

Thames Area Fisheries Newsletter

Autumn 2018

EA and local angling club give River Thame a makeover!

At the end of June, the Fisheries team carried out some habitat improvement works on the River Thame in conjunction with High Wycombe Thames A.C (HWTAC). The stretch below the A418 Thame by-pass had become very overgrown with trees and instream macrophyte growth which was preventing club members accessing the water. The Team with a band of willing helpers from HWTAC improved access to approximately 300 metres of river opening up a number of new swims, by trimming back overhanging trees, hinging and pinning back larger tree boughs and clearing channels through dense instream stand of macrophytes.



The works were carried out sympathetically to prevent wholesale clearance of valuable cover but striking a good balance between providing available habitat for resident fish populations whilst giving anglers greater access to the river. The Fisheries team demonstrated a number of simple techniques which the club now hope to use to keep the new 'swims' clear and accessible for the future.

Thame catchment Fisheries Officer Andy Killingbeck said, "over 2 days, working alongside the club, we have improved a huge stretch of their river creating some excellent habitat and at the same time opening up areas to fishing previously inaccessible. The club are now in a position, with some of the simple methods we demonstrated, to hopefully keep areas open to fishing and make their river a viable fishery all year round."

For further information on this project please contact Andy Killingbeck.

andy.killingbeck@environment-agency.gov.uk

Fisheries Enforcement

The fisheries enforcement team in Thames Area during Q2 (July-September) checked a total number of 1023 rod licences.

912 were anglers who haven't been previously checked with the other 111 anglers being rechecked.

During this time officers issued 22 offence reports.

The Bankside Evasion Rate for Q2 was 2%.

Don't forget that rod licences are valid for a year from the day of purchase.

For more information on rod licences and to buy a licence please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/fisheries-rod-licensing>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

Fish Rescues

The Fisheries Team have undertaken two fish rescues within the Kennet Catchment. The first was on a small distributary of the Kennet near Hungerford. The Team rescued over 500 fish with a mixture of brown trout, grayling, pike, minnows, bullhead and brook lamprey. These were then relocated to their new home in the main river Kennet.

The second fish rescue was on the River Lambourn at Eastbury. In the past fish rescues on the Lambourn have produced huge numbers of fish, over 400 brown trout have been caught historically. On this occasion the number of fish was low. The low numbers of fish was probably due to the Lambourn also suffering last year with low water levels when Fishery Officers also completed a fish rescue. Flows in the area didn't return to normal until early 2018 therefore the fish hadn't had sufficient time and flows to redistribute into the upper reaches.

Both of the fish rescues were in response to calls from the public. If you see fish in distress please call the incident line on 0800 80 70 60.



For further information on these fish rescues please contact Adam Hilliard on:

Adam.hilliard@environment-agency.gov.uk

Boom Boat surveys

We monitor fish populations in rivers using a number of different methods as part of our National Fisheries Monitoring Programme.

Nationally we complete around 2500 surveys every year, approximately 90 per cent of which we carry out by electric fishing. Every year we perform surveys on the river Thames by means of electric fishing from a boom boat using a timed effort catch which equates to weight and number of fish caught per minute. One of the challenges of fishing such a large river is when and where to fish for maximum efficiency.

This year we have decided to repeat a number of surveys on sections of the River Thames to investigate whether the time of year and time of day make a significant difference to the result. The reach which we have repeated is Godstow – Osney near Oxford. Each reach was split in to two sections, one a very shallow section and the other is a deeper section on the approach to the lock. So far we have performed a survey in the day and a repeat three nights later.

What we have found so far is quite astonishing. During the day survey performed on the 22nd June the first section caught 11.68 fish per minute compared to the night survey on the 25th when we caught 19.32 fish per minute. The second deeper section we caught 4.26 fish per minute during the day and 10.05 fish during the night which is over double.



We will be continuing this during late September on the same reach once again during the day and night. Once all have been performed we will be given an indication what time of year and time of day will be best for maximum catch efficiency which may form the basis on all surveys performed in future years.

