

Public urged to report sightings of the tree pest oak processionary moth

The Forestry Commission has today urged the public to report sightings of [oak processionary moth](#) caterpillars. We are now entering the greatest risk period as the caterpillars emerge between May and July to feed before turning into adult moths.

Oak processionary moth, which is a tree pest, was first identified in London in 2006 and has since spread to some surrounding counties in the South East of England. Its caterpillars and their nests contain hairs which can cause itchy rashes, eye and throat irritations, and should not be touched under any circumstances.

Oak processionary moth caterpillars also feed on the leaves of several species of oak trees. This can cause the trees to lose their leaves, negatively impacting their growth, and become more vulnerable to other stresses, like drought.

Andrew Hoppit, Oak Processionary Moth Project Manager, said:

At this time of year, many of us enjoy being outdoors in green spaces of all kinds. If you live in London and the surrounding areas, it's really important for you to be aware of the health risks posed by tree pests like oak processionary moth.

Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via our [TreeAlert](#) portal. Alternatively, you can email opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk or call 0300 067 4442.

Professor Nicola Spence, UK Chief Plant Health Officer, said:

Reporting any sightings of oak processionary moth to the Forestry Commission will help to protect people, minimise the pest's spread and help ensure our precious oak trees remain a much loved feature of the landscape.

The caterpillars and their nests can pose a health risk to the public because of their hairs. I would urge the public not to touch them, and for pets and livestock to be kept away.

In addition, Defra, together with the Forestry Commission, is set to launch a grant as part of the Tree Health Pilot to help tackle oak processionary moth. Open to applications from Wednesday 18 May, the [OPM Groups Grant](#) will fund

the surveying of oak trees within local communities in London and the South East, and thus support efforts to better understand the risks and appropriate management of oak processionary moth. To ease the administrative process and encourage cooperative action in local communities, it will pay for a lead facilitator to form a group of local landowners who all need support to tackle the hazardous pest. This builds on existing support and guidance available to help minimise the impact and spread of the pest.

A Government programme to manage oak processionary moth has been in place since 2012. Over the last five years, £10 million has been invested into oak health, including the management of oak processionary moth, as well as research to develop novel control techniques and new policy responses.

How to identify oak processionary moth caterpillars

- Nests are typically dome or teardrop-shaped, averaging the size of a tennis ball. They are white when fresh, but soon become discoloured and brown. The caterpillars have black heads and bodies covered in long white hairs which contain proteins which can cause itchy rashes, eye, and throat irritations. They can also occasionally cause breathing difficulties in people and pets, so should not be touched under any circumstances.
- A public information leaflet covering [how to identify OPM and methods of control is available here](#).
- For more information, visit '[Managing Oak Processionary Moth in England](#)'.

Further information:

[Permit variations issued for Horse Hill oilfield](#)

Press release

Operator will be able to construct new boreholes and carry out other activities to support production.



The Environment Agency has issued permit variations to Horse Hill Developments Ltd (HHDL) for its operations at Horse Hill well site.

These will allow the operator to:

- construct up to 4 new boreholes in addition to the 2 boreholes already constructed
- use 2 of the 6 boreholes as reinjection wells to support production
- carry out well treatments such as an acid wash and solvent treatments
- run 90-day well tests for each of the 4 additional wells before they are either added as production wells at the site, or abandoned
- undertake an injectivity test within one of the wells (HH-2z) and any other wells as dictated by HHDL
- incinerate natural gas at a rate not exceeding 10 tonnes per day during production operations. This to continue until it can be demonstrated that the incineration of natural gas is no longer considered Best Available Technique through a cost benefit analysis.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that all oil and gas sites must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

The decision to issue these permit variations follows our review of comments received during the last period of public consultation which closed on 31 March 2022.

When making permit decisions, we use information on the potential environmental and human health impacts of the activity. In deciding to issue these permit variations, the Environment Agency considered all relevant considerations and legal requirements.

[Further information, including the consultation Decision Document.](#)

Previous public consultations on the permit variations took place in March 2022 and in March-April 2021.

For further information, please email KSLE@environment-agency.gov.uk.

