



## SOUTH EAST FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

October 2012

### Salmon on the Thames – London



Adrian Bicknell (Fisheries Officer West Thames) holding two salmon grilse that were caught recently at our trap at Molesey on the Thames. It's felt that the higher river flows this year have encouraged a number of salmon to return to the Thames. The fish were quickly returned to river after being tagged.

Two Thames salmon at Molesey trap

### Improving Fish Passage on the Itchen Navigation - Hampshire

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund we have nearly completed a bypass channel at the redundant Malms Lock on the Itchen Navigation, which will address a priority obstruction to fish passage, bank instability, an impoundment and siltation.

The now-obsolete lock was a complete barrier to fish passage and impounded water, which negatively impacted on the channel's condition and jeopardised the integrity of the Navigation's banks for several hundred meters upstream. A close-to-nature channel has now been constructed adjacent to the historic waterway which will enable fish and other aquatic species to move more freely and improve flows.



Dennis Bright

River Itchen Malms fish bypass channel

To facilitate fish movement the bypass channel has been designed to provide the appropriate flow conditions by careful use of gradient, channel profile, armouring, planting and positioning of rocks and gravel.

To improve the in-channel conditions upstream of the lock, water velocity has been increased and the depth reduced which will ease the pressure on crumbling banks and keep the gravel bed clear of silt.

These works will remedy many of the reasons for failure of this section of the Navigation under the Water Framework Directive.

## Developing angling across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Sussex and Kent



Developing angling across the south

Brian Smart, the Angling Trust and Environment Agency Southern Counties Angling Development Officer has had a busy summer.

Working with partners over 3,000 people have been introduced to angling for the first time since the 1<sup>st</sup> April through a programme of fishing events. With the support of trained coaches from the Angling Trust, the Game Anglers Instructors Association and the Professional Anglers Association events have been organised across the south coast including at waters in the New Forest, Southampton, Portsmouth, Andover, Crawley, Hastings, Dartford, the Isle of Sheppey and the Isle of Wight.

Most of the events have been fully booked, which shows the continued popularity of the sport. If you know of a venue near you that would be suitable for staging an event speak to Brian on 07771624247.

## Candover Stream restoration works helps wild brown trout – Hampshire

Following work to improve the Candover Stream, which was carried out in partnership with the Wild Trout Trust and the Game Conservancy, a recent fish survey has shown a marked improvement in brown trout.

The fish survey took place this September over a 100m stretch of river and 39 brown trout were caught which ranged in size from 80-215mm in length. This compared to 23 brown trout, size 81-123mm, caught in a pre-enhancement work survey. The larger trout were predominantly caught in the deeper water that had been created during the work.



Monitoring the Candover Stream

Part of the work included fencing the stretch and as a result of keeping the cattle out the channel has narrowed itself as vegetation has grown in which has sustained water velocity, cleaned the gravel of silt and provided much needed cover for the trout.

## Hampshire wages war on poachers - Hampshire

The Environment Agency has announced a major crackdown on poaching across all of Hampshire's rivers, streams and estuaries following a recent sharp rise in fish theft and illegal angling taking place in the county.

## MORPH delivering improvements on the Sussex Ouse – Sussex

Work is underway at four sites on the River Ouse following the completion of detailed designs, gaining landowner permission and appointing Blackwells as the contractor. At Spring Farm Meander,

upstream of Sheffield Park, meanders are being reinstated to enhance river and floodplain habitats as the river had been historically straightened for navigation. At Sharpsbridge and East Mascalls fish passage is being improved through road culverts to enable the free passage of fish. At Buxted Park on the River Uck a weir is being removed that has been a long standing barrier to fish movement and river and wetland habitat is being restored.



Enhancement work at Spring Farm Meander on the River Ouse

At Sheffield Park, Anchor Sluice and Sutton Hall, we have completed our options appraisal report. Our plan is to reach an agreed preferred option for each site and have completed the detailed designs in preparation for construction next financial year.

On our 'further consideration' sites at Deans Mill/Pimms Lock, Hempstead Mill and Isfield Mill, we are at the early stages of consultation. These remain priorities and we are gathering information and talking to people about potential options at these sites.

At Ardingly and Goldbridge we have completed outline designs for two options: a) removing the weir and b) either constructing a bypass channel or adding a technical fish pass. Barcombe requires further consideration as the site is so complex.

In taking a more strategic catchment wide approach to flow gauging that takes into account WFD needs, we are working with Royal Haskoning and Hydrologic to review our flow gauging sites on the Adur and Ouse. Our Telemetry and Hydrometry User Group is providing invaluable help and support for the project. By Christmas we hope to have completed the hydrometric review.

For more: Helen Godfrey and Sally Chadwick, [morph@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:morph@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### **The Thames annual electrofishing boom boat surveys produced some of the best fish numbers of recent years.**

**There were 17 different fish species caught on the Thames between Oxford and Hurley and nearly 8000 fish were caught in total. The diversity of fish species on the Thames is excellent, however there is one species that seems to be fin and tails above the other species and that is everyone's real favourite, the roach!**

There were just under 6000 roach caught on the surveys ranging from fish of a few ounces to fish of well over the pound mark, with the real hotspots around Caversham, Abingdon and Henley. There were no areas that were really poor and you could expect to catch roach all the way from Oxford to Hurley, and also some really nice quality fish as well. The numbers of smaller roach were very encouraging and you should expect excellent roach catches to continue over the next few years. You never know the Mighty Thames could become THE roach mecca in the country!



