

Bristol Water Fisheries Report - March 2026



Following a brilliant two weeks of pike fishing to round off February, and with the entire boat fleet returned from annual servicing, the start of the trout season was eagerly anticipated, and it certainly didn't disappoint. Although, March also gave us some very windy days with 5 days called off due to the high winds. With opening day boats fully booked and anglers ready to get back on the water, the new season was welcomed with real enthusiasm across all our fisheries.

The season got underway on 25th February at the Barrow Tanks, where season ticket holders enjoyed their opening day, followed by the general opening on the 27th of February. Activity then shifted to Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake, with season ticket holders taking to the water from the 3rd of March, and day permit anglers joining from the 5th of March.

Early season sport has been excellent. During the first week, Chew and Blagdon produced a combined average of 3.26 fish per angler, with an impressive average weight of 3.4lb. The Barrow Tanks also fished well, with an average of 3.07 fish per angler at 1.1lb, reflecting their role as a high-action fishery.

Boat fishing returned to Chew on the 5th of March, producing strong results from the outset. Although the opening of the Blagdon boats was initially delayed due to high winds, they were able to commence on the 13th of March, and it proved well worth the wait, with some excellent catches reported.

With a strong start to the trout season and plenty to look forward to, 2026 is already shaping up to be another memorable year on the water.

Staff changes to our ranger team!

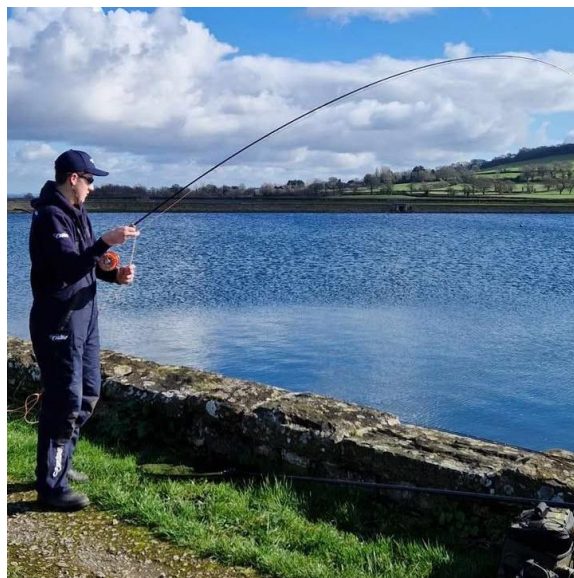
March also brought a farewell to one of the team, as Joe Tugwell departs after over three seasons as a fisheries ranger. Joe has been a much-valued member of the lakeside team, whose passion for fishing and wildlife has left a lasting impression on both colleagues and anglers alike. We wish him and his family all the very best as they begin an exciting new chapter in Scotland.

We're also pleased to welcome three new starters to the Bristol Water fisheries ranger team: Jamie, Kye and Reiley. Be sure to give them a warm welcome around the lakes and say hello when you see them out on the bank or water.

Barrow Tanks Report

On the **1st of March**, just a few days after opening for the 2026 season, father and son duo Jacob and Darren Edwards enjoyed an excellent morning on Tank 1 at the Barrow Tanks. The pair found plenty of action on the “Barrow Bullets,” with a small orange lure fished at varying depths proving most effective, and the fishing was so productive they were heading home by midday.

The tanks have started the season strongly, with 4,000 fish (averaging 1lb) stocked to supplement a good head of overwintered fish, providing consistent sport and plenty of action for anglers.



Ospreys Bank Competition – Barrow Tanks

Earlier in the month, the first Ospreys Bank Competition of 2026 was held at the Barrow Tanks, attracting a strong turnout of 20 anglers. Despite a brisk southerly wind, conditions remained fishable and produced solid returns, with 82 fish caught for a rod average of just over 4 fish per angler.

Most of the action came from Tank 3, with successful methods including DI7 and “basher” lines fished deep with boobies and snake patterns.



Results:

1st – Dilwyn Heath – 7 fish – 7lb 9oz

2nd – Sam Williams – 7 fish – 7lb 8oz

3rd – Mike Parfitt – 7 fish – 7lb 5oz

Heaviest Fish: Darren Williams – 1lb 14oz

The Barrow Tanks continued to provide consistent early-season sport, with high numbers of stocked fish supplemented by a healthy head of overwintered trout. Several anglers also reported connecting with larger fish, while **Chew Valley Lake** and **Blagdon Lake** were producing quality trout during the same period.

