



The 2024 season at Bristol Water Fisheries has been an exciting and action-packed year, marked by incredible fishing, memorable competitions, and behind-the-scenes efforts to enhance facilities and services for anglers. Harsh weather made the 2024 season very interesting providing new challenges for the team to tackle all through the year. An astonishing year for pike fishing with a trickier start to the season at Chew and Blagdon for trout anglers. Taking feedback from last season, our stocking policies focused on stocking as many areas of the lakes as we could access, to increase the spread of the fish. We also focused on clearing the bank areas for better access around Chew. The birdwatching community were thrilled to see the first year an Osprey has resided at Chew lake throughout the summer with multiple sightings being reported daily. Towards the back end of March, we saw a huge increase in catch rates with the fishing at Blagdon and Chew switched on, it didn't turn off until our mid-summer challenges. The Barrow Tanks have been superb all season with many overwintered fish coming out throughout the year. Excluding a temporary closure of the tanks due to low water levels.

New UK Record at Chew.

The first and arguably most notable event of the 2024 season was the new UK Pike Record being set at Chew Lake. Angler Lloyd Watson, on his first visit to Chew, fished Woodford bank and within the first hour of his fishing he had landed his 47lb 5oz pike. Smashing the record by 8 ounces, previously set by Roy Lewis at Llandegfedd, a record that stood for over 32 years.



BRFFA Youth Pathway:

This season also saw the launch of the BRFFA Youth Development Pathway. This program is aimed to teach, nurture and encourage the next generation of fly anglers to the intricacies and skills of fly fishing. Starting from the ground up, students can complete their bronze, silver and gold awards. Currently, there are 26 members of the YDP of which, 15 have completed either their bronze or silver awards. This number continues to increase.



The start of June saw the first BRFFA Youth Pathway event here at Bristol Water Fisheries, with support from Bristol Water, The Angling Trust as well as Airflo and Turrell.

This initiative is aimed at getting youngsters into the sport and guiding them all the way from the basics of how to set up a rod and reel, to them catching fish from both bank, boat and even tying their own flies!

The four juniors pictured above had just passed their bronze fishing award over two days with the instructors, hopefully setting them up for a lifetime of enjoying angling and the beautiful surroundings here at Chew Valley and Blagdon lakes.

The Lakes

Chew Valley Lake 2024

We kicked off the season with our February Pike Trials. The weather proved very choppy this February with 3 days being rescheduled due to high winds. This didn't stop some of the best Pike Fishing Chew has seen in recent years with 20 fish over 38lb of which 6 broke the magical 40lb barrier, and of course the new British Record 47lb 5oz monster! Here are some photos of the catches from February:



Terry Findlay 39lb



Dave Gaskins 42lb 8oz



Mr Fudge 39lb 2oz



Tommy Colucci 40lb 8oz



Spinks 41lb 10oz



Nathun Perry 36lb



Lloyd Watson 47lb 5oz record!



Andy Griffiths 32lb 8oz



Danny Horton 32lb 8oz

Once the Pike Trials had ended it was straight onto trout season on Chew! We saw some tricky fishing conditions, with reports of fish scattered all over the lake. This coinciding with some extremely changeable winds really put the fish off. The end of March saw some welcome settled weather which led to some good hatches of buzzers across the lake leading to rod averages of up to 8.17. Towards the end of March and beginning of April was understandably mixed due to some extreme weather conditions. However, the back end of April and the moments of calm, we saw some quality fish and world class angling with fish high in the water.

Seb Pecchia was the winner of the BRFFA's first mid-month bash of the year with 15 to the boat and to top it all off an amazing 10lb 5oz rainbow.



With the introduction of a more scattered stocking approach, we saw the fish being caught all over the lake. The start of May saw Chew on fine form with plenty of reports of 20+ fish to the boat, and our bank anglers catching consistently from Walley and Woodford banks! Washing lines and dries proved the most effective methods. The mighty Muskies still seemed to be a favoured dropper fly for our anglers, with Hi Viz and UV being replaced with more natural black and brown patterns. Small back boobies and fabs made an excellent point fly fished in conjunction with a floating line or midge tip. Towards the end of May pin-fry and Damsels started showing particularly around Denny Island, Hollow brook, East Shore and even around the jetties. These proved an easy meal for the fish and lead to some very productive bank sessions. Rod Averages in May were incredible at the start of the month with the first week producing a rod average of 8.30.

One fish that topped them all early in the season was this beaut! On a damp rainy day this 12lb+ Brownie certainly made season ticket holder Dave Blair one happy angler! It was 76+cm long! Caught off Walley bank on a green Diawl Bach. This is one of the biggest trout we saw in the whole of the 2024 season.



At the back end of May rod averages dropped down due to some rough weather conditions to 3.64; Some notable catches for May included this whopping 9lb Rainbow by Peter Holdsworth and a 6.75lb Rainbow caught by Terry Feest (Right).



Once the weather had settled the good fishing returned in the early days of June, with rod averages in the first few weeks topping at 9.48 commencing the 3rd June and 8.82 for the week commencing the 10th. During this time, Chew hosted one of its main Competitions: Tony Donnelly Memorial Match.

Tony Donnelly Memorial Match – BRFFA Vs Blagdon Fly Fishers – 01/06/2024



Changeable weather greeted the Blagdon Fly fishers and BRFFA on the annual “friendly” to celebrate Tony’s life. A bright start and brisk north easterly wind, the two teams had congregated in the Woodford carpark. Loads of laughing and joking could be heard as competitors did their best to fill their teammates in with the going tactics and methods, whilst simultaneously pulling the wool over anyone’s eyes trying to listen in!

The boats split into two packs at the jetty with some heading for Herons green and the others turning upwind towards the dam and north shore! It didn’t take long for both teams to be on the score board with fish being caught at the dam before the drogues had even settled! Callum Russell capitalised on the early action landing 16 fish by just 10.30am! An incredible display of angling by the BRFFA member! Graham Currie was hot on his heels landing his 16th fish by 11.00am, another impressive display. As the morning went on, the fish seemed to come up in the water and the sinking lines coupled with blobs and fabs were swapped for tips and floating lines with nymphs. At 1pm the competitors all returned to Woodford to enjoy a spread put on by Hannah Wellman & Sara Golding. The scores showing that the Blagdon fly fishers were just pinching the lead! After the competitors had refuelled, exchanged stories of the morning and hatched a new line of attack, they took to the water once more. The fish had switched off slightly in the bright afternoon sun. Both teams started to put in the work to grind out each valuable fish as the clock ticked on. Even though this was a “friendly” competition, pride was at the forefront of everyone’s minds! As the boats returned to the jetties for the final scores it was incredibly close, but it was the BRFFA that had taken the title!