The Boom Boat in action on the Thames

So what has produced this roach explosion? The Thames is very different in all its individual reaches, tributaries, islands, marinas, backwaters and floodplain connectivity all of which contribute to the Thames in their own way. This normally leads to different results from one reach to another, the common theme this year is the sheer number of roach that have been caught in all the reaches surveyed. A good example of this is the Hambleden stretch. This is a stretch that normally produces a few larger fish, pike and carp are normally on the cards, with smaller silver fish few and far between. This year 738 roach were caught and the site produced the highest numbers of dace caught on the Thames surveys this year.

The low flows over the last few years are something that impacts all the reaches of the

Thames though and this impacts different species in different ways. What it does mean is that the smaller fish born in the spring do not have to fight against high flows, food availability is much higher and the shallow areas of the river are much warmer. All this adds up to a much fitter healthier fish that can combat the rigors of their first winter that much better. This means that more fish born that year survive their first winter, which in turn means more fish to be caught!



The EA's Adam Hilliard gets to grips with a Thames roach

### **National Fishing Month – MBK Leisure Fisheries and Get Activ8'd – Sussex**

MBK Leisure Fisheries in Rake, West Sussex, which is a commercial stillwater with the support of East Hampshire's Get Activ8'd program ran angling events throughout the summer to give youngsters a chance to try angling.

The Get Activ8'd programme provides 8 and 16 years old the opportunity to try new activities for free during school holidays, except Christmas. It has run for five years and every year angling gets even more popular.

At an event on the 23 August run by MBK Leisure, Andy Loble of our Sussex Fisheries and Biodiversity Team provided coaching alongside other Angling Trust coaches to an enthusiastic group of children.

Andy Loble said: "It was a fantastic day with the children learning lots of new skills including fish identification, how to cast, play and land fish, fish handling and much more."



"I just want to give a huge thank you to the owners of the fishery, Kenny and Kendra for putting on the day and to all those who gave up their time to help. Everyone left with smiles on their faces and were keen to give fishing another go."

Children have a go at fishing

For more information about East Hampshire's Get Activ8'd, The Environment Agency's National Fishing Month and MBK Leisure's fishing complex please follow the links below.

[www.mbkleisures.co.uk](http://www.mbkleisures.co.uk) ; [www.getactivenow.co.uk](http://www.getactivenow.co.uk) ; [www.nationalfishingmonth.com](http://www.nationalfishingmonth.com)

Across the region we have been actively promoting angling as part of national fishing month, which was a great success with hundreds of people taking part.

### Ouse Upstream Thinking (OUT) Project - Sussex

Less of this...



South East Water settlement tanks

And more of this!



Enhanced river channel with clean gravel

Ouse Upstream Thinking is an SSD East Fisheries & Biodiversity collaborative project working with South East Water and the University of Brighton, which has been initially funded by the Adur/Ouse pilot project.

Simon Lohrey took on the role of Ouse Upstream Thinking Project Officer in May 2012 to explore opportunities for ecosystem services in the Ouse catchment. Put simply, this means finding ways to reduce suspended solids levels, faecal pollution, fertiliser and pesticide related chemicals entering the watercourse upstream so that South East Water doesn't have to remove them downstream thus reducing their water treatment costs! Simon hopes to provide South East Water with robust evidence that demonstrates that funding these upstream improvements is cost effective so that they will continue to fund the work in future years via the Periodic Review 2014.

In gathering evidence and tackling these upstream issues, Jane Birch from our SSD East Fisheries and Biodiversity Team, started working with the University of Brighton during autumn 2011 to gain match funding and support through an INTERREG project bid called RiskManche. We were delighted to hear in June 2012 that the project was successful and secured €2.2million in what was an intense National and European competition.

The University of Brighton's RiskManche project will contribute specialist skills and knowledge in the field of microbial ecology to the OUT project. It will develop and apply novel tools to help identify where and when pressures on the catchment resulting from faecal inputs are likely to be most severe. This newly generated data will be used to inform the development of integrated catchment management modelling tools that can be applied to other catchments outside of the region.

To ensure a strong link between OUT and RiskManche and the wider community, Simon Lohrey chairs The Surface Water Quality Steering Group for the Adur & Ouse Catchment Pilot.

### **Eton College – River Thames**

In June West Thames fisheries team members Steve Sheridan, Matt Drew & Stuart Keable were invited to Eton College by Grounds Manager John Taylor (pictured). Both parties are keen to work closely together to improve fish habitat on the important Romney weir stream of the River Thames which passes through the Eton estate. Water Framework Directive waterbodies the Salt Hill Stream and Chalvey Ditch also cross the estate. Ideas were shared for habitat improvement and protection, with an agreement to meet later in the year to start work on a fish refuge.



Eton Grounds Manager, John Taylor with the EA Fisheries team on the River Thames.

### **Angling access improvements at Gogmore Farm, Chertsey – River Thames**

The Environment Agency has teamed up with Runnymede Borough Council to improve and encourage angling access on the River Bourne at Gogmore Farm, Chertsey. With EA funding, July saw work start on 3 new fishing swims which, in addition to able bodied anglers, will facilitate access to wheelchair users. Distinguished local resident Tony Babbage OBE, a lifelong angler and campaigner on community issues recently attended the site along with Runnymede Parks and



Amenities Manager Peter Winfield, Council Engineer, Faouzi Saffar and EA Fisheries Officer Stuart Keable. The swims will be officially opened later this summer.

Tony Babbage OBE (centre) with Runnymede Borough Council's Peter Winfield and Faouzi Saffar at Gogmore Farm, Chertsey.

