Smolt run volunteers needed!

From 25th March to the middle of May, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's Salmon and Trout Research team will be doing their annual smolt monitoring at the FBA River Laboratory at East Stoke. And this year, we’re doing salmon AND trout smolts!

We are looking for volunteers, over the age of 18, to assist us in data collection. Your responsibilities will be to help net the smolts, record the data (written and computer input) and return the smolts to the river. We monitor the smolts for a large part of each day, including weekends. Therefore you can choose to volunteer for a day (9am-5pm) or night shift (7pm to, as late as 2am).

Ideally, particularly if you want to volunteer for night shifts, you would be able to commit to a minimum of 3 consecutive shifts. Any volunteer committing to 7 consecutive shifts is eligible to an £89 subsistence allowance and can stay in the FBA on-site accommodation.

You’ll need to bring warm clothes, something to read (smolt are not guaranteed to make an appearance) and food and drink. If interested, please contact Luke Scott at liscott@gwct.org.uk or telephone: 01929 401893.

Wild Trout Trust Conservation Awards 2016

The Wild Trout Trust Conservation Awards, supported by Thames Water and the River Restoration Centre, seek to recognise and encourage excellence in wild trout habitat management and conservation and celebrate the efforts of all those involved.

There are three award categories: Large scale Enhancement scheme, medium scale habitat enhancement scheme and contribution to wild trout conservation. There is also the Wild Trout Hero Trophy Nominations for a professional whose work has furthered the cause of wild trout conservation and management in Britain and/ or Ireland. For more details and to apply visit: www.wildtrout.org/content/conservation-awards. Deadline for applications is Friday 29th July 2016.

Upcoming events

Meet the Water Bears and other amazing Microbeasties, an opportunity to learn about cryptic biodiversity from Bournemouth University and Dorset Wildlife Trust. Wednesday 6th April, FBA labs, East Stoke Fen Nature Reserve. Booking is essential, contact Bryony Baxter on 01305 264620 or bbaxter@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk.

For more events, volunteering opportunities and Easter activities with the Dorset Wildlife Trust visit: www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

The Great Dorset Beach Clean, a weekend of beach cleans across the Dorset Coast, Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th April, followed by Litter Free Coast and Sea Week, a week of events, campaigns and workshops to raise awareness of marine and beach litter and bathing quality, Saturday 23rd April to Sunday 1st May, visit: www.litterfreecoastandsea.co.uk for more details.
Algal Harvesting Workshop

In December, together with the Dorset Local Nature Partnership and Local Enterprise Partnership we hosted a workshop on the possibility of algal harvesting in Poole Harbour. Attended by over 30 representatives from local authorities, agencies, businesses and NGOs, the meeting sparked interesting discussion about the possibilities to manage nitrate and algae in the harbour. There was significant support for a proof of concept study to see if it is feasible to remove and dispose or reuse the algae. The workshop report can be viewed at: www.pooleharbourcatchment.co.uk.

Proposed extension to the SPA

Natural England is currently holding a consultation on the extension of the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA). This proposes to extend the boundary of the existing SPA to include the subtidal areas of the harbour and areas of Lymington Bay which are subject to tidal inundation. The extension would also include the addition of Little Egret, Eurasian Spoonbill and Sandwich Tern to the list of protected species. The consultation closes 21st April, please visit: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/poole-harbour-special-protection-area-extension-comment-on-proposals for more information.

Ecosystem Accounting for Dorset AONB

A Defra funded contract has recently been published on developing ecosystem accounts for protected areas in England and Scotland. The project had two broad objectives: to assess the potential for such accounts and a compilation and evaluation of pilot accounts in selected protected areas, including the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which was the topic for the Local Nature Partnership forum in February. More information is available from the DEFRA website or from this link.

Environment Agency Medium Term Projects

The EA Wessex Area Environment Programme Team has recently finalised and submitted funding bids for 2016-2017. The main focus of the bids for the Poole Harbour catchment is river restoration and tackling diffuse pollution.

Working in partnership, the Froom Rehabilitation Plan will continue to focus on restoring the SSSI reaches of the Froom. Total spend across the medium term project window (2016-2022) is projected to be £690k through a combination of DERFA funds and partner contributions.

The Wessex Diffuse Pollution Reduction Plan in Poole Harbour will bring together multiple organisations which deliver 1:1 farm advice to ensure that advice is consistent and delivery is coordinated to address diffuse pollution. If successful, DEFRA funds and partner contribution total spend between 2016-2022 is projected to be £932k.

For future project submissions the EA will be working with the Dorset Catchment partnerships to develop projects which integrate their priorities and the emerging themes from the DEFRA 25 Year Plan for the Environment (published later in the spring). The EA is already looking to develop projects for submission in 2017-2018 and encourage any partners who have project ideas to let them know.

Following publication of the draft DEFRA 25 Year Plan, there will be an opportunity for consultation. All involved in the Catchment Based Approach can help to shape the final version, which will be published towards the end of the year. The DEFRA 25 Year Plan will frame all of future EA/NE work and many of its themes will be familiar to those involved in Catchment partnerships. It is anticipated that it will emphasise the need for joined up action and the shared stewardship of our environment in a way that meets local needs and interests.

For more information please contact the EA Catchment Coordinator Ben Rayner: ben.rayner@environment-agency.gov.uk

www.pooleharbourcatchment.co.uk | info@pooleharbourcatchment.co.uk