

Press release: Record breaking year for Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm

Over half a million (520,819) fish were produced in 2018 – compared with 358,552 the previous year – an increase of over 30%.

In 2018, the fish farm produced 11.6 tonnes of strong healthy fish, an increase of 22% from the 9 tonnes it produced in 2017.

The average size of each fish also increased on previous years. In 2018 the average weight of the 18 month old fish was 45 grams each – an increase of 60% from 18 grams each in 2013.

In 2018, the fish farm also stocked out almost seven million (6,905,000) advanced reared larvae into the wild. The figure increased from six million in 2017.

The fish and larvae are used to replace stocks lost to pollution or following habitat or water quality improvements; to improve stocks where natural reproduction is low; and to help create fisheries in areas where there is a shortage of angling opportunities.

Kevin Austin, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

The fish and larvae produced by the National Coarse Fish Farm play an important role in the work of the Environment Agency and its partners to restore, improve and develop sustainable fisheries in England.

All of the fish farm's work is funded by income from fishing licence fees so it's great to see it setting new records for the number and weight of healthy fish it has produced for recovery and re-stocking.

Alan Henshaw, Team Leader at the National Coarse Fish Farm, said:

2018 has been an exceptional year in terms of the number of fish produced. The size and weight of the fish has also been outstanding and we have succeeded in smashing all of our production records.

We have achieved these record breaking figures despite the difficult conditions that resulted from the hot, dry summer of 2018. While the fish grew quickly in the warmer temperatures, the team had to work hard to maintain optimal oxygen and pH conditions in the ponds. It is a testament to their dedication and

professionalism that all their hard work paid off at harvest time.

We take great care in ensuring that every fish is fit for purpose when stocked out into the wild. During their 18 months at the farm, the fish are fed live natural food, they encounter a range of flora and fauna, and are trained in flowing conditions while being grown in the earth ponds.

In 2018 the number of each species of fish released was:

- Barbel – 123,398
- Bream – 56,416
- Chub – 96,615
- Dace – 39,116
- Roach – 101,397
- Crucian carp – 22,475
- Tench – 16,950
- Rudd – 7,702
- Grayling – 56,750