trees into the river.

Weir 3, Ginner Weir, was observed at 50.790575, -3.233090 (pic 28). It held a head of water ~1.2m and was producing cascading flow which could be passable to fish but in low flow periods, with flow dispersed, passage will be more challenging. The fourth weir is ~50m upstream, and Ginner Weir acts as an easement to its passage. Ginner Weir is clearly holding back a large volume of trapped gravel as is shown by the vegetated mid-channel bars upstream of it. Removal is the optimum outcome.

Pic 28 – Looking downstream to Ginner Weir, note the gravel trapped upstream of it.

Weir 4 was observed at 50.791060, -3.232962 (pic 29). It was estimated to be retaining a head of water ~0.4m (but would be more if Ginner Weir is removed/adjusted). The weir is considered passable in most flow conditions. Removal is the optimum outcome.

Pic 29 – Weir 4.

Upstream of Weir 4 some riparian tree planting has taken place (pic 30). Unfortunately, much of that planting has failed during the drought of 2022, but some oak trees set further back have taken. Planting new trees is important for bank stability. Riparian willows of the true left bank extended beyond half the channel width providing important cover and shade.

Pic 30 – Valuable tree planting has largely failed.

The weirs present obstacles to migrating salmonids, with fish becoming delayed and drained of energy on their migration. All weirs should be removed if they no longer serve a purpose. Figures 1 & 2 illustrate the difference between predation in simple and more complex river channel types. Figure 3 illustrates the impacts of an impoundment on a river as is happening at all of the 4 weirs.

