

News Reels *for* Anglers

Issue 7 July 1997



For better fishing see the Agency!

Keep an eye out for any otters

Anglers in the Southern Region will hopefully be seeing more otters on the river banks in the years to come.

The Environment Agency along with County Wildlife Trusts are carrying out an extensive programme of work to encourage these solitary creatures back to the banks of the Rivers Arun and Rother in Sussex.

It is believed that lack of sufficient cover on riverbanks is limiting the recovery of otters. The project, which was set up in 1991 and involved building artificial holts, fencing, planting cover and building river islands in Hampshire, aims to have a minimum of one secure holt or resting site each kilometre of river.

We would like to hear from anyone who has seen an otter in the region or who is willing to assist in any way with the project work. Contact Robin Crawshaw, Conservation Officer on 01903 832129 or Project Officer, Graham Roberts at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust on 01703 613636.

Any angling clubs keen to improve their fishing should contact the Environment Agency.

That's the message following a special workshop in East Hampshire designed to help angling club fisheries managers improve their waters and share news and views.

The day-long event was devised and hosted by the Environment Agency and provided a valuable opportunity for anglers to develop ideas on habitat improvements and fish health.

A series of hour long discussions ranging through SVC — a killer carp virus — to willow hurdles and chalk for bank re-instatement ended with an open forum.

Fisheries staff will be working further with angling clubs to help take forward some of the scheme

the Agency and club officials were keen to get established on local waters.

This may involve supporting lottery grants and advising on necessary Agency and planning consents.

Collaboration

Lawrence Talks, Hampshire Area Fisheries, Recreation, Conservation and Navigation Manager, said, "I'm delighted that this event helped to initiate, what I am sure will be, joint efforts on many club waters to improve the fishing for their members.

"If clubs have any schemes or ideas we can help make them a reality with advice and collaboration. Any club keen to better their fishing should call us on 01962 713267."



Fisheries Technical Officer, Heb Leman, demonstrates the advantages of using natural materials.



Kent staff replace alkaline victims

Three thousand five hundred small roach, dace, chub and barbel were stocked into the upper River Teise from the Environment Agency's Calverton fish farm to replace the estimated stock loss related to an alkaline discharge which hit the river last spring. Carrying out the restocking are Agency fisheries staff Andrea Buckley and Ian Rockley.

Boxing clever on the Test and Itchen . . .

In stream upwelling incubator boxes are being used on the Rivers Test and Itchen this year by Environment Agency fisheries staff as part of the Salmon Enhancement Programme.

Salmon eggs totalling 33,000 were collected from Itchen broodstock in January and taken to a hatchery until the eggs became eyed — when the eyes of the fish inside the eggs are visible through the shell. They were then stocked into the incubator boxes and layered with gravel.

Yolk sack fry first began to emerge at the beginning of March and hatching went well on a slight rise in river temperatures.

A similar scheme was carried out last year and fry release



Upwelling incubator boxes.

from the incubator boxes were noted to be significantly better. It is hoped that overall survival is enhanced by having this good start at release stage.

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Now these youngsters have a clean pool to dip into



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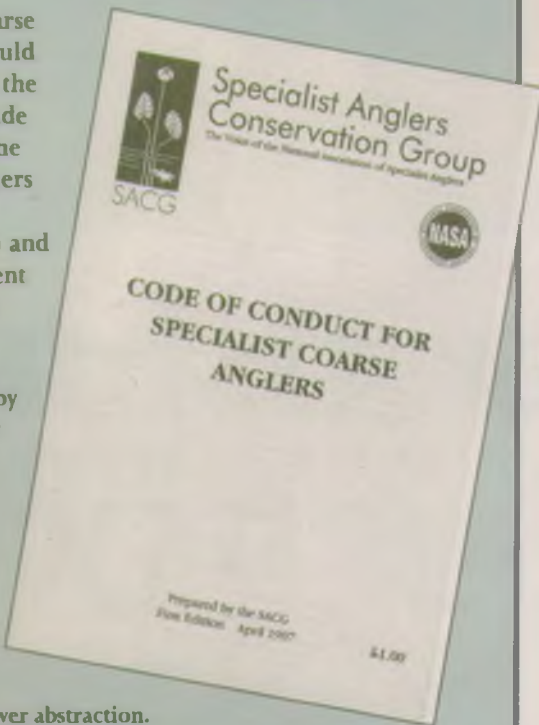
New guide a must for coarse anglers

Every keen coarse fisherman should have a copy of the brand new guide produced by the Specialist Anglers Conservation Group (SACG) and the Environment Agency earlier this year.

