

NEWSLETTER

FISHERIES, BIODIVERSITY & GEOMORPHOLOGY

Winter 2014

SOLENT AND SOUTH DOWNS AREA

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter in which we celebrate some of our successes, particularly those delivered through working in partnership with others. We hope this report gives an insight into the range of activities we do and the fantastic partners we work with.

In the Solent and South Downs Area there are two Fisheries, Biodiversity & Geomorphology (FBG) Teams: The South Downs Team covers East and West Sussex, while the Solent Team covers the Isle of Wight, the Solent and most of the County of Hampshire.

Medmerry welcomes a new guest

The new habitat we created at Medmerry, Sussex, with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and other partners, has recently received a notable seal of approval. For the first time since 1987, Black Winged Stilts (more commonly found in Southern Europe) have bred successfully at two sites in the UK, one of these being Medmerry. This is only the third successful breeding ever in the UK. Charlie Smith, Biodiversity Technical Specialist said: "It is really exciting that a scheme designed to protect people and property has provided habitat for one of the rarest birds in Britain. Black-winged stilts are choosy about their breeding sites!" We created the new habitat for wildlife and in the process protected homes from flooding.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/news/370152-arrivals-from-the-dry-mediterranean-brighten-rainy-britain>



Black Winged Stilt, Medmerry Ivan Lang, RSPB

In conjunction with Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority we have carried out a survey of the fish community at Medmerry. Species found using the new habitat include: Golden-Grey & Thin-Lipped Mullet, Bass, Sand Smelt, Herring, Sand Goby, Corkwing Wrasse, Flounder, Plaice, Solenette, Stickleback, Worm Pipefish and Squid – not bad considering it's been open to the sea for just one year!

Seine Netting at Medmerry Kathryn Nelson Sussex IFCA





Juvenile Flounders Kathryn Nelson Sussex IFCA

Corkwing Wrasse Kathryn Nelson Sussex IFCA

Contact: Gareth.Williams@environment-agency.gov.uk or Damon.Block@environment-agency.gov.uk

Adur Restoration of Physical Habitat (ARPHA)

In partnership with the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART), the South Downs FBG Team have removed three weirs on the Upper Adur, near Henfield. OART commissioned a contractor to carry out the works resulting in a saving of over £160,000 when compared to previous quotes and all three structures were removed in a little over six weeks.

River continuity has been restored, dynamics of flow are more natural and the profile of the river will become more varied over time. This will benefit a wide range of biodiversity at different life stages, providing unimpeded access to 4.8km of river.



Tilting Weir, Twineham – before.....



.....and after

For further information about this project contact: Gareth.Williams@environment-agency.gov.uk

Enhancing the River Anton

This autumn we worked with the Wild Trout Trust, Test Valley Borough Council and Andover College to enhance a reach of the River Anton, in Andover. The work involved narrowing an overly-wide section of the river using woody debris. The work will increase water velocity, resulting in a cleaner bed substrate favoured by trout and chalkstream invertebrates. Coppicing some of the bankside trees will enable more light to reach the river, encouraging aquatic-plant growth and increasing in-channel biodiversity.

The project was an excellent opportunity for Environment Studies students from Andover College to gain practical experience in conservation and learn about their local river. And to learn more about the Environment Agency's work. The students were inspired to plan future projects, so watch this space.

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For more information about this project contact: Adam.Cave@environment-agency.gov.uk

Bicknell Pond Wels Catfish removal

We have worked closely with the Haslemere Angling Society and Natural England to improve management of Bicknell Pond, Shillinglee. The Pond is partially designated a SSSI for its wildlife value and we have helped to strike a balance between angling and nature at Bicknell Pond, which is managed by the Haslemere Angling Society. We have also been assisting the Club with a program of removal of non-native Wels Catfish, which were illegally introduced a number of years ago. The pond was drained down and netted and with agreement from Natural England, fish were transferred into the adjacent, larger, Shillinglee Lake to enhance angling opportunity.

Whilst drained, a thorough search was carried out of Bicknell Pond, to ensure there were no catfish left. The lake was then allowed to naturally refill, and restocking will be carried out, in agreement with Natural England. This will include the introduction of 1,000 Crucian Carp from our own Calverton Fish Farm.