Overall, it marked a strong start to the Ospreys competition calendar.

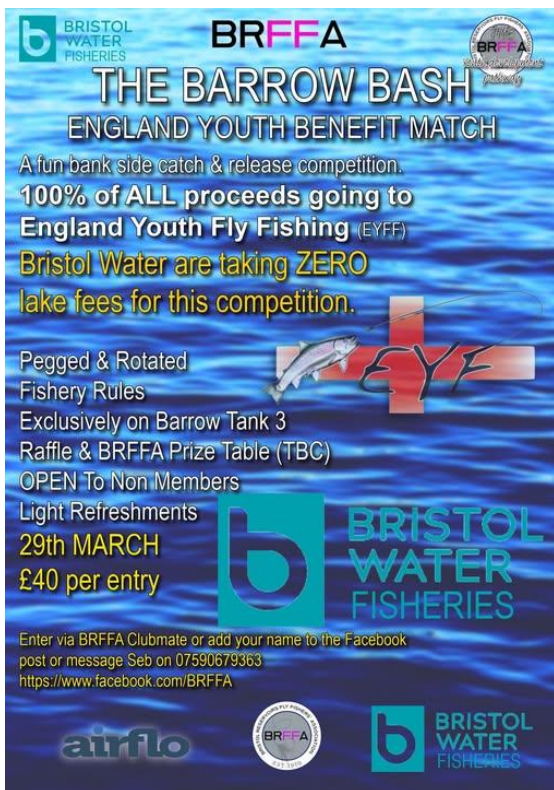
Barrow Bash – England Youth Fly Fishing Fundraiser (Barrow Tanks No. 3, March)

BRFFA hosted the Barrow Bash at Barrow Tanks No. 3, with 16 anglers braving cold, wet conditions. Despite the challenging weather, spirits remained high, and the day was filled with camaraderie and enthusiasm for fly fishing.

The event welcomed seasoned England internationals, including Mark Miles, Paul Golding, and Tim Wellman, alongside a talented group of young anglers. Special thanks went to Ruth Gale for catering and photography, Luke Cox for support, and Bristol Water Fisheries for donating all proceeds. Airflo provided prizes, and volunteers Andy Stones, Tony Torrington, and Bernie Weaver ensured the day ran smoothly.

Long casting proved decisive on the day: Mark Miles took first place with two fish, Will Wellman second with one fish, and Tim Wellman third. Thanks to the generosity of participants, around £800 was raised for the England Youth Fly Fishing Team, with additional donations still welcome.

Mark Miles also contributed a fully loaded A4 box of flies for raffle, with all proceeds donated to EYFF—demonstrating incredible support despite recent health challenges. A fantastic day was had by all, highlighting the skill, generosity, and passion within the fly fishing community.



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**





All Waters Season Ticket Opening Day

We were delighted to welcome back all our Season Ticket Holders for their opening day across Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake.

As always, the day carried a special atmosphere, with familiar faces returning to the banks and that unmistakable buzz as anglers got back into the swing of things after the winter break.

Conditions provided a positive start to the season, with good early sport reported across both lakes. The day marked an excellent start to the season, setting the tone for what promises to be another enjoyable year across all waters

March has set the tone for what promises to be another action-packed season on Chew, with a full calendar of trout competitions lined up throughout the year. At Blagdon the fishing has been in excellent form, particularly across the top end of the lake, where anglers have enjoyed consistent success. Attraction patterns such as fabs, blobs and boobies have dominated catches. At Chew, the same methods have been working well with key areas including Herons Green, Villice, and the water in front of Woodford and Walley producing some of the best results. Both boat and bank anglers have shared in the sport, reflected in strong rod averages of **5.81 fish per angler from the boats** and **3.5 fish per angler from the bank**, making for a very encouraging start to the season.

Overall, it marked an impressive start to the season across the Bristol Water fisheries.

