

Make time to go fishing



FISHERIES IN YORKSHIRE NOVEMBER 2017

Natural Flood Management: Good for people, rivers and fish.

In recent years, the Environment Agency placed an increased emphasis on Natural Flood Management (NFM) as part of a series of measures to manage flood risk.



NFM involves working with natural processes to slow the flow of river water and reduce surface water run-off. This can include measures such as restoring flood plains, planting trees, installing felled timber within woodlands to intercept flow, and building leaky dams within river channels, like the one picture (left) at Crakemoor in the Upper Aire.

These techniques are a useful addition to traditional flood risk management techniques, such as floodwater storage areas and riverside walling; but engineering solutions will still remain part of the overall mix of flood defence measures.

In addition to helping manage flood risk, NFM also benefits the environment and fisheries. Slower flows across land lead to less erosion and reduces the amount of fine sediment being washed into the channel. Fine sediments can settle on the river bed, smothering gravels and reducing the quality of fish spawning and feeding grounds.

The Environment Agency and our partners have a good track record of using techniques which provide an NFM benefit, in completed and ongoing ecological improvement projects.

This year, partnership funding has been announced to allow us to take advantage of the latest NFM techniques in the Upper Ure and Bishopdale, Brompton and Backstones Beck catchments, as well as Derwent Villages (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust with Derwent Catchment Partnership), Collingham Beck (Dales to Vales River Trust) and Midgelden Brook, upper Calder (Treesponsibility with the Source Partnership). Phase Two of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme will also include planting hundreds of thousands of saplings across the Aire catchment to reduce surface water run-off.

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Have Your Say

The Angling Trust South Yorkshire Fisheries Forum will be held on Wednesday 22 November at the Warmsworth Community Centre, 40 Low Road West, Warmsworth, DN4 9LE. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served from 6.40 pm and the meeting starts at 7.00 pm. The draft agenda includes a debate on the coarse fish close season and a case study of how a Yorkshire stillwater fishery has been revitalised. Please [register online](#) to book your place.

Working Together

The Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP) uses income from the sale of rod licences to support environmental projects that will benefit fisheries. Organisations such as Angling Clubs or Rivers Trusts can apply to the Environment Agency for FIP money to support their work. The organisation applying also needs to make a matching contribution to the project. This can be financial, 'in-kind', or a combination of both. 'In-kind' funding is voluntary work which we can put an equivalent financial value to.

We have already had two rounds of bidding for FIP projects in 2017 and are currently inviting bids for a third.

Please contact us if you have a project that you would like us to support.

North and East Yorkshire: Paul Slater paul.slater@environment-agency.gov.uk 0113 819 6076

South and West Yorkshire: Rita Reid rita.reid@environment-agency.gov.uk 020 30 2 58101 or Joanne Kay joanne.kay@environment-agency.gov.uk 020 302 56534

Successful FIP projects include:

Backstone Beck, River Wharfe. A culvert near this spawning tributary's confluence with the River Wharfe was removed and replaced with a clear span bridge. This restored fish passage. The project was a partnership between us, Ilkley Angling Association, Wild Trout Trust and Yorkshire Water.

River Aire, Gargrave. Bradford City Angling Association and The Wild Trout Trust have been working with us to improve the habitat along the River Aire downstream of Gargrave. Using funding from the FIP, match funding from partners and volunteer labour, over 600 metres of fencing was installed to stop sheep and cattle entering the river. Wooden flow deflectors were secured into the river to vary flow and provide cover for fish and clean gravels. The work has resulted in an increase in the numbers and species of invertebrates in the river, and an increase in the number of fish being caught.

Portsmouth Reservoir. Todmorden Angling Society received FIP funding to re-anchor and replant floating islands on the reservoir after they came loose during strong winds. The islands provide fish with shelter from predatory birds.

River Ryburn and Triangle Dam. Yorkshire Private Anglers Club received a contribution from FIP that allowed them to re-build a weir, incorporate a fish passage easement and restore water supply to their fishery.

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Rivers



Working with Chesterfield Borough Council, we have re-connected over 0.5 km of historic meandering river channel to the Doe Lea at Norbriggs. The variety of depths and flows in the meanders provide a far better habitat for fish than the artificial straightened channel that used to bypass these features.

- We are currently working on naturalisation projects on the River Rother at Woodhouse (with Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust), the River Went (with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Wild Trout Trust) and the Porter Brook (with Sheffield City Council and the Wild Trout Trust).
- The European Marine Fisheries Fund is contributing to a two-year partnership project between the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and ourselves to improve fish passage at weirs, including Tadcaster weir and Flint Mill on the River Wharfe. Design work is underway and construction is expected to take place in 2018/19. The fish passes will benefit fish that migrate between the river and the sea, as well as river resident species, like barbel.
- We have successfully bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to progress our 'Developing the Natural Aire' project, in partnership with the Aire Rivers Trust. The project seeks to build fish passes on four weirs, the last major barriers to fish movement between the North Sea and Gargrave in the Yorkshire Dales.