### Work at Lock Weir sites – River Thames

This summer has seen the start of a comprehensive review of access and facilities at the EA's Lock and Weir Permit fishing sites on the lower non-tidal Thames. Following the submission of a detailed report from the Thames Anglers' Conservancy, officers from Fisheries and Biodiversity were quick to address the challenge with a program of improvements expected to last well into next year. Kicking things off in July, a group from Frimley office descended on Sunbury Lock Island where they put their skills with a chainsaw to good use by clearing willows that had overgrown a number of the fishing swims.



Fisheries' Matt Drew gets to grips with a willow at Sunbury Lock Island

Consultative groups on the river are a vital touchstone for EA Fisheries throughout West Thames. Having opened the Penton Hook spawning channel at the popular lock and weir site over a decade ago, it has become a focus for voluntary groups working to improve fish passage and spawning habitat on the reach. In a recent initiative to protect the spawning channel from littering and vandalism, the EA erected a stretch of post and rail fencing in keeping with the rustic character of the island. Some additional fencing was installed adjacent the main weir pool and back planted with hawthorn to delineate angling swims and improve safe access to the water.



New post and rail fencing at Penton Hook Island protects public and nature alike

## **Geomorphology Technical Specialist appointed Sussex Fisheries and Biodiversity Team – Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight**



Dr Rebecca Westlake has recently been appointed as our in-house Geomorphology Technical Specialist for Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Rebecca will provide expert geomorphological input to coastal, estuarine and fluvial projects, working across all Environment Agency functions and at all levels from strategic down to more local projects. She will be considering all aspects of river, coastal or estuary form, sediment dynamics and links to catchment ecology and land use. This understanding is essential in realising the sustainable management of water bodies and the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives.

Dr Rebecca Westlake  
geomorphologist

Rebecca possesses a PhD in coastal geomorphology, researching shoreline morphodynamics, and the behaviour of both offshore and inter tidal bars, and how they promote varying levels of shoreline change; and has worked as a university lecturer and consultant. In her latter role she worked on projects such river restoration schemes, bridge construction, harbour and marina developments, marine licensing, offshore wind farms, and several coastal and marine Environmental Impact Assessments.

## **Cookham to join lock and weir permit scheme – River Thames**



With plans well advanced for Cookham weir stream to be added to the popular lock and weir fishing permit scheme, the British Disabled Angling Association (BDAA) represented by President, Terry Moseley and Access Officer, Carey Sutton were invited to view the proposed site and conduct an audit to review its potential for disabled anglers. With disabled toilet facilities already on site it is hoped that Cookham will be a valuable new addition to the permit later this year.

Terry Moseley and Carey Sutton of the BDAA

For information on current fishing opportunities at EA lock and weir sites on the river Thames and details on

how to obtain your permit, visit

<http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/135005.aspx>

## **Watch out the Enforcement Team are about! – West Thames**

The work carried out by our Enforcement Officers nationwide often goes unheralded but is essential in helping promote the development and protection of freshwater fisheries. Capturing those that do not hold a licence will help lower the evasion rate and encourage more people to buy a rod licence. This ultimately means more money is then invested into fisheries to the benefit of all anglers! As well as rod licence checking the Enforcement team also carry out work to prevent illegal fishing and unconsented fish introductions. We recently joined forces with Elmbridge Borough Council on a joint patrol of the borough's fishing sites. Elmbridge's John Snook leads a team of security officers

Report by Environment Agency South East

Editor: Lawrence Talks, South East Strategic Fisheries Specialist

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dedicated to enforcing byelaws on council parks and amenities and was joined by EA Fisheries Enforcement Officer, Mark Sainthouse and Fisheries Technical Officer, Stuart Keable. After a briefing from Parks Development Officer, Jenny Richardson at Esher Civic Centre patrols were conducted at several popular sites on the River Thames. Despite the rainy weather, anglers were out in force and several expressed their pleasure at seeing both organisations working together.



EA's Mark Sainthouse (left) and John Snook of Elmbridge Borough Council (right) with license holding anglers at Cigarette Island on the River Thames

With many miles of public fishing access on 'Old Father Thames' and banks owned by both local councils and the Environment Agency, effective enforcement requires cross-agency cooperation. In August a night patrol was organised by Fisheries to target not just illegal fishing, but also lock and weir permit sites and banks controlled by Elmbridge Borough Council Parks and Recreation. Participating were EA Fisheries Enforcement, Waterways Enforcement, Elmbridge Security Patrol and 3 officers from Surrey Police. Several offence reports were raised for rod licence evasion. Further such patrols are planned

## Did you know?

- You can fish for free anywhere on the nontidal Thames downstream of Staines Bridge to Teddington where there is public access.
- The Lower Thames is one of the Country's best coarse fisheries capable of producing specimens of virtually any freshwater species!
- For further information on free fishing on the Thames visit [www.visitthames.co.uk](http://www.visitthames.co.uk)



From left to right, representatives from Elmbridge Security Patrol, EA Waterways Enforcement, Surrey Police and EA Fisheries Enforcement patrolling the banks of the lower non-tidal Thames in August

Fisheries Enforcement boat patrols on the Basingstoke Canal, River Wey and Thames have also recently been undertaken. Using a small boat and outboard engine many miles of water can be patrolled in a day. This allows access to areas which

cannot be patrolled from the bank. During a recent patrol enforcement officers have seized illegal traps and were able carry out rod licence checks at many locations. Boat Patrols will continue be a regular part of our enforcement work for the coming spring and closed season.



Out on Patrol. Mick Cox with a seized illegal crayfish trap!

### **Improving eel passage through culverts a collaborative project with Southampton University – South East**

success of yellow European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) through culverts, whilst testing debris reducing baffle designs.

