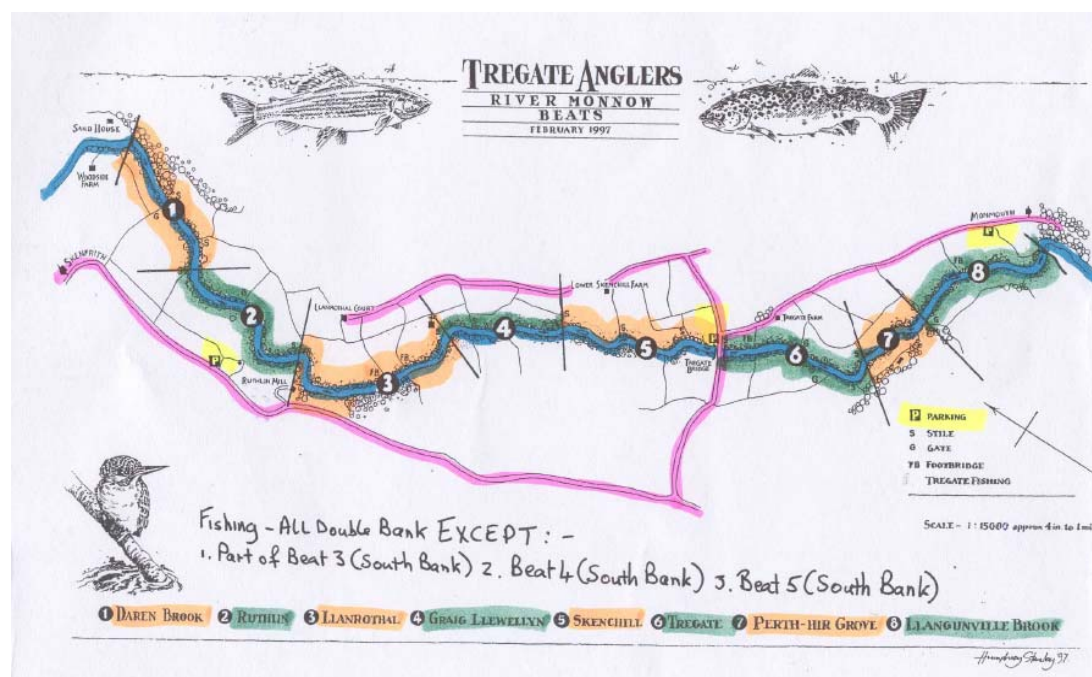


The Tregate Angling Club controls nearly 4 miles of the **Monnow** near Skenfrith on the English/Welsh border and the water is divided into eight beats.



The club has a limited number of members and they are generally very diligent in submitting detailed returns containing a “fish by fish” record including the date, beat and length of each fish caught. We stopped recording weights of fish in 2000. We have detailed catch and stocking records dating from 1958.

The water had been stocked annually in one or two tranches around the end of April for at least 55 years with a variety of brown trout of various sizes from 1,500 fingerlings to 700 three year olds. In that time a total of 8,000 fingerlings, 1,395 two year old, 25,985 three year old and 1,585 four year old stock fish have been introduced.

In the 20 years between 1958 and 1978 about a tonne of coarse fish was removed from the water either by electro-fishing or by visiting coarse fishing clubs removing fish after winter matches.

In 2003 the committee decided to try and promote the wild brown trout. The first action taken was to try and learn more about how stock fish behaved and to help with this they were identified by dye marking. In 2003 and 2004 all stock fish were dye marked to indicate where on the fishery they were stocked. Members were encouraged to practise catch and release, to look for dye marks and not to kill any fish without a dye mark. The results showed that fish moved as much as 1½ miles upstream and 2½ miles downstream from the point of stocking but most remained remarkably faithful to the stretches where they were stocked.

