



## UPDATED SOUTH EAST FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

May 2012

### A Plan in Action - Saving Sussex Sea Trout – Sussex

The South Coast Sea Trout Action Plan was developed in 2010 by the Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust (WTT) and Atlantic Salmon Trust with the common goal of improving sea trout stocks on the south coast. The plan will deliver on the ground habitat improvements to rivers and streams that are critical for sea trout spawning and juvenile life stages.

In response to the action plan, Sussex Fisheries and Biodiversity (F&B) Team have funded a Sea Trout Conservation Officer post which will be delivered through the WTT. The main focus of the post will be to address obstructions to fish passage, improve river habitat and protect vulnerable spawning grounds. This will contribute to River Basin Management Plan delivery under the Water Framework Directive.

The main role of the conservation officer will be to identify and prioritise low cost habitat focused projects within Sussex that can be delivered through the WTT. The Officer will also work with the Environment Agency F&B teams, rivers trusts, angling clubs, local authorities and landowners to identify and assess impacts to migration and spawning grounds. They will also produce prioritised lists of projects and actions in line with the Sea Trout Action Plan.



Fish easement put on the Batts Stream Bridge on the Ouse.



If you would like to find out more visit Wild Trout Trust [www.wildtrout.org](http://www.wildtrout.org)

latest Fishing news in Sussex by visiting [www.FishActive.com](http://www.FishActive.com)

You can also keep up to date, with all the

## Plumpton College Fishery Management Course – Sussex


The Sussex Fisheries & Biodiversity team are working in collaboration with Plumpton College to create and provide a training environment for students wishing to study fisheries management. This partnership allows for the teaching of Environment Agency best practice and will help shape the fishery managers of the future.



**Level 2 Diploma in Fish Husbandry**  
**Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma Fishery Management**  
**One year full time programmes**

We also run school taster days for year 10/11 and a range of short courses

For full details please contact:  
Plumpton College  
Ditching Road, Plumpton, Nr Lewes,  
East Sussex BN7 3AE  
Tel: 01223 890454  
Enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk  
www.plumpton.ac.uk



www.plumpton.ac.uk

The course makes full use of the college's 800 hectare estate which includes chalk streams and access to ponds and lakes.  
Close links with industry ensure excellent opportunities for placements and work experience and links from industry specialists.  
Courses content allows for a broad range of interests in many of fish related subjects.  
Practical and technical subjects can be parallel to develop a range of skills needed in modern fishery management.

**Level 2 units include**

- Work Experience
- Level Based Outcomes Studies
- Introduction to Fish Health
- Introduction to Fish Biology
- Estate Skills
- Introduction to Game and Game Rearing
- Freshwater Sport Fishery Management

**Level 3 units include**

- Work Experience
- Estate Skills
- 500 hour Keynote seminar
- Game, Game and Game Rearing Techniques
- Freshwater and Wetland Management
- Fishery Management
- Investigation Project

As well as developing a fisheries management course, the college are working closely with the Angling Development Board to create a 'Hub' for angling coaching within Sussex. This will support angling development within the South of England.

The College estate boasts some 8km of trout stream habitat and through practical projects with the Wild Trout Trust, Plumpton aims to restore and enhance their streams to increase the biodiversity and wild trout habitat of their estate.

The Environment Agency will be supporting the College's Open Day on the 12 May 2012.

For more information on the project contact Steve Lysyj:

[steve.lysyj@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:steve.lysyj@environment-agency.gov.uk)

<http://www.plumpton.ac.uk/documents/plumpton-fishing-flyer.pdf>

## New Stillwater Fishery- West Sussex

As part of a collaborative agreement with Hassocks & District Angling Society, Sussex Fisheries and Biodiversity have contributed £10,000 towards the construction of a fishing lake near Hickstead, West Sussex. Incorporated into the site design, which was once an arable field, are scrapes (shallow seasonal ponds) and a native hedgerow and tree planting scheme. The fishery will include swims which will enable access for disabled anglers.

For more information please contact Mark Bennett:

[Mark.Bennett@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Bennett@environment-agency.gov.uk)



New Stillwater in Sussex

## Bringing Operational Assets Together – Sussex



Joint Environment Agency and Sussex IFCA inshore patrols

Sussex Fisheries & Biodiversity Team and Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (IFCA) are working together on inshore fisheries enforcement. As well as carrying out joint enforcement patrols, Fisheries & Conservation Officers of Sussex IFCA will be able to solely operate from our RIB 'Sea Search'. This partnership will continue into the future beyond the serviceable life of Sea Search through the joint operation of a new purpose built vessel.

For more information please contact Mark Bennett:

[Mark.Bennett@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Bennett@environment-agency.gov.uk)



## The elvers are here! – Sussex

For the Sussex Fisheries and Biodiversity team, spring heralds the arrival of elvers (juvenile eels) into our rivers, arriving on their long migration from the Sargasso Sea. We work with Ops Delivery, FCRM, Hydrometry and external partners to make sure that the tiny elvers can pass over weirs and other structures in the river. A new elver pass is currently under construction on a large obstruction on the River Cuckmere. The number of elvers arriving at our rivers has declined by around 95 per cent in the past 40 years. However, in the last week we've counted over 1600 elvers at our national monitoring point in East Sussex! They've been drawn upstream by the wet weather. It's also a great indication that our work to improve fish passage is showing results.



