

Committee(s):	Date(s):	
Port Health and Environmental Services	8 January 2013	
Subject: 40th City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment 2012	Public	
Report of: Director of Markets & Consumer Protection	For Decision	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to inform your Committee of the outcome of the 40th City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment held along the foreshore at the Port Health Lower Thames Office, Denton, Gravesend on Saturday 27 October 2012.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your Committee notes the report and supports the 41st City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment on 19 October 2013 on a date to be agreed with the Thames Angling Preservation Society.		

Main Report

Background

1. The Thames Fishery Research Experiment, which was first held in 1973, is an annual angling event held along the foreshore of the River Thames, one and a half miles downriver from the Port Health Lower Thames Office, Denton, Gravesend.
2. Your Committee has a long association with this event which is organised in collaboration with the Thames Angling Preservation Society and the Environment Agency. Financial contributions are received from the Fishmongers' Company and the Port of London Authority (PLA) which supports the Schools' Trophy. The Water Conservators' Company also donates a prize for the Bio-diversity Award.
3. The objective of the experiment is to establish the environmental condition of the Thames through the number and size of fish species caught as well as providing data to the Environment Agency, Thames Angling Preservation Society and members of the river community.
4. Judging is based on the greatest variety of fish caught and a scoring system originally devised by Dr Wheeler of the Natural History Museum which rates fish according to scarcity and significance in the context of a cleaner river.

The Event

5. 64 adult anglers representing eight teams competed for the Lady Howard Trophy which is awarded to the team with the highest score. Additionally, school teams consisting of four pupils from the City of London Girls School, City of London School and Gravesend

Grammar competed for the School's Trophy. Details of all the competing teams are contained in the summary of results at Appendix 2.

6. There are also prizes for the largest/ best fish, best individual catch by an adult and member of a school team and a bio-diversity award for the overall catch which most demonstrates the continuing healthiness and improvement of the River Thames.
7. Fishing began at 9am and finished at 1pm. Upon completion of the fishing the judging of the largest/ best fish by the Thames Angling Preservation Society took place followed by lunch in the marquee and the presentation of awards by esteemed guests and commemorative badges by your Chairman.
8. The event was attended by Councillor Derek Sales, Deputy Mayor for Gravesham and his wife Pam Sales, Deputy Wendy Mead, Sheriff Jeffrey Evans, Sheriff Nigel Pullman, Alderman Sir David & Lady Howard and Members of your Committee. Other guests included Dr Peter Matthews (Master of Water Conservators) as well as other members of the river community.

Results

9. There were 550 fish consisting of 5 species caught this year which was lower than previous year's figure of 658 fish and 8 species. This may have been due to the warmer weather conditions experienced during September and early October last year and the good water quality.
10. Details of the fish caught are recorded by stewards and accordingly awarded points based on the recognised scoring system.
11. The catch consisted of:-

Number Caught	Species	Minimum Size		Maximum Size	
		cm	inches	cm	inches
1	Cod	-	-	75	29.5
2	Pouting	-	-	14	5.5
3	Dab	-	-	29	11.4
24	Flounder	-	-	31	12.2
520	Whiting	-	-	35	13.7

Environmental Conditions

12. Water quality in the tidal Thames has been at levels that have meant that we have had no fish mortalities due to low dissolved oxygen events this year. Despite the initial low flows in the river and fears of drought conditions, we subsequently have had prolonged periods of rainfall and freshwater flows into the tidal Thames have been much higher than in preceding years.
13. This has meant that during the Environment Agency's fish surveys, we captured freshwater species of fish lower in the estuary than we would normal expect as the salinity of the water has been diluted by these increased freshwater flows.
14. During this year's fishing experiment, 5 species were taken and the majority of fish caught were whiting, this has been observed in previous years and reflects that these

fish move into the middle estuary during the autumn months. On good years, cod will often follow the whiting and predate upon them. This could explain the capture of the 9lb cod seen this year.

15. We did note the absence of eels caught during the match and whilst we believe that eel populations in the Thames are currently at sustainable levels, it was unusual that none were caught. Previously, eels would have featured in the catches of the anglers. We will be interested to see if this result is repeated in future years, as we are currently performing a great deal of work to ensure that eels population in the Thames recover to their previously high levels.
16. Whilst these data collected by the Fishing Experiment are essentially a snapshot of the river, it does show that the river does support a range of fish and whilst the number of species present was lower than in previous years, the numbers of fish caught remains above the average and the general trend since the experiment began remains positive.

Financial Implications

17. Funding is provided through a grant of up to £4,600 from City's Cash, a contribution of £750 from the Fishmonger's company and £150 from the Port of London Authority.
18. The total cost of this year's event was £8,855.40 and the cost to my local risk budget was therefore £3,355.40. These figures do not include staff costs nor use of in-house resources.

Strategic Implications

19. The City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment encourages sustainability and conservation through the rules of the competition which require young and undersize fish to be returned immediately to the river once recorded. Eels are no longer to be taken away from the riverside due to the low numbers in the Thames.
20. The continued support of your committee has demonstrated the City's commitment to supporting communities as well as promoting and enhancing our environment which are key themes of our City Together Strategy.

