

National Highways working to keep fish on the move in Devon

Following the completion of a fish pass scheme on the River Lemon last year, the company has just confirmed its investment in a project to assist the migration of fish through Ashburn Check Weirs within the Dartmoor National Park.

Westcountry Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency have identified an issue whereby fish – including salmon and eels – are unable to move upstream due to the four stepped weirs close to the A38 eastbound entry slip road at Buckfastleigh.

As a result, National Highways, the company responsible for England's major A roads and motorways, is investing £450,000 from its Environment and wellbeing fund, to adapt the weirs to enable fish to navigate their way upstream to their traditional spawning grounds.

Tina Barrington, National Highways' Environment Funding Manager, said:

Our work goes beyond operating, maintaining and improving roads, and through our Environmental and wellbeing fund, we're investing in the environment and communities surrounding our network.

We're delighted to be able to support such a worthwhile project which will help to support aquatic biodiversity close to the A38 – a glowing example of how this funding and partnership working can make life better for communities, wildlife and the environment around our roads.

The investment underlines our commitment to reducing the impact of our roads on the environment – in this case by modifying a structure originally provided during the construction of the road.

The scheme, designed by Kier, is to be delivered by idverde UK in conjunction with the Westcountry Rivers Trust, Castleford Engineering and Fishtek Consulting, and following initial preparatory work, the scheme will start on Monday, 6 June and complete by October in time for the start of the spawning season.

The area around the weirs is an environmentally significant location, sitting within the National Park. The verges around the A38 eastbound entry slip road at Dart Bridge contain species rich grassland of county-wide importance, and are also home to rare orchids.

As the location also sits within a bat conservation area, no overnight work will be taking place to avoid disturbing bat activity.

The programme will require daytime closures of the A38 entry slip road on weekdays, with a short local diversion route in place to allow National Highways to manage construction and help teams protect the natural habitat. These closures will be lifted at weekends.

Olivia Cresswell, Aquatic Services Manager at Westcountry Rivers Trust, said:

We are excited these four fish and eel passes, which are located at the entrance to the River Ashburn are to be created.

Fish survey records from the Environment Agency suggest that salmon have been restricted from most of this river since 1999, making this a much-needed construction to improve access to important salmon, trout and eel habitat.

WRT will be providing fisheries expertise and support during the construction phase of the scheme.

Thanks to its Designated Funding programme, National Highways was last year able to assist the Westcountry Rivers Trust to install the specially designed fish passes on the River Lemon under the A38 dual carriageway near Newton Abbot.

Elsewhere in the South West, the company also announced further investment last month for Cornwall Wildlife Trust to deliver environmental enhancements to the Cornish landscape bordering the A30.

National Highways confirmed £785,000 from its Environment and wellbeing fund for the Trust to restore and recreate 16.8 hectares of woodland, orchard, grassland and heathland around Ladock to Gwills and Benhaven to Lambourne Mill, north of Truro.

The company manages four designated funds, allocated by the Government, to deliver benefits above and beyond building, maintaining and operating England's strategic roads.

Currently in its third year, the funding programme, which was allocated £936m for Roads Period 2 (2020-2025), is divided into four funding streams aimed at making the biggest difference and delivering lasting benefits; Environment and wellbeing, Users and Communities, Safety and congestion and Innovation and modernisation.

From protecting the environment and enhancing the landscape around roads, to improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting communities, the aim is to make a positive difference to people's lives.

And as part of its national biodiversity effort, the company announced an investment earlier this week of nearly £6 million from its Environment and Wellbeing fund into the country's Wildlife Trusts' Network for Nature programme.

The funding will enable the Trusts to deliver a total of 26 biodiversity projects to enhance, restore and create more than 1,700 acres (690 hectares) of woodlands, grasslands, peatlands and wetlands across every region of England.

Wild areas which have been fragmented by highways will also be improved and restored for nature, with another South West scheme reconnecting isolated populations of dormice alongside the M5 in Somerset and helping them spread into the wider landscape.

[Find out more information about National Highways' Designated Funds programme.](#)

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.

