Angling Match Catch Database

Output from the Great Ouse - Newport Pagnell to Bedford

2016/2017 MKAA Newsline

Upper GREAT Ouse in... silverfish explosion!

September 17ᵗʰ 2020

Average 10lb a rod as visiting winter league crew find...

Ouse alive with silvers!

August 20ᵗʰ 2020

● OLNEY Ouse, Tuesday, 21 totalled 128lb of silvers: Paul Caton 13lb, Joe Roberts 10-1, Dave

December 10ᵗʰ 2020

■ DOWNSTREAM at Olney Stuart Cheetham was a whirlwind of action landing hundreds of small bleak to win the previously postponed Royal British Legion open with a very respectable 15-9.

Graeme Prince had 13-6 of roach ahead of Dave Mawby 10-6. The 'Legion benefited by £200 thanks to the Olney lads' efforts. Gary Underwood had a 2-11 perch in the match.

July 11ᵗʰ 2019

Good match nets as...

Ouse silvers go well on feed!

BIG Upper Ouse fish may generally be keeping their heads down....but the silvers are feeding just fine.

Newport's match from Sherington bridge-back of the Abbey open saw Dave Tebbutt way out front with 19-1 – mostly dace – while his dad, Roger, was runner-up with 10-13. Steve Chilton had 10lb.

Downstream at Olney, the town club's three-hour evening match went to Pete Laughton with 13-2, mostly roach. Kevin Osborne was second with 6-8 as Les Wallace had 6lb.

2004 - 2020

The Angling Match Catch Database:

Great Ouse Newport Pagnell to Bedford 2004 – 2020

Introduction

Angler catches by rod and line are a valuable source of information on fishery performance and can be a useful indicator on the status of the exploited fish stock. The Environment Agency (E.A.) Angling Match Catch Database allows fisheries staff to store match results provided by angling clubs and permits easy analysis of catches over time. Such a data source can be useful to validate our routine sampling data collected by seine netting, electric fishing and hydro-acoustic survey techniques, and may also add to it by detailing species infrequently caught in our surveys. The Match Catch database is an excellent way for anglers to support their fishery and have their say on the quality of sport they are experiencing and by collecting & providing the EA with match returns a club can also know that if it has a concern about fishery performance, there will be a long term record against which this may be compared. Decisions on the management of a fishery can then be made using all available data sources.

Method

Participating angling clubs are provided with a simple data sheet (a copy of which is included at the end of this report) and asked to provide details of each match conduced such as number of competitors, duration of the match, top three weights, overall weight, no of anglers 'weighing in' etc. as well as some observations on river conditions, weather and also some simple determination of species composition. The Match Catch Database stores this information and can provide output on angler participation, Catch per Unit Effort (C.P.U.E) given as the average weight in grams caught per angler per hour, as well as average overall weights and species caught etc.

A system of classification was introduced in 1997 which allowed comparison of match results between rivers and assigned a class that was based on the mean C.P.U.E. See **Table 1** (below) for more details. In 2012 a new classification band, A+, was introduced to help distinguish between good catch rates and exceptional catch rates. The system utilises the same classification bands for rivers and stillwaters with the exception of the new A+ band which is significantly higher for stillwaters, reflecting the increase in commercial stillwaters with elevated stock densities.

Trends in angling activity can be observed from the number of matches occurring and anglers participating in each match, whilst details of the number of anglers successfully weighing-in, the weight of fish caught and the species of fish present give a picture of the fish population residing within the angled reach.

Table 1: Match catch fisheries classification ranges.

Class	CPUE Grams / angler hour		CPUE Decimal Ounce / angler hour	
	Rivers / canals	Stillwater	Rivers / canals	Stillwater
A+	>290	>909	>10.00	>32.00
A	150 - 289	150 - 909	5.27 - 10.00	5.27 - 32.00
B	110 - 149		3.8 - 5.26	
C	70 - 109		2.5 - 3.84	
D	<70		<2.50	

Image 1: A nice catch of roach from Olney waters

Match Venues

As can be seen from **Table 2** (below) the large majority of match returns from this river reach have been kindly provided by **Olney and Clifton Fishing Association** http://www.olneyfishing.co.uk without whom this analysis of fishery performance could not be undertaken.

