

[Press release: Official opening of £3million North East flood scheme](#)

The multi-million pound Lustrum Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme has been officially opened.

The Environment Agency and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have worked together on the £3million award-winning scheme, which included replacing Londonderry Bridge and building new flood walls along the beck.

The scheme reduces the risk of flooding to over 150 homes in the town.

An official opening event on 26 July marked the completion of the first phase of the project, while residents were invited to a community drop-in event and walking tour of the defences to find out how they are better protected from flooding.

The lifting screen at Primrose Hill

New flood defences

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council replaced Londonderry Bridge, on Durham Road, as part of the project. This was completed in December 2016.

The Environment Agency has built new flood walls along the beck at Bedford Street and Duddon Walk, which tie in with a raised embankment at Newtown. Work to tie in the new defences with the new bridge was completed earlier this year.

The Environment Agency also installed a new lifting screen at the culvert at Primrose Hill and had previously built a new flood wall along Bishopton Road.

Environment Agency Area Director Oliver Harmar said:

This is a fantastic project with some unique features which has increased flood protection to over 150 properties.

We've worked closely with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council throughout which has enabled us to provide Stockton with an excellent scheme with a high level of protection.

And we're not finished yet. The next phase involves looking at storing flood water further upstream at Coatham Woods, as well as creating new habitat.

This makes Lustrum Beck a great project which will see us combine traditional engineering solutions with natural flood management.

The new Londonderry Bridge

Natural flood management

The Environment Agency is looking at options to store flood water further upstream of Stockton at Coatham Woods, and is working with Newcastle University and the Forestry Commission to explore designs.

And it's also exploring opportunities to create up to 30 hectares of water dependent habitat, including improved habitat at Sixfields.

Construction of these features is expected to start later this year and will take approximately three years.

Councillor Mike Smith, the Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, added:

The replacement of Londonderry Bridge was an essential part of the broader scheme to help reduce the flood risk to homes.

"The old bridge was a major contributor to serious flooding because its arches obstructed the beck's flow. Replacing it with a new, single span bridge has reduced the risk of the kind of devastating flooding we've seen in recent years.

We'd like to thank local people for their patience and understanding throughout this project, and it's good to give them this opportunity to find out how the new flood protection measures all work.

The Lustrum Beck flood scheme has won a number of awards, including the Sustainability award at Constructing Excellence North East 2017, it scooped the top award for Partnership Project of the Year at the Flood and Coast Project Excellence Awards, and was highly commended at the Robert Stephenson Awards run by the Institution of Civil Engineers.

It's important residents understand their flood risk and know what to do during a flood. [Find out more about how to prepare for flooding](#)

[Press release: Fish stocks boost for north east rivers](#)

The Environment Agency has released 12,000 young grayling to give fish stocks a boost in north east rivers.

The fish were released this week into the rivers Deerness, Browney, Blyth and Skerne as well as Langley Beck at Staindrop and Aldbrough Beck near Darlington.

It's part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plans to develop and restore rivers in the region, targeting those which have been affected by pollution or where barriers affect fish passage.

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

Help the process of natural recovery

Fisheries Officer Paul Frear was out releasing some of the grayling in the south of the region on Tuesday (1 August). He said:

We're pleased we can provide these fish for restocking as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers and to help the process of natural recovery in waters which have been impacted by pollution or suffered poor water quality.

While it's a really important aspect of our work, it's one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the effects of pollution, improving habitat and removing barriers to fish migration.

Grayling released into Langley Beck

Improved water quality

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways regularly. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity in response to impacts on local rivers and using data from national fish surveys to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and [are available online.](#)

Press release: Anglers urged to report pink salmon catches

Recently a non-native pink salmon was caught in the River Tyne at Wylam and around 100 are believed to have been caught in waters off the North East and Yorkshire coast in recent months.

Further afield, anglers have confirmed catches in a number of rivers in Scotland and in western Ireland.

The Environment Agency is collecting vital data about sightings so officers can monitor the situation to determine any impact on the local environment and species. Data collected will help the Environment Agency, fisheries researchers and other organisations with an interest in fisheries management in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia, better understand how to manage the arrival of pink salmon in the UK .

Unusual find

Jonathan Shelley from the Environment said:

It is quite unusual to find pink salmon in our waters and we're keen anglers know we're aware of the sightings and we're investigating.

I'd urge anglers to contact us if they see any non-native salmon in the waters, with a date, location and if possible a photograph, which would really help us identify them and build up a picture of where they are.

We are monitoring the situation and early indications is that there is no major impact on wild fish stocks at this point in time.

The non-native pink salmon

The native Atlantic salmon

Advice for anglers

Anglers holding a salmon licence who catch pink salmon are asked not to return the fish to the water. Instead they are asked to dispatch of them humanely and, if possible, make the fish available to the Environment Agency for inspection and further analysis.

If this is not possible, they are asked to send a sample of the scales. Trout and coarse anglers are asked to call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60, if unsuccessful please return the salmon.

Pink salmon (*Onchorhynchus gorbuscha*), also known as humpback salmon, originate from the northern Pacific Ocean.

Millions were stocked in the White Sea region of north Russia from the 1950's until 2003 to develop a net fishery. As a result, some have established self-sustaining populations in rivers in Russia, Finland and northern Norway. This is the most likely origin of the pink salmon recently caught in the UK and Ireland.

