

TEIFI FISHERIES FEDERATION

VOLUNTARY CATCH AND RELEASE PROJECT

The Teifi Fisheries Federation is an umbrella organisation with representation from angling clubs on the Teifi which is able to take a view on matters which affect the river, fishing and the environment of the Teifi valley as a whole. It provides a forum in which the concerns and thinking of the individual Clubs can be considered and discussed and priorities and policies agreed as necessary for members to take back to their Clubs.

With the active encouragement and support of the Environment Agency Wales, the Game Conservancy Trust and the recently-formed Teifi River Trust the TFF has agreed to recommend to Clubs and individual anglers that they should participate in a project to increase the practice of voluntary catch-and-release of salmon and large sea-trout on the river. It must be emphasised that the scheme is one which aims to encourage voluntary catch-and-release on the part of anglers but at the same time the possibility of mandatory rules being introduced to conserve stocks is a real one. None of us is happy with such a prospect and we are therefore looking to the acceptance and success of a voluntary scheme to try to ensure that this does not happen.

You may have heard that the Carmarthenshire Fishermens Federation introduced a voluntary C&R scheme on the Towy last season with great success and the TFF is to follow their lead this year on the Teifi. Environment Agency figures show that last year the catch-and-release rate on the Teifi was 41% and the goal is to raise that by 10% this year. This has been achieved on the Towy, so it is a realistic goal.

We know that the great majority of anglers are responsible citizens and do care about conserving fish stocks and the environment of the river which supports them. A flourishing population of fish is a sign that the river is in good health and this is important to the wider public, not just to anglers. At a time when nets are being bought-out and removed to help stocks and commercial fishing at sea is being pressured it is vital that all of us anglers on our rivers demonstrate that we are responsible in our fishing too. What this scheme does is to encourage what many are already doing, namely catch-and-release of salmon and large sea-trout, (over 24 inches) and to make a public statement of their commitment to responsible fishing practices.

Following the Towy example the TFF will be awarding badges which can be displayed on fishing waistcoats or jackets; bronze for one fish released, silver for two and gold for three. Claim forms will be sent to Club members and will be available from Clubs and ticket issuers as well as direct from the administrator of the scheme for the TFF. Retrospective claims to June 16th can be made but all claims have to be witnessed. In addition, there will be a draw at the end of the season with a range of prizes on offer. More news on this later.