The Match Catch Database currently contains details of 161 matches that have occurred between Newport Pagnell and Bedford over the past seventeen years and almost 95% of these were conducted on Olney and Clifton waters, the remainder being split between venues at Felmersham, Biddenham and Kempston Mill.

As the data used for this analysis is heavily skewed towards Club Waters around Olney it may be argued that any output is not representative of the river as a whole, and this is not disputed; however, ability to provide such analysis is reliant on the goodwill of angling clubs to provide the data. If any angling club does feel strongly that this output is not descriptive of the sport they have experienced then it will be particularly important to also provide catch data for inclusion in future analysis. It should also be noted that whilst the author of this report is a regular angler, he is not a match angler, and if there is any further match specific detail that would be of interest for inclusion in future reports then such feedback would be appreciated.

Table 2: Match locations, No. of matches and No. of anglers.			
Venue name	NGR	No. of matches	No. of anglers
Olney	SP8842250704	151	3560
Felmersham	SP9904457890	2	37
Biddenham	TL0163650997	5	311
Kempston Mill	TL0231147673	3	30
Total	---	161	3938

Map 1. Showing location of match venues
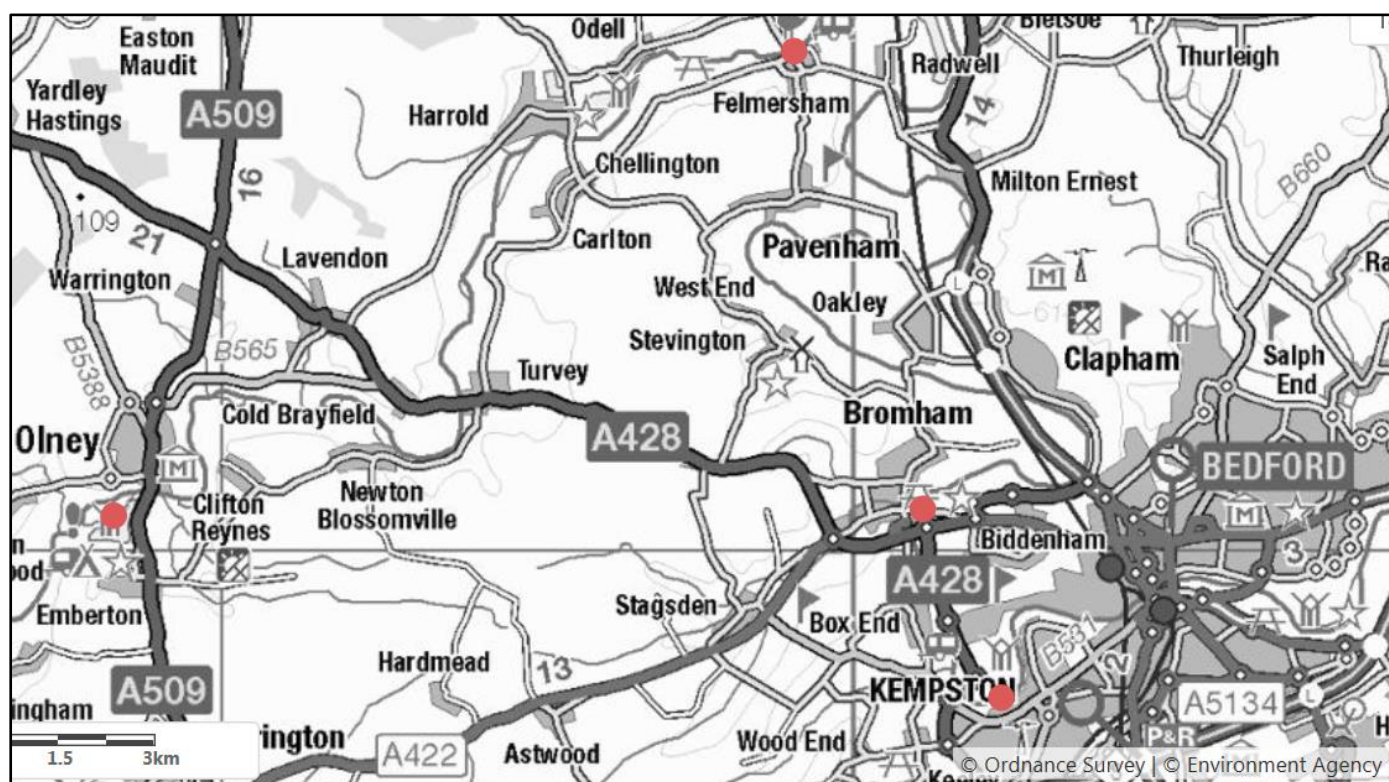
Results