The Code has been endorsed by HRH the Prince of Wales, who welcomed the emphasis on working with environmental organisations to help deal with problems like pollution and over abstraction.

Available free of charge from the Agency, the booklet contains forewords by the Head of Fisheries for the Environment Agency, Dr Tony Owen, Chairman of the Specialist Anglers Conservation Group, Tim Marks and General Secretary of the National Association of Specialist Anglers, Keith Barker.

Among the contents are sections on care of fish and the environment, general behaviour, tackle, rigs and bait and fish handling.



Officers save trout as river dries up

Environment Agency fisheries officers had to scramble down an 8ft bank on the River Dunn just outside West Dean, north Hampshire to rescue around 100 distressed brown trout.

The trout were discovered swimming in between 6-9in. of water in the drying out river.

They were put into tanks and moved to a different stretch of the river at Lockerly away from the problem.

Right: Pictures show the 8ft. bank and the disappearing River Dunn.

Rescue R



Help search for Ratty

Wind in the Willows' famous Ratty was actually a water vole and he was once a common sight along rivers and canals as many anglers will tell you.

But a nationwide survey in 1990 revealed that water voles had disappeared from two thirds of the sites where they had been found before. About half of these voles

have been lost since 1980 giving Ratty the dubious honour of being one of the UK's fastest declining species. The decline is thought to be due to a combination of factors including habitat loss and the spread of the American mink.

The Wildlife Trusts are asking people to help find out more about the voles, where they live, what sort of habitat they prefer and what other wildlife they share their river or lake with.

Information

As anglers are more likely than many people to know about the water voles on their water we would like your help.

If you are interested in taking part in the survey (we'd like to know if you haven't got voles as well as if you have!) Ring Jane Cecil on 01903 215835 and we will post you a survey form and some more information about Ratty.

Sheppey stocks

Environment Agency Fisheries Inspector John Smith stocks roach and carp into HMP East Church, Isle of Sheppey.



Putting it right after pollution

Blighted watercourse brought back to life



Herrings Stream in West Sussex is teeming with life again following a major restock by the Environment Agency.

In May last year a lethal discharge of sewage from SWS sewage pumping stations at Hurstpierpoint wiped out many of the fish. Restocked species include 3,000 bream up to 6lbs, 2,500 roach up to 1 1/2lbs and 1,000 5in. - 6in. dace and chub.

Fined

Many of these fish were netted from South East Water's Arlington Reservoir in East Sussex while others came from the Agency's fish farm in Calverton.

In March this year SWS was fined £5,000 with £580 costs for the polluting Herrings Stream.

Additionally, in October last year SWS paid £7,511 which included £4,822 for restocking.

Eric Crowe from Hassocks Angling Club with a net full of dace and chub about to be released into Herrings Stream at Twineham.

Fresh fry for Hampshire river

Two thousand salmon fry have been released into the Barton River at Bishopstoke, in Hampshire, as part of a restocking programme following a pollution incident which killed many small salmon and grayling in 1995.

Eggs were stripped from wild salmon caught in the Bishopstoke area earlier this year and taken to a hatch-

ery where they were reared to the first feeding stage.

It is hoped that these small salmon will re-colonise the stretch of river and grow to smolt stage, when they will leave the river to begin the sea stage of their life cycle.

As adults they should return to the area of release to spawn.

Farewell To Fisheries

Environment Agency staff bade a fond farewell to three long standing committees which were recently brought to a close.

The Fisheries Advisory Committees for Kent, Sussex and Hampshire began life in the early 70s and have worked hard with the Agency and its predecessors to represent the needs and views of the local angling community. They are replaced by Area Environment Groups with local fisheries members providing advice on the full range of Agency work.



Above: Sussex Fisheries Advisory Committee.

Right: Hampshire Fisheries Advisory Committee.

ound Up



Action at 19th Century site

A reservoir built in the early 1800s at Newport on the Isle of Wight was the scene of a fish rescue by Agency fisheries staff.