Boat Number	Fish Returned	Fish Dispatched	Total Bag Weight	Comments
34	41	4		
23	42			HERONS RECOR
37	16			+ 8 PIKE BOAT PIKE 1016
41	19			Black Dancer Spring Bay
50	46	0		Black Dancer Spring Bay
67	15	0	4516?	Best fish 616 - 2 of 4.516



Chew Valley Lake – Pike on the Fly (March 2026)

Jeremy Head landed a notable pike while fly fishing at Roman Shallows on Chew Valley Lake. Using a blue perch pattern, he enjoyed both the catch and a nostalgic connection, recalling trips with his father for trout fishing as a child.

Chew continues to provide memorable experiences for anglers of all ages.

Celtic League – First Match of the 2026 Season (21st March)

The first Celtic League match of the year was held on Chew Valley Lake, with a strong turnout of anglers. Despite bright and calm conditions, the fishing was excellent, with consistent catches across the lake and no blanks reported.

The results were:

- 1st - Tight Lines
- 2nd - Team Snowbee
- 3rd - The Ospreys



Airflo Celtic League 2026 | Chew Valley Lake
Overall Team Results

Pos	TEAM	21st Mar	02nd May	23rd May	13th June	19th Sept	Total
1	TEAM TIGHTLINES	39	0	0	0	0	39
2	SNOWBEE	70	0	0	0	0	70
3	OSPREYS FFA	77	0	0	0	0	77
4	FUNKY FF	79	0	0	0	0	79
5	AIRFLO NYMPHOMANIACS	84	0	0	0	0	84
6	TEAM EGLWYS	96	0	0	0	0	96
7	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	103	0	0	0	0	103
8	DRIFTERS	105	0	0	0	0	105
9	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	109	0	0	0	0	109
10	VALLEY CORMORANTS	119	0	0	0	0	119
11	RED LION	144	0	0	0	0	144
12	WELSH WIZARDS	147	0	0	0	0	147

Top rods of the day were Alan Banwell and Martin Burgess, each landing 13 fish. The event marked a fantastic start to the 2026 league season on Chew.



Airflo Celtic League 2026 | Chew Valley Lake
Individual Result Round 1

POS	NAME	TEAM	TOTAL FISH	TIME 2nd FISH	TIME BONUS	PTS
1	ALAN BANWELL	OSPREYS FFA	13	10.35	0	1
2	MARTIN BURGESS	TEAM TIGHTLINES	13	11.20	0	2
3	SCOTT GRAHAM	TEAM TIGHTLINES	11	10.30	0	3
4	PAUL SHARMAN	DRIFTERS	11	10.30	0	3
5	JAMES GRAHAM	TEAM EGLWYS	11	10.35	0	5
6	LEE JAMES	AIRFLO NYMPHOMANIACS	11	11.56	0	6
7	PAUL MORRIS	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	10	10.21	0	7
8	ALLEN HUGHES	AIRFLO NYMPHOMANIACS	10	10.25	0	8
9	TIM WELLMAN	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	9	10.35	0	9
10	RICHARD WALKER	SNOWBEE	9	11.06	0	10
11	ANDREW LEWIS	TEAM TIGHTLINES	9	11.40	0	11
12	DAVE REYNOLDS	FUNKY FF	8	10.30	0	12
13	MATHEW GRIFFITHS	OSPREYS FFA	8	12.07	0	13
14	STEWART WATKINS	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	7	10.30	0	14
15	ANDREW WEEKS	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	7	10.35	0	15
16	GRAHAM CURRIE	SNOWBEE	7	11.00	0	16
17	MARK MILES	FUNKY FF	7	13.15	0	17
18	PAUL SWEATMAM	SNOWBEE	6	10.16	0	18
19	PAUL GOLDING	FUNKY FF	6	10.23	0	19
20	IAN SHANAHAN	VALLEY CORMORANTS	6	10.23	0	19
21	MARCO ORSI	OSPREYS FFA	6	10.37	0	21
22	JAMES RICE	WELSH WIZARDS	6	10.43	0	22
23	STEVE JONES	TEAM TIGHTLINES	6	10.48	0	23
24	ANDREW BANNER	DRIFTERS	6	11.20	0	24
25	MICHEAL LLEWELLYN	VALLEY CORMORANTS	6	11.40	0	25
26	MARTIN BARRETT	SNOWBEE	6	13.25	0	26
27	TOM PITCHFORD	AIRFLO NYMPHOMANIACS	6	14.55	0	27
28	ROB TUCKER	TEAM EGLWYS	5	10.55	0	28
29	LEE WILLIAMS	RED LION	5	12.51	0	29
30	PETER MORUZZI	TEAM EGLWYS	5	13.00	0	30
31	PAUL BOND	FUNKY FF	4	10.25	0	31
32	WILL WELLMAN	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	4	11.02	0	32
33	DAVID GRAHAM	TEAM EGLWYS	4	11.30	0	33
34	SEAN TORRINGTON	RED LION	4	12.06	0	34
35	JOHN GUMBLETON	RED LION	4	14.17	0	35
36	LUKE ROBERTS	VALLEY CORMORANTS	3	11.15	0	36
37	JOHN OTTER	WELSH WIZARDS	3	11.20	0	37
38	PAT SHARMAN	DRIFTERS	3	11.45	0	38
39	STEVE NICHOLS	VALLEY CORMORANTS	3	11.15	0	39
40	ANDREW ROYNAN	DRIFTERS	3	12.15	0	40
41	MARK MCCARTHY	WELSH WIZARDS	3	12.30	0	41
42	DARREN WILLIAMS	OSPREYS FFA	3	14.34	0	42
43	CALLUM RUSSELL	AIRFLO NYMPHOMANIACS	3	15.20	0	43
44	MARK STEVENS	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	3	15.35	0	44
45	ALUN WILLIAMS	E.N FLUFF CHUCKERS	3	15.35	0	44
46	BILL PUGH	RED LION	2	10.22	0	46
47	MARK KENNEDY	BRFFA RED EMERGERS	1	0	0	47
48	RICHARD ELMS	WELSH WIZARDS	1	0	0	47

