



Annual Fisheries Report 2017 to 2018

Kent and South London

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment. We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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Foreword

In each of our 14 areas we carry out a wide range of work in order to protect and improve fisheries. Below are some examples of what has been happening in the Kent and South London (KSL) Area, much of which benefits fisheries from funding from both fishing licence fees and other sources. For a wider view of the work we do across the country for fisheries please see the national Annual Fisheries Report.

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1. Fishing licence checks and prosecutions

During the 2017 to 2018 financial year (the last complete year of data) a total of 64,702 fishing licence checks were carried out by our fisheries enforcement staff across the country. Our checks show us that evasion was relatively low with a national average of 3.97%. Below are details from KSL:



106,811 rod
licences sold



£2,190,980.75
income generated from
rod licence sales



6008 rod
licences checked



192 successful
prosecutions



£27,806
fines and costs
imposed

2. Illegal fishing

Illegal fishing remains a threat to game and coarse fish stocks in England and the fisheries they support. The Environment Agency uses a combination of covert and overt patrols to deter and detect poachers, as well as responding to reports of illegal fishing where there is a credible threat to fish stocks and where we have a realistic chance of apprehending the alleged offenders. We cannot respond to every report of illegal fishing so we must prioritise where we focus our efforts. For KSL:

201 illegal fishing incidents
were reported to our incident
hotline (0800 80 70 60)



Fishing licence checks and prosecutions

In KSL over 6,000 fishing licence checks were carried out on rivers, canals and stillwaters through a 1000 separate bailiff visits. The evasion rate was relatively low at just over 3% with 191 offence reports issued

On patrol on the River Medway with an officer from the Angling Trust's Volunteer Bailiff Scheme (VBS). KLS is one of the first areas in the country to run the VBS2 pilot where VBS officers are now trained to help check rod licences and help achieve our annual target



Partnership



Joint fishery enforcement familiarisation patrol with EA, Kent Police and the Angling Trust VBS in the Tonbridge, Kent area.

Working in partnership to fight Illegal Fishing

After receiving several calls from concerned members of the public regarding possible illegal fishing, stealing of fish and traps being set from moored boats, we undertook several boat based enforcement patrols. These were joint efforts including staff from fisheries, navigation and Kent Police Marine Unit.

The result was several offence reports being issued for unlicensed fishing and illegal traps being seized, as well as meeting plenty of anglers fishing legally and enjoying good sport.

Boat patrol on River Medway through Maidstone – joint patrol, EA fisheries, navigation and Kent Police Marine Unit.

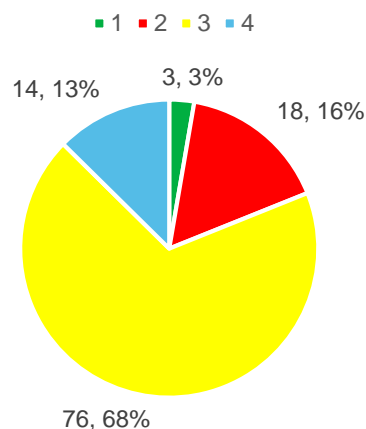


3. Incident management

Responding to fish kills and other environmental incidents is a vitally important part of what we do. We respond to thousands of substantiated incidents annually. Members of the public report incidents through our Incident Hotline (0800 80 70 60) and we are able to respond 365 days a year and on any day, at any time, providing an effective and proportionate response.

All incidents are categorised according to potential and actual impact on the environment and the impact on our resources. We can then break this figure down into categories of incident as shown below. Category 1 is the most serious and Category 4 is a reported incident with no impact.

Kent and South London Incident Management Categories



Rescued trout

30 brown trout were rescued but several others died on the River Dour due to low/no flows caused by prolonged dry weather. The Dour regularly suffers from this and we have undertaken several fish rescues over the last few years.



Picture taken on arrival by one of our officers

Pollution

Accidental discharge of sewage from a sewage treatment work's storm tanks resulted in over 2000 fish dying in the Gatwick Stream and River Mole near Gatwick. Amongst them were specimen barbel, perch and trout. Over 3km of the Gatwick Stream and 1.5km of the River Mole were seriously impacted.

This resulted in significant deployment of EA staff and equipment – FBG (Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology) & Land & Water officers worked tirelessly throughout the night counting and removing dead fish and attempting to save remaining live fish. The watercourses suffered such large numbers of dead fish, that they required subsequent restocking with fish reared at the EA's Calverton Fish Farm.



