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Riverfly Partnership Conference 2020

The 5th National Riverfly Partnership conference, *The pressures on our rivers and how we can detect and mitigate them*, will take place on 20 March 2020 in the Flett Theatre, Natural History Museum, London. It will bring together organisations and individuals participating in the Riverfly Partnership and the Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI), and will focus on new developments in ARMI (morning session) followed by pressures on rivers and ways to mitigate them (afternoon session). Particularly exciting will be the national **launch of the Extended and Urban Riverfly Schemes** by John Davy-Bowker (Freshwater Biological Association), Angus Menzies (Dorset Wildlife Trust), Richard Chadd (EA), William Bartle (Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project), and, Nicola Edgar (EA), Jess Andrews (EA) respectively. Delegates will be able to get a closer look at these Riverfly Plus schemes and talk to the presenters during the lunch period. Freshwater Biological Association CEO, Bill Brierley, will demonstrate the **updated ARMI database and website**, both of which go officially live at conference.

Other speakers include:

Steve Brooks, Chair of Riverfly Partnership, Dr Pete Fox (Director Water, Land and Biodiversity, Environment Agency), Ian Hawkins (CamEO ARMI Hub Coordinator), John Findlay (Environmental Monitoring Officer, Environment Agency), Paul Sams (Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust), Lauren Mattingly (Salmon and Trout Conservation) & Nick Everall (Aquascience Consultancy Limited), Prof Richard Brazier (Exeter University), Prof Steve Ormerod (Water Research Institute, Cardiff University), Craig Macadam (Conservation Director, Buglife), and Theo Pike (Wild Trout Trust).

Tickets for the 5th Riverfly conference are available via Eventbrite but you will have to move quickly as they are proving popular, with under two months until the event less than a quarter remain. To book your ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/riverfly-conference-2020-tickets-80216472629>, we look forward to seeing you there!



Mayfly by Jon Hawkins – Riverfly Partnership photography competition winner

Inaugural 'Riverfly Monitor of the Year' award open for nominations

At the Riverfly Partnership (RP), we recognise the ongoing and outstanding efforts made by committed ARMI volunteers all over the UK. Quite simply, without those volunteers the Angers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) would not exist and our rivers would certainly be worse off as a result. RP is extremely grateful to every single ARMI volunteer and we have decided to mark our appreciation by launching the Riverfly Monitor of the Year Award in 2020.



Reflections of a mayfly by Paul Sharman - Highly Commended

How will it work? There are currently 56 Riverfly hubs and each of those is encouraged to nominate **one** of its own ARMI volunteers as a candidate for the award. The only formal criteria governing nominations is that they must be for volunteers who are currently participating in ARMI. Nominations should take the form of a short statement including the candidate's name, their ARMI volunteer role (if monitor please include site and river name details), their ARMI hub and group names, and why you think they should be considered for this award.

Nominations will only be accepted if submitted by an ARMI hub coordinator, via email, to ARMI Project Manager, Ben Fitch (ben@riverflies.org) between 1st February and 31st December 2020. Entries will be reviewed by RP Executive members in early 2021 and the winner will be announced shortly thereafter. The winning volunteer will receive one FBA and one FSC guide of their choice, a 'Riverfly Monitor of the Year' certificate, and will have the chance to visit an Environment Agency laboratory (subject to availability).

Now is the time to get those discussions going with your hub coordinator! Let them know who you think should be the first Riverfly Partnership 'Riverfly Monitor of the Year' and why.

Important news about trigger level setting and breach protocols

Following a review of the current ARMI trigger level setting and breach protocols, between Riverfly Partnership, ARMI and Environment Agency representatives, new guidance documents are set to be released across the ARMI and EA networks in an attempt to improve ARMI standards for all. Final edits to the guidance documents will be completed imminently, then, once final versions have been signed off by the RP Executive team, the guidance documents will be shared throughout the ARMI network and amongst Environment Agency staff.