**Abstract:** The study has proved that corner baffles do make culverts more passable for eels. When corner baffles were installed into the base of a culvert, eel passage success increased from 28% to 80%. This was a significant increase that in the field would be critical in helping the free movement of eels. It was also encouraging to see that this increased passage success was maintained when slopes were installed on to the back of the corner baffles (debris-reducing baffle, success remained at 80% passage). This suggests that there is potential to reduce the number of culvert blockage events without compromising the passage efficiency of corner baffles. Therefore, the new debris-reducing baffle, as designed by the Environment Agency, may be a solution to eel and fish pass issues at culverts, while minimising the risk of flooding, by reducing the build-up of debris that can occur between baffles over time. (M. Woods 'Passage success of yellow European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) through culvert fishways: new, debris-reducing baffle design tested'. 2011)



Water velocity reducing baffles that are designed so as not to get clogged up by debris improved eel passage significantly.

## Connect With The Countryside Day at South of England Showground, Ardingly - Sussex

Over 2000 children from across Sussex spent a day finding out about many different aspects of rural life. 'Connect With The Countryside' is an initiative of the South of England Agricultural Society. The aim is to inspire teachers to look at ways they can use the countryside in greater depth when teaching the curriculum and allow pupils direct access to a wide range of animals and farming practices in a real hands-on way.



Children learn about wetland wildlife

At the event our team had trays of invertebrates from a nearby stream on show for the kids to identify. Damon's Fish ID poster was as always popular, if they could only identify one fish you could guarantee it was the Wels Catfish. The newts from the pond however were the star of the show. It was a great opportunity to pass on some knowledge in a really fun interactive way.

## Wet summer helps Salmon returns – River Thames



Adrian Bicknell with a freshly run Thames Salmon

Whilst most of us have been moaning about the incredibly wet summer the Thames Salmon have definitely not! Throughout August 9 salmon were captured in the Environment Agency's salmon trap on the lower freshwater River Thames. Regular rainfall this summer has ensured a good attraction flow through Molesey salmon trap which is checked twice a week by fisheries officers. Water in the concrete built salmon trap is drained down and the adult salmon are caught, weighed and measured. Scale samples are taken from individual fish to determine age and source of the fish. Each adult salmon has an easily visible floy tag attached to its dorsal fin with an individual identification number to monitor progress upstream to spawning grounds.

For further information on Thames Salmon please contact Adrian Bicknell on 01276 454383.

## West Thames EA lends our West Country cousins a helping hand!

A major fisheries incident across the border in EA South West region saw assistance from EA regions across the country in helping prevent a major disaster. Heavy summer rainfall caused inundation of the Somerset Levels. The added nutrients washed into the drains and rivers caused a crash in Oxygen Levels. Fish were in distress and there were already some mortalities.



Fisheries Officers at Wallingford responded to the plea for help by delivering and deploying our AirO2 aerator. This was located on the River Parrott at Huish Episcope. We also loaned South West staff a smaller aerator and a 2" pump and venturi. Aeration was carried out for many weeks and the number of fish mortalities would have been much higher without this assistance. This was a good example of inter-regional assistance: aeration was also provided by other teams and regions. It demonstrates the sort of help we could expect if we had a major incident in our area.

The Air O2 in action on the Somerset Levels

### **Fisheries boffins use science to protect Weirpool habitat – River Thames**

Rushey Weir is one of the 43 weirs on the main River Thames. Recent investigations identified that the old paddle and rymer weir was in a dangerous state and was in urgent need of repair. The weir is now being rebuilt with a new radial gated structure and a new fish bypass channel.



