



The Journal of the Lee Anglers' Consortium

LEE ANGLER

Issue Number 18 Newsletter February 2010

Introduction

It is nearly mid February and our long cold winter does not want to end. The current trend is for many of us to stop fishing during these miserable couple of months and therefore we should spare a thought for our bailiffs and the owners of our local tackle shops. There has certainly been a return to those winters where the Lower Lee freezes over for many days at a time. It is an important time for fisheries with the introduction of the Environment Agency's (EA) new fishery byelaws. We have waited many years for greater protection against illegal fishing but as the draft regulations stand there is little help for waterways like the Lee. The new byelaws have been formulated on the basis of rivers, nationally, and the EA believe they have struck the right balance. However, there is always going to be some losers and I believe the Lee is one. Our fish have to overcome cormorant predation, American signal crayfish, mitten crabs, mink, the odd otter and finally illegal fishing for the table. All of these factors have come along since the formation of the LAC back in 1992 and have clouded the issue as to why fish stocks in the Lee are as low as they are today. I still sit and meet regularly with the EA and British Waterways (BW) at the Lee Fishery Action Plan meetings but I am no wiser what the real cause is. Every fish in our river system is extremely important and should be given the chance to survive and we need fishery byelaws that give them that chance. I have made objections to the draft byelaws and, currently, I am in discussion with EA officers to see if there is any way greater protection can be given to the Lee. The financial recession has seen both the EA and BW reduce their fishery budgets. Firstly, the EA's Fishery Officer for this area moved to the Thames offices at Wallingford and a recruitment freeze has resulted in the post remaining unfilled. Secondly, BW underwent a restructuring which resulted in the direct fishery team being cut by half. All this means that it becomes extremely difficult to get anything done in our area. This is also one of the reasons why no LAC meetings have been called as there is very little to report. In addition, it is difficult to get people to attend meetings these days. So unless there is urgent business we have saved a little money by not calling meetings unnecessarily. Those of you who have access to the internet can keep up to date on our web-site

(www.lee-anglers-consortium.co.uk). Our last few meetings were combined with the Lee Valley Anglers' Consultative Association but apart from myself, Treasurer, there are no active officers to pull the Lee Valley angling scene together.

Those of you that follow the politics of angling will know that the Angling Trust was formed in 2009 and had a pretty rocky start but now with a new Chairman and a more realistic budget it can look forward to being the main representative body for angling. Currently it has about 14,000 members but when you realise that 1.4 million rod licences were sold last year it is easy to see that anglers are not prepared to spend just £20 a year (about 39 pence per week) to fight for the continuation of their sport. PLEASE JOIN THE ANGLING TRUST. (Call the AT on 0844770616 or visit www.anglingtrust.net).

Fishery Matters

BW and the National Grid completed the erection of power cable warning signs. For the Enfield to A406 Edmonton stretch these provide clear markings of the new restrictions. Other parts vary only slightly from previous arrangements. Remember they have been erected to protect your life and not stop you fishing. The EA together with Thames 21 have replanted the fish refuges at Enfield and hopefully, this time the plants will grow on and people will stop throwing litter in them. One unresolved matter has been the loss of access to Feildes Weir since the landowner gated the bottom of Ratty's Lane to prevent further rubbish being dumped. I had hoped that public pressure from local residents would have seen the local Council or BW taking some action. I am still working on this issue. The LAC website continues to get a regular flow of hits but I have to rely on anglers on the bank to provide any news to update the site.

Whilst reading the weekly angling papers you may have noted that there have been frequent fish kills by otters. Most of the Lee is unlikely to be affected by otter predation but nevertheless we should be vigilant. In the past few months we have learnt that the Mayor of the LB of Newham wishes to use the otter as the Olympic mascot. The Olympic infrastructure will provide for otter passes just in case they return to the Lower Lee. In addition the local wildlife Trust has plans to see otters back in the Stort Valley. If they succeed I doubt whether they will be

contained to the River Stort and therefore surrounding fisheries and the Lee could see another regular predator. Another study has confirmed that eels are in serious decline and it should be remembered that eels are the main diet for otters. As opportunists, otters are known to eat rats, shrews, mice, voles, and water fowl. In other words they will eat almost anything that is easy to catch. I assume that includes the water vole that has already been hit hard by mink. I therefore ask you all whilst fishing to be observant and report to this office or the bailiff anything unusual that could either help in fact finding or be detrimental to the fishery.

Angling

During the warmer months of 2009 shoals of decent roach were seen in several areas and reasonable bags were taken on breadpunch and hempseed. Good sized bream have been caught and big perch were a feature of the top end of the river. Double figure carp were regularly reported by anglers specifically targeting them. During this winter the triploid trout, falling out of Amwell Magna fishery, have been caught from Rye house to Ware. The odd big chub show along the Ware Town stretch. However, the highlight of this cold spell has been the big roach shoal under the A406 at Edmonton. One angler had 72 lbs of roach over three consecutive days fishing. Since the thaw two shoals of bream have been providing terrific sport from Hertford Meads and Stanstead Abbots (A414 Bridge). As many as 30 fish, up to 8 lbs, in a day have been caught using liquidised bread in a feeder with either

bread flake or maggots as hook bait.

Senior Citizens/Disabled Anglers Match

The match is planned for Wednesday August 4th with the same arrangements as previous years. I, personally, am getting a bit old in the tooth to run this match and so would very much appreciate some younger blood to assist or even take over its running, at least on the day. Last year's match was well attended and it was a good day albeit the fishing was, as always, hard. Those of you who have attended over the years will be sad to learn that our old friend Charlie Baxter passed away in December. Charlie presented our and the LAA's (at Berkhamsted) trophies every year even after he had moved to Mersea Island.

Season Tickets for 1st April 2010

Individual and club tickets are now available at the same price as last year and there is a postal application form below. Please do not forget to purchase your EA licence from 1st April and remember that there is still a close season from March 15th to June 15th on the Navigation above Aqueduct Lock. Fishing continues all year below Aqueduct Lock to Bow Lock.

Secretary
Dennis Meadhurst

DON'T FORGET YOUR EA LICENCE

RENEWABLE 1st APRIL Available Post Offices & Phone or Online @ the EA

LEE ANGLERS' CONSORTIUM
SEASON TICKET APPLICATION FORM 2010/2011
MAIL ORDER ONLY

LAST NAME:FIRST NAME.....

AGE (if applicable).....

ADDRESS Name or Number and Street.....

TOWN.....COUNTY.....POSTCODE.....

Ticket Required: (please tick)

Adult	£25.00	[]	
Concessionary..	£12.50	[]	Indicate type below
Under 16		[]	
Over 60		[]	
Registered Disabled Person		[]	

Tackle Box Sticker £0.25 { }

Handbooks £2.00 { }

*Please send form with fee, together with a self addressed stamped envelope to:
(Permits will not be sent without stamp).*

Lee Anglers' Consortium
PO Box 19426
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Please make cheques etc. payable to 'Lee Anglers' Consortium