For more information, or to get advice or guidance, please contact Sally Chadwick, South East Eel Champion.  
[Sally.chadwick@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.chadwick@environment-agency.gov.uk)

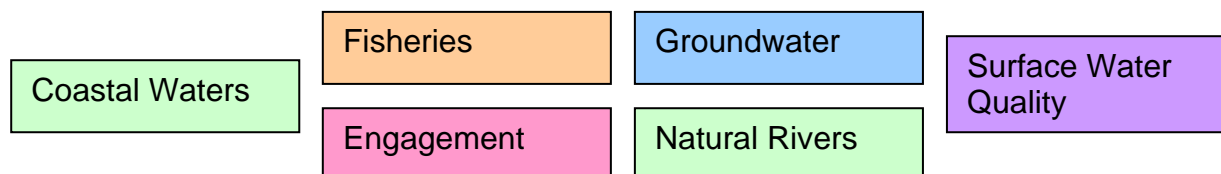
## The Adur & Ouse pilot catchment – Sussex

The Adur and Ouse Catchment Delivery Partnership were established in October 2011, with support from a number of organisations. A Steering Group has been set up and is a core group of representatives from organisations that provide direction and co-ordination for work in the Adur and Ouse catchment.

The members that sit on the Adur and Ouse Catchment Steering Group are:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Brighton and Hove City Council               | • Natural England           |
| • Brighton University                          | • Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust  |
| • Environment Agency                           | • South Downs National Park |
| • Forestry Commission                          | • South East Water          |
| • Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority | • Southern Water            |
| • National Trust                               | • Sussex Wildlife Trust     |

The Adur & Ouse Steering Group collaboratively developed six work themes and have agreed to form sub-groups (task & finish groups) to pursue each theme. Adur & Ouse task & finish groups will understand the complex issues within the Adur and Ouse catchment by drawing on a wide range of expertise. This understanding will stem from robust evidence gathered from the wider Adur & Ouse Partnership and local communities. The evidence will be used to underpin all action in the Adur and Ouse catchment and form the basis of the Adur & Ouse Catchment Plan.



For more information contact Cat Fuller: [catherine.fuller@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.fuller@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## TrUck – Using Trees for flood alleviation on the River Uck – Sussex

As part of the Adur and Ouse pilot catchment, Sussex F&B team are working in partnership with The Woodland Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust to identify areas in the River Uck catchment where techniques such as woodland planting and increasing in-habitat diversity could alleviate flooding down stream at Uckfield and Lewes. This will also improve water quality. We are looking to establish a project officer position to do this. Research has shown that targeting headwaters by increasing woodland planting and installing catchment riparian intervention measures can stagger peak high flows. This includes use of woody debris to form dams. This can have a major positive impact on downstream flooding and is therefore a low cost option for flood risk management.

The project officer will engage with landowners and farmers, run workshops to meet the community and stakeholders, raise awareness, find out views and concerns, develop solutions for natural regeneration and increasing ecological networks, and incentivise land managers.



Tree planting in the River Uck catchment

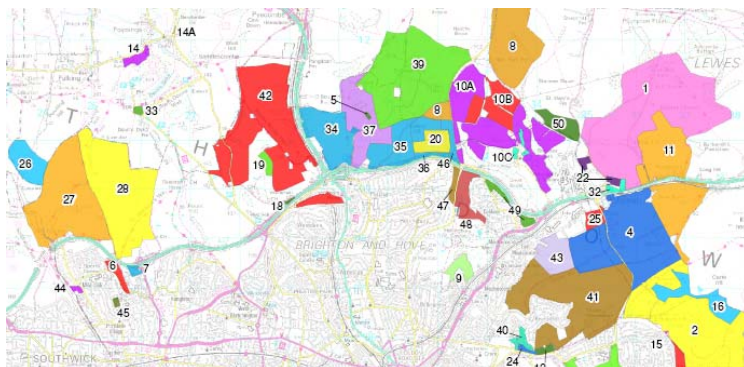
For more information please contact F&B Officer Rosie Pyper: [rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Ground Water Protection in Brighton and Hove – Sussex

As part of the Adur and Ouse Pilot catchment, Sussex F&B team are working in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council to identify areas where we could protect and improve groundwater. We are specifically targeting Brighton & Hove tenant run farms.

Groundwater quality within the Brighton chalk aquifer is at poor status for groundwater quantity under the Water Framework Directive and is at risk from water quality impacts. There is an imbalance between the amount of water abstracted or flowing out of the chalk and the recharge from rainfall. The groundwater quality is at risk for a large number of pressures including nitrate, phosphate and pesticides. As well as aiming to restore the Brighton chalk to good status, we need to “prevent and limit” the entry of pollutants to groundwater in order to protect the numerous public water supplies in the chalk.

The project will assist in the delivery of the Adur & Ouse Partnership groundwater outcomes.



Protecting groundwater

For more information please contact F&B Officer Rosie Pyper- [rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.pyper@environment-agency.gov.uk)



## 22 new islands! Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - Sussex



The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management team led by Nick Paige and managed by Ian Nunn, created 22 new nesting islands at Rye Harbour Farm. Already the islands have become colonised by birds such as the Mediterranean gull and the common tern.

For more: [tom.cook@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:tom.cook@environment-agency.gov.uk)

22 new islands! Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

## Penton Hook Spawning Channel Project – West Thames

West Thames Fisheries Officers Matt Drew and Stuart Keable worked with 10 volunteers from Thames Anglers Conservancy (TAC), to place 7 tons of gravel (10/20/40mm) into the channel on Penton Hook Lock Island near Staines to improve spawning habitat for a wide range of species including chub and dace.

The ton bags of gravel were delivered onto the island by barge and the volunteers used barrows, rakes and shovels to put the gravel in the stream.

The work was part of an ongoing collaboration between TAC and ourselves to deliver WFD outcomes and promote angling on the Thames.