Work underway at Rushey Weir – River Thames

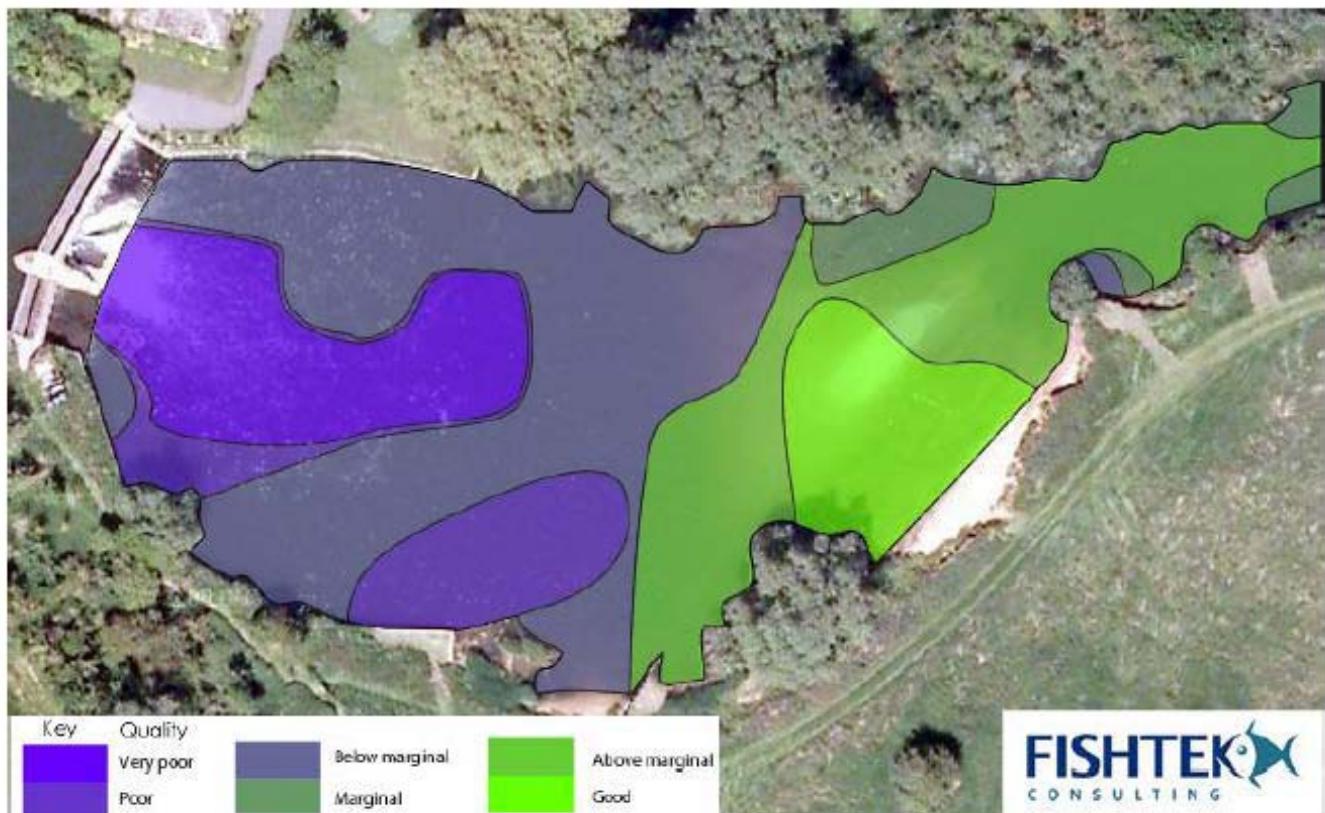
The weirpool below Rushey weir is widely considered to be one of the best areas of fish spawning habitat in the Upper Thames. The weirs, their impounding effect, and the presence of a navigation on the Thames all serve to make this shallow gravel habitat that is found below Rushey weir really important for maintaining fish populations and meeting our obligations under the Water Framework Directive to get this waterbody to Good status. This habitat has been formed and maintained by the operation of the existing Paddle and Rymer weir at the site, which has kept it in good condition for the living memory of all the Rushey weirpool anglers.

Inevitably the new weir will change some of the flow patterns in the weirpool. The concern for the Project was that there is a risk that it could cause a

deterioration in the fish habitat, washing it away or increasing sedimentation on it as the velocities and energy differs. We don't think that this will happen, but we need to be sure, so we have carried out a range of surveys that will create a baseline condition for the weirpool. These include:

- routine electric fishing surveys in this reach of the Thames
- Acoustic Doppler Current Profile (ADCP) surveys of the weirpool to assess the flow streams and velocities
- Bathymetry over several years to assess the extent of the gravels

- habitat mapping of the weirpool to assess the quality and quantity of fish habitat
- a hydromorphological assessment of the weirpool
- real-time monitoring of water quality in the weirpool to determine whether there was significant siltation as a result of the weir works that might impact on downstream gravels



An example of some of the habitat mapping

We will repeat the surveys after the weir and fish pass are built and have had a chance to settle in. Hopefully show that there has been no deterioration, and preferably that there has been an improvement. Any reduction in quality or quantity will have to be made good by mitigation or compensation.

### **Work begins on new fish passage on Thames in Oxford - River Thames**

Construction has just begun on a new fish pass that will help fish negotiate a number of impassable weirs in the centre of Oxford. The new fish pass is being built on the Iffley Weirs stream near Donnington Bridge and will see a new channel that will not only allow fish passage but should hopefully provide new spawning opportunities for gravel spawning species such as chub, barbel, dace and gudgeon.



The new fish pass channel under construction

The above picture shows one of the first stages of the construction. The channel has been dug to a single level and takes into account an important peat layer that has interested Oxford Archaeologists. The layer is important as it contains the remnants of pollen, seeds and other vegetative matter that has lain preserved in the peat. Once this layer has been looked at the machine operator can introduce the required gradient to the channel.

Intake and off take structures will be set at the head and tail of the fish pass and finally a dressing of gravel will be introduced. Reinstatement of the topsoil and some softer bankworks will go to make this channel look as natural as possible. It is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of October.

### **Meet our newest member of staff! – West Thames**

We are pleased to welcome Karen Twine to the West Thames Fisheries Team. Karen will be taking over the reigns as the Loddon Catchment Fisheries Officer. Karen will be an excellent addition to the team as she already has a good amount of fisheries knowledge and is a barbell expert.



Karen radio tracking barbel

“Before joining the Fisheries Team in West Thames area, I was involved in a three year research project, funded by the Environment Agency, which focused on barbel in the River Great Ouse. Investigations into the barbell population included radio tracking 20 adult wild barbel, identifying spawning gravels, assessing gravel quality, measuring larval drift and establishing the distribution of ‘young’ barbel. Initial findings were presented at a Barbel Open Day, organised by Hull International Fisheries Institute and the EA. I have enjoyed my first three weeks working in the Loddon Catchment and I am looking forward to getting involved in many more projects.

## **Environment Agency owned Park Wood provides sustainable materials and is a haven for wildlife - Sussex**



Endangered Hazel dormice

Park Wood is a 60 hectare ancient semi-natural woodland near Hailsham owned by the Environment Agency. The Wood is a valuable asset to us and is closely managed by Operations Delivery and Fisheries and Biodiversity colleagues to ensure the needs of biodiversity are met alongside timber production. The wood is under coppice rotation, including 20 hectares of Sweet Chestnut trees, and this year we replanted over 2000 new trees. The timber produced has numerous uses such as post and rail fencing around structures, fencing posts for general work, faggots for river bank stabilisation and poles for pole wharfing on the tidal River Ouse. The timber is processed at a local wood mill; this is paid for using excess timber therefore creating an entirely sustainable process. The wood provides a haven for many rare and important species including the endangered Hazel Dormice. We have recently installed 50 new nest boxes in Park Wood and these will be used to carry out monthly monitoring between May and November. This data is submitted to the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme which is aiming to build up a better picture of dormouse distribution and abundance across the UK.

