

# Environment Agency ‘counts’ on refurbishment

Press release

Environment Agency work to refurbish a vital fish counter on the River Tyne in Northumberland starts on Monday 17 October.



The fish pass at Riding Mill

The fish pass at Riding Mill has a counter that is used to monitor the number of salmon and sea trout returning to spawn in the River Tyne – which is regarded as the best salmon river in England – and is vital for understanding the status of stocks.

It logged 11,845 fish in July, the highest July total in Environment Agency records, and on 3 August this year, 2,359 fish were logged – the second highest single day figure on record.

Since it was installed 25 years ago the equipment has counted over 775,000 salmon and sea trout returning to spawn.

## **Increased understanding of fish stocks**

Morton Heddell-Cowie, Fisheries Technical Officer at the Environment Agency, said:

The fish counter at Riding Mill has improved our understanding of the status of salmon and sea trout stocks in the River Tyne, as well as of fish movements in response to changes in flow and temperature.

It's been vital to help us understand how the additional releases of water from Kielder Reservoir have supported fish migration during the current dry weather, with some record numbers recently.

It demonstrates just how important the fish counter is and I am delighted that this refurbishment work, which aims to extend its lifetime for another 25 years, is about to start.

The refurbishment work is expected to start on 17 October and last for around five days.

It was originally due to take place in September 2021 to coordinate with Northumbrian Water's work to install an eel pass in the same location but was put back to make design improvements and to source materials. Northumbrian Water completed the eel pass earlier this year.

Precautions will be taken to minimise any disruption to the local environment during the works. Fish will be safely removed from the affected area prior to the work taking place and a fish passage will be maintained.

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