For more info contact Stuart Keable 01276 454426 [stuart.keable@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.keable@environment-agency.gov.uk)

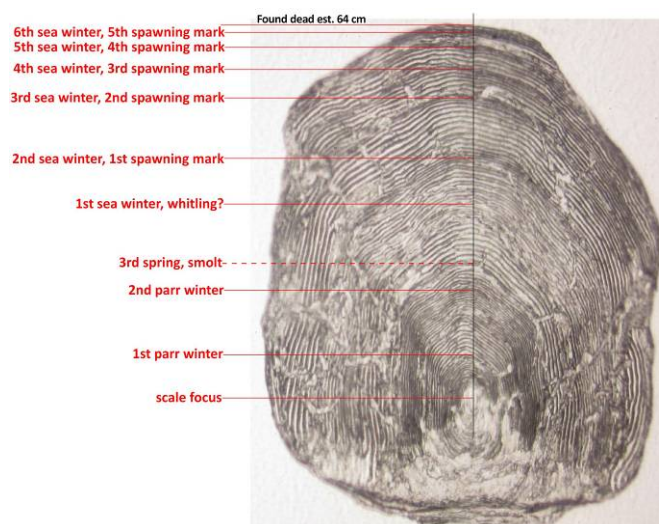


TAC volunteers help restore valuable fish habitat

## Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust - Sussex

The Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART) annual Sea Trout Watch found that sea trout spawned successfully this year with very little mortality despite the low flows and Drought Order on the Ouse. Heavy rainfall in early January came at just the right time to enable sea trout to move upstream. We are particularly pleased that sea trout redds were reported on riffles that had been enhanced by the OART Task Force.

Through the year scale samples were collected to learn more about Ouse and Adur sea trout life history, which included the one shown here which has 5 spawning marks. For more information go to: [www.oart.org.uk](http://www.oart.org.uk)



Sea trout found dead in R. Ouse (Sussex)

Data:  
Fish No. SO Z 11\_4  
est. 25", 64 cm  
est. 7lb  
Found dead  
18 Sept. 2011  
R. Ouse, Barcombe Mills Pool.

Reading: 2+.1+5SM+

Notes:  
2+-year smolt with 3rd parr spring; then one maiden sea winter, possibly with whiting return, followed by returns in each of the following 5 years with spawning marks for each winter. A veteran, returning to spawn for the 6th time.

River Ouse Sea trout scale

Report by Environment Agency South East

Editor: Lawrence Talks, South East Strategic Fisheries Specialist

Visit our website for up to date news at: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news)

## Loddon Rivers Week – West Thames



We did it! A big thank you to seventy plus enthusiastic volunteers of varied backgrounds and ages for turning up to deliver habitat improvements for Loddon Rivers Week. This exciting initiative was supported by ourselves in partnership with the Wild Trout Trust, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Over 30 practical habitat enhancements

Loddon Rivers Week

were completed on the Blackwater, Loddon and

Whitewater by eight teams, each led by experts. Work included creating gravel spawning grounds; installing large woody debris to change river morphology (shape) to scour pools, clean spawning grounds and improve habitat complexity; adding cover for fish and other wildlife; and planting native wetland plant species. At Arborfield bypass channel, fish passage was further improved by slowing the water down through the channel's exit to facilitate upstream movement.



Volunteers install woody debris

To support local people carrying out further work, a draft Environment Agency flood defence consent advice pack was circulated together with advice on undertaking habitat improvement work such as adding woody debris, creating backwaters and spawning habitat enhancement.

To find out more about Loddon Rivers Week visit [www.lfcc.org.uk](http://www.lfcc.org.uk) or contact Dominic Martyn: [dominic.martyn@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.martyn@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Unlicensed trap recovered at Teddington – London



Thanks to the eagle eyes of a young member of the Thames Angling Conservancy Oliver, an illegal fish trap at Teddington was spotted and reported. Carl Rasey, North East Thames Fisheries Officer, was quick on the scene and immediately seized the trap. Such unlicensed traps can be a real danger to fish and wildlife including otters and wetland birds as no otter guard was fitted.

If you see anything suspicious call our 24hr emergency number **0800 80 70 60**

Unlicensed trap recovered at Teddington



## Managing our rivers in drought – Hampshire

Heb Leman of the Solent Area Fisheries and Biodiversity team gave a presentation at a recent Test and Itchen Association 'Managing our Rivers in Drought' workshop. Approximately 50 river keepers and riparian owners together the Wild Trout Trust attended the workshop. There were 3 speakers with workshop sessions after the talks. Heb's talk focused on 'Resilience' and how our chalk streams need to be managed so that they are able to cope with both high and low flows. Rob Starr, a river keeper from the Kennet gave a presentation entitled 'The river keepers perspective' which detailed how he was managing his stretch during low flow conditions and Tom Davis from the T&I gave a presentation on flows and rainfall patterns. Heb says "The work shop was a great success and it hasn't stopped raining since!"

## Broadlands Fishery Disabled Access Improvement Project - Hampshire

A collaborative project between the Environment Agency, Broadlands Fishery and Sparsholt College has recently been completed, which has created 5 all-ability fishing swims. We provided the funding to construct the disabled swims and Sparsholt College students built the platforms as part of their course's practical work experience. The pathways were built and paid for by the fishery owner Peter Beale. This collaborative project now allows wheel chair users, families and young children safe access to the waterside with all-ability access to the whole fishery.



All ability fishing access

For more contact Hannah Wright 01794 832737, [Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Diffuse Pollution Project – Hampshire



Run off from open pig farming

On the River Test sediment pressures and their impact on the ecological quality continues to be a concern. To help better target work on the ground a recent study has used spatial source apportionment analysis to identify sediment sources across 14 sub-catchments. For high risk sub-catchments sediment fingerprinting may be undertaken to identify specific sources.

## Eradication of Topmouth Gudgeon at Abshot Pond - Hampshire

Working with Hampshire County Council and our National

Non-Native Eradication Team we have successfully eradicated Topmouth Gudgeon from Abshot Pond using an organic piscicide "Rotenone". TMG are classified as a serious threat under the Import of Live Fish Act 1980 as they outcompete native fish species.

Now that the fishery has been cleared we are working with the angling club to restore the fishery. Work proposed includes developing all-ability swims, fish free havens for plant and insect life, a bio-security plan and a restocking programme.

For more contact Cormac Meenehan 01794 832781, e-mail [cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Enhancing marginal habitat

## Isle of Wight Ponds Project – Isle of Wight

Between 2001-2012 the Isle of Wight Pond Project has created 36 new ponds at a variety of locations across the island. The project has significantly increased the amount of good quality freshwater habitat available for BAP species such as the Common toad, Great crested newt and Bechstein and Barbastelle bats, which feed over water. Many pond owners have also received advice from the project on how to manage and enhance their ponds for wildlife. Our staff from the IOW and mainland offices helped to clear willows from a pond at Bouldnor in order to assist the recovery of Pillwort, which is a rare pond plant.



Pond clearance

The project is a partnership between ourselves, the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, West Wight Landscape Partnership, the Million Ponds Project (Pond Conservation) and the AONB partnership.

For more contact Claire Hamilton on 01794 832742 or e-mail [Claire.hamilton@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.hamilton@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Track improvement

## Wallop Brook - Hampshire

A small diffuse pollution project has recently been completed to prevent farm track run off entering the Wallop Brook after the site had been identified by the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer. Cuts were dug into the track so that any runoff would flow into the adjacent fields and soak away and the track was re-surfaced.

For more contact Hannah Wright on 01794 832737 or e-mail [Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Fish passage and habitat improved at The Malms on the Itchen Navigation - Hampshire

Working with the Itchen Navigation Project, our funding enabled a significant expansion in works at 'The Malms', which has led to some really good improvements for fish passage and river habitat. With the help of lottery funding, the Itchen Navigation project is now able to tackle long-standing issues of bank instability, impoundment and siltation caused by historic structures along the highly modified channel.

On one obsolete lock near the Malms on the Itchen Navigation, modern concrete walls have been removed to allow the free flow of water. Original historic brickwork was retained, which is part of the Navigation's heritage.

At a second lock, a bypass channel is planned to enable the free upstream migration of fish. This will help remedy one of the reasons for failure that has been identified under the WFD.



Removing concrete structure



For more contact Hannah Wright on 01794 832737 or e-mail [Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### **St Cross Project - Hampshire**

The River Itchen at the historic St Cross water meadows, is a hugely popular destination and one of the few places where the public can get access to the banks of this famous chalk river. However, decades of paddlers, dogs and livestock have eroded the river's banks and over-widened the channel. Working with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, who are new tenants of the meadows, plans are afoot to repair the banks and improve the habitat and water level management in the meadows' carrier streams and derelict fen habitat. In all up to 300m of river will be improved once the works are completed.

For more contact Hannah Wright on 01794 832737 or e-mail [Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### **Itchen Valley Grazing Project – Hampshire**

Land use in the Itchen floodplain has changed profoundly over recent decades with a move to smaller landholdings which are either more intensively managed for cattle or horses, or been left derelict and scrubby. In response to this the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has established the Itchen Valley Grazing Project that we and the new South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area are supporting. The project is promoting a low-intensity conservation grazing service to landowners which is being implemented through both formal tenancies and Higher Level Stewardship. Outcomes include fen, meadow and ditch habitat restoration and improved water quality through reduced nutrient inputs.

For more contact Hannah Wright on 01794 832737 or e-mail [Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)



### **New Funtley Fish Pass – Hampshire**

At Funtley on the River Meon, a joint operation between our Operations Delivery team and Fisheries and Biodiversity team has successfully updated a poorly functioning fish pass. The existing fish pass was a Denil Fish Pass with baffles that were too large for the available flow at this location. It was also set too low in the channel. The whole operation required removing the pass and replacing it with a new aluminium Alaskan A model. The Alaskan A was chosen as it was more appropriate for the flow characteristics at Funtley. The procedure required moments of innovation, ingenuity, adaptation and occasional frantic head scratching. Under the expert direction of Ross Knowles and technical guidance from Cormac Meenehan the fish pass will now work more effectively, for a longer period of the year and for a wider range of fish species. This will help give the fish pass more resilience against the impact of climate change. Ideally it would have been good to remove the structure completely at Funtley, however this was not possible due to the characteristics of the river at this location.

For more contact Cormac Meenehan 01794 832781, e-mail [cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk)

New Funtley fish pass

## The Lower Test Valley Gateway Project - Hampshire

Thanks to support from the Environment Agency and other partners including Test Valley Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, The Romsey and District Society, the RSPB and Natural England, the Wildlife Trust was able to compile and submit a Heritage Lottery Fund application in early February. If successful the project will support a wide range of environmental improvements within the lower Test Valley as well as enhancing access to the valley for local communities and delivering an extensive programme of educational and awareness raising activities. The first round decision date is 22<sup>nd</sup> May when the HLF board will consider the application. If approved a further year of preparation work will be undertaken to support a full application, if approved work on the ground will hopefully start in early 2014.