The event was a great success, and it was wonderful to see both clubs working together to raise money for Tony’s Family and the England Youth Team. Well done to all those that helped with the event, took part and contributed.

Congratulations to the BRFFA, the winners of the 2024 Tony Donnelly Memorial match. Full scores as follows:

BRFFA	TOTAL NO. FISH	Total C&R Weight	FINISH TIME	LBS	OZS	LBS	OZS	BFF	TOTAL NO. FISH	Total C&R Weight	FINISH TIME	LBS	OZS	LBS	OZS
Andy Stones	16	32	15:47:00	4	0	36	0	Paul Golding	16	32	16:39:00	2	8	34	8
Ron Howard	16	32	12:35:00	10	8	42	8	Jay Curry	16	32	16:15:00	3	0	35	0
Tim Wellman	16	32	16:54:00	2	0	34	0	Jeff Mason	12	24	N/A	0	0	24	0
Bill Pugh	11	22	N/A	0	0	22	0	Geoff Lambert	4	8	N/A	0	0	8	0
Gordon Smith	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	Sean Glover	14	28	N/A	0	0	28	0
Paul Roach	16	32	11:55:00	12	0	44	0	Dave Reynolds	16	32	17:20:00	1	0	33	0
Arwel Williams	9	18	N/A	0	0	18	0	Alan Williams	16	32	15:37:00	4	8	36	8
Seb Pecchia	16	32	15:28:00	5	0	37	0	John Humphry	8	16	N/A	0	0	16	0
Mark Miles	16	32	15:24:00	5	0	37	0	John Piper	16	32	14:58:00	6	0	38	0
Barry Hawyes	15	30	N/A	0	0	30	0	John Gumbleton	11	22	N/A	0	0	22	0
Dave Drake	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0	Graham Currie	16	32	11:30:00	12	8	44	8
Will Wellman	16	32	15:04:00	5	8	37	8	Joan Russell	16	32	16:08:00	3	8	35	8
Dan Vince	16	32	17:35:00	0	8	32	8	Alan Clark	16	32	14:23:00	7	0	39	0
Martin Barrett	16	32	16:54:00	2	0	34	0	John Harris	16	32	15:35:00	4	8	36	8
Matt Russell	16	32	17:15:00	1	0	33	0	Luker Cox	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0
Callum Russell	16	32	10:33:00	14	8	46	8	Dale Burges	16	32	11:39:00	12	8	44	8
Lee Williams	16	32	17:37:00	0	8	32	8	Jesse Gale	13	26	N/A	0	0	26	0
						LB	OZ							LB	OZ
						Total Weight								Total Weight	
						568	5							527	0

Chew Pike Fly

In addition to the trout fishing, we were also seeing a lot of pike fly angling in June. Our predator fly anglers made the most of the cool conditions with gentle winds and cloud cover, we saw numerous 30lb+ fish being reported, including this 31lb specimen for Alex Mason along with a number of 20lb+ fish.

July also saw a number of pike anglers fishing on Chew. With large fish spotted in the west and east ends of the lake. Several 30lb+ fish were caught with the largest at 34lb being caught by Martyn Cattermole.



However, with the increasing heat, we experienced a sharp drop in the fishing as Chew began to colour with blue/green algae. On the 15th of June all water activities including the fishing and sailing on Chew were ceased due to high blue-green algae levels in the lake. This was an incredibly difficult decision for the team to make, which impacted multiple major competitions in our calendar. This included the Wychwood Individuals, the Garafit Cup and the Airflo Celtic League, as well as our day ticket and season ticket holders. Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, can be dangerous due to the harmful toxins they produce. These toxins pose risks to humans, animals, and ecosystems when algae blooms occur in water bodies. Here's why they are dangerous:

In response to the bloom, the ranger team started monitoring and sampling every few days through the closure, with the help of the senior water quality scientists, collecting samples from specific points around the lake. The data collected was then used to make informed decisions to safeguard our anglers, other water users and staff. Despite the closure at Chew, the fishing at Barrows and Blagdon continued while the ranger team were also busy keeping up with rearing the fish at Blagdon and stocking. The fishery department want to express a big thank you all for the patience, understanding and support showed by the lake users over the period of Chew's closure.

As July began, we all let out a sigh of relief as we were able to lift all restrictions on Chew as the algae had started to clear. A strong return to the fishing activities saw Herons Green and Villice Bay producing large numbers of fish being caught on Diawl Bachs, Damsels and Crunchers. Washing Line method with a FAB on the point and your choice of nymphs on the droppers accounted for a lot of the action, and as you can see from the picture of the catch return from July 7th below:



Moreton also provided anglers with some great dry fly fishing when conditions allowed, making flies such as Bobs Bits very useful in case the fish made an appearance on the surface! As the month progressed, the catch average had dropped as less people were fishing for the summer period. This meant a quiet end to July and the start of August. Unfortunately, with an increase in more warm weather, we experienced new challenges at Chew as the oxygen levels depleted. This led to the cancellation of the highly anticipated fly fishing open day, an event aimed to introduce all ages of inspired individuals to fly fishing. This event offers casting lessons, fishing from the jetties, fly tying demonstrations and Q and A sessions with qualified fly fishing instructors. Despite this cancellation, we made sure 15-year-old Jack, who was due to attend the open day as a birthday celebration, still had a memorable day on Blagdon Lake. BRFFA competitions manager, Andy Stones, took Jack out on a boat for a special one-on-one fishing experience in perfect weather conditions. Jack showed great skill, catching two fish under Andy's guidance. It turned out to be a fantastic day on the water, making Jack's birthday one to remember despite the change in plans.



Although the Fly Fishing Open Day didn't take place in 2024, we are still planning it for our 2025 season! Keep an eye on dates for this in the spring 2025.

Another event sadly effected by the oxygen levels was the Wychwood Individual Fly Fishing Championship. This was the first year this competition was to be held on Bristol Water's lakes. With the oxygen levels improving on the days leading up to the event, the decision was made to hold the championship at Blagdon Lake to allow Chew more time to stabilise. *To read more about the Wychwood Individuals, please see the Blagdon section of this report.*

Once the oxygen levels improved, we provided Chew with our largest individual stocking of the year, with 4,500 fish being released from our net cages located in Chew Lake. This made for some brilliant sport and got the lake producing well for our anglers after this period of rest.

