

# Make time to go fishing



## Lincs and Northants Fisheries Update April 2018

### Fisheries Incidents Update – River Witham

The Environment Agency received reports of dead fish in the River Witham on 3 March 2018. Our officers subsequently determined that a pollution incident had occurred from ammonia which had entered the River. According to our latest estimates, this pollution event has caused the deaths of many thousands of fish and also severely impacted the river's ecosystem (including the organisms that feed the fish population).

At this stage, we believe this is the largest river pollution incident ever recorded in Lincolnshire. The River has been affected from Bardney Bridge Lock downstream to the Wash. We are not able to comment on the source of the pollution at this time due to potential legal action.

**If you see something in the environment that you are concerned about please let us know. Please call our Environment Incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.**



*Figure 1 Aeration Equipment*

### Fisheries Standby Rota

Fisheries staff are now operating the fisheries incident standby rota. Staff are available out of normal working hours to help and support any fisheries incidents. At any time during the spring and summer our Environment Management Team can call on Fisheries staff for advice and guidance, or to request field support. Do not hesitate to call us if you have a developing problem at your fishery or you are aware of a potential environmental incident. Our **Incident Number is 0800 80 70 60.**

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## **Fisheries Monitoring Summary & Look Forward**

Jake Reeds has been working with our Hydrometry & Operations and Hydrometry & Telemetry Teams installing two water quality Sondes on the River Sleaford. (A Sonde is a multi-parameter probe used for collecting water quality data). Each year the River Sleaford suffers from low flows, this can result in trout mortalities. To mitigate this the Environment Agency operates a flow augmentation scheme supplied from a borehole in order to maintain flows in the river during summertime. The Sondes will help us monitor and manage the water quality in the section via live telemetry links, this should help to prevent fish deaths during warm periods. The live links will be made available to local partners such as local river care groups and the Lincs Rivers Trust.



*Figure 2 Solar powered data logger*

### **Fisheries Monitoring Work 2017- 2018?**

Survey reports have been produced for the monitoring works carried out in 2017. Jake Reeds will present the survey results to the consultative within the next meeting in June 2018.

Our survey programme for 2018 will include the Ancholme and Nene catchments. Additional information on the programme will be made available at the next meeting.

## Update on Institute of Fisheries Management & Environment Agency 'Free Fisheries Management Work Shop'.



During the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2018 Fisheries Technical Officer Hugh Bunker from Lincs and Northants FBG Team joined staff from the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) to deliver a free Fisheries Management Workshop for our local angling clubs and associations. The workshop was held at Ferry Meadows in Peterborough and was funded directly by our rod licence income. The workshop was attended by a number of our major clubs and associations who represent thousands of local anglers.

The content and agenda was put together and delivered by staff from the IFM and was designed to improve the knowledge and skills of our local fishery managers. Some of the subjects covered included; water quality, fish biology and physiology and causes of fish mortalities, including disease risks and how to minimise them.

With improved knowledge and skill sets fishery managers are more confident in managing their fisheries and can prevent fish health incidents and even fish mortalities occurring.

We hope this will reduce the need for support and intervention from local EA Fisheries Technical staff and ensure our clubs are using best practice to manage their fisheries.

The event was a huge success and we received some excellent feedback from those who attended.



### Fish Health Incidents & Fish Mortality Incidents

As temperatures are starting to warm up we are receiving a number of reported low level fish mortality incidents. These are often related to algal or diatom blooms. Algae and diatom blooms can have a significant impact on dissolved oxygen levels with impacts most noticeable in the early hours of the morning. Early morning checks at your fishery could prevent a mortality occurring. Fish at the surface, being lethargic or gasping in the morning is a sign of low oxygen levels and you should consider aerating your water.

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## Fishery Site Visits & Investigations

As well as providing advice and guidance through phone and email, fisheries staff can support clubs with more proactive fishery investigations if required. This can include survey operations or simply checking dissolved oxygen levels.



## Fisheries Live Fish Movement Permitting Work



In March this year Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Fisheries Officers Darren Randall and Hugh Bunker attended a Fish Movements seminar organised by our National Fisheries Service. The seminar focused on the Introduction and keeping of Live Fish Act. This is our new legislation used for regulating the movement of live fish. The Environment Agency regulate the movement of live fish in order to protect our native fish stocks and to prevent the spread of destructive fish diseases.

