



Afon Wygyr Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project

Final Report January 2020

1. Introduction and Objectives

This report summarises the work carried out on the Afon Wygyr catchment on Anglesey to improve water quality and habitat. In 2017 the Clwyd, Conwy and Gwynedd Rivers Trust surveyed the habitat along the 10 largest rivers on Anglesey in the Anglesey Rivers Project funded by Anglesey Council's AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) (<http://ccgrt.org/anglesey-rivers-project-from-source-to-sea/>). This survey identified that the River Wygyr, which enters the sea at Cemaes, was affected in some areas by trampling of the river banks by cattle using the river for drinking, causing large quantities of silt and organic matter to enter the river. This was affecting bankside and instream habitats for fish and other wildlife. In addition, investigations by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) into the reasons for the poor quality of the bathing water at Cemaes showed that bacteria from agricultural sources in the river was contributing to the poor quality of the bathing water in 2017. In 2018 the Trust was successful in obtaining funding from Anglesey County Council's AONB SDF, NRW and Horizon Nuclear for a project to improve both the habitat and water quality on the River Wygyr.



Trampling of the riverbank by cattle

The work has focussed on the lower Wygyr and Meddanen catchments. Sites have been selected for monitoring by photographic records and river flylife monitoring by a trained volunteer and NRW. A restoration/management plan was produced for the lower river which includes notching of several weirs and management of woody debris, overgrown willows and bankside/marginal vegetation and repair of stock-proof fencing. The aim of this work is to restore a more natural pattern of river flows to reduce silt and nutrient deposition, improve access for fish and improve ecological



diversity and productivity. Stock proof fencing has been repaired and replaced in the lower river and an alternative borehole water supply to a series of drinking troughs has installed to enable cattle to be completely kept out of the lower river. The Trust has also been working closely with NRW and their monitoring and improvement work on the river



Weir restricting fish movement



Weir after 'notching' to ease access

Volunteers from the Keep Wales Tidy AONB Team, Welsh Water and Anglesey Council have been helping with some of the management of woody debris, overgrown willows and in-channel reeds.



A borehole was drilled to a depth of 100m giving an output of approx. 20-25 cubic meters per day. Water troughs for each of 12 fields with a 20000 litre storage tank



are now in position with water supplied from a three phase pumping system which will enable cattle to be totally excluded from the lower Wygyr and Meddanen.



Further work has taken place to replace broken access gates and repair fencing.



In June 2019 the Leslie Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs visited Cemaes and met the local farmer and partnership members working on the Project.

