

[From tree to bench at Barony](#)

Second year Arboriculture students got to test their skills that they had picked up throughout the year at the Barony Campus of SRUC – and picnic benches were produced as a result.

[Warning of high risk of damage from leatherjacket grubs](#)

Scientists from SRUC are warning that this spring there is a high risk of damage to spring cereals from Leatherjacket grubs.

[News story: No fishing for coarse fish in rivers from 15 March to 15 June](#)

Every year, the close season prevents fishing for coarse fish, like barbel and chub, for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed.

Judy Proctor, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. This includes rescuing fish in distress, improving habitat and restocking rivers with 450,000 fish a year. However, one of the best things we can do is simply to leave the fish alone during the spring allowing them the opportunity to breed so that we have healthy stocks in the future.

During the close season, the Environment Agency's specialist enforcement teams rigorously police illegal fishing. In the first few weeks of last year's close season, officers carried out more than 380 targeted patrols and found more than 70 people fishing on waters off-limits.

In addition to Environment Agency enforcement teams, the Angling Trust's Voluntary Bailiff Service, which is funded by fishing licence money, will be taking part in Operation Clampdown. The volunteers will be looking out for illegal fishing on local rivers and reporting any suspicious activity to the

Environment Agency and police.

Judy Proctor:

The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders. Our enforcement officers, supported by Angling Trust voluntary bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing again this year and anyone caught can expect to face prosecution and receive a significant fine. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws>

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 at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

[Consultation outcome: Water industry: strategic policy statement to Ofwat 2017](#)

Updated: Summary of responses added.

We want to know your views on the new strategic policy statement (SPS) to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

This document sets out the government's strategic priorities for Ofwat's regulation of the water sector in England.

It will replace the [previous SPS](#) that was issued to Ofwat in 2013.

Guidance: Groundwater activity exclusions from environmental permits

Updated: Changes to 'Very minor discharges exclusion – also called de minimis' (section 2) to explain that you need to assess whether a 'class of case' exclusion applies.

Use this publication to find out about groundwater activity exclusions for:

- accidents and natural causes
- very minor discharges – also called 'de minimis'
- risks to human health or the environment
- disproportionate cost for land contamination