Calverton Crucian



Netting, Bicknell Pond

For further information about this work contact:

Damon.Block@environment-agency.gov.uk

Keeping a track of Eel recruitment



We are keeping track of elvers as they head upstream on their epic migration. We have monitored the juvenile eels on the Wallington and have also recently installed an elver pass on the River Itchen, with a camera to track numbers arriving, to give a better understanding of eel populations in the local area. From May until the end of October the trap on the Wallington has caught 870 elvers on their upstream migration .

For more info please contact:

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4x4 drivers damage Monks Brook habitat

Eastleigh Police caught two individuals driving down the Monks Brook in 4-wheel-drive off-road vehicles. The Solent FBG Team were asked to advise on the potential damage this activity causes to wildlife in terms of disturbance, as well as to the geomorphological damage that it can cause to the river. If you look carefully in the photo you can still spot the tyre tracks down the mid-channel bar on the Monks Brook from the vehicles which are thought to have entered close to the Concorde Club, driving over two small weirs before exiting close to Junction 5 of the M27. Both drivers were given formal warnings by the Police, and risk having their vehicles seized if they cause any further driving offences anywhere in the UK.



For more info please contact:

Kerry.Sims@environment-agency.gov.uk

Arun & Rother Connections (ARC)

As a partner in a catchment-wide project which includes the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sussex Wildlife Trust, West Sussex County Council, Arun & Rother Rivers Trust amongst others, we have completed fish passage improvements to three weirs within the Arun & Rother catchment. The ARC Project has secured significant match-funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards river habitat improvements on the Upper Arun, which had previously been severely impacted by a pollution incident caused by the release of untreated sewage.

Get excited about the [#ARCproject](https://arcexplorer.org.uk/) app launch in January 2015. Sign up here for info <http://arcexplorer.org.uk/>

Three different solutions were applied at the weirs:

- The weir at Harsfold Farm on the River Kird was removed.
- A Larinier design fish pass was installed on the Arun weir near the A24, Horsham.
- A low cost baffle solution, as well as the installation of a new eel pass was employed at Hardham weir on the Western Rother, an important gauging weir for public water supply.

For further information about this project contact: Damon.Block@environment-agency.gov.uk or see <http://arunwesternstreams.org.uk/projects/arc> for more information about the wider project



Harsfold Farm Weir - before.....



.....and after

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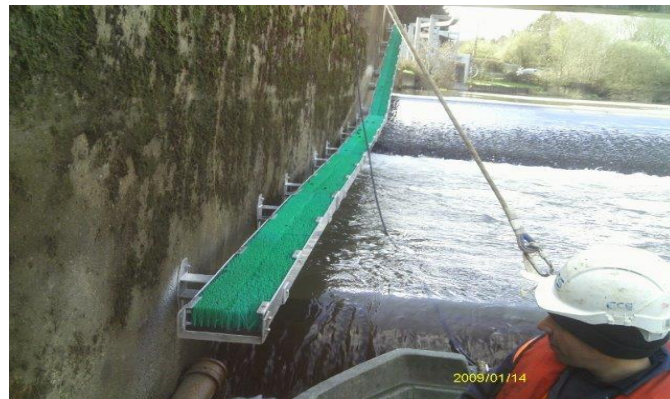
Arun Fish pass during construction



Works Complete



Low Cost Baffle during installation



Eel pass under construction

Don't Cheat on Fishing!

Targeted rod licence enforcement across Solent & South Downs Area proved unlucky for some. In the period June to September we successfully prosecuted 42 anglers for fishing without a licence. Fines totalled £10,225 with an average of £324 in fines and costs being awarded to each angler. A further 20 anglers were issued with a formal caution or warning letter.

Charles Bacchus, Fisheries Technical Specialist, says "We dedicate time and resources to tackling rod licence evasion, as well as wider fish-related crime. The revenue we receive through rod licence income funds some of the work presented in this Newsletter – work to improve fisheries, in particular wild stocks through enhancing habitats, and to facilitate better angling".

Make sure you've got your licence and remember to renew for next season. You can purchase your licence online at <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/when-you-need-a-licence>, over the phone 0344 800 5386 (call charges apply <https://www.gov.uk/call-charges>) or at a Post Office <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>



Officers checking anglers for their rod licence.