Pomphorhynchus research project report

Acanthocephalans, commonly known as spiny headed worms, are intestinal parasites of fish that use amphipods as their intermediate host. In the UK, greatest attention has been given to *Pomphorhynchus laevis*, which matures in freshwater fish such as chub and barbel, and cycles through *Gammarus pulex*, although recent studies suggested two closely related species of *Pomphorhynchus*, *P. laevis* and *P. tereticollis*, are present. This raised uncertainty over the identity, distribution and impact of these parasites in our rivers.

During 2017, Environment Agency National Fisheries Services conducted a partnership project to assess the diversity and distribution of the parasite *Pomphorhynchus*. The success of this project would depend upon sufficient samples of the parasite being collected. Thanks to engagement with willing citizen scientists including a number of ARMI volunteer monitors the samples were gathered, demonstrating just one of the ways in which the ARMI network provides benefits to Environment Agency staff beyond acute pollution monitoring.

The results of the project have been termed 'fantastic'! A pdf of the final report is attached with this newsletter (initial circulation only) or you can read it on the Riverfly Partnership website: <http://www.riverflies.org/identification-pomphorhynchus-english-rivers-project-has-been-concluded>.

Looking back... the RP photography competition

Regrettably, long delays hampered the most recent Riverfly Partnership photography competition, however, it was with great pleasure that we were able to announce Jon Hawkins as the overall winner in 2019. Jon's entry 'Mayfly', which can be seen on page 1 of this newsletter, was named competition winner by our judging panel.

Last summer, ARMI Project Manager, Ben Fitch and Mark Vesey-Thompson, Pro Media Graphico, met with Jon on the banks of the River Wey to present him with a canvas of his winning image and the winner's cheque.

"I was walking through the a local water meadow on my way to photograph roe deer when I noticed a few Mayfly drying in the early morning sunshine on some dew covered grasses ... I didn't have a macro lens with me so used my huge tripod mounted 500mm lens to capture the image from about 15 feet away.. this gave the image a great soft depth of field and now I often use this big lens for lots 'macro' type shots ..I saw the competition on twitter so thought I'd take a punt, I was over the moon on hearing I'd won.. I was going to put the money towards a little macro lens but now I don't think I'll bother!" Jon Hawkins

Two further images, 'Caddisfly – *Limnephilus lunatus*' by Icy Ho and 'Reflections of a mayfly' by Paul Sharman, were highly commended by the judges. Icy and Paul each receive a blown up canvas of their respective images, along with best wishes from all at the Riverfly Partnership.

'On behalf of the Riverfly Partnership, I would like to congratulate everyone who entered the competition, in particular Jon, Icy and Paul. The standard of entries was excellent, spanning the subject of 'Riverflies' in both larval and adult forms, and it was personally gratifying to see how these wee beasties captivated those behind the lens.

Special thanks to Mark Vesey-Thompson at Pro media Graphico for producing and donating the canvases, and to our panel of judges. Finally, thanks to everyone involved for showing great patience!' *Ben Fitch*