The Chew water clarity improved significantly during mid to later August, especially after a brief period of rainfall. The cooler weather we experienced encouraged more surface activity, with fish visibly rising during dusk and dawn. Anglers were advised to focus on early morning and late evening sessions when fish activity was highest.

September was another busy month at the fisheries with exciting fishing across all our waters. Chew Valley saw multiple competitions including the Courtland Team Championship and the Airflow Sheild.

Cortland Fly Fishing Team Championships 2024

This competition took place on Chew Valley and Blagdon Lake under excellent conditions. Both lakes offered a challenging yet rewarding experience, with varied weather and water conditions. The competition saw 96 participants across 16 teams over two days, with two boats on Chew and one on Blagdon each day. This year marked the debut of a junior team, who were all members of the BRFFA Youth Pathway. This team showed great skill, catching 42 fish during the event.




- **Day 1 Highlights:** Team Tightlines led with 55 fish for a total weight of 113 lbs, with the FM Nymphomaniacs close behind in second, and Northern Drifters in third.
- **Day 2 Results:** The FM Nymphomaniacs edged ahead, with a total of 93 fish and a weight of 188 lbs, leaving Tightlines in second and Northern Drifters in third.
- **Notable Catch:** A stunning 6lb 10oz rainbow trout caught by Lee James, of the Nympho's, was the largest fish of the event.
- **Overall Competition Summary:**
Both Chew Valley and Blagdon provided excellent sport for the Cortland Fly Fishing Team Championships, testing the skill of all anglers. The blend of surface action at Chew and the deeper, more tactical fishing at Blagdon ensured that versatility was key to success. The event saw impressive catch rates, with teams landing multiple fish across both lakes; the rod average was 4.45.

Airflo Shield Final

September also saw Chew host the Airflo Shield final with 13 teams and a total of 78 anglers! Fishing was tough at times with a cold wind and bright sunshine, but Chew didn't disappoint with a rod average of 4.72 and some cracking fish caught. Well done to Mark Miles who was top individual!

- Team Tightlines stormed away to take the title with 50 fish for the team.
- Local team Blagdon Fly Fishers finished in a credible second, beating Greenwells Persuaders who finished third.



 2023 Airflo Open Shield Final Team Results 14-Sep-23			
	No. of Fish	Total Weight	
1 Tightlines	50	101 lb	1 oz
2 Blagdon Flyfishers	40	80 lb	2 oz
3 Greenwells Persuaders	36	71 lb	6 oz
4 CWM FF	32	61 lb	14 oz
5 Froggies Fly Fishers	29	58 lb	13 oz
6 Llanilar AA	27	56 lb	8 oz
7 Elinor	28	54 lb	6 oz
8 Stocks Falcons	25	48 lb	0 oz
9 Munster Mavericks	24	47 lb	11 oz
10 Welsh Wizards	21	42 lb	2 oz
11 Tanahill	21	39 lb	13 oz
12 Reel Hookers	18	36 lb	11 oz
13 Select Fly Fishers	17	32 lb	7 oz
No of anglers	78		
No. of Fish Caught	368		
Rod Average	4.72		
Best Bag			
Mark Miles (Tightlines)		23 lb	15 oz

Thank you to all competitors and anglers on creating both these well-run competition with a brilliant atmosphere!

Celtic league

September also saw the hosting of the Celtic league competition on Chew.

This was an individual competition which resulted in Callum Russell coming first and Tom Pitchford coming a close second.

Airflo Celtic League 2024						
Individual Result Round 4						
Chew Valley 15/09/2024						
Pos	Name	Team	Total	Time 2 Fish	Time Limit	PTS
1	CALLUM RUSSELL	FULLING MILL NYMPHOMANIACS	16	10.08	16.07	1
2	TOM PITCHFORD	FULLING MILL NYMPHOMANIACS	16	10.45	16.12	2
3	KEITH TANNER	E. N FLUFF CHUCKERS	13	11.10	0	3
4	PAUL BOND	FUNKY FF	12	10.34	0	4
5	PAUL GOLDING	BLAGDON FF	12	11.10	0	5
6	GRAHAM CURRIE	SNOWBEE	11	10.15	0	6
7	DAVE REYNOLDS	FUNKY FF	11	10.20	0	7
8	ANDREW LEWIS	TEAM TIGHTLINES	11	10.40	0	8
9	ALAN CLARK	BLAGDON FF	11	11.37	0	9
10	MARK MILES	FUNKY FF	10	10.34	0	10
11	DAREN WILLIAMS	OSPREYS FFA	10	10.50	0	11
12	GARY HASKINS	FUNKY FF	10	11.05	0	12
13	LEE JAMES	FULLING MILL NYMPHOMANIACS	9	10.22	0	13
14	JAMES RICE	WELSH WIZARDS	9	10.42	0	14
15	MARK BARTON	WELSH WIZARDS	9	11.00	0	15
16	PAUL MORRIS	E. N FLUFF CHUCKERS	8	10.17	0	16
17	TIM WELLMAN	BLAGDON FF	8	10.27	0	17
18	STEVE DOCHERTY	WELSH WIZARDS	8	12.25	0	18
19	DALE BURGESS	BLAGDON FF	7	10.36	0	19
20	ROB TUCKER	TEAM TIGHTLINES	7	11.00	0	20
21	MARK KENNEDY	SNOWBEE	7	11.34	0	21
22	ANDREW ROYNAN	DRIFTERS	7	11.15	0	22
23	JOHN HORSEY	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	7	11.47	0	23
24	MARCO ORSI	OSPREYS FFA	7	13.55	0	24
25	STEWART WATKINS	E. N FLUFF CHUCKERS	7	14.20	0	25
26	MIKE KAYES	TEAM TIGHTLINES	6	10.34	0	26
27	ALAN BANWELL	OSPREYS FFA	6	10.53	0	27
28	ALLEN HUGHES	FULLING MILL NYMPHOMANIACS	6	11.50	0	28
29	ANDREW BANNER	DRIFTERS	6	12.24	0	29
30	JEFF THOMAS	E. N FLUFF CHUCKERS	6	12.49	0	30
31	JOHN GUMBLETON	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	5	11.58	0	31
32	GORDON SMITH	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	4	12.09	0	32
33	BOB HEMMINGS	OSPREYS FFA	4	12.40	0	33
34	ANDY WEEKS	SNOWBEE	4	13.54	0	34
35	JOHN OTTER	WELSH WIZARDS	3	13.05	0	35
36	PETER MORUZZI	TEAM TIGHTLINES	3	14.50	0	36
37	MARTIN WATTS	SNOWBEE	3	14.45	0	37
38	ANDY STONES	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	2	12.25	0	38
39	MARK THOMAS	DRIFTERS	2	16.20	0	39
40	GEOFF THOMPSON	DRIFTERS	2	16.30	0	40

Another Competition worth mentioning is the Fluff Chucker's Multi Species.

