Game & Wildlife CONSERVATION TRUST

Frome, Piddle & West Dorset Fisheries Association
Saving Our Native Fish

West Country Rivers Trust

Cefas

The Raft Project

Recolonisation Assistance for the River Frome

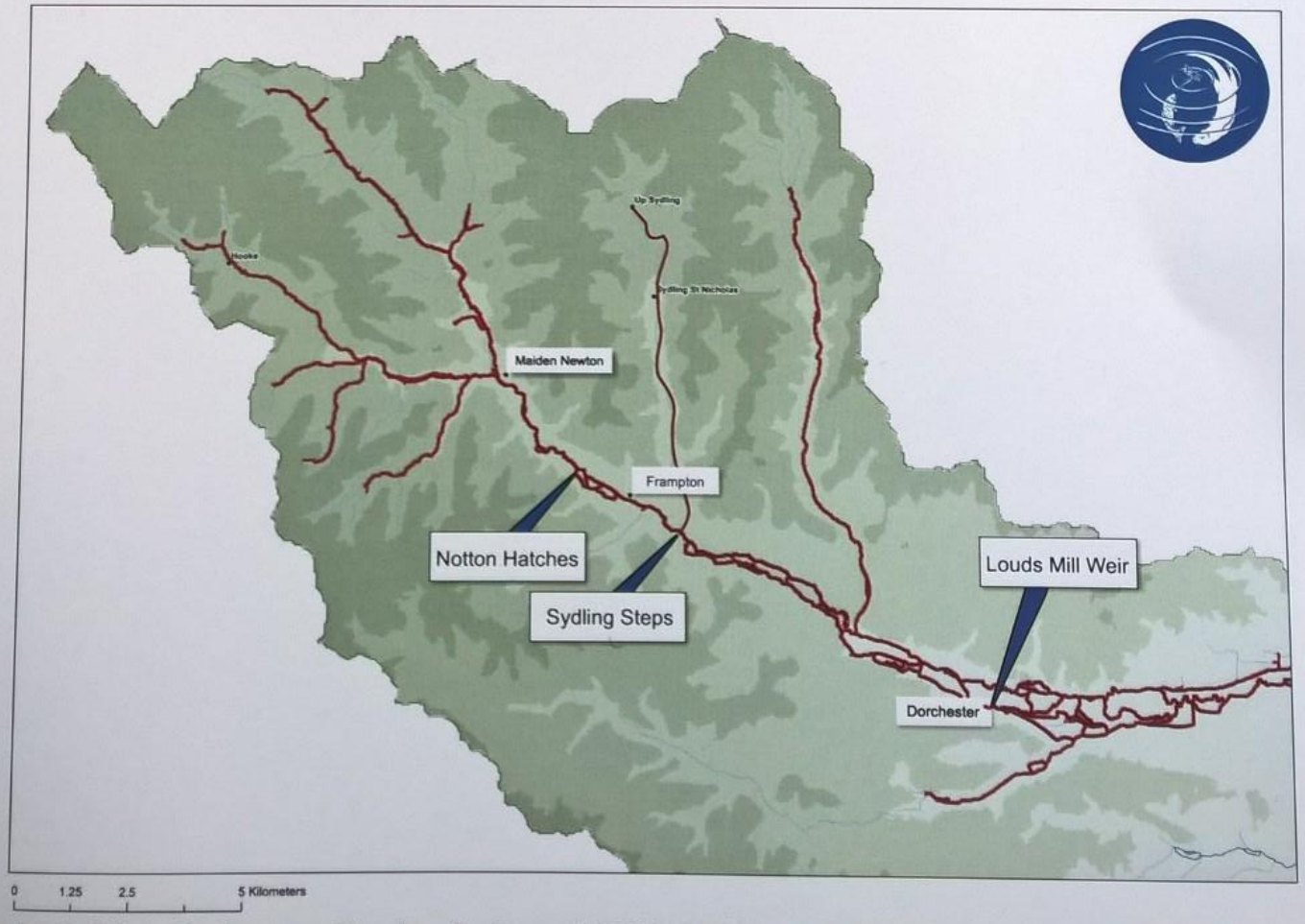
Dr Anton Ibbotson of The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust said:

"Survival of parr over their first winter to the smolt stage is greater in the Upper Frome than in the Lower Frome and, on average, you could say the survival is nearly twice as good."

