

Media release issued jointly by the Environment Agency and Richmond & District Angling Society

Fish released below Richmond part of River Swale improvement project

The fish population of the River Swale below Richmond was boosted when the Environment Agency and Richmond & District Angling Society (R&DAS) released over 2,000 juvenile barbel into the river.

As part of an improvement initiative involving the Agency and local angling clubs, it is hoped that a further 6,000 barbel will be released into selective fisheries above Topcliffe Weir over three years to give nature a helping hand. The stocking is being carried out in response to declining numbers of barbel above this barrier in recent years. The fish will be sourced from the Environment Agency's hatchery at Calverton in Nottinghamshire.

Habitat improvement is an important feature of the joint initiative and angling organizations such as R&DAS have been playing their part.

R&DAS Secretary Phil Brown said that the society was busy on a wide-ranging programme of habitat improvement along many miles of river fished by its members between Richmond and Great Langton.

Based on a detailed survey carried out by the well-respected Wild Trout Trust, R&DAS had embarked on a series of activities to improve habitat for fish to feed, shelter and breed in the river and its feeder streams. The initiatives would also benefit other wildlife such as aquatic insects and species which feed on them.

David Morley, Environment Agency Fisheries Technical Officer for the River Swale, said that the EA had been involved in similar initiatives on Yorkshire rivers over recent years collaborating with clubs whose members were prepared to roll up their sleeves.

“Projects on rivers throughout the Yorkshire region have improved conditions for both wildlife and anglers. With the help of angling clubs and habitat improvement groups such as the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, along with cooperation from environmentally aware landowners, a lot has been achieved and I am sure that the River Swale will see similar benefits as the improvement projects roll out.”

A member of Richmond & District Angling Society releases a batch of barbel into the River Swale.

