Fish population survey report

River Ivel

[May / June 2016]

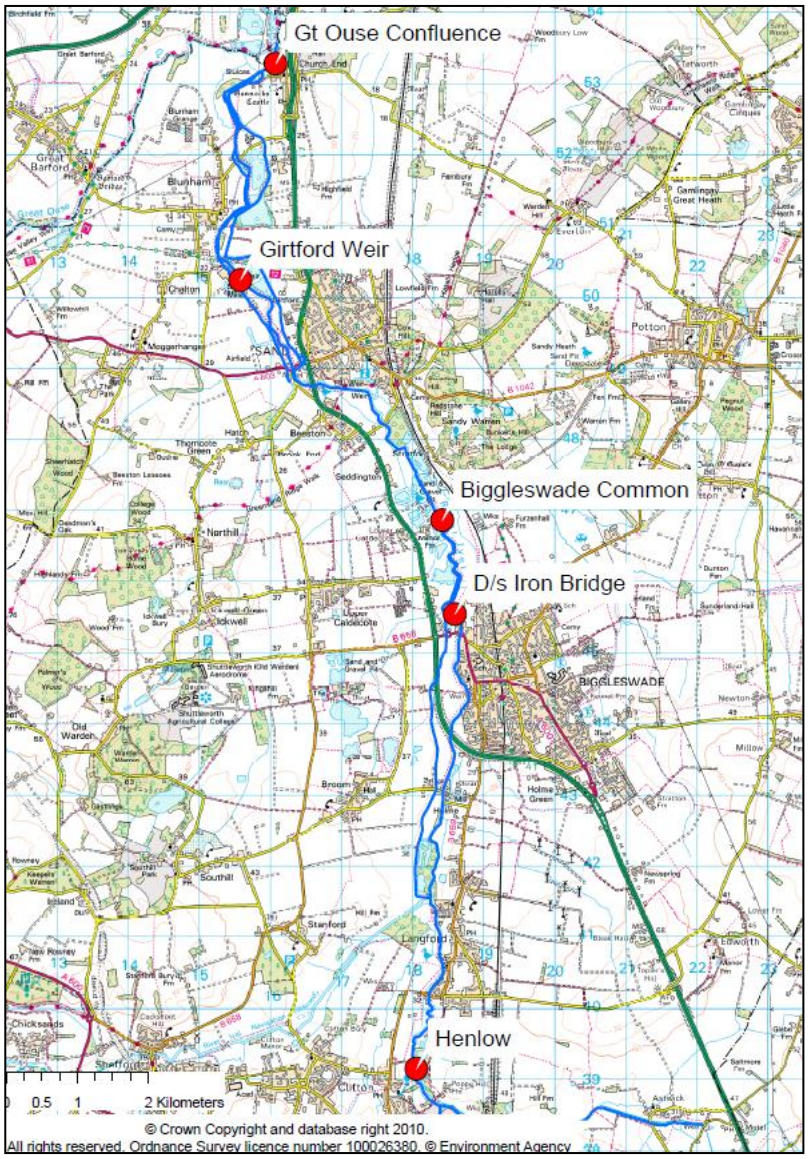
This report provides a summary of results from recent fish population surveys on the River Ivel between Henlow and Tempsford. The surveys were carried out to assess the health of the river and enable successful management of our principal fisheries.

Image 1: A specimen Chub from Tempsford

Summary

- Five sites on the River Ivel were surveyed by electric fishing between the 11th of May and the 10th of June 2016.
- A total of 604 fish of 15 species were recorded.
- Chub and dace were the most numerous species captured and were recorded at all sites sampled.
- The average density and standing crop estimates derived from the five sites surveyed equates to 3.98 fish per 100m² and 2323 grams per 100m² respectively.

Site locations



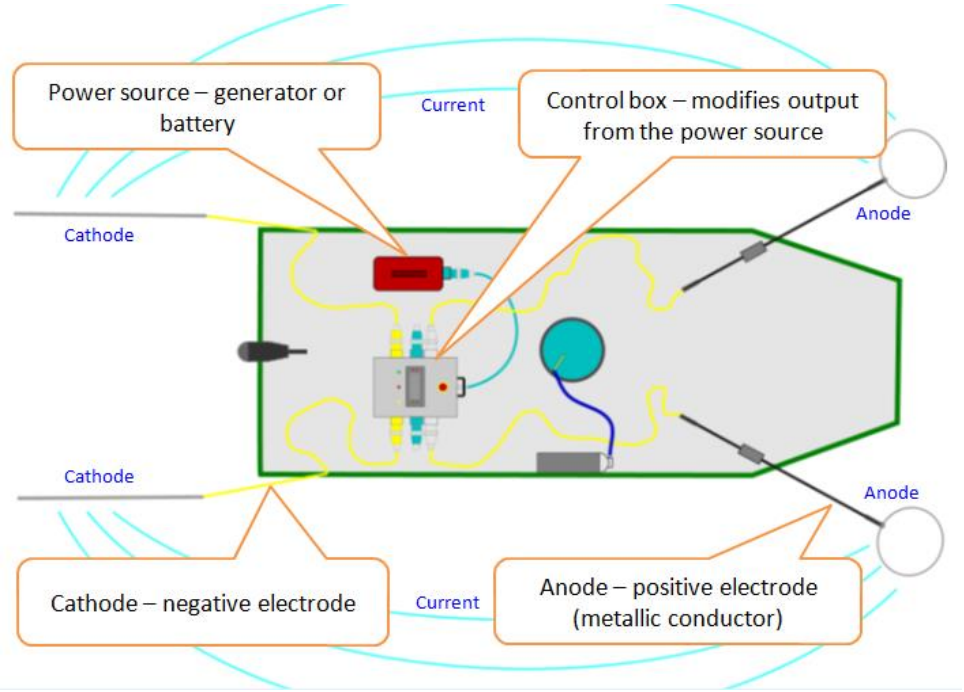
Introduction to Environment Agency fisheries surveys

The Environment Agency has a statutory duty to maintain, improve and develop fisheries. Our policy is to do this in a way that maximises the social, recreational and economic benefits arising from the sustainable exploitation of the fish stocks that underpin fisheries. To help deliver this duty, we have a National Fisheries Monitoring Programme (NFMP) to describe the status of our fish populations and inform our fisheries management to meet international (WFD, Eel regulations, ICES reporting), national and local data needs.

Sites are regularly reviewed to maintain a representative sample of fish populations and the water body as a whole in order to retain a comparable dataset. Sites designated for the national fisheries monitoring programme cannot be altered, unless there is a valid health and safety concern or there has been a review of policy during the monitoring period.