Stocking In March

Over at the farm, the rangers were kept extremely busy throughout March with this season's stocking programme. In addition to the pre-season stocking, a further 2,400 trout were stocked into Chew, 1,800 into Blagdon, and 850 into the Barrow Tanks. The quality of these fish has been exceptional! Among the best seen in recent years, and a special mention goes to Senior Fish Farmer and Ranger Alistair Pearson and the team for their outstanding efforts. Looking ahead to April, a further 8,000 trout are scheduled to be stocked across the fisheries, setting things up perfectly for the weeks to come.



b BRISTOL WATER

Photography by Lucy Masters - 

Annual Birdwatching Permits are now available! Get access to the hides around Chew and Blagdon Lakes from the 1st of March 2026 to the 28th of February 2027.

Permits available online or in store at Woodford Lodge
From £43



 BristolWaterFisheries  01275 352339
www.bristolwaterfisheries.com
Bristol Water plc - Registered in England No. 2382226 - Registered Office: Bristol Water plc, Bywater Road, Bristol, BS23 7JY

In March, our annual birdwatching permits went on sale, offering fantastic value for those keen to make the most of the incredible wildlife around the fisheries. These permits provide full access to all the hides around Chew and Blagdon Lake through to **28th February 2027**, giving plenty of opportunities to enjoy the lakes across the seasons. Permits are available at **£43 for an individual adult**, or **£78 for two adults from the same household**, making it an ideal option for couples looking to visit regularly.

April 2026

Looking ahead to April, there is plenty to be excited about across Bristol Water Fisheries as the season continues to gather momentum. The month begins with the highly anticipated Airflo Open

Championship on Chew on 5th April, followed by the ever-popular Wychwood Individuals. One of the standout competitions of the year. With a practice day on 11th April and the main event on 12th.

The action continues with the Celtic League Anglo Welsh Cup on 18th April, bringing together top anglers for another competitive day on the water.

We are also incredibly excited to be hosting two major qualifiers on the same weekend, with the Welsh Qualifier taking place on Chew and the English Qualifier on Blagdon on 26th April. Both events will be preceded by official practice days on 25th April, giving competitors the chance to fine-tune their approach. With a packed calendar of high-quality events and the lakes fishing well, April is shaping up to be a fantastic and highly anticipated month for anglers across all our waters.

Secure your spot and get ready

The Wychwood Fly Fishing Championship

12th April 2026
Chew Valley Lake

Enter today at:
flyfishingchampionships.uk

Win **£1000**

