

Westcountry Rivers Trust Report - 21/7/25

Info from Olivia Cresswell, Head of Fisheries & Ecology at Westcountry Rivers Trust, 21.7.25

We have begun our Devon Environment Foundation Shad eDNA (Environmental DNA) project collecting samples across the Taw catchment with angling volunteers. We hope to understand spatial distribution of Shad in the catchment throughout the summer – we are quite certain that both Twaite and Allis Shad are utilising the Taw, but we are not sure if they are successfully spawning. Any sightings including dead specimens is really useful information - if you could spread this word that would be great. The funding constraints meant we were slightly slow to start in the Shad migration window but hope that this project will lead to further monitoring and research in the future.

For our Water Restoration Project on the Taw, we will be carrying out field management trials and alternative cultivation options to reduce the impact of maize in the catchment, including options such as under sowing, living mulch, cover crops and riparian buffer strips of alternative crops (Miscanthus) or the use of sediment fences. This project runs until March 2028.

Julian Payne presented at the North Devon Catchment Partnership last week and has also been working on a river restoration feasibility piece for DCC at South Cott and Hall Estate.

Mark Haworth-Booth