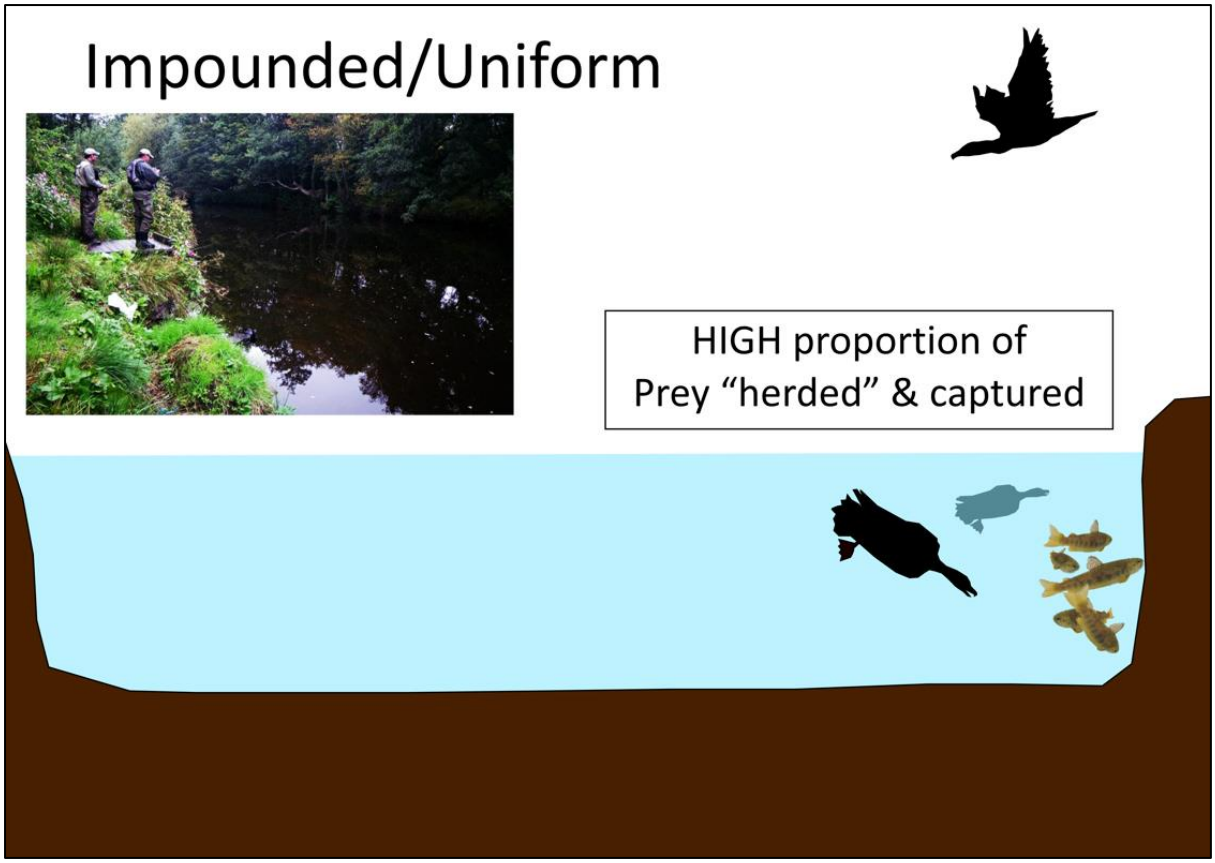


Figure 1 – The ease of predation in a uniform channel.

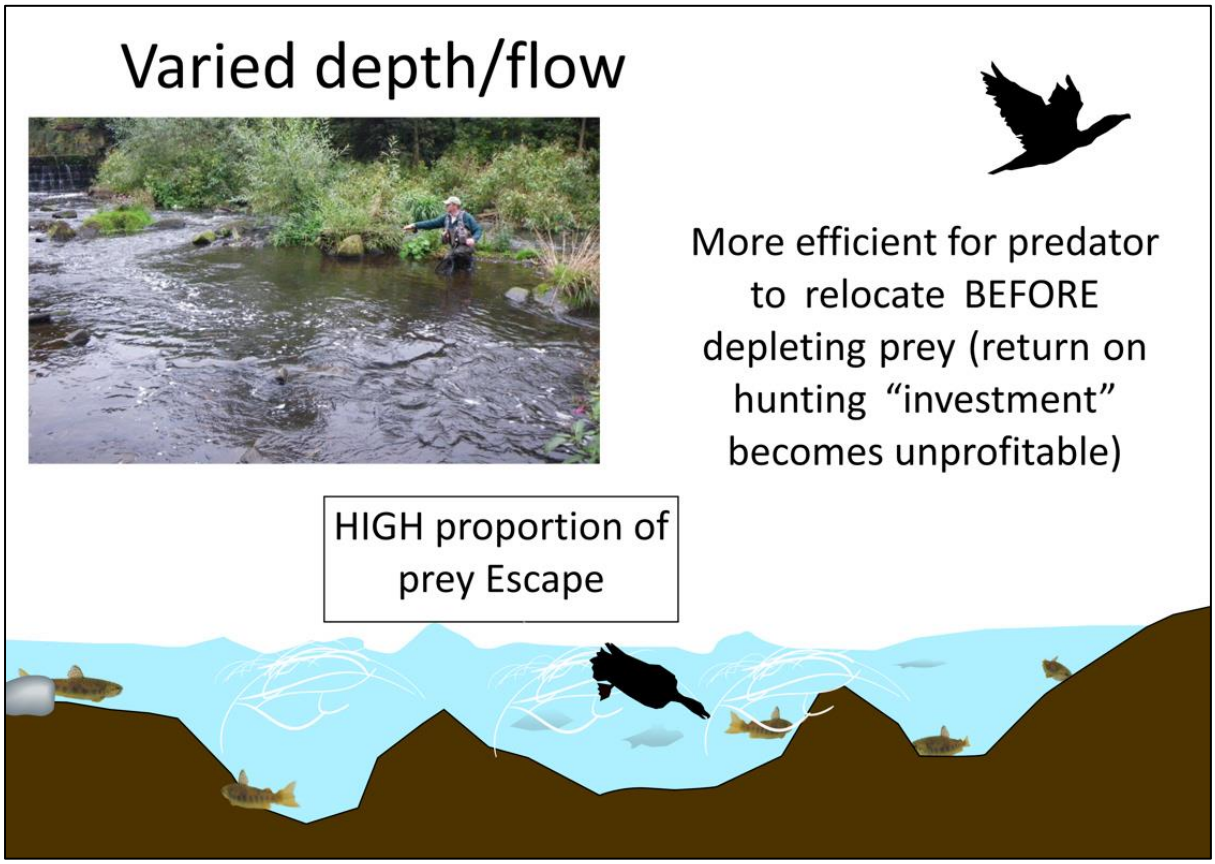


Figure 2 – The challenge of predation in a diverse river channel.

