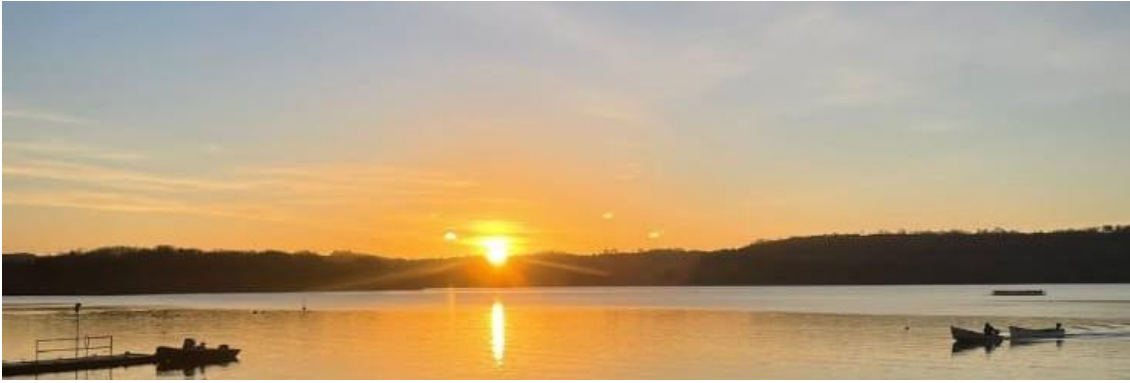


# Bristol Water Fisheries Report February 2026



We are immensely relieved to see the lakes returned to full levels this February, following the end of the 2025 season when prolonged hot weather left water levels at some of the lowest recorded in recent years!

While the lakes enjoyed their annual winter rest period, it has been anything but quiet behind the scenes. The close season provides us with the critical operational window to prepare every aspect of the fishery for the year ahead and the team has been fully engaged throughout. Our entire boat fleet has been lifted from the water and undergone comprehensive annual servicing. Each hull has been inspected, repaired where necessary, and prepared to meet the highest safety and performance standards before returning to the lakes. This work is fundamental to ensuring anglers can fish with confidence throughout the season. At the same time, we have been carefully nurturing the trout class of 2026, monitoring growth rates and conditioning fish to reach optimum stocking weights in readiness for the new trout season. Considerable planning has also gone into the year ahead, with competitions, tuition days, and special events scheduled across the Bristol Water lakes. Shaping what promises to be an exciting and well-supported calendar.

February has also seen the welcome return of our pike anglers. The demand for pike boat and bank tickets has been unprecedented, selling out in record time. Those fortunate enough to secure permits have been rewarded, with some truly colossal pike brought to the boats and landed from the bank! A strong indication of the continued quality of the predator fishing across the fishery.

With preparations complete and momentum building, we now look forward to the season fully underway!

## Pike Trials Feb 2026

February's pike fishing has more than lived up to expectations, with anglers enjoying some truly memorable sport both from the boats and along the bank. Throughout the trial period we have seen a number of exceptional fish brought to the net, including several specimen-sized pike that highlight the outstanding quality of the predator fishing currently present within the Bristol Water lakes.

Chew Valley in particular produced some remarkable results during the February trials. Based purely on declared catches, the lake produced over 15 pike between 30lb and 39lb, along with one incredible fish breaking the 40lb barrier. These figures are particularly impressive when you consider that they are drawn only from fish that were officially reported, and it is entirely possible that more large specimens were landed but never formally declared.

Careful catch reports from participating anglers continue to provide valuable insight into fish distribution and condition, while also showcasing just how productive the fishery has been during the winter months. Below are just some of the standout captures recorded during February:

To start off the February trials, we saw Jamie Askew land a superb 32lb 12oz pike from Chew Valley Lake. Fishing with boat partner Matt Barlow in the Morton area, the pair were targeting water around 7–8ft deep using both a lure rod and a bait rod. After first landing a smaller pike on the lure, Jamie's bait rod, rigged with a joey mackerel, was taken by something far more substantial. Following a tense fight, and with the fish only lightly hooked, the pair successfully netted the incredible 32lb 12oz specimen, smashing Jamie's previous personal best by around 20lb.



