

Happy New Year!

What a fantastic and busy year 2016 has been. We've improved habitats, released fish to help sustain native populations and have rescued fish from environmental and pollution pressures. We have also taken time to revisit some of the sites we've worked at in the past to see how the rivers and clubs benefit from these improvements. Our newsletter is a great way for us to share important news and successes with you and I'm genuinely excited about the work we will deliver in 2017.

We always appreciate your feedback. Be it a comment on the newsletter itself or an idea to improve a local stretch of water. We are passionate about fisheries and are always keen to listen to you.

Dave Brain Thames Fisheries Team Leader

New rod licence prices and structure

We last changed our rod licence prices and structure in 2010. Since then, we've listened to anglers about the improvements to fishing licences that they'd like to see, and we've acted on their feedback. Changes to rod licence prices and structure will come into effect from 1 April 2017 and the new licences will go on sale in March 2017.

We will introduce:

- a rod licence that lasts for 365 days from the date you buy it
- a 3-rod licence, especially for specimen hunters
- a free licence for junior anglers, the cost of this will be funded by other licences.

You can find out more about the [new rod licence prices and structure](#) at GOV.UK

Calverton Stocking brings Partnership Benefits

Waters in the Thames area have been stocked with fish from the Environment Agency's national fish rearing site at Calverton, Nottinghamshire. The facility, which is funded by rod licence revenue, produces 9 species of fish which are distributed to waters around the country.

Calverton fish are reared in a system which prepares them for the rigours of the natural world by, for example, introducing them to flowing water and a natural diet so that they are robust and conditioned to achieve optimum survival rates when released to the wild.

Each water receiving fish needs to satisfy certain selection criteria. For example, we will only normally stock fish where a water has lost fish due to events that have reduced the natural stock. We may also seek to boost fish populations where habitat improvements have been undertaken. In all cases we will only stock fish where we feel that they have the best chance of surviving and reproducing to benefit their new environment.

This year local waters receiving fish included the sites of a number of partnership projects between the EA and local angling clubs (Thames Valley Angling Association, Farnham Angling Society, Godalming Angling Society), local wildlife groups (The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Thames 21), and businesses and landowners (Thames Water and Eton College). Species released included roach, dace, chub and barbel.

One Out - One In

Tom Sherwood is on secondment to the Rivers Trust and will be helping with the development and delivery of the **Your Fisheries** project. **Your Fisheries** is a catchment initiative developed by the River Trust and Angling Trust. It will provide a common web-based planning system that brings together evidence and knowledge from a range of different sources to inform catchment specific fisheries reports. The programme has now entered a phased roll out across a number of catchments in England and it is hoped that it will be trialled in at least one catchment of every River Basin District in England

Lee Pacheco has been appointed as a Fisheries Enforcement Officer in Thames Area. Lee started on the Volunteer Bailiff Service (VBS), an Environment Agency/Angling Trust collaboration project, in 2012. In 2016 he moved on to Phase 2 – which involves being warranted and working directly in support of EA fisheries enforcement officers to check rod licences and deal with certain fisheries offences. Lee is a keen angler and loves to get out on the Thames targeting big perch.



Lee Pacheco

For more information Contact Lee Pacheco:

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Gravel Cleaning River Tillingbourne, Surrey

Adrian Bicknell worked with the Tillingbourne Fly Fishers using specialist pressure washing equipment and rakes to remove silt and loosen gravel on the river bed. Trout shed their eggs in excavations known as redds. For the eggs to hatch successfully the gravel must be clean and free of silt. We carried out this work in locations where brown trout are likely to be spawning in the next few weeks.

This section of the River Tillingbourne at Chilworth saw some habitat improvement work carried out ten years ago with the removal of a weir, a newly created river channel and introduction of tonnes of gravel.

It is always good to revisit these sites and see how good work has improved the river.



For more information contact Adrian Bicknell:

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Fisheries Improvements on the Chalgrove Brook

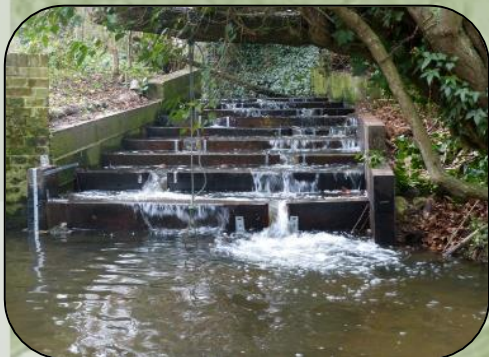
The Chalgrove Brook is a small chalk stream that joins the River Thames at Chiselhampton. It supports the only self-sustaining brown trout population in the Thames catchment. There have been a number of incidents on the brook that have affected fish numbers. Barriers to migration isolate fish in short reaches where they are vulnerable to environmental pressure and pollutants.