Carcass count (above) of specimen barbel, perch and other coarse fish at River Mole near Gatwick

4. Fisheries improvements

The boxes below highlight some of the projects we have delivered. This is followed by a summary table below listing many of our environmental improvement projects that have helped to deliver benefits to fisheries; many in conjunction with our partners. We have included the time of our fisheries officers in the funding considerations for the projects as their posts are funded by fishing licence income. Considerable amounts of their time and expertise has been provided for the projects. Many projects have also received funding from Government or from other parts of the Environment Agency e.g. Flood Defence, the Environment Programme or Water Framework Directive budgets. Where contributions from fishing licence income have been included, this has been noted.

£51,577	+	£48,000	=	£99,577
EA Funding		Match Funding		Fisheries Improvements

In 2017 to 2018 KSL installed 7 fish passes and opened up 7km of habitat or spawning ground for fish.

Scarletts Lake improvement project

Working in partnership with Bromley & District Angling Society (BDAS) to improve one of their stillwater fisheries.

Scarletts Lake in Kent is a popular mixed fishery of 4 acres owned entirely by BDAS. Silt carried in by the Kent Water meant that over half of the lake was less than 600mm deep. This was causing poor water quality, stressed fish and less angling opportunities. The aim of the project was to remove around 6 to 7,000 cubic metres of silt, which was utilised for bank and island repairs. This resulted in a much greater depth to the lake, creation of better habitat which is more resilient to climatic conditions, and in time improvement to fish stocks and angling. A silt trap was also dug, slowing the process of future siltation.

Funding for the project came from EA FIP– nearly £8,000 (£7455 plus £410 staff time) with the club providing over £2,500 in money and members time.



Silt trap at Scarletts Lake, Kent

Project Title	Outcome or benefit	Partners	EA Funding (£)	Match funding (£)	Total Cost (£)
Scarletts Lake Desilt	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Bromley & District Angling Society	£7,866	£2,600	£10,466
River Medway Fordcombe Improvements	Improved habitat for juvenile and spawning fish – better fish stocks – better fishing.	Royal Tunbridge Wells Angling Society	£5,411	£7,000	£12,411
MESAC Gravel Pits Improvements	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Maidstone Ex Servicemans Angling Club	£10,411	£17,000	£27,411

Bennetts Lake Improvements	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Dartford & District Angling Preservation Society	£3,672	£2,000	£5,672
Brooks Way Lake Diffuse Pollution	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Brooks Way Fishery	£2,822	£2,000	£4,822
Gatwick Stream Habitat Improvements	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Horley Piscatorial Society	£5,572	£4,000	£9,572
Montreal Park Restoration	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Holmesdale Angling & Conservation Society	£8,822	£5,700	£14,522
Thameside Works Angling Preservation Society floating island installation	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Thameside Works Angling Preservation Society	£2,722	£2,000	£4,722
Darent Fly Fishers river restoration project	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	Darent Fly Fishers	£1,900	£2,450	£4,350
The Dell (Woolwich) marginal habitat improvement project	Improved habitat for fish – better fish stocks – better fishing	The Dell Angling Club	£2,380	£3,250	£5,630
Total			£51,577	£48,000	£99,577

5. Monitoring

Monitoring of all fish species is vital to our assessment of the condition of the environment. Surveys of fish populations, including coarse fish, are used to assess the status of stocks and contribute to the overall assessment of ecological status of a water body. In KSL:

73 Waterbodies
assessed for
fish 2016/17

29% of waterbodies
assessed were at
good status or above
for fish

This survey is conducted as part of a triennial report. The next survey results will be published later in 2019.

You can look at our [Catchment Data Explorer](#) for more information.



Fish monitoring survey on River Len in Kent.

46 electric fishing surveys

4 hydro acoustic surveys (1x Great Stour, 3x Medway)

2 fry surveys (Medway)

26 TRAC (transitional and coastal waters) surveys on Medway and Thames, some carried out in partnership with officers from Kent & Essex Inshore Conservation Authority.



Above are staff from EA and South East Rivers Trust (SERT) tagging fish in order to monitor how successful fish pass is that was installed on the Hogsmill River, London.

The gauging station is of non-standard design (steep at 1:3.3). EA funded Low Cost Baffles (LCB) were fitted to the weir face to help fish passage. The project was delivered in partnership with SERT. Collaborative work was carried out with Durham University and SERT to monitor the effectiveness of the baffles. Our involvement included consultation during planning of the project, electric fishing to capture 2 fish samples, collection and stocking of fish from Calverton fish farm and ensuring permissions and authorisations were in place to carry out the work. This was a challenging project due to the location of the site in the middle of Kingston-Upon-Thames.

Although yet to be published, early indications are showing that the weir is now passable by a variety of coarse fish species, although the project revealed limitations which will inform future design at similar structures.

Our fish count data is now available [online here](#)

For information on what we are doing across the rest of the country read our other Area reports.

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