



Annual Fisheries Report 2017 to 2018

Yorkshire

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 Yorkshire 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 Yorkshire:



108,979 rod
licences sold



£2,316,627.00
income generated from
rod licence sales



5,970 rod
licences checked



287 successful
prosecutions



£34,494
fines and costs
imposed

It is an offence to fish without a licence

Whilst on patrol one of our officers approached an angler to check his fishing licence. The angler was fishing without a licence and he also refused to state his correct name and address which is a further offence. This angler was stopped twice on 2 separate occasions and committed the same offences at both times. Our officer conducted an investigation and they were able to identify the anglers name and address. We were able to serve this offender with court papers and both incidents and all 4 offences were heard at Hull and Holderness Magistrates Court. The offender was found guilty of all 4 offences and ordered to pay a total penalty of £597.47.



Officer on patrol

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 Yorkshire:

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



Illegal gill nets

A Whitby man was found to be illegally fishing for salmon and sea trout with gill nets, our officers further discovered he was in possession of illegally removed fish. It is an offence to fish in any inland water with a gill net. His prosecution was heard by Scarborough Magistrates court and he was found guilty of fishing illegally for salmon and sea trout. He was sentenced with a 12-month community order and instructed to pay £2,985 in legal costs. He also received a seizure notice for 23 sea trout, 2 salmon, 2 gill nets and various other fishing equipment.



Officer preparing for an enforcement patrol

Illegally set nets

Our officers collected a gill net that had been illegally set off the coast at Robin Hood's Bay. An illegal net was also recovered from the River Ure. Both nets had been left with the intention of illegally catching salmon and sea trout.



Gill Nets

Hitting the beach

We carried out a number of beach patrols to deter illegal fishing for salmon and sea trout. As part of our beach patrols we also inspect legally set fishing equipment to ensure it is compliant with licence conditions. We further undertook intelligence led covert surveillance operations. Over the summer period our officers worked in partnership with the North East Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) to monitor coastal fisheries operating joint boat and shore patrols.



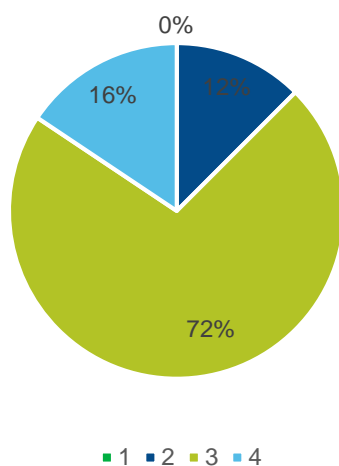
Beach patrol

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

Yorkshire incident management categories



£600,000 fine

Our officers were called to an incident of pollution at Staithes watercourse. Our officers discover the pollution had killed up to 100 fish. The pollution had discoloured the water and had a foul odour. After an investigation the water quality tests revealed high levels of ammonia and low dissolved oxygen levels. Yorkshire Water were fined £600,000.



Polluted watercourse

Rescue netting with spectators

Our fisheries officers attended Burnby Hall Water Gardens. This fishery was, undergoing essential maintenance work to a pond. The water level was too high and this needed to be reduced. This work had caused the fish to become distressed and they needed to be urgently moved. Our officers conducted a netting exercise and successfully rescued a large quantity of fish. They were moved to a safer deeper water area. Amongst the rescued fish were large carp, rudd and roach. Approximately 700lb (318 kg) of fish were rescued. The rescue interested a large number of visitors to the Gardens who watched and asked questions regarding our work as the distressed fish were being rescued.



Fish Netting

Flyfishers

We were contacted by Methley Flyfishers during a fish mortality incident. This incident resulted in the loss of over 150 rainbow trout from their gravel pit trout fishery. The club told us that they had found gills of the fish were broken and peeling away.

We visited the fishery and collected a sample of rainbow trout by using electric fishing. These fish were then sent to our National Fish Health Laboratory for a closer inspection and health check.

The sample of rainbow trout were found to be hosting a heavy infections of a parasitic crustacean called *Ergasilus sieboldi* and this was likely to have been the primary cause of the mass fish kill. The club has now employed the services of a fisheries consultant to advise on restocking and fishery management at all their venues.



Infected rainbow trout

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. The Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP) which is funded from rod licence income has been used to help deliver a number of schemes and 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.

£663,980 + £518,140 = £1,142,120

EA Funding

Match Funding

Fisheries Improvements

In 2017 to 2018 Yorkshire installed 3 fish passes, 6 easements and opened up 27 km of habitat or spawning ground for fish.

