

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY: RIVERFLY CENSUS



Salmon & Trout
Conservation

KEEPING OUR WATERS WILD • EST 1903

WHAT IS THIS CAMPAIGN ABOUT?

The riverfly census is all about understanding and improving water quality in UK rivers. Across several iconic rivers, we use professional sampling to analyse invertebrate life and thereby understand the health of the river and the issues which need tackling.

HOW DOES THE CAMPAIGN AFFECT SALMON & TROUT?

Insects are the foundation of the food-chain, with birds and wild fish, such as salmon and trout, depending on them for survival. Not only this, but they are incredibly susceptible to certain chemicals or excesses in the water, making them an excellent indicator of the wider issues in the river. Invertebrate health, numbers and diversity are therefore excellent indicators of water quality; with healthy bugs indicating a healthy water ecosystem.

However, anecdotal evidence, other studies, and our own research has told us for some time that these bugs are in decline. If true, this decline directly threatens the health of our wild fish populations, and at a wider level means our waters could be in trouble. So in 2015 we set out to confirm this, to understand why invertebrate life on our rivers is in decline, and to learn more about what could be done; and the Riverfly Census was born.

Now in its third year, the census has shown us that invertebrates are under enormous stress from phosphorus and sediment, among other culprits. If not addressed, river health will deteriorate, and we risk losing our most iconic rivers and the life they support. This is a serious issue that needs investment, research and most importantly, action. At this stage, we are now analysing the data from our 2018 rivers and will be sharing our findings (and action plans) imminently. Please see below for the latest river updates.

WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

The way we operate all our campaigns is consistent across S&TC. We immerse ourselves in science, doing everything we can to understand the issues and collect relevant, professional, independent data. Once we have this evidence, we follow the facts and build strategic campaigns which fight for appropriate change.

In regards to our Riverfly Census campaign, we are now at step 2: sorting through the data, understanding the issues, and presenting it to the relevant parties to campaign for better protection of our watery places.

We are currently producing individual reports for the rivers, and tackling their unique issues at a grass roots level with the relevant organisations.

The next step will then be taking our findings national, generating an overarching national policy paper which highlights consistent problems. We aim to tackle things like the Water Framework Directive, EA regulation of farming practices, sewage treatment outputs, ineffective national monitoring, and inadequate discharge guidelines, to name but a few.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

With your support, we can continue to understand and fight for local rivers before it is too late.

The Riverfly Census is an important and unique campaign, which no other charity or organisation is undertaking. While many organisations opt for river restorations projects (which only deal with symptoms of water problems), we are trying to tackle the root causes and get to the bottom of what is happening. Our sampling and analysis is done at a scientifically professional level, and the scale of this project is enormous.

We do not receive any government money, and a project of this size needs extensive funding. Please consider donating or joining us as a member, which will enable us to protect these iconic waterways, and the wild fish and creatures that live there, for generations to come.

£50 funds a sampling net

£70 funds sampling at one site

£200 analyses a sample to species level and biometrically fingerprinted

£400 funds sampling at all sites on a river - providing enough data for 6 months

We gratefully welcome private funding offers from local landowners or those with river access who wish to help us protect their stretch of water. Please contact our fundraising manager Guy@salmon-trout for an informal discussion on supporting our efforts.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU SUPPORT US?

We need to educate people that despite the surface level beauty of local rivers, the water ecosystem itself may be in decline. There are invisible threats under the surface, threats that need tackling NOW.

Therefore we need your help in spreading the word about the Riverfly Census with locals, anglers, nature and water enthusiasts, wildlife lovers, relevant NGO's and charities, and anyone else who may be interested or able to assist us.

Please see if we are sampling or campaigning for a river near you, and get involved with our efforts on social media by sharing our work.