For more information please contact [richard.whyman@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:richard.whyman@environment-agency.gov.uk) or [rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Repairing K dams in New Forest

## **Fish passage improvement for sea trout in the New Forest - Hampshire**

We have recently been working in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and Alaska Environmental Consultants to carry out much needed repair work to a fish easement on the Bratley Water, a tributary of the Lymington River, in the New Forest.

The structure which is in the form of a pool and traverse fish easement formed by two "k" dams needs repairing following the heavy rainfall over the summer months. The increase in flows resulted in one of the structures becoming compromised and water levels in the pool

above it dropping making the structure impassable to sea trout.

The structure was originally constructed about 6 years ago and was intended to provide passage through an 'Irish' ford which until then was impassable to ascending fish. The spawning habitat upstream of this location is pristine and the Solent team and Forestry Commission are now working towards a more sustainable and long term solution to the issue at this site.

Contact: [paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Sea trout on the River Hamble

### **Fish survey shows sea trout upstream of Botley Mill fish pass on the River Hamble – Hampshire**

The Botley Mill fish pass was installed three years ago to bypass a mill structure that had prevented sea trout getting up the River Hamble for hundreds of years. A fish survey has now shown that at long last sea trout are able to migrate up stream which is superb news.

Dave Coombs from Portsmouth & District says that a few sea trout have been caught by anglers upstream of the pass.

Dominic Longley who carried out the survey said:  
"It has certainly turned a couple of very dull survey sites into explosively exciting ones!"

### **Don't dump pet fish into the wild – Kent**



Pet fish dumped into the River Stour

We issued a press release warning the public that 'pet' fish and non-native fish should not be placed into their local streams, rivers and lakes because they are breaking the law. The reminder comes after fisheries officers were called to remove non-native fish found in a stream beside the Great Stour, Kent.

The fish, including at least 50 goldfish, were found by a Mid Kent Fisheries bailiff and reported to the Environment Agency. It is likely that the fish were put into the river from a garden pond. When ornamental fish are released into rivers they can spread disease and parasites to other fish.

For information about non-native fish, see the Environment Agency's website.

## River enhancement at Godinton on the River Stour – Kent

Working with the Wild Trout Trust, Godinton Piscatorials, the Godinton House Preservation Trust and the Nineveh Trust the project's aim was to restore a 500m section of the upper Great Stour in Kent, which had suffered from a long legacy of maintenance dredging that had left a silt-filled channel choked with emergent reed.



Andy Thomas of the Wild trout Trust battles through the over deep, wide, silty and choked river channel



Work in progress: Peel back emergent reed and soft sediment, introduce 1000 tonnes of gravel to raise the bed and then squash back the reedy mass into the margins.



By carefully raising the bed whilst working upstream and shaping a regime of pool, riffle and glide a river suddenly appeared!



Newly created shallow gravel glides were given shape and structure by introducing LWD flow deflectors to help scour and sort the new bed material.



Upstream water levels were constantly monitoring during the introduction of gravels. Increases in water levels at the upstream limit of the fishery were only 100mm higher following the introduction of

50 lorry loads of 20-40mm gravel. It is expected that river levels will rise once the new plant species have become established. Improved conveyance is expected now that the environment is more suited to flow loving submerged plants rather than the total blockage with large emergent reeds found throughout the reach prior to the project. The section now looks to be ideal for supporting a range of flow loving and gravel spawning fish species, as well as being greatly improved environment for native crayfish.

For further information please contact Andy Thomas: [athomas@wildtrout.org](mailto:athomas@wildtrout.org)  
tel: 07876-525499



### **Going Batty for the Hermitage Stream - Hampshire**

Prior to undertaking further enhancement work on the Hermitage Stream in Havant our fisheries and biodiversity staff have been carrying out an ecological assessment and looking at potential impacts on legally protected species, including bats. By doing this work in-house it is a major cost saving for the project.



Bechstein's bat



Hermitage Stream

Bat detector surveys along the stream corridor and capture surveys helped to identify a range of bat species including pipistrelle and bechstein.

The Hermitage Stream Restoration Project is a partnership project that will restore the Hermitage Stream to a more natural state. The project, currently at design stage, will deliver 1.6km of restored channel and enhance the adjoining stream corridor for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The stream is currently situated within an uninteresting concrete lined, over-wide trapezoidal channel. The river is designated as a heavily modified water body (HMWB) under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), and is currently at Moderate Ecological Potential. This project seeks to improve the quality of the stream, contributing towards meeting Good Ecological Potential (GEP).

The Hermitage stream runs through Leigh Park in Havant and it is hoped that the project will play a major role in local regeneration through providing a stream corridor that the community can be proud of and enjoy for many years to come.

For further Information Contact [adam.cave@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:adam.cave@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## In the news



## Follow us on Twitter – West Thames

You can now follow the **West Thames Fisheries Team's** activities on Twitter. Catch up to date news on enhancements, surveys, incidents and much, much more by going to [www.twitter.com/MattDrewEA](http://www.twitter.com/MattDrewEA) or @MattDrewEA by searching on Twitter.

