



**Fisheries Annual Report 2017 to 2018
Greater Manchester, Merseyside and
Cheshire**

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 Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) 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.

Contents

Fisheries Annual Report 2017- 2018 Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.	1
Foreword	3
Contents	4
1. Fishing Licence Checks and Prosecutions	5
2. Illegal Fishing	6
3. Incident Management	7
4. Fisheries Improvements.....	10
5. Monitoring	14

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 GMMC:



89,017 rod licences sold



£1,944,057.50 income generated from rod licence sales



5,532 rod licences checked



118 successful prosecutions



£17,389 fines and costs imposed

Bankside enforcement - Fishing licence checking



One of our area fisheries enforcement officers out on the bankside fishing licence checking.

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 GMMC:

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



Close season boat patrol, River Mersey March 2018



GMMC fisheries enforcement officers prepare for a boat patrol to during the coarse fishing close season

High impact fisheries enforcement work – Joint operation with Cheshire Police – April 2017

Following intelligence received and from the controlling angling club, Lymm AC, with regards to fish theft from the Bridgewater Canal, Runcorn, and a joint EA / Cheshire Police enforcement operation was initiated.

EA covert patrols in the area were undertaken and background checks were completed upon suspected individuals and premises of interest, this culminated in a residential house visit whereby the suspect was interviewed and found to be staying in the UK illegally.

As a result of this the individual was deported and no further reports of poaching on the stretch of canal were received over the last 6 months.



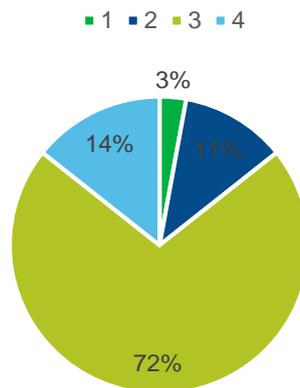
Officers on patrol with English as a second language licence checking material

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.

Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Incident Management Categories



Incident management

GMMC Fisheries dealt with 152 incident reports, varying between illegal fishing, fish mortalities and pollution incidents.



Aeration deployed for algal dieback St Helens AC

Ops and Fisheries make a splash with equipment test

Members of the Operations and Fisheries teams attended a training scenario on the River Weaver in Winsford.

The main aim of the day was to test the equipment used by the teams, which would be used if there was a major pollution incident on a river or watercourse. The teams were testing their hydrogen peroxide equipment and putting their two six inch pumps with a venturi aeration system into action.

They also tested all their aeration units – methods to oxygenate the water in case of pollution. The exercise provided a great opportunity for all to meet and share working practices and work collaboratively. Mike Vernon and Andy Eaves also did an interview with That's TV Manchester.



Operation at River Weaver

4. Fisheries improvements

The boxes below highlight some projects we have delivered followed by the 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. flooding, the Environment Programme or Water Framework Directive budgets however where contribution has included fishing licence income, this has been noted.

£60,000 + **£40,500** = **£100,500**

EA Funding

Match Funding

Fisheries Improvements

In 2017 to 2018 GMMC installed 4 fish passes and easements and opened up 38.5 km of habitat or spawning ground for fish.

Project Title	Outcome or benefit	Partners	EA Funding (£)	Match funding (£)	Total Cost
Pennywort Removal	Improved river access for anglers. Invasive species removal from a popular local fishery	CRT, EA	£5,000	£5,000 In kind	£10,000
Fisheries management weekend	Improved knowledge and promotion of best practice	Angling Trust, EA	£1,000		£1,000
Invasive plant control training	Angling clubs managing non-native species on their river stretches to improve access and reduce invasive species (Japanese Knotweed, Giant hogweed & Himalayan Balsam)	EA, Angling clubs, Bollin Environmental action and Conservation Group (BEACON)	£14,000	£21,500	£35,500
Weir removal assessments	Four weirs assessed for removal and easement On the Irwell catchment	EA, Groundwork, Bradshaw Fly fishers AC	£15,000		£15,000