UK government leads global transport transformation as it takes over ITF presidency in Germany

- UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, will assume presidency of international organisation on transport policy
- He will use the summit to call for a united response against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as focusing on priorities on decarbonisation and road safety
- transport ministers from around the world will support a call to action committing to ending all International Transport Forum cooperation with Russia and Belarus

Today (18 May 2022), the UK government will assume the presidency of the [International Transport Forum \(ITF\)](#), leading its work to improve people's lives across the world through cleaner, safer and more innovative solutions.

In a ceremony held in Leipzig, Germany, the largest gathering of transport ministers in the world will see current president, Morocco, hand over the reins to UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps.

The ITF is a world-leading intergovernmental organisation for transport

policy bringing together 63 countries from around the world, hosted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In a keynote speech, Mr Shapps will lay out 5 priorities for the UK's tenure: leading global transport transformation by making transport more connected, greener, inclusive, safe and resilient, and innovative.

He will also use the forum to bring nations together in solidarity against the invasion of Ukraine, uniting his counterparts in condemning Russia's heinous acts and atrocities committed against Ukraine's civilian population.

Transport ministers from around the world will back a [call to action committing to ending all ITF cooperation with Russia and Belarus](#).

In a speech at the summit, the Transport Secretary is expected to say:

Transport binds nations together for the common good. But access to the international transport network is a privilege. It requires countries to act in a responsible and respectful way to each other.

So we cannot stand back when one state, entirely unprovoked, attacks another, killing thousands of innocent people, violating international law and breaching the UN Charter.

The targeted destruction of one nation's infrastructure, in particular its transport system, clearly contravenes the very foundations on which the ITF is built.

The United Kingdom stands with our partners in condemning the outrageous actions of Vladimir Putin and the Russian military in Ukraine.

The summit will also be a chance to demonstrate how innovations in crash avoidance technology can save lives and meet the United Nations' goal to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030, which ties in with the UK's own objectives on road safety.

At the summit, Mr Shapps will take part in a demonstration of autonomous emergency braking (AEB) – new technology that monitors the road ahead and automatically brakes the car if the driver fails to respond to a collision threat – as well as anti-lock braking system (ABS) for motorcycles.

Such technologies are not only being considered for UK vehicles – something we can do now we have greater regulatory freedom after leaving the EU – but it is hoped these will be rolled out worldwide through initiatives like the #STOPTHECRASH partnership.

This will be followed by another example of international unity: the announcement of a new air services agreement between Canada and the UK. It means that crucial transatlantic routes can continue and planes flying from the UK will continue to enjoy the same access they currently have with

Canada, helping the UK maintain its place as Europe's most important aviation hub.

The Transport Secretary will sign the bilateral agreement at the event with Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra.

The UK's leadership in decarbonising transport will also be on show, coming hot off the heels of the Transport Secretary's historic challenge to the aviation industry to deliver the first net zero transatlantic flight by the end of next year, and the launch of its Jet Zero Council, which is focused on delivering zero emissions aviation in a generation.

The Transport Secretary will chair meetings of the intergovernmental [Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition Council](#) (ZEVTC), which he is expected to use as an opportunity to discuss coordinating industry and government efforts in the transition to zero emission heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) – which will be key to decarbonising our roads and meeting global climate targets.

[Government funding backs scallop fishing industry breakthrough](#)

A world-first method for catching scallops which offers an alternative to damaging dredging activity has been developed using funding from the Government's Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF).

This new low-impact method, pioneered by scientists at Devon-based company Fishtek Marine, uses illuminated pots dubbed 'scallop discos' to attract and catch scallops.

Due to having 200 eyes, scallops were found to be particularly receptive to the lights and naturally moved towards them, making the lights an effective means to catch large quantities without trawling the seabed. Findings indicate this could replace traditional dredging methods which can have a damaging effect on valuable marine habitats.

The Seafood Innovation Fund, a multi-million programme funded by Defra and delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), is supporting innovative projects across the fishing, aquaculture and seafood industries that use cutting edge technology or new techniques to limit the impact of fisheries on the marine environment.

The Seafood Innovation Fund sits under the £100 million [UK Seafood Fund](#), set up by the Government to support the long term future and sustainability of the UK fisheries and seafood sector. It will ensure industry is able to process more fish landed in the UK, create more job opportunities across the supply chain and upskill the workforce and train new entrants, to level up

coastal communities across the UK.

Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, said:

It is great to see Fishtek Marine benefitting from our Seafood Innovation Fund, and developing a world-first method for catching scallops in an environmentally sustainable way.

