

Press release: 8,000 young fish released into the River Rother

The Environment Agency has today released 8,000 young grayling into the River Rother at Chesterfield to help fish populations recover from historical pollution.

This release is part of a five-year restocking programme that is helping to restore the river's ecology to how it was before the industrial revolution.

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

Dr Jerome Masters, fisheries officer at the Environment Agency, said:

The River Rother was once one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. Grayling were wiped out as a result, and weirs in the river makes their natural recolonisation highly unlikely.

But life is returning to the River Rother. Water quality has improved, and the re-stocking programme will see grayling returning to live alongside species such as brown trout, chub and roach which are already resident in Chesterfield's rivers.

Anyone who wants to help improve Chesterfield's rivers and the health of fish stocks could contribute by getting involved with the Wild Trout Trust's 'Trout in the Town' scheme.

Paul Gaskell, at the Wild Trout Trust, said:

We have a programme to help urban communities engage with and care for their local streams and rivers, called 'Trout in the Town'. In addition to caring generally for the river, groups often carry out invertebrate monitoring, and habitat improvement work. We can help out with training for that habitat improvement work and provide support with fundraising.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a founder member of a Chesterfield Trout in the Town group are invited to contact Dr Jerome Masters at jerome.masters@environment-agency.gov.uk.

More information on Trout in the Town projects can be found at www.wildtrout.org/content/trout-town and www.wildtrout.org/tint.