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From the Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) Project Manager

Welcome to the latest edition of the Riverfly Partnership (RP) newsletter, the first one of 2017/18. Last year was a very busy for both RP and ARMI, details further below, and this year began in the same fashion, leading up to the changing of RP host, from Salmon & Trout Conservation UK (S&TC) to the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA), in April. The FBA/RP press release about the transfer of host, including very positive messages from FBA Chief Executive, Bill Brierley and Environment Agency (EA) Acting Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, Judy Proctor, can be found in the next item, below. In line with the new hosting arrangements for RP, my contact details for have been updated so please replace all existing contact information with the following, and note that the office landline number is no longer in use:

Ben Fitch, Project Manager, Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative, c/o The Ferry Landing, Far Sawrey, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0LP **Mobile 07903 942115** **Email ben@riverflies.org**

The primary function of ARMI is to detect acute perturbations in water quality by regularly monitoring eight key groups of freshwater invertebrates. Confirmed 'trigger level' breaches are reported to the relevant statutory body which will investigate further. During April 2017, four confirmed incidents were reported by volunteer monitors on rivers in England, Rivers Bollin, Irwell (two separate incidents) and Brit respectively. It is never good news when a river is polluted but it is important to highlight the essential role that ARMI volunteers and RP partner organisations, such as Mersey Basin Rivers Trust, Salford Friendly Anglers and Dorset Wildlife Trust, are playing in protecting the water quality of UK rivers, in conjunction with UK statutory environmental agencies. In each example above the Environment Agency was notified is carrying out ongoing investigations. Tragically, the first Irwell pollution was caused by an insecticide and resulted in massive invertebrate fatalities over a fifteen mile stretch of the Irwell. The incident has drawn comparisons to the 2013 Chlopyrifos pollution in the River Kennet. Whenever an ARMI volunteer confirms and reports a suspected pollution incident it is essential that excellent communication between monitor, ARMI group coordinator, statutory body ecology contact and the Riverfly Partnership follows. Firstly, a monitor must immediately (verbally) report the incident to their ARMI group coordinator and EA incident hotline (0800807060). The ARMI group coordinator then relays details to the statutory body ecology contact to ensure a fast response. Any investigation, and potentially, enforcement action that may follow can take considerable time to complete so regular updates between all parties, particularly to the ARMI volunteer, is essential. Using the River Brit example, feedback from the EA ecology contact, and other EA staff, was immediate and has continued in line with ongoing investigations which should breed confidence in the ARMI collaborative process. It is worth mentioning that staff at the incident hotline centre are unlikely to have prior knowledge about ARMI so it is vital to report the name of your ARMI group and statutory body ecology contact in addition to site and incident specific details. Always ask for an incident number and feedback too. Finally, on behalf of myself and RP, continued and sincere thanks to every single ARMI volunteer, coordinator, tutor, partner organisation, statutory body ecology contact, RP steering committee and RP executive member for demonstrating true commitment and collaboration in protecting and conserving river water quality across the United Kingdom. Special thanks to all rod licence (England) purchasing anglers, to the Environment Agency for funding ARMI in England, and to SEPA for providing in kind and funding support to ARMI in Scotland. Finally, I would like to personally thank Paul Knight, Debbie Creasy and everyone else at S&TC for the excellent support which has been ever present during S&TC's time as RP host, and, Steve Brooks, RP Chair, and Alex Domenge, ARMI Assistant, for their excellent support and commitment to RP and ARMI.

Riverfly Partnership hosting update

At the beginning of April 2017, the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) took over from Salmon and Trout Conservation UK (S&TC) as host of the Riverfly Partnership, a role which the latter fulfilled excellently since it took over from the Natural History Museum (NHM), London in 2008.



The Riverfly Partnership (RP), a network of many supporting organisations representing anglers, conservationists, entomologists, scientists, water course managers and relevant statutory bodies, is now operating through charitable status of the Freshwater Biological Association and coordinates the Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI). ARMI facilitates regular water quality monitoring of close to 1800 river sites UK-wide by over 2500 active volunteers, arranged into 165 ARMI groups and supported by 35 regional hubs. ARMI is an excellent example of citizen science and both angler and community engagement in environmental monitoring and management.

