

Press release: 8,000 young fish released into the River Rother

The Environment Agency has today released 8,000 young grayling into the River Rother at Chesterfield to help fish populations recover from historical pollution.

This release is part of a five-year restocking programme that is helping to restore the river's ecology to how it was before the industrial revolution.

The baby fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton using funding from rod licence sales.

Dr Jerome Masters, fisheries officer at the Environment Agency, said:

The River Rother was once one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. Grayling were wiped out as a result, and weirs in the river makes their natural recolonisation highly unlikely.

But life is returning to the River Rother. Water quality has improved, and the re-stocking programme will see grayling returning to live alongside species such as brown trout, chub and roach which are already resident in Chesterfield's rivers.

Anyone who wants to help improve Chesterfield's rivers and the health of fish stocks could contribute by getting involved with the Wild Trout Trust's 'Trout in the Town' scheme.

Paul Gaskell, at the Wild Trout Trust, said:

We have a programme to help urban communities engage with and care for their local streams and rivers, called 'Trout in the Town'. In addition to caring generally for the river, groups often carry out invertebrate monitoring, and habitat improvement work. We can help out with training for that habitat improvement work and provide support with fundraising.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a founder member of a Chesterfield Trout in the Town group are invited to contact Dr Jerome Masters at jerome.masters@environment-agency.gov.uk.

More information on Trout in the Town projects can be found at www.wildtrout.org/content/trout-town and www.wildtrout.org/tint.

Notice: Y042 4LJ, Sellmor Farming Limited: 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: Sellmor Farming Limited
- Installation name: North Farm
- Permit number: EPR/HP3330AY/A001

Press release: Fish kill costs Frome farmer Michael Aylesbury more than £22,000

A farmer was told to pay more than £22,000 for polluting a river in Frome, Somerset, killing nearly 2,000 fish.

Dairy farmer Michael Aylesbury, a director in Cross Keys Farm Ltd, pleaded guilty to causing an unpermitted water discharge which turned the river in Frome brown and smelly in May 2016, killing 1,700 fish, probably many more.

The pollution came from a slurry lagoon at Bollow Farm, Silver Lane, East Woodlands where it was overflowing into a ditch from an underground chamber that had not been fully sealed off. Making matters worse, a spillage from a slurry pumping operation days before also entered the same ditch, meant only to carry rainwater.

The reduced water quality and the river's polluted appearance hit local groups, like anglers, kayakers and swimmers, who had to suspend activities. Residents were also upset by the sight of distressed and dying fish.

The Environment Agency was alerted to the incident on 12 May 2016 and attempted to save the fish population by spraying hydrogen peroxide to restore dissolved oxygen levels in the water. The pollution was traced back to Bollow Farm the next day.



To save the fish, hydrogen peroxide was sprayed to restore the dissolved oxygen levels

Tasked with protecting water, land and biodiversity, the Environment Agency classified the incident as category one – the worst kind – which affected the watercourse for more than 6km and was obvious to the naked eye.

The defendant told investigating officers “he had nothing to hide and held his hands up to the pollution incident” and that he was sorry it had happened.

Bath Magistrates’ Court found Aylesbury to be negligent for not informing the Environment Agency about the initial spillage and fined him £3,000, a victim surcharge of £170 and ordered him to pay costs of £19,306.69 on 5 June 2017.

Environment officer Andy Grant said:

Our role as a regulator is to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth. We work with business owners to create better places but when avoidable incidents like this happen, we take action.

Informing us of the initial spillage and keeping an eye on nearby watercourses are two simple actions the farmer could have taken which would have sped up our investigation and stopped the cause of the pollution sooner.

Last November we restocked 5,500 fish including chub, roach and bream at two locations in Frome and we continue working with our

partners including the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Frome Town Council, farmers and landowners to identify opportunities to enhance and protect the River Frome.

Detailed guide: Safe passage for eels

Existing water obstructions

You may need to construct an eel pass if you own or occupy land with, or are in charge of, a

- dam
- weir
- sluice
- other in-river obstruction

The Environment Agency will write to you if you must construct an eel pass to allow eels to migrate safely past the structure.

Contact the [Environment Agency](#) and ask for your local fisheries officer to confirm a completion date for the work at your site.

You may need to apply for a permit or permission to do the work. Check the guidance to see if you need a:

- [flood risk activity environmental permit](#)
- land drainage consent

Check with your [local planning authority](#) if you need planning permission.

