

# Press release: Spawning success for new fish pass

Young salmon have been found in the River Derwent at Shotley Bridge in Consett for the first time in 300 years.

The 33 juvenile salmon caught during recent routine sampling by the Environment Agency are the first evidence of salmon spawning this far upstream since a number of large weirs were built to power industry in the region.

Around £750,000 has been invested over the past decade to build fish passes at four of these weirs to allow fish to reach upstream spawning grounds of the Derwent – which is an important tributary of the River Tyne.

The latest, built a year ago at Lintzford in a partnership project between the Environment Agency, Tyne Rivers Trust and Esh Group, was immediately successful, with adult fish seen using it within hours of its completion.

As well as juveniles caught during sampling upstream at Shotley Bridge, the Environment Agency also found record high numbers of juveniles at three other locations downstream.

## **Great news for river**

The Environment Agency's Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist, said:

The presence of young salmon this far upstream has shown the immediate impact and success of the new fish pass. To find them so soon after the completion of the pass and during a single routine survey shows that significant numbers have spawned upstream.

It's also likely that many more sea trout and brown trout will also have been able to access their historical spawning grounds. This is great news for the River Derwent.

We've worked really hard together with our partners over the years to make dramatic improvements to water quality right across the country. But there's always more we can do and opening up our rivers to fish migration is vital for future biodiversity and river health.

Efforts have now started to build a fish pass at the only remaining large weir on the Derwent, further upstream at Shotley Grove, which may date from the 14th Century.

The Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust have completed preliminary design work for a fish pass, and are now seeking funding to cover the

estimated building costs of £275,000.

Douglas Phillips, Operations Director for Tyne Rivers Trust, added:

With more funding the Derwent could become a fantastic example of how intervention on a whole river system can improve spawning rates and the health of the river as a whole.

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## **Press release: Angler to pay £1,800 after unsuccessful appeal**

On 29 September 2017 at North Staffordshire Justice Centre, George Holland of Coppice Gardens, Stone, was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £1,855.81 after a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency. Mr Holland was fined £660 for threatening behaviour, ordered to pay costs of £1,129.81 and a victim surcharge of £66.

Mr Holland was originally called to court on 24 April 2017 and was proved guilty in absence for 4 offences. However, the case was reopened under a statutory declaration application from the defendant where he proceeded to enter a not guilty plea.

Mr Holland faced charges of wilfully obstructing a constable in the execution of his duty, fishing without a rod licence, failing to state his name when addressed by an Environment Agency enforcement officer and using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour causing that person to believe that imminent violence will be used against him.

Magistrates heard the case and again found Mr Holland guilty of all charges and issued a fine of £660 for threatening behaviour. While found guilty, he did not receive a further penalty for the additional charges. Mr Holland did not attend court on 29 September, so was again proved guilty in absence.

The offences took place on 23 August 2016 at Isaak Walton Fishery, Chebsey.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

It's good to see the courts taking instances of threatening behaviour against enforcement officers seriously and offenders being prosecuted. Thankfully cases where an angler is threatening are very rare; most anglers found without a licence, while not happy, admit they have been caught out.

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence.

With an annual licence costing £30 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine, and the very small minority feel it acceptable to threaten an enforcement officer.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency rod licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. [Buying a rod licence](#) is easy.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111 or [online](#).

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## [Press release: Salmon fishing season in Trent catchment area to come to a close](#)

With the salmon fishing season due to close in the Trent catchment area from Sunday 8 October 2017 to Wednesday 31 January 2018 inclusive, the Environment Agency is reminding anglers that failure to comply with statutory rod fishing byelaws could result in prosecution in court and a fine of up to £50,000.

Rod fishing byelaws are statutory rules put in place by the Environment Agency to protect fish stocks and apply to all waters in England, whether they are owned by angling clubs, local councils or private individuals. The close season aims to protect fish stocks from the impacts of angling during the fish breeding season.

Matt Buck, Fisheries Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

We would like to remind anglers that the salmon fishing season is due to come to a close and they should refrain from fishing for salmon until the start of February next year. This allows the impacts of angling to be minimised in order to protect fish stocks at a time when the fish are breeding.