The reservoir is divided by a central dam and one half of it was losing water through an old cast iron water main. While the water level was being pumped down to make the repairs fisheries staff rescued 75 carp between 3lbs and 5lbs and some 4,000 roach and perch. They were all moved to the other half of the reservoir for safety.

Goldfish saved as pond dries up

Common carp were rescued from a small pond in Totton, Southampton, after a passer by noticed the water level was very low and called the Environment Agency. Some fish had already died before the pond could be refilled.

Agency restores silted Kent stream

A former prime spawning area for native brown trout in Kent is being given a new lease of life thanks to the Environment Agency.

Previously adult fish spawned in the gravel beds of the Pickledon Stream, a tributary of the River Great Stour, and thousands of baby fry hatched every spring before migrating to the main river.

But over the past few years the stream has progressively silted up and the spawning gravels have been covered over inhibiting successful trout spawning. The silting has been aggravated by the extremely low river flows experienced in Kent during the past seven years because of drought conditions. A failure of winter rains and spates flows have prevented the scouring of the silts and the maintenance of the spawning gravels.

Now Kent fisheries inspectors are restoring the gravels, this work includes constructing small stone weirs and groynes which will speed the stream

flow over the bed scouring out the silt and exposing and cleaning the gravel.

John Cave, Principal Fisheries Officer said, "It is a privilege to be able to bring about such a dramatic positive change to the environment using a few simple techniques. This is one area where we can bring about a self-sustaining fishery in the environment."

Reduction

Member clubs and syndicates of the Stour Fisheries Association annually stock the River Great Stour with thousands of brown trout varying in size and lifestage from 3in. fry to 2 1/2 lb adult fish.

The restoration of the stream supports their efforts and it is hoped will ultimately lead to a reduction in the need to stock so many hatchery reared fish.

The Environment Agency surveyed the stream section before starting work and follow up surveys will be carried out for some time after completion to assess the scale of improvements.



A section of the Pickledon Stream.

Advisory Committees



Kent Fisheries Advisory Committee.



Wantsum? You've got some . . .

Wantsum Angling Club have received £19,000 from the National Lottery Sports Council to restock the River Wantsum following last winter's mortality after tidal gates were vandalised.

Before restocking Kent fisheries staff spent two days carrying out electrofishing surveys to determine existing stock levels. They advised the club to repeat stock over the next 18 months rather than commit all the stock in one go.

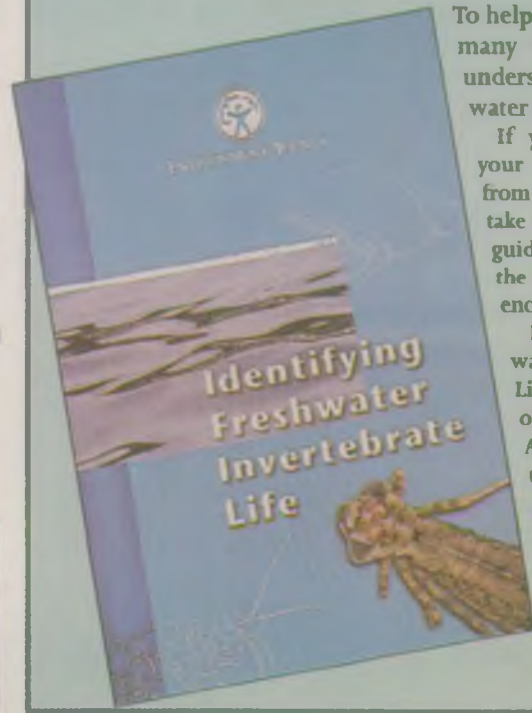


Tube ruse to beat the birds

Bundles of tube reefs have been put into School Pool at Faversham by the Environment Agency to provide cover for fish from predators, including cormorants.

Lowering the reefs into the lake is Senior Fisheries Inspector Mick Woollven and Fisheries Inspector Peter Riggall, who will be monitoring their success.

How to identify freshwater fauna



To help them catch fish many anglers like to understand the underwater environment.

If you don't know your diving beetles from your water bugs take a peek at a new guide published by the Environment Agency.

Identifying Freshwater Invertebrate Life is available free of charge from the Agency and contains some excellent close up shots of these tiny creatures and a straightforward key to make identification easy.

Thinning the Itchen

A project to improve wild trout spawning and general habitat has been carried out on the River Itchen at Ovington in Hampshire.

