

2014 Report for Vitacress

This year, in spite of the very wet 2013-2014 winter, has been another good year for Riverfly Monitoring in both Dorset and Wiltshire. The Wildlife Trusts in both counties run a River Monitoring Scheme which has been supported by a grant from the Vitacress Conservation Trust. This support has assisted in the training of Riverfly monitors in both Dorset and Wiltshire and also, for the first time, in Devon.

The scheme is of interest to keen anglers and wildlife enthusiasts alike, who both share a concern for the present and future health of our river: it is based on the counting at regular intervals of key river insect species and other invertebrate groups as a method of assessing river quality. Many insect and invertebrate species are extremely sensitive to pollution levels and therefore their numbers act as an early warning system of any potential problems.

The methodology used is that of the Riverfly Partnership (www.riverflies.org). The number of 8 different groups of insects and other invertebrates are counted. Monitors are asked to carry out the surveys on a monthly basis between April and September, ideally at the same time each month, (weather and river conditions permitting). Many of our volunteers carry on outside these months, if it is safe to do, and also monitor redds (non-migratory Trout, and, migratory Salmon & Trout spawning sites). Generally speaking these surveys take a minimum time of one hour. The data obtained is submitted to us at the two Wildlife Trusts: in the event of a reduced count, the Environment Agency is contacted for investigation of a potential pollution incident.

Essential to the Scheme is the continuous requirement to train monitors. This year training workshops have been run at Langford Lakes (Wiltshire), Malmesbury (Wiltshire), Cerne Abbas, (Dorset) and Hatherleigh (Devon). A very generous grant from the Vitacress Conservation Trust has enabled us to provide recently trained volunteers, of whom there have been 46, with monitoring equipment.

The attached photographs show volunteer monitors at training workshops run on the River Lew, at Hatherleigh, and also at the River Avon (Bristol) near Malmesbury.

Anybody interested in becoming a River Monitor should contact either

- Angus Menzies at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust 01380 736066 or MonitoringProjects@wiltshirewildlifetrust.org
- Sarah Williams or Angus Menzies at Dorset Wildlife Trust 01305 264620 or riverfly@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk



[Hatherleigh: May 2014](#)



[River Lew : June 2014](#)



River Avon (Bristol) : August 2014