Survey methodology

The 5 sites on the River Ivel were sampled using electric fishing methodology. This technique uses the physiological effect of an electric field in water to attract and immobilise fish. Electrodes, immersed in the water, stimulate a fishes nervous system so that it swims towards the operator, or is unable to swim away, which can then be caught with a hand net. In shallow rivers and streams it is often possible to wade upstream within the river channel using generator powered equipment towed within a small boat. When rivers deepen or site depth is variable, electric fishing from within a flat-bottomed boat is generally the preferred method. The boat is manoeuvred downstream on long ropes by an operative on either bank controlling the speed, direction of travel and in-channel positioning. The image below shows the typical components of an electric fishing system.



Stop nets are positioned across the channel isolating the survey site preventing fish from migrating into and out of the survey area. The electric fishing operation is repeated until a 50% reduction in the total number of fish caught has been achieved. Captured fish are measured to the nearest millimetre (to the fork of the tail) and scales are taken for age, growth and other statistical analyses at the National Fish Laboratory in Brampton.

Density and standing crop results are reported utilising fish greater than 99mm in length as electric fishing method has been shown to loose efficiency on fish below this length. Numbers of juvenile fish and small species such as minnow and bullhead should therefore be viewed as a minimum estimate only.

Results

- Five sites on the River Ivel were surveyed by electric fishing between the 11th of May and the 10th of June 2016.
- A total of 604 fish of 15 species were recorded.
- Chub and dace were the most numerous species captured and were recorded at all sites sampled.
- The average density and standing crop estimates derived from the 5 sites surveyed equates to 3.98 fish per 100m² and 2323 grams per 100m² respectively.

Table 1: Total number and largest (mm) fish captured for key species during the 2016 survey.

Site	Chub		Dace		Barbel		Roach	
	Number	Largest	Number	Largest	Number	Largest	Number	Largest
Henlow	27	496mm	64	230mm	0	-	24	154mm
D/s Iron Bridge	63	516mm	3	144mm	4	591mm	19	147mm
Biggleswade Common	2	464mm	3	194mm	0	-	4	184m
Girtford Weir	4	482mm	11	165mm	6	760mm	0	-
Gt. Ouse Confluence	32	535mm	44	184mm	0	-	9	100mm

Table 2& 3: Density estimate and Standing crop estimate for fish >99mm

Table 2: - Results (Cs) Table for Density											>99mm
Species	Survey Site Reference Number										Mean
	CAM355 (11/05/2016)	+/-CI	CAM358 (16/05/2016)	Single catch	CAM359 (17/05/2016)	+/-CI	CAM361 (10/06/2016)	+/-CI	CAM362A (19/05/2016)	+/-CI	
Chub [Leuciscus cephalus]	1.45	0.29	3.15	-	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.03	2.06	0.10	1.37
Dace [Leuciscus leuciscus]	2.85	0.32	0.1	-	0.09	0	0.67	2.21	1.92	1.82	1.13
Gudgeon [Gobio gobio]	0.1	0.10	0.45	-	0	0	0	-	1.53	0.79	0.42
Pike [Esox lucius]	0.25	0.05	0.55	-	0.25	0.05	0.39	0.13	0.33	0	0.35
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	1.00	0.10	0.2	-	0.06	0.06	0	-	0.07	0	0.27
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	0.15	0	0.3	-	0.25	0.19	0.08	0.04	0.53	0.18	0.26
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0	-	0.1	-	0.03	0	0.06	0	0.20	0	0.08
Barbel [Barbus barbus]	0	-	0.2	-	0	-	0.17	0.03	0	-	0.07
Stone loach [Barbatula barbatula]	0.05	0.17	0	-	0.03	0.10	0	0	0	-	0.02
Common [wild] carp [Cyprinus carpio]	0	-	0	-	0.03	0.10	0.03	0	0	-	0.01
Ruffe [Gymnocephalus cernuus]	0	-	0.05	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0.01
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0	-	0	-	0	-	0.03	0	0	-	0.01
Total	**5.84**	**0.49**	**5.10**	**-**	**0.80**	**0.26**	**1.53**	**2.21**	**6.63**	**1.99**	**3.98**

Table 3: - Results (Cs) Table for Standing Crop											>99mm
Species	Survey Site Reference Number										Mean
	CAM355 (11/05/2016)	+/-CI	CAM358 (16/05/2016)	Single catch	CAM359 (17/05/2016)	+/-CI	CAM361 (10/06/2016)	+/-CI	CAM362A (19/05/2016)	+/-CI	
Chub [Leuciscus cephalus]	1273.4	254.4	3105.2	-	66.8	65.4	94.4	28.3	1704.3	86.8	1248.8
Pike [Esox lucius]	152.8	31.7	896.7	-	507.4	107.7	853.6	286.2	674.7	0	617.0
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	115.7	0	242.5	-	242.3	186.9	91.9	44.8	147.3	50.6	167.9
Barbel [Barbus barbus]	0		309.8	-	0		358.0	55.1	0		133.6
Dace [Leuciscus leuciscus]	196.5	22.0	3.0	-	7.8	0	22.2	73.4	49.8	47.1	55.8
Common [wild] carp [Cyprinus carpio]	0		0	-	93.4	317.1	131.6	0	0		45.0
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0		69.5	-	12.6	0	10.8	0	60.5	0.0	30.7
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	32.1	3.3	5.5	-	4.4	4.3	0		1.0	0	8.6
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0		0	-	0		41.9	0	0		8.4
Gudgeon [Gobio gobio]	2.5	2.5	8.8	-	0	0	0		24.3	12.6	7.1
Ruffe [Gymnocephalus cernuus]	0		1.7		0		0		0		0.3
Stone loach [Barbatula barbatula]	1.1	3.7	0	-	0.4	1.2	0	0	0		0.3
Total	**1774.1**	**257.3**	**4642.7**	**-**	**935.0**	**389.1**	**1604.4**	**305.2**	**2661.9**	**111.7**	**2323.6**