This is one of the more unique competitions in our calendar! Targeting multiple species on the fly is a growing part of the sport and this competition is building a great following! Anglers from all over the country came to pit their wits against the Pike, Brown Trout, Perch and Rainbow Trout that reside in Chew. The weather stayed settled with slight winds and sunny periods. All four species were caught with a total of 84 Perch, 63 Pike, 21 Rainbows and 1 Brown! With an additional catch of 8 Rudd! The results are as follows:

- David Roscow had the largest Pike at 17lb.
- John Bradley caught the one and only Brown Trout of the day at 4lb 11oz
- Andy Cheetham caught a 2oz Perch (just goes to show it pays to weigh everything)



- Andrew Eglon caught the biggest Rainbow Trout weighing 4lb 12oz
- Oliver Cullingford and Andrew Eglon had the best combined boat pair score
- The best individual score went to Oliver Cullingford

Congratulations to all the successful anglers and to Rodney Wevill for organising such a great event!

The weather was very favourable in September with consistent high-teen temperatures and overcast skies, contributing to an increase in fish caught and improved water clarity at Chew. As September ended, grounds maintenance work was carried out around Chew to allow better access for all anglers. Targeting the areas of Woodford bank, Villace bay and Walley Bank.



As we started October, the weather conditions presented a mixture of warm sunny days with no winds, to cold easterly winds, torrential rain and high winds coming from the south. With the slightly more coloured water on Chew, the warm sunny days proved very productive for both lure and fly angling, as the bright light would illuminate the lures and flies provoking a response. With fry feeding well underway, by far the most effective colour was white. A favourite fly for the anglers was the white Humongous and white Minkie. Other notable flies were the green pseudo Diawls and Buzzers, but we were often seeing large numbers of fry feeding trout all around the lake.

Garafit Cup 19/10/24

After being cancelled twice the Garafit Cup finally got underway on the 19th of October. This competition was the largest individual event of the year, hosted on Chew with a huge 74 fishermen taking part including 3 Juniors and 3 female anglers!

The conditions were testing with a mixture of bright sunshine and breezy conditions, meaning that we got to see some very technical angling. One of the most effective methods was a fast glass line with tequila blobs and fabs. Even in tougher conditions this didn't stop a total of 343 trout caught over the day, with a rod average of 4.65.

Angler		2 Fish combined	Time of Second Fish	Time Released	Time Bonus	Time Released	Time Bonus	Time Released	Time Bonus	Total weight
1	Tony Baldwin	48.13oz	10:08	12	24	19:29	26.8oz	31	7	
2	Lloyd Pallett	48.2oz	09:42	11	22			24	2	
3	Andrew Laine	48.14oz	08:40	10	20			24	14	
4	Mark Russell	48.13oz	10:08	12	24			24	13	
5	Andrew Barber	58.1oz	10:40	8	16			22	1	
6	Julian Harris	58.8oz	10:02	7	14			18	8	
7	Sean Cleaver	48.24oz	11:01	7	14			18	14	
8	James Morris	58.07oz	10:51	8	16			18	10	
9	James Blev	58.07oz	09:57	8	16			17	10	
10	Alan Williams	48.74oz	10:01	8	16			14	14	
11	Steve Jones	48.13oz	14:01	8	16			14	14	
12	Andrew Pagan	48.8oz	11:03	8	16			14	8	
13	Steve Reynolds	58.74oz	10:18	8	16			13	14	
14	Jim Curry	58.13oz	09:51	8	16			13	13	
15	Calum Russell	58.07oz	14:43	8	16			13	10	
16	Paul Booth	48.13oz	09:41	8	16			14	11	
17	John Gumberton	48.8oz	10:01	8	16			14	8	
18	David Newing	48.8oz	11:01	8	16			14	8	
19	Arnet Williams	48.2oz	09:51	8	16			14	3	
20	Paul Gately	48.7oz	09:37	8	16			12	7	
21	Gordon Smith	48.7oz	09:41	8	16			12	5	
22	Steve Howley	48.7oz	10:40	8	16			12	8	
23	Steve Ebban	58.07oz	10:00	8	16			11	12	
24	Gordon Caine	58.8oz	09:40	8	16			11	8	
25	John Russell	58.8oz	10:30	8	16			11	8	
26	Neil Jones	28.8oz	09:05	4	8			11	5	
27	Paul Jones	28.8oz	14:43	4	8			11	4	
28	Osie Burgess	48.14oz	10:43	8	16			10	14	
29	Paul Sharmen	48.13oz	10:43	8	16			10	12	
30	Nigel Evans	58.14oz	13:15	8	16			9	14	
31	Alvin Davies	28.8oz	11:27	8	16			8	9	
32	Paddy Mounter	28.7oz	11:40	8	16			8	7	
33	Geoff Wharton	58.8oz	09:28	2	4			8	8	
34	Mark Burton	58.8oz	10:33	2	4			8	2	
35	Richard Elms	48.8oz	11:02	2	4			8	9	
36	Julian Woodie	48.8oz	14:32	2	4			8	8	
37	John Otter	48.8oz	18:45	2	4			8	6	
38	Bill Pugh	58.14oz	08:42	2	4			7	14	
39	Dean Muckridge	58.07oz	09:37	2	4			7	10	
40	Bernie Walker	58.07oz	10:19	2	4			7	10	
41	Sean Torrington	58.7oz	11:05	2	4			7	3	
42	Stephen Docherty	28.8oz	10:00	2	4			7	6	
43	Andrew Wreble	58.8oz	11:08	2	4			7	0	
44	Alan Johnson	48.14oz	10:48	2	4			6	14	
45	Malcolm Hunt	48.14oz	10:43	2	4			6	14	
46	Tony Torrington	48.13oz	10:08	2	4			6	11	
47	Sally Parker	48.13oz	10:38	2	4			6	10	
48	Alan Dobbs	48.8oz	14:30	2	4			6	8	
49	Bob Hemmings	48.8oz	10:17	2	4			6	8	
50	Osie Jones	48.8oz	14:50	2	4			6	4	
51	Marco Orr	48.2oz	13:43	2	4			6	2	
52	Rob Tongues	48.13oz	11:01	2	4			6	10	
53	James Roberts	28.8oz	10:30	2	4			6	8	
54	Nigel Long	28.8oz	10:30	2	4			6	4	
55	Simon Bennett	48.7oz	10:17	2	4			6	7	
56	Dave Owen	48.8oz	10:08	2	4			6	8	
57	Paul Swalesman	48.8oz	10:30	2	4			6	4	
58	Mark Galt	48.8oz	10:10	2	4			6	3	
59	John Southworth	48.8oz	10:00	2	4			6	3	
60	Andy Gooding	48.13oz	10:45	2	4			6	12	
61	Stephen Ellis	28.13oz		2	4			6	12	
62	Geoff Lambert	28.8oz		2	4			6	9	
63	Mark Wootte	28.2oz		2	4			6	9	
64	Mark Kennedy	28.1oz		2	4			6	1	
65	Tom Mansel	28.1oz		2	4			6	1	
66	Matt Kingston	28.8oz		2	4			6	0	
67	Pat Sharmen	28.8oz		2	4			6	0	
68	Alan Clark	28.14oz		2	4			6	14	
69	Chris Fuller	28.12oz		2	4			6	11	
70	Mark Miles	28.8oz		2	4			6	9	
71	Trevor Davies	28.8oz		2	4			6	9	
72	Alan Hughes	28.8oz		2	4			6	8	
73	Geoff Thompson	28.8oz		2	4			6	10	
74	John Humphrey	28.8oz		2	4			6	8	

