

DRAFT

Cheriton – Informal Advisory visit by Andy Thomas of WTT 20 September 2016

Andy Thomas of the Wild Trout Trust kindly agreed to provide advice on best locations for gravel cleaning to take place at Cheriton to maximize the prospects of successful spawning for the wild trout along with successful development of the juvenile trout. (This follows on an original WTT Advisory Visit in 2005 and subsequent informal visits by Andy.)

So, members of the Trout Committee met with Andy to walk the stream. In addition to specific advice on gravel cleaning Andy advised on “whole life” habitat management measures that we might wish to consider to support the trout population.

Seven locations were identified for gravel cleaning to take place before the start of the spawning season. These locations exhibit the right size of gravel (pea to hen’s egg size) along with good rates of water flow to provide high levels of oxygen to the eggs. The idea behind the gravel cleaning being to free up the gravel where it is calcified and to remove silt from between the pieces of gravel to allow water/oxygen flow for the eggs.

Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust have kindly offered to make available to SPS gravel jetting/cleaning equipment for a day and **Tuesday 25th October 2016** has been penciled in for this work. **Assistance will be required** with the equipment and associate gravel raking and gravel loosening, so interested members should contact the water-keeper, Chris Mitchell – email: fircott@gmail.com

Once the gravel is cleaned we will avoid work on the river till after the eggs are likely to have hatched and juveniles moved sideways/downstream – likely Feb 2017, dependent on water temperature.

Andy also gave some advice on locations to accelerate the flow of the stream in places and to deepen the stream occasionally to provide better adult trout holding pools. Also measures to provide more cover for juvenile and mature fish, to provide protection from avian predators. So, you may see some additional “structures” (timber brush and lengths of tree trunk) appearing in the stream over coming months.

Clearly a balance needs to be struck between the trout habitat and our requirements to be able to cast a line and your water-keeper and the Trout Committee are committed to try and provide a first class wild trout fishery that is good for the Society members, as well as good for the trout!

Any questions, or comments on the proposed works should be addressed to Chris Mitchell - fircott@gmail.com or ‘phone 01293 862947 or Tony Fox – email: troutcurator@sussexpiscatorialsociety.co.uk mobile 07808949805. The Society has made a donation to the WTT in recognition of Andy’s input.

6/10/2016