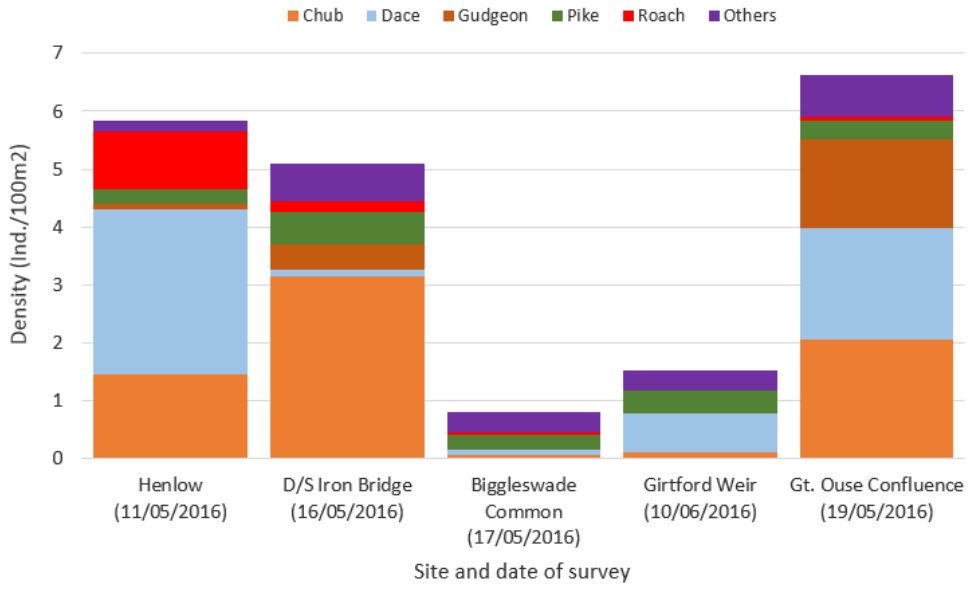


Figure 1: Density estimate (number of fish >99mm per 100m²) by species across all survey sites.

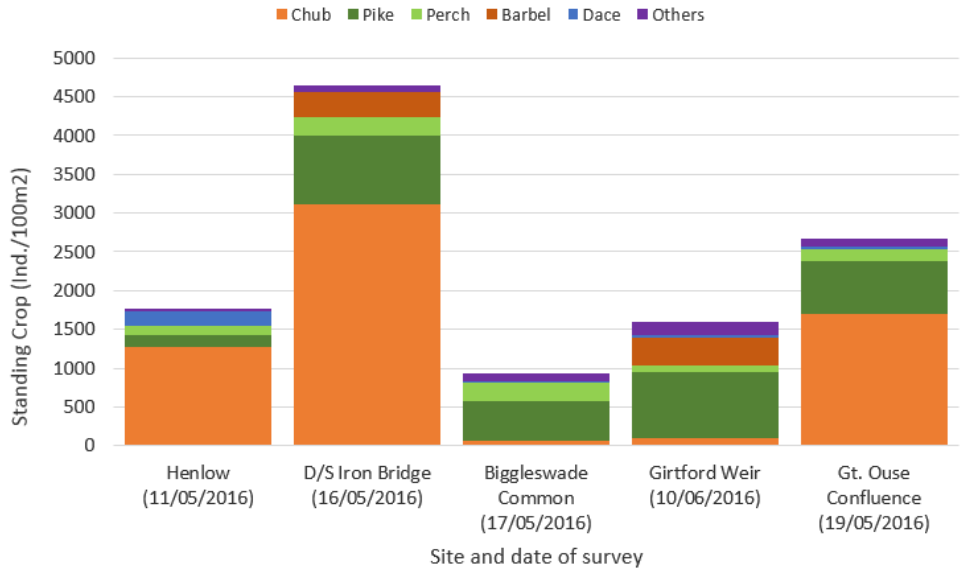


Figure 2: Standing crop estimate (grams of fish per 100m²) across all survey sites.

