

# River Great Ouse gets Christmas present with fish restocking

The fisheries team recently undertook their annual trip to Calverton Fish Farm to collect fish and restock the river in and around Buckingham.

This was done over 4 days as part of a conservation programme and post-pollution recovery plan.

On the first day of the restocking, more than 1400 juvenile barbel were released into the upper reaches of the River Great Ouse in specific locations to suit habitat conditions, in a bid to protect and develop the species.

This is part of wider efforts to conserve barbel populations and improve vital habitat.

The fish being released into the Great Ouse.

Officers then released 5000 dace, 7000 roach and 1000 chub into the river to replenish stocks following a pollution incident in Brackley, Northamptonshire, in 2018, during which thousands of fish died.

Since the incident, the Environment Agency has released almost 28,000 fish back into the river. Further stocking at this location is planned for 2020.

As well as the fish stocking, other measures have been taken to restore the River Great Ouse, including habitat restoration work, such as gravel enhancement and cleaning, improving cover for foraging and resting up, and improved opportunities for fish passage.

Kye Jerrom, fisheries specialist for the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said: "All of these enhancements should give these fish and others in the system the help they need to thrive.

"We're working with researchers, anglers, angling clubs and land owners to do this, and we know we couldn't do this work without them.

"We are pleased that our restocking programme will hopefully give the river a new lease of life, but good fisheries management shouldn't revolve around stocking.

"Our emphasis is on the restoration work that will create a self-sustaining fishery, improving the river in the long term for fish and wildlife.

"We look forward to the year when we're not heading to Calverton to stock more barbel, safe in the knowledge that the river is doing its thing independently, and hopefully that isn't too far away."

The restocking is part of our post-pollution plan.

On the final day, 900 crucian carp and 500 tench were delivered to 3 separate still waters in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Bedfordshire and will promote work with the Angling Trust to conserve crucian carp populations.

Mr Jerrom added: "Crucian carp are at risk from loss of pond habitat.

"Small ponds without resident stocks of carp were chosen for these introductions – they are also waters that are also dedicated coaching venues for new anglers too, so not only are we helping to conserve crucian carp, we're helping to encourage more anglers too."

Remember to go fishing you need to purchase a fishing licence. You can do this here [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)