Birkin Brook	Habitat improvements and buffer fencing	Birkin Fly fishing club	£10,000	£10,000	£20,000
Bury Lido	To drive water quality, habitat and angling improvement projects.	Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM)		£2,000	£2,000
Sankey Canal	Weevils for invasive plant control.	Local Council	£1,000	£2,000	£3,000
Fish easement design	R. Medlock culvert assessed for barrier impacts and subsequent easement designed for installation in 2018 to improve fish passage	EA, Manchester MBC	£14,000		£14,000
Total			£60,000	£40,500	£100,500

Removing floating pennywort from River Weaver August 2017



Filming a YouTube instructional video on Floating island building August 2017



Watch it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNO17cRrhoA>

Fish stocking in the Irwell

We released thousands of coarse fish into the River Irwell to give fish stocks a boost. We invited local media to the event as a mix of 8,000 chub, dace and Barbel were released at three different points along the river.

Trevor Oldfield, Fisheries Officer, conducted interviews in Salford with BBC North West, ITV Granada Reports, BBC Radio Manchester and student news outlet Quay News. It was a great opportunity to promote the Environment Agency's work relating to fisheries; how fishing licence money is used; our work improving water quality and how we work with local groups. Thanks to local Fisheries officer Ian Hayes and the Fisheries team for a job well done!



Trevor Oldfield reporting on BBC North West

Christmas restocking of fish

A Christmas present for anglers who fish the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal. A big thank you to [@NWFishEA](#) [@EnvAgencyNW](#) [@FishFarmEA](#) for working with Little Britain Anglers to secure these fish for local anglers (a nice mix of Crucian Carp, Tench, Roach, Rudd & Bream).



Fish restocking from our fish farm in Calverton

242 licences raked in – generating £7,000

More than £7,000 was raised in fishing licences during a two day Northern Angling Show event held at Event City, in Manchester on 1st and 2nd April.

Our Fisheries team shared a stall at the huge event with our partners from the Canal and River Trust and the Angling Trust. It was estimated that attendance levels exceeded the 16,000 who came to last year's event. The EA presence was well received, with one visitor commenting: "We are pleased to see the fisheries team here – this is welcoming news as many people are keen to learn more about fishing and some are keen to get involved and buy a licence." During the event 242 people bought fishing licences which generated more than £7,000 – this cash will be used to plough back into improving fisheries across the region.

Andy Eaves, Fisheries technical officer, said: "We are most grateful to Catherine Thornton, Alexandra Watt and Sally Shawcross for their hard effort – they sold many licences along with the team in a relatively short space of time. It was well worth being involved with this event because of the high levels of public engagement – people were really pleased to see us. We generated a lot of income too."



For further information please contact [Andy Eaves](#)

Northern Angling Show

Northwest angling show 2018



The GMMC fisheries team attended the North West Angling Show 2018 over the weekend and invited partners such as CEFAS, Angling Trust, Canal and River Trust and the Institute of Fisheries Management.

The show was attended by as many as 14,000 anglers over the two days. Many anglers came to talk to us as a one stop shop regarding information on angling.

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 GMMC:

83 Waterbodies
assessed for
fish 2016/17

20% of waterbodies
assessed were at
good status or above
for fish

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

Monitoring

Netting Survey Hayfield AC Glossop October 2017 part of our annual netting survey programme for angling clubs to improve knowledge of the fishery status and management of their fisheries (17 surveys undertaken).



Fish netting

Twitter – NWFishEA Account

The GMMC initiated NW Fisheries twitter account continues to be a success amongst our customers, with our friendly informative tweets being warmly received, re-tweeted, favoured and commented upon!

We primarily use Twitter to quickly promote and publicise the great work we do, but it's also a great way to engage with our customers and receive thoughts and feedback on a whole range of fisheries issues – from fishing licence changes, to incident response to re-stocking – the list goes on!

With the support of the comms team, we have rolled out access to our neighbouring NW team, Cumbria & Lancs, who have been tweeting their work too, further adding more 'salmonid' work content to our 'coarse' content, and therefore garnering interest from another range of angling customer.



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