343 fish caught.
212 Released. Rod Ave: 4.65

The results were astonishing with Tony Baldwin bagging up and winning the comp with a total poundage of 31lb 7oz. Congratulations Tony!

Here are some of the photos taken by photographer Diana on the day!





A big thank you to event sponsor Mark Stevens of Garafit Services for his sterling efforts and taking everything in his stride despite the Competition being cancelled twice due to bad weather. Also, thanks to @Diana_photo_pure, for providing great photos of the day. Another big thank you too all the sponsors of the Garafit for providing such excellent prizes for the winning anglers!

Winter Pike Trials

October also brought the start of our winter Pike Trials. Anglers from all over the country once again flock to Chew for the opportunity to catch the monster pike that Chew has to offer. This winter's trials were highly anticipated thanks to Lloyd Watsons new record from February. Although the trials started slowly for size, it wasn't long before some large pike were caught on the lake. Here are some of the top specimens Chew had to offer in October/November this year:

*This enormous Esox at 42lb 8oz was banked by **Paul Mattinson** at Chew. The successful bait was a sardine!*

With many anglers reporting that big fish were being seen on sounders, it was great to see one of the real lumps on the bank.



Colin McGucken 25lb at Walley and 27.2lb at Villice.



Darren Cunningham with his 25.12lb off Woodford.



Ian Hawkins 23lb from the Boat



David Gaskins 22.8lb and a 21lber!



Ollie Browns 26.10lber



Lee Farnsworth 29lber off the Boat



Andrew Moretta 27lb 5oz



Steve Cox 21lb 7oz

Thank you to all the Boat anglers that have fished with us over the last month for the Pike. We look forward to seeing you in the new season in February.

End of the Trout season at Chew:

From October into November, despite the return of the biting easterly wind, was a lovely end to the boat season with wind speeds topping at around 9mph. This allowed the sediment to settle and made for much clearer visibility on Blagdon and Chew. While Woodford bank continued to produce quality catches, wick green also turned on with up to 10 catches reported in the morning of the 8th of November for one angler. We also saw North Shore and behind Denny Island produce large numbers of fish starting in the first week of November. With the Boats now finished on Chew, we experienced some brilliant fishing on the last trout boat days of the season! Most notable was the amount of huge Brown Trout, all caught within the space of a week on fly and whilst dead bait angling. Here are some of the best Brown catches:



Zane Ryan est. 10lb Brown



Gary Lewis est. 8lb



Martin Downton est. 10lb



Steve Ellis est. 4lb

The Boat Shed Brownie!

Many anglers who have fished on the Chew Boats know that there has been a large Brown Trout circling the jetties down by our boat shed; The Boat Shed Brownie. Boyan Kuzmanov and his boat partner George Nikolov caught it on a pike fly and what a fish it is. Estimating a huge 11lb!





Colin McGucken 10.6lb Rainbow and 11lb Brown

The Lure Anglers Society Pike Cup

During this competition, we saw well over 100 fish caught with competition adjudicator Eric suggesting the number may be closer to 200. Plenty of Pike caught including at least three over twenty pounds and a good number of doubles. The weather for that day was intermittent sunshine with a light breeze. With slightly limited visibility on Chew many of the catches were when the sun was out, allowing the lures to become more visible to the pike.

The results of the day were measured in total length of 3 biggest fish combined:


- Ryan Dolby took the longest pike, at 101cm weighed at 24lbs
- The heaviest was a 100cm specimen caught by Will Webster weighing in at 27lbs, which was also a new personal best for him
- The competition was incredibly close with 18 of the 25 boats recording lengths greater than 2m for their three biggest fish, and it was also incredibly exciting
- Kevin Cox and Dave Mower took first place for the entirety of the day with a total length of 279cm
- Neil Vine and Dave Mutton pulled off the comeback of the century, and they logged a fish of 99cm at the very end of the comp which elevated them from 19th place up to second with 263cm!
- Ryan Dolby and Karl Bird came in third with 259cm
- Will Webster and Emma Evans fourth with 247cm
- Another prize was given to smallest Pike which was won by James Potts with a 27cm pike, taking a lure almost the size of itself



We want to thank all the LAS for an amazing competition and to Eric for making sure all anglers were respecting the water and most importantly the fish!

Chew End of Season Comp:

Our end of season competition was held on the 3rd of November, 21 boats were competing with a rod average of 2.5. A bitterly cold easterly wind made conditions tough but anglers still had a good day. It was also great see 4 juniors involved, with Jesse Gale being the most successful junior of the day!

