



FISH EGG INCUBATORS

At the end of the 2019, we have successfully planted **fish incubators** in some of our rivers under direct FRIS management with several thousands of fertilized **brown trout eggs** (*Salmo trutta fario*, Linnaeus 1758). High brown trout egg loss rates can easily be caused during the natural spawning process by poor fertilization, deposited eggs not being successfully buried, fungus from dead eggs spreading to healthy eggs, attrition by predators like sculpins or other fish, predatory birds and sometimes silt suffocation. Using the system with incubators (various types) and carefully planting fertilized eggs, enables the percentage of the hatching success from egg to fry to increase to 65-95%, depending on the environmental factors.

In nature this number is roughly estimated to be from 5-20 %, with only around 1% of fish reaching the adult stage with mortality being the highest in their first year of life. Therefore it is essential to choose the right and ripe fish individuals (males and females), right environment and carefully follow the procedure even after the fry had already left the incubators. This kind of help for our domestic strain of brown trout is just one of the actions we are taking to preserve the healthy wild fish population in our rivers and lakes.

After a trend of decline of fish numbers in the last decade we are slowly noticing positive trends in the opposite direction. The numbers of healthy smaller fish are recovering and getting higher, but the biggest challenge that still remains is preserving the adults and avoid the damage caused to them by predatory birds.



Figure 1: FRIS employee sets the incubators with indigenous brown trout egg in a clean water stream.