Recent tweets include:

- Had over ten different species in the #electrofishing survey on the #fish bypass channel on the R #Loddon at #Arborfield! Pics soon!
- Emergency aeration equipment has been deployed at a #fishery near #Newbury after we responded to a low oxygen #incident. Photos soon!
- Chainsaws, wooden stakes, sledgehammers, wire, dry suits and PPE! Another day of improving fish habitat on the #Loddon #Fishliveintrees

- Seine netting finished and one very wet #LandRover at the end. Also one very wet #Fisheries officer! pic.twitter.com/dJIB7aL3
- Myself and colleagues arranging some rock pools on the #Letcombe Brook to aid salmonid fish passage upstream. pic.twitter.com/zer6HjGs

### **The net draws in round Goldsworth Park! - Woking**

Environment Agency Fisheries Officers have carried out a fish population survey at Goldsworth Park Lake in Woking

With the help of local anglers a one hundred metre seine net was laid across the water using a small boat and engine. The net was pulled in several times capturing many of the different species of fish which are present within the lake.



Hard at it! Carrying out the fish survey at Goldsworth Park

Fish species including bream, roach, perch, pike, carp and tench were measured for length and scale samples were taken to determine the fish age. Also a sample of fish was taken to the Environment Agency's laboratory to examine for fish parasites and general health of the population. Information collected on the survey will be used to collate a fisheries management report which will give guidance for future fisheries management practice at Goldsworth Park and retain the lake as a healthy fishery. This piece of work is just part of a large project ongoing at Goldsworth Park Lake to

improve marginal plants and habitat for fish and wildlife. For further information on the Goldsworth Park Lake project please call Adrian Bicknell on 01276 454383

### **Rod Licence Checks – West Thames**

Our Enforcement Officers in West Thames checked 5406 anglers for rod licences in July, August and September. Of those 176 failed to produce a valid licence. These anglers have been reported for possible prosecution.

### **Fisheries Resilience Fund - Kent**

We have been working with local angling clubs to increase the resilience of their fisheries and better enable them to monitor and respond to incidents themselves.

The Fisheries Resilience Fund allows angling clubs in Kent the chance to receive rod licence funding to purchase aeration equipment to use at their fisheries. This will enable the clubs to be proactive in fisheries management during times of environmental stress, such as drought, flooding or pollution incidents. By having equipment directly at their disposal, they are now able to keep a close eye on water quality, manage their fisheries in a sustainable manner and respond promptly when required. This will be a much more effective, efficient and economical approach than relying on third parties for provision of such equipment. To date some 30 angling clubs across Kent & South London have taken up this offer. For more contact Nick Brain: [nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## **PhD to help salmon – Hampshire**

We are supporting a PhD with Southampton University on: The effects of exposure to low dissolved oxygen on the fitness of incubating salmonid embryos; a field and laboratory investigation.

For more contact: [tim.sykes@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:tim.sykes@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## **R'eel'y Good News - Hampshire**

With the collapse of the European eel population over the last 30yrs and the number of elvers returning to European rivers falling to less than 5% of 1980's levels. It is no surprise that eels in general are having a hard time.

With the Environment Agency working hard to improve elver passage and new Eel Management Plans in force to protect stocks it is great news when eel fisheries voluntarily reduce the number of adult eels they take.



Eel rack on the River Test

The famous Houghton Club on the River Test runs 2 of 6 licensed racks in Hampshire. Having heard of the plight of the local eel populations the Houghton Club have voluntarily reduced the number of eels their racks take. Historically these highly efficient racks could take as many as 1000kg of adult eels per season. The club has now reduced its catch to 90kg with those being caught distributed to club members only. That is about 180 eels.

Heb Leman of the local F&B team said: "This is a great boost for the adult eel population of the river Test and hopefully the actions of the Houghton Club will set an example for others to follow. The action will also improve river channel habitat as the river will not be diverted through the racks and less boards will be used allowing the river to flow faster in the location of the racks."

Leckford Estate, which is owned by John Lewis partnership no longer operates its eel rack on the River Test in response to the state of the eel population.

## **Olympics – North East Thames**

Our fisheries officers were busy during the Olympics helping to deploy mobile aeration units to protect fish populations at sites on the River Lee in East London near the Olympic Park. The Lee suffers from poor water quality in this area due to the heavily urbanised environment through which it flows, which can cause oxygen levels to sag under certain conditions. Our mobile 'doughnut' aerators provided a useful boost of aerated water at sites like 3 Mills Marina, where fish tend to gather in shoals away from the main flow. "We worked



alongside the marina and the boat owners, who were really keen to help us protect the fish" said Rob Pearson – fisheries officer.

The Olympics ceremony made reference to Britain's industrial past and the Lee catchment has suffered its fair share of impact from urbanisation and industrialisation, all of which has impacts on habitat and fish populations.

We are working hard to address some of these problems including improving water quality, and habitat enhancements. For more details look on our website or obtain a copy of the Lee Fisheries Action Plan from our regional offices.

For more: [Richard.tyner@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.tyner@environment-agency.gov.uk)

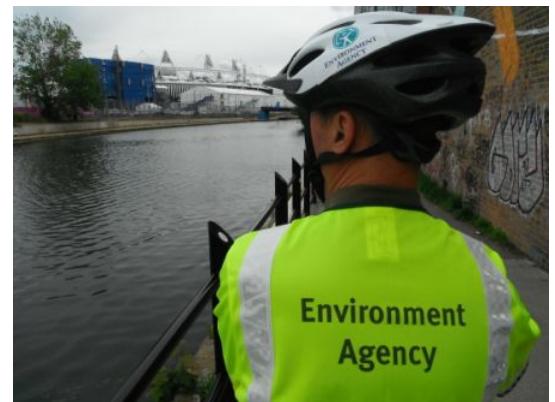
### **On your bike! – North East Thames**



In a new initiative our North East Thames fisheries enforcement officers are out and about using bicycles to cover miles of ground looking for illegal fishing on London's waterways.