Fish on the move

Two new fish passes have been constructed on the River Aire they form part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme. This is a collaborative project between the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council. As part of the scheme, three existing weirs were replaced with the first moveable weirs in the UK.

The first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme is a major milestone as all three moveable weir gates have now been successfully put in place at Knostrop Weir on the River Aire.

Costing in the region of £50million, the scheme is being led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency.

The final stages of the work at Knostrop included the removal of the remaining cofferdam ahead of it becoming a fully operational flood defence.

Three gates have been constructed as part of an innovative approach using moveable weirs, which can be lowered in flood conditions to reduce river levels and the threat of flooding. This is the first time that moveable weirs are being used in the UK for a flood defence.

The weirs can be lowered, and raised, by deflating and inflating 'bladders' fabricated from a bullet proof neoprene material under each gate, which act like giant air filled pillows.

The first of the weir gates at Knostrop Weir which was installed to allow a dry working area in the river for the construction of the weir gate, this was flooded with water and the sheet piles then removed.

New fish and eel passes were constructed at Knostrop. The structures consist of a number of shallow trays which the fish and eels can swim and jump up, allowing them to migrate upstream. The previous stone weir was approximately three metres high and a barrier to fish and eels moving up the River Aire.

Moveable weirs and fish and eel passes were also constructed further upstream at Crown Point in the city centre, where the installation of the first of two weir gates has been completed. Reinforced concrete works were finished which meant the bladders and gates could be fixed in place prior to testing.

The gate has been installed and tested, the cofferdam has been flooded and the sheet piles are being removed to allow for work to begin on the final weir gate adjacent to Fearn's Island.

The Leader of Leeds City Council, Cllr Judith Blake, visited both sites to see first-hand how the weirs will be reducing the risk of flooding to the city.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

It was fascinating to see the new flood scheme up close and especially to see the amazing technology and engineering involved in putting these moveable weirs in place to control the flow of the River Aire.

It is such a simple idea but it is fantastic to see Leeds at the cutting-edge of the field using the latest technology in this way.

The value of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme in terms of the reassurance it will offer residents and businesses over the coming years and decades is incalculable, we continue to make the strongest possible case for further significant measures to help protect all our communities threatened by flood-risk across the city as soon as possible. Further information of the scheme can be found at www.leeds.gov.uk/fas.



Leeds flood alleviation scheme

Working in partnership

Working in partnership with the Wild Trout Trust, the Aire Rivers Trust and the local council we installed a baulk fish easement. On the short but steep-faced bridge culvert which is at Eastburn Beck, Lumb Mill near Glusburn. This work means that trout downstream now have improved access to 12 km of potential habitat. This will lead to improved ecological resilience in the beck and furthers work already completed through earlier rounds of the Fisheries Improvement Programme, along with investment from Green Port Hull, which has already improved fish passage on nine downstream weirs.



Baffles, Hebble Brook

Yorkshire Water Ltd installed a series of baffles on the Hebble Brook at Salterhebble, Halifax. The stream is over widened, and has an artificial bed. Before the baffles were fitted the water was very shallow and fast flowing, preventing fish from colonising or moving through. The baffles alter the flow of water providing a deeper water route and areas for fish to rest. They may also allow gravel to build up in newly-formed slack areas, improving the ecology of the Brook.



Hebble Brook

Improvement projects which have benefitted fisheries in the Yorkshire area in 2017 to 2018:

Project Title	Outcome or benefit	Partners	EA Funding (£)	Match funding (£)	Total Cost (£)
Baker's Pond silt treatment	Pond treated with powdered lime to break down the organic content of the silt.	Kilnhurst and District Angling Alliance	£980	£1,000	£1,980
Cod Beck salmonid spawning improvement	1.9 km of river enhancement, with 1.5 km of in-channel features restored across three sites.	Wild Trout Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust	£5,340	£10,700	£16,040
Embsay tributaries	Stock-proof fencing installed, bankside and in-channel features restored.	Skipton AA, Wild Trout Trust, Yorkshire Water	£3,600	£5,300	£8,900
River Wharfe Habitat Improvements	Stock-proof fencing installed, trees planted, bankside and in-channel features restored.	Appletreewick Burnsall & Barden Angling Club	£3,924	£3,550	£7,474

