



Round-up

The Wild Trout Trust is a founder member of the Riverfly Partnership (RP) – a dynamic network of organisations working together to help protect UK rivers, further our understanding of riverfly populations and actively conserve their habitats. RP is hosted by Salmon & Trout Conservation UK.

Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative

The Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) is coordinated centrally by the Riverfly Partnership (RP), which receives funding support in England from the Environment Agency. A network of trained citizen scientists across the UK and Republic of Ireland regularly monitor close to 1,200 river sites to check for severe changes in water quality, with confirmed alerts reported to the relevant statutory body which carries out further investigations and enforcement action as appropriate. ARMI volunteers operate within coordinated groups, which are aligned to specific rivers and streams and supported by a growing network of 28 catchment or regionally based ARMI hubs. In addition, local ARMI support is provided by ecology contacts within the Environment Agency (England), Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, and, for the first time ever, local authorities and Inland Fisheries Ireland (Republic of Ireland). Though ARMI was launched nationally back in 2007 it continues to grow; last year more than 700 volunteers received training with a record 62 one-day ARMI workshops being delivered.

For further information about ARMI and Riverfly Partnership email Ben Fitch, ben@riverflies.org, or visit www.riverflies.org.



Why not get involved?

If you feel passionate about helping to conserve your local river ecosystem and if you can commit two to three hours every month, why not become an ARMI volunteer monitor? You will receive initial training from a Riverfly Partnership certificated tutor before commencing regular monitoring of a local river site, and ongoing support will be available from local ARMI hub, Environment Agency ecology contact and the Riverfly Partnership. To register your interest simply send an email to the national ARMI Coordinator, Ben Fitch ben@riverflies.org detailing where you are based and which river(s) are local to you. Ben will provide you with further information and put you in



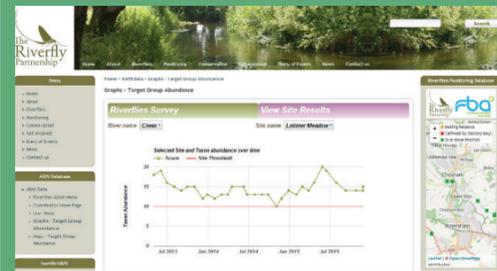
Credit © Stuart Crofts

contact with your local ARMI hub or group, which will discuss training arrangements, etc., with you.

ARMI online database

Two significant areas of ARMI database development are currently under way: The Riverfly Partnership (RP) remains on track to import all pre-July 2014 ARMI data (as received by 31st December 2015) by the end of March this year, whereupon those data will

be available online under the Open Government Licence. The realisation of one complete and accessible ARMI dataset will be a true reflection of the effort and commitment demonstrated by every ARMI volunteer and partner to date.



RP is working closely with the Freshwater Biological Association to deliver a programme of improvements following feedback provided to RP by users of the system, and RP's own critical analysis of existing functionality and usability. For more information please visit www.riverflies.org.

Riverfly Partnership Conference

Following the success of last year's technical conference for ARMI coordinators, tutors and ecology contacts, the Riverfly Partnership (RP) will host its own national conference on Thursday 17th November 2016, in the Flett Theatre, Natural History Museum, London. Details

about the conference theme, programme and registration will be announced shortly and RP is keen to deliver a high quality event, so please commit this date to your diary in anticipation.



Limerick City and County Council Riverfly Hub

Currently there are 27 catchment or regional ARMI hubs operating in the UK. Additionally, 2015 saw ARMI become established in the Republic of Ireland for the first time, with the establishment of a hub in County Limerick. The hub is hosted by Limerick City and County Council, which funded two workshops and provided monitoring equipment so that trained volunteers can monitor sites in the River Loobagh catchment. Interpretation boards are to be erected on the river banks as part of the 'Tidy Towns' initiative, highlighting the

importance of healthy freshwaters and using Dr Cyril Bennett's excellent riverfly images.

RP will continue working with partner organisations to establish more ARMI hubs in 2016 and beyond. Feedback suggests that hubs improve volunteer support, motivation and retention, helping ensure the success of the ARMI model.

If you are interested in setting up an ARMI hub in your area, or, if you would like to get involved in riverfly monitoring, please contact the RP's national ARMI Coordinator, Ben Fitch ben@riverflies.org.



Taking the Riverfly training a step further

by JAN MALLIK

I have to admit at the outset that I only went along to the Riverfly training day at Hatherleigh, Devon, to see what it was all about, and didn't really intend to get involved. But as the day progressed I became more and more intrigued, and when it came to taking a sample and attempting to identify what we'd caught, I was hooked.

I began with just one site and was amazed at the amount and variety of creatures I caught, and although I concentrated on the ones needed for the survey I soon found I wanted to know more about them – what their life cycles were, and just how many species of olives, mayflies, stoneflies, and so on were there? And then I wanted to know what all the other things were that weren't on the Riverfly monitoring guide we were given during the training day.

First I bought a second hand copy of Helen Mellanby's excellent book *Animal Life in Fresh Water*, which told me all I wanted to know about the life cycles. That was fine, but I found I needed to identify the actual species, and here things got tricky.

When going through the samples on site I used a better hand lens than the one included in the equipment I'd been given, and I started taking anything that looked interesting home so that I could have a better look at it under the low powered microscope. Luckily I have both a low and a high powered microscope,

having studied fungi in the past. With the help of the Collins pocket guide to Freshwater Life, I was able to identify a few things – Alder and Crane Fly nymphs for example, but I pretty soon got stuck with other things.

First I sent photographs to my immediate Riverfly co-ordinator, who sent a useful list of publications, but couldn't help much with identifying things. So I contacted Ben Fitch, the overall Riverfly co-ordinator, who sprang into action. He recommended specific publications, identified a few things and contacted Craig Macadam of Buglife for help with others, which resulted in an immediate response from Craig with an offer to be my mentor, assisting with identifications and validating specimens when required. I was delighted.

Now I have two official Riverfly sites, and whenever I'm near a watercourse with suitable access I collect a sample to take home to study, and thanks to Craig's encouragement and tremendous knowledge I'm able to satisfy my desire to identify to species virtually everything I find.



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Biosecurity

Demon Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus haemobaphes*) was found in the River Churnet, Staffordshire last October by Riverfly Partnership tutor Dr Nick Overall, during a one-day Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) workshop.

The identification of this invasive non-native species (INNS) in the River Churnet, subsequently confirmed under laboratory conditions, highlights both the extended role that ARMI plays in freshwater conservation, and the importance that we all maintain effective biosecurity when visiting waterbodies.

The Riverfly Partnership complies with the 'Check, Clean, Dry' (CCD) campaign and instruction on how to follow CCD procedures are delivered as part of all ARMI workshops.

For up-to-date information on INNS and biosecurity visit www.nonnativespecies.org and www.cabi.org.



Riverfly Recording Schemes

RP continue to work with partner organisations to raise public awareness about riverflies and monitoring them to assess water quality. Please come and say 'hello' if you see us at public events and, if you represent an ARMI group which is planning to exhibit at a local event please contact RP for materials and advice, ben@riverflies.org.

Further riverfly identification resources are available from:
Freshwater Biological Association: www.fba.org.uk
Field Studies Council: www.field-studies-council.org
Riverfly Recording Schemes: rrs@riverflies.org