Like the Police they are an efficient way to undertake patrols and they are a visible deterrent to illegal fishing activity.

"Using bikes is a great way to get access the Lower Lee navigation, Grand Union and Regents Canal navigation network, detect illegal fishing and raise our public profile", said Steve Robinson – North East Thames. "We're able to check for illegal nets and traps, which are often found in inner city areas, and the word gets around that we are out and about. We also enforce our fisheries byelaws governing the taking of fish which carries a substantial fine of up to £50k under the new rules."



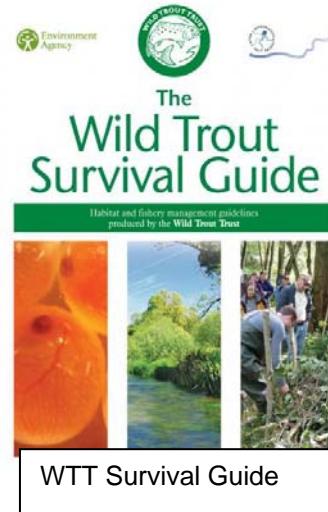
Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers on bike patrol

## Wild about trout - New Wild Trout Survival Guide - Lawrence

### Talks

The new and updated Wild Trout Survival Guide, which has been produced with our help, has recently been launched on the River Dickler in the Cotswolds.

The illustrated guide is all about helping landowners and fisheries interests in managing their waters for wild trout, which directly contributes to achieving water framework directive objectives. Copies have been circulated across the country and a pdf version supported by short film clips is soon to be available via the Wild Trout Trust's web site: [www.wildtrout.org](http://www.wildtrout.org)



## None native fish species collected for Bristol Zoo aquarium - Hampshire

We were asked by Matt Brazier, our national non native species technical advisor, to help with the collection of non native fish species from across the area for a display at Bristol Zoo. The display will include zebra mussel, the African clawed toad, killer shrimp, topmouth gudgeon, pumpkinseed and sun bleak. The display is designed to raise awareness of non native species and their impacts on native ecology. It is hoped that the display will be opened by the Environment Minister.



Top Mouth Gudgeon

For more: [paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Our High Impact Fisheries Enforcement Officers (HIFE) found hidden spear gun whilst on routine patrol - Hampshire



Recovered spear gun

During a routine evening patrol at a known vulnerable location two fisheries enforcement officers observed three people walking along the River Itchen in Hampshire at night with torches. The officers decided to carry on watching the individuals using night vision and thermal imaging equipment and realised that they were carrying what appeared to be a fishing rod.

When the people were approached by our officers the equipment they were empty handed. The officers then decided to search the immediate area and discovered a spear gun hidden behind a fence. The officers called Hampshire Police to report the incident and to arrange for the equipment to be collected. A police fire arms unit was deployed to their location to de-activate the spear gun. Paul Newman said: "This is a clear example of the lengths some individuals will go in order to catch and kill wildlife from our river systems. The enforcement work that our HIFE officers carry out is very important and specifically aimed to target locations where this type of activity is known to occur. Offences of this nature are very serious and can significantly impact not only fish stocks but on wild fowl too."

For more: [paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Environmental Management Team get to work on the Jubilee



The Team at Dorney

On 17<sup>th</sup> October the Environmental Management Team took their environmental leave day at Dorney Wetlands on the Jubilee River. The Biodiversity team arranged and ran a programme of works to maintain and enhance the area for wildlife and the visiting public.

Work on the day included the removal of some redundant fencing. This was installed during the landscaping of the newly constructed Jubilee River to protect shrubs and other planting. Many of the wooden posts are now rotten and in some areas the fencing has been completely flattened. The removal of the fencing will improve the habitat connectivity along the river corridor as well as generally enhancing the overall look of the area.

Materials reclaimed from the fencing will be used in a second phase of work taking place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at the same location, which will involve attaching chicken wire to the boardwalk which becomes very slippery in wet conditions.

The boardwalk at Dorney wetlands provides an excellent interface for visitors to engage with this rich and diverse location. It is frequently visited by bird watchers, families and walkers. The addition of the reclaimed chicken wire to the surface of the boardwalk will mean that people can use this excellent facility to interact with the local wildlife with more confidence.

This second day of work will be carried out by a group of volunteers through collaboration between Biodiversity and the EA Waterways volunteer team.

### **Getting London Fishing - a call to Londoners as Angling Action Group is Formed in the Capital - London**

Working alongside the Angling Trust and Thames 21, we organised and spoke at the first ever London Angling Action Group meeting which was held at Fishmongers' Hall on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Over 40 movers-and-shakers of angling in London come together to promote angling in the capital. There were representatives from the Angling Trust, Environment Agency, Thames21, the London Wildlife Trusts, borough councils, schools and angling clubs, along with fishery managers, angling coaches and other stakeholders in the capital.



Angling has so much to offer from providing a really positive activity for youngsters to getting people outdoors and enjoying London's many waterways.

"There was a real buzz about the meeting and it was the most positive fisheries forum that I have been to for many years", said Lawrence Talks SE Strategic Fisheries Specialist.

Grant Fear introduces Londoners to the excitement of fishing



Slippery When Wet! – Boardwalk at Dorney