Jute Matting for Gate House Lake	Matting installed to control the growth of submerged vegetation.	Hutton Cranswick – Gatehouse Lake Angling Club	£7,000	£7,200	£14,200
Lumb Mill Culvert	Fish easement built.	Wild Trout Trust, Aire Rivers Trust, Local Authority	£4,150	£7,000	£11,150
Masbrough weir fish pass scoping and design	Design approved and permissions secured to allow project to move to 'build' phase.	Don Catchment Rivers Trust	£44,079	£5,100	£49,179
Patterson's Pond fishery improvements	Floating islands to provide additional habitat and refuge from predatory birds	Thornhill Angling Club	£556	£500	£1,056
Portsmouth Reservoir floating islands	Floating islands to provide additional habitat and refuge from predatory birds	Todmorden Angling Society	£746	£750	£1,496
River Ryburn fish passage restoration	Restoration of a dam to provide flow into a stillwater fishery, including a fish passage easement.	West Yorkshire Private Anglers	£11,225	£11,200	£22,425
River Seven improvement project	Restoration of in-channel features across 44 sites.	East Yorkshire Rivers Trust, Seven Angling Club, Wild Trout Trust, Derwent CABA, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, local landowners	£8,000	£2,000	£10,000

Rye riparian surveys	Walkover surveys to assess how to sustainably manage fish stocks on 11 water bodies within the Rye catchment, combined with habitat improvement demonstration days.	North York Moors National Park Authority, Wild Trout Trust	£12,000	£12,000	£24,000
Spen Vale Lake habitat improvement project	Floating islands built and reed beds installed reed beds to provide fish spawning and nursery habitat along with refuge from predators.	Dewsbury Juniors Angling Club	£1,900	£2,000	£3,900
Stillwater fishery improvement – Yorkshire and North East	Facilitated demonstrations of floating island and fish protection structure construction	Various angling clubs and fisheries interests in North and East Yorkshire	£5,000	£14,500	£19,500
Systagenix weir removal study	Feasibility study into removing a barrier to migration on the upper River Aire at Gargrave.	Aire Rivers Trust	£24,000	£500	£24,500
Upper Wharfe riparian improvements	Tree planting, fencing and buffer strip creation	Wild Trout Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust	£4,750	£5,250	£10,000
Woodhouse Mill Ponds Fishery Improvement	Installation of a new controllable inlet and outlet sluice was completed.	Learn2Fish, Canal & River Trust, Calderdale Council, Greenstreams Alliance	£10,730	£11,500	£22,230

Kirkby Beck, Hanlith.	Instillation of willow spiling and notching of a weir to allow fish passage.	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Wild Trout Trust, Yorkshire Farming and Wildlife Partnership	£5,000	£2,400	£7,400
Floating pennywort project	Survey of the distribution of Floating Pennywort on the Rivers Calder, Don and Aire to inform a strategic top down treatment programme to eradicate it from these rivers	Calder and Colne Rivers Trust, Don Catchment Rivers Trust, Canal and River Trust, Yorkshire Water	£10,000	£10,000	£20,000
Living Went Phase III	Addressing sediment input and channel modification through farm advisory visits and woody debris installation.	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Wild Trout Trust	£7,000	£15,750	£22,750
Norbriggs	800m of river has been returned to its old meandering course, creating a diversity of river habitats.	Chesterfield Borough Council	£140,000	0	£140,000
Upper Aire Habitat and Land Management 2017 to 2018	In-stream habitat improvements, 'leaky dams' controlling run-off, stock proof fencing and planting	Forestry Commission Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and others	£35,000	£68,940	£103,940
Glaisdale Beck Project	Buffer strips, planting, livestock crossing points and drinking bays 0m of hedge planting, 30 trees planted and 76m	North York Moors National Park	£25,000	£25,000	£50,000

	of guttering installed				
Mid Swale Tributaries Project	Working to improve the ecological status of all tributaries of the Mid Swale (Richmond to Bedale), through catchment walkovers farm visits and land management improvements/ habitat creation.	Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Internal Drainage Board and Local Authority	£25,000	£25,000	£50,000
Natural Nidd Project	Restoration of three tributaries of the River Nidd: Crimple Beck, Thornton Beck and Park Beck which are failing under WFD for sediment issues	Yorkshire Water and Nidderdale Area of Natural Beauty	£25,000	£25,000	£50,000
River Derwent Restoration Project – Invasive Non Native Species Project	Controlling invasive non native species namely giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam on the main River Derwent, the tributaries and the Sea Cut (Burniston Beck	Natural England, East Yorkshire Rivers Trust	£15,000	£15,000	£30,000
River Derwent SSSI Restoration Project	INNS mapping and catchment wide strategy, sediment input surveys and report, lamprey tiles installed at Buttercrambe, final design for fish pass at Howsham, feasibility of weir	Natural England, East Yorkshire Rivers Trust, Open University	£50,000	£68,000	£78,000