These permit variations are issued subject to HHDL having all other correct permissions in place from our regulatory partners before they use it.

See [further details of the recent public consultation that closed on 31 March 2022](#).

For further information on how we determine applications, the time scales involved and how we regulate Onshore Oil and Gas, please see the following:

Public consultations

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More than £2 billion to boost UK submarine programme

- Around 30,000 jobs supported across the UK across the programme
- Largest submarines ever built for the Royal Navy

Defence contracts worth more than £2 billion have been awarded to BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce to begin the third major phase of the future submarine nuclear deterrent programme – Dreadnought.

With the overall programme supporting around 30,000 jobs across the UK, from design through to build, Delivery Phase 3 (DP3) represents the most significant stage of the Dreadnought programme so far. In 2021 alone, it supported around 13,500 jobs in the Northwest of England and a further 16,300 over the rest of the UK, making a significant contribution to the Government's levelling-up agenda.

The investment is the latest financial commitment between the Ministry of Defence, BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce, and is the initial investment within a planned overall total of nearly £10 billion for the whole delivery phase.

DP3 will see the first of four submarines, HMS Dreadnought, exit the Barrow-in-Furness shipyard to begin sea trials, laying the foundation to sustain the Continuous at Sea Deterrence (CASD) for as long as the international security situation makes it necessary.

Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

The Dreadnought Class will be crucial to maintaining and safeguarding our national security, with the nuclear deterrent

protecting every UK citizen from the most extreme threats, every minute of every day.

Designed in the UK, built in the UK and supporting tens of thousands of jobs in the UK, the Dreadnought programme is a leading example of our commitment to defence manufacturing and will continue to boost British industry for decades to come.

The Dreadnought programme also brings huge benefits to the BAE Systems' Submarines Academy for Skills and Knowledge, based at the Barrow-in-Furness site. Opened in 2018, the academy is currently training more than 1,050 apprentices and graduates, with a further 230 craft apprentices, 110 degree apprentices and 90 graduates set to join this year.

Managing Director, BAE Systems Submarines, Steve Timms said:

We take great pride in designing and delivering one of the world's most advanced engineering programmes and helping to protect national security.

Today's funding announcement allows us to maintain the Dreadnought programme's progress and continue investing in the infrastructure and skills needed to deliver these highly complex submarines to the Royal Navy.

The Dreadnought Class will be one of the most complex machines ever built and it will operate in one of the most hostile environments on the planet.

As the largest Class of submarine ever built for the Royal Navy, each will boast 26.4 miles of pipework and more than 20,000 cables stretching 215 miles – further than travelling between London and Leeds.

President of Rolls-Royce Submarines, Steve Carlier said:

Since 1969, Rolls-Royce has proudly provided the nuclear power and expertise that keeps the UK's continuous nuclear deterrent at sea. This latest contract is a welcome sign of the UK's ongoing commitment to the Submarines Enterprise and all the jobs around the UK that support it.

The four Dreadnought-Class submarines, each the length of three Olympic swimming pools, will maintain the CASD, responsible for safeguarding our national security and way of life, as long as the international security situation makes it necessary.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key said:

We welcome the faith shown in the Royal Navy and our people that submarines remain the optimum means of securely deploying the independent nuclear deterrent. This investment will enable the transition from the Vanguard to Dreadnought-class submarines – an enormous challenge, and one we in the Royal Navy willingly accept.

We have provided over fifty years of unbroken Continuous At Sea Deterrence and we will ensure that the Royal Navy provides the ultimate guarantee of security for the United Kingdom for the next five decades and beyond.

Looking ahead, a £160 million contract has been awarded to Raytheon UK for the Dreadnought crew training at HM Naval Base Clyde. This will see more high-quality jobs being based on the Clyde, further highlighting the importance of the base and the Dreadnought programme to Scotland and the defence of the UK and its allies.

Chief Executive of Raytheon UK, Jeff Lewis said:

This contract is for a truly transformative submarine training solution and builds on the success that we have had to date in transforming the Royal Navy's training and learning solutions.

Our collaborative working culture and experience in managing large and complex training programmes will help equip the Royal Navy with a training capability that underpins the cornerstone of the UK's strategic defence capability.