We enjoy meeting anglers, swapping stories, anecdotes and advice on the bankside.

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Bexhill Festival of the Sea

Officers from our South Downs FBG Team attended this extremely popular event (formerly Bexhill Sea Angling Festival) - one of the biggest and best festivals of the sea and sea angling in the UK.

As well as showcasing sea angling in the south of England, we were on hand to offer advice to those who also wanted to find out about its freshwater cousin. Our Brian Smart demonstrated the art of fly fishing to many of the 100,000 plus visitors over the two day festival and how this method can be effectively used in both salt and freshwater.

We supported the angling competitions and introduction sessions being held at Wylands Angling Centre near Battle that formed part of this great event.



For more information please contact: Brian.Smart@environment-agency.gov.uk

De-culverting of a Lymington River tributary

The owner of a tributary of the Lymington River, carried out “improvements” to his access track last year, but within a few days of the culverts being put in place they were already blocked by leaf debris. Consequently flows were reduced. We judged the culverting of this watercourse could significantly impede sea trout passage during their annual migration upstream to spawn.

As a ‘minor’ watercourse, responsibility for regulation and maintenance falls to Hampshire County Council. The Council were receptive to our concerns and through liaison with the landowner, the unpermitted culvert was removed and the gravel track re-instated, complete with ford. Migratory fish are now unimpeded.

We were alerted to this incident by a member of the public which underlines how we rely upon the public to inform us of their concerns and observations.

For further information contact: Paul.Newman@environment-agency.gov.uk



Illegal culvert and



.....the restored river crossing

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Southampton Water Approach Channel Dredge

During 2014 Associated British Ports (ABP) undertook substantial dredging works in Southampton Water at a cost of approximately £40M. This work was needed to maintain access for larger modern vessels to the port of Southampton, which supports around 15,000 jobs locally and generates ca. £1Bn for the UK economy. The project has been planned for many years, with the risks to migratory fish and shellfish a primary concern for the Environment Agency. The magnitude of the dredge meant that it was not possible to carry out the works exclusively within the normal time “window” of low risk to migratory fish and shellfish.

Given our concerns for potential impacts on water quality, ABP offered to employ an adaptive management approach to ensure water quality impacts were controlled. Nine continuous water quality monitoring buoys were strategically placed throughout Southampton Water in order to indicate if water quality standards were maintained during the work. Real-time data was relayed from these buoys to a website that both the Agency and ABP had access to. The installation and maintenance of the buoys was the responsibility of the dredging contractor and cost around £1.1M. Where water quality fell to a ‘caution’ threshold, set by the Agency, an automatic alarm alerted the dredging contractor to change practice or move location.

Dredging was scheduled to generally work from the head of Southampton Docks, southwards to the seaward extent. This schedule allowed much of the River Test works to be accomplished by the end of May, before most adult salmon would have arrived in the estuary from the sea. Over-spilling of sediment was tightly controlled. Over the peak migration period in the summer, most of the dredging works were farther seaward in Southampton Water where the estuary is less confined.

During the entire project there were no alarms triggered due to water quality falling below the required thresholds for either migratory fish or shellfish. Local salmon catches have been near normal, to above normal this year. The general picture across England is one of a below-average catch year. Where future dredging programmes cannot be completed over winter we will consider these adaptive management approaches.

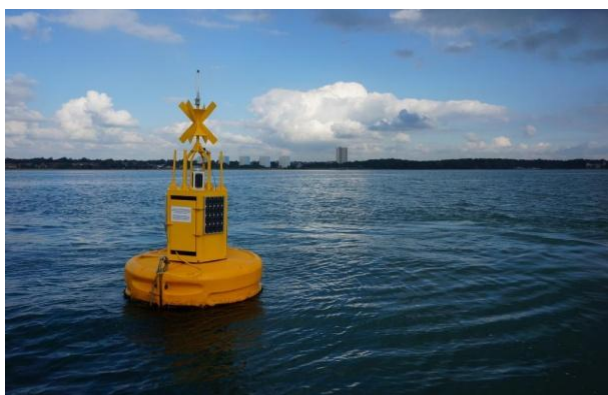


ABP planned their adaptive management strategy in close consultation with the Agency to ensure risks to migratory fish were avoided.