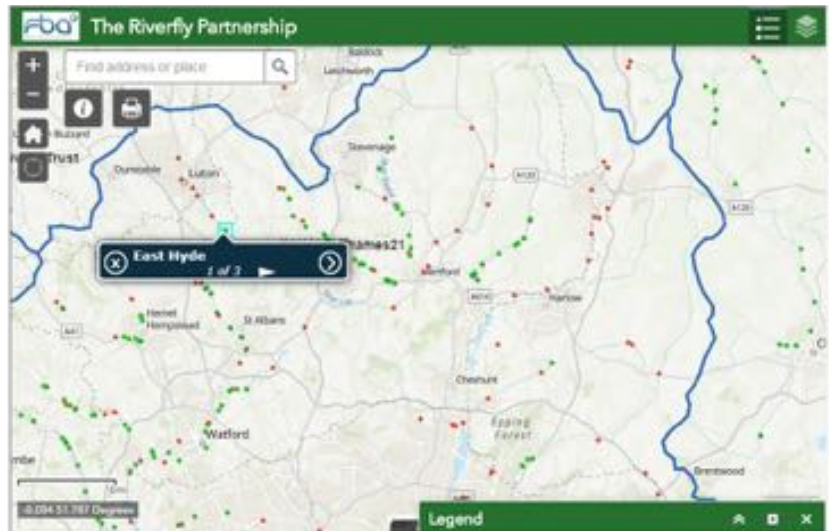


Mark Vesey-Thompson (on the right) presents Jon Hawkins with his prizes

RP website and ARMI database announcement

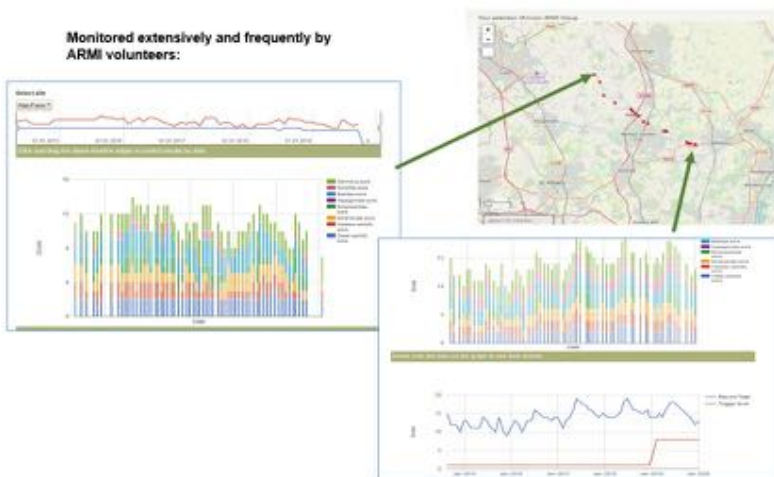
We have almost finished creating the new RP website and ARMI database. As we make essential final changes and transfer to the new site, the website and database will be closed for two weeks from Monday 27th January. The website will be available again from Monday 10th February, but the database will remain closed until Friday 20th March.

We are excited to be nearing the release of the new website and database after focussing on improvements motivated by feedback from many, including ARMI volunteers, coordinators, and EA staff.



Drought and low flows – chalk rivers:

River Mimram (Herts), is one of many chalk rivers impacted by extended period of dry weather between 2017 and 2019.



The official live launch of the website and database will be 20th March 2020 at the 5th RP conference (see lead item above) when features including the new data explorer tool, improved navigation, and online tutorial guides will be demonstrated. Following the launch, live webinars will be set up to provide further guidance to users of the new system so watch this space! Thank you for your continued patience and support, we realise that these improvements have been a long time coming and we sincerely look forward to sharing them with you.

Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation

The Environment Agency (EA) urgently needs to protect and improve our waters. This consultation gives **you** the opportunity to express your views on the challenges that our waters face and the choices that need to be made to help overcome those challenges.

By responding you will be helping to shape the management of the water environment. Information gathered through this consultation will be used by EA to help update the current river basin management plans, starting with the publication of draft plans in 2020.

It is vitally important that as many people as possible respond so please read on below, complete the consultation yourself, and share it with your contacts. The consultation closes on 24 April 2020.

This consultation covers all the river basin districts (RBDs) that are entirely in England, and the Severn and Northumbria RBDs which lie partly in Wales and Scotland respectively. Further information on RBDs, including the management of significant water management issues across Wales, can be found on the Supporting Information page.

For more detail on the consultation, see the Guide (https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/user_uploads/challenges-and-choices-guide.pdf).

Go to and complete the survey: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/>



Caddisfly - *Limnephilus lunatus* by Icy Ho – Highly Commended

Sign up to receive every RP newsletter

If you do not currently receive the RP newsletter directly but would like to, please let us know. We need your permission before we can add your details to our contact list. It's easy to do, simply use the link below and complete the online form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetSv97Iyl_m8C0HLGYcUs0Q5D0FXkXkUeLVdV-L1a0k5Mog/viewform

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You can find previous editions of our newsletter on our website

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The Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative is funded by income from fishing licence sales and a Water Environment Improvement Fund grant through the collaborative agreement with the Environment Agency.
