

Thames Area Fisheries Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2017

Swim Clearing at Marlborough Pool

Marlborough Pool is one of Oxfordshire's most well-known carp lakes. Some of the heavyweights of yesteryears carp fishing fraternity have wet a line there, Middleton, Maddocks, Taylor and Walker to name a few. It is a picturesque, reed lined gravel pit, mostly shallow with big beds of lilies and snaggy corners— a carper's delight! Unfortunately there is an ongoing battle with the tall, common reeds *Phragmites australis*. Some of the swims are getting tighter and tighter as the reeds encroach making them harder to fish safely, in regards to fish welfare. After having a chat with Geoff down at the pool, fisheries officers made a start at pulling out the reeds by hand. By lunch time they had cleared one of the more popular swims and set to one of the tighter swims to make it a bit more fishable. It was hard going in places with the roots and runners deeply embedding in the gravel. It was important to get as much of the plant out as possible so as not to leave underwater stubble. As progress was quite slow another day was booked in and a further two swims were opened up. Marlborough Pool can be fished on the Abingdon and Oxford Angling Alliance permit and look out for a fund raising event in February – An evening with Oz Holness. Details on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/190813917600344/>

News in Brief

The Fisheries Team have been aerating stock ponds for a fishery near Lechlade. After an equipment failure the fishery manager called for support and we were able to get some functioning units to him within hours.

Aeration was also deployed at a still water near Marsworth when oxygen levels plummeted resulting in a small number of chub dying. After

the aeration equipment was put in no further fish were killed.

Habitat enhancement work on the Chalgrove Brook at Stadhampton



The Chalgrove Brook joins the River Thame a short distance downstream of Chiselhampton Bridge. In addition to being the only watercourse in the Thame catchment with a native brown trout population, the Chalgrove Brook also has a coarse fish population at the downstream end. The reach between Stadhampton and the River Thame has great potential for fish spawning and for juvenile fish.

The River Thame Conservation Trust (RTCT) organised 2 working days with volunteers to improve the habitat downstream of Stadhampton. The Fisheries team from the Environment Agency helped to plan the work and provided technical input and practical help on both days. The main work was to narrow the river with berms and flow deflectors. The berms were made using stakes and faggots then backfilling with branches, etc. The branches were cut to allow more light into the site as plant growth is needed to stabilise the berms. Some bank re-profiling was carried out

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and this was also used to backfill the berms. The RTCT are planning to create a backwater in the same area, and improve one of the fords. Import of stone/gravel is also being planned. Note; there is a small concrete weir on the Chalgrove Brook under Chiselhampton Bridge that severely restricts access for fish from the River Thames. We are looking to improve fish passage here.

For more information contact
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Fishing Boost for Bracknell



An exciting new partnership got underway this week at Jock's Lane Recreation Centre in Bracknell. The Bracknell Town Council operated facility now offers fishing alongside tennis and basketball to local residents and the Environment Agency funded project has got off to a good start. The project is operating on 3 levels: Firstly the council have applied for and received funding from the Angling Trust administered Angling Improvement Fund to help pay for 10 fishing platforms, including 2 with wheelchair access. They then successfully bid for further funding from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Improvement Programme to carry out much needed habitat improvements to the River Cut which flows through the public land near Binfield Road. Both schemes are funded from national rod licence sales. At the same time the

Environment Agency and Thames Water are conducting a concerted anti-pollution campaign in the area to discourage the illegal tipping of liquid waste into the drainage network nearby. Later in the year it is planned to boost fish numbers in the river, which has suffered several pollution incidents this year, by re-stocking it with roach and chub from the EA's Calverton Fish Farm. Fishing at Jock's Lane is controlled by The Braybrooke Nature and Fishing Club in association with Bracknell Town Council. Website: <http://www.bcncf.btck.co.uk/>. You will also require an Environment Agency rod licence. For more information contact
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Lambourn Fish Rescue



Following a call from the public in August, a team of Fisheries staff attended the village of Eastbury on the River Lambourn, West Berkshire. Low groundwater levels had caused the stream to run dry very quickly and fish were seen to be trapped in a few remaining pools. Thanks to a quick and organised response our Thames Fisheries Team, assisted by the local community warden were able to remove all the stranded fish, which are believed to be wild brown trout, and relocate them safely downstream.

