

[Press release: River coarse fishing season starts tomorrow](#)

It's a great time to get out there and go fishing, but the Environment Agency is reminding anglers to make sure they have a fishing licence before they go.

You can buy a [fishing licence](#) online and don't forget that all fishing licence income is used to fund work to protect, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. If you want to fish a new river this season, why not visit [fishinginfo](#) to find details of different venues, river levels and angling clubs.

Volunteers helping to tackle illegal close season angling

The Environment Agency reported 87 close season offences during the first 10 weeks of the annual restricted period for coarse fish. Officers undertook 729 targeted patrols, also detecting 115 other offences, mainly unlicensed fishing, but also several illegally set traps.

Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were supported again by Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiff Service members on Operation CLAMPDOWN. Now in its sixth year, Operation CLAMPDOWN is a joint initiative between the Environment Agency, Angling Trust's Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and police forces, aimed at gathering intelligence about illegal fishing and responding through targeted patrols.

Patrols took place across rivers, streams, drains and on specific canals and stillwaters that still retain the close season.

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

It's a great time to go fishing. So I'd encourage anglers to get out there, enjoy yourselves fishing and make sure you are doing the right thing.

I'd like to thank the Angling Trust volunteers for the significant role they play in stopping illegal fishing through their work on Operation CLAMPDOWN.

The vast majority of anglers fish legally; sadly there are a small number of anglers who cheat others by fishing during the close season. It is still possible for anglers to fish during this time on many stillwaters and canals, which are open all year round.

We respond to the intelligence we receive about illegal fishing by ensuring our patrols are targeted at the right places – and the right people.

Dilip Sarkar MBE, Angling Trust National Enforcement Manager, said:

These figures show that during Operation CLAMPDOWN 6 Volunteer Bailiffs throughout England are demonstrating their massive commitment to protecting fish and fisheries and cracking down on illegal fishing.

All anglers can help this process, in fact – at any time of year – by reporting information and offences in progress to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60, or the police on 101/999 as appropriate.”

Anyone who suspects illegal fishing to be taking place should report the matter to the Environment Agency’s incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[Notice: LE17 4JA, GC Metals Limited: environmental permit issued. EPR/PP3233RS/V002](#)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: GC Metals Limited
- Installation name: GC Metals Limited
- Permit number: EPR/PP3233RS/V002

[World news story: Bids open for projects to tackle the Illegal](#)

Wildlife Trade (IWT)

- The IWT CHALLENGE FUND aims to help developing countries by reducing demand, strengthening enforcement and improving criminal justice, and providing alternative livelihoods. The deadline for Stage 1 applications is Thursday 10 July. Information on how to apply can be found [here](#).
- The DARWIN INITIATIVE – a programme funded by the UK's Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) aims to protect biodiversity and the natural environment in developing countries. The deadline for Stage 1 applications is Tuesday 24 July. Information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

The British Embassy strongly encourages environmental and conservation organisations working in Guatemala and/or Honduras to apply. According to official statistics species such as exotic birds (macaws), reptiles (iguanas), and mammals are seeing their numbers rapidly decline as a direct consequence of IWT.

To address this issue the United Kingdom aims to build coalitions by engaging with the private sector, NGOs and academia. We also believe it is important to harness technology and innovation, and ultimately to close markets for illegally traded wildlife products. Project proposals may draw on any of these objectives.

Notice: RG7 4PR, AWE PLC: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: AWE PLC
 - Installation name: Aldermaston Carbon Activity
 - Permit number: EPR/WP3436UJ/V002
-

[Press release: Sea change for migrating smolts](#)

The Environment Agency has carried out underwater sonar surveys to check for young salmon using a new route across the Tees Barrage gates.

And the results show the juveniles – known as smolts – successfully making their journey from spawning grounds upstream out to sea.

It follows changes to the operation of the Tees Barrage in 2015, which means on every tidal cycle the gates are lowered to allow fish to pass both upstream and downstream.

Surveys have shown the barrage gates are the main route for salmon migrating upstream and the automation of the gates has resulted in an extra 1,500 hours per year of fish passage for returning adult salmon to reach their upstream spawning grounds.

It's in addition to the other routes that salmon use including the Barrage's navigation lock, the Denil fish pass, the fish pass in the white water rafting centre, and the main canoe slalom.



Downstream migration improved

Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

As well as improving the routes for returning adult fish we are also looking to improve the downstream migration of these precious fish and maximise the number of smolts reaching the North Sea.

By lowering the main barrage gates at set times, it means that as well as providing an additional upstream route for adult salmon we are providing a much easier route for the young salmon moving downstream as well. It is known that the sooner the smolts reach the sea the better their survival chances are, resulting in more returning adult fish.

Our recent work using an underwater sonar has shown large numbers of smolts using the gates to pass successfully downstream. It's really positive to see yet more evidence that salmon are spawning upstream and these youngsters have been living in the river for up to 3 years before they move out to the sea.

Every year smolts, which are between 1 and 3 years old, leave the river to start their feeding migrations to the sea – travelling as far as Greenland – where they will spend up to three more years as an adult salmon before returning to the river to spawn.

Smolts are vulnerable throughout their migration and only around 5% of those that leave the river will return to spawn the next generation of salmon.

[Underwater sonar footage of River Tees smolts crossing the Tees Barrage](#)

Steering group

The Tees Barrage Fish Pass and Operation Steering Group, made up of Tees Barrage owners the Canal & River Trust, the Environment Agency, Angling Trust, Salmon & Trout Conservation Trust, Tees Rivers Trust, Industries Nature Conservation Association and Tees Barrage International White Water Centre, oversees the monitoring and research of fish and seal populations and carried out action to improve fish passage.

Research to understand the preferred routes through the barrage for fish and how to make it easier for them while reducing seal predation has been the focus of recent surveys.

Last year also saw the use of an acoustic deterrent device (ADD) to deter seals from entering the navigation lock, which showed promising results. Phil added:

We're working really hard together with our partners to understand how fish naturally try to pass through the barrage and then to make it as easy as possible for them. We've changed the way the main gates and navigation lock operate to allow more fish passage, and we'll be using an acoustic deterrent device again this summer.

We want as many fish as possible to make it upstream to their

spawning grounds to ensure the River Tees continues to improve.