How to identify a pink salmon:

- Large black oval spots on the tail
- Bluish back, silver flanks and white belly
- Much smaller scales than an Atlantic salmon of the same size
- Very dark mouth and tongue
- 40-60cm in length
- Breeding males develop a distinctive hump

In contrast, the native Atlantic salmon typically:

- Have no spots on the tail
- Usually larger (up 110cm in length)
- Pale mouth and tongue
- Larger scales
- One or two black spots on the gill cover
- Spots on the back above the lateral line
- Thicker base of tail than a pink salmon

[News story: Reducing the use of animals in research: apply for SBRI funding](#)

The [National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research](#) (NC3Rs) plus sponsors will invest in collaborative projects that address some of the challenges posed by animal experiments.

This is designed to:

- minimise the use of animals in research
- support the development of marketable products
- improve business processes

Collaborations are encouraged between industry, research organisations and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

What you need to know

The centre is launching 3 challenges as part of its [Crack It initiative](#).

DARTpaths

This challenge aims to develop an effective data strategy and data management structure to map the developmental and reproductive toxicity (DART) genes of different species. You should compare the effects of toxic compounds across species.

It is in 2 phases. There is up to £100,000 for phase 1. Phase 2 has funding of up to £1 million. [Shell](#) and [Syngenta](#) are the sponsors.

Dosing for controlled exposure (DoCE)

This challenge aims to improve dosing methods and strategies for in vitro dose-responses and to encourage their uptake, application and use in risk-based decision making. This could offer the potential to eventually replace the need for in vivo animal studies.

It is in 2 phases. There is up to £100,000 for phase 1. Phase 2 has funding of up to £1 million. [Unilever](#) and Shell are the sponsors.

RespiraTox

In this challenge the aim is to develop a model that reliably predicts human respiratory irritation to chemicals. It should use in silico-based tools.

This is a single-phase competition. Up to £100,000 is available. The competition is sponsored by Shell.

The background

NC3Rs is an independent scientific organisation that supports the UK science base to find alternative applications to the use of animals in research and improve welfare.

This competition is being run through the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI).

Competition information

- the competition opens on 11 September 2017
- there are different deadlines depending on the competition you are applying into. These are:
 - 8 November 2017 at midday for the 2-phase DARTpaths and DoCE challenges
 - 15 November 2017 at midday for the single-phase RespiraTox challenge
- there will be a launch event on 7 September 2017 to find out more. You

will need to [register for the event](#)

News story: Priti Patel: taxpayers' money is making the difference between life and death in East Africa but Britain cannot act alone

This year the world is facing humanitarian crises in greater number and scale than ever before. Extreme hunger is stalking East Africa, pushing millions of families to the brink of starvation.

My readers will be rightly shocked and saddened by the harrowing stories of Somali children and their families. Babies whose bodies are shutting down because they are so starved, mothers who are fighting to keep their children alive.

These people are many miles away and their lives, wracked by conflict and drought, are totally unimaginable from our own. But they are our fellow human beings and they desperately need our help.

The UN suggests that half the population of Somalia is without reliable access to food, and 1.4 million children are acutely malnourished. Of those, 275,000 children are so severely undernourished they could soon die without urgent treatment.

The British Government has acted without hesitation. Earlier this year, I visited Somalia and saw first-hand that all the signs were pointing to famine. In response, the UK quickly stepped up support and right now, food is urgently being shipped into Somalia and distributed across the country – including to Somaliland.

We are giving one million people access to safe drinking water, food and emergency healthcare. This is the difference between a child having something to eat and having nothing; it is the difference between life and death.

The British public have also shown typical generosity; £60 million has been raised by the Disasters Emergency Committee's East Africa crisis appeal, including £10 million of matching funds from the British Government.

British people are helping to alleviate the suffering but the UK cannot act alone on this. The swift action we have taken to save lives must be matched by others. That is why I have called on the whole international community to play their part to avert tragedy. UN organisations are now on the ground in Somalia developing response plans and scaling up efforts. The World Bank has

pledged \$50 million to Somalia to help people in drought affected areas access food assistance, water and health services.

To date, over \$948 million has been raised for Somalia and this is more than was pledged for the whole of 2016. Over a fifth of this is from the British government alone – totalling £170 million – but more than a third of the humanitarian appeal for 2017 still remains unfunded.

Together, we have so far managed to avert a repeat of the famine which killed 260,000 people in 2011. But the job is far from done. The risk of famine still looms over Somalia; millions of people remain in dire need and hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk. Unquestionably, more people will die if we do not continue our collective efforts.

To maximise our impact, we must focus on the most urgent actions, collaborate properly and improve transparency. Funds must go where the need is greatest.

This is ultimately in all our interests. Somalia is one of the world's most fragile countries and the humanitarian crisis threatens to undermine recent political and economic progress at a vital time. Meanwhile, extreme hunger is forcing people from their homes and threatens to swell the refugee crisis in Africa and Europe.

The British Government's support for Somalia is enduring. We hosted a landmark London Somalia Conference in May this year, where we convened global leaders, the UN and key players from Somali government to end this desperate situation and help build a more prosperous, stable and peaceful Somalia for the future.

My message to the rest of the international community is clear: we must all step up our efforts before it is too late to stop innocent people starving to death. International leaders cannot and must not turn their backs or shut their eyes. That would be a stain on our collective conscience.

This article was [originally published on the i newspaper](#).