

## Rod licence sales generate more than £21 million to improve fisheries and support anglers.

Over 500,000 fish, including species such as barbel, roach and chub, were released into England's rivers by the [Environment Agency](#) last year as part of a multi-million pound restoration programme funded by rod licence sales.

The revenue generated by nearly one million fishing licences also contributed to the cost of building more than 100 fish passes, which allow fish to move up rivers more freely. Other works covered by the licence fee included nearly 2,000 fish stock surveys and improvements of over 1,000 kilometers of river habitat and 87 hectares of stillwater fisheries.

While a range of factors, including competition with other forms of entertainment, are contributing to a reduced participation in angling, the Environment Agency is working with partners to get more people fishing. Around 37,000 people tried fishing for the first time last year through taster sessions funded by licence sales and organised by the Angling Trust.

In total, the [Environment Agency Annual Report on Fisheries \(2018-2019\)](#) shows that £33.5 million has been invested in providing a fisheries service and funding fisheries projects overall. In addition to the £21 million generated by rod licence holders, a further £1.1 million grant-in-aid came from central government with the remainder of the funding the result of successful partnership working with a range of conservation organisations.

Kevin Austin, Environment Agency Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, said:

Income from fishing licence sales is vital to fund our work to protect and improve fisheries and support the sport of angling. This includes improving habitats for fish, facilities for anglers and tackling illegal fishing.

It's no secret that fishing is having to compete with high-tech entertainment and social change, including an ageing population, to attract people down to the riverbank. But being outdoors is good for our health, interacting with nature teaches us a lot about our environment and, through rod licence sales, anglers are really at the heart of protecting and improving the very things they care about – a great return for £30, the cost of an annual fishing licence.

Overall, with the licence income, the latest Annual Report on Fisheries shows

that in the financial year 2018-2019, the Environment Agency was able to:

- invest over £33.5 million in providing a fisheries service and projects including partners' contributions and additional government funding
- supply and stock 520,819 coarse fish
- carry out 1,992 fish stock surveys
- work with almost 1,700 different partners. These include the [Angling Trust](#), [Wild Trout Trust](#), [Institute of Fisheries Management](#), [Riverfly Partnership](#), as well as local river trusts, angling clubs, charities, among others. Effects of the licence fee fall were offset by efficiency savings and extensive partnership work.
- open up or improve 1,058 kilometres of river habitats for fish
- enhance 87 hectares of stillwater fisheries
- complete 104 fish passes
- check 64,074 fishing licences
- make 1,692 successful prosecutions
- complete 950 fish rescues
- introduce 37,000 people to fishing for the first time thanks to more than 1,000 'Get Fishing' participation events organised with the Angling Trust.

Environment Agency's Kevin Austin added:

As our Annual Report shows, people who don't buy a licence are cheating other anglers and the future of the sport. Of course, they also run the risk of a criminal conviction and a fine. But the good news is buying a rod licence couldn't be easier – to get yours and ensure you can enjoy fishing legally, visit [GOV.UK – Get a fishing license](#).