



In this issue...

- Coordinator's notes
- 4th National Riverflies Conference and Riverflies photo competition
- ARMI monitoring equipment – important announcement
- ARMI engagement
- Freshwater Watch pilot
- ARMI hubs
- Online database and GIS
- Training update
- Status Updates and RRS
- Contact us

Coordinator's notes

It is perhaps stretching things to call this the Spring 2016 newsletter now, but I have deliberately held back on publishing so that I could include news about a number of important developments.

As per 2015, this year is looking incredibly positive for both the Riverfly Partnership (RP) and Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI). Alex Domenge, who has been working for RP since January to import historical ARMI records into the online database has done fantastically well and there are now approaching 10,000 records online with those still outstanding due to be imported as soon as possible. The Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) has been working hard with RP to deliver a number of improvements to the ARMI database and GIS system, and I am pleased to report that the majority are now live. You can read more details about the changes which have taken place below. On behalf of RP I would like to extend particular thanks to Alex, Tom Miles and Mike Haft for their ongoing commitment to making the ARMI database as user friendly as possible, and I would also like to thank every ARMI volunteer, coordinator and tutor for your continuing feedback and patience whilst both historical record importing and system upgrades have been taking place.

As always, ARMI depends upon the overwhelming passion and commitment of trained volunteers, coordinators, tutors, partner organisations, ecology contacts within each UK statutory body, Salmon & Trout Conservation UK, FBA, the RP steering committee and RP executive. On behalf of RP, I sincerely thank you all. In addition, special thanks to the Environment Agency for continuing to fund and support ARMI in England.

4th National Riverflies Conference and Riverflies photo competition

Online registration for the 4th National Riverfly Conference 'Riverfly Monitoring and Beyond' will open toward the end of June. The conference will take place in the Flett Theatre, Natural History Museum, London on Thursday 17th November 2016 so please keep the date free. I will circulate an email in June to confirm that registration is open and a similar announcement will be placed on the RP website. Please do not email Ben Fitch directly if you wish to attend, registration can only be completed online.



Also towards the end of June will be the launch of the 2016 Riverfly Partnership 'Riverflies' photographic competition. Amateur entries of riverfly images will be invited to be judged by a panel of four comprising of Hugh Miles, Paul Procter, Kevin Parr and Mike Hamling with the winning entry to be revealed at the 4th National Riverfly Conference in November. The competition will be sponsored by Pro>Media which has kindly agreed to donate a prize of £500 to the winner. Full competition details, including rules, running time, etc., will be made public at the time of launching.

ARMI monitoring equipment – important announcement

Please take note of the following information when ordering RP monitoring kits and ensure that you email Ben Fitch to request your discount code (5%) before placing your order with NHBS.

EFE & GB Nets is moving



On the 17th of May EFE & GB Nets will become part of NHBS

It will take us a few days to transfer the website and get everything set up at NHBS

Until then, please contact us by phone on [01208 873945](tel:01208873945), by email (sales@efe-uk.com), or order directly on the NHBS website www.nhbs.com

ARMI engagement

In addition to sponsoring the forthcoming RP photo competition, Pro>Media has agreed to produce roll up banners at a discounted price of £135.00 plus VAT and delivery to interested ARMI hubs. The banners are high quality and the roll up mechanism comes with a lifetime guarantee making them ideal for use by one-day workshops, forums and wider engagement events. In addition to the mayfly image, RP logo and website address, ARMI hub hosts can choose to have their own logo and website address printed on the banner, as per the Severn Rivers Trust/RP example. Banners can only be ordered by contacting Ben Fitch at RP so please email him directly if you are interested, contact information is at the bottom of this newsletter.

Very limited numbers of the RP 'British Mayflies' poster are now available, thanks to kind permission from Dr Cyril Bennett MBE. The A3 poster depicts the adult form of twenty nine mayfly species, recorded in the British Isles and is available freely to ARMI hub and group coordinators for local ARMI/RP engagement purposes. An RP three-fold leaflet is also freely available upon request, please contact Ben Fitch by email to request either the poster or leaflet.



Freshwater Watch pilot

A number of ARMI hubs are participating in a 5 month long pilot project between RP and Earthwatch over the summer. Participating ARMI volunteers will record water quality information as part of the Freshwater Watch (FWW) programme, in addition to recording presence and abundance of the eight ARMI target groups. This collaborative pilot will assess the practicalities of asking citizen scientists to gather more data when at the river, whilst also looking how FWW data may enhance that recorded within ARMI.

I know that many of you may be participating in the national Clean Water for Wildlife (CWW) survey, launched by Freshwater Habitats Trust earlier in the year. CWW employs the Freshwater Watch nitrate (N) and phosphate (P) test kits which selected ARMI volunteers will use during the ARMI/FWW pilot. In addition, those volunteers will record turbidity and other information related to water quality and possible sources of pollution.



ARMI hubs

The UK network of ARMI hubs now numbers 30, with those hubs hosting more than 50 RP certificated tutors and providing excellent support to ARMI groups and volunteers; here are just a few examples from around England.