	removal at Kirkham and Stamford Bridge, condition assessments of EA assets (to inform future project decisions)				
River Hull Headwaters Restoration Project - Copper Hall	Habitat improvements in West Beck and wetland creation (reducing silt input)	Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	£12,500	£42,500	£55,000
River Hull Headwaters Restoration Project - Lowthorpe Beck	Restoration of a 750m long section of Lowthorpe Beck by creating a more natural margin on one side and using coarse woody debris to vary flow and reduce sediment build up	Natural England, East Yorkshire Rivers Trust	£12,500	£15,500	£28,000
River Hull Headwaters SSSI Restoration Project - Driffeld Trout Stream	Restoration of 250m of Driffeld Trout Stream, linking with other work upstream	Natural England, East Yorkshire Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	£5,000	£5,000	£10,000
River Wharfe SSSI Restoration Project	Habitat improvements, including deculverting	Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust	£25,000	£25,000	£50,000
River Wiske Restoration Project	Stock proof fencing and installation of cattle crossing points to limit stock access to the watercourse; tree planting and buffer strip creation to intercept run-off	Natural England, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Water, Yorkshire	£89,000	£40,000	£129,000

	and stabilise banks; re-profiling river banks.	Wildlife Trust			
Upper and Middle Calder (Clifton Beck) Project	Tree management and planting to reduce fine sediment input, also Himalayan balsam control	Local Authority, 'Friends of' group	£35,000	£35,000	£70,000
Dearne barbel stocking	600 barbel released into the River Dearne at five sites near Barnsley. Fish reared at our Calverton fish farm.				
Rother grayling stocking	8,000 grayling released into the River Rother at Chesterfield. Fish reared at our Calverton fish farm.				
River Derwent coarse fish stocking	12,000 fish (bream, roach, chub, barbel) released into the River Derwent at Malton. Fish reared at our Calverton fish farm.				
River Wharfe barbel stocking	400 barbel released into the River Wharfe. Fish reared at our Calverton fish farm.				
West Beck grayling stocking	3,000 grayling released into West Beck. Fish reared at our Calverton fish farm.				
Total			£663,980	£518,140	£1,142,120

Doe Lea river restoration project

Working in partnership with Chesterfield Borough Council we have re-connected over 0.5 km of historic meandering river channel to the Doe Lea at Norbriggs. The Doe Lea was straightened in the 1700s. We returned the river to its original meandering channel,



restoring a diverse range of habitats, including slower and faster moving sections of water, essential to develop a river rich in fish and wildlife. 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. This project has seen local volunteers promoting Norbriggs Flash Nature Reserve and the river restoration. This has seen local communities reconnecting its wildlife. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust worked with volunteers to improve the nature reserve around the river: clearing up rubbish; working to educate users about reducing dog muck on the site and conservation tasks including 'balsam bashing' (to eradicate Himalayan balsam, an invasive plant species). There is also a regular programme of events such as guided walks, wildlife survey training and children's activities including river dipping.

River Aire

The bottom of Eshton Beck at its confluence with the River Aire suffered from sedimentation. This sediment was caused by cows and sheep entering the water to drink. This activity led to an area of poor water quality which affected the fish movement up and down the beck.

We've now installed 685m of fencing to prevent livestock from entering both the beck and the River Aire to drink.

Drinking water for the animals is now provided by a solar powered pump which feeds a trough in the field away from the watercourse. This fencing has created a buffer strip along both the banks of the river and the beck. This has seen further improvements in the habitat which was supplemented by the planting of 0.25 hectares of new woodland within the fenced-off area. The tree planting project was conducted by Forest of Bradford volunteers assisted by staff from Systagenix who own some of the landscape being improved.