				
End of Season Pairs 2024 (Pairs results)				
	Pairs	Total Number of Fish	Total weight	
			lb	Oz
1	James Graham & David Graham	12	26	15
2	James Rice & Richard Elms	12	23	10
3	Sean Torrington & Will Torrington	11	22	14
4	John Harris & Martin Burgess	10	20	8
5	Mark Stevens & Nikki Long	9	19	3
6	John Humphry & Alan Williams	8	17	2
7	Paul Roach & Graham Currie	7	16	0
8	Tony Coxhead & Rik Anderson	6	12	5
9	Sean Glover & Steve Jones	5	10	12
10	Matt Russell & Callum Russell	4	9	10
11	Ron Howard & John Horsey	4	9	4
12	Jesse Gale (J) & Louis Pearn (J)	3	7	9
13	Gordon Smith & Jody Gale	2	7	1
14	Peter Bessell & Tony Torrington	3	6	4
15	Ian Scadding & Martha	2	5	4
16	Mark Kennedy & Robin Parker	2	3	14
17	Paul Brace & Steve Ellis	1	2	0
18	Dan Vince (DNF) & Dave Green	1	2	4
19	Paul Sweatman & Bill Pugh	1	1	12
20	Luke Boulton-Major & Henry Boulton-Major (J)	0	0	0
21	John Braithwaite & Jim King	0	0	0
22	Matthew Lile (DNF) & Louis Lile (J)	0	0	0



Well done to James Graham and David Graham for taking top spot with 26lb 15oz. Thanks to all competitors for a well spirited end of season competition!

Blagdon lake

Similarly to Chew, Blagdon Lake had a tough start to the season. Opening week saw boats motoring up to top end expecting to find fish but to no avail. Changing winds scattered the fish with no real hot spots appearing. However, when the weather improved, anglers started to find fish, again high in the water this time through the middle of the lake, up into the mouth of Butcombe. The end of March saw some good sport off Blagdon's North shore especially Pegs Point and Owl Box with buzzers, Muskies and Diawl Bachs all being consistently successful flies. North shore fished particularly well, with Pegs Point into Rugmoor bay proving to be a hot spot, with many bank anglers bagging up after a couple of hours. Top End switched on towards the end of April with lots of fish moving, but getting them to take a fly was a real challenge. Nymphs, again, proved to be the best choice with small black Buzzers, Diawl Bachs and Muskies. Blagdon had a great spell of bank fishing earlier in the month of May, with many bank anglers focusing their attention on North Shore, in particular Pegs point!



As evidenced by the catch returns, May saw large numbers of fish high in the water and topping in Rugmoor and Top End. The changeable weather coupled with the abundance of food in the form of large black Buzzer, Corixa and Damselfly, and the added challenge of the same filamentous algae. These factors left the anglers having to really think about timing to maximise on the early and late feeding spells.

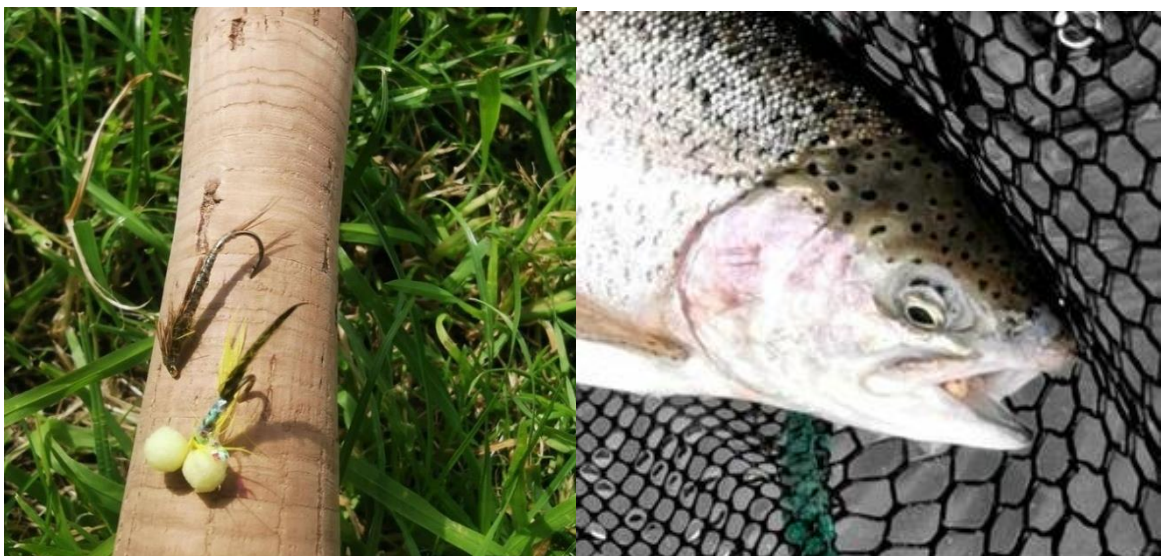


Our Boat anglers have found fishing very similar with Top End being productive. Good numbers of fish were also up in Butcombe, especially when we were on the receiving end of the powerful southerly winds! With a rod average of 4.09 in May the fishing was consistent. The ATTEFF England Qualifier was held on Blagdon with our resident guide John Horsey leading the pack with 7 fish for 15lb 10oz. John Piper was a very close second, just a few ounces behind again with 7 fish for 15lb 6oz, and John Bowen taking 6 fish for 3rd with a weight of 14lb 7oz! It was great to see some familiar faces all qualifying for the next round, so well done to all who took part!

As we entered June, Blagdon received a stocking of 4000 fish including a bumper 1500 in one day to help bolster the stock due to Chew being closed. Rod averages hovered around 4.71 on the boats, and 4.75 for the banks through the month.

The fish at Blagdon were localised to a few spots but short feeding spells kept the anglers having to really put the effort in to catch consistently through the day. Damsels seemed to be the main food source especially at the top end, with many fish keeping tight into the banks and tree lines to gorge on the emerging nymphs.

A washing line fished with a Damsel Boobie on the point and a few olive nymphs was hard to beat.



Away from the banks, fish could still be caught in open water. Damsels were still an effective fly choice but Diawl bach and Crunchers really came into their own, especially when fished with a small Boobie on the point and Fab on the top dropper.

The fish were feeding close to the surface, so the addition of the Fab helps keep the flies high, with a bit of colour which in the early part of June seemed to make a difference! Dries flies also became very effective in the afternoon with Big Reds, Daddies and Bob's Bits all taking fish.

The levels started to drop away at Blagdon, and the fish slowly moved out of the now shallow top end with Rugmoor bay becoming a holding area.