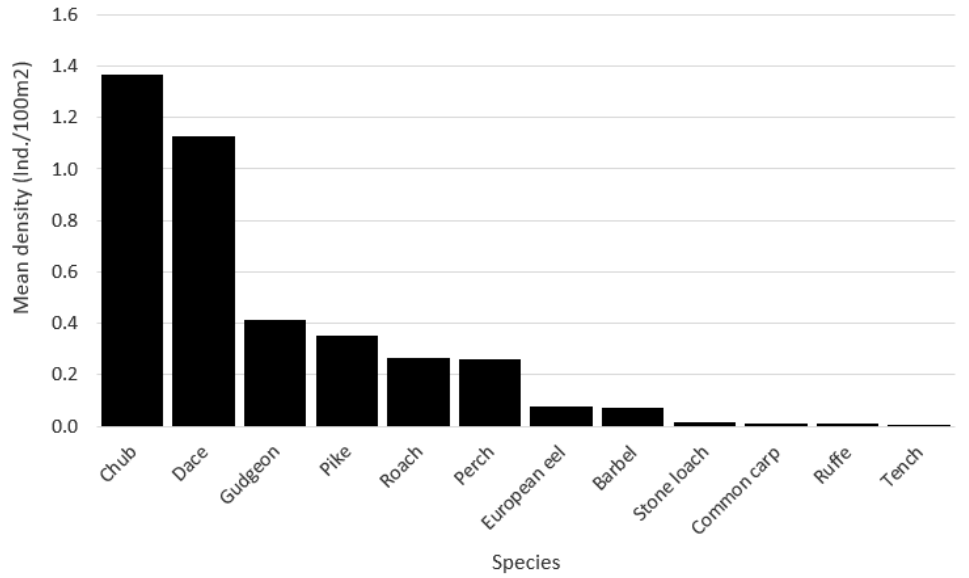


Figure 3: Mean Density by Species 2016

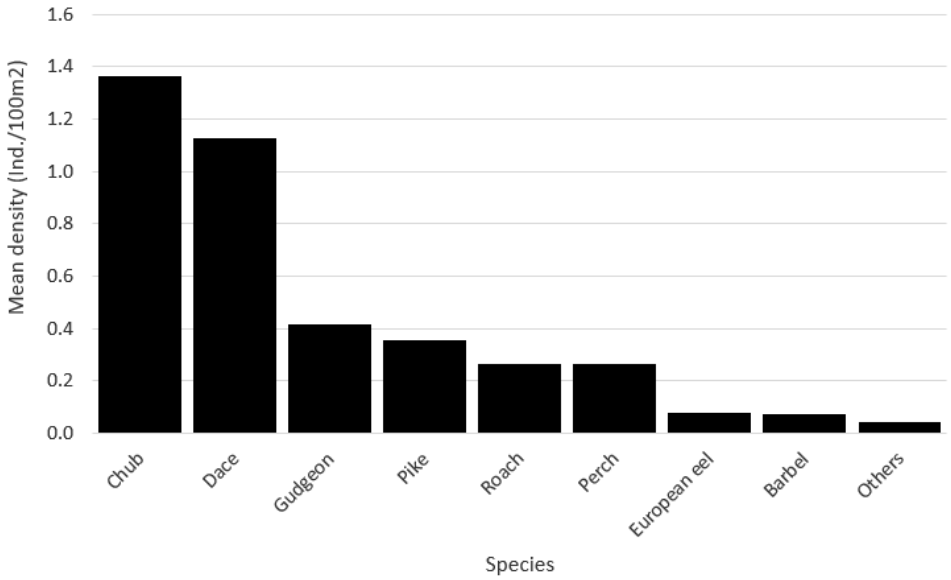


Figure 4: Mean Standing crop by Species 2016

Discussion

Mean population density and standing crop have declined slightly since the 2013 survey. Much of this loss may be attributed to the poor representation by roach in this current survey cycle. Roach populations had appeared to be steadily increasing between 2002 and 2007 however subsequent surveys have shown a reduced population density. The majority of the roach caught in 2013 were at the Great Ouse Confluence site and given the close proximity of the main River Ouse it is quite likely that fish stocks migrate between the two.

The highest population density recorded during the 2016 survey was recorded at the Great Ouse Confluence site at Tempsford with a population estimate of 6.63 Ind./100m^2. This site also held the highest population density in the 2013 survey and this was attributed to the quality of habitat available in the locality with riparian tree cover, extensive macrophyte growth, shallow and fast flowing riffles and slow deep pool areas offering a variety of ecological niches for fish to exploit. Species composition and population density on the Ivel is, like on many rivers, closely associated with habitat quality. Henlow, Iron Bridge and Tempsford survey areas are situated on areas of the channel with riffle and pool habitat whereas habitat at Biggleswade Common is comparatively poor with only a pair of flow deflectors breaking up the uniformity of the reach. Girtford Weir is also somewhat uniform and lacking riparian cover within the survey area, however the weir pool at the upper extent of the survey site does attract and hold fish of many species.

The D/s Iron Bridge site held the highest biomass recorded during the 2016 survey cycle with a standing crop estimate of 4642 g/100m^2, a figure which can generally be attributed to the large number of chub present to specimen size. The 2016 survey found that chub were the dominant species within the Ivel by both density and standing crop. Specimen chub were captured at all locations sampled and the largest individual recorded weighed 6lb 8oz and was captured at Tempsford. Chub density at site level varied between 3.15 Ind./100m2 and 0.06 Ind./100m2 and a mean population estimate derived from the five sites surveyed equated to 1.37 Ind./100m^2, a figure almost identical to the 2013 result when 1.35 Ind./100m^2 was recorded. The standing crop of chub at site level varied between 3105 g/100m^2 and 66 g/100m^2 with a mean biomass of 1241.5 g/100m^2. Chub were present to 17 years old and showed a percentage standard growth (P.S.G) of 96%.

Dace were subdominant by density and were represented at all sites surveyed, however the majority of the fish were caught at two locations, Henlow and Tempsford. Scale reading showed that the oldest dace recorded was 7 years old and that the species was exhibiting slow growth at 85% (P.S.G).

Perch were the 6th most populous species recorded (>99mm) and ranked 3rd in terms of standing crop due to the large average size of the fish. The seven perch caught at Biggleswade common all measured between 340mm and 371mm in length and specimen perch of >300mm in length were captured at all five sites sampled. It is likely that these fish are exploiting the rivers signal crayfish population as an easy food source. Images of some of these fish follow at the end of this report.

Barbel were found at two of the five sites sampled, D/S Iron Bridge and Girtford Weir, and although only a small number of individuals were captured some exceptional fish were recorded which included two “double figure” fish of 12lb 8oz and 13lb 8oz. The remaining fish captured weighed 3lb 12oz, 6lb and 8lb 7oz and two <200mm barbel were also recorded. Scale reading indicated that the oldest barbel captured was 14 years old and that the two smaller individuals were stocked fish introduced by the EA.

Images: 2 and 3 specimen barbel from Girtford.

Health of the fish population

The 2016 survey at **Henlow** found that dace were dominant by density survey and chub dominant by standing crop. These two species show an interesting interaction at this location with the recorded dace density declining as chub populations increase and growing as chub populations decline. Chub are omnivorous and will quite happily predate on smaller fish species, which may help explain why dace densities are generally lower when large numbers of chub are present. A total of 27 chub were caught in 2016 which is a comparatively poor result for this location. The 2016 catch represents a slight decline in density from the 1.9 Ind./100m^2 recorded in 2013 result but a greater loss from the 4.9 Ind./100m^2 recorded in 2010. This should not be of immediate concern as there has been considerable fluctuation of stock at this location in the past, density dropping considerably before recovering in the subsequent survey. The 2013 Ivel report stated that the reduced chub population observed in that survey cycle was likely due to environmental factors and that the cold 2013 spring had led to reduced macrophyte growth with very little cover available at the time of survey. It was suggested that this had caused fish to search out areas of improved habitat other than the survey site. If populations remain low at this location, or continue to decline, then further investigation will be required. The fisheries survey team noted that a significant amount of erosion was occurring at this location and introducing large volumes of sediment onto the riffle habitat constructed by the EA to enhance spawning of rheophillic species such as chub and dace. Habitat data collected during the previous 2013 survey recorded that the bed substrate was composed of 50% gravel, 10% sand and 40% silt. Data collected in 2016 indicates that sand and fine silt is now dominant and less than 20% of the substrate is gravel. This erosion will need to be addressed to stop further degradation of this important habitat. Work should aim to stabilise the eroding bank faces and introduce features such as woody material to scour the accumulated sediment & monies have now been secured from the Fisheries Improvement Fund to undertake this restorative work.

Image 4: Bank side erosion at Henlow.

The **D/s Iron Bridge** survey site at Biggleswade provided the highest biomass to be recorded during the 2016 survey cycle with a standing crop estimate of 4642 g/100m². This figure which can chiefly be attributed to the locations chub population. Catches of chub at this location have been unusually consistent in recent surveys with a total of 63 individuals caught in the 2010, 2013 and 2016 survey cycles. Although chub density is closely comparable to the 2013 previous result, the mean density estimate is currently lower than that recorded in the mid to late 2000's. Examination of length frequency data (figure 5) shows this can be attributed to either the absence, or poor catches, of younger year classes which have been recorded sporadically and have been all but absent in the last two survey cycles. The oldest chub recorded during the 2016 survey was aged as 17+ years, an age approaching the upper limit of this species' natural lifespan.

In terms of larger chub the 2016 survey at the D/S Iron Bridge site recorded an above average number of fish >300mm in length and represents the fourth largest catch of chub >400mm to be made at this location. It should also be remembered that the 2016 result is also only a minimum estimate of the population present and based on a single catch.

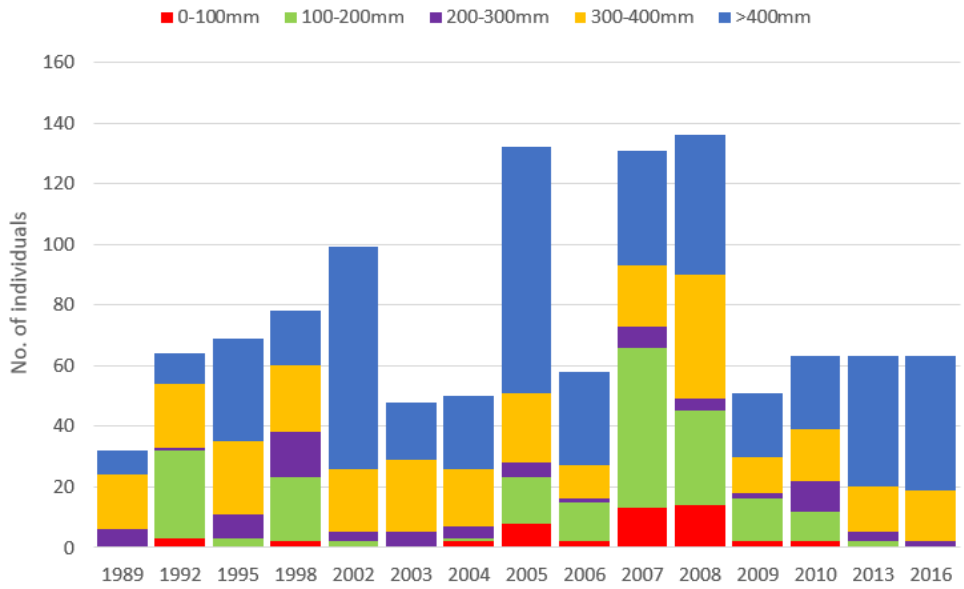


Figure 5: Numbers of chub at the Iron Bridge site 1989 – 2016 by length. Note the sporadic representation by smaller fish.

The survey at **Biggleswade Common** provided both the lowest density and standing crop estimates recorded during 2016 with estimates of 0.8 ind/100m² and 935 g/100m² respectively. This result is not the lowest catch made at this site (0.3 Ind./100m² in 2006) but this is still a disappointing result. Very few shoaling silver fish were recorded and with the exception of minor species such as bullhead and stone loach the majority of the fish captured were predatory species composed of pike to 726 mm (8 individuals) and specimen perch to 371mm (7 individuals). Two large chub were also recorded, one of which was 11 years old.

The consistently poor results over successive summer survey cycles is likely to be due to the lack of habitat complexity at this location, the channel form being fairly uniform and lacking any form of riparian tree growth throughout the survey area. Cattle poaching and bank erosion is occurring in this vicinity of the survey site permitting an input of fine sediment into the river.

The **Girtford Weir** catch included six barbel, three large "specimen" fish and three younger samples. Of the older fish, one individual was 13 years old and two were found to be 14 years old whist the three smaller fish were all 2 years old. This catch is the second highest barbel density and standing crop estimate to be recorded at this site, the highest catch being made in 2007 with four fish between 334 mm and 774 mm in length. The inclusion of large barbel in 2016 also means that the current standing crop estimate is the fifth highest to be recorded at this site. The current density estimate is comparable to that recorded at this site since 2009, although higher densities had been recorded prior to this due to the inclusion of roach, dace and occasionally common bream.

The Ouse Confluence at **Tempsford** recorded the highest density estimate of the survey at 6.63 Ind./100m^2. This density estimate represents only half of that recorded in 2013 (12.54 Ind/100m^2) and around two thirds of that recorded in 2010 (9.76 Ind/100m^2) and much of this loss can be attributed to a reduction in the roach population at this site. Chub density at Tempsford had been steadily declining since 2005 however; the 2016 survey recorded a much improved population estimate, which is above the long-term average for this site. This catch of specimen chub also meant that this location also returned the second highest standing crop estimate of the 2016 survey cycle (2661.9 g/100m) of which 64% was composed of chub (1704 g/100m). The close proximity of this site to the main River Ouse means that there is likely to be stock migration between the two watercourses, and the largest chub caught at Tempsford in 2016 was recognised as being a fish caught on rod and line from the nearby River Ouse during the previous winter.

Standing Crop & Density estimate of the River Ivel 2002 – 2016

Mean standing crop estimates **Figure 6** (below) derived from data collected since 2002 demonstrates the dominance of chub within the River Ivel and also shows the absence of common bream from surveys conducted since 2008. Although unimportant in terms of density, common bream fish have sometimes represented a significant part of the biomass recorded such as in 2003 when a catch of twenty-six mature individuals between 420mm and 535mm in length was made. The final representation of this species was made in 2008 and consisted of eight fish between 470mm and 580mm in length aged between 12 and 19 years old. The species is extremely nomadic and may be utilising other areas of the channel, however their continued absence and advanced age when last sampled may suggest that these particular fish are lost.

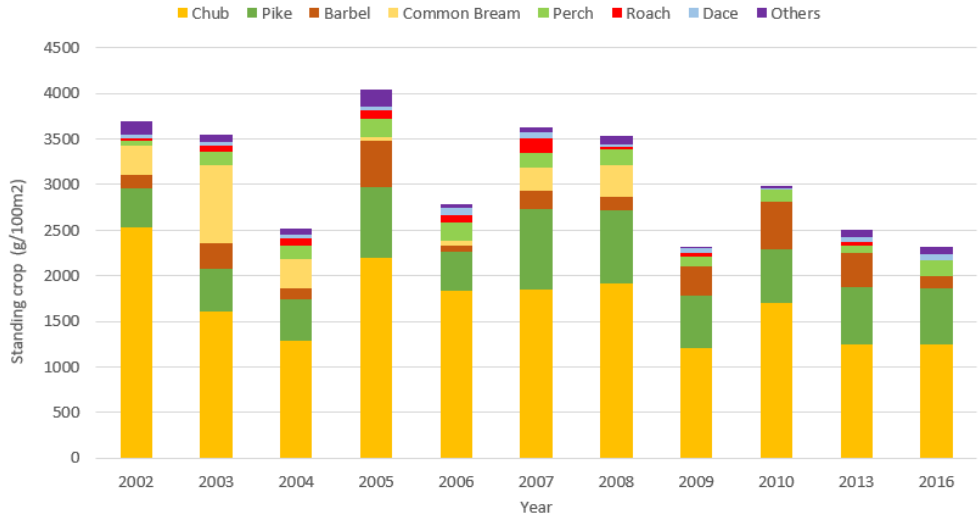


Figure 6: Mean standing crop estimate by species 2002-2016

Figure 6b (overleaf) shows the mean density estimate recorded over successive survey cycles since 2002. The highest density estimate, recorded in 2005, can be attributed to a large catch of almost 800 bleak made at Tempsford, fish that are likely to have moved in from the nearby main River Great Ouse. Limited representation by roach has been partly responsible for the decline in overall population density observed in recent surveys, catches of this species having been quite variable over the last five cycles. The species had been showing an increasing population density between 2002 and 2007 but fared worse after this and it is plausible that the spring flooding which occurred in 2007 & 2008 was responsible for some of this loss by displacing fish downstream and reducing spawning success. The improved catch of roach made in 2013 was almost entirely recorded at Tempsford and, like the bleak of 2005, may have been transitory fish that had moved into the Lower River Ivel from the Great Ouse.

The majority of dace caught in 2016 were found at Henlow and Tempsford and provided a mean density estimate of 1.13 Ind./100m^2, a figure closely comparable to the 2013 result of 1.11 Ind./100m^2. Although the total catch of this species is comparatively modest (125 individuals) this actually represents the second highest dace density recorded on the River Ivel since 2002. The slow growth rate noted in 2016 was also observed in numerous other survey cycles suggesting that this species has not been achieving its full potential for a considerable period, potentially due to competition from the dominant chub stock and the invasive American signal crayfish. See **Table 4** overleaf.

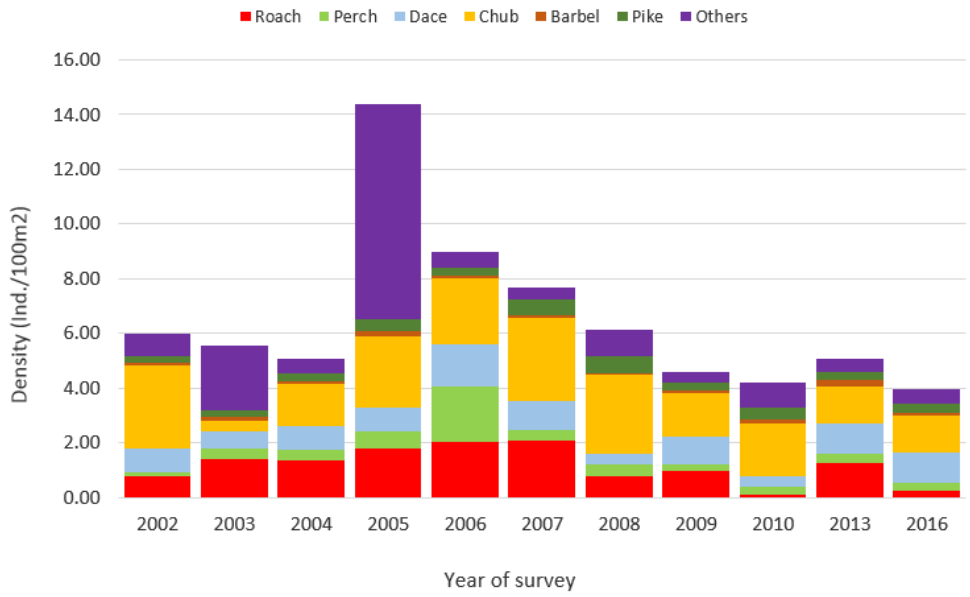
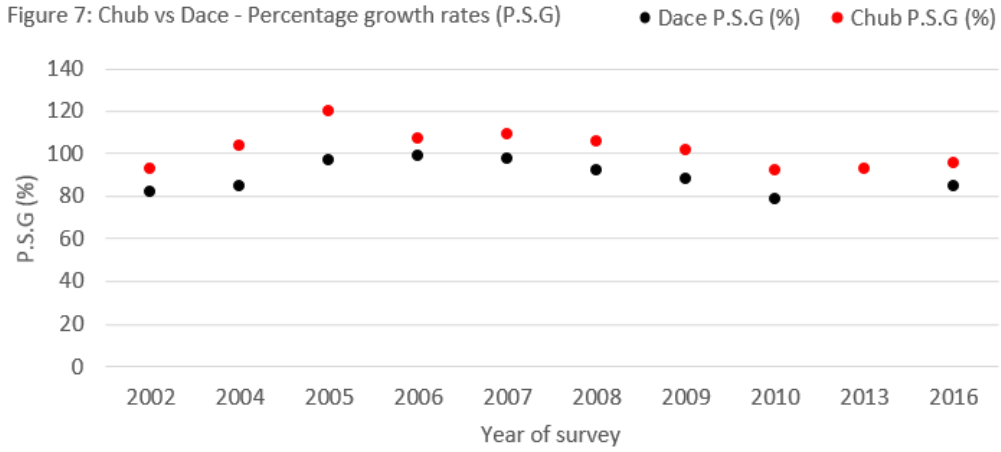


Figure 6b: Mean density estimate by species 2002-2016

Specimen chub were recorded at all sites sampled but poor representation by younger year classes remains a concern as the population currently appears skewed towards large, older individuals. While this offers excellent angling potential with a high average size, it is not beneficial to the long-term health of the fish population which will require younger fish to replace those lost to natural mortality. The possibility exists that the youngest of these fish are present, but are elsewhere and avoiding the somewhat risky company of their larger, predatory, brethren however, length frequency data from the river as a whole shows that of the 98 chub caught; only 3 were below 200 mm in length. By comparison the total catch of chub in 2007 was composed of a similar 97 individuals, however in this instance almost a third of these fish were <200 mm length and were predominantly spawned during 2003 and 2004. The sample size is too small to draw any firm conclusions; however, it is possible that the low flow winter of 2004 allowed increased survival of the younger year classes. Chub have displayed average growth rates over the last seven survey cycles although the percentage standard growth figure had slowly declined since 2005 and has shown a slight increase since 2010. See table 5 below. There is correlation between chub and dace growth rates (**Figure 7**) as both of these species take advantage of the low flow conditions in the 2004-2006 period.

Table 4: Dace growth rates	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2016
Growth rate	Slow	Slow	Average	Average	Average	Slow	Slow	Slow	Slow
P.S.G (%)	82	85	97	99	98	92	88	79	85

Table 5: Chub growth rates	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2013	2016
Growth rate	Average	Average	Faster than average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
P.S.G (%)	93	104	120	107	109	106	102	92	93	96



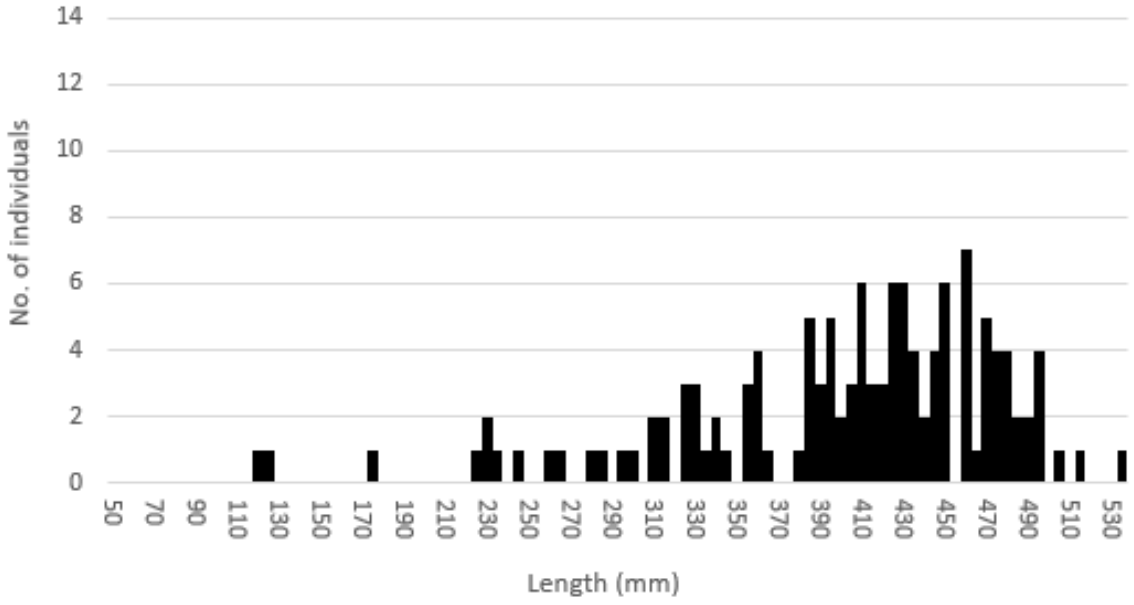


Figure 8: Chub length frequency 2016

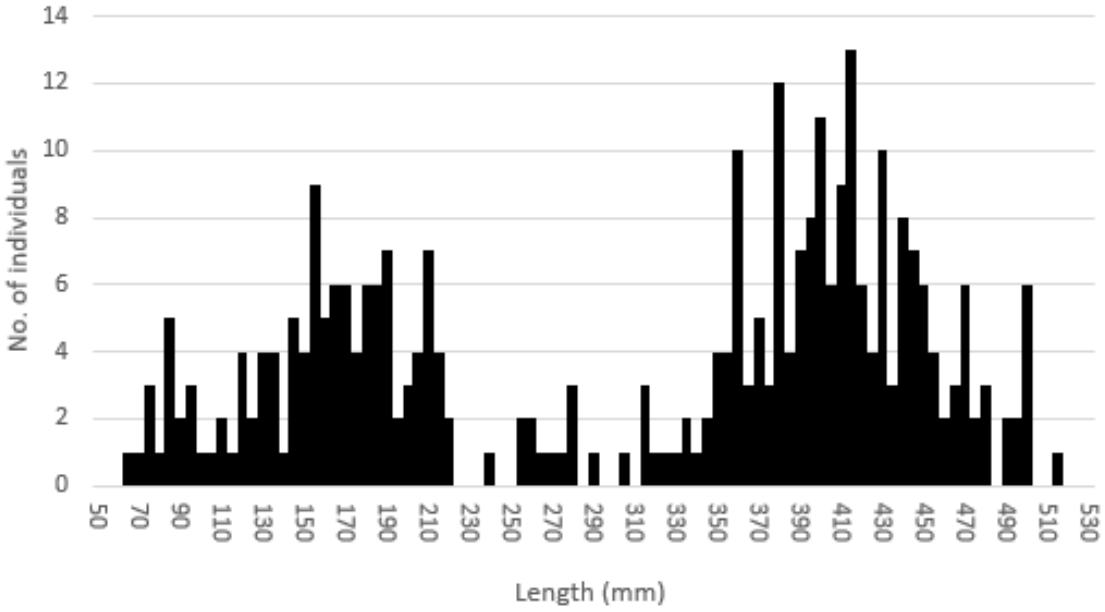


Figure 8: Chub length frequency 2007

Gravel jetting

Gravel jetting has been undertaken on the River Ivel around the Biggleswade area and works by using high-pressure water jets to force accumulated sediment back into suspension and out of a rivers gravel bed. This fisheries management technique is used to clean the gravel 'riffle' areas utilised by species such as chub, dace and barbel as a spawning media.

When excess sediment enters a river channel from sources such as bank erosion, cattle poaching and crayfish activity, this loading of fine sediment may infiltrate or smother this important substrate. Overlaying sediment may stop the fish from using these areas, whilst sediment accumulated amongst the gravel will reduce the through flow of oxygenated water to eggs laid in the gravel, preventing their development.

Reducing sediment infiltration and keeping key gravel areas clean can therefore help contribute to increased productivity of the river and help improve fish populations in the local area.

Habitat projects & the River Ivel Restoration Project

The River Ivel Restoration Project is a 5-year Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) funded scheme, which aims to modify or remove obsolete in-channel structures and embankments on the River Ivel to enable the free movement of fish and eels, aid naturalisation of the river and improve connectivity of valuable floodplain habitats whilst providing flood risk benefits.

Working upstream from the River Ivel's confluence with the Ouse at Roxton the project will initially aim to trial the lifting of the sluice at Tempsford in Autumn 2016. This will be followed by the removal of the fixed weir at South Mills which currently represents a significant barrier to fish and eel movement. Further phases will look at the structures in the river reach between Sandy and Arlesey. The removal of in-channel barriers will enable connectivity of fragmented fish populations and enhance flow and channel form diversity to support fish diversity and abundance.