Participation

Figure 1 provides details of the number of matches conducted and the total number of anglers competing in matches each year of the dataset within this river reach. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the COVID-19 restrictions in place, the number of matches conducted in 2020 was less than in 2019, although the number of anglers competing was closely comparable which perhaps suggests that people were making the most of the limited opportunities to participate when they became available.
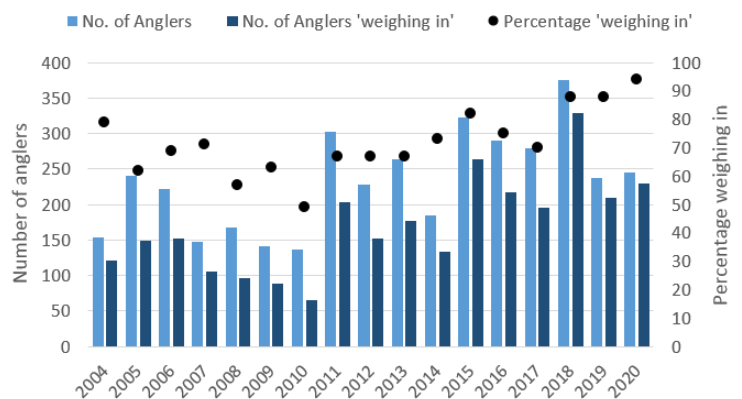
Figure 1: Number of anglers and matches
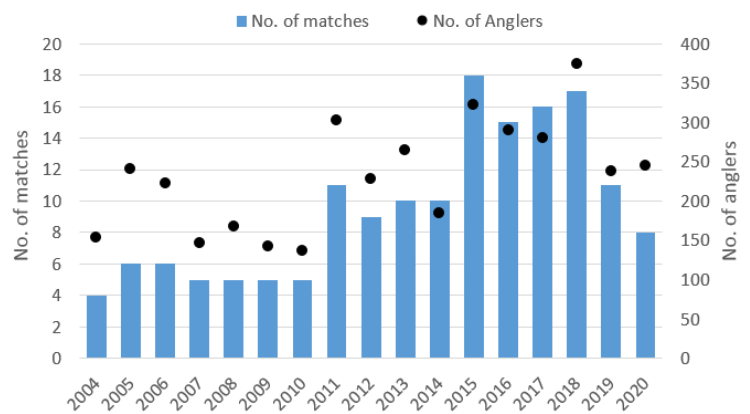
Success rates

Figure 2 indicates that those anglers whom did partake in matches were largely rewarded with 230 of the 245 anglers 'weighing in', which represents a 94% success rate, the highest such value observed to date. It is interesting to note that the percentage of anglers weighing in has steadily increased since 2010 when a mediocre 49% of anglers were successful.

This 'weighing in' figure is perhaps not a particularly useful indicator of the quality of sport experienced as the value simply indicates that the angler had caught and weighed in 'something' at the end of the match and does not differentiate between say, a net of prime roach, or a single ruffe and also fails to account for anglers that choose not to weigh in despite catching.

