

# Press release: Fish pass plans for Howsham weir

The Environment Agency is finalising plans to install a fish pass on the River Derwent at Howsham to help migrating fish, eel and lamprey access spawning grounds upstream.

The work is part of a joint programme with Natural England to improve a number of weirs and other structures that the Environment Agency owns in the lower Derwent.

The project will involve the installation of an enhanced single Larinier fish pass near the existing hydropower turbines, along with eel and lamprey tiles at two locations on the weir.

Improved passage will help fish populations by allowing them to move freely between the river and coastal waters to access breeding, nursery or feeding grounds. It will also help species to naturally re-colonise the river upstream after floods, droughts or pollution.

The design is being developed following a public consultation with the local community, environmental organisations, and people who use the river regularly, including anglers and canoeists. It aims to provide a significant improvement for fish while at the same time allowing continued use of a chute across the weir for canoe and kayak training and competitions.

Ineke Jackson, project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The upstream reaches of the River Derwent and the Rye have very low numbers of lamprey, eels and salmon, so this is a really important project for the environment.

We have opted for a single fish pass with a special design and additional flow to make it particularly attractive to fish, while protecting canoeing and kayaking. This will be a substantial improvement for fish, and requires only a small reduction in flow through the canoe chute. We will put lamprey and eel tiles on the weir to help these species make their way across.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed during the consultation because this helped us to find a solution which balances all interests.

Construction on the scheme is expected to begin in spring or summer next year.

More information on the public consultation can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/howsham-weir-fish-passage-consultation](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/howsham-weir-fish-passage-consultation).

---

## **Press release: Scrap yard licence revoked for illegal activity**

The Environment Agency took the action against Robert Wright (snr), the former Company Director of Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd in Stanley, County Durham, following a series of breaches of licence conditions after his son took over the business.

The decision means that Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd will no longer be authorised to accept and treat waste metals from 15 July 2017.

Environmental permits ensure the protection of the environment and local communities from the risk of pollution caused through the carrying out of waste activities.

Under the regulations, the permit must be in the name of the person who has overall control of the facility and the site must employ an industry qualified technically competent manager to provide waste management advice and guidance.

### **No application received**

The permit for Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd was in the name of Robert Wright (snr), meaning he is legally responsible for ensuring the site is compliant. In 2006 he retired and his sons Ian and Robert Wright (jnr) took over. In January 2013 Ian Wright took sole control of the business.

Throughout this period, Environment Officers repeatedly advised Ian and Robert Wright (snr) of the legal requirement to transfer the permit to Ian. No application was ever received and officers were unable to take action against Ian Wright for a number of permit breaches on site because the permit was not in his name. Environment officers deemed these permit breaches to be a result of lack of technical competence.

In addition, the permit holder had failed to pay subsistence fees since 2013.



## **Permit revoked 'to protect the environment'**

Andrew Rothery from the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency has revoked the environmental permit for Robby's Autos to protect the environment and ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses. It is clear that the permit holder is not in a position to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

It is vital that waste companies comply with the law so that communities and the environment are not put at risk. We work with operators to help them meet their obligations, but where significant or repeated breaches occur, we will take appropriate action to protect the environment.

The revocation requires all waste is removed from the site and disposed of legally by 31 July 2017. Failure to do so may lead to legal action by the Environment Agency.

Anyone who experiences problems from this or any other waste site is urged to report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060 or CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

---

## Press release: Water abstraction lie costs farm business £5,500

Lakenheath farming business N&M Sizer lied about how much water it abstracted, fearing it would lose its licence or have its abstraction limits reduced.

In doing so, the company falsely stated that it had extracted more water than it was allowed to under the licence which resulted in an investigation by the Environment Agency.

The company had actually taken very little of the allowance as its crops at the time did not need spray irrigation, Ipswich Magistrates' Court heard today (30 May).

It fined the company £3,000 for the deception and ordered it to pay £2,531 costs.

