

Press release: Partners work together on day of action along Norfolk river

Following complaints over several months from Norfolk Broads residents living along the River Yare in Norwich about illegal fishing, littering and general anti-social behaviour, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer Nick Beardmore took action. He raised the matter with partners including Norfolk Police and the Broads Authority at the monthly Norfolk Police Broadsbeat Partnership meeting.

As a result a multi-agency day of action was arranged for the Heron Island area, led by the Norfolk Police Broadsbeat team. The day saw new information signs installed, a big clean-up of the area and rod licence checks carried out.

Nick Beardmore said:

The residents were overwhelmed with the support they received and I want to thank everyone who joined us on the day, which was a real success. Hopefully the problems encountered in the past won't be repeated.

Norfolk Police Broadsbeat officers Derek Rutter, Martin Chapman, Paul Bassham and Amy Barrell used 2 police boats to transport everyone over to the island and carry out hi-visibility patrols along the Rivers Wensum and Yare. They also explained their role to the cadets, who were split into 3 groups and rotated throughout the day.

Broadsbeat officer PC Paul Bassham said:

It was recognised that if we didn't all pull together to tackle the emerging issues, the problems would continue to escalate once the weather turned warmer. This would take up valuable resource time and make life miserable for residents around Heron Island.

PC Barrell co-ordinated the follow-up response, supervising North Norfolk and Broadlands Police Cadets, and Officers Tina Wright, Peter Davison, Andy Mason and Ian Kennedy while they cleared the area and installed the new signs. The team worked alongside Broads Authority Rangers, local residents, a tree surgeon and the Environment Agency throughout the day.

Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said:

Working together in this way means we can pool our resources and tackle a number of issues at the same time. I am very pleased that

local residents felt supported and urge anyone with information about illegal fishing activities to report it to our 24-hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For updates and pictures, follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyAnglia @Broadsbeat @BroadsAuth

Press release: Suspended jail term for landowner over illegal landfill site

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted a landowner and two men who blighted 19 acres of Cheshire farm land by dumping and landfilling tens of thousands of tonnes of waste.

Mr Eric Hale of Bank Top Farm near Frodsham was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for two years, disqualified from driving for 12 months ordered to work 200 hours unpaid and have a curfew of 8pm to 6am for three months after pleading guilty to operating an illegal waste site without an environmental permit and dumping and landfilling controlled waste on the land.

Mr Hale also paid £100,000 in contributions towards the Environment Agency's costs. Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street each received a Conditional Discharge for two years after pleading guilty to dumping and landfilling controlled waste.

The Environment Agency brought the case against Mr Eric Hale, Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street after a lengthy investigation. The investigation identified that significant amounts of waste were being brought on to the farm, which did not have an environmental permit.

The Environment Agency identified that the operation of the illegal site was closely connected with a waste company Eric Hale Skip Hire Ltd. The prosecution for the Environment Agency stated that the majority of waste collected by the company was illegally dumped and landfilled at Bank Top Farm instead of being taken to a legitimate waste site.

Tracey Rimmer, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This operation demonstrates how the Environment Agency works in partnership to tackle serious waste crime. We have worked closely with the police and local authorities to pursue these criminals and bring them to justice. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per year from legitimate business and the

treasury.

During the course of the investigation Eric Hale, Steffan Street and Dennis Whiting were seen driving large waste vehicles which delivered, deposited and disposed of mixed waste, demolition waste including plasterboard and other waste including carpets and mattresses.

Trommel fines, which are a by-product produced during the recycling process and consist of materials such as wood, aggregate, glass, ceramics and organics, were also dumped at Bank Top Farm. The unregulated deposit of waste has the potential to cause harm to the environment.

The Judge on sentencing said:

Eric Hale was driven by greed to continue the illegal operation.

Also the court did not accept any of the mitigation of the offending put forward but Eric Hale's substantial personal mitigating circumstances were acknowledged by the court.

If you see waste crime report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Waste crime can cause serious pollution to the environment put communities at risk and undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it. You can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview/overview.

Press release: New proposed measures announced ahead of salmon consultation

The Environment Agency is proposing new measures to protect salmon stocks across England and in the Border Esk, which are currently among the lowest on record.

The 2015 national salmon stock assessment indicated that salmon stocks in many rivers across England had failed to meet their minimum safe levels. The 2016 assessment showed this trend continued and the new measures proposed are based on this assessment.

The proposals come after an initial EA consultation last year to understand how the better management of salmon fishing in England and the Border Esk can reduce the impact on salmon numbers. The responses to that consultation

helped inform these proposals and build an understanding of the likely impacts for managing salmon fishing in the future.

The Environment Agency is now proposing the following measures to protect salmon stocks in England Fisheries and on the Border Esk:

1. Stop the taking of salmon from the majority of net fisheries by 2019. Other nations have closed their net fisheries; the evidence shows we should too.
2. For rivers with the lowest salmon stocks, a mandatory requirement to return all salmon caught. This reflects the need for both net and rod fishermen to help us protect Salmon stocks.
3. Voluntary catch and release targets for all other rivers.
4. Restriction on the number, size and type of hooks that can be used when fishing.

Kevin Austin, Environment Agency's Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment said:

We are not suggesting these proposals lightly and have consulted widely with those affected. However we need to take action now in order to give as many of the salmon that make it back to our rivers as possible a chance to spawn successfully.

The reasons for decline of salmon are complex and there is no single solution; reducing the catch of salmon can only partly contribute to the recovery of salmon stocks. We continue to work closely with water companies and other to improve water quality and low flows on salmon rivers. We are also investing and working in partnership to improve fish passage on schemes up and down the country.

It is only through continuing to take concerted action, and through the co-operation of others, that we will successfully protect this iconic species for future generations.

Reducing the taking of salmon by rods and nets is only one part of the Environment Agency's larger programme called the 'Salmon Five Point Approach'. The Salmon Five Point Approach has been jointly developed and committed to by a wide range of partners which include Government, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Angling Trust, River Trusts, Association of River Trusts and the Institute of Fisheries Management.

It sets out the actions to address the key pressures that affect the

different life stages of salmon. The priorities are:

1. Improve marine survival
2. Further reduce exploitation by nets and rods
3. Remove barriers to migration and enhance habitat
4. Safeguard sufficient flows
5. Maximise spawning success by improving water quality

You can find out more about the [Salmon Five Point Approach](#).

We will formally advertise the proposed byelaws to protect Salmon will be published on GOV.UK in late February 2018, and all those wishing to may respond either online or via letter.

Notes to Editors:

1. The most vulnerable rivers will be the rivers classed as “At Risk” as predicted by 2021. These are: the Tees, Stour, Yealm, Plym, Ribble, Wyre, Lune Crake, Calder and Derwent
2. Voluntary catch and release levels at rivers classed “probably at Risk” will be required to be greater than 90%
3. Voluntary catch and release levels should be encouraged on rivers classed as ‘Probably not at Risk’
4. Other countries that have closed salmon net fisheries include, Eire, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Faroese fisheries
5. [2015 national salmon stock assessment](#)
6. [2016 national salmon stock assessment](#)

Press release: Fishing licence money funds Severn Rivers Trust ‘tool bank’

The Environment Agency, through its Fisheries Improvement Fund, has provided a wide selection of tools to help fishing clubs improve river habitats and access to fishing.

A wide range of hand tools including saws, hammers and spades make up a ‘tool bank’ which will be managed by the Severn Rivers Trust. Local angling clubs and volunteers can borrow the tools for small habitat projects. A number of habitat days will also run to show clubs techniques for creating natural habitat features to benefit fish.

Ieuan Davies, from the Severn Rivers Trust said:

We’re delighted to receive these tools, and we’ll be opening up a loan based system to allow angling interests in the River Severn catchment to borrow and use them for their projects.

We hope having access to these tools will allow a diverse set of improvement works to be carried out, and we will be happy to back up this resource with advice from our in house experts, as well as links to volunteer helpers where needed. We look forward to engaging with locals, volunteers and anglers on a wide range of fisheries improvement projects.

Fisheries experts from the Environment Agency and the Severn Rivers Trust work in partnership to give angling clubs and volunteers advice on how to improve habitats, but often small improvements that can really make a difference don't go ahead because people don't have access to tools and materials.