Environment Agency fisheries staff helped with the work which involved narrowing 150 metres of the river bed to increase flow and encourage re-growth of aquatic weed which provides cover and food for both trout and grayling.

Our picture below shows a section of the river being narrowed.



Tiddlers . . .

Poachers convicted

Two fishermen from Keyhaven were convicted at Lyndhurst Magistrates Court, Hampshire, for illegally taking sea trout in the Western Solent.

The two men were caught in possession of the fish at Keyhaven last summer by Environment Agency fisheries inspectors. They were each fined £100 and ordered to pay £50 costs.

Stuart Taylor, Hampshire Area Fisheries Officer said, "This is another conviction by the courts in support of our efforts to protect stocks of salmon and sea trout in coastal waters. Anyone found in possession of illegally caught fish or who attempts to take them will be prosecuted."

Romsey Park Clampdown

Hampshire Environment Agency fisheries inspectors made their presence felt in the Romsey Memorial Park and surrounding area during the salmon spawning period with three men being reported for prosecution and several others warned.

Several pairs of salmon had spawned in vulnerable areas with easy public access. One salmon was even poached with a handline while laying her eggs.

New stock for new lakes

Environment Agency Fisheries staff in Hampshire recently netted a trout fishery which was being drained down for repairs.

Around 4,000 roach between 5cm and 20cm in length were removed as they were an unwanted species in the waters. They were restocked to two recently dug lakes belonging to the Isle of Wight Angling Club.

Salmon return to the Medway

In July Kent Area Fisheries Officers from the Environment Agency caught the first salmon in the river to have been positively identified in living memory by Agency staff.

The salmon, which weighed 10lbs, was fresh run and in beautiful condition. Its mate, which was estimated to be a 12lb to 15lb fish, evaded capture.

The Environment Agency's Kent Area Fisheries Scientist, John Cave, said, "The verified return of salmon is good news for the Medway and indicative of environmental improvements because the species requires good quality water in which to thrive."

Agency brings new life to urban pond

The Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Ed Gallagher visited Southampton in July to see for himself how a neglected city pond has been given a new lease of life thanks to a joint initiative by the Environment Agency and Southampton City Council.

Cromarty Community Pond at the western edge of the city was heavily silted with little or no pondlife, only six inches deep in places and full of the inevitable shopping trolleys and debris of urban life.

Lack of funds prevented restoration until the Agency and City Council decided to join forces. Work on the pond started in earnest in February with the remainder of the water being drained out and the silt and rubbish removed. Now the pond is 6ft deep in places and is becoming a

Education

focal point in the community. The pond has much to offer including angling opportunities for youngsters, access for disabled anglers and a shallow area for pond dipping and other educational uses. There's also a conservation area and path around the pond.

Mr. Gallagher said, "The Agency is delighted to be working in co-operation with the local community to enhance the environment. What is particularly pleasing is to see young people making such good use of the facility which has been provided. "Education is one of the strongest tools the Agency has at its disposal. Working with the young children of today is one of the best ways we have of securing a better environment for tomorrow."



Senior Agency bailiff, Peter Rees, goes pond dipping with some local youngsters at Cromarty Pond.



The final haul of the net, heaving with large carp and bream.

A large carp about to be stocked into the River Arun at Roman Station.

Bottom feeders moved on

Fish will no longer cloud the issue at bird sanctuary

Numerous carp, bream and tench — all found guilty of clouding the water at a bird sanctuary in West Sussex — have been given new homes.

Environment Agency fisheries staff were asked to carry out a fish survey at Warnham Mill Pond to establish the population size of the bottom feeding fish and, if necessary, remove them to another water.

Too many bottom feeders can cause silt to become disturbed and the water cloudy. Clouding can adversely affect the growth of submerged aquatic plants which are vitally important to many water birds.

Results of the survey showed a substantial number of bottom feeders, mainly carp, believed to be contributing to the cloudiness of the water and reducing the amount of submerged plant growth.

Carp to 18lbs, bream to 6lbs and tench to 4lbs were removed and restocked to local waters including Castlewood Pit at Southwater and the River Arun at Roman Station.



Power packs do the job

Electrofishing backpacks being used by Environment Agency fisheries officers at a pond in Shanklin on the Isle of Wight. Around 100 carp were removed and restocked to ponds at Ventnor and Bonchurch.



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