You must pay for the construction, operating and maintenance costs.

If you do not do the work the Environment Agency can:

- issue you a warning letter
- serve you with a formal caution
- prosecute you if they think it's in the public interest
- construct the eel pass and charge you for the work

Existing water abstraction structures

In most cases you must install an eel screen if you do both of the following:

- own or occupy land with, or are in charge of, a water abstraction structure
- abstract at least 20 cubic metres of water per day

Water abstraction structures include:

- pumping stations
- hydro-electric power stations
- irrigation pumping systems

Check [when you do not need to install an eel screen](#).

A screen will keep eels out of the structure and allow them to migrate safely past it.

You must have a temporary exemption notice in place until you have completed the work. Contact the [Environment Agency](#) to get your exemption notice and the date by which to complete the work.

You may need to apply for a permit or permission to do the work. Check the guidance to see if you need a:

- [flood risk activity environmental permit](#)
- land drainage consent

Check with your [local planning authority](#) if you need planning permission.

You must pay for the installation, operating and maintenance costs.

If you do not do the work before your exemption notice expires the Environment Agency can:

- issue you a warning letter
- serve you with a formal caution
- prosecute you if they think it's in the public interest
- install the eel screen and charge you for the work

When you do not need to install an eel screen

If you can prove that your abstraction structure does not affect eel migration, the Environment Agency may give you a permanent exemption from screening.

If you can provide evidence that it's not cost beneficial to install an eel screen, the Environment Agency may give you an exemption from screening for a specified period. You must prove that the cost of installing a screen is greater than the benefit of protecting eel at your intake. Contact the [Environment Agency](#) to find out how to do these calculations.

But you will still need to protect eels, for example by:

- installing a fish recovery and return system
- installing a fish friendly pump or turbine
- protecting eel in another way, such as creating a new eel habitat

New licence and permit applications

You must make sure eels can migrate safely past your new structure or flood risk activity when you apply for any of the following:

- impoundment licence
- abstraction licence
- flood risk activity environmental permit

Impoundment licence

In most cases, when you apply for an impoundment licence you must include information on how eels can pass safely around, over or through your development.

You may not need to include an eel pass if your structure is both greater than:

- 100 kilometres from the tidal limit
- 150 metres above sea level

Check with the [Environment Agency](#) and ask for your local fisheries officer.

Apply for an [impoundment licence](#).

Abstraction licence

In most cases you must include a screen at an abstraction point to keep eels out of the abstraction structure. You must submit information on how you will include a screen as part of your licence application.

You may not need to include an eel screen if your structure is both greater than:

- 100 kilometres from the tidal limit
- 150 metres above sea level

Check with the [Environment Agency](#) and ask for your local fisheries officer.

Apply for an [abstraction licence](#).

Flood risk activity environmental permit

When you apply you must submit details of eel passage, such as an:

- elver pass
- eel by-pass structure

Read the guidance on how to [apply for a flood risk activity permit](#).

Sanctions

If you do not comply with the conditions of your licence or permit the

Environment Agency can:

- issue you a warning letter
- serve you with a formal caution
- prosecute you if they think it's in the public interest
- impose a civil sanction where the law allows or you may be able to offer a [civil sanction enforcement undertaking](#).

Contact the Environment Agency

National Customer Contact Centre

P0 Box 544

Rotherham

S60 1BY

Email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone 03708 506 506 [See call charges](#)

Ask for your local fisheries officer.

Minicom (for the hard of hearing) 03702 422 549

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

[Press release: Ozone air pollution alert](#)

A high pressure system persisting over the UK has brought warm and still conditions, resulting in increased ground level ozone.

A number of sites in the UK have exceeded the EU ozone public information threshold of 180µg/m³.

The latest information on these alerts will be issued on the [UK Air website](#).

Some people are more sensitive to ozone than others and may begin to notice an effect on their breathing. People with asthma are not necessarily more sensitive but, if affected, can use their 'reliever' inhaler to alleviate symptoms.

If affected, people are urged to take sensible precautions. In particular,

avoiding exercise outdoors in the afternoon can reduce individual exposure to ozone.

If the legal threshold for ozone is again breached, further alerts will be issued on our [UK Air website](#).

Forecasts, latest measurements and health advice are available on UK Air and via Defra's freephone helpline (0800 556677). Updates on current and forecast levels of air pollution can also be found on Twitter [@DefraUKAir](#).