

Environment Agency invests £48 million in projects to benefit fishing

The Environment Agency invested over £48 million in projects to enhance fisheries and make improvements for anglers, angling facilities and the environment during 2019-20.

The EA's [Annual Fisheries Report](#), published today (15 January), shows that over £20 million was raised from rod licence sales, with almost a million (940,974) fishing licences sold between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. This was supplemented by partner contributions and additional government funding, allowing the EA to spend over £48 million to support the management of fisheries.

Environment Agency fisheries staff also used rod licence income to work with the Angling Trust and the police to educate anglers, enforce fisheries law and protect the sport for those who want to fish safely and legally. This resulted in 1,611 successful prosecutions and over £285,900 in penalties against people committing angling offences, demonstrating that angling crime doesn't pay.

Fishing licence sales have also allowed EA fisheries officers to save thousands of fish and helped protect hundreds of fisheries. In 2019-20, the agency attended 309 reported incidents of dead fish or fish in distress. When responding to incidents, trained officers collect evidence for prosecution and where possible help mitigate impacts of both natural and preventable incidents.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

Income from fishing licence sales is used to fund vital work to improve and protect our fisheries and much-loved fish species. Our new Annual Fisheries Report shows how income generated is invested directly back into our angling community, improving fish stocks, boosting opportunities for anglers as well as working with partners to make it easier for anyone to take up fishing.

When you buy a licence, you are supporting important work by the EA, including restocking, fisheries enforcement, habitat improvement and fish rescues when needed.

The report shows that in 2019-20, licence sales funded:

- In-depth monitoring of fish stocks, with EA teams conducting 1,521 fisheries surveys to assess fish stocks and the health of waters across England
- Over 40,000 people encouraged to try fishing for the first time at 1,525 angling participation events

- Installation of 58 fish passes and the improvement of 515km of rivers providing habitat for all fish to thrive
- The enhancement and improved access to 185 hectares of stillwater fisheries
- 27 projects to protect fisheries from predation from otters and cormorants through the Angling Improvement Fund (AIF)
- 135 projects to improve and enhance fisheries via our Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP)
- Collaborative work with over 2,000 partners (including the Angling Trust, Wild Trout Trust, local rivers trusts, land owners and angling clubs)
- The supply and stocking of more than half a million coarse fish including roach, dace, chub, barbel, tench, rudd, common bream and grayling. These fish are essential in helping to develop fisheries and for waters impacted by major pollution incidents.

Annual fishing licences are available from only £30. Anglers under 16 can fish for free and concessions are also available. As well as being a legal requirement, purchasing a fishing licence contributes to the enhancement of rivers and lakes across England and supports participation events which helps angling become more accessible to everyone.

[Find out more about fishing licences](#) to enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally.