



NRA

*Guardians of the
Water Environment*

"A NEW ANGLE"

A simpler way of licensing fishing



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Fishing at Stratford-upon-Avon

This consultation paper sets out the National Rivers Authority's (NRA) proposals for the future. It has been published so that anglers, interested individuals and interested organisations can give their views in order to help the NRA decide what is the best way of licensing fishing.

An important part of the NRA's job as the Guardian of the Water Environment is to protect the fish stocks in the rivers, lakes, and canals of England and Wales. Under the Water Act (1989) the NRA's fisheries service has a duty to maintain, improve and develop salmon, sea trout, trout, freshwater and eel fisheries.

To do this the NRA:-

- controls the pressure on fisheries through issuing licences and making byelaws,
- prevents damage to fish and fish stocks by effective enforcement of fishery laws,
- ensures the health and abundance of fish stocks through regular fisheries surveys,
- rescues fish when pollution accidents occur and contains the damage to fish stocks,
- rears and restocks fish to restore and improve fisheries,
- constructs in-stream fishery improvement structures,
- carries out fisheries research to allow future improvements and developments.

WHAT THE NRA FISHERIES SERVICE DOES

The aims of the NRA fisheries service are to maintain, improve and develop fisheries.

ITS OBJECTIVES ARE:-

- To develop and implement a long term strategy for fisheries,
- To monitor the fishery status of rivers and inland, estuary and, where appropriate, coastal waters,
- To regulate, protect and conserve salmon, trout, freshwater, eel and coastal fisheries (where appropriate) through the enforcement of fisheries legislation,
- To formulate policies to maintain, improve and develop fisheries and restore and rehabilitate damaged fisheries,
- To ensure proper consideration of fisheries issues through Regional Fisheries Advisory Committees (RFACs),
- To provide a fisheries service which is based on a sound charging system and which is sensitive to the needs of the public.

In order to fulfil these objectives in the year April 1990 to March 1991 the following key activities were undertaken in England and Wales:-

Fish rescues

654 fish kills attended
528,000 fish rescued

Rearing and restocking

3,660,000 salmonids stocked out
1,830,000 coarse fish stocked out

Fisheries enforcement

216,340 kilometres of bailiff patrols
190,000 licences checked
3,000 licence offences detected
734 successful prosecutions obtained against illegal activities damaging to fish stocks

Monitoring of fish stocks by surveys

10,463 km of river monitored
2570 sites sampled including
1518 netting and electro-fishing surveys and
198 angler catch censuses

Fisheries regulation

1,250,000 fishing licences issued
15 byelaws made

Improvements to fisheries and the fish's environment

47 improvement structures built including
31 fish passes



Above: NRA bailiffs seize a mixed bag of poaching gear

Left: Restocking with Common and Mirror Carp

Below: Mirror Carp brood stock



THE COST OF THE NRA FISHERIES SERVICE

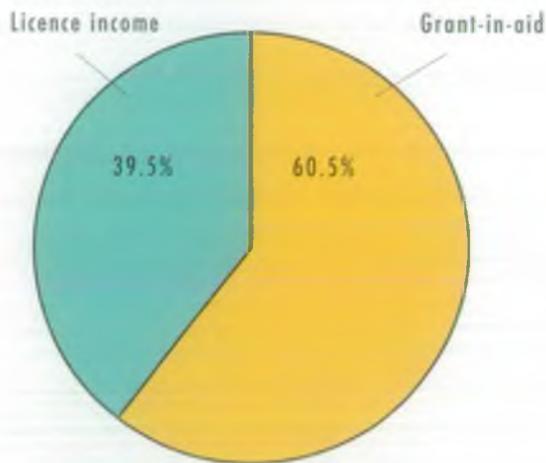
The planned expenditure for April 1991 to March 1992 and for April 1992 to March 1993 is:-

| | 1991/1992 £M | 1992/1993 £M | INCREASE % |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| REGULATION | 1.89 | 1.93 | +2 |
| ENFORCEMENT | 6.57 | 6.72 | +2 |
| FISHERIES SURVEYS | 4.24 | 4.85 | +14 |
| FISHERIES IMPROVEMENTS | 1.46 | 2.69 | +84 |
| REARING AND RESTOCKING | 2.82 | 3.43 | +22 |
| OTHER | 3.24 | 2.98 | -8 |
| TOTAL | 20.22 | 22.60 | |
| LICENCE INCOME | 8.00 | 10.70 | |
| GRANT-IN-AID | 12.22 | 11.90 | |

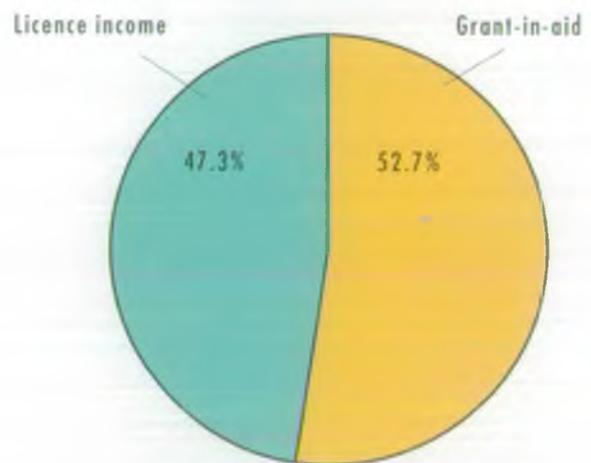


Intensive rearing to meet restocking needs

Sources of funding for the NRA Fisheries Service

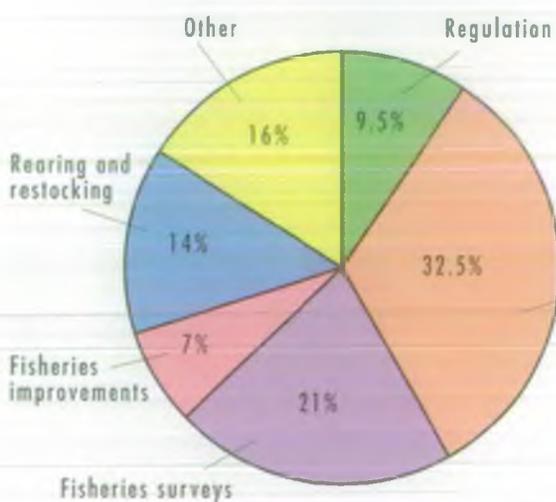


Planned funding for April 1991 to March 1992

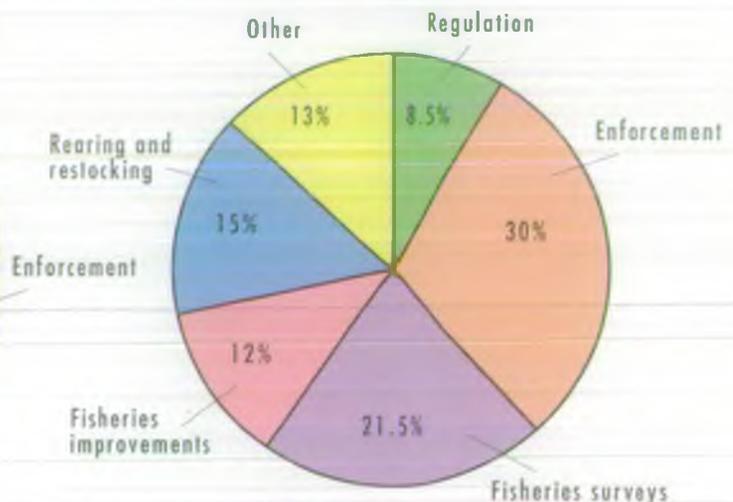


Planned funding for April 1992 to March 1993

The Cost of the NRA Fisheries Service



Planned expenditure for April 1991 to March 1992



Planned expenditure for April 1992 to March 1993

THE PREFERRED OPTION

The NRA prefers option 2 because it brings substantial benefits to both the angler and the NRA itself. Under this scheme, and subject to the permission of the fishery owner, a rod could be used legally anywhere in England and Wales with just a category A licence if all species were to be fished for, or just a category B licence if trout, coarse fish or eels were to be fished for, but not salmon and sea trout.