The funding is supporting innovation, helping industry use cutting edge technology and protecting the marine environment. It is also an important part of levelling up coastal communities – and it is great to see Devon leading the way.

Suzanna Neville, Seafood Innovation Fund programme manager at Cefas, said:

This is an important project that has the potential to make a real difference to the sustainability of the scallop fishery. The opportunity to transform commercial scallop harvesting has been made possible by providing funding for the development of early stage ideas. This is exactly the sort of innovative project that the SIF was set up to support, helping the UK lead the way in developing a sustainable seafood sector.

Dr. Rob Enever of Fishtek Marine, and lead scientist on the study, said:

The support of the Seafood Innovation Fund was vital to this work. The research simply wouldn't have happened without it. The discovery that scallops can be attracted into crab pots using light is a world first. Beyond the UK, the innovation of a new low-impact scallop fishery has application in scallop fisheries world-wide. With the continued support of Defra, we look forward to developing this exciting work and hope for "pot-caught scallops" to be a consumer choice of the future!

Fishtek Marine received around £245,000 of SIF funding to collect data and trial several designs for the pots, which confirmed the illuminated light 'scallop discos' technique consistently attracts significant numbers of scallops.

Following these promising results, the next steps involve optimising the trap design and developing and manufacturing a new, low-cost light specific to the operational needs of crustacean fishers. Further sea-trials will then be conducted with the new designs, focusing on crucial factors such as fishing region, light intensity, light colour, flashing rate and trap efficiency.

Sitting under the £100 million UK Seafood Fund, the Seafood Innovation Fund brings together industry, academia and the UK's wealth of scientific

expertise to help the sector become more sustainable at every level. Alongside this, the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme is a further boost for science and innovation in the industry, together totalling £24 million.

Bids for the next round of the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships scheme and the Seafood Innovation Fund are due to open this summer. Businesses can find out more information and how to apply to the schemes on GOV UK.

Notes to editors:

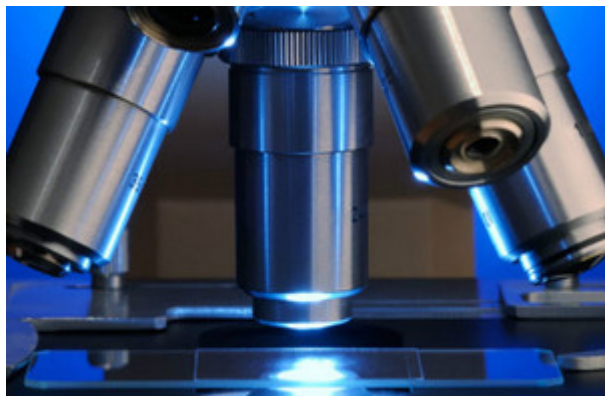
Fishtek Marine: Based in Totnes Devon, UK, Fishtek Marine is a unique conservation engineering company. The Fishtek Marine team develop, engineer, test, manufacture, and distribute a range of innovative fishing technologies that facilitate sustainable fishing, reducing bycatch of cetaceans, turtles, seabirds and sharks.

Cefas: Cefas is the Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science. We are an agency of Defra (the Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and world leading experts in marine and freshwater science. We help keep our seas, oceans and rivers healthy and productive and our seafood safe and sustainable, by providing data and advice to Government and our overseas partners. For more information visit www.cefas.co.uk or follow @CefasGovUK. Media enquiries: communications@cefas.co.uk

[Join the government's highest-level advisory body on science and technology](#)

News story

The Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology is looking to recruit 3 new members to join the council.



The Council for Science and Technology (CST) advises the Prime Minister on science and technology policy issues across government. It is jointly chaired by the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and an independent co-Chair, Lord Browne of Madingley.

The council is the government's highest-level advisory body on science and technology, advising on issues that cut across the full range of government's responsibilities.

Their current work programme includes developing advice on:

- how to improve incentives for business research and development and access to finance for innovative companies
- the role of public procurement to drive innovation
- government action to support translation of engineering biology research into benefits for society

Members of the council are leading figures in the science, and technology and business community. This includes presidents from the national academies and UKRI (ex officio), and representation from academia, key high-tech businesses and investors in innovative companies.

The work of the council has directly influenced the government's Research and Innovation strategies and high-profile initiatives including the establishment of the Alan Turing Institute and the 100,000 Genomes Project.