Figure 2: Number of anglers and success rate

Catch per unit effort (CPUE)

A more useful indicator of the quality of sport that may be experienced is the CPUE a value which is expressed as the average weight in grams caught per angler each hour fished. The CPUE value is expressed as **Figure 3** alongside the average total weight per angler. Both of these values indicate a trend of increasing match catches since 2010 in terms of both weight per hour and average weight per angler. The 2020 results are currently the highest on record to date with an average catch per hour of 496g (1lb 1oz) and an average total weight of 2398g (5lb 4oz) which compares particularly favourably to 2010 when an average total weight of 927g (2lb) was recorded.

Figure 3: Average weight per angler/ average weight caught per hour.
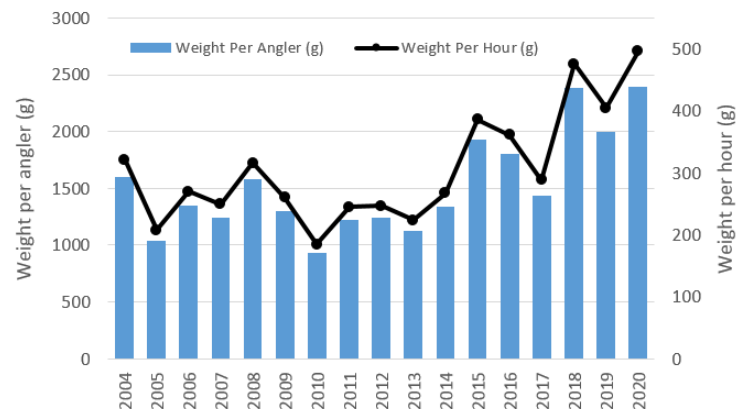
Average catches

Figure 4 displays the average weight caught by anglers placing first, second and third in each sample year. The output shows good correlation between second and third placed anglers, whereas first place anglers have occasionally greatly exceed their fellow competitors, perhaps suggesting 'hot' pegs or captures of large fish that have boosted their overall catches. The 2020 result seems to have been amongst the more consistent years, however an average of 1375g (3lb) still separates anglers achieving 1st and 3rd place catches.
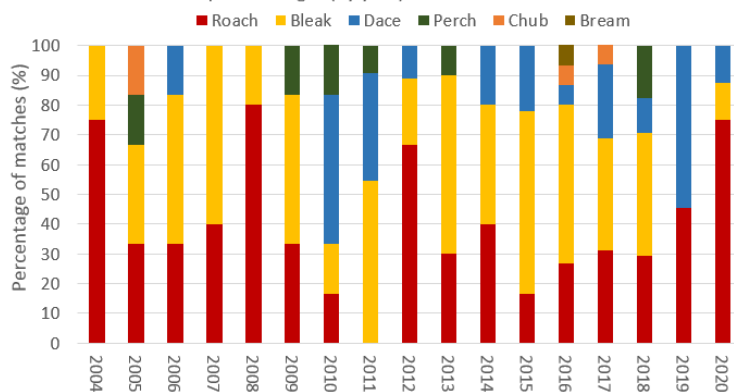

Figure 4: Average weight caught by 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed anglers.
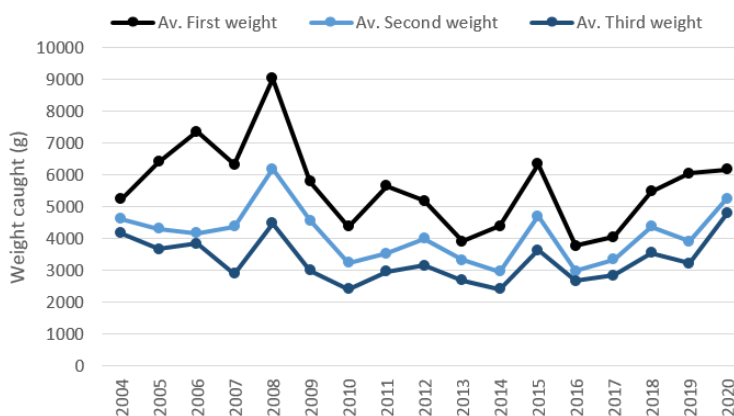
Species composition

As part of the match return, the angling club will indicate the numerically principal, secondary and 'other' species that are caught during the match which allows some simple trend analysis of species composition.