Mrs Megan Selves, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court the company had been worried that as it had not taken much water it would lose the right the following year to take what the licence allowed.

However, she said that any reduction in future abstraction or any revocation of licence would not be done without looking at about 10 years of records and without discussion with the licence holder.

Any assessment would only be carried out when the licence came up for renewal or if there was evidence that the licence is causing environmental damage. The licence for N&M Sizer Ltd expires on 31 March 2027.

Mrs Selves said that water meters at the company's site, Bedford Fen in Sedgfen, had been re-calibrated to corroborate the figures submitted to the Environment Agency in a 'determined effort to mislead'.

She said the company's actions had been deliberate and a 'flagrant disregard for the law' and although there had been no environmental impact, the company had falsified its figures giving a false impression of how much water had been taken from the environment.

Mrs Selves said the company had shown remorse and co-operated with the investigation.

N&M Sizer Ltd pleaded guilty to:

Charge: On or before 30 November 2015 you furnished information to the Environment Agency pursuant to section 201 of the Water Resources Act 1991, namely the water abstraction return for 2014 to 2015 for licence 6/33/39/\*S/0496/R01 for abstraction points A, C, D, E and F, and in the said information made a statement which you knew to be false or misleading in a material particular, namely that you had abstracted 153,360 cubic metres of

water.

Contrary to section 206(1) and (5) of the Water Resources Act 1991

Media enquiries: For East Anglia press office please contact (24 hours): 0800 917 9250

---

## **Press release: Environment Agency saves thousands of fish in Ampthill Reservoir**

Over the hot weekend of 17 to 18 June, Environment Agency teams saved thousands of carp, roach and rudd from Ampthill Reservoir Lake, an amenity fishery in Bedfordshire.

The angling club reported seeing huge shoals of fish gasping at the water's surface throughout the fishery. A dedicated Fisheries Incident Officer was in touch within the hour and quickly on-site to monitor oxygen levels.

Recent hot weather and very high water temperatures encouraged algae blooms which had reduced oxygen levels in the fishery to a potentially fatal level for fish. Environment Agency fisheries officers dosed the lake with hydrogen peroxide into the early hours of Monday (19 June). They were then back on the scene first thing to monitor recovery. There are now no fish in distress, and the huge shoals of fish seen gasping have returned to normal behaviour.

Kye Jerrom, Fisheries Officer said:

Specialist officers are on duty 24 hours a day to respond to fish kills and fish in distress, all funded by rod licence income. Our team was able to respond quickly and we'd like to thank the angling club for knowing what to do.

The club suffered a similar incident 30 years ago and lost every fish in the lake. The scene when I arrived was very worrying and I am sure that our efforts have saved the fishery from a huge fish kill, which is great news for such a hardworking club, and for those who fish it.

We have provided advice and management options and will continue to work with the club to prevent a similar, and potentially devastating, event in the future. If anyone spots fish in distress then please call our incident helpline on 0800 80 70 60.

Summer can see Environment Agency staff responding to many reports of 'fish in distress' due to naturally occurring environmental changes causing lower oxygen levels in the water. Hot, sunny weather can lead to low flows in rivers and stillwater fisheries (ponds and lakes) starting to warm up. Small stillwaters are particularly susceptible.

As well as encouraging people to call them on 0800 80 70 60, the Environment Agency is encouraging private fishery owners to manage fish stocks to appropriate levels and install aerators.

Media enquiries: For East Anglia press office please contact (24 hours): 0800 917 9250

---

## **Press release: Fish stocks boost for north east rivers**

Thousands of fish were released into the River Pont at Ponteland and Matfen as well as tributaries of the rivers Wear and Tees.

It's part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plans to develop and restore rivers in the region.

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



Fisheries Technical Specialist Phil Rippon was out releasing some of the grayling in the south of the region today. 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 impacted waters.

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 migration.



## **Rivers have improved dramatically**

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways annually. 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](#)