Bid to HLF for Lower River Test

For more contact Adam Cave on 01794 832770 or email [adam.cave@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:adam.cave@environment-agency.gov.uk)



River Meon tidal gates improved for fish passage and wildlife

## Hill Head tidal flap helps wildlife – Hampshire

The top-hung tidal flaps on the River Meon have recently been overhauled and re-engineered to the benefit of wildlife. The Solent Fisheries and Biodiversity Team working alongside Zane Gunton of our Asset Systems Management Team have developed a system that now enables the flaps to only partially close which allows for controlled saline water intrusion. For the birds within the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve, this will reduce the risk of Avian Botulism, which has been an issue at the reserve because of the high densities of birds. By the fact that the sluice gates now open for a longer period of time, it increases the window of opportunity for sea trout, salmon and eels to migrate past the structure.

For more contact Cormac Meenehan 01794 832781, e-mail [cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:cormac.meenehan@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Anjou Bridge Fish Easement Project – Hampshire

To improve fish passage at a key site on the River Meon in Hampshire a simple “self assembly” or flat pack design has been tested by the F&B and the East Hants Ops Delivery team. The existing structure had a high velocity and a shallow sill that was difficult for small fish to pass. Using sustainable oak and the advanced whittling skills of the Ops Delivery team the design allows most of the construction to be undertaken in the workshop. All the parts are light enough to be carried to inaccessible sites and assembled using simple tools in just a few hours. The shape allows water to “stick” to the structure reducing air entrainment and improving fish swimming performance. In this case the design is suitable for most fish species and could serve as a template



for other structures installed by our partners. Multiple units allow greater obstacles to be mitigated. An elver pass is to be installed on the left of the structure and in the culvert.

The project was funded by F&B, designed by Analysis and Reporting and fabricated (whittled) by Ops Delivery – an excellent example of inter-team collaboration (horizontal synergy!!)

For more information please contact either Adrian Fewings (A&R) on 01962 764952 or e-mail [Adrian.fewings@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Adrian.fewings@environment-agency.gov.uk) or Matt Wilde (ops delivery) on 01794 832758 or e-mail [matthew.wilde@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.wilde@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Quick-fit fish pass

## Isle of Wight Fishing Club Gets a New Access Path and Fishing Platforms – Isle of Wight

The Solent Fisheries and Biodiversity team have provided advice and funding to an Island fishing club to provide a much needed new car park and access to 3 brand new fishing platforms.

The club are excited as they are now able to offer their facilities to all.

For further info please contact Claire Hamilton on 01794 832742 or e-mail [Claire.hamilton@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.hamilton@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Access for all at IoW stillwater



## Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon MP opens new IFCA office - Sussex



New Sussex IFCA office opened

Recently Minister Richard Benyon MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Fisheries, attended an event to mark the opening of the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's office in Shoreham-by-Sea.

The Minister unveiled the new office signage in front of the Authority members and local representatives from public and community organisations with whom the Sussex IFCA team works closely. Present were individuals from; The Sussex Wildlife Trust, The Environment Agency, County Councils, Police and Fire Service.

The new office base for the Authority is located at Shoreham's Riverside Business Centre immediately adjacent to the river Adur; providing quay access and close proximity to the local fishing industry.

The office, recently vacated by another local authority organisation was an ideal

'shoe in' for the Sussex IFCA who required a larger facility as their team grew to meet the organisation's new marine management duties. The 'handover' of facilities at the location meant minimum disruption and significant savings for the

local authorities involved.

As well as the office base for the Sussex IFCA, the facility provides a new location to host meetings related to marine issues for relevant groups; for instance the Environment Agency's Adur and Ouse Catchment Pilot Project which plans to improve the river and coastal environment. The Sussex IFCA is closely involved in the pilot and an associated project mapping seabed habitats in the area.



At the event the Minister expressed his strong support for the work of the organisation and its role in the Sussex community for future management of coastal waters. Sussex IFCA Chairman, Councillor, Roger Thomas acknowledged the valuable support the Authority had received from central and local government and the value County Councils placed on the Sussex IFCA.

One year on from commencing its role to manage Sussex waters the Authority has just published its second Annual Plan for the year ahead. The Plan includes strong commitments on partnership working with local communities and marine related organisations.

The Sussex IFCA was established in 2011. The Authority is a joint committee of East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council. The organisation is tasked with the

sustainable management of inshore sea fisheries resources in its District.

Joint Environment Agency and IFCA inshore patrol





## Kent Angling Training Academy (KATA) - Kent

We are working with a variety of partners which include: Swale Youth Projects and Mid Kent Fisheries on an exciting new community fishing and wildlife water in Faversham, Kent.

KATA aims to develop a community angling facility in Faversham, Kent, which will be managed by a combination of qualified staff, coaches and volunteers. It will provide an angling and environmental centre that will offer education and engagement programmes, qualifications, work experience, advice and mentoring services, respite care and sport and leisure opportunities primarily for people from disadvantaged, special needs and vulnerable backgrounds across Kent.

We have contributed £15,000, which will be used to improve angler access, parking and construction of all ability angling platforms, angler coaching training together with providing advice on setting up and managing the fishery. Contact: Nick Brain [nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Fish and wildlife improved through Ashlone Wharf flood risk project – London

The work at Ashlone Wharf included the provision for fish and eel passage. This has been provided through a Lariner fish and eel pass. Innovatively a self-regulating tidal valve has been installed, which stays open longer than a traditional flap valve. This has significantly increased the time available for fish and eel passage.

Upstream of the wharf along the Beverley Brook trees have been thinned to allow more sunlight to reach the brook, which will encourage reed growth. Further marginal planting is planned to help stabilise the silt next year after the flood risk works are complete. Reeds provide very important habitat for fish and other river wildlife.

Fish passage improved at tidal flood gates



## London Invasive Species Initiative manager appointed - London

Karen Harper has been appointed as the London Invasive Species Manager. She is based at GIGL and can be contacted by email: [karen@gigl.org.uk](mailto:karen@gigl.org.uk). She will be leading the development of a London Invasive Species Action plan and can be contacted for any invasive species related queries in London.