Next, we saw John Horsey enjoy a remarkable day on Chew Valley Lake, landing a superb 35lb 11oz pike on the fly, setting a new personal best. John, who has guided on Chew for over 30 years, has previously weighed even larger fish for his clients, including two over 40lb, but his capture was particularly special as it was his own. With help from Richard Bowers to land and document the fish, the highlight capture capped off an exceptional session which also saw John land two double-figure pike, several other fish, and numerous follows, proving once again just how productive Chew can be even in challenging conditions.



A standout series of bank sessions during the February trials was recorded by Daniel Horton and Richard Collins, who fished four days between 7th and 18th February in the Wick Green area, targeting 10–12ft of water with smelt. Across the sessions they landed an impressive run of fish including 18lb, 21lb, 24lb, 31lb, 31lb 12oz, and a superb 38lb 14oz, alongside around 25 jack pike and several low doubles. A remarkable return from the bank and a clear demonstration of the exceptional predator fishing currently available at Chew Valley Lake.





The biggest declared pike of the February 2026 trials at Chew came courtesy of Nigel Parr, who landed an absolute monster weighing **40lb 8oz** on a mackerel dead bait. Fishing with boat partner Warrick Francis, Nigel battled the fish to the net in what was a thrilling capture and a true highlight of the trials. Warrick also praised the boats and our ranger team for their support on the jetties, a reminder of the high standards of service we aim to provide.

This incredible capture was just the tip of the iceberg, with multiple pike between 30lb and 35lb also reported throughout the 14 days! Here are a few more of the amazing Chew capture from the Feb trials:



Alan Buckingham - 32lb



Darren Turner – 28lb 08oz ^ - Andy Burley 18lb - v



Shawn Kittridge – 24lb 04oz





Jon Sturt – 35lb 08oz



Brad Perry – 22lb 08oz



Fin Lewis – 22lb 04oz

Steve Chesney –  
31lb 08oz





Daniel Moorcroft - 39lb 12oz



George Swindlehurst – 37lb 08oz



Martin Bowler – 34lb

### Junior Pike Anglers

Another mention goes to all the juniors that took part in the February trials. It's great to see the next generation of anglers out there!

Preston and Jenson Jarvis with their father Gary enjoyed some great angling



We would like to extend our thanks to all pike anglers who joined us during the February trial period. The support, enthusiasm, and cooperation shown throughout has been greatly appreciated, and it was fantastic to see so many anglers enjoying success across the lakes.

We now look forward to welcoming pike anglers back later in the year for the **October and November trial dates**, where we hope to see a continuation of the excellent sport experienced this season.

### Pre-Season Stocking

Throughout February, our dedicated ranger team **worked tirelessly behind the scenes**, carrying out extensive netting, grading, and stocking operations across the Bristol Water fisheries. With the Barrow Tanks fully stocked and open, and Blagdon completed, efforts were heavily focused on Chew Valley Lake, where stocking was carried out at full pace. This represented a significant undertaking, and great credit goes to the team for achieving a **pre-season stocking total of just under 20,000 rainbow trout** across our waters. These high-quality fish were carefully prepared to ensure they were in prime condition, setting the stage for what promised to be an excellent start to the new season.

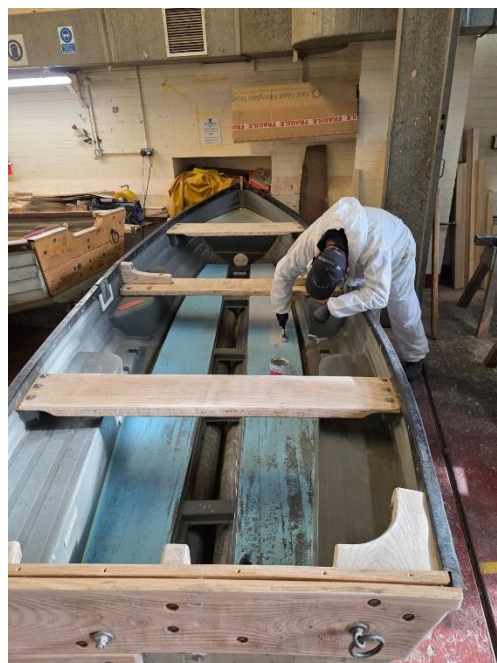


### Winter Boat Maintenance

Over the winter, our full fleet has once again undergone a comprehensive maintenance programme at Blagdon Pumping Station. Each boat has been carefully inspected, cleaned, repaired where necessary, and prepared to meet our high safety and performance standards.

