



RRC Site Visit Series

Cynrig Hatchery, Brecon, Wales

Wednesday 20th September 2023

Join us at Cynrig Hatchery near Brecon to see the new freshwater pearl mussel rearing facility. Cynrig Hatchery is a facility managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) which delivers several captive breeding programmes for critically endangered aquatic animals. These include salmon, Arctic char, freshwater pearl mussels, white-clawed Crayfish and water voles.



Site visit leads
Dr John Taylor,
(Natural Resources Wales)
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(Four Rivers for LIFE)
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(Four Rivers for LIFE)

The Project

Construction work to upgrade the facility has been funded by the five-year EU LIFE funded Four Rivers for LIFE Project run by Natural Resources Wales. Additional financial support is also provided by Welsh Government and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.

A new agricultural-type barn construction has been erected on the site to provide additional space for rearing freshwater pearl mussels and fish. The new facility will ensure the services at the hatchery are of a high standard and in line with modern requirements.

The Hatchery is one of only two currently in existence in Wales and one of only two specialist freshwater pearl mussel hatcheries in the UK (the other is in Cumbria).

Cynrig exists purely as a conservation tool with the aim of restoring aquatic populations damaged by human activities.

Freshwater pearl mussel populations are critically endangered in Wales and are struggling due to habitat loss and dwindling fish stocks.

Their complex lifecycle includes a parasitic phase where pearl mussel glochidia attach to the gills of salmon or trout (see image). Healthy populations of salmon or trout are therefore critical for their early life stages.

In 2018 the hatchery's breeding programme was successful in breeding freshwater pearl mussels beyond six months of age for the first time.

This achievement was due to a new box rearing technique, pioneered by workers in Czech Republic, using sediment and algae for the first 8-10 months of the juvenile mussels' life.



Information

This site visit is **FREE to RRC members** (£10 deposit to be refunded following attendance at site visit). If space is available, non-members are welcome to attend at a cost of £30. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. To book a place please [complete a booking form at the link here](#). Booking closes when all spaces are allocated.

- The visit will start at 10:00 and end by 15:00. This will include time for a packed lunch (not supplied).
- Meeting point will be Cynrig Hatchery, Brecon LD3 7AQ
- There is a small car park on site, please car share where possible.
- Toilet facilities are available on site.

[Find out more](#)

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