The fish passes on the River Aire at Crown Point and Knottingley are now both open. The Crown Point fish pass was built as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme. The fish pass at Knottingley was a condition on the Environment Agency licence for the hydropower scheme on the weir.

- We have removed blocks from a weir on Harden Beck, a tributary of the River Aire, to improve fish passage and restore natural flows. Fish from the River Aire can now access a further 1.2 km of this spawning tributary. The project was a partnership between ourselves, the Aire Rivers Trust, the Wild Trout Trust and the landowner.
- This winter we will be stocking 1,500 juvenile barbel into the River Dearne. This will be the fifth year of our six-year stocking plan for the river. Earlier this year, we released 15,000 grayling fry into the upper River Wharfe.

Stillwaters

- This winter we will be carrying out surveys at Pontefract Park Lake, Wilton Park Lake (Batley), and Askern Lake in order to help their Local Authority owners make informed decisions about their ongoing management of their fisheries.
- Please contact us (03708 506 506) for advice about fishery management. We can advise over the phone, by letter, or on site, as required. In recent months we have advised on topics including fishery design and restoration, stocking, fish health, algae and weed control, access and erosion prevention.
- We have responded to numerous incidents of fish in distress and fish mortalities, including analysing samples of fish at our National Fish Health Laboratory when necessary. We work closely with our colleagues at the Fish Health Inspectorate when there is a suspicion of a notifiable disease, such as spring viraemia of carp (SVC) or koi herpes virus disease (KHV). Three Yorkshire fisheries have been designated for KHV in 2017; details are on the [.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) [website](#).
- **Please report fish in distress or suspected disease outbreaks to us using our free 24 hour incident hotline 0800 80 70 60.**

Non-native species



Unusually high numbers of non-native pink salmon have been caught this year, including this one from Driffeld Beck. There are no signs of a major impact on native fish stocks at this time. If you see non-native salmon please call us on 0800 80 70 60 or email [Jonathan Shelley](mailto:Jonathan.Shelley) with the date and location of the sighting. A photograph and sample of scales would also be useful. These fish have probably come from introduced populations in Russia or Scandinavia.



This summer, demon shrimp were caught for the first time in the River Rother. This invasive non-native species is already known to occur at sites in the River Ure, the Yorkshire Ouse, the Leeds & Liverpool canal, and on the New Junction and Stainforth and Keadby Canals. Please [Check, Clean, Dry](#) your gear between trips to the river.



Floating pennywort has made a return to Yorkshire's rivers and canals. This highly invasive weed can form a dense mat over still and slow flowing watercourses. The Yorkshire Floating Pennywort Forum will be redoubling efforts to treat it. If you see stands of pennywort in Yorkshire, please report it to the Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology team via 03708 506 506 or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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Enforcement

- **Please report pollution incidents, or suspected fisheries offences, to us using our free 24 hour incident hotline 0800 80 70 60.**
- Between April and the end of September, our fisheries enforcement officers questioned **3,083** anglers with **257** being reported for fisheries offences. Over the same period, **200** reports were phoned through to the 0800 80 70 60 hotline which related to possible fisheries offences. We have carried out several successful joint patrols with the Voluntary Bailiff Service and local police authorities.
- Over the weekend of 14 and 15 October, Fisheries Enforcement Officers carried out intensive patrolling of fisheries, visiting 33 waters checking 192 anglers. 19 offence reports were issued.
- Our teams recently collected a gill net illegally set off the coast at Robin Hood's Bay to catch salmon and trout. An illegal net was also recovered from the River Ure.
- Yorkshire Water was fined £600,000 for polluting a Staithe watercourse. The watercourse was discoloured and had a foul odour. Up to 100 dead fish were seen, and water quality tests revealed high levels of ammonia and low dissolved oxygen levels.



The Hol Beck in Leeds is a tributary of the River Aire, joining the main river in the centre of the city. Following reports of a white and oily substance, Environment Agency officers entered the culverted watercourse and located a likely discharge point. Dye testing was carried out to confirm the source. A discharge of contaminated site drainage was found and has now been stopped.

- In October, we received several public reports of oil visible and oil odour on the River Don at Templeborough, Rotherham. We confirmed a significant oil spill, obtained water samples for oil identification and inspected several businesses. No dead fish were observed. The source of the oil pollution was not traced. A targeted pollution prevention follow up is being planned in the next few weeks and we will be reviewing the water sample results when analysis has been completed.

Please contact us for more information on any subject covered in this newsletter. Phone us on 03708 506 506 (Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm) or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk. Please report incidents to our 24 hour Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60.

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