

# Thames Area Fisheries Newsletter

Summer 2018

## Hell Ditch Fish Pass

The Environment Agency has recently funded the creation of a fish pass at the top of the Hell Ditch upstream of Godalming.

This is a brush style fish pass which connects the Hell ditch to the main River Wey. The Hell ditch hosts some good habitat which we expect coarse fish will be using for spawning during the spring. The new fish pass will ensure that fish can freely pass to good spawning habitat and juvenile fish can then drop out of the Hell ditch to trickle feed the main river with fish.

A fish rescue carried out during the fish pass construction saw a number of different species of fish relocated to the main river.



For Further information on Hell Ditch Fish Passage please contact Adrian Bicknell, Fisheries Officer on [adrian.bicknell@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.bicknell@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Waterstock Mill

The fisheries team have been working in conjunction with the River Thame Conservation

Trust (RTCT), to improve the habitat and fish passage on the back channel at Waterstock Mill.

RTCT contractors have re-built the sluice structure where the channel leaves the main River Thame. They incorporated design features specified by Darryl Clifton-Dey from the Environment Agency to make it passable to fish.

To make fish passage even easier we have narrowed a significant proportion of the first 200m of the channel. This involved EA and RTCT staff driving in wooden stakes and securing faggots to create berms. These were backfilled with small branches that had been removed from the trees to allow more light to the channel. Gravel is being added to the channel to create good spawning substrate and improve the gradient.

Trees growing in the channel and debris dams have been removed to improve the flow. Two backwaters will be de-silted to provide extra habitat for juvenile fish. The downstream end of the channel will be narrowed to provide an attraction flow for migrating fish and help them find this route as opposed to going up the main river and getting stopped by the weir.



For further information on this project please contact Andy Killingbeck. [andy.killingbeck@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:andy.killingbeck@environment-agency.gov.uk)

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
03459 88 11 88

## Rod Licence

You need a rod fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel with a rod and line in England. Licences run a year from the date of purchase.

Rod licence sales are the main source of income for our fisheries work. All of the money we receive through rod licensing goes towards this.

The main work areas are: regulation (rod licence sales, enforcement of illegal fishing and disease control), fisheries monitoring and surveys to identify areas in need of improvement, stocking fish to help restore populations, habitat restoration and improvement, fish rescues, promotion, advice and support of anglers and angling clubs.



To buy a rod licence or for more information visit the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>

## Plough Angling Club

Fisheries officer Laurence Hook has been working with the plough angling club to assess the fish population of their lake. The fisheries team performed a population assessment at the end of March which involved a combination of electric fishing and seine netting to catch the fish to identify a rough estimate of the population and the species which are present. The club have also been successful with an Angling Improvement Fund bid from the Angling Trust which will be used to install some floating islands and fish refuges to add to those the club have already installed in the lake.

For further information on this project please contact Laurence Hook.

[Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## River Coln Gravel Compaction

The River Coln in Gloucestershire is sourced by water from Limestone aquifers. As a result deposits of calcium carbonate bind the gravel and stones together, like glue, compacting the surface of the bed. The hard bed makes it impossible for trout to spawn efficiently, for invertebrates to hide and for aquatic plants to take root. Thames Area's Fisheries Team have been working with the Ernest Cook Trust to demonstrate the use of large woody debris to address the problem. Logs pinned to the bed promote scour and reduce compaction.



For further information on this project please contact Jim Seymour.

[james.seymour@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:james.seymour@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## River Thames Surveys

The sampling collection team and fisheries officers are just begging the yearly surveys on the river Thames. A combination of electric fishing and hydroacoustic surveys provide data to help analyse fish populations. The data set has been ongoing for 25 years. More details on the surveys will be provided in the next newsletter.

For further information please contact Jon Baxter on [jonathan.baxter@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.baxter@environment-agency.gov.uk)

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## Ludgershall Pond

Fisheries officers assisted the Ludgershall angling club with the removal of weed from there lake which was making fishing the lake difficult. The weed was curly pond weed (*Potamogeton crispus*) appeared in the lake a couple of years ago. With the aid of a boat and drysuits the majority of the weed was removed from the lake with lily beds and rushes left in place to allow cover for the fish and valuable spawning habitat.

