

# Fish Tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FISHERY STUDIES  
SECTION, SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE  
January 2003

## Big Netting Job in France

During the Autumn half term the HND Year 2 group travelled with four Fish Lecturers to Southern France for some serious netting. The job was a big one – the complete harvest and draindown of Lake Villedon, a 100 acre fishery containing over 20 tonnes of mainly carp, zander, pike, roach and the very spikey “poisson chat”.

Great hospitality from our hosts and fishery owners, Carp Connections, ensured that the whole team kept hauling the nets even as it got dark. After three days of mammoth physical effort and great fun the whole lake was empty, ready to be flooded again and re-stocked with the pick of the fish.

Carp Connections were ecstatic with the job, and many locals who had seen previous lake draindowns were amazed at the work rate and professionalism of the students. Hopefully the group have paved the way for more fishery work abroad.



above: The team crowding fish on Lake Villedon.

A small sample of the 15 tonnes of carp caught!



## Plugging in Spain

An early morning plugging session on the estuary at Ribadesella, north Spain proved successful for Chis Blunt when he landed this 3 ½ lb bass (see below). Chris was on the BSc. Year 3 Easter Study Tour and he caused amazement to the local community when he was seen returning the fish live to the water!



## Brand New Aquatics Centre!

Plans for a new National Aquatics Training Centre (NATC) are nearing completion. Demolition of the old Centre will start in late Spring '03 with the new £1 million building finished (hopefully!) early in 2004. It will be a **fantastic** fish house, nearly twice the size of the existing Centre. Many leading Aquatics Companies have promised generous sponsorship allowing us to fit it out the building with state of the art equipment.

## News from the Fish Lake - the Highs and Lows of Fishery Management!

Stocking of Pat's Lake started in September 2002 with 100 hand-picked, immaculate mirrors from Priory Fisheries in Devon. Then some beautiful crucians, bream and golden rudd were added, and in December some of Alan Black's cracking rainbows to see how they'd do. There are plans for chubb and barbel in the Spring.

**BUT then came the dark destroyers!** . . disaster struck on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002 – cormorants arrived! First two, then three..... by 7<sup>th</sup> January **13 birds** were fishing the lake. A variety of scaring and fish shelter tactics are being attempted with limited success – sadly we can only guess at what's left.



Matt has just secured employment as the UK rep. for the Coppens fish food company.

## World's First in Captivity!

B.Sc. student Allan Lyons spent his practical placement last summer working for Dingle Aquarium on the west coast of Ireland. One day he was contacted to pick up an unidentified shark that had been caught by local fishermen off Co. Kerry. Alan bought the shark back to the aquarium, placed it in a 5 metre tank and identified it as a bluntnose six-gill shark. He searched for advice on how to look after it, but to no avail as it was the only specimen in captivity in the world! The shark did not adapt well to its new home, and it was considered too large and aggressive to release back into the wild! Unfortunately, it died after two weeks in the tank.



Veteran Fish lecturer Chris Seagrave visited the Spanish river Ebro last September on the hunt for monster catfish. He wasn't disappointed as the picture above shows.

## News of Past Students

**Phil Belfield (BSc. 1996-1999)** After a spell fish farming with Voluntary Service Overseas in Cameroon, Phil has returned to the UK and is now a Research Assistant at the Fish Genetics Laboratory, Southampton University. He is hoping to start a PhD.

**Simon Holden (BSc. 1998-01)** Fish Biologist for Fawley Aquatic Research Laboratories. His work is involved with the EA project on coarse fish swimming speeds and more recently the Thames Water project looking at the effect of storm pollution on the tidal Thames.

**Matt French (BSc. 1997-00)** After working for Clearwater Fish Farming in Oxfordshire for the last two years,

### Ryan Flowers (NDAOF 2000-02)

Recently presented a talk at the National Aquarium Workshop on his success spawning piranhas at Sparsholt. He is now employed as chief aquarist at Alton Aquariums.

**Chris Meikle (NDAOF 2000-02)** Assistant manager of the Yeovil Branch of Maidenhead Aquatics.

**Erin Andrews (NCAOF 2000-01)** After studying great white sharks in South Africa, she is now employed as an aquarist for Bournemouth Oceanarium.

**Keiran Bates (NCAOF 1998-9)** Now a partner with Maidenhead Aquatics.

**Peter Hiscock (NDAOF 1996-8)** Is a regular contributor to various aquatics journals. Peter has just published his third book on aquarium installation.

## World Carp Classic

Fish lecturer Ben Gratwicke is currently running and organizing the 2003 World Carp Classic fishing competition, which is to be held during April at Lac Amance in France.

This is very prestigious event in the carp angler's calendar and a fantastic opportunity for a fishery practical. For the first time there will be an official marshalling team in the shape of our very own NDFS fish lads! Not only will Sparsholt College be marshalling the event, they will also be sponsoring teams to fish it. Three pairs of anglers will be picked to compete, and with a first prize of £10,000 that's a lot of beer!!

### More Exciting Spring Practicals BScF.3

**Welsh Netting** - A three day stock survey of an 80 acre lake in South Wales. **HUGE** tench are promised.

## Fish Lecturers out of the classroom! Recognise anyone?



**Would you like to contribute?** "Fish Tales" is published roughly twice a year. We are always on the look out for interesting news, stories, pictures, etc. Do you have anything for the next newsletter? If so email [ghide@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:ghide@sparsholt.ac.uk).

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