For more information contact
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Thames Area Fish Stocking 2017



In July Thames fisheries officers collected 16,500 grayling fry from Calverton fish farm to stock into the Rivers Kennet and Lambourn. The fry are 5 months old and were reared from Kennet and Lambourn broodstock. The stocking, coupled with improvements in habitat, will help to establish populations of grayling in areas where they have declined.

1000 rudd and 1000 crucian carp from Calverton fish farm were introduced into on the Reading and Districts Farnham flint lake as part of an ongoing work at the complex. The aim of this project is to boost numbers of juniors participating in angling through the creation of a parent and child part of the fishery. The crucian carp come from broodstock which have been genetically tested to ensure all fish stocked by the Environment agency are 100% true crucians.

In November 500 barbel, 750 chub and 1000 dace were stocked into a River Kennet side stream.

In December 500 barbel, 750 chub and 1000 dace were stocked into the River Evenlode at Ascott-Under-Wychwood.

For more information contact:
adam.hilliard@environment-agency.gov.uk

Why GOV.UK is the only site you need to get a fishing licence

Earlier this year we launched our new 'Get A Fishing Licence' (GAFL) online service on GOV.UK – it's a quick and easy way for those who want to fish to get a licence. Whilst the vast majority of anglers are benefitting from the new service, thanks to all the on-going publicity, we've discovered that there's a proportion of people who are using 'check and send' websites instead to buy their fishing licence.

So, we're spreading the word far and wide that [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) is the only site you need to get your fishing licence. Using a 'check and send' website is unnecessary and means you will pay more for your licence than you need to.

River White Water Habitat improvements



Environment Agency Fisheries Officers recently teamed up with wardens from the Hampshire Isle of White Wildlife Trust to deliver habitat improvement work on the River White water.

This work was a follow up to the good work carried out during Loddon Rivers Week.

Works carried out included installing flow deflectors which will pinch flow and cleanse gravel to aid fish spawning. The flow deflectors were created using recently felled trees which will

also allow extra light into the channel and help weed growth.

For more information contact
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Laurence Hook joins the Thames Fisheries Team



Laurence is currently on a 6 month assignment with the Thames Area Fisheries team. The role is very different from his usual post at the Environment Agency's fish farm at Calverton.

He has taken part in fish surveys as part of the National Fish Monitoring Programme. The surveys varied from the Rivers Thames and Kennet using the boom boat, multiple anode set ups on the rivers Windrush and Thame to using an electric fishing backpack on the River Dorn.

Laurence has been helping us respond to a number of incidents including the Lambourn fish rescue and dissolved Oxygen crashes at a number of waters.

Laurence's connections with the Fish Farm resulted him in being appointed as our stocking champion. As well as the grayling stocked on the Kennet and Lambourn, he has led on much of our crucian carp projects. Over the coming weeks more stocking will take place in the area and this will be reported in the next edition of the newsletter.

Our projects are an important part of working in Thames area. Laurence has got stuck in on

habitat improvement works on the River Thame, Bracknell Cut, Osier Bed Stream and Chalgrove Brook.

Salmon and Sea Trout catch returns

The Environment Agency are calling upon all migratory salmon and sea trout rod licence holders to submit their catch return records by 1 January 2018.

The submission of angler's reports plays a vital role in the assessment and management of salmon and sea trout stocks in England. The information submitted forms part of the wider Environment Agency's Salmon 5 Point Approach, which aims to conserve and enhance England's salmon populations.

The submission is a legal requirement for all salmon and sea trout anglers, and each submission will go towards securing the future of the sport. Anglers can fill in their catch returns online: www.gov.uk/catch-return

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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