## Support for European river restoration project RESTORE – Kent & South London

West Thames Environment Agency Fisheries and Biodiversity team members have supported the project by sharing their extensive knowledge and experience at conferences in the UK, Slovenia, France and Holland. RESTORE is a partnership for sharing knowledge and promoting best practice on river restoration in Europe. It is an EU Life+ project for which the Environment Agency is project manager. At the RRC's River Restoration Conference in Nottingham in April we held a RESTORE workshop with participants from across Europe to discuss their experiences in river restoration and managing river basins. This included the Danube river basin which requires working across 19 different countries and incorporates Europe's largest wetland, the Danube Delta! We also held a demonstration of the RESTORE Wiki tool which will provide a searchable database of European river restoration case studies and best practise and will go live over the summer! Find out more at [www.restoreivers.eu](http://www.restoreivers.eu)

## Tracking Bream on the River Lee – North East Thames



In February, thirteen common bream were captured from Tottenham lock, tagged with acoustic tags and released back into the river. Receivers that can detect the tags have been positioned along 8 km of the river. As the fish swim past the receivers their presence is logged, we can then download the data from the receivers every couple of months. The River Lee

is a challenging environment for fish; the heavily urbanised channel and the regular

incidents of poor water quality limit the potential of the fishery. The breams' movements will be tracked for 18 months, and the information obtained will tell us the habitats where these fish congregate, spawn and move to during the periods when water quality is poor. This will allow us to identify key locations with the aim to improve and protect the critical areas in the future.



Receiver and temperature logger ready for deployment

## Floating Pennywort Removal – North East Thames



Removal of floating pennywort

Many tonnes of floating pennywort have been removed from the River Colne in Hertfordshire. A section of the river upstream of Uxbridge was worked on by contractors and the river was freed from this invasive floating plant. Further work is required as the plant can re-grow from small nodes, but we expect that this work has removed the bulk of the plant which will allow access and make further removals more manageable.



The new channel taking flow

## TMG eradication starts – North East Thames

The first stage of an eradication programme of top mouth gudgeon has been completed. A stream has been diverted around a lake in Enfield. The isolation of the lake will allow the future removal of the non-native invasive species whose escape from the lake would threaten the wild environment. The eradication is due for completion this winter, and will be followed by several years of monitoring to ensure recontamination will not occur.



## Cotswold rivers receive habitat enhancement boost – West Thames



New gravels going into the River Churn

In February and March 2012 Operations Delivery and the Fisheries Teams completed a number of habitat enhancement projects on rivers in the Cotswolds. All of the projects were aimed at helping the rivers achieve good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive

On the River Churn, North Cerney, Gloucestershire we improved 2 cattle drinks and created a new spawning riffle for brown trout. In 2010 we fenced 1.1 km of the River to prevent damage to the channel by cattle and this work completed the project.

In November 2011 Operations Delivery removed 7.5 tons of gravel from the River Churn in South Cerney to alleviate flood risk. In line with the EA Gravel Policy the gravel was stored and on 9th March 2012 the gravel was used to drown an existing

weir (barrier to fish migration) and create a spawning riffle for brown trout and rheophilic coarse fish species.

On the River Ray near Cricklade, Wiltshire 52 tonnes of gravel were placed in the channel to improve spawning for fish in the lower Ray and River Thames. This project was one of a number of enhancements completed to increase barbel populations on the Upper Thames in recent years.



Example of some of the woody debris installed during the works

### Collaborative project results in habitat creation on the Cherwell – West Thames

A recent partnership project involving the Environment Agency, The Wild Trout Trust, Barbel Society in conjunction with local angling clubs and landowners has seen habitat improvements to a 150 metre section of the River Cherwell at Thrupp, Oxfordshire.

The stretch of river in question was heavily shaded with a uniform channel and boasted little in the way of instream habitat. The works saw the pollarding of a number of large willows to let light into the channel and also saw the reinstatement of pieces of woody debris to provide cover for fish and encourage diversity of flow.

“We are pleased to have committed funds from our Research and Conservation budget to this project” said Pete Reading of the Barbel Society “The tree work has let light into the river, encouraging weed growth, and the large branches placed instream will make excellent fish refuges for barbel and chub in particular”

Andy Thomas from the Wild Trout Trust who led the project said, “The work at Thrupp has been a great example of a project where the Wild Trout Trust has been able use it’s expertise in river habitat management. Actively working with the land owners and using local contractors, as well as having practical support from the local Environment Agency Fishery Officers is a good model for how we can all pull together to help improve our rivers.”

Woody debris and fallen trees are important natural features of all watercourses. They provide habitat to fish, insects and birds. Fish in particular will seek them out as they provide excellent cover from predators and create areas of slack water which provide refuges from high flows.

Report by Environment Agency South East

Editor: Lawrence Talks, South East Strategic Fisheries Specialist

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Tom Sherwood Fisheries Officer for the Environment Agency said, “previous river management practices have sometimes seen the complete removal of woody debris from the river channel which can lead to a loss of habitat. Whilst fallen trees do need to be managed in areas where they pose an enhanced flooding risk to property, today we try and promote more of a balance between flood risk management and the retention of important habitat features.

### **Loddon also gets a Woody debris makeover – West Thames**

The first phase of a package of works at Old Basing has recently been completed. Old Basing is located on the River Loddon, to the East of Basingstoke. This first phase of works includes the installation of small woody debris structures along the channel bed. The woody debris structures will improve this reach by creating areas of clean gravels suitable for trout spawning, through creating areas of refuge for juvenile fish, as well as being beneficial for a range of invertebrate and plant species. Changes in the flow associated with the structures mean that you can now hear the river as it flows around the structures. This makes the walk along the footpath next to the river more enjoyable for the many locals and dogs walkers who are out to stretch their legs.