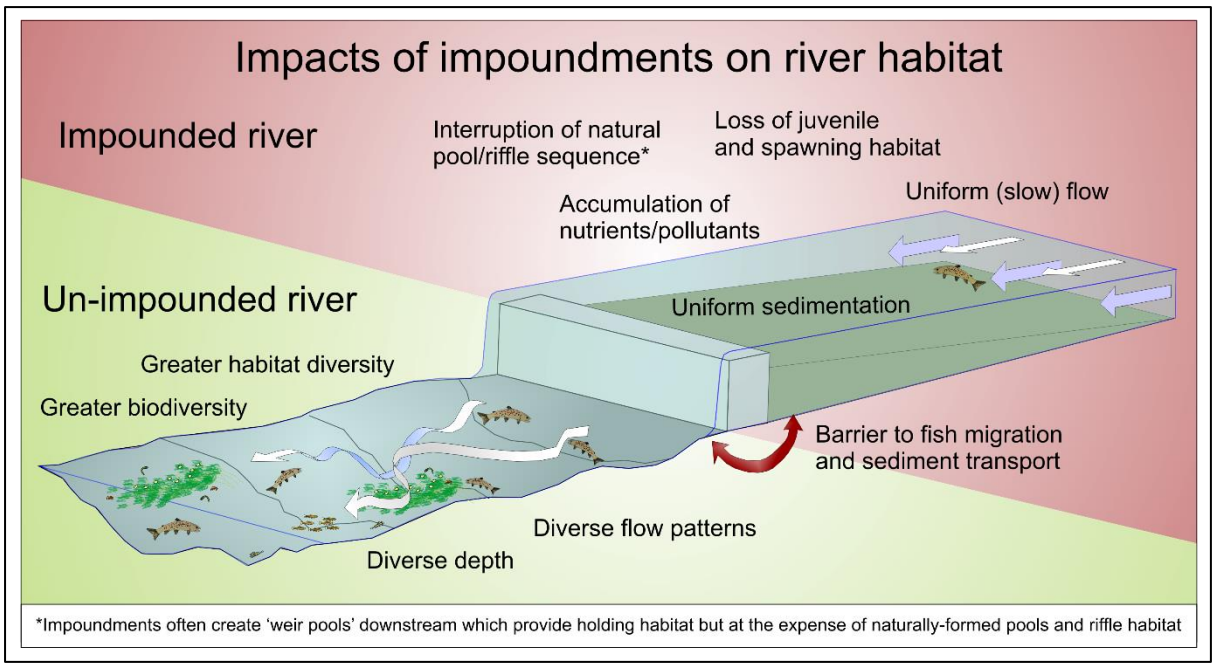


Figure 3 – The impacts of impoundments of river habitat.

Figure 4 illustrates the effect a weir has on sediment supply, whilst figure 5 shows how a weir can act as a gravel trap, as observed on the River Otter.