Such a scheme is easy to understand requiring just one fee for one licence and there would be little difficulty deciding which licence was required. Obtaining a licence would also be easier because licence outlets across the country would only need to hold two sorts of licence and not the large number that they would need if they were to cover every possibility with a regional scheme.

The need for the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State for Wales to approve 10 separate licence schemes would be replaced by a single annual licence fee approval procedure.

The proposed system would be easier to operate and would be more efficient than the alternatives. Therefore, it will be cheaper to operate and a greater proportion of the anglers' money will be spent on real fisheries services and less on administration and bureaucracy.

Everyone would pay the same for the same service.

THE COSTS OF THE NRA'S FISHERIES SERVICE

About 1,200,000 people buy fishing licences and pay from £1 to £55 for one of the 100 different types of licence. This is expected to raise about £8m in 1991/1992.

This money is put towards the cost of carrying out the NRA's fisheries duties. However, it does not cover the full cost of the NRA's fisheries work. A breakdown of the fisheries service's planned income and costs is given in the table (overleaf) for the years April 1991 to March 1992 and April 1992 to March 1993.

Nearly half of the income comes from licences. The remainder, some £12m, is funded by Government Grant-in-Aid. The NRA believes that about £10.7m will need to be raised from angling licences in 1992/1993 in order to meet the costs of the proposed services. It will be seen in the table overleaf that this relatively small increase, which will still provide less than half of the NRA's fisheries income, will be used on services that directly benefit anglers: fisheries surveys up by 14%; fisheries improvements up by 84%; and fish rearing and restocking up by 22%.

It is reasonable for those who benefit from fisheries work to pay a fair share of the costs. This includes the owners of fisheries, anglers and commercial netmen. Of course, the public at large benefits from part of this fisheries work. For example, it is understood and appreciated by most people, regardless of whether or not they are anglers, that good

quality fisheries in the rivers and lakes of England and Wales are of value as indicators of environmental quality. It is also reasonable, therefore, for some of the money to come from the Government as Grant-in-Aid.

The indications are that the demand from anglers is for an improved fisheries service. The NRA is keen to comply with this demand and improve facilities for anglers; but this work will require extra money. Since anglers will not be the only people to benefit from this work a proportion of this will be funded by Grant-in-Aid but a small increase in licence income will also be necessary. Of course, the greater efficiency of a revised licence scheme will divert money away from bureaucracy and into real fisheries work on the bankside.

HOW MUCH WOULD THE NEW LICENCE SCHEME COST?

Currently salmon and sea trout licences cost between £31.20 and £55, whilst coarse fishing licences typically cost between £5 and £10. The variation across England and Wales is great.

Looking at the amount of money needed to carry out the work necessary to meet the fisheries duties of the NRA, the licence costs for the preferred option, option 2, have not been decided but are likely to be about:

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Category A | £55 |
| Category B | £9.50 |

These figures are for a proposed introduction of new arrangements in 1992.

The total income from these charges would be about £10.7 million which is more than collected from licences now, but for good reasons. Firstly, it will be a year before the new licences could be introduced, and secondly, more work needs to be done to improve fisheries, especially coarse fisheries.

WOULD OPTION 3- A REGIONAL SYSTEM- BE BETTER?

Many anglers fish all season in the same area. They might prefer a regional licence plus the option of a national licence at extra cost, but only if the overall arrangements were cheap enough.

The NRA does not favour this option because it is estimated that in order to bring in the required £10.7 million, regional-only licences would need to cost about the same as the national equivalents because of the greater

work and administration needed to run them. A further disadvantage would be that the national licences that sat alongside the regional-only licences would be expensive, about:-

all species *including* salmon and sea trout £75

all species *excluding* salmon and sea trout £12

WOULD THERE BE CONCESSIONS?

The NRA wishes to keep the number of concessions to a minimum so that the system is simple and fair. Concessions will be considered during consultation. However, it is proposed that a half price concession will be considered for those under 16 years of age.

WHAT NEXT?