From minor refurbishments to more extensive structural work, our carpentry team has worked diligently to ensure every boat is in top condition for the season ahead.

This essential work helps extend the lifespan of the fleet and ensures anglers can enjoy a safe and reliable experience on the water.



## Milestone Achievement - 10,000 Facebook Followers

Bristol Water Fisheries was delighted to announce that our **Facebook page reached 10,000 followers**. This milestone reflected the ongoing support and engagement of our anglers, birdwatchers, lake users, and all who enjoyed these special waters.

We extended our thanks to everyone who shared photos, asked questions, provided feedback, and demonstrated a passion for the fisheries. Their involvement was invaluable.

We also acknowledged the dedication of the Bristol Water Fisheries team, past and present, as well as former members and staff, whose hard work and care had helped shape these waters into what they are today.

Whether followers had been with us from the beginning or joined along the way, we thanked them for being part of the journey and looked forward to the future, with tight lines, memorable wildlife encounters, and many more moments on the bank.

## The Barrow Bash – England Youth Benefit Match

**BRISTOL WATER FISHERIES**

**BRFFA**

**THE BARROW BASH**  
ENGLAND YOUTH BENEFIT MATCH

A fun bank side catch & release competition.  
**100% of ALL proceeds going to England Youth Fly Fishing (EYFF)**  
**Bristol Water are taking ZERO lake fees for this competition.**

Pegged & Rotated  
Fishery Rules  
Exclusively on Barrow Tank 3  
Raffle & BRFFA Prize Table (TBC)  
OPEN To Non Members  
Light Refreshments  
**29th MARCH**  
**£40 per entry**

Enter via BRFFA Clubmate or add your name to the Facebook post or message Seb on 07590679363  
<https://www.facebook.com/BRFFA>

**airflo** **BRFFA** **BRISTOL WATER FISHERIES**

The BRFFA are proud to host **The Barrow Bash**, a friendly bankside **catch & release fly-fishing competition** at **Barrow Tanks**, with proceeds supporting the **England Youth Fly Fishing (EYFF)** team.

Thanks to **Bristol Water Fisheries** waiving lake fees, **100% of entry proceeds** go directly to helping young anglers cover travel, training, equipment, and competition costs. This event supports youth development, promotes the sport responsibly, and enables talented anglers to compete for their country.

### Event Details:

- **Location:** Barrow Tanks – Tank 3
- **Date:** 29th March
- **Entry:** £40
- **Format:** Pegged & rotated
- **Extras:** Raffle & BRFFA prize table, light refreshments
- **Open to:** Non-members

**Entries:** 50 places available via **BRFFA Clubmate**, Facebook comment, or contact Seb on **07590 679363**.

This is more than a competition — it's a chance to back the next generation of fly anglers.



### Looking Ahead – Trout Season 2026

As the trout season approaches, we are excited to welcome all anglers back to the Bristol Water fisheries. Please note the key upcoming dates:

- **25th February** – Barrow Season Ticket Holder Day
- **27th February** – Barrow Tanks Opening Day
- **3rd March** – Chew & Blagdon Season Ticket Holder Day
- **5th March** – Chew & Blagdon Bank Opening Day & Chew Boats Opening Day
- **12th March** – Blagdon Boats Opening Day

The February Pike Trials have provided excellent sport and set a strong foundation for the year ahead. We look forward to seeing both returning and new anglers on the lakes, and we thank everyone for their continued support. Here's to an **unforgettable 2026!**