Commenting on this significant event, Dr Bill Brierley, Chief Executive of the FBA said, "I am delighted the FBA is taking over as the Riverfly Partnership host. More and more people are interested in the environment – especially water. We are looking to increase the number of freshwater ambassadors across the UK. We intend to build on the success of the established national network of volunteers and are confident that the frequent monitoring and early warning signs that the volunteers report will significantly enhance the health of our water networks and support improvements across catchments. The Riverfly partnership is fostering a new diverse pool of interest and enthusiasm, with young people, community groups and fishing clubs taking an interest in their local stream or river. The growth of a coordinated and increasingly expert freshwater community is happening!"

Although S&TC is no longer RP host, it will continue to be a key member of the Partnership in future, by remaining on the Executive board along with FBA, NHM and the Environment Agency (EA).

It is important to stress that anglers continue to represent the core of ARMI participants, and that FBA's established track record on fish science and training, which includes the excellent 'Entomology for Anglers' levels 1, 2 and 3 courses delivered by Andrew Dixon and RP's own Stuart Crofts, identifies with that angling core. In addition, FBA equally reflects the broader, non-angling participants of ARMI and it must be acknowledged that, whether angler or not, every ARMI participant contributes equally to protecting rivers, and the fisheries they support, by regularly monitoring water quality, and, by detecting and reporting pollution incidents. The RP website and the ARMI online database are already hosted by FBA so it is hoped that the new hosting arrangements may streamline both delivery timescales and costs associated with future system development costs.

Judy Proctor, Acting Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment added "The Environment Agency fully supports the work of the Riverfly Partnership. We have been involved from the start and provide a financial contribution that enables a coordinator to be employed to oversee the monitoring programme. The initiative engages a huge number of anglers and other volunteers with their environment and provides us with data that complements our own surveys. I am delighted that FBA are the new host for the Partnership, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and experience, we are looking forward to working closely with them and the other members of the Partnership."

Ben Lamb, Trust Manager at Tees Rivers Trust, said of ARMI "The monitoring scheme provides us (The Trust) with both pre, and post, project monitoring data which is essential for assessing where work is needed and whether the work we are doing is making any difference. This is particularly relevant to our sediment reduction projects. It has also given us a valuable tool to work with anglers and interest groups and given them the opportunity to gain greater insight into the health of their local river or beck whilst also informing the wider national picture."

The FBA is a membership organisation, formed in 1929 and a charity since 1966, dedicated to promoting and increasing the understanding and sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems and resources. For more information see: www.fba.org.uk

Riverfly Partnership Photography Competition

There should be at least two motivations to enter this competition, one, it is open to all and two, there is a first prize of £500 up for grabs courtesy of competition sponsor and RP media partner, VT Pro>Media. In addition, it is hoped that sufficient, varied and quality images will be submitted for RP to create an online Riverflies gallery, acknowledging the photographer of each image and providing free access to aid both engagement and training. You only have until the 31st July 2017 to enter so what are you waiting for? See the [poster](#) on page 5 of this issue for more information before getting down to the riverbank with camera in hand. Good luck!