Up until 2016 ARMI has not been active in Cornwall. This was never down to a lack of interested volunteers or because no organisation expressed a willingness to coordinate and support ARMI locally, but there has been an absence of funding until Westcountry Rivers Trust (WCRT) successfully secured some this year. As a result WCRT has established an ARMI hub in Cornwall - in April two one-day ARMI workshops were delivered to a total of 20 volunteers and staff, with both Hazel Kendall and David Chapman being successfully accredited to deliver future ARMI training.



On 24th May Terry Hardman and George Moon delivered a one-day ARMI workshop to Canterbury & District Angling Association members, and Westgate Parks staff and volunteers, as part of ongoing work to establish a Riverfly hub in Kent.

In addition to running ARMI refresher workshops, the Yorkshire Esk Riverfly hub has put together a couple of resource packs which volunteers can sign out and use at home. In March 2015 Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust (YERT), on behalf of the Esk and Coastal Streams Catchment Partnership, secured funding from the players of the People's Postcode Lottery to deliver the 'Discovering the Esk' project.

This project encompasses

education initiatives and community monitoring schemes, including Riverfly Monitoring (ARMI) – making the purchase of the resource packs possible.

If you would like to find out whether an ARMI hub exists near you, or if you are interested in establishing one, please visit www.riverflies.org or email Ben Fitch (details below) for more information.



Online database and GIS

There are now more than 1350 active ARMI sites registered in the ARMI database with more than 10,000 records online. Alex Domenge has completed importing the vast majority of historical data, as received by RP before the end of 2015, which accounts for around 70% of the total records in the system to date. It had been hoped that all historical data would be online by the end of March 2016; however, this was not possible due to both initial minor issues with the importing tool and missing information within some of the historical records. Alex is continuing to work on those outstanding records with a view to importing them all as soon as possible.

In addition to importing historical records RP and FBA have been working on delivering improvements to the database and GIS system following feedback from ARMI volunteers and coordinators. I hope that you have seen improvements as they come online and recognise how functionality is improving; I have listed some of those improvements below:

- auto validation between 'Estimated Number' and 'Score' fields
- new user registration system
- 'select catchment' at start of submit record process
- screen print facility in 'graphs' and 'maps'
- unique record number created after 'submit record' is selected
- enlarged target group images during record submission
- fix to 'river' drop down menu so that user can scroll through list on screen
- ARMI and river search facility in 'Maps'
- open government license terms link
- ARMI scoring methodology instructions updated in line with fold out guide and field recording form
- removal of 'Propose a Site' facility due to dysfunctionality

Whilst the majority of planned improvements have now been completed, more will be delivered in the near future, including:

- EA monitoring site GIS layer to be available in 'Maps'
- dedicated online forum to be launched for ARMI volunteers, coordinators, etc.
- auto notifications to ARMI coordinators as records are submitted, requiring verification
- user guide available online (login restricted);

A few other improvements require additional funding so will be delivered as soon as it becomes possible to do so. Each improvement is tested before being made openly available though one or two functionality issues have been experienced by system users and reported to RP. If you experience any problems with the database or GIS please capture a screen print if possible and send with details to Ben Fitch via email. In such cases RP and FBA will work as quickly as possible to resolve issues, though delays may be experienced during the field season (March-October) so your patience is greatly appreciated.

The system user guide for ARMI coordinators and monitors is updated as appropriate and remains available upon request from the national ARMI Coordinator.

Training update

42 ARMI one-day training workshops have been confirmed so far this year with the majority of those having been delivered already. This represents continuing growth in ARMI and I am confident that close to the same number of workshops as were delivered in 2015 will have been delivered by the end of this year. In addition most of the ARMI hubs have, or will be, hosting refresher events, local Riverfly conferences and/or Riverfly Plus workshops in 2016. If you are interested in holding an ARMI workshop or support day please email Ben Fitch (details below) and remember to leave plenty of time when ordering participant packs and monitoring kits (now supplied by NHBS).

Status Updates and RRS

The Review of Scarce and Threatened UK Caddis, and the Review of Scarce and Threatened UK Mayflies were published earlier this year; in addition to that for Stoneflies published last year. Each review highlights threatened species in the UK as well as summarising the status of all UK species. Species records, submitted to the Riverfly Recording Schemes by volunteers, are vital in contributing to accurate distribution data, upon which the reports are based, and distribution maps are also available via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway. To access the reports, and for more information about the Riverfly Recording Schemes, visit the Riverfly Partnership website ([status reports](#) and [Riverfly Recording Schemes](#) respectively).

Contact us

The Riverfly Partnership
c/o Burgate Manor
Fordingbridge
Hampshire
SP6 1EF

Ben Fitch

National Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative Coordinator

Mobile: 0771 4487 209, Tel: 0117 2303 505, Email: ben@riverflies.org, Skype: amicoordinator

www.riverflies.org

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