

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Port Health and Environmental Services	21 January 2014
Subject: 41st City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment 2013	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 41st City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment held along the foreshore at the Port Health Lower Thames Office, Denton, Gravesend on Saturday 19 October 2013.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your Committee notes the report and supports the 42nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment on 25 October 2014 	

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 each 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 A

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 9.30am and finished at 1.30pm. Upon completion of the fishing the judging of the largest/ best fish by the Thames Angling Preservation Society took place. This was 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 Adrian Robert Waddingham CBE; Sheriff Sir Paul Judge; Alderman Sir David & Lady Howard; and Members of your Committee. Other guests included Dr Chris McQueen (PLA Harbour Master Lower) and Barry Dennis (Previous Master of Water Conservators) as well as other members of the river community.

Results

9. There were 99 fish consisting of 5 species caught this year which was lower than previous year's figure of 550 fish and 5 species. This may have been due to the warmer weather conditions experienced during September and early October last year and the poor water quality.
10. Details of the fish caught are recorded by stewards and points are awarded based on the recognised scoring system.
11. The catch consisted of:-

Number Caught	Species	Minimum Size		Maximum Size	
		cm	inches	cm	inches
1	Sole	-	-	24	9.4
2	Bass	-	-	44	17.3
3	Eel	-	-	50	19.7
21	Flounder	-	-	32	12.6
72	Whiting	-	-	31	12.2

Environmental Conditions

12. The Water quality in the Tidal Thames, during 2013 has been stable, with no major incidents resulting in fish mortalities. There have however, been events in some of the river's tributaries. After a cold start to the year, a very mild spring suggested water temperature may rise earlier than in previous years. This levelled out after May and summer highs were fractionally lower than 2012. Prolonged and high volumes of rainfall have meant a much higher proportion of freshwater in the river, increasing its buffering capacity
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 normally expect as the salinity of the water has been diluted by these increased freshwater flows.
14. This year's fishing experiment saw 5 species taken and the majority of fish caught were whiting, this mirrors previous years and reflects that these fish move into the middle estuary during the autumn months. The size of which was noticeably small

with a clear build-up of action at the close of the match as the tide rose fully, which is consistent with angling reports from many of the south east marks. This presents a good opportunity for larger predatory fish, such as Mick Sharp's wining Sea Bass, to take advantage of.

15. As in 2012, the lack of Eels caught was apparent; however the current populations within the Thames are at what we believe a sustainable level, and this year Environment Agency Tidal Thames fish surveys have shown numbers of juvenile Eels migrating along the intertidal foreshore. Notably this was seen at Kew, Battersea and Greenwich.
16. The Data collected by the Fishing Experiment is very much a snapshot of the rivers fish populations. The number and size of fish caught were lesser than previous years, but does show the potential of the river as an important nursery and on-growing habitat for small fish.
17. **Financial Implications**
18. 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 £200 from the Port of London Authority.
19. The total cost of this year's event was £8,859.04 and the cost to my local risk budget was therefore £3,309.04. These figures do not include staff costs nor use of in-house resources.

Strategic Implications

20. 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.
21. 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

22. The Environment Agency has been consulted and their comments are contained within the 'Environmental Conditions' section of this report.
23. The Chamberlain has been consulted on this report and his comments have been incorporated.

Conclusion

The 2013 annual fishing experiment was a successful event which was well supported by Members and guests.

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Appendix A

41st City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment Summary of Results

Lady Howard Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Essex County Anglers	23	145
2	Charles Stanley Angling Team	17	85
	Thamesiders Angling Team	16	80
4	Public Services Angling Team	13	65
5	PLA Angling Team	12	60
6	City of London Invitation Team	5	40
7	Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	3	15
8	Kent Angling Team	1	5

School's Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	City of London School for Girls	5	25
2	City of London School	2	10
2	Gravesend Grammar School	2	10

Adult Individual Competition

Place	Name	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Mick Sharp	Essex County Anglers	13	75
2	Alan Yeates	Charles Stanley	8	40
3	Chris Northover	Thamesiders Angling	7	35
	Vernan Allen	Public Services Angling Team	5	25
	Barry Graves	Essex County Anglers	3	20

Students Individual Competition

Place	Name	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Ailish Maroof	City of London School for Girls	3	15
2	Aidan Ng	City of London School	1	5
3	George Bruce	Gravesend Grammar School	1	5
	Holly Bancroft	City of London School for Girls	1	5
	Matthew Perty	Gravesend Grammar School	1	5

Bio-diversity Tankard

The catch, which in the judges opinion, best demonstrated the conservation of the water was awarded to Mick Sharp of Essex County Anglers.

The Fishmongers' Cup

The best single fish was judged to have been a 44cm Bass caught by Mick Sharp from Essex County Anglers