Supporting the UK Government's levelling-up ambitions, this contract will support the training and development of the Royal Navy men and women who will take to the water when HMS Dreadnought enters service in the early 2030s.

[Going, going, gone! Watch motorway bridge disappear in new footage](#)

Press release

After carrying traffic over the M6 for some 50 years, the old bridge which spanned the motorway at junction 10 disappeared in under 48 hours.



The landscape last week before the old south bridge, right, was removed

Work finished in the early hours of this morning – more than four hours ahead of schedule – to remove the bridge which is being replaced by a more modern and wider, four-lane structure to tackle congestion at the busy junction.

[Watch time lapse footage of the junction 10 bridge demolition.](#)

National Highways Project Manager Annie Hyett said:

Demolishing a bridge of this size is a complex operation but everything went exactly to plan and we were delighted that we were able to get the motorway open several hours earlier than planned.

A big thank-you to everyone who was able to avoid the area where possible as it helped us reduce the queues of traffic and delays to journeys. We appreciate that closing the motorway does cause some inconvenience and only do so when we absolutely necessary to protect our workforce and road users.

Road users will soon be able to enjoy the full benefits of the improvements to the junction which will help combat the traffic hold-ups endured at this bottleneck for many years.

Junction 10 was closed from Friday night until 1.30am today (Monday) to enable the south bridge to be removed. A fleet of machines swept on to the site to 'nibble' away the bridge before the road was cleared and then reopened to traffic.

There was an 'up and over' diversion for traffic which left the motorway at junction 10, travelled over the roundabout and then re-joined the M6 on the other side.

The existing north bridge is due to be demolished within a few weeks.

The two new bridges were built alongside the existing ones and will double the number of traffic lanes around the junction from two to four.

National Highways and Walsall Council, supported by the Black Country Local

Enterprise Partnership, have joined forces to fund the £78 million upgrade of the junction. Contractor John Sisk & Son is carrying out the work.

For more information about the scheme and latest updates, [visit the scheme web page](#).

General enquiries

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

Media enquiries

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

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[Yeovil man fined for illegal fishing at Somerset fishery](#)

The case was heard at Swindon Magistrates Court on 3 May 2022, when Mr Reid, 47, of Westfield Road, Yeovil, pleaded guilty to 3 offences:

- fishing without a licence
- leaving fishing rods unattended
- failing to provide correct name and address when required

On 1 December 2021, while on patrol at Coking Farm fishery near Henstridge in south Somerset, fisheries officers discovered Mr Reid fishing illegally.

He failed to produce a rod licence when asked and refused to provide his name and address. He was also found not to be in control of his rod and line, as they had been left unattended with bait and hook in the water.

Following the verdict, James Allan, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer, said:

Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute. We are able to check offenders' details, so giving false information is not an easy route out of failing to comply.

This angler blatantly disregarded signs at the fishery that said an

Environment Agency rod licence was needed to fish. As part of Operation Clampdown signs had been put at the entrance to the fishery and on each fishing peg.

Anglers must be control of their rod and line at all times whilst fishing – it is illegal to leave them unattended with bait or hook in the water.

Rod fishing byelaws are there to protect fish stocks and their habitats. If you do not comply with these byelaws you could face prosecution and be fined up to £50,000.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1-day licence costs from just £6 and an annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 – 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The charges

On 1 December, at Coking Farm, Henstridge, in a place where fishing is regulated, Mr Reid fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

On 1 December, at Coking Farm, Henstridge, Mr Reid left a rod and line with its bait or hook in the water unattended or so that he was unable at any time to take or exercise sufficient control over said rod and line. Contrary to Byelaw 10 of the Environment Agency National Byelaws which came into force on 27 May 2001 made pursuant to Section 210 and Schedule 25 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and Contrary to Section 211 of the said Act.

On 1 December, at Coking Farm, Henstridge, Mr Reid when fishing/being reasonably suspected of intending to fish/being reasonably suspected of having recently fished, failed, when required to do so, to state his name and address to a water bailiff/a constable/an officer of the Environment Agency having power to make such a request contrary to Section 35(3) of and Schedule 4 to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.