For further information on this project please contact Laurence Hook on:  
[Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Grayling & Dace

As part of a long-term plan, the Fisheries Team have been working with river keepers and angling clubs to increase numbers of grayling on the River Kennet. Grayling brood stock are collected from the Kennet in March and spawned at The EA Fish Farm at Calverton. The brood stock are returned to the river unharmed a few weeks later, and a couple of months after that the juvenile fish are introduced into their new home. On the stretches that provide the brood stock and as mitigation for the impact on recruitment, a proportion of the juveniles are returned to these areas.



The remaining fish are stocked into areas of the Kennet that have the potential to support a population of grayling. This project is in its second year and in this short time nearly 40,000

juvenile grayling have been stocked into the River Kennet.

This year while collecting grayling, good numbers of broodstock dace were also found. These fish were also spawned and will provide other rivers with quality Kennet dace in late 2019. As mitigation 120,000 juvenile dace were returned to the stretch that originally provided the broodstock. It is now hoped that we can run a grayling and dace broodstock collection and introduction programme over the next few years and see these benefits in angler's catches.

For further information on this project please contact Adam Hilliard on:

[Adam.hilliard@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Adam.hilliard@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Aeration Testing Day

Back in April the Fisheries Team hauled out all of the aeration equipment to make sure kit and staff were both match ready. It is important that we respond as quickly as possible to incidents, it can be the difference between a fish kill and not. It is also vital that any suspected issues are raised quickly, this is done through the incident hotline number on 0800 80 70 60. This will give us as much time to assess the situation and deploy the appropriate equipment. The day was a real success, with some issues that have been resolved before the kit is used in anger. Someone from Fisheries is always on call so remember if you see anything you think could be a problem, please phone the hotline number as soon as possible.



## Ladygrove Lake Fish kill

Fisheries officers responded to a fish kill on the Ladygrove lakes in Didcot. On arrival it was apparent the lake was suffering from an algal bloom with hundreds of fish dead. The water was sampled and results showed the bloom was a blue green algae which can be harmful to humans and animals. Aeration was deployed with officers continued to monitor the water quality of the lake. The water quality levels improved enough for the aeration equipment to be removed.



For further information please contact Stuart Manwaring on:

[Stuart.Manwaring@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Stuart.Manwaring@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Summer advice for fishery managers

Prolonged dry weather can affect fish stocks and the fisheries they support. Where water levels fall, low dissolved oxygen levels can put fish at risk, especially during warm weather and where there is a lot of weed growth. Fishery managers will be well aware of the risks affecting their waters, but we hope this advice will be a useful reminder. The full document can be found

- Think carefully before cutting weed as it helps to hold up water levels, provides shelter and shade, and avoids disturbing silt. Retaining bankside vegetation can also provide valuable

shelter and shade during warm weather. If you do cut weed, avoid piling it on the bankside as the run-off can further reduce dissolved oxygen.

- If you plan to stock your water with fish, consider delaying until cooler conditions are restored and oxygen levels are higher
- Take care over fish welfare, particularly for more sensitive species, including salmon, sea trout, brown trout, grayling, pike and barbel.
- Keep a close eye on water levels and look for any signs of fish in distress. Visit the water early in the morning when dissolved oxygen levels are at their lowest and if possible record oxygen levels especially in the early morning.
- Be prepared and check that you have access to water pumps, aeration equipment and generators. If you need to remove weed, avoid piling it on the bankside as the run-off can further reduce dissolved oxygen.
- Be prepared and check that you have access to water pumps, aeration equipment and generators. If you need to remove weed, avoid piling it on the bankside as the run-off can further reduce dissolved oxygen.
- **If you see any fish in distress or suspect a fish disease outbreak please tell us immediately by calling our National Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.**

The full guidance can be found on the link below from the Angling Trust website:

<https://anglingtrust-news.net/3XSU-FBB8-2PE214-A8SEV-1/c.aspx>

## Contact Us

If you would like any further information about any articles in this newsletter or have any other queries please contact Laurence Hook.

[Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel: 02030259657**

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