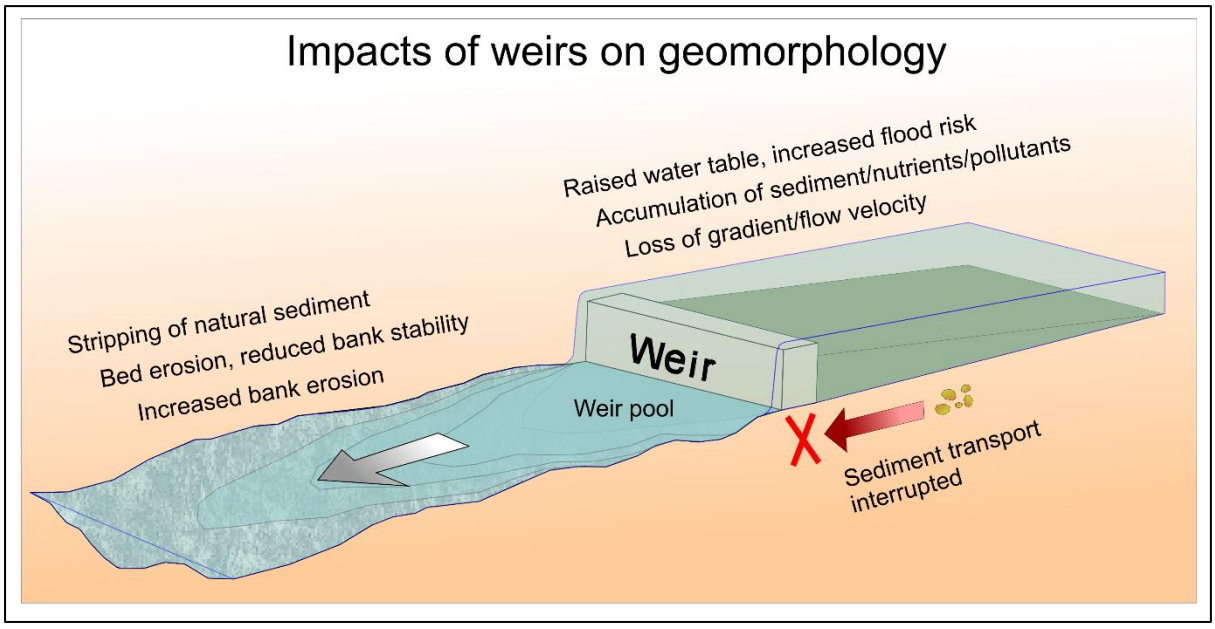


Figure 4 – The impacts of weirs on geomorphology.