If anglers catch any salmon by mistake when fishing for other fish throughout the salmon close season, they should allow the salmon to recover by handling them with great care so as not to damage the fish before allowing them to swim off upstream.

Survival rates for salmon are greatly increased if the appropriate angling techniques and equipment are used, and best practices for catching, handling and releasing angled fish are adopted. Between 1 February and 15 June, any salmon caught from any waters should not be removed and must be returned to the water with the least possible injury. Other restrictions also apply during this period and anglers must only use artificial fly or artificial lure to ensure the fish can be returned alive.

Anyone fishing with rod and line in England and Wales must hold a rod fishing licence and comply with the byelaws that cover the waters where they are fishing.

A special salmon and sea trout rod fishing licence is required for anyone wishing to fish for salmon and is available from [www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence](http://www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence) or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. The licence covers one rod for salmon in freshwater. Any salmon taken by rod and line may not be offered for sale.

Catch and release is vital to help protect and restore salmon stocks in our rivers – read our [guide for anglers](#).

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## **[Press release: Helping pupils prepare for flooding](#)**

Around 800 school children are better prepared for flooding following vital Environment Agency information sessions.

Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland, Sarah Pearce, led assemblies at schools across the area last week to help pupils understand flood risk and know what to do in a flood.

The schools involved were Handale Primary School at Loftus, Rift House Primary School in Hartlepool and Oxbridge lane Primary School in Stockton-on-Tees.

She was joined at Rift House by Coun. Marjorie James, Hartlepool Council's representative on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Sarah also launched a competition for school pupils to design a new logo which will be worn by Community Flood Wardens throughout the North East.

## **Awareness raising**

Sarah said:

It's hoped that through these sessions with children I will raise awareness of flooding and issues associated with flooding and will be able to pass on key safety messages to young people.

Working with schools means children can be educated about what it means to be flood resilient and ensure the messages delivered have a long-term impact in flood risk areas.

It's absolutely vital that future generations understand flooding, what we do during a flood and what they can do to stay safe.

The Flood Warden Logo competition is being run right across the North East with schools taking part from the whole area. Once the winning design has been selected this will be printed on to the new Flood Warden jacket which will be presented to all flood wardens to wear during a flood incident.

## **Helping communities be resilient**

Sarah is one of four Community Engagement Officers for the North East appointed by the Environment Agency to help communities to be more flood resilient.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for the next four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

Sarah works closely with Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit, and her work includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

She's also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service Visit [the gov.uk website](#)

You can contact Sarah at [sarah.pearce@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.pearce@environment-agency.gov.uk) or 07867 441 697.

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## [Press release: New inter-tidal habitat planned for Poole Harbour](#)

The Environment Agency is working with the RSPB and Natural England to explore how to adapt approximately 150 hectares of the Moors at Arne into a diverse wetland habitat. The scheme is necessary to compensate for the loss of inter-tidal habitats around Poole Harbour due to rising sea levels and the need to improve and maintain coastal defences.

Next week's drop-in event will be held on Tuesday (3 October 2017) at Wareham Town Hall from 2.00pm to 7.00pm.

When finished, the coastal change project will enable the Environment Agency and its partners to continue to protect properties around Poole Harbour from the increased risk of flooding due to climate change. It is predicted up to 10,000 local properties could be at risk within 100 years.

Important freshwater habitat and the Arne Road will continue to be protected from flooding as part of the scheme.

The loss of inter-tidal habitats through climate change and improved sea defences is known as 'coastal squeeze'. Compensatory habitats are needed to ensure birds and other wetland species are protected and still have places to rest and feed.

Neil Watson, for the Environment Agency, said:

It is important to us the local community is involved in this project right from the start, so please come along to the drop-in session and find out more about this exciting project. We would like to hear your views.

Tony Whitehead, speaking for the RSPB, said:

We're really looking forward to meeting people in Wareham and discussing the future of the Moors at Arne. During the day we'll share more on the reasons why the proposals are being made and the implications for people, wildlife and landscape in this special part of Dorset.