Salmon in the Stour “Headwaters to Confluence”

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West Midlands Stour

Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and West Midlands

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire
Brief history.....

• Industrial Revolution - reputedly more industry per mile than any other river in the country (upper section affectionately referred to as the Black Country)
• Dammed to form mill pools
• Diverted to operate mills
• Straightened / culvertted / impounded
• Considered ‘devoid’ of wildlife c. 1900
• Seen as a means of conveyance for waste
• In short, about as ‘urban’ as it gets!
“There’s no fish in ere’ mate!”
Main issues

- Rubbish!
- Pollution
- Invasive Non Natives
- Legacy of 'best practice'
- And……weirs!
What does the data tell us?

Salmon in the Stour

A collection of layers used to map out key issues related to the Salmon on the Stour Project.
Justification and why Salmon?

• Fish aren’t a reason for failure – presumably failing (lack of site and species data)?

• Key indicator of a healthy ecosystem

• Relatable to non fishy / ecology people

• In short - must be doing something right if they are present!
Salmon, Stour, same sentence....?
Good news….they are already here!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Atlantic salmon</th>
<th>Barbel</th>
<th>Brook lamprey</th>
<th>Brown / sea trout</th>
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Fish Lengths

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Bad news….we can’t go home!
So, what’s the solution?
What has the partnership delivered?

• 19 sampling sites to gap fill existing water quality knowledge (13 parameters)

• Barriers to fish migration walkover and landowner mapping

• Delivery of a “quick win” on the ground

• Secure funding to move the project forward
Do we know everything?
Weirs – preaching to the converted!
Weirs – things to consider

• Ownership
• Funding
• Heritage / Listed status
• Flooding
• Prioritisation – barriers assessment
• Options outside of removal?
• Stakeholder concerns
• Not delivering on the promise of improvement (short term anyway) a difficult message
What is the plan now?

- Formalised a partnership
  - Project manager in post / point of contact
  - Review new data
  - Identify main constraints to Salmon in the Stour approach – ‘showstoppers’
  - Generate a prioritised 4 year activity plan

- Deliver quick wins – be opportunistic!

- Identify long term funding opportunities
What is a 4 year activity plan?

- Community / Partner engagement
- Not just about weir removal!
  - Road run off
  - Misconnections
  - Suspect discharges
- Improved habitat connectivity
- Habitat creation / improvement
- Natural flood management
- Citizen science
Quick win – Devils Den weir
Quick win – case study

• Low head weir downstream of EA asset (0.7km)
• Upstream of CRT asset (even closer)
• Downstream of privately owned bridge (even closer still)
• Not listed
• Privately owned
• Reach not actively fished
• Original purpose? i.e. who will come looking for me when its removed?!
What was needed?

- Landowner permission!
- Funding!
- Stakeholder consultation
- Baseline data!
- Topographical survey / services search
- Desk based heritage assessment
- WFD compliance assessment
- Hydraulic modelling
- Environmental Permit (replacing FRA)
- Low Risk impoundment assessment
Cost and what next.....?

• £12.7k excluding staff time – begs the question; can we tackle the rest for less than £1 million?? (one element of a much bigger project)
• Promotion and engagement (who else can work with us?)
• Detailed barriers assessment
• Engaging water companies / other industry that has an impact on the catchment
• Identify BIG funding opportunities - FCRM?
Questions?