Ed Noyes, Fisheries Technical Officer from the Environment Agency said:

We're pleased to be able to use Angling Improvement Fund money, which comes directly from fishing licence sales, in this way.

Access to the tool bank will help fishing clubs and volunteers carry out low cost, small improvements which across the whole Severn catchment will really enhance the environment for many species of fish.

The tools can be hired by contacting the Severn Rivers Trust.

For more information on tools or training days please contact the Severn Rivers Trust on 01886 888394 or admin@severnriverstrust.com

Press release: Warrington's £34 million flood defence scheme officially complete

More than 2,000 Warrington homes and businesses will benefit from the town's multi-million pound flood defence scheme, officially opened today (26 January) by Environment Agency Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan and the town's Mayor, Councillor Les Morgan.

The scheme is one of the largest value flood defence projects constructed in the region in recent times, and will significantly reduce flood risk to the town which has been no stranger to flooding – given it sits in naturally low-lying land and within the path of the River Mersey and its tributaries.

The £34 million scheme brings increased flood protection to properties in 9 residential and public areas of Warrington, better protecting the hundreds of families and businesses who have experienced flooding in the past and are aware of the destruction it can bring.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:

The scheme not only brings flood risk benefits but the work in the area is also good news for walkers, birdwatchers and wildlife. It's been great to see the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect Warrington – a fine example of what can be achieved by working with others.

These new flood defences will not only benefit hundreds of homes and businesses in the area but will also safeguard critical infrastructure, vital in keeping the town moving.

Due to the scale and complexity of works, the scheme was delivered in 3 phases – parts of which have been effectively operating for some time. Phase one (the Knutsford Road section) was put to the test during the 2013 December high tides, preventing some 200 properties from being flooded. The predicted value of damage to properties that would have otherwise occurred, covered the actual cost of this section of the scheme.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Warrington's new £34 million flood scheme will reduce the flood risk to over 2,000 homes and businesses, and protect vital infrastructure helping to bring investment to the area.

This scheme is an excellent example of how working together with councils and local businesses allows us to make the most of government funding to secure the best possible defences for communities. By 2021, we will have invested £47 million in flood defences to better protect 4,280 homes in Cheshire.

Comprising 5km of flood walls and 2.2km of embankment, the 7.2km scheme has improved amenity and recreational opportunities, as well as habitat conditions along the river corridor.

The widening and clearing of formerly impassable footpaths has improved connectivity, as well as views of the river and across the town, and extensive tree planting has created many pleasant vantage points for walkers and cyclists.

At the Twiggeries site behind Kingsway North, a 500m section of Padgate Brook has been realigned to create a more natural look and 5 hectares of reed bed habitat has been established to attract wildlife to the area.

The town's main park, Victoria Park, has seen major improvement works to the main entrance, and a 'wavy-topped' railing along the road frontage at Knutsford Road makes a strong urban design statement.

The scheme was designed not only to be functional but to be aesthetically fitting within its environment. Children from local primary schools were challenged to create the winning artworks that adorn the defence walls, from Kingsway North all the way along Knutsford Road.

Funding for the scheme came from a number of sources. The majority – £29m – came from Government Grant-in-Aid, the remaining came from the partners the Environment Agency worked with to deliver the scheme.

The Environment Agency worked closely with Warrington Borough Council, who contributed £4 million towards the scheme, of which £1 million was 'works in kind'. Scottish Power, who owns and operates a high voltage substation in the Howley area that serves almost half of the town, also contributed £2 million to the scheme to better protect this key piece of Warrington infrastructure.

As well as contributing funding, the Council was a key partner in cementing a strong relationship with stakeholders and landowners within the scheme's footprint.

Councillor Hans Mundry, Warrington Borough Council's executive board member for public realm, said:

The work done by the Environment Agency will bring peace of mind to many Warrington people as we work together to protect homes and businesses along the Mersey.

It is more than just functional though, as you will see if you take a walk by the river. It is an attractive addition to the waterfront and has improved the ecology and helped protect wildlife in the area.

You can view [aerial drone footage of the Warrington flood defence scheme on YouTube](#).

Drone footage filmed by Suave Air Photos