

Press release: Happy Dace for north east fish surveys

The Environment Agency has joined forces with expert anglers to carry out an important survey to assess the numbers of a highly prized fish in Northumberland.

Surveys for Dace, the main species of coarse fish in the River Tyne, much valued by anglers, took place downstream of Kielder reservoir as part of a wider programme to monitor any impact of the current trial of changes in the release of water from the reservoir.

Environment Agency specialists teamed up with 15 expert anglers from the Tyne Anglers Alliance and other fishing clubs to fish around a dozen locations on the North Tyne between Kielder and Watersmeet.

The aim was to both update and enhance our existing information on Dace populations.

One of the Dace surveyed during the event

Successful survey

Environment Agency Fisheries Officer Niall Cook, who organised the survey, said:

Angling was used in the survey in preference to other survey methods like electric fishing and netting because dace are highly mobile and difficult to catch, especially in wide rivers like the North Tyne.

The angling survey itself was really successful in that it showed dace to be present throughout the river system and in areas where they had not been recorded for many years, such as Falstone. We are hoping to repeat the exercise over several years or more to build up a more detailed picture.

The Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and the hydropower operator, Innogy Renewables UK Ltd have been working together to make changes to the operating arrangements for the release of water from Kielder reservoir.

The trial started in November last year and is intended to maintain the future of water supply to the North East, better reflect the natural changes in river flows, provide increased flood storage in the reservoir and increase the generation of clean, renewable energy.

The rainfall over the winter trial period was low and large flood alleviation releases were not required, so the initial results were inconclusive.

As a result the trial has been extended through the summer and will be continually reviewed.

An angler taking part in the Dace survey

More natural flow variation

Hydrologist Rachel Merrix, who is leading on the trial for the Environment Agency, said:

We were keen to use this opportunity to change the releases from Kielder to try to make them reflect a more natural flow variation. While the changes are relatively minor we believe that monitoring is essential to ensure the environment is protected.

We have worked hard with our partners to listen to the views of both reservoir and river users, including holding a public drop-in last October ahead of the trial, and producing a freely available interim report.

We welcome feedback from anyone who uses the river or reservoir and are keen to hear how others feel the trial is going. We continuously monitor river levels, flows and water temperatures at several locations in the Tyne catchment and all of this data is available on request.

Other activities to monitor the impact of the new Kielder release regime include temperature monitoring at 11 new sites as well as fishing surveys and freshwater pearl mussel assessments.

For more information and updates on the trial visit [the dedicated Kielder release website](#) or email Kielder.reservoir@environment-agency.gov.uk with any queries or observations.

[Press release: Driver advice as clubbers head for Creamfields](#)

Highways England is advising drivers traffic is likely to be busy around the M56 and M6 over the forthcoming late summer bank holiday weekend with up to 60,000 dance music lovers heading to the annual Creamfields festival in Cheshire.

Creamfields 2017 features 4 days of events – running between 2pm on Thursday 24 August through to 11pm on Sunday 27 August.

Chris Chadwick, Highways England's Events Planning Manager, said:

We will be doing all we can to manage traffic around the event and keep drivers on the move – festival goers and other drivers can help themselves by planning their journeys and keeping themselves up to date with traffic information.

We would like to remind everyone that the motorway is no place for pedestrians. It is dangerous and illegal to walk along the motorway, and having pedestrians on the network can cause delays for legitimate motorway users.

Drivers wanting to pick people up should use the dedicated collection points off the motorway network which will be clearly signed.

Anyone thinking of driving to the annual bank holiday festival is advised to plan their journey and leave plenty of time to get to the festival site on Daresbury Estate near Runcorn, just off junction 11 of the M56.

Extra police and Highways England traffic officers will be deployed around junction 11 of the M56 at Daresbury to deter festival goers from walking on the motorway – an issue in previous festivals particularly at the end of the event.

Car parks to the site will open at noon on the Thursday and close at 2pm on Bank Holiday Monday (29 August).

This year, with Mersey Gateway continuing, drivers are being advised not to use the M62 to get to the event. Event-goers will be directed to use junction 11 of the M56.

Highways England traffic officers at the North West regional control centre at Newton-le-Willows will use their electronic motorway signs across the local network to guide festival goers to the site and give information on any incidents or congestion.

Meanwhile, other road users are being advised that the M56 around junctions 10, 11 and 12 around Runcorn is likely to be busy at key times of the weekend. The M56 interchange with the M6 is also likely to experience higher volumes of traffic. Electronic signs along the M6, M56 and M62 are being used to give advance warning about the event.

Highways England is advising motorway users to check the latest travel information before setting out as well as listening for radio traffic alerts and heeding electronic signs once they are on the move.

Drivers can get up-to-the-minute traffic information by calling Highways England's customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000 or by checking the Highways England website.

Live information on incidents or congestion will also be available from dedicated feeds from Twitter with the M56 and M6 routes covered by @HighwaysNWEST.