For further information please contact Jon Baxter on jonathan.baxter@environment-agency.gov.uk

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WICAC's Coming Home!

Every year on the 3rd Saturday in September for over 40 years a special event has taken place on a waterway somewhere in England. This year it was the turn of the mighty River Thames to host the 41st Water Industry Coarse Angling Championships contested by 17 teams of 5 anglers from the former EA regions and water utilities across the country. The 'WICAC' as it is known is unique in terms of its diverse make up of contestants from highly experienced match fishing 'experts' to laid back fair weather enthusiasts, all competing in a famously light hearted spirit to raise money for Water Aid and the fabulous WICAC trophy.



The winning EA South East team of (l to r) Dan Griffiths, Rob Pearson, Stu Keable (Capt'n) Tony Scott (ret'd) and Mick Cox (ret'd) with the magnificent WICAC Team Trophy.

With fishing on the River Thames in recent years being particularly good the EA's Thames Area (as EA South East) was well represented by 2 teams of 5 anglers, each hopeful of bringing home the prize.

Team captain Stu Keable got a big slice of luck at the draw for EA South East White who never looked back during the 5 hour competition contested over several miles of river at Beale Park and Goring. They easily won the team competition in which points are awarded for each individual's total weight of fish relative to other anglers in their section of 17.

EA South East Black also did well beating 4 teams to finish 13th. The individual crown went

to Jan Cebular of EA's Anglian Team with an amazing 43kg of bream from Beale Park.

For more information on this please email stuart.keable@environment-agency.gov.uk

Crucian Carp Stocking

In August the fisheries team stocked out 2,400 crucian carp from the Environment Agency fish farm at Calverton as part of the National Crucian Carp Project (NCCP). All of the broodstock used by Calverton have been genetically tested to ensure the production of 100% pure crucian carp. The main objectives of the NCCP are to promote the conservation the species, its habitat and to encourage the development of well managed crucian fisheries.

The waters stocked were:

Moat at Marsworth, C.A.R.E angling club (1000)

Summer pit, Farnham angling society (1000)

Swalcliffe Park school (300)

Honeydale Lake (100)

Honeydale Lake is being used as an ark site where the fish will grow on and in the future the water will be cropped. This should provide a source of genuine pure bread crucian carp which can then be stocked into other lakes around the Thames area.



For further information on this project please contact Laurence Hook.

Laurence.hook@environment-agency.gov.uk

River Blackwater Floating Pennywort

Fisheries Officers have been working with our Ops Delivery team to try and eradicate Floating Pennywort on the River Blackwater. The invasive plant floating Pennywort is escaping into the River from a small still water within the catchment.

The outlet from the pond has now been screened to prevent escape during high flows and the plant has now been hand pulled and sprayed. By applying regular pressure we hope the plant can be eradicated from this location which is the greatest risk to the River Blackwater.

Floating Pennywort can grow very quickly in the right environment and can create flood risk as well as shading and out competing our native plants which fish and wildlife are reliant on.



For Further information on River Blackwater Floating Pennywort please contact Adrian Bicknell Fisheries Officer on adrian.bicknell@environment-agency.gov.uk

Hinksey Lake

In July fisheries officers spent two days removing floating refuge islands from Hinksey Lake, Oxford. This is unusual as fisheries officers are usually found installing such structures. In truth the refuges were no longer fit for purpose – marginal tree growth was now shading them and

any emergent vegetation had long since perished.

In total 18 units were removed from the marginal areas of the lake. Fisheries officers have already found new homes for some of the refuges and some have been re-planted and installed in their new homes already.

Three large floating islands remain and it is hoped that a partnership between the EA and Oxford City Council can get these reinstated in Hinksey Lake next year.



For further information please contact Stuart Manwaring on:

Stuart.Manwaring@environment-agency.gov.uk

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

Tel: 02030259657

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