

Close season for coarse fishing gets underway for 2021

Press release

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The annual close season helps to protect fish stocks across England when they are spawning by preventing fishing for coarse fish in rivers, streams, drains and specified canals, as well as 'sites of special scientific interest' (SSSI) stillwaters.

Throughout the close season, Environment Agency (EA) officers conduct patrols to enforce the close season. As part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, now in its ninth year, Angling Trust (AT) volunteers support the EA by keeping watch on riverbanks and reporting incidents to the 24-hour incident hotline.

EA fisheries enforcement officers and AT volunteer bailiffs patrol riverbanks to ensure anglers observe the close season rules. They also regularly patrol lakes, canals and ponds to make sure all anglers have a valid rod fishing licence. Anyone fishing without a fishing licence can face a court hearing and run the risk of prosecution.

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

The close season aims to protect fish while they are spawning which improves the health and resilience of our fish stocks. Alongside our fisheries improvement work, the close season gives our fish populations the chance to recover.

We always encourage everyone to give fishing a go but we are aware

not all will know of fishing rules like the close season. Last year was one of our busiest as we saw many new anglers enter the sport. If you know a new angler, please remind them of the close season dates.

Nino Brancato, Angling Trust National Enforcement Support Manager, said:

The close season will provide a great opportunity for the Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and the Voluntary Bailiff Service to work closely with the Environment Agency and police during Operation CLAMPDOWN 9.

Our dedicated volunteer bailiffs will be out on patrol and taking part in coordinated joint activity around the nation's waterways in an eyes and ears capacity – gathering intelligence and reporting incidents in support of our enforcement partners as part of our multi-agency approach to protecting fish and fisheries.

Anglers who do still want to get out on the banks during close season can still visit many stillwaters and canals, depending on landowner agreement, or try their hand at trout fishing, though a valid fishing licence is still required.

The Environment Agency takes illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally should expect to be prosecuted and to face a substantial fine. Those who suspect illegal fishing should report it to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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[£90 million boost to fire up aerospace manufacturing](#)

- Five innovative aerospace projects backed by nearly £90 million investment set to revolutionize aerospace manufacturing in the UK
- State-of-the-art technology including 3D printing machines will be crucial to help industry build back better and greener from COVID-19
- Projects being funded today have the potential to help secure 1400 jobs across the UK

1400 jobs could be secured across the UK thanks to nearly £90 million investment in aerospace manufacturing announced today by Business Minister Paul Scully (Friday 12 March).

The government-industry funding for the five projects through the Aerospace Technology Institute Programme aims to improve manufacturing within the aerospace industry, developing technology to make production lines quicker, more efficient, and more cost-effective. This will safeguard the UK's manufacturing sector, ensuring that the UK remains a competitive market for aerospace companies as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

Successful projects could help to secure approximately 1400 jobs across the UK, from Bristol to Belfast, and South Wales to Somerset, improving local growth and benefitting communities.

Minister for Business Paul Scully said:

This multi-million-pound cash injection will safeguard vital jobs and support the aerospace sector as it builds back stronger after the pandemic.

Manufacturing is at the very heart of UK industry, and innovative processes will ensure that the UK is at the forefront of global efforts as we develop technology that can power a green aviation revolution.

A particular focus of the project proposals is on creating lightweight materials and parts that will reduce how much fuel is used and that can be adopted onto future hybrid and electric planes. This will help the wider aerospace industry build back greener as it innovates and adapts to more sustainable travel over the next few decades.

Projects receiving funding today include:

- GKN Aerospace-led ASCEND [Bristol]: With McLaren Automotive also joining the consortium, the project is seeking to develop and accelerate new lightweight, composite technology, including parts for aircraft wings, in the aerospace and automotive sectors, and improve supply chains for more sustainable future mobility solutions.
- Renishaw-led LAMDA [Gloucestershire]: The project will develop a 3D metal printing machine to mass produce smaller components for aircraft, increasing production and consistency and reducing costs. Manufacturing will take place in South Wales.
- Q5D-led LiveWire [North Somerset]: The project will create a machine that can automate the manufacture of wiring and embed it into aircraft parts including airline seats or even a control panel in a flight deck, reducing costs and making lighter, higher-quality components. The technology will provide new employment opportunities in the UK, and on-shore jobs previously undertaken abroad.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

Net Zero aviation is the future and this cash injection will boost capabilities as we look to build back greener and make businesses sustainable in the future.

We are committed to working closely with industry, including through the Jet Zero Council, to accelerate the development of new aviation technology and Sustainable Aviation Fuels to help us realise net zero flight.

The government will help advance the UK's future transport system through its extensive R&D Roadmap and to increase R&D public spending to £22 billion per year by 2024/5. This investment comes ahead of the consultation on the Aviation Decarbonisation Strategy this year, set out as part of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, with jet zero and low carbon aviation as a key pillar to building back greener.

The announcement of today's grant winners forms part of a wider £3.9 billion government-industry investment in aerospace research and development projects from 2013 to 2026 through the Aerospace Growth Partnership and delivered through the ATI Programme.

Notes to Editors

The ATI Programme's grant winners have been chosen by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Innovate UK, and the Aerospace Technology Institute. The total investment in the projects will be £88.7 million, with £44.1 million coming from government and £44.6 million from industry.