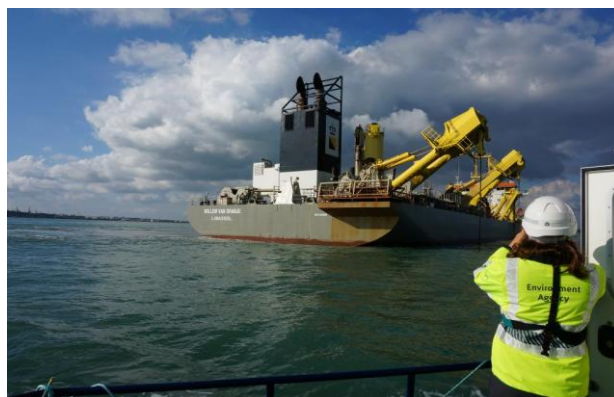
Further information is available from:

Adrian.Fewings@environment-agency.gov.uk

The view from the dredger pilot's seat. An expert job to minimise environmental risks



One of the monitoring buoys in Southampton Water



A close-up view of the dredger in situ.

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Candover River Restoration

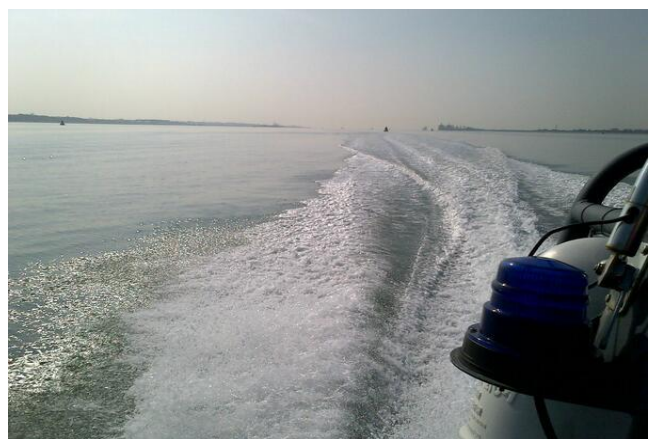
The Solent FBG Team has restored a 280m section of chalk stream south of Abbotstone Road on the Candover, in the upper Itchen catchment. The work has seen the creation of four pools, four spawning riffles, and pinch-points to restore the reach back to a more typical width with more complex and varied in-stream physical features. The stretch of river had become over-widened following excessive cattle poaching. Our work will ensure that clean areas of gravel are created for fish to spawn. The final stages of the project involved temporary fencing to ensure more controlled grazing access and creation of refugia for native crayfish. The work forms part of the Candover Management Plan to restore the river to ensure it is more suitable for trout fry, parr and adults as the reach is part of a Wild Fisheries Protection Zone.

For more information contact: Richard.Redsull@environment-agency.gov.uk



Joint patrols with the Sussex and Southern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities

Our working relationship with the Sussex and Southern IFCAs remains mutually beneficial. Exchanging intelligence about illegal fishing along our coast and estuaries helps us all tackle wildlife-crime in an efficient and effective way. The IFCA Officers have a wealth of practical law enforcement experience which we can benefit from. Neil Richardson, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Southern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority says of the arrangement “Joint working between the organisations is now routinely carried out and is addressing common compliance issues: in so doing, the Agency is delivering a more effective and efficient service. This is now working both ways with mutual benefits and a better understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities which supports this effective delivery at the coast.”



We confiscated this illegally-set net on a night patrol – poachers aiming for sea trout & salmon

For information about our work with the IFCAs contact: Kerry.Sims@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Topmouth Gudgeon Eradication at Crampmoor Fish Farm, Romsey

This winter we have carried out a programme of work to eradicate Topmouth Gudgeon, a species of non-native fish, from a disused fish-farm near Romsey. This followed several months of preparation: clearing scrub; treating *Crassula* an invasive non-native plant; and making the site safe.

