



## **New Hatchery Provides Welcome Boost for Kennet Chub Stocks**

This week saw the first release of around 10,000 chub fry bred in the new Kennet coarse fish hatchery. The aim is to help replenish stocks of fish in the river Kennet whose recruitment has been severely impacted by siltation of spawning grounds from the re-opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal and the vast numbers of non-native signal crayfish which now inhabit this once famous chalk stream.

The Berkshire hatchery, which opened in February, is situated close to the river on land donated by the Englefield Estate. It is a collaborative project led by Reading and District Angling Association (RDAA) and involving angling clubs and fisheries along the Kennet Valley including Newbury AA, Civil Service AS, Red Spinners AS, CALPAC and Action for the River Kennet. The project group chaired by longtime Kennet angler and RDAA president Martin Salter with support from the Kennet Valley Fisheries Association (KVFA).

The brood fish, mainly chub with some barbel, were netted from the river by the local Environment Agency fisheries team at the point of spawning. The eggs were then harvested and mixed with milt from the males, with the resulting fry nurtured in the hatchery until they were big enough to survive in the wild, when around 70% were reintroduced to the river. The remaining 30%, including 1,000 barbel, are to be kept and fed on at the hatchery for longer and released later as mature fish. Only brood fish from the Kennet will be used.

The first two release sites, selected for their proximity to natural spawning grounds in the river, were on the Civil Service water at Hambridge below Newbury and on the CALPAC stretch above Padworth Bridge. Both sites are upstream of waters controlled by Newbury AA, Red Spinners and RDAA.

Del Shackleford, RDAA Fisheries Officer said:

“After all the hard work in securing the funding, finding the site, building the hatchery and obtaining the necessary permissions it was immensely gratifying to see a new generation of Kennet chub swimming off to hopefully become healthy, mature fish capable of reproducing and regenerating this lovely river.”

Dougie Hull, Chairman of Newbury AA said:

“I was delighted to represent Newbury Angling Association at the first of many future stockings of coarse fish into the River Kennet. The RDAA fish hatchery is a fantastic concept and a well-put together long-term project to bring back the river to hopefully its former glory.”

Ian Campbell, Fisheries Officer for Civil Service AS added:

“We are please and proud that CSAS's waters were chosen to be the site of the first release in this great project.”

Production is planned to substantially increase next year with a target of 200,000 dace, roach, chub and barbel to be bred and released back into the river.

ENDS

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Pictures

1. Hambridge release with Ian Campbell (CSAS), Dougie Hull and Paul Futcher (NAA)
2. Padworth release with Del Shackelford (RDAA) and Keith Johnson (KVFA).
3. Chub fry in their new home.