Much of the upper catchment has never been populated with migratory salmonids, certainly in living memory, possible longer, despite having some of the best spawning gravels on the whole river system. This has been due to the many weirs and hatches which have now been by-passed.

Salmon and seatrout may over decades, populate the upper catchment for spawning, but with falling numbers of returning fish **and** more frequent winter floods, it is vital that we do all that we can to help Mother Nature repair herself, whilst stocks last.

We therefore considered four options, a) fry translocation, b) ova translocation, c) kelt reconditioning and d) parr translocation.
All have their pros and cons, but building on the science of Prof. Ken Whelan, the late Peter Grey and Dr Anton Ibbotson, we chose option d. This is supported by GWCT, WRT, CEEFAS and EA.



Contact: Vice Chairman, Charles Dutton: 01963 23161 or Dr Bruce Stockley: 01570 372 140

The Story So Far: Barrier work since 2006

Louds Mill Fish Pass. Open summer 2007

Notton Fish pass Open Jan 2015

The Sydling Brook artisan fish pass, before (left) and a new meander in the bypass channel

Annual Redd Count Since 1980

	80/81	82/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	92/93	07/08	Louds Mill Open	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 Upper Frome
Redd Count Frome Only	490	214	99	168	67								235	168	131	472	36 Upper Frome only	Flood	Pass Open in Dec 314
Redd Count Piddle only	338	99	77	130	61	151	109	123	73	84	No info				111	174	No info		180
Redds above Louds Mill (inc total)		12	25		4			17		12	4		44	44	23	131	18		61
Tagged Sea Trout														8	13	1	6	1	1
Estimated Fish Run by East Stoke	906	1546	131	2150		3409	3373	3018	1795	819	817	655	994	602	1058	1100	No info	Approx 343	Approx 350

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Support for the project

'This is a ground breaking project based on scientific findings of higher survival rates of young salmon in upper catchments. The Frome & Piddle Fishery Assoc. has worked for several decades to save & improve the salmon stocks in this beautiful chalk stream. This project is the next step in its program, following a decade of work in removing barriers throughout the river system. NASF welcomes and supports initiatives like this because they are vital tasks if we are to save the king of game fish. We wish all partners good luck with the project'.

Orri Vigfusson of NASF

"The Environment Agency has been working closely with FPWDFA, GWCT and WRT for many years to monitor assess and most importantly improve the salmon and sea trout stocks on the River Frome. We support the goal of the RAFT project and specifically its initial aim to survey the upper reaches of the Frome to identify and assess potential stocking out sites in the river".

Jim Flory of EA

"an interesting experiment which may have resonance on other rivers where parts of the catchment no longer produce salmon."

Roger Furniss of SWRA

'Over recent years the partnership between the FPWDFA, WRT and the EA has opened up areas of the Frome catchment to salmon migration, and we hope, recolonisation of the upper river. This new project aims to discover if we can assist the fish in this recolonisation by working with GWCT to translocate salmon juveniles from areas of low survival in the lower river, into the upper catchment, where survival can be expected to be higher. Its our aim to trial this method to discover if we can kick-start the recovery of the Frome salmon.'

Dr Bruce Stockey of WRT

"This work will provide an interesting insight into the freshwater ecology of salmon on the Frome. We are delighted to be working in association with our partners on the RAFT project and look forward to positive outcomes for salmon and sea trout survival on this beautiful chalk stream".

Prof Nick Sotherton, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.

'The European Environmental Bureau has recently estimated that some 80% of all river systems, by length, in Europe, comprise small streams. These are the arteries of the catchment. It is vitally important that we develop practical management techniques to reseed such areas with wild, juvenile salmon fry, so as to encourage returning adults to fully utilise these waterways. This is an exciting and innovative project, building on past experience in Wales and the West of Ireland. The Atlantic Salmon Trust is delighted to be associated with the Raft Project and we recommend it to you'.

Prof Ken Whelan of the Atlantic Salmon Trust

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