Topmouth Gudgeon present a significant environmental risk to native wildlife and habitats - they are highly invasive and are able to out-compete our native wildlife for food and habitat and have the potential to spread novel parasites and disease. They are DEFRA's number one priority on their 'hit-list' of non-native species. 16 Fisheries Officers from across the Agency, who make up the Non-Native Virtual Eradication Team with their specialist skills, convened at the site to carry out treatment of 40 ponds. The ponds were sprayed with Rotenone, a naturally derived piscicide which only impacts on fish. No native fish remained within the site before the treatment started. The operation will be concluded in early 2015, and is the most complex site that has been treated in the UK to date.

This eradication is part of a programme to remove Topmouth Gudgeon from the UK, with the last sites that remain mostly located in Hampshire. We will be treating those sites next year.

For more information please contact: Paul.Newman@environment-agency.gov.uk



Tighter standards will drive improvements to the Test and Itchen

Common Standards Monitoring targets for water quality and water resources for the Test and Itchen Sites of Special Scientific Interests (SSSIs) have been revised by Defra Chief Scientist, but require local analysis and agreement between the Agency and Natural England to create bespoke sub-targets, that apply locally, over and above WFD standards. These proposed targets are tighter than ever before and will govern our work across the board, including regulatory decisions as well as operations, plans and strategies. Developing bespoke T&I-specific targets has involved numerous Agency staff and data input.

The public is invited to comment on the draft, proposed new in-river water quality standards and flow standards for the River Itchen, as part of the current public consultation on the South East River Basin Management Plan. Have your say on these draft documents

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/update-to-the-draft-river-basin-management-plans

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-flood-risk-management-plans

For more information contact: Kerry.Sims@environment-agency.gov.uk

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#GoFishing!

A personal perspective from Brian Smart, our Angling Development Officer

I am Brian Smart and I have fished for over 60 years. I have worked for the Environment Agency and before that the National Rivers Authority, for 22 years and have been the Angling Development Officer in the Solent and South Downs Area for the last five years.

As a qualified Angling coach for 12 years I have introduced many people to the sport for the first time: my target last year was 3000 young people, and my total coached to date exceeds 20,000. These are people, young and old, from all walks of life and all backgrounds including young offenders, under-privileged sectors of society, and at least three Lords of the Realm, all trying a new sport and for many getting hooked for life. To help promote this sport I have demonstrated at shows and events all over the UK and appeared on TV and radio programmes: anything to spread the word!

But the job I do is not about me, it is all about the people I am introducing to the sport and to this new world of big lakes & tiny streams, of rising fish, dragonflies and kingfishers, otters & cuckoos and all that fresh air, the list is endless. And the benefits to people are positive, albeit incalculable.

To meet my targets I work closely with my Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology Team colleagues and numerous partners including the Angling Trust, Salmon & Trout Association, Schools, Local Authorities, Angling Clubs & Commercial Fisheries to name a few. In fact I work with anyone who is seeking help or guidance to start fishing.

Although I introduce and teach a lot of adults I have always believed that the future of our sport lies with our younger people and helping them to understand how the water environment works and to value it for people and wildlife. For this reason I actively encourage people to become coaches & champions of the sport: sometimes we adults also need a little help to reach our full potential!

For me, seeing the pleasure that anyone, young or old, gets from catching their first fish and carefully releasing it, is priceless, as for many this will have been the first time that they have seen a live wild fish close-up. The whole experience can have long-term effects on the way they view their environment.

The social benefits of Angling are now well known but some little things that I have witnessed have been very moving. Like the nine year old boy from a south coast seaside town who told me that he had never seen the sea, fishing for him was a very different experience and with the help of his Carer he has become a regular angler.

Recently, a man in his 70s and his wife came to an event in Hampshire. She told me that he now suffered from severe memory loss but had enjoyed fishing some years before. She wanted to spend time with him in the fresh air and with a little help he was soon able to catch fish again. To his wife's joy he started recalling fishing trips from his past. I felt quite humbled.

So, Angling has given me a lot of pleasure over the years and I feel privileged to be doing a job that helps others to get the same enjoyment and benefits.