The government is seeking applicants with expertise in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics field with credibility at national level (whether business, the not-for-profit sector, or academia). The government is also seeking candidates who have the ability to operate at the interface between disciplines, bring together different perspectives, evaluate options and develop evidence-based solutions.

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Property search services merger could mean homebuyers pay more

Following an in-depth Phase 2 investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has provisionally found that the acquisition of TM Group by Dye & Durham substantially lessens competition in the supply of property search services.

Property search reports are used to make sure that buyers and sellers have all the facts they need about a property – including title deeds, access rights, planning restrictions, water and sewerage services, flood risk and other important information – before a sale goes ahead. The reports are ordered from firms like Dye & Durham and TM Group by conveyancers, solicitors, estate agents, and mortgage brokers on behalf of people and businesses buying and selling properties. Charges for property search services arise in almost every property transaction and are typically included within the conveyancing fees paid by homebuyers.

Dye & Durham, an international provider of cloud-based software and technology solutions, announced the £91.5 million purchase of Swindon-based TM Group in July 2021. Both businesses offer property search services to clients in the UK under a variety of different brands.

The firms chose not to notify the CMA about the deal but, as part of its ongoing monitoring of mergers and acquisitions, the CMA identified potential concerns and began an initial investigation in October 2021. It was referred for an in-depth investigation, overseen by an independent inquiry group, in December 2021.

The CMA's in-depth investigation has considered a wide range of evidence, including from the merging businesses' own strategic documents and a survey of customers, as well as extensive information provided by customers, competitors and other industry players.

The CMA has provisionally found that this evidence shows that Dye & Durham and TM Group are 2 of the largest players in the supply of property search services in the UK and competed closely before the merger. It also shows that the combined business would be by far the largest player in the market and face only limited competition from other suppliers. On this basis, the CMA is concerned that the deal could result in higher prices for property search services (or lower quality services, including less innovation). This could result in higher fees or worse service standards for people and businesses buying or selling residential and commercial properties across the UK.

In light of this loss of competition, the CMA has also set out its initial view that the only effective way to address the issues it has identified would be for Dye & Durham to sell TM Group to a suitable buyer.

Richard Feasey, chair of the group conducting this inquiry, said:

Buying and selling property can be a challenging experience for many people and one of the most significant purchases most of us make.

We need to ensure that fees for search reports are competitive and that we continue to see innovation in digital services to make the process easier and faster.

By reducing competition in an already concentrated market, we have found that Dye & Durham's purchase of TM Group could increase the costs and reduce quality in these services.

For more information, visit the [Dye & Durham/TM Group merger inquiry page](#).

1. The CMA invites submissions on its provisional findings by 8 June 2022 and its notice of possible remedies, which sets out potential options for addressing its provisional concerns, by 1 June 2022. The CMA plans to issue its final decision by 16 August 2022.
2. The UK merger control regime is voluntary, which means that merging businesses are free to choose whether to notify a merger to the CMA. The fact that a merger has not been voluntarily notified to the CMA does not mean that the CMA will not review it. The CMA has a duty to track merger activity to determine whether any unnotified merger may give rise to a substantial lessening of competition. The CMA's Mergers Intelligence Committee, which keeps merger activity under review, decided to call in the merger for review after Dye & Durham acquired TMG in July 2021.
3. There are 2 routes by which the CMA may come to review a merger (details of which can be found in the CMA's [quick mergers guidance](#), paragraph 2.5). Businesses can formally notify a merger to the CMA by completing a Merger Notice or the CMA's Merger's Intelligence Committee can investigate mergers that have not been notified to it.
4. Before the merger, the Parties were 2 of the 4 largest suppliers of property search reports, with the other 2 large competitors being ATI and Landmark.
5. The CMA has found that the limited entry and expansion of new suppliers into the market is unlikely to be sufficient to offset its concerns about the merger. Neither does the evidence show that smaller firms providing similar services offer a significant competitive threat to the merging firms.
6. Canadian-based Dye & Durham has expanded globally over the last few years, into territories such as Australia and Ireland, as well as the United Kingdom. Since 2016, it has acquired 11 firms based in England and Wales, including PIE, PSG Connect, Index, York Place, Terrafirma and Future Climate Info (FCI), and one in Northern Ireland.