

Press release: Salmon in Derbyshire river a first since Industrial Revolution

Atlantic salmon have been discovered on the River Ecclesbourne, a tributary of the River Derwent, Derbyshire for the first time since the Industrial Revolution following work carried out by the Environment Agency and its partners.

The discovery comes following the installation of fish passes on the River Derwent by the Environment Agency and Trent Rivers Trust which have helped to improve fish migration and allow the salmon to move upstream through the river.

The installation of fish passes is just one of a programme of actions carried out by the Environment Agency and its partners to remove barriers to migration and help restore salmon stocks throughout England.

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

Salmon is an important species and after two decades of work to improve water quality and the habitat for fish in the Trent catchment area, we now have a recovering population of salmon.

We are particularly excited to have found juvenile salmon in the Ecclesbourne for the first time in living memory, which indicates the success of salmon in this part of the river.

Poor water quality and weirs on the River Derwent constructed in the Industrial Revolution acted as a barrier to fish migration and left them stuck in unsuitable water. Weirs not only stop fish migrating, but trap fish spawning gravels and create ponded areas upstream which are not suitable for riverine fish species.

Over the past seven years, the Environment Agency has worked with partners and developers on the construction of fish passes on a number of weirs in the area. These passes have enabled adult salmon to swim freely further up the river, where they have access to more varied habitats providing suitable conditions to spawn, shelter and feed.

Matt continued:

Thanks to the work we have carried out with our partners, we are, for the first time ever, witnessing a recovering population of salmon on the River Derwent and other local rivers which is an excellent result. Last year we saw a record number of sightings of

adult salmon, including a salmon found at Belper weir for the first time in over 100 years.

We are committed to ensuring that salmon numbers continue to increase within the catchment by working with partners to enable fish passage on the remaining barriers and to improve the quality of river habitats for this fascinating species. If salmon are thriving we know the river is doing well for all fish and wildlife.