For more information please contact: Brian.Smart@environment-agency.gov.uk

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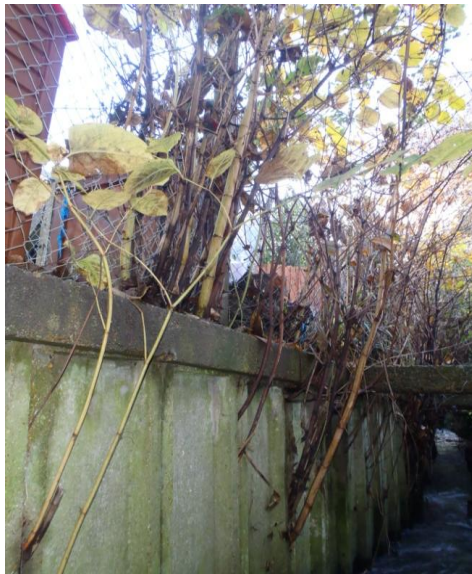
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Tackling Japanese Knotweed on the Isle of Wight

A site visit with a Housing Association Officer in Newport, Isle of Wight, for a relatively straightforward knotweed problem lead to the discovery of a more serious and immediate concern.

The knotweed had pushed up through minor cracks in the retaining wall which, over time, would weaken the defence. Working with our Asset Performance Team colleagues, we were able to advise the landowner of the seriousness of the situation and a knotweed management strategy has now been put in place.



Knotweed growing through joints in concrete retaining wall on Lukely Brook, IoW



Further information: Claire.Hamilton@environment-agency.gov.uk

Weir Today, Gone Tomorrow

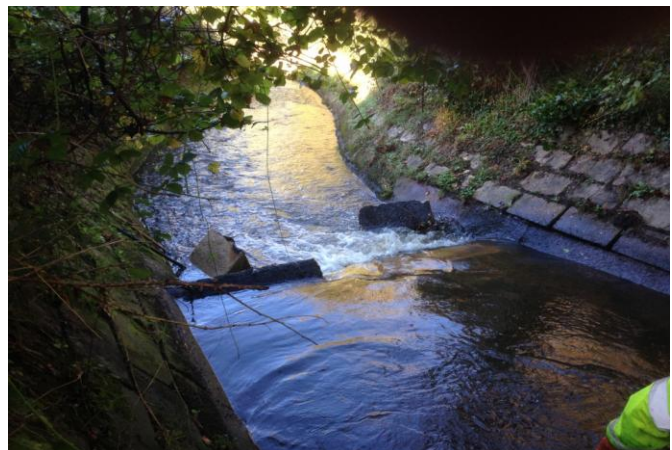
Our Solent Fish Pass Project has continued to gather momentum this autumn, culminating with the removal of two weirs on the Tadburn Lake, an urban stream in Romsey. These weirs were barriers to fish and eels, impeding access to a large proportion of the catchment.

The works included the installation of a temporary barrier in the watercourse to divert flows past the activity area and allow for safe working conditions.

Once the weirs were removed a new bed was laid and finished with cobbles and gravel.



The weir in-situ and.....



.....partly removed

Information about this project: Dan.Ross@environment-agency.gov.uk

Information about the Solent Fish Pass Programme: Kerry.Sims@environment-agency.gov.uk

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We love working with Sparsholt College!

This year we've invited Sparsholt College students to join us of some of our fish monitoring work. This provides valuable experience for students studying a range of interesting courses, in what we do and how we work, fish survey techniques and fish identification. We enjoy working with Sparsholt College on a range of activities, including de-stocking lakes, river restoration and angling awareness.



Welcome our new Hermitage Stream Restoration Project Development Officer

We are supporting Groundwork South (@GroundwrkSolent) to employ a Hermitage Stream Restoration Project Development Officer.

Emma Kemp is based at Groundwork South Gosport, and has set about building partnerships and securing funding to enable this exciting project in Havant to go ahead. Once delivered, this will be one of the largest urban river restoration projects along the South Coast, making a considerable contribution towards meeting WFD objective and creating a better place for people and wildlife.

In the meantime, we have recently replaced the old (bullet-ridden!) signage in Havant, celebrating the green infrastructure provided by the Hermitage Stream. Our river restoration project offers amazing ecosystem services benefits for people and wildlife.



For further information contact: Louise.Forder@environment-agency.gov.uk

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A surge in eel-pass installations across East and West Sussex this year

We have installed four new eel passes in East and West Sussex this year. West Sussex County Council installed a pass at Burton Mill Pond a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve in order to comply with the Eel Regulations, 2009. The South Downs FBG Team worked closely with the Council to ease passage for this protected species over a formidable obstruction to migration. Elvers migrate upstream from Spring to Autumn looking for water bodies like Burton Mill Pond which provide an abundance of shelter and food. Adult eels will eventually mature into silver eels which will then migrate back to the Sargasso Sea to spawn and complete their life cycle.



Other sites to benefit from the technical knowledge and expertise of the South Downs FBG Team were Clappers and Redbridge weirs on the Bevern Stream, in the Ouse catchment, and Pallingham Weir on the Arun. Clappers and Redbridge were installed in partnership with the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART) opening up 3.6km of river habitat and Pallingham weir was one of a few high priority structures which needed a pass to again comply with the Eel Regs. All of these sites were installed using our expert Operations Delivery Team colleagues.

Clappers Weir includes a trap which will be monitored by volunteers from OART and members of the local public. The data from this site will complement our other four monitoring traps across Sussex which have recorded 13,640 elvers this year.



For further information contact: Gareth.Williams@environment-agency.gov.uk

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25-years and counting!

This autumn Adrian Fewings celebrated his 25 year service milestone working for the Environment Agency and its predecessor, the National Rivers Authority. Adrian is one of our national experts in salmon ecology and risks to salmon migration, especially from underwater acoustic pressures (i.e. piling), fish passage and fish passes, and hydropower schemes.



In September, SSD Area hosted Sir Philip Dilley, our newly appointed Chairman of the Environment Agency. We introduced Sir Philip to the River Test, source to sea, discussing a range of pressures including diffuse pollution, Phosphates and Nitrates in groundwater, illegal fishing, historical damage from dredging and water control structures, development such as off-shore wind farms, port development and hydropower, and abstraction. Here is our Adrian Fewings, Fisheries Technical Specialist, briefing Sir Philip at Southern Water's Testwood abstraction point.

Adrian pioneered our salmon counting capabilities in Hampshire, 25 years ago. The counters are still going and the dataset informs our own operations and priorities as well as form the basis of our advice and position on key threats to salmon, including increased abstraction and development. Well done Adrian!

We are reviewing Hampshire's Fish Farms

Our Fish Farm and Watercress Review Project is off to a flying start with a series of visits to a number of Hampshire's Fish Farms and a Watercress farm completed this autumn. The visits have involved joint working between several Environment Agency Teams.

The initial visits have already highlighted a number of sites on the Test and Itchen where operations do not meet our regulatory requirements, with missing discharge permits; and changes needed to abstraction licences where operations on the ground don't accurately reflect what is stated in licences. Many of the fish-farms have inadequate screens, which are needed to protect migratory salmon and trout smolts as they head out to sea, or for silver eels (adult eels which head downstream to return to the Sargasso Sea at this time of year to complete their lifecycle).

Resolving these issues will increase environmental protection for the rivers and wildlife where the sites are located. We will visit other fish farms on the Meon and West Sussex next year.

For more information contact: Kerry.Sims@environment-agency.gov.uk



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Test and Itchen River Restoration Strategy 2014 update

Thanks to the support and enthusiasm of local land and river-owners, we have completed seven collaborative projects this year: five on the Test and two on the Itchen. Each project is being 50/50 funded by the Environment Agency/Natural England, and the land owners.

All the works have been designed to improve the status of the SSSI and improve connectivity with the flood plain and so potentially provide increased flood storage while still taking into account that these are valuable fisheries. A mixture of techniques has been used to improve previously poor stretches of rivers. Long stretches of steel and wood piling have been removed at three locations and the bank re-profiled to provide habitat and improve connectivity with the flood plain. Three islands have been built on the Itchen in an historically over wide and dredged section. Over two km of river will have been improved by the use of woody debris, the creation of meanders, tree removal, re-profiling of banks and structure removal. One structure is also being altered to improve fish passage and upstream habitat.



Images from 4 of the 7 restoration sites: 1km of river restored using locally-won timber and woody debris; piling being removed; structure to be improved for fish passage; one of three new islands being built in over wide, historically dredged section of the Itchen at Twyford.



