**HEAD WATER BALIFF’S REPORT 2017/18**

The salmon fishing season started well for us in 2017 with big fish caught at the start of the season. The first salmon was 14lb which was returned on the 7th June, there were also fish of 12lb, 13lb & 14lb caught between June and August.

When we had favourable water levels the fish were not shy at coming in and we had good runs from the end of July until the end of September. The biggest fish I witnessed was a 22lb cock salmon which was returned on the 24th October. Only two syndicates fished last year and I feel they both did well with good catch numbers considering the amount of people fishing.

The sea trout started off well, the biggest caught was 6.5lb which was returned in mid July. The first fish was caught in the second week in June and we were catching fish when river levels were low enough, some of the rods managed to catch some through the day when fishing for salmon. The high river levels affected the sea trout fishing at night and we were unable to fish on a good number of occasions. There was very little sea trout fishing during the month of August as river levels were too high.

There was no hatchery in operation over the winter period this year, some very high river levels over the winter months I’m sure have washed out some of the reds as the movement of gravel in the river this year has been exceptional. Many of the pools are very shallow and bank erosion is particularly noticeable this year. We have lost quite a few trees from various river banks and therefore we have spent the Spring period recovering some of them from under bridges and various pools. A number of trees still require to be removed and it will be necessary to carry out some bridge maintenance and style repairs. We have also planned to repair the steps and handrail at the Millstream and also attempt to recut a walkway up to Redbrew and Smiddyholm. At this time the banks have all been cut and some tree trimming has taken place. Sea trout have now started running into the river for the 2018 season.