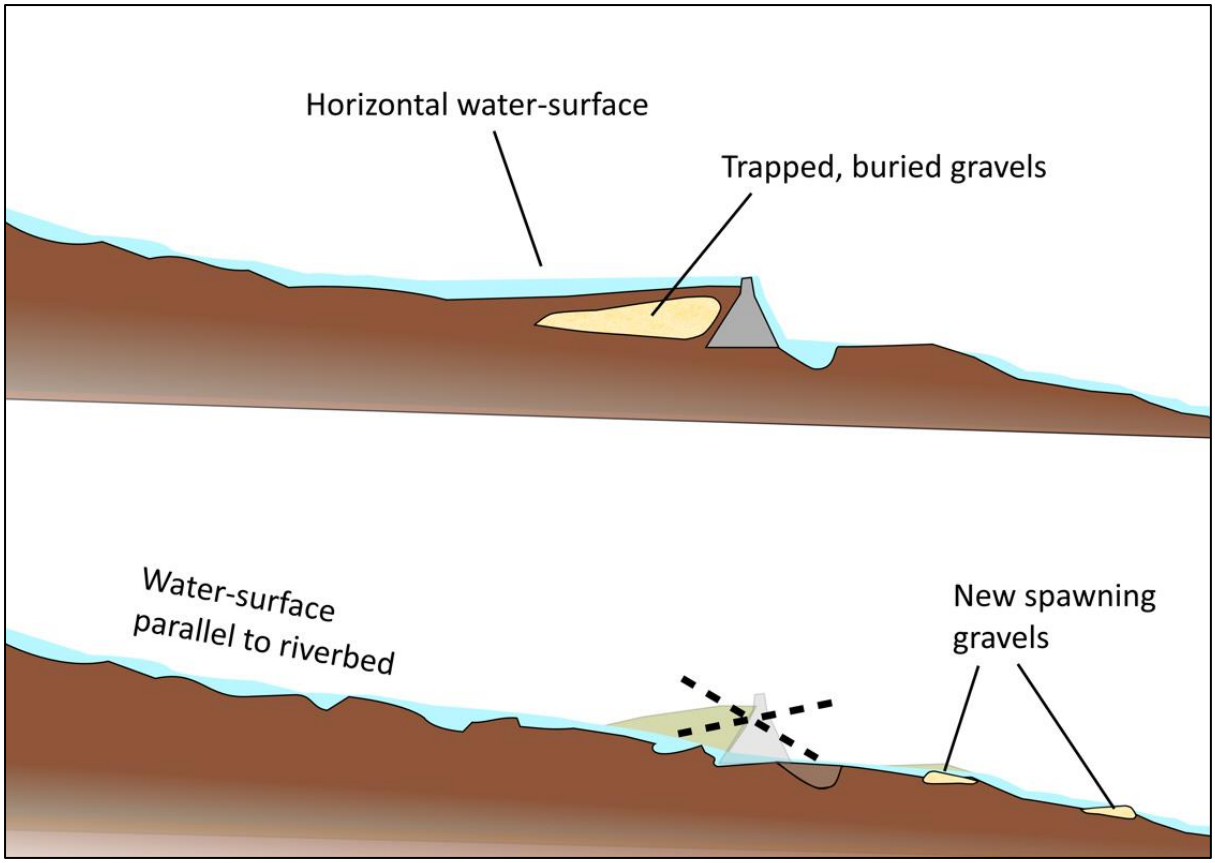


Figure 5 – An illustration of how potential spawning gravel can become trapped upstream of a weir.

An abandoned (due to flooding in winter 2023/24) beaver lodge was observed at 50.791761, -3.230725 (pic 31), yet activity in the area remained high, with large willows having been recently felled (pic 32). Where the stems lay on wet mud they are likely to root. It was surprising to see that beavers had started to gnaw at the largest pollard willow seen during the visit (pic 33). It would appear that beavers will tackle any sized tree, even one that is likely to contain a lot of deadwood. With the pollard willow considered an important landscape tree, it has been protected with wire. The beavers pose no detrimental impact to the river's ecology at present. More information on the potential interactions between beaver and trout populations are outlined on the Wild Trout Trust website Beaver Resource Hub | Wild Trout Trust.

Pic 31 – An abandoned beaver lodge in the bank.

Pic 32 – Beaver felling of willows on to wet mud may encourage further willow rooting and growth.

Pic 33 – Notable trees have been protected from beavers.

Upstream of the beaver lodge the river became multi-stemmed, producing excellent trout habitat with low-trailing cover, short glides and deeper holding areas (pic 34), together with slower flowing side channels that presented valuable juvenile trout habitat.

Pic 34 – Valuable and complex salmonid habitat is provided by multiple flow pathways and depth variation.

Pic 35 – Small backwater channels offer important habitat for fry and juvenile salmonids.

4.0 Recommendations

Of the 4 weirs observed, none appeared to serve a current purpose. They may have been constructed to create fishing areas, but if so those areas have now degraded. They pose unnecessary barriers to the movement of all fish species and should ideally be removed (or at least significantly adjusted).

A geomorphologist should be involved before any weir adjustments are made as there is a risk that upstream channel instability could occur during a period of channel adjustment. Recommendations as to possible actions at each weir are presented, though expert advice must be sought, but with a strong steer that removal is the optimal solution.

Weir 1 - Full removal is recommended due to the significant head of water retained and barrier to fish movement. But if channel instability is a concern then partial removal to create one significant flow pathway may be appropriate. Fencing and tree planting to aid channel stability should be undertaken.

Weir 2 – The large breach may require no further action to be taken. The structure should be reassessed in low flow to see if the structure is still passable.

Weir 3 (Ginner Weir) – Full removal should consider the in-combination effect upon weir 4. The structure is considered less passable in low flows and so should be reassessed. If partial removal is considered, then the creation of a pathway against the right bank into the pool with felled trees is considered best.

Weir 4 – This was the smallest of the weirs and possibly the simplest to remove or adjust. The structure should be re-assessed in low flow. Full removal is the best option but if not possible then the creation of a significant flow pathway against the right bank would enhance flow diversity upstream of weir 3, aiding sediment transport.