All the above works have had valuable technical input from colleagues in many Environment Agency Teams. We have also worked collaboratively with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust on one of the Itchen projects and continue to work with the National Trust and Southampton University surveying bed profiles on a 1km section of the Test with a view to future restoration.



Before.....



....and after

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“before” and “after” shots from works carried out in the middle Test in 2013.

For more details contact Heb Leman Heb.Leman@environment-agency.gov.uk

Helping local Clubs with their stocking levels

We have been working with local angling clubs to lend a helping-hand to stock fish at a number of still water fisheries. Small numbers of Crucian Carp from our Calverton Fish Farm have been stocked into Foxlease, Hiltingbury Lake and Foxcotte Lake in Hampshire, and Hale Manor on the Isle of Wight. We also restocked Borde Hill Fishery, West Sussex with Crucian Carp, Tench and Bream, after a slurry pollution event damaged stocks earlier this year.

These sites have been specifically supported using Rod Licence money. At Foxlease and Hiltingbury, we are replacing the existing stocks with native species. At Hale Manor, the trout stocks are being replaced with coarse fish more suitable for the water quality and habitat present at the water.

We have also de-stocked some local waters, including Broadlands Lake, to make them more resilient to natural pressures, including high summer water temperatures.



For more information please contact :
Dave.Hunter@environment-agency.gov.uk

River Avon's Royal Otter

This autumn we have collected several dead otters, the most recent being reported to us by an employee of Network Rail. That otter was not the first to be killed on the railway line in Southampton.

The Environment Agency send dead otters to the Cardiff University Otter Project ([@Otter_Project](#)), which runs a long-term environmental surveillance scheme, using otters found dead to investigate contaminants, disease, and population biology across the UK.

The Otter Project has received 37 otters from Hampshire since 2007, 15 females and 22 males. 10 of the individuals have been sub-adults and the rest adult, no juveniles have been received. In general, the otters have been in good condition prior to death, with only one otter appearing emaciated. The majority of the individuals (78%) were involved in a road traffic accidents resulting in death, other causes of death include infection and in two cases electrocution.

customer service line
03708 506 506

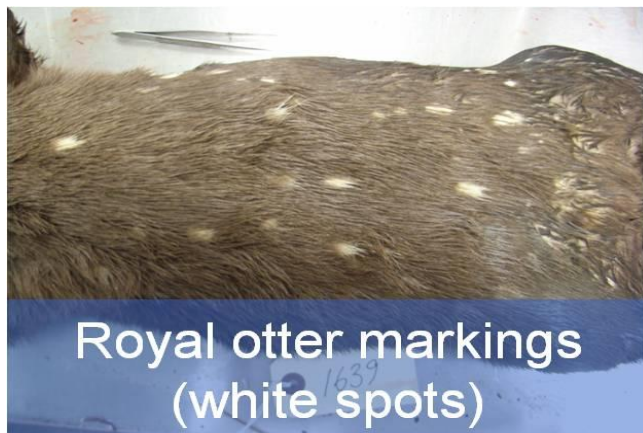
incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0345 988 1188
0845 988 1188

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Otter No.2420 was found in the Hampshire Avon catchment, near Ringwood on the A338 : river levels were higher than normal at the time. The otter had royal otter markings, which means that the pelt had white spots on its dorsal side, a few on the ventral and several on the tail.

Royal otter markings are unusual and have only occurred in about 3% of the otters handled by Cardiff University since the project started in 1992. The reason for the markings is not fully understood, but some research suggests that markings in mustelids are random variations within a population, controlled by deletions in a certain gene.



To find out more about the work at Cardiff check out their website <http://www.otterproject.cf.ac.uk/>

Found a dead otter in England? Please telephone 03708 506506 (Environment Agency)

Found a dead otter in Wales? Please telephone 0800 807060 (Natural Resources Wales)

Found a dead otter in Scotland? Please telephone 01471 822487 (International Otter Survival Fund)

Research and advancing science

Look out in our next Newsletter for a summary of our collaboration with local Universities and Colleges. Over the years we have enjoyed a close working relationship with research institutions across the UK, notably local colleges and Universities. Together we have carried out a range of fascinating research that has helped to shape our work and informed our decisions. Many of the students we have supported have gone onto great things, even to work for the Environment Agency!

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