Dedicated travel information for those attending the event is available [at the Creamfields website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Highways England appoints interim Major Projects Director

Highways England has today (Monday 21 August) announced the appointment of Peter Mumford as Exec Director to lead major projects until a permanent successor is appointed.

Peter is a senior director with a breadth of experience across all aspects of professional technical and management services, including the leadership of significant programme management teams and major project teams across global locations.

He joins the Highways England Executive team from HKA (formally Hill International) where he was Vice President. Prior to that Peter held senior positions within a number of construction industry related organisations including, Aecom, EC Harris LLP and Turner & Townsend.

The appointment of Peter will allow for a seamless transition of the major projects directorate without any impact on our ability to deliver the government's £15bn road investment strategy.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

I am really pleased to have Peter join the executive team. It is important that we continue to have the right mix of individuals to lead the company as we deliver the challenging target we have been

set by government.

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[Press release: Highways England urges motorists to check their vehicles this bank holiday](#)

Highways England is lifting more than 98 per cent of roadworks to help people travelling over the August bank holiday – and motorists are being urged to make sure their vehicles are ready for the journey.

Last year more than 20 motorists broke down each day during July and August because they had run out of fuel. Almost half of all breakdowns are caused by simple mechanical problems which could be avoided with simple checks and nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems.

Highways England will be removing some 445 carriageway miles of roadworks from motorways and strategic A roads over the bank holiday and today joined forces with leading safety group IAM RoadSmart (IAM) to remind motorists to do their bit before setting off to cut the number of breakdowns.

Highways England operations director, Nick Harris, said:

We're lifting more than 98 per cent of roadworks this bank holiday to help people get where they need to as safely and quickly as possible. If you're driving out to enjoy the late summer bank holiday, make sure you take a few vital minutes to check your vehicle, especially if you haven't done so for a while.

IAM RoadSmart Policy & Research Director, Neil Greig, added:

It's excellent news that most roadworks will be lifted over the bank holiday. The onus is now on drivers to minimise the number of

preventable incidents by driving safely and preparing themselves and their vehicles properly.

With tens of thousands of motorists set to travel across England, Highways England traffic officers will be working around the clock to deal with incidents on motorways and A-roads.

And before they set off, Highways England is urging motorists to:

- check fuel: Make sure you have enough to get to your destination.
- check tyres: Prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare – look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: Use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- check water: To ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- check your lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk – in addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

Highways England has also launched a series of specialist videos to help carry out basic vehicle checks before they set off on their travels. The videos [can be viewed on the Think! website](#)

[View a map](#) showing the locations of lifted and completed schemes.

By suspending or completing roadworks, more lanes will be open and many speed restrictions will be lifted. The roadworks will be removed by 6am on Friday 25 August 2017 and will not be put back before 00:01 on Tuesday 29 August 2017.

Those wishing to find out more about driving on smart motorways can [view our webpage](#) for further information.

Drivers planning to use the Dartford Crossing are reminded to pay Dart Charge in advance or by midnight the day after crossing.

More information can be found on our [website](#) or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000) they can keep up to date with conditions on the roads.

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, search Think!

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Press release: Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser starts at the Department for International Trade

An internationally recognised trade expert with over 25 years of experience, Crawford will lead trade policy and the development of trade negotiation capability at DIT, following a global recruitment campaign by the department.

As Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser and Second Permanent Secretary, Crawford will be the UK government's expert on trade negotiation and strategy, and the principal adviser to the International Trade Secretary on striking trade agreements and market access deals with the UK's global trading partners.

Crawford will serve as an ambassador for DIT, engaging with international partners and trade counterparts to develop key strategic relationships, and will personally oversee pivotal trade negotiations on behalf of ministers.

Crawford will also act as the new head of profession for trade negotiators within the UK Civil Service, building, recruiting for and strengthening the department's specialist trade and negotiation capability.

Crawford Falconer brings over 25 years of public service in trade and foreign affairs to DIT. A New Zealand/UK dual-national, he was previously Professor of Global Value Chains and Trade at Lincoln University. This follows a long career at the heart of New Zealand's Foreign Office, as Deputy Secretary (Vice Minister) for International Trade and Foreign Affairs. He has also served in the OECD, as New Zealand Ambassador to the World Trade Organization, and been a judge on over 15 WTO international trade disputes.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Crawford Falconer brings a wealth of international trade expertise to our international economic department, ensuring that as we leave the EU, the UK will be at the forefront of global free trade and driving the case for international openness.

His direct experience in global trade will prove invaluable as we build our future trading arrangements with the rest of the world.

Crawford Falconer said:

As the UK prepares to leave the EU we have a huge opportunity to be a world innovator, striking trade deals outside of Europe, and to be an ambassador for free trade across the world.

With 90% of new trade to coming from outside the EU in the next decades, this is an immensely exciting time to join the Department, and I look forward to preparing for the important negotiations ahead.