Consultation

21. The Environment Agency has been consulted and their comments are contained within the environmental conditions section of this report and Appendix 1.
22. The Chamberlain has been consulted on this report and his comments have been incorporated.

Conclusion

The 2012 annual fishing experiment was a successful event which was well supported by Members and guests.

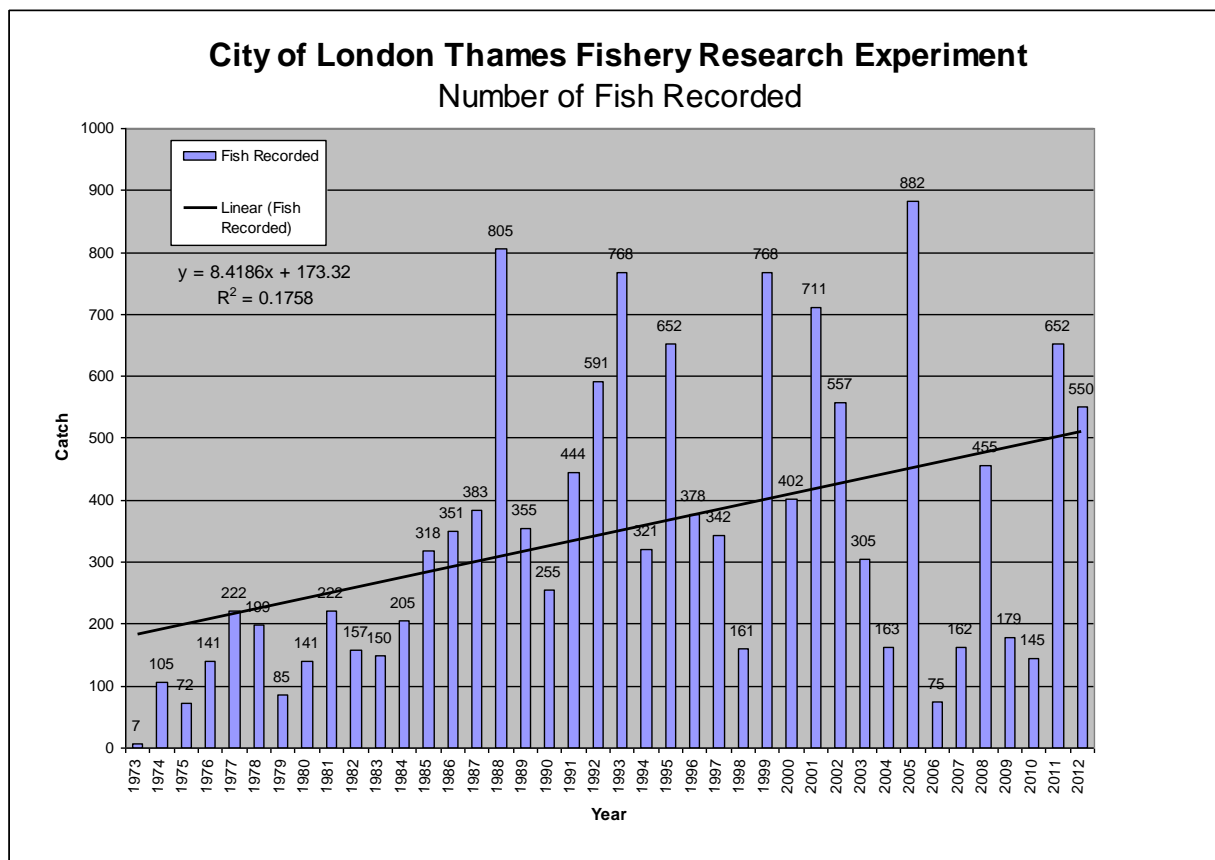
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Appendix 1

Chart 1: The number of fish recorded each year



Appendix 2

40th City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment Summary of Results

Lady Howard Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Public Services Team	116	580
2	Essex County Anglers	98	490
3	Charles Stanley	95	475
4	Thamesiders Angling Team	89	445
5	Public Services Angling Team	68	345
6	Kent Angling Team	36	180
7	City of London Invitation Team	21	108
8	Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	6	36

School's Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Gravesend Grammar School	16	80
2	City of London School for Girls	3	15
2	City of London School	2	10

Adult Individual Competition

Place	Name	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Paul Longmuir	Public Services Team	29	145
2	Barry Graves	Essex County Anglers	26	130
3	Mick Sharp	Essex County Anglers	22	110
	Vernan Allen	Public Services Angling Team	21	105
	Barry Tilson	Essex County Anglers	21	105

Students Individual Competition

Place	Name	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Matthew Perry	Gravesend Grammar School	11	55
2	George Bruce	Gravesend Grammar School	4	20
3	Ailish Maroof	City of London School for Girls	2	10
	Adam Bernsten	City of London School	1	5
	Isabel Donaldson	City of London School for Girls	1	5

Bio-diversity Tankard

The catch, which in the judges opinion, best demonstrated the conservation of the water was awarded to Phil Baxter of PLA Angling Team.

The Fishmongers' Cup

The best single fish was judged to have been a 9lb Cod caught by Rick Hodson from the PLA Angling Team