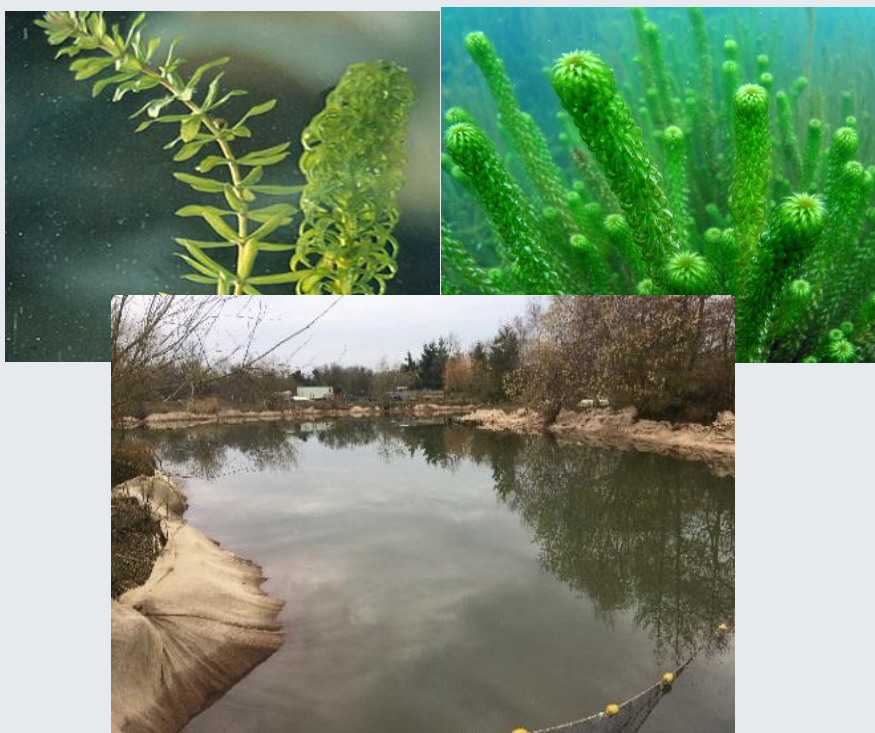


South African weed

We have worked in partnership with Gatehouse Lake Angling Club in Hutton Cranswick, East Yorkshire for several years in attempt to restore angling following the incursion of invasive non-native aquatic plant *Larogosphon major*.

This weed is a native plant of South Africa and is commonly known by a number of other names such as oxygen weed, curly water weed or ridley moss. Until 2016, bunches of the weed were routinely sold cheaply as a 'pond-oxygenators' in water garden centres. Due to its invasive nature, the European Union banned its sale and cultivation.

The club received Fisheries Improvement Programme funding to purchase and install jute matting, matting pins, ballast gravel and mechanical aids to destroy the weed though light exclusion. Our officers focused on manipulating fish stocks within the lake. This is likely to create unfavourable conditions for the weed to thrive.



Top-Pictures of South African Weed
Lower- Gatehouse Lake Angling Club

Island in the pond

We deployed two planted floating islands on one of the original crucian ark sites in East Yorkshire. Subsequently after cultivating tree work two years ago in order to reduce leaf litter into the pond the cormorant bird population of the Lower Yorkshire Derwent began to feed on the pond's fish. The fish in this particular pond are of a high conservation importance.



Two planted floating islands were built by our officers using mainly empty recycled soft drinks bottles collected by Environment Agency staff at our local Beverley Office. The floating planted islands were placed onto the pond to compliment underwater cages and

habitat structures that had recently been submerged to provide the fish areas of refuge. The plants of the island grow hydroponically providing an excellent habitat and added protection for the crucian's invertebrate food and the juvenile fish. The crucians at the ark sites will allow us to crop and restock genetically pure crucians into other waters, whilst providing our National Coarse Fish Farm at Calverton with male and female brood stocks.

Lamprey migratory season

On the tidal Ouse during the river lamprey migratory season we have been working with authorised netters in order to determine whether the lamprey population can continue to support a sustainable fishery. In previous years, lampreys have been caught for sale to pike anglers as bait. Following concern over lamprey numbers, netters voluntarily released all their catch in 2017. Through their continuing fishing we were able to collect data on the potential river lamprey harvest. We then transported all lampreys upstream and released them upstream of several weirs that stood in their way.



Lamprey

Community work

A local community group contacted us regarding Pontefract Park Lake. The group wanted advice on turning the lake into a fishing coaching venue. They were concerned that there might be too few fish present for the lake to be attractive to beginner anglers. Our officers conducted a fishery survey, using a seine net to catch a sample of fish. We also collected and analysed water samples. The Environment Agency concluded that there were insufficient numbers of fish present to make the venue viable but that water quality was conducive to supporting a fishery. We are now advising the community group and the site owners on how to improve fish habitat in the lake, before they consider restocking.



Community Group



Netting

Restoration

The Environment Agency carried out a baseline ecological assessment of the River Rother at Woodhouse Washlands, near Orgreave. This assessment was in preparation of the river restoration project in partnership with the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. The river habitat surveys sampled and recorded the species of fish, invertebrate and plant communities. Fish species caught included chub, barbel, dace, roach and brown trout. The fish were mainly found in and around the natural features of this straightened section of river. The project intended to increase the number of these features, to benefit ecology and geomorphology. Restoration work is planned for 2018/19 and further surveys will take place once work has been completed.



Fish Assessment

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 Yorkshire:

247	Waterbodies assessed for fish 2016/17	33%	of waterbodies assessed were at good status or above for fish
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This is a triennial report and the most up-to-date report is expected later this year.

You can look at our Catchment Data Explorer for more information.

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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