

News story: Worm bait returns for trial period at Exmoor fishery

The Environment Agency is continuing conservation measures on its Watersmeet and Glenthorne Fishery for the coming season.

Restrictions have been in place on this popular Exmoor fishery since 2014 in response to disease problems affecting adult salmon and sea trout returning to the East Lyn to spawn. Recent monitoring also revealed reduced numbers of young salmon.

Anglers have been allowed to continue fishing for salmon and sea trout on a 'catch and release' basis throughout the season and have been limited to fishing with a fly or spinner only. The use of worms was traditionally allowed from 16 June. However, this method of fishing can be very effective and has been prohibited in recent years to limit the number of fish caught while stocks have been under pressure.

Following discussions with the Lyn Riparian Owners Association and local interest groups, worming is being allowed again on a trial basis this year from 16 June, subject to strict conditions.

Worms will only be allowed when fished on a single circle-patterned hook, no larger than Size 4. A circle hook increases the likelihood a fish is hooked in the jaw where it can be safely removed. This type of hook reduces the risk of 'deep hooking' which can sometimes occur when worming. It also reduces the chances of accidentally catching trout and salmon parr on this method.

All salmon and sea trout must still be released throughout the 2017 season, irrespective of the method used to catch them. As a further conservation measure, anglers will not be allowed to fish with worm at any time in Long Pool.

Mike Holland of the Environment Agency said:

We want fishermen to continue to enjoy their sport on the Watersmeet and Glenthorne Fishery, but at the same time ensure suitable measures are in place to safeguard migratory fish returning to the river to spawn.

By allowing only circle hooks to be used for worming we hope to maximise the survival chances of any salmon and sea trout caught and released by this method. We'll review the success of this trial at the end of the season.

The brown trout fishery regulations remain unchanged. The full list of

fishery regulations can be found printed on the reverse of the permits, purchasable from local agents.

[Kirsty Williams welcomes new OECD report on Welsh education reform](#)

In November 2016, after an invite from the Education Secretary, the highly-respected Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) visited Wales to examine the work underway on education reforms to make sure they are on track.

The [independent findings](#) (external link) published today state that

“the OECD has witnessed progress in several policy areas and a shift in the Welsh approach to school improvement away from a piece meal and short term policy orientation towards one that is guided by a long term vision.”

The report also found Wales’ reforms were characterised by close working between government and the education sector with a commitment to improvement “visible at all levels of the education system.”

Kirsty Williams said:

“I invited the OECD to come to Wales to challenge what we are doing to reform our education system and I welcome their findings. They have concluded that we are making progress and we have a long term vision in place to keep improving.

“We are already taking action on many of their recommendations, from creating a new national academy for leadership, transforming initial teacher education, launching new professional standards, and introducing a national approach to professional learning.

“Our job is to continue our national mission of education reform focused on driving up standards and helping every learner in Wales, whatever their background, fulfil their potential.

“As the OECD recommends, our focus must be on making sure we continue to properly implement our vision for reform. I am committed to raising standards, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.”

Both the Education Secretary and Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills for the OECD, will today address representatives from all of Wales' 205 state secondary schools at a special event in Cardiff.

Chancellor must commit to 'triple lock' at Budget

In a speech today on intergenerational fairness Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary will demand that the Chancellor 'commit' in the Budget to 'guarantee the triple lock on state pensions beyond 2020'.

The Government hinted that they may cut the triple lock in order to "tackle the challenge of rising longevity." This led to accusations that the Tories were 'abandoning older people'.

Labour has made a commitment to maintaining the triple lock under the next Labour government, alongside other pensioner benefits.

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Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary commenting on concerns that the Government has refused to commit to the triple lock said:

"It was shocking to hear the Chancellor suggest that he would expose older people to the flawed austerity agenda – further proof that the Tories are abandoning older people.

"The last Labour government were responsible for a historic reduction in pensioner poverty levels. A record that we remain hugely proud of.

"The Chancellor must use this Budget to provide clarity on the issue of the triple lock, and follow Labour's lead by committing to the policy beyond 2020."

President of India to visit Kerala and Tamil Nadu from March 2 to 3

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee will visit Kerala and Tamil Nadu from March 2 to 3, 2017.

India signs Financing Agreement with World Bank for US\$ 63 Million for Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project.

A Financing Agreement for IDA credit of US\$ 63 million (equivalent) for the "Tejaswini" Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" was signed here with the World Bank on 23rd February, 2017.