In 2015/16 the Environment Agency worked with Bedford Rural Communities Agency to deliver small scale in-channel and bankside fisheries enhancements which included:

- The installation of cattle drinkers and woody debris flow deflectors on Biggleswade Common to reduce cattle poaching and fine sediment input and to promote flow diversity to self-cleanse remnant gravel spawning beds.
- Riparian tree planting on The Riddy LNR to provide shade and cover and future woody debris input.

Further enhancement works are due to be undertaken in 2016/17 funded via Water Framework Directive (WFD) GiA and the Fisheries Improvement Programme.

Stocking

An ongoing stocking programme will see chub, dace and barbel, bred at the Environment Agency's Calverton Fish Farm, stocked at key locations to supplement fish populations and complement areas of habitat improvement. The 2016 stocking programme saw 500 barbel introduced at Biggleswade (below), 500 barbel at Henlow and 2000 chub stocked upstream of Langford Mill.

Image 5: Stocking barbel at Biggleswade 08/12/2016

Non-native species

Signal crayfish are widespread throughout the River Ivel and their detrimental effect on a rivers ecology is well known. This may be by competition for food, direct predation of fish, eggs and fry and by mobilisation of sediment by foraging and causing bank collapses when burrowing.

Another non-native species noted was the plant Himalayan Balsam *(Impatiens glandulifera).* When established this plant can quickly dominate and shades out native species completely changing the appearance of riverbanks with its large attractive flowers. When the shallow rooted plant dies back during the winter months it leaves river banks which may be susceptible to increased erosion.

When excess sediment enters a river channel from sources such as bank erosion, cattle poaching and crayfish activity, this loading of fine sediment may infiltrate or smother this important substrate. Overlaying sediment may stop the fish from using these areas, whilst sediment accumulated amongst the gravel will reduce the through flow of oxygenated water to eggs laid in the gravel, preventing their development.

Reducing sediment infiltration and keeping key gravel areas clean can therefore help contribute to increased productivity of the river and help improve fish populations in the local area.

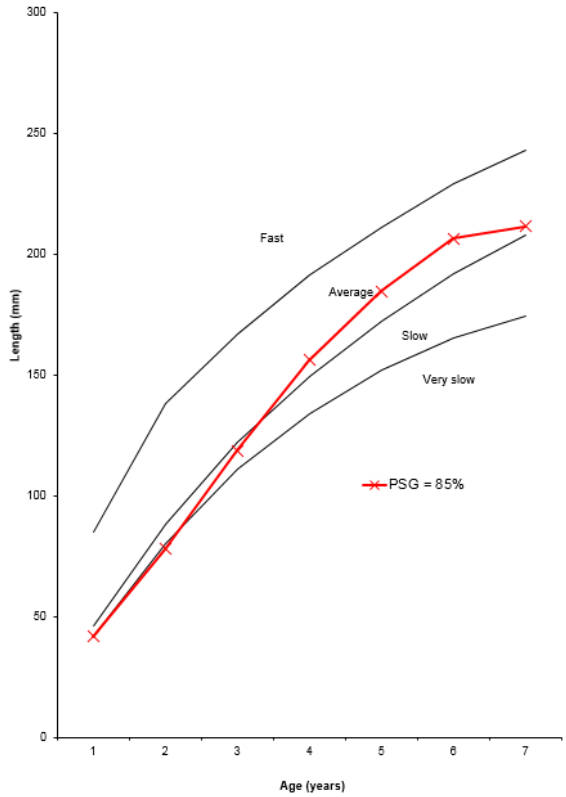
Anglers can help stop the spread of invasive non-native species by using the check, clean & dry protocol, details of which are included at the back of this report or by visiting:

http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/biosecurity-for-anglers.cfm

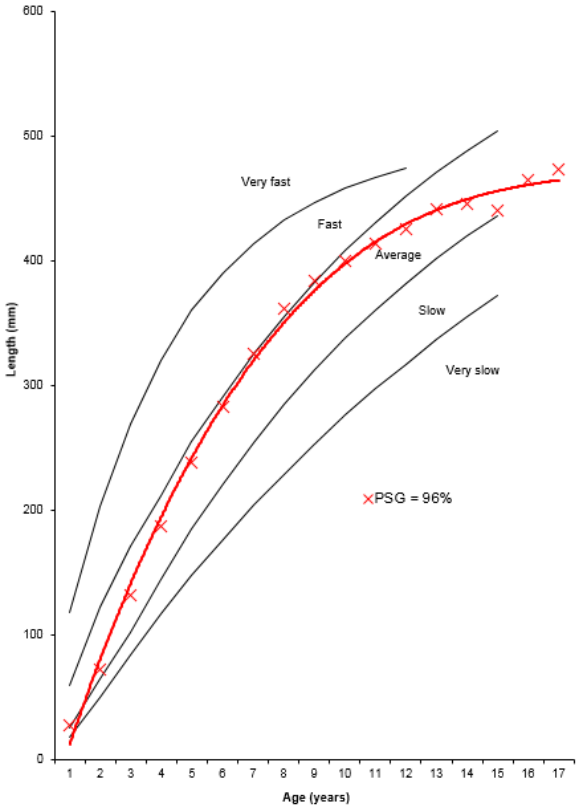
Owners of smartphones could also help track the location of non-native species by using either the Plant Tracker or Aqua Invader Apps available for both Android and IPhone.

Image 6: Himalayan Balsam

Growth rates for key species



Graph to show the growth of dace in the River Ivel compared to the standard growth of dace in Southern rivers (National Fisheries Services unpublished data)



Graph to show the growth of chub in the River Ivel compared to the standard growth of chub in Southern rivers (National Fisheries Services unpublished data)

Additional information

For further information regarding the Fisheries Improvement Programme please follow the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fisheries-projects-needed-to-improve-the-environment

For further information regarding the Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) administered by the Angling Trust, please follow the link below:

http://www.anglingtrust.net/landing.asp?section=1094&sectionTitle=Angling+Improvement+Fund

Before you go fishing don't forget:

You must have a valid Environment Agency rod licence and permission from the fishery owner;

You must comply with the fisheries byelaws;

The coarse fish close season (15th March to 15th June inclusive) applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England and Wales but not most stillwaters. Stillwater fishery owners can still have their own close season and rules, so please check with them before setting out.

Report illegal fishing:

If you see any fishing, netting or trapping you think may be illegal, please do not tackle it yourself. Call us immediately on 0800 80 70 60 and tell us: Exactly where the alleged offence is taking place; What is happening; How many people are involved and their descriptions & The registration numbers of any vehicles involved.

If you prefer to remain report an environmental crime anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/give-information-online/.

Next survey due

Spring / Summer 2019