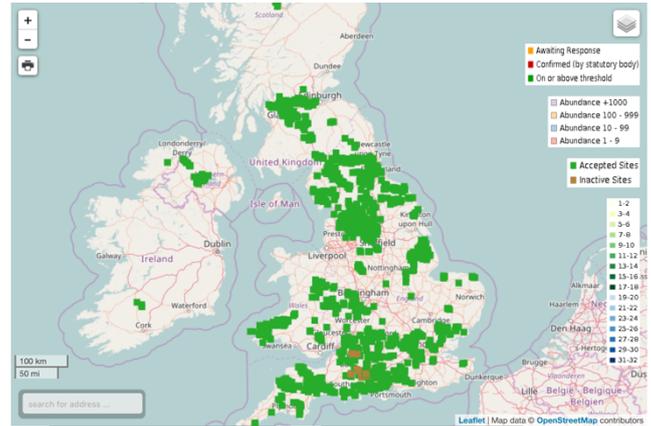


ARMI end of year update

ARMI engagement, through RP, continued to grow impressively during the last year. In total, 86 locally funded one-day ARMI workshops were delivered resulting in hundreds more trained monitors regularly sampling in UK rivers. 835 new sites were registered in the ARMI online database, bringing the current active site total to around 1800, and 7 new Riverfly hubs were established to provide training and ongoing support to the growing network of ARMI groups and volunteers. This initiative has been established nationally for ten years now and it is testament to its continuing success that volunteers, through organisations and groups such as angling clubs, Rivers Trusts, Wildlife Trusts and many more, continue to engage and commit.

ARMI database

Recently, the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA), on behalf of the Riverfly Partnership (RP) has been able to secure additional funding from the Environment Agency (EA) to deliver priority improvements to the ARMI database. Top priority is to make ARMI target group level score and abundance data openly available in a user-friendly way, something I know that most ARMI participants, including myself, have been waiting patiently for since the system was launched back in 2014. I expect these improvements to be completed soon but I ask for your continued patience as RP works with the development team at FBA to build, test and fine tune before they go live. Overall engagement with the national database continues to increase, approaching 15000 records have been submitted to date, and it has been incredibly positive to receive feedback from ARMI group coordinators and volunteers about the motivational qualities of the system.



Riverfly Partnership website

RP is working with FBA to construct a new RP website platform. The 'look and feel' of the new site will be similar to that of the current FBA website, though branding and content will remain RP focussed. Moving to a new website platform is providing RP to review and update current website content with a view to providing increased function and user friendliness. Migration of current content is underway and, once complete, the new website will be tested by a specially formed group so that feedback can be incorporated before the new platform goes live; hopefully at some time later in 2017/8.

Biosecurity e-learning

University of Leeds and Cefas have produced an e-learning course aimed at increasing understanding of the importance of effective biosecurity as part of fieldwork practice. With kind permission from University of Leeds, this course is now freely available to new and existing ARMI participants. To enroll simply click the following link (https://openeducation.blackboard.com/mooc-catalog/courseDetails/view?course_id=1189_1). At the end of the course a short multiple choice test can be taken and, for participants who achieve 100%, a University of Leeds certificate downloaded. Details about how to access this e-learning are now included in every ARMI participant pack.



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Sewage Fungus guide

With kind permission from authors Tim Geatches, EA, and Graham Rutt, Natural Resources Wales, and from one of the EA's national leads, Tim Jones, ARMI participants and RP partners can download '[Sewage fungus: a field and microscopic guide](#)' from the RP website. Simply click on the publication title above, or find it at www.riverflies.org (News/Publications). The guide is intended to aid general observations rather than facilitating detailed assessments and can help ARMI groups to recognise a sewage fungus outbreak. If ever identifying and recording sewage fungus, always take a photo to confirm any suspected outbreak.

Contact us

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[Riverfly Partnership](#)



[@Riverflies](#)



The **Riverfly Partnership**
Photography Competition
‘Riverflies’*
1st prize £500
Plus commended images

Open for entries until Monday 31st July 2017

Judging panel: Mike Hamlin, Kevin Parr, Hugh Miles and Paul Procter

For more information including how to enter and full competition rules, visit:

www.riverflies.org

This competition is administered by the Riverfly Partnership in association with its official media partner



* the theme of this competition is ‘Riverflies’ (for the purposes of this competition the word ‘Riverflies’ means one or more larva, nymph and/or adult Mayfly *Ephemeroptera*, Stonefly *Plecoptera* and/or Caddisfly *Trichoptera*). Full terms, conditions and rules available online at: www.riverflies.org.