

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.

[News story: MMO welcomes National Grid for industry interchange](#)

Members of the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) marine licensing team recently met with National Grid as part of ongoing improvements being made to the service it provides to industry.

The industry interchange programme involves MMO employees hosting and visiting a range of organisations, delivery partners and devolved administrations to learn more about day-to-day and strategic activities, build awareness of other operating environments and establish relationships.

In September members of National Grid visited the MMO headquarters in Newcastle for a two day event aimed at learning more about the marine licensing process.

Matthew Kinmond, MMO senior marine licensing manager said:

We were delighted to host National Grid for a two day industry interchange in Newcastle. The interchange provided us with an opportunity to give National Grid an insight into the wider work of our organisation, as well as the marine licensing team's systems and processes.

This has improved National Grid's knowledge and understanding of the work involved in determining a marine licence application and the wider work we are undertaking to improve our services. We look forward to the return visit to National Grid, where we can continue to build upon our already positive working relationship.

Sean Stokoe, National Grid consents manager said:

Not only were we made to feel exceptionally welcome but we were given a well-structured and comprehensive insight into the work of

the MMO, and specifically the marine licensing and environmental assessment process.

Particularly apparent, was the willingness of MMO personnel to work closely with us in the future, and technically guide us, so that we can successfully deliver our construction and engineering projects to specification, programme and cost.

Notes to editors:

- The marine licensing team often carries out interchange sessions with customers and organisations with an interest in their work. This provides an opportunity to learn more about how each other operates and strengthens relationships.
 - Other organisations MMO has previously carried out interchange activities with include Lafarge Tarmac, Dong Energy, Peel Ports and Cemex.
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SRUC welcomes new head of SAC Consulting Solutions

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Andrew Lacey as the new Head of SAC Consulting Solutions.

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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