One of the woody debris structures installed

Over 25 woody structures have been installed through an area of woodland. Over-shading of the channel prevents macrophyte growth here and the channel has been dredged in the past, and so is uniformly wide and relatively straight. The wood used for the structures has been sourced locally from young, self-seeded trees, such as Sycamore, found on the river banks.

These works have been delivered through a collaborative partnership project with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The Trust have now delivered several river improvement projects on the rivers Loddon and Whitewater and we hope to continue to deliver these kinds of habitat improvements in partnership with them.

Future phases of work will include the removal of redundant weirs which are obstructing fish passage.



Example of bad poaching found on the Cherwell

### **Fencing for success on the Upper Cherwell – West Thames**

In conjunction with landowners and the local angling club the Environment Agency has undertaken the first phase of a habitat restoration on the Upper Cherwell near Cropredy, north of Banbury. The works saw the installation of over 2.5km of fencing, restoration of gravel riffles, the creation of new cattle drinks (which also acted as backwaters) and the narrowing down of a section of river to create new spawning habitat

One of the main problems affecting this stretch of river was severe cattle poaching which had resulted in large swathes of bank collapsing into the river. Over time this had been causing large amounts of sediment to enter the watercourse, smothering of gravel riffles and the destruction of important marginal habitats. By fencing the river and providing



designated cattle drinks the banks should be able to recover and stabilise as terrestrial and aquatic plants recolonise. This in turn will limit the amount of sediment entering the river and allow the marginal habitat to improve all of which will benefit local fish, invertebrate and plant communities.

Five cattle drinks have been created which have also been designed to act as backwaters for juvenile fish. These shallow water environments are ideal habitats for young fish as they act as important nursery areas. In addition four gravel riffles have been restored and section of river has been narrowed down with new gravel added all of which will provide improved spawning habitats for fish such as chub, dace, gudgeon and bullheads.



One of the new cattle drinks

Tom Sherwood, Environment Agency Fisheries Officer for the Cherwell catchment said, "The poaching of the banks on this stretch of the river was some of the worst we had seen and it was definitely having a deleterious effect on the aquatic habitat. This section of the Cherwell is one of our top priority waterbodies under the Framework Directive and it is hoped this first phase of works undertaken will help the river achieve 'good ecological status'. The next phase will see similar methods employed on a further stretch downstream"

## Fobney Island update – West Thames

Since September 2011 the Environment Agency has been working with Reading Borough Council, Thames Water and the Thames Rivers Restoration Trust on Fobney Island (Reading) to improve the local area for people and wildlife.



Huw Thomas (Thames Water), Paul Gittings (Reading Borough Council) and Lizzie Rhymes (EA) sowing wildflower seed at Fobney Island

The first phase of the project, managed by the EA, involved lowering the land to create wetland features which at certain times of the year will connect with the river. The river has also been restored to a more natural state on the south bank and tree works have taken place to let more light into the river channel. Five trees have been dropped into the river to create woody debris features which will create more diverse flows in the river, and provide improved habitat for young fish.

A circular walk has been created for visitors with views across the wetland features along with the installation of two bird hides.

The second phase of works at Fobney Island is now underway. The site has been handed back to Reading Borough Council, the landowners, who are now managing the planting, seeding and landscaping works. Areas of scrub have already been planted, and this spring a wildflower seed mix will be sown across the site. Wetland species will also be planted around the new features to maximise the availability of good quality habitat for birds, fish, invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians.

The project partners are working to establish a 'Friends of Fobney Island' group to help with the ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring of the site. If you are interested in being part of the '**Friends of Fobney Island**' group please contact Lizzie Rhymes or call Reading Borough Council's Parks department on 0800 626540.

This spring Reading and District Angling Club are also carrying out improvement works on the south bank of the River Kennet. The club are creating new fishing pegs that will be used for club events and competitions. These facilities will not only improve fishing but also leave an area of the island undisturbed for wildlife use.

Association chairman Alby Cohen said: "It is a very popular spot for fishing and we are looking forward to everything being completed and ready so we can go back there, and I hope that it will encourage more people to take up the sport."

Marian Livingston, lead councillor for culture and sport, said: "It's heartening to see Fobney Island restored back to its glorious best. I can't wait to take advantage of the park's wonderful features and hope the people of Reading do the same for years to come."

## **Rye Dyke in High Wycombe receives much needed help! – West Thames**

The Rye Dyke Angling Club, Environment Agency and Wycombe District Council have all joined forces to help provide so much needed habitat creation on the Rye Dyke in High Wycombe.

The Rye Dyke a popular stillwater fishing venue in the middle of High Wycombe has long provided angling opportunities for local residents and in the past has offered some high quality angling. Recently, however fish stocks have suffered due to a loss of the once abundant aquatic vegetation and cormorant predation.



The new floating reed islands

The Rye Dyke has always been characterised by gin clear water and luxuriant stands of the aquatic plant Mare's tail (*Hippus vulgaris*) which provided superb cover from predators and somewhere to spawn for the resident fish population. Unfortunately an 'over enthusiastic' weed cut a number of years ago left the lake somewhat barren with little cover and when a number of cormorants started to visit the lake the fish numbers began to decline.

The Mare's tail is beginning to make a welcome return, however the recolonisation is proving to be a slow process and there are still large areas of the dyke that are totally devoid of cover. To help provide some extra cover a number of floating reed islands have been installed which will help promote aquatic plant

growth but will also double up as cormorant refuges.