A subset of this data is displayed as **Figure 5** and shows the percentage of matches held annually in which each key angling species was considered as being 'principal' i.e. most numerous. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this output indicates that abundant silver fish species such as roach, bleak and dace are frequently the most numerous species caught. Bleak were particularly well represented during

Figure 5: Percentage of matches where each species was the primary species caught (by year)

2011 when 54% of returns stated the species was principal, followed by dace (36%) and perch (9%) whilst, in an unusual result, roach were not considered 'most numerous' during *any* of the matches held in that year. Dace and roach have overtaken bleak in recent years and, in a reversal of fortunes, the species was not considered principal during any matches conducted in 2019 (presumably to the great relief of some anglers?) The 2020 dataset indicates that roach were considered the most numerous species during 75% of matches fished followed by dace and bleak (12.5% each).

Whilst these catch composition figures are drawn from general observations at the weigh-in, the dominance of roach, dace, perch and chub does seem appropriate for the river, and the ponded nature of the site from where a large proportion of the data-set is derived would perhaps help explain the regular inclusion of so many bleak and the inclusion of both tench and common bream.

Figure 6 shows details of species inclusion in matches and denotes what percentage of the each species was considered either the principal species caught by number, secondary by number or were amongst the 'also caught' category. For example, although never a major species in terms of numbers caught, tench were actually recorded in a little over 44% of the matches conducted at Olney. When looking at the total dataset from Olney it is apparent that bleak were considered the most numerous species caught in almost 42% of matches held, were secondary in 13% and also noted in near 16% meaning a total inclusion of 70%. Roach were considered the

Figure 6: Species inclusion in matches conducted at Olney
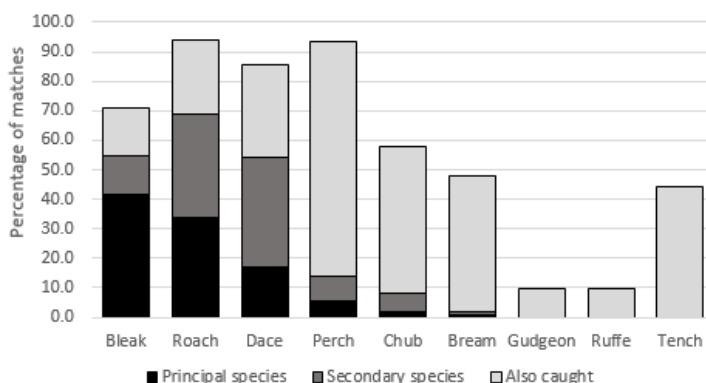
principal species in almost 34% of matches, secondary in 35% and also noted present on a further 25% of occasions giving a 94% inclusion overall. The two remaining species with >80% overall capture are dace and perch, the latter species being principal in relatively few matches, but having been recorded in >90% of competitions. Species such as chub and common bream have occasionally been reported as principal by number, however such incidences have been infrequent and these species more often fall within the 'also caught' category being caught in a little under 50% of the events fished. Catch composition data has been collated for all key species caught from all Olney and Clifton matches and is provided as **Table 3.**

Table 3: Percentage of matches at Olney where each species were considered principal, secondary or 'also caught'			
Species	Principal species	Secondary species	Also caught
Bleak	41.7	13.2	15.9
Roach	33.8	35.1	25.2
Dace	17.2	37.1	31.1
Perch	5.3	8.6	79.5
Chub	2.0	6.0	49.7
Bream	0.7	1.3	45.7
Gudgeon	-	-	9.9
Ruffe	-	-	9.9
Tench	-	-	44.4