Fish Suppliers and Fishery Managers require a permit to supply, stock and keep live fish. Fish Movement permitting staff from every Environment Agency Area attended the two day event in order to learn more about the regulations, their compliance and enforcement.

If you need advice and guidance regarding fish stocking permits please contact Hugh Bunker or Darren Randall.



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## Area Fisheries Enforcement Summary

As part of Operation Clamp Down Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology Officer Darren Randall represented the EA at a meeting between the Angling Trust and Humberside Police.

Darren was promoting our enforcement work and developing relationships with the fisheries enforcement networks while building capacity for future planned operations.

The meeting was followed by our attendance at a Boston and District Angling Club meeting in the evening. Paul Thomas from the Angling Trust commented that the B&DAA meeting was 'a bit lively' for both Jake Reeds and Darren Randall. A number of subjects were discussed including; fish population numbers, aquatic weeds and water level management, which all touched nerves in the audience.

It was a great opportunity for the EA/AT officers to speak to anglers face to face and understand the issues concerning them. On the whole, the feedback has been positive and will help us develop better working relationship in the future.

We are continuing with Operation Clamp Down with patrols in and around the Boston area. On this occasion a joint Operation with East Anglia Area (West) and Peterborough & District Angling Association following up on intelligence reports.

We are pleased to report that compliance with the close season was good on the day, this provided the ideal opportunity to refresh signage at some critical locations.



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## Biosecurity - National Invasive Species Week – Pitsford Fishery Awareness

The Environment Agency has been focusing on invasive non-native species (INNS) recently. This is in support of a National Campaign being run by the **Non Native Species Secretariat** (NNSS). One of our local areas of concern is the presence and the spread of ‘killer shrimp’ at Pitsford Reservoir Trout Fishery. Can we remind all anglers visiting the fishery this year to ensure they follow the Anglian Water procedures when visiting the fishery. Please **check, clean and dry** your fishing equipment before and after fishing?

The Fishery provides landing nets, drogues and a dedicated wash down area; these must be used by all anglers visiting the fishery. Please do your bit to ensure this invasive non-native species does not spread from this Fishery.

For additional information please use the following web address

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/index.cfm>

Or you can contact Fisheries Officer Hugh Bunker

### Water Situation Summary

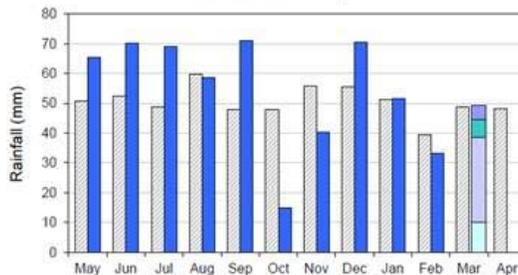
The wetter weather over the winter has meant that river flows and groundwater levels have improved and are now within normal (or above) ranges. The wet weather has also helped boost reservoir storage. Further information on the water situation is available [here](#).

*The graph below shows rainfall totals for our area (blue bars) relative to the long-term average in grey.*

### Rainfall

March 2018

Monthly total rainfall (mm)      Long-term average rainfall (mm)  
March rainfall (provisional)      1st to 6th      7th to 13th      14th to 20th      21st to 27th  
Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire



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## River Habitat Projects

Works to improve fish passage have proved successful after evidence of fish spawning was recorded in the Welton Beck. In 2017 Asset Performance and Fisheries, Biodiversity & Geomorphology teams worked together to ensure that a build-up of gravel affecting the gauging station telemetry could be removed and installed in a new location in the Barlings catchment. This ensured the habitat was not lost.

Using colleagues in our Operations Delivery Team and a partnership approach with the Environment Programme team, Wild Trout Trust and Lincs Rivers Trust Limestone Becks Project, gravel was introduced into the downstream end of Welton Beck. The gravel helped improve fish passage by creating a ramp that the fish could use to migrate up. On a recent visit FBG observed fresh Trout redds approx. 3 km upstream from the culvert proving that fish can now move freely through the section. This is great news as fish had been lost from this section due to historic droughts and are now recolonising through spawning in this section. This is a great example of different departments working together to save money and improve the environment.



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