Removal of the weirs will release a significant volume of coarse sediment which will enhance the natural development of gravel bars and riffles to the benefit of salmonids. Assuming that all weirs can be removed, as per the optimal scenario, it is likely that removing them in sequence, from upstream to downstream would be beneficial, thereby retaining as much of the stored material as possible to assist the natural channel regrade. It may be that the impact of this process could be reduced further if the removals were one per year, allowing time (and floods) over which the channel can adjust.

The tributary ditch should be restored as a sinuous stream to provide a spawning and nursery headwater. Whilst this approach may take farm land out of production, future changes to farm subsidies such as the Government's Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs) and Sustainable Farming Incentive - Farming for the future (which includes payments up to £1242/ha to connect river and floodplain habitats) may influence how riverside land is used and the site owners may wish to explore different approaches to land use.

The reach visited exhibited many examples of excellent habitat, some enhanced by the action of beavers, and features such as fallen trees, trailing branches and exposed mid-channel bars should be retained as they are. Complex cover and backwater habitats should also be retained. There is little more that can be achieved through physical intervention at the site-specific level. Improvements across the wider catchment may influence fine sediment and nutrient input. More information may be found at Habitat improvement | Wild Trout Trust

Fencing of the left bank of the river will protect it from grazing allowing a greater number and diversity of trees to re-establish, aiding bank stability. Similarly, a reduction in grazing pressure will allow a greater vegetated fringe to develop. That long vegetation will have a greater depth of roots, thus further aiding bank stability, and will provide a more diverse habitat for both terrestrial and the aquatic invertebrates (in their adult form) to find a suitable niche, and ultimately become food for fish.

The right bank had a significant length of arable cultivation to its top of bank. A buffer strip, ideally of 10m, should be established, which would prevent pesticide and herbicide drift from entering the river, could aid soil conservation and increase invertebrate production.

The ford presented a pathway for fine sediment and nutrients to enter the river. The muck heaps should be moved further away from the river, and any area of erosion on the ford slopes should be made good with new gravel (or suitable fill). Material must not be lifted from the river for repairing tracks.

Boulder armouring of riverbanks should not be continued as it will interrupt the natural supply of coarse sediment. The armouring also degrades riparian habitat.

5.0 Making it Happen

It is a legal requirement that works to a Main River require an Environmental Permit from the EA.

The Wild Trout Trust can provide further assistance in the following ways:

- Walking the river to undertake project scoping, followed by the production of a Project Proposal report.
- Assisting with the preparation and submission of an Environmental Permit, or by identifying appropriate exemptions to take forward small-scale habitat improvement works.
- Running training days to demonstrate the techniques described in this report.

We have produced a 70-minute DVD called 'Rivers: Working for Wild Trout' which graphically illustrates the challenges of managing river habitat for wild trout, with examples of good and poor habitat and practical demonstrations of habitat improvement. Additional sections of film cover key topics in greater depth, such as woody material, enhancing fish stocks and managing invasive species. The DVD is available to buy for £10.00 from our website shop www.wildtrout.org/shop/products/rivers-working-for-wild-trout-dvd or by calling the WTT office on 02392 570985.

The WTT website library has a wide range of materials in video and PDF format on habitat management and improvement:
www.wildtrout.org/content/library

An important source of income which helps to fund the WTT's work is our Annual Spring Auction. The auction is our biggest fundraising event and includes fishing days, tackle, books, art and more. Many of our AV and PV recipients subsequently help us with auction lots each year, and we're very

grateful for this extra support. To donate a lot, please contact WWT via Christina Bryant @ office@wildtrout.org.

6.0 Acknowledgement

The WTT would like to thank the Environment Agency for supporting the advisory and practical visit programme in England, through a partnership funded using rod licence income.

7.0 Disclaimer

This report is produced for guidance; no liability or responsibility for any loss or damage can be accepted by the Wild Trout Trust as a result of any other person, company or organisation acting, or refraining from acting, upon guidance made in this report.

Legal permissions may be required before commencing work on site. These are not limited to landowner permissions but may also involve regulatory authorities such as the EA, lead local flood authority and any other relevant bodies (e.g. Natural England and Forestry Commission) or stakeholders. Alongside permissions, risk assessment and adhering to health and safety legislation and guidance is also an essential component of any interventions or activities in and around your fishery.