Fishery class

Figure 7 displays CPUE vs the fishery performance class bands given as **table 1** and shows that during the first ten years of this dataset fishery performance usually fell within the 'Class A' range (150g – 289g av. catch per hour), whereas from 2014 onwards performance has generally exceeded the A+ threshold, the exception being 2017 when the average value was just 2g below the cut off value. This current classification seems to be well supported by reports in the local press (some of which are included overleaf) and opinions posted on social media, however; it is important to state once again that this dataset is based upon a small sample area and that if this report does not feel representative of fishery performance experienced elsewhere, it will be important that these results are supplied to the EA for inclusion as this will allow a more robust output that is more representative of the river as a whole.

Figure 7: CPUE Vs Class bands 2004-2020
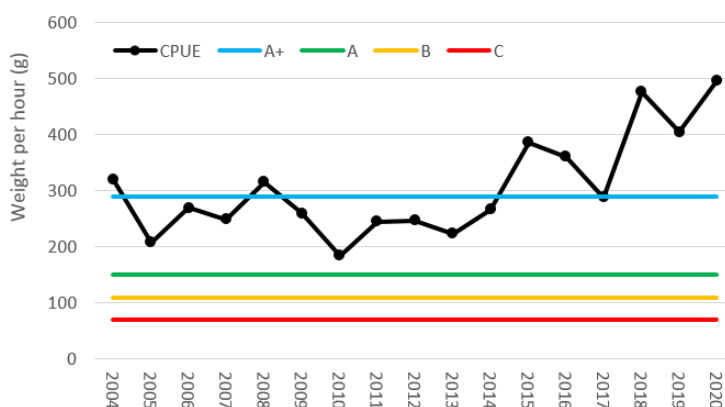
Conclusion

The Great Ouse around Olney is currently offering some excellent sport for silver fish, particularly roach which have been of growing importance to match results over the past three years, and also the species that predate upon them. Match returns have shown growing dominance by roach over the last two years and match weighs, in terms of average weight per caught per angler and average weight caught per hour are currently the highest on record. Angler success rates are also the highest to date with 94% of competing anglers choosing to weigh in.

Match returns from elsewhere on the Great Ouse, and from rivers within the Great Ouse catchment, would be much greatly appreciated and if any Great Ouse clubs have an archive of previous match data, which they would be happy to share, then I would also be keen to know.

This report will be updated with any match data that subsequently becomes available. **Hopefully 2021 will be a better year for *all* anglers.**

Angling clubs located within the Great Ouse and Fenland area whom wish to contribute to the Angling Match Catch Database may contact us via the private messenger feature on the teams Facebook page via this link: https://www.facebook.com/OuseFishEA

Justin Mould
Analysis and Reporting
28.01.2021

Images 3-8: Examples of catches from the Olney and Clifton waters.

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floodline
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The following page contains a number of relevant clippings from the weekly fishing reports written for the Northamptonshire Chronicle and Echo & Milton Keynes Citizen and included here with kind permission by their author Trevor Johnson.

September 17th 2020

Average 10lb a rod as visiting winter league crew find...

Ouse alive with silvers!

WHAT a day! The Ouse was alive with silvers for the Bedford winter league opener – with two county teams riding high on the back of it.

And it was a double pay-day for Websters4 as their Pete Laughton conjured-up 400 dace on whip for an amazing 25-4 win from the Kempston Mill shallows – while the squad finished as runners-up.

Sensas Colemans had beaten them to top team slot on a day when, in the first match of the season on the section, 32 anglers bagged 322lb between them, averaging just over 10lb per rod.

Second-place in the individuals went to Blunham's James Drakulik with 25-1-8 of class roach on seed with Colemans' Paul Reynolds, on 17-5.