No firm decisions have been made. However, the NRA believes that the two national licences arrangement will be best for both the NRA and anglers.

The NRA wants to hear the views of anglers and anyone else who is interested in this subject.

The NRA will hold meetings with angling organisations. It will also seek the advice of its Regional Fisheries Advisory Committees.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

The NRA wants to hear your views, whether you support the preferred option or not.

It would also be very helpful if you gave your views to the angling organisations to which you belong so that they can represent the views of their members.

The closing date for comments is 31 August. Responses, marked Angling Licence Review, should be sent to: National Rivers Authority, 30-34 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TL.

WHEN WILL THE NEW LICENCES BE INTRODUCED?

The NRA would like to introduce new licences in April 1992, for the 12 months from 1st April to 31st March 1993.

The NRA needs the support and cooperation of anglers to make any new system work and it is hoped that anglers will see the benefits of the simpler arrangements.

High speed anti-poaching patrol



EXISTING LICENCES: WHY CHANGE?

Before the NRA was formed in September 1989, fishing licences were issued by the ten regional water authorities and these varied from region to region. Everyone in England and Wales who fishes for game fish, coarse fish and eels must now have an NRA fishing licence.

The NRA has inherited a fishing licence system with over 100 categories. This is confusing for some and it can be difficult to obtain the right licence. Even before the NRA was formed there was criticism of these complicated arrangements and much talk of the need for a "National" licence. The formation of the NRA has made the introduction of a National licence a real possibility.

The licence system has been examined thoroughly and a wide range of options has been looked at. Not all of them are practical and those considered by the NRA to be the most realistic are set out below. Commercial fishing licences are also being reviewed and there will subsequently be consultations about them.

It is sensible for the NRA to see if there is a simpler arrangement for fishing licences because this would give the angler a better deal. If there were fewer restrictions it would allow some of the current administrative effort to be redirected

into practical fishery work.

The NRA believes that option 2 is the simplest and the best scheme for both the angler and the NRA. Before a decision is made the NRA would like to hear your views.



Above: Salmon fishing

Right: The Chub - a favourite quarry



POSSIBLE OPTIONS

Some fishermen like to fish the same stretch of river while others prefer to travel the country fishing for different species of fish in different places. Anglers want to be able to fish at a fair price with as few bureaucratic restrictions as possible. The NRA has sympathy with this view and, therefore, wishes to introduce a simple fishing licence system, especially as this would also lead to greater efficiency and would be cheaper to operate.

The NRA considers the following options to be the most sensible:

OPTION 1 The simplest arrangement would be to have just one NRA national rod licence, at a single fee, for all types of fish, for all areas. However, the resultant average figure would not reflect the expenditure by the NRA on managing the different types of fishery. Coarse fishermen, in particular, might not view this as fair.

OPTION 2 The next simplest arrangement would be to have two NRA national rod licences:-

Category A for all species including salmon and sea trout

Category B for all species except salmon and sea trout

OPTION 3 A third possibility would be to have the same two national rod licences as in option 2, but also to have the same two categories for each NRA region.

OPTION 1

ONE NATIONAL LICENCE

A single national rod licence for the whole NRA area for salmon, migratory trout (sea trout), trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels.

OPTION 2

TWO NATIONAL LICENCES

Two national rod licences for the whole NRA area:-

CATEGORY A - salmon, migratory trout (sea trout), trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fish

CATEGORY B - trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fish *except* salmon and sea trout

OPTION 3

TWO NATIONAL LICENCES AND TWO TYPES OF REGIONAL LICENCE

For the whole NRA area:-
CATEGORY A - salmon, migratory trout (sea trout), trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fishes

CATEGORY B - trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fish *except* salmon and sea trout

For each Region:-
CATEGORY C - salmon, migratory trout (sea trout), trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fish

CATEGORY D - trout, charr, grayling, freshwater fishes (coarse fishes) and eels. ie all types of fish *except* salmon and sea trout

Salmon parr reared for restocking



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Trout fly

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



099487

National Rivers Authority
Information Centre
Head Office

Class No NRA FISHERIES

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