As we progressed into the summer, water levels and temperatures left the fish looking for deeper water; the dam end offered exactly that. With more consistent water temperatures we slowly saw the fish move into this area, with high catch returns being reported from in front of the lodge.

Action in July on Blagdon slowed a little, and anglers found the fishing trickier than it had been for much of the season. With water levels dropping, the fish moved away from Rugmoor and the Top End where they had been all season. The Dam and deeper areas of the lake started producing fish to those anglers switching up their methods and fishing over the deeper water and aerators, commonly known as the boils.

The banks were still producing quality fish, as you can see to the right, a lovely 5lb rainbow was the reward for Rick Sellers. Caught from Green Lawn on a Red Holographic Diawl Bach. This was no easy feat, with the increasingly growing weed at Blagdon.



During August the Dam and Boils yielded good results, especially for those using deeper lines, Cheddar water also proving a good spot. Lures and small fry patterns were effective in the early mornings and late evenings. Anglers reported steady catches of rainbow trout with fish in the 2-4 lb range, there were also reports of larger specimens up to 6 lbs being caught near the deeper waters. Fish were noted to have been changing depth in the water column, so experimentation was key to get the best out of a day's fishing.

We were also thrilled to announce the long-anticipated return of the weed cutting boat to Blagdon lake! Ranger Shaun Monaghan and the boat were hard at work, cutting back the significant weed growth to make fishing more accessible for both bank and boat anglers. This was just in time for the Wychwood Individuals Championship. This competition was due to be held on Chew lake, but as the oxygen levels at chew were still recovering, the choice was made to move it over to Blagdon lake. This was a huge effort for our team of rangers, as boats had to be taken from chew in record speed, to cater for the large number of anglers that were booked to attend the comp.

Wychwood Individual Fly-Fishing Championship



Despite the bright conditions the lake fished rather well, it was great to see a bigger comp like this at Blagdon and the atmosphere was great. We had 29 boats with 58 anglers taking to the water. The competition was won by Paul Morris with a very respectable bag of 11 fish weighing in at 23lb 6oz (9 fish C&R counting for 2lb each). It was great to see one of our regular anglers walk away with the top prize! It was also good to see one of the Bristol Water Rangers competing, our own Richard Walker missing out on a spot in the top 10 by less than 2lb. A big well done and thank you to all of those that took part from all of us here at Bristol Water Fisheries.

Blagdon had a relatively unchanging rest of season. September and October had a steady supply of fish coming out in front of the lodge down into Pipe Bay and Cheddar Water. It was at this point that Blagdon Hosted the BRFFA Hidden Teams and the BFFA's Autumn Competition.

Blagdon Pike Fly

October also brought the return of the Pike fly on Blagdon. This saw some great fishing. Despite the weather conditions being so erratic, making it harder to establish any one area that the pike were holding up; that didn't stop Justin Jarvis from pulling in an amazing 37.5lber on the 4th of October:



HIDDEN TEAMS REPORT



Saturday the 12th October saw the Hidden Teams take place on Blagdon, with the lake fishing well it was set to be an exciting comp, with 26 anglers competing. As fishing was mostly around the lodge area itself, the best tactics were to get on floating lines with a mix of Nymphs, Daddies or Black boobies. Although, it was said that hooking the fish wasn't the problem, it was keeping them on the lines! That didn't stop some incredible catches and the end results being:

- **Top Rod** - Graham Currie with 11 fish
- **Best Junior** - Will Wellman
- **First Place Team** - Dave Reynolds, Jesse Gale & Paul Crook
- **Second Place Team** - Graham Currie, Ian Scadding & Will Wellman
- **Third Place Team** - Tony Coxhead, John Bowen & Tim Kamei

BFFA Autumn Comp

With the Hidden Teams comp the day before, a lot of the anglers knew just what to do. Floating or 3ft tips being the line of choice for many, with Fabs and Boobies top and point. Like the Hidden Teams, the problem was keeping the fish on the lines!

Dave Reynolds took top place with 8 fish. With the next 3 anglers having 7 each but separated by their respective times. Shaun Glover, Alan Clark and Dale Burges for 2nd 3rd and 4th.

	NAME	1 ST FISH	4 TH FISH	TOTAL BAG	TIME BONUS	POSITION
1.	RICK ANDERSON					
2.	JOHN BRAITHWAITE	09:45	16:20	5		7th
3.	DALE BURGESS	11:05	15:03	7		3 rd 4 th .
4.	ALAN CLARK	09:34	12:20	67		5 th 3 rd .
5.	GRAHAM CURRIE	09:40	16:20	4		9th
6.	SHAUN GLOVER	09:24	12:47	7		2 nd
7.	PAUL GOLDING	12:49		2		11th
8.	ALEX JOHNSTONE	3:56		3		10th
9.	JEFF LAMBERT					
10.	STEVE POPE	09:53	16:50	5		8th
11.	BILL PUGH	10:10	11:00	6		4 th 5 th .
12.	DAVE REYNOLDS	09:31	10:50	8		1 ST
13.	TIM WELLMAN					
14.	LEE WILLIAMS	11:32	15:17	5		6th
TOTAL No. of FISH				5859		
ROD AVERAGE				4.82527		

There was a total of 59 fish caught with a rod average of 5.29.

Fishing turned tougher into November with lower returns as the fish move into the centre of the lake, inaccessible to anglers as the boats finished at the end of October; although, the occasional catch was made around cheddar and the lodge with small dries such as a 14 Bobs Bits.

Other Notable Competitions at Bristol Water Lakes:

Chew

Ospreys bank competition at Barrow Tanks 2nd March - 34 Anglers

1st - Matthew Griffiths 7 fish 15Lb 1 1/2oz

B.R.F.F.A. Open 2024 - 59 Anglers

1st - Kieron Jenkins 14 fish 33lb 6oz

24/03/24 Airflo Celtic League Round 1 Chew – 34 Anglers

1st Mark Miles, Funky FF – 16 Fish (12:10)

31/3/24 Ospreys Boat Comp Chew – 30 Anglers Total caught 124, average of 4.13.

1st Alice Davies – 7 Fish 19lb 6oz

13/04/24 BRFFA Spring Shield – 32 Anglers

1st Dave Reynolds – 14 Fish

21/04/24 Airflo Open Chew Heat – 60 Angler 323 fish caught, rod average of 5.38.