Aviation has a crucial role to play in achieving the government's net zero commitment. To this end, other government support for the aerospace industry includes:

- Funding £125 million of grants, matched by industry, through the Future Flight Challenge, for companies to invest in future aviation systems and vehicle technologies that enable new classes of electric or autonomous air vehicles.
- The establishment of the Jet Zero Council, a partnership between industry and government to bring together ministers and industry stakeholders to drive the ambitious delivery of new technologies and innovative ways to cut aviation emissions.
- Funding FlyZero, a research project delivered through the Aerospace Technology Institute bringing together experts from industry and academia to determine the future viability and capability of and market for zero-carbon emission commercial aircraft.

During the pandemic, aerospace companies have been able to benefit from the government's extensive business support measures including furlough, CBILs, and Bounce Back loans. The aerospace sector and its aviation customers are being supported with almost £11 billion made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate

Financing Facility and grants for research and development.

Engineers answer SOS call to rescue symbolic railway structure

Historical Railways Estate (HRE) has answered a call for help from Scottish Borders Council to come up with a plan to repair Boleside Road footbridge and make it safe for the public to use again.

The local authority closed the former railway structure, which carries a footpath across the former Selkirk Branch near Galashiels in the Scottish Borders, at the turn of the year after raising concerns over its condition and instigated an ownership search.

HRE, operating on behalf of Highways England, is now working closely with the council to secure the future of the bridge, which is one of the few surviving structural elements from the railway network in Galashiels.

Highways England civil engineer Colin McNicol said:

This cherished footbridge has a rich history and we are determined to extend its life for many years to come.

Until its recent closure the structure gave the public a chance to enjoy popular riverside walks, which took on new significance for people exercising during the Covid-19 pandemic.

HRE maintains more than 3,000 structures across the UK for the Department for Transport. Boleside Road footbridge wasn't one of them, and was brought to HRE's attention in January when the local authority asked for assistance.

It's now been added to the Historic Railways Estate and engineers have already carried out an examination to determine its state, paving the way for a plan to be developed. The next step will see a designer and contractor appointed to put together a repair scheme that will allow for public use once again.

The footbridge is held in high regard by those who have frequented it over the years, not least because of its fascinating backstory. The Edinburgh and Hawick Railway was opened in 1849 by the North British Railway and formed the first part of the line from Edinburgh to Carlisle. The railway through Galashiels was initially known as the Border union, but in 1862 it was officially named the Waverley line, to emphasise the connection with the celebrated novelist Sir Walter Scott, as nearby Abbotsford increased in popularity as a literary shrine.

In 1856 the branch line opened to Selkirk although this footbridge doesn't show up on the map until 1930. It's possible that a later footbridge was required at this location to improve access from the developing areas of housing to the east end of Abbotsford Road with the river for recreational purposes.

Due to the development of transport by road the Selkirk line was closed to passenger transport in 1951 and to goods in 1964, at which point the footbridge became redundant. However, up until its recent closure, the public continued to make use of the structure as it spans the remaining embankments and links a late 20th century housing estate to the north west directly to those much-needed walks by the water.

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.

[UK Government approves further military support for Northern Ireland health service](#)

Press release

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Military medical personnel have previously supported front line healthcare staff in Northern Ireland on coronavirus wards, helping to treat the sickest patients and reduce pressures on the NI health service.

Commenting on today's announcement Northern Ireland Secretary of State Brandon Lewis MP said:

As we continue the mass COVID 19 vaccination rollout across the UK, I'm pleased medically-trained personnel from our Armed Forces will support health and social care teams in the delivery of this unprecedented programme across Northern Ireland.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Today I authorised the deployment of 100 defence medics to support the vaccine rollout in Northern Ireland from the end of this month.

Our Armed Forces are once again stepping up to support the UK's response to the pandemic, working around the clock to protect our people in all four corners of the nation.

Notes to editor

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[UN Human Rights Council 46: General Debate on Item 4](#)

Thank you, Madam President,

The United Kingdom will convey its concerns relating to Syria, Iran and Belarus in other statements.

We remain deeply concerned by extensive and systematic human rights violations in Xinjiang, including credible reports of forced labour and forced birth control. We repeat our call for UN experts to be granted immediate, unfettered access in Xinjiang. In Hong Kong, the decision to

charge 47 Hong Kong politicians and activists for conspiracy to commit subversion demonstrates that the National Security Law is being used to stifle political dissent. Free and fair elections must take place as planned, with a range of opposition voices allowed to take part.

Russia must respect citizens' human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, right to a fair trial, and freedom from torture. We are deeply concerned by recent legislative changes that further restrict civil society and human rights. It is disgraceful that the poisoning of Alexey Navalny has not been investigated, while he himself has been jailed on arbitrary charges.

Restrictions on freedom of expression and civil society in Egypt are also concerning. We call on Egypt to end the use of terrorism charges to hold human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists in extended pre-trial detention, and to lift travel bans and assets freezes on human rights defenders, including staff of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.

Finally, we remain deeply concerned by the wide range of human rights violations and abuses in Myanmar, and the more than 50 deaths since the coup began. The escalating violent crackdown on peaceful protestors is completely unacceptable. Arbitrary arrests also continue, freedoms are inhibited, and the military shows no sign of deescalating the situation. The perpetrators of the coup must be held accountable for their actions. We stand with the people of Myanmar. Their wishes, and the result of the November 2020 General Election, must be respected.

Thank you, Madam President.