August 20th 2020

• OLNEY Ouse, Tuesday, 21 totalled 128lb of silvers: Paul Caton 13lb, Joe Roberts 10-1, Dave Tebbutt 9-6.

March 5th 2020

■ Just enduring the full five hours must have been an achievement – but Paul Caton did that AND caught 8-4 which, a few roach apart, was solid bleak...earning him £375 from the series pot!

Bleak made up the bulk of most catches on the Goosey as Pete Laughton had 6-14, Graeme Prince 6-7 and Dave Mawby 5-11.

September 24th 2020

• OLNEY's Ron Bull memorial on the Ouse was a cracker with the 66 weighing-in (eight didn't bother but no one blanked) totalling 372lb – better than 5-8 per rod. The winner collected £750.

With silvers making up the bulk of catches Grant Howie had 20-8, Paul Abbott 16-2, Mark Pollard 14-10, Dave Lewis and Myles Phi... 12...

October 29th 2020

and Towcester's joint sweep, won by Pete Laughton with 11-10 of roach – to 1-6 – bream and perch. Sam Cortese 10-10 'on the stick', John Balhatchett 9-5. An MKAA match upstream of the bridge saw two 23lb bream weights and an 18.

October 29th 2020

• THE Old Stratford Ouse was coloured and rising for Nene

October 29th 2020

• OLNEY, Ouse, Spooner Cup: Chris Howard roach, dace and perch to 2-9 for 15-14, Jim Broadbent 11lb, Graeme Prince 9-12.

December 10th 2020

■ DOWNSTREAM at Olney Stuart Cheetham was a whirlwind of action landing hundreds of small bleak to win the previously postponed Royal British Legion open with a very respectable 15-9.

...had 13-6 of ...of Dave ...e Legion ...0 thanks to ...efforts. Gary ...had a 2-11 ...match.

November 19th 2020

• OLNEY's Ouse is churning out double-figure pike and two-pound-plus perch – doubtless a result of the sustained presence of large quantities of small silvers along that length of the river.

June 27th 2019

• NEWPORT, Ouse open above Sherington Bridge, 18 rods totalled 160lb of silvers. Steve Davies 13-9, Kevin Osborne 12-5, Roger Tebbutt 12-3.

• OLNEY Ouse, evening, Didder Hefferon 7-1, Sam Corteze 6-14, Peter Laughton 6-3 ■

February 7th 2019

• OLNEY Ouse, 'Spring Cup': Alan Lambert 2-3 (one perch on worm). No one else caught.

Of course, not all matches go quite as well!

Environment Agency Match Record

Name of angling club:		Date of match:	
River:		Venue:	
Section / peg fished:		Number of competitors:	
Match start time:		Match duration (hrs):	

Number of anglers weighing-in:		
Total weight caught:		(lbs/oz) or (g) *delete as appropriate*
Winning weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) *delete as appropriate*
2nd weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) *delete as appropriate*
3rd weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) *delete as appropriate*

Species Caught In:

Greatest number:	
Second greatest number:	
Other species present:	

River Conditions:

Level		Colour		Condition		River Temp	
Low		Clear		Falling		Cold	
Normal		Coloured		Steady		Normal	
High		Green		Rising		Warm	

Weather Conditions:

Brightness		Wind		Rain	
Dull		Still		Dry	
Changeable		Light		Drizzle	
Bright		Moderate		Light	
		Strong		Heavy	
				Hail	
				Sleet	
				Snow	

Any other comments:

STOP THE SPREAD

STOP THE SPREAD — INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES — CHECK-CLEAN-DRY

Are you unknowingly spreading invasive species on your water sports equipment and clothing?

Invasive species can affect fish and other wildlife, restrict navigation, clog up propellers and be costly to manage. You can help protect the water sports you love by following three simple steps when you leave the water.

CHECK — **Check** your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particular in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

CLEAN — **Clean** and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. Use hot water where possible.

If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

DRY — **Dry** all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions.

Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

For more information go to www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry

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