Tom Sherwood, Fisheries Officer for the Environment Agency said, "The new floating reed islands have been positioned in conjunction with the angling platforms we constructed several years ago in an area where there is no cover. Whilst aquatic plants are visible growing on the surface there is a cage structure underneath that allows small and medium size fish to escape from the cormorants."



Rescued roach and rudd bound for the Rye Dyke

As the Mare's tail carries on its recovery and with the new habitat creation it is hoped fish populations will begin to recover too. To aid this recovery the EA are also looking to undertake some stocking. A first batch of fish have recently been introduced with approximately 1000 roach and rudd going into the Dyke from a pond near Banbury



Further stockings are planned for later in the year with fish from the EA's fish farm at Calverton.



Off they go!

### **Otters Return to the Wey at Guildford – West Thames**

A recent discovery of otter spraint (droppings) at 2 sites on the Wey near Guildford, is proof that this rare mammal is returning to the area after 18 years. The discovery was made by Jim Jones, Surrey Wildlife Trust's (SWT) Wetland Landscapes Officer, after a lead from the National Trust who had met a member of the public who claimed to have seen otters in this location.

Otters were on the brink of extinction in the 1970s but are slowly returning to all catchments thanks to a ban on certain pesticides, legal protection, improved water quality and associated fish stocks and habitat improvements. They are still very rare in the SE though and particularly on the Wey catchment. In recent years positive signs of otters have been found in Alton, Bentley, Farnham and Godalming, but they have not been recorded this far downstream near Guildford since 1994.



An otter

The Environment Agency can provide advice to Fisheries owners and angling clubs on how to protect their fish from otter predation and may be able to fund fencing projects.

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

Our Enforcement Officers in West Thames checked 2506 anglers for rod licences in January, February and March. Of those 78 failed to produce a valid licence. These anglers have been reported for possible prosecution.

## Protecting fish stocks during drought – Kent and South London

KSL Fisheries and Biodiversity teams in partnership with Environment Management, have purchased several new sets of aeration equipment. These consist of pumps, generators and both paddle wheel and floating cage aerators that will be located at all main EA offices in KSL.



Aeration equipment



We have run familiarisation and training sessions with Incident Response and newly recruited Environment Officers for this equipment and our Oxyjet systems. This will not only enable a large range of staff to deploy and use this equipment, but also gives us much more flexibility when responding to incidents. These aerator packs can also be lent out to angling clubs/organisations as needed.

In conjunction with this, we have also set up a drought fund. This will give angling clubs/organisations in Kent and South London the ability to buy their own aeration equipment/dissolved oxygen meters etc. in order that they can keep a close eye on their fisheries water quality and respond rapidly when required.

Further information: Nick Brain or Ben Lord, [nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:nick.brain@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Nipping Pennywort in the bud on the Blackwater – West Thames

Tackling the invasive species Floating Pennywort is a priority because it damages aquatic ecosystems and increases flood risk. Once it is established, the costs to control it are significant. For example on the River Mole, costs to control Floating Pennywort have exceeded £1 million in ten years. In addition, a recent report by CABI indicated that Floating Pennywort control incurs annual costs to the national economy of around £25 million.



Pond before.

We recently had our first reports of Floating Pennywort in the Loddon catchment and have been working to eradicate before it establishes. This rapid response, in collaboration with local groups, reduces the impacts on the environment and saves long-term costs of removal.

Although floating pennywort can be found across the South East region, to our knowledge it has only just appeared in the Loddon catchment, specifically on the

River Blackwater. Thanks to the efforts of a local angling society, Farnham Anglers, combined with help of 6 volunteers from the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, a large pond which was jammed full of the problematic pennywort has now been cleared. This will help to prevent pennywort spreading into the river and therefore into the rest of the downstream catchment.

The pennywort was largely removed from the pond using a long-reach digger, paid for by the Environment Agency's Operations Delivery team. The pennywort was cleared to the



Digger lifting pennywort out of the pond and on to the bank.

Report by Environment Agency South East

Editor: Lawrence Talks, South East Strategic Fisheries Specialist

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top of the bank, where it was to be dried on higher ground and composted.

Farnham Anglers have agreed to undertake ongoing monitoring of the site, at Mill Lane Fishery, in Yateley, in case any more pennywort appears in the coming months. We hope that we have been able to nip the occurrence of Floating Pennywort in the bud on the Loddon catchment, although we will have to be vigilant of any future infestations and act accordingly.

We would like to extend our thanks to Farnham Angling Society and especially Mike Barass and his 5 volunteers for their efforts in getting rid of the bulk of this species.

For more contact: Jo Harkness, Biodiversity Officer, [joanne.harkness@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.harkness@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Silent and deadly - fisheries officers on canoe patrol - Hampshire



Fisheries Officers go through their paces in preparation for anti-poaching patrols to protect vulnerable sea trout and salmon populations.

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

## Close Season Patrols

There is still a statutory close season on all rivers and some canals and stillwater SSSIs. Fisheries Enforcement Officers are carrying out regular patrols to apprehend those fishing illegally in the close season. We also receive reports from members of the public using our 0800 807060 hotline. Those calls have led to a number of successful detections and we will be recommending prosecution of offenders. It is vital that you report sightings of close season fishing at the time of the incident.

## Don't forget your new rod licence!



From April 1<sup>st</sup> if you are over 12 you will need your new rod licence for the 2012/2013 season. There are several ways you can buy your licence; from post offices; by phone (0844 800 5386) or online ([www.environment-agency.gov.uk/rodlicence](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/rodlicence)). Prices remain fixed from last year which is good news for all in these tough financial times!

Rod licence money is directly reinvested back into the Fisheries teams across England and Wales. So remember by buying your rod licence you are helping us to maintain, protect and improve our local watercourses!