Individuals

1st John Horsey (BRFFA Emergers) – 16 Fish

Teams

1st – Fulling Mill Nymphomaniacs – 55 Fish

Sunday 5th May Celtic League Round two Chew

1st Calum Russel 16 Fish: 13:57 finish

The Welsh Wizards were the top team on the day

Sunday 12th May Floating Line BRFFA Chew

1st Paul Roach 11 Fish

Sunday 26th ATTEFF England

1st Andrew weeks: 5 Fish 12lb 12oz

Blagdon:

8-10/4/24 English Fly Fishers Association

Having had to settle for bank fishing at Chew the EFFA had a great day out on Blagdon with lots of fish being caught all the way along north shore into Rugmoor and to top it all off a lovely brown coming out of top end.

14/4/24 BRFFA Bank Competition Blagdon – 10 Anglers

1st Martin Ansty – 10 Fish (Pictured)

Sunday 28th April ATTEFF Qualifier Blagdon angling trust

3 Fish Kill 13 Release

1st John Horsey leading the pack with 7 fish for 15lb 10oz

Saturday 4th May Spring Cup Blagdon fly fishers Chew 168 Fish landed

1st Graham Currie (16 Fish) 13:44 finish

Barrow Tanks

In stark contrast to our large reservoirs, Barrow tanks carried on their form from last year with some truly exceptional fishing right from the start of the season. Stocking took place across all three tanks; anglers were spoilt for choice! We saw 68 fishermen attend across on the opening weekend. Like the lakes, the fish were high in the water and reports suggested green and black lures were the flies of choice to target the fish.

The Ospreys Barrow bank competition took place on the 2nd of March with 21 anglers taking part. There were tough conditions with wind and rain, but perseverance saw Matthew Griffiths take first place with 7 fish.

As March carried on, stunning fish were coming out, having gorged themselves on sticklebacks. A cracking 5.5lb rainbow to Bernie Weaver on tank 3, as seen below:



Unfortunately, due to essential pumping needed, the water levels at Barrow 1 & 2 dropped to the point that they were too dangerous to fish. We made the tough decision on the 28th of March to close tank 1 and 2. Tank 3 remained open, but anglers were advised to use the ladders provided on the walls to enter the tanks, and to wear appropriate footwear. To accommodate for the extra traffic we were expecting at tank 3, we altered our stocking program to give it plenty of fighting fish! The fisheries department took this period of closure to address and cut back the weeds and willow withies growing around the tanks. At the end of March Barrows hosted the Barrows Bash:

31/3/24 BRFFA 3 Lakes Challenge Barrow Bash

1st Sean Torrington – 6 Fish

2nd Ron Howard – 4 Fish

Throughout April Tank 3 continued good form producing numerous over wintered fish right from the start of the season. Even with the closure of tanks 1 & 2, we've had some great sport on tank 3; so much so even one of the migratory Ospreys got involved! Lures and nymphs fished well on tip and floating lines. During this time the pipe and the ladder to the left of the entrance, were the most popular fishing spots.

On the 3rd of May we were pleased to announce the re-opening of tanks 1 and 2, as their levels were now high enough. After they had received a healthy stocking, fishing was ready to resume normally at the tanks as we entered the summer months.

During late May, the evenings were the most productive time in classic tanks fashion. Covering rising fish with dries such as Bobs Bits was very effective. The addition of a foam daddy as a point fly gave anglers a second chance if the fish passed by, as a quick twitch drew the trout's attention!

The second Barrows Bash was hosted on the 19th of May with the BRFFA's Jesse Gale showing everyone how it was done, taking a fish in the first few minutes!



As June began, barrows received a steady stocking of 600 fish across all three tanks over the course of the month. The 'Barrow Bullets' made up much of the catch returns in June, and we also had some lovely over wintered fish.



Steffan Williams had this cracking overwintered specimen weighing in at 4lb 8oz! (Left)

Mark Warne landing this lovely 5lb 6oz Rainbow! (Right)



The last light remained the best times to be on the bank, with many choosing to focus their attention on the last few hours of the day. The inflows were the hotspots with fish taking emergers, Buzzers and dries as well as lures deeper down. A small Buzzer fished just under a large dry like a Foam Daddy was a deadly combination and often tripped up one of the larger residents.

The tanks were once again very consistent over July with good numbers of fish being caught. The trend has continued with the inflows being very productive: one method that proved very effective with the water levels being so low was by Euro Nymphing the inflows. A cormorant on the point with a small Daiwl Bach Booby on the dropper perfectly imitated snail patterns, which the barrows fish were feeding on. Angler Peter Holdsworth had a very productive morning at Barrows catching some sizable fish shown below. We also witnessed the tanks throwing up a few nice Perch for those who wish to target them. Bernie Weaver caught this lovely fish:



Bernie Weaver with a lovely Perch from tank 3



Peter Holdsworth 4 brilliant fish!

Throughout August and into September the tanks were the best of our waters for bank fishing, with both tank 2 and tank 3 producing well. It was crucial to stay late to get the most out of the sport, as early mornings and late evenings accounted for most fish. Effective tactics included dries, nymphs, and lures fished on floating and intermediate lines. As usual for this time of year, heading to the inlets was the best approach. Here are some of the photos of the big catches from august at the Barrows:



The back end of September, and most of October, nymphs and sparkler flies were the most effective on the Barrows. Productive times were the first and lasts hours of the day. Stickleback and fry patterns were reported to be catching well by the inflows.



Notable Catch: Adrian Shaw had this brilliant 5.8lber from the tanks! Great angling

As we entered November Barrow tanks were still fishing brilliantly on the fry patterns. Large numbers of quality fish were being caught on all 3 waters. With the fishing due to end on at the end of November, the decision was made to extend the Barrows season until the 23rd of December. This proved harder to fish as the water levels had increased dramatically. Despite the increasing challenge, anglers still managed to land some quality fish like this stunning Brownie for Louis Pearn who was fishing tank 3 with his father, Alex.



Reflections and appreciation

With the 2024 season now over, we reflect on what certainly was an eventful year filled with fantastic fishing and exciting competitions. A huge thanks goes to all our season ticket holders, members, deadbait and lure anglers, birdwatchers, wardens, volunteers and all the lakeside residents for their continued support and custom!

We would also like to thank Operations Manager, Alan Dymock and our Head of Fisheries and Recreations, Luke Cox for all their hard work in what was to be a very challenging season.

With 2025 approaching, we have already realised our calendar for the new year, and it won't be long before the dead bait pike days go on sale in the early days of January. We thank you again for a great season and wish you all a happy end to 2024, whatever your plans. Tight lines!