

# North East Fisheries Bulletin

## News

- Net Limitation Orders are used to secure sustainable exploitation of salmon and sea-trout stocks by controlling the number of licensed nets. The limits in the Order also consider the interests of those who are licensed to fish and are dependent for their livelihoods on the fishing to ensure they are protected. The Environment Agency is currently drafting a new Net Limitation Order to replace the current Order as it is due to expire in December 2012. We must apply for confirmation of a new Order before then to ensure appropriate continued regulation of the Fishery. In April 2012, we will formally publish our proposals for a new Order, as required by law. Before reaching this stage, we would like to discuss the proposals informally with all interested parties. We welcome any evidence you are able to offer to support your preferred outcome. For more information please contact Jon Shelley, Technical Project Manager (Net Limitation Order) directly on 07979 704 281 or email [jonathan.shelley@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.shelley@environment-agency.gov.uk)



- Government plans to introduce new live fish movement regulations on 1 April 2012. These will replace current fish stocking and removal authorisations, and licences to keep non-native fish. The new regulations will continue to protect fisheries and the wider environment from the risks of spreading damaging non-native fish species and diseases, and the consequences of inappropriate stocking. However, the new scheme will reduce the paperwork for fishery managers and fish suppliers by reducing the regulation of routine, low risk fish transfers. Instead, it allows the Environment Agency to focus on those movements which pose a greater risk to fisheries and the environment. If you have any questions about the proposed changes, please let us know using the details below.
- River level data can be accessed through the Environment Agency website. This could prove to be a valuable resource both to anglers and homeowners in areas with a flood risk. The service can be found at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/default.aspx>.
- River users can also check conditions by using one of the webcams installed on prominent positions on the Tyne, Wear and Tees as well as other rivers throughout the country. These can be found at: <http://www.farsondigitalwatercams.com/>
- Members of the public are a vital source of information in helping us to tackle crime and report incidents. You can report these, including suspected pollution and poaching to our hotline number **(0800 80 70 60)**

- We introduced a new scheme in 2011 to regulate certain types of net and trap fishing. We welcome your views on how much we propose to charge for authorisations. We want to know how these charges could affect you and your fishing. To find out more, and to contribute please see: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/ho/fish/auths>

## Local Updates

- Fisheries Officers have been carrying out a series of 'walkover surveys' to identify reasons why fish populations in some rivers are not meeting the expected standard as part of the Water Framework Directive. Some of the issues that we have been looking at include obstructions to migration, habitat quality and chronic pollution. This will help us to identify areas where we need to concentrate efforts to improve these rivers.
- This summer we've had several blue-green algae blooms across the area. Blue-green algae naturally occurs in inland waters. It spreads rapidly over the surface of still and slow-moving water and it takes oxygen out of the water. Blue-green algae is caused when there are excessive nutrients in the water. More information is available at: <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/GEHO0809BRGN-E-E.pdf>

## Tyne

- Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT) have been working on the River Rede repairing bank damage from livestock access. Woody brash bundles have been pinned using posts to eroding sandy banks. This helps to prevent excessive bank erosion by increasing the vegetation cover of the

banks, as vegetation makes banks more stable, especially during floods. Once established and matured, these will decrease inputs of fine sediment that choke gravel. It also provides cover for fish and benefit the wider river ecology.



**Brash bundles protecting eroded banks.**

- TRT are working with interest groups to develop the fish pass project at Hexham Bridge. Lowering of the downstream water levels below the bridge footings is making passage more difficult for fish in a variety of flows. The failed attempts to ascend, increase stress to the fish and potentially cause physical damage. TRT propose to build a pass suitable for all species to move freely past this obstruction. You can keep up to date with progress on the website - [www.tyneriverstrust.org](http://www.tyneriverstrust.org)
- With four hundred samples received so far this year, the Angler Scale Sampling programme underway on the Tyne continues to grow. Results indicate the majority (c.90%) of salmon caught by anglers so far this season were 2SW fish, while the sea trout were predominantly (90%) 'maidens', spawning for the first time. They also

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suggest 3SW salmon have been more prevalent than in recent years.