One of the barriers to fish movement was the weir at Cuxham Mill. In November the Fisheries team designed and built the 9 pool traverse fish pass using recycled, untreated railway sleepers. This was a great effort by the Wallingford fisheries team with help from Darryl Clifton-Dey from the National team and skilled carpentry from the joiners at our Osney Yard.

The next step is to create a riffle downstream of the structure. This will provide more habitat and raise water levels to make it easier for fish to access the first pool and traverse.

The work on the fish pass follows a demonstration day given to the Watlington Environment Group by Andy Thomas of the Wild Trout Trust. The group learnt how to improve the brook by installing deflectors and management of trees. The group have since had a number of days out installing deflectors.

For more information on this please email andy.killingbeck@environment-agency.gov.uk



Low Cost baffle fish pass
at Cuxham Mill.

River Lambourn Fish Rescue

The River Lambourn flows from Lambourn Village into the River Kennet at Newbury. Above Great Shefford the river periodically ceases to flow because of low groundwater levels. Fish become stuck in pools and either cannot obtain sufficient oxygen to survive or are vulnerable to predation

On the 13th October the Fisheries Team mobilised to conduct a fish rescue at Eastbury after being alerted to fish trapped in pools at that location. Fisheries Officers Adam Hilliard, Tom Meier and Jim Seymour used an electric fishing backpack to catch the fish in the isolated pools. The local Village Warden for Eastbury then helped with transporting the fish in bins back to the EA fish trailer- a good team effort. In total over 30 adult brown trout and numerous minor species were rescued and relocated downstream.



For more information contact Adam Hilliard:
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Floating Pennywort Removal on the River Blackwater

Fisheries Officers Adrian Bicknell and Stuart Keable spent a day working with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership to remove the invasive weed Floating Pennywort from the River Blackwater. We are trying to manage the spread of this invasive plant which is still only present in a few locations. A net was stretched across the river downstream of the raft of pennywort to catch any broken fragments as the weed was removed by hand. The invasive weed was floated away in boats and composted away from the river in a safe location.



For more information contact Adrian Bicknell:

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Fish Surveys 2016

2016 was a busy year: Starting on the Wycombe Wye in April, the Survey Team moved on to the River Cherwell followed by the Thames and Thame. The surveys were concluded on the Kennet and Lambourn in the autumn. Some fantastic fish were caught with a 14lb barbel being one of the highlights. The big barbel was caught on the River Thames just above St John's Lock near Lechlade. Recruitment is looking good with plenty of juvenile fish being caught. Our midsummer night work on the Thames created some bumper catches with nearly 2000 fish being caught in one evening.



For more Information contact Jon Baxter:

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Supporting catchment delivery with our Environment Outcome days

On 21 October and 11 November, 16 EA and Natural England staff helped volunteers led by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust enhance sections of the River Windrush and Dikler as part of their [Rivers and Wetlands Community Days](#) (RWCDs).

We achieved almost 30 in river habitat enhancements using a variety of wood techniques from brush bundles to large wood. This is to improve fish spawning, nursery and natural river function offering benefits to a wide variety of wildlife like water voles, kingfishers and mayfly.

The inspiration for these days is from successful examples of Rivers Weeks ([Wye, Loddon](#)) and [Colne Habitat Master classes](#) championed in the Thames catchment that led to the conception of the 3 year £1million Rivers and Wetlands Community Days programme in 2014 sponsored by Thames Water and the Thames River Basin District Liaison Panel – this programme aims to benefit all catchments so do bid for small grants around 5k during the February 2017 final tranche to make your local events happen. Interest is growing in these practical days e.g. the Loddon Fisheries and conservation Consultative website has seen over 50,000 hits on its rivers week page.

Please contact stuart.malaure@environment-agency.gov.uk for more details. The Environment Agency provides up to 2 days each year for us to help communities improve the environment.

Fisheries improvement fund expenditure on the Upper Thames.

Clanfield Angling Club recently completed work part funded by rod licence revenue on their stretch of the Thames between Radcot and Rushey Locks. The club committee also received funding from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and contributed to the cost of the project. This funded improvements to the existing cattle fencing and formalised a cattle drinking area. Gravel was introduced below a small weir to facilitate fish passage and provide spawning substrate. A small back water was cleared to create refuge for fry.



The fencing helps limit the effect of cattle poaching and now protects some shallow, well vegetated marginal areas, areas that are very important for fish fry to shelter in.

Please contact stuart.manwaring@environment-agency.gov.uk for more details

News in Brief

- The Environment Agency's Fisheries Annual Report 2015-16 has been published: Details of Fisheries activity and expenditure in England, including partnership working and delivery projects, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-annual-fisheries-report>.
- The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) and the WILD Project were both on the shortlist for the prestigious Wild Trout Trust awards. Unfortunately neither project picked up the award but it's a measure of the great work done by our partners in the Upper Thames catchment.

Contact Us

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

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