Summary of Incidence of Dye Marked Fish in 2003 to Establish Fish Movements

350 trout stocked into beats 1, 2, 3 marked between Pectoral fins

350 trout stocked into beats 4, 5, 6 marked at Vent

No stocking on beats 7 & 8

	Beat 1	Beat 2	Beat 3	Beat 4	Beat 5	Beat 6	Beat 7	Beat 8	Total
Pectoral	78	168	41	6	7	4	0	0	304
Ventral	5	2	21	40	58	76	6	4	212
No Mark	40	60	30	18	34	13	2	3	200
Total	123	230	92	64	99	93	8	7	716

Percentage of dye marked fish taken within stocking zone: 89.3%

Percentage of dye marked fish that moved outside stocking zone: 10.7%

Having established this, the dye marking regime was then changed to indicate the year of stocking so that the over-wintering success of stocked fish could be measured. This showed that the maximum percentage of fish from previous years featuring in catches was 3%. Some caution has to be exercised in considering this figure as the dye marks fade and it is entirely possible that more fish stocked in previous years were featured in catches but not recognised. The oldest stock fish recorded was a fish from a stocking two years previously.

Summary of Dye Marked Trout Caught in 2006 to Establish Over-Wintering

(Pectoral marked fish were stocked in 2006, other mark locations previous seasons)

Mark	Beat 1	Beat 2	Beat 3	Beat 4	Beat 5	Beat 6	Beat 7	Beat 8	Total
Chin (C)	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Tail (T)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pectoral (P)	70	108	19	89	88	33	23	14	444
Belly (B)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ventral (V)	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
No Mark	50	74	19	43	69	34	22	10	321
Total	120	188	38	133	158	68	45	24	774

Percentage of dye marked trout from previous year's stockings: 1.98 %

The catch records have shown a remarkable and sustained increase in the percentage of wild fish in the catch over the 11 years in which we have been able to reliably identify stocked fish. For the first two years about 25% of the catch were wild (unmarked) fish, by the 2005 season had risen sharply to about 40% where it remained for the next four years before rising sharply again to nearly 70% in 2010 from where it has climbed slowly to the best ever level of just over 80% in 2013.

	Visits	Total Caught	Catch per visit	Total Stocked	Marked Caught	"Wild" Caught	Wild %	Wild >14"
2003	217	716	3.30	700	516	200	27.9%	23
2004	197	597	3.03	700	457	140	23.5%	26
2005	206	914	4.44	700	536	378	41.4%	21
2006	227	774	3.41	700	453	321	41.5%	19
2007	218	796	3.65	665	468	328	41.2%	43
2008	188	549	2.92	600	339	210	38.3%	36
2009	206	586	2.84	375	374	212	36.2%	45
2010	234	1121	4.79	300	379	742	66.2%	84
2011	206	812	3.94	250	264	548	67.5%	26
2012	142	571	4.02	250	148	423	74.1%	23
2013	149	537	3.60	250	106	431	80.3%	37

The number of fish caught each season varies with river conditions, weather and other factors but the reduction of stocking has not resulted in a downward trend in catches. The best measure is probably the "catch per day fished" and the best ever catch per day fished was 4.79 recorded in 2010, the same year as the largest ever number of fish (1,121) was recorded. The catch per day in the years since we started promoting wild fish has been consistently better than in previous years.

This increase in the number of wild fish has allowed the club to progressively reduce stocking in terms of both total number and the parts of the water stocked. For the last few years stocking has been limited to the top three beats and virtually no stock fish have been reported from Beats 6 – 8 making them effectively a wild fishery. We have now reached the point where in 2014 only 200 fish will be stocked over Beats 1 & 2.

The other change is in the number of larger fish being reported. In the 1970s and 1980s a typical return of fish of 14" or more would have been between 2.5% and 4%, it rose to 9% in the 1990s but in the 2000s it was 13.7%. Over the period from 1958 to 1996 the largest fish recorded was 1lb 12oz (about 16") but we now get fish of this size (or larger) almost every season and fish of over 20" have been recorded. Conversely about 25% of each season's catch is under 11" and indicates a strong juvenile cohort.