- Following the recent announcement that the work underway to assess the impact of the Second Tyne Tunnel will cease in March of next year, funds have been secured to continue the monitoring as part of the Agency's index river programme of salmonid monitoring.

### Wear

- Wear Rivers Trust (WRT) have completed over 25 electro fishing sites using volunteers from local angling clubs. Data collected will be shared with the EA and will be available for anyone who has an interest. Data will be displayed using new GIS software. More details can be found on their website.
- WRT have completed feasibility and ecological study of easing fish passage on the Lumley Park burn. The EA are to fund a fish easement near to Smtihs Arms to open up over 15km of spawning habitat.
- Further information on WRT activities and how to become involved can be found at: [www.wear-rivers-trust.org.uk](http://www.wear-rivers-trust.org.uk)
- At Herrington Country park a combination of an already shallow and eutrophic lake and a blue green bloom caused oxygen levels to drop sufficiently to cause a fish kill. Environment agency officers responded by netting the pond and relocating the remaining fish to the larger fishing pond on the park. Officers saved approximately 100 rudd. At least this number including roach and perch died as a result of low oxygen levels. Owners have been advised to reduce nutrient levels by discouraging the feeding of ducks and using barley straw.

This also acted as an example of the dangers of introducing fish to waters that are unsuitable to support them.



**problematic decaying algae on waters surface**

- There is evidence that the work carried out by the EA, WRT, Chester-le-Street Angling Club and Northumbrian Water on the Cong Burn is beginning to bear fruit. During a routine electric fishing survey, Environment Agency staff caught a 1 year old salmon. This project shows that with the right ideas, and by working together it is possible to achieve significant results.

### Tees

- To encourage anglers to undertake catch and release on the River Tees we are reminding anglers of our initiative to help salmon stocks recover. For every fish released on the Tees in the 2011 season you can enter a prize draw to win a £200 pound John Norris tackle voucher. In addition to this, John Norris is offering a fishing reel worth £140 to the angler who returns the biggest fish. If you wish to have a fish considered as the biggest returned, we require contact details for the captor along with either a photograph of the fish or details of a witness. Winners will be announced March 2012. To report your capture or to get further

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details, please contact Paul Frear on 0191 203 4321 or [paul.frear@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:paul.frear@environment-agency.gov.uk)



## Projects

- The EA supported coarse angling survey matches have again been taking place. The Tyne match was held on 21st August with the Wear taking place on 25th September. The Tees competition will be held on 30th October. These matches not only provide anglers with the opportunity to take part in large competitions on the areas rivers but also provide the EA with valuable information on coarse fish populations they support. This includes data on the relative abundance of different species in various locations. The catch data gathered through these matches is used to inform us about the health of coarse fish populations in our rivers. For further information about the matches and a summary of the results, please let us know.

- The Environment Agency has an annual allocation of funding to improve and enhance the areas fisheries. If anyone would like the Environment Agency to become involved as partners, they can let us know at any time. The local fisheries officers will be happy to advise what projects could be eligible for funding.

## Regular Features

- Latest figures from the Riding Mill counter indicate an above average year so far for salmon and sea trout runs on the Tyne, with 23,883 counts recorded by end of September.
- In line with counts on the Tyne, the Wear total of 16,045 over the same period was also above average for the river.
- All the latest data from the fish counters in the North East can be found at: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/33953.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/33953.aspx)

## Tees Barrage

- Final commissioning of the Tees Barrage White Water course by British Waterways has been delayed due to an issue with leaking penstocks, this is now resolved. The new fish pass alongside the hydro turbines is complete. The second fish pass around the long course and the infrastructure for monitoring fish using the new fish passes is not completed but is programmed for completion shortly.

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- Since the replacement of the fish trap in July with an automatic fish counter the following upstream counts have been recorded: **July: 183, August: 115 and September: 49.**
- It should be noted that the existing fish pass and counter represents one possible route for fish passage across the barrage, with passage across the main barrage gates possible at different tidal and flow conditions.
- We are continuing to work with BW and CEFAS to look at ways of improving fish passage across the barrage structure, including the operation of the two new fish passes within the new canoe course, as well as alterations to the barrage operating agreement.

For more information contact:

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