

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Port Health and Environmental Services	18 November 2014
Subject: 42nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment 2014	Public
Report of: Director of Markets & Consumer Protection	For Decision
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to inform your Committee of the outcome of the 42nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment held along the foreshore at the Port Health Lower Thames Office, Denton, Gravesend on Saturday 20 September 2014.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Committee notes the report and supports the 43rd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment in 2015 	

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 9.00am and finished at 1.00pm. 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 the Mayor of Gravesham, Cllr John Caller and his wife Sue Caller; Roger North, Master of Water Conservators, Julian Parkes, PLA Deputy Chief Harbour Master and Sir David and Lady Valerie Howard

Results

9. There were 101 fish, consisting of 8 species, caught this year which was higher than the 2013 figure of 99 fish and 5 species. However, in 2012 a total of 550 fish were caught.
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	Maximum Size	
		cm	inches
3	Sole	36	14.1
1	Rockling	14	5.5
8	Eel	52	20.5
63	Flounder	35	13.7
19	Whiting	25	9.8
1	Plaice	21	8.2
3	Pouting	16	6.2
3	Smelt	18	7

Environmental Conditions

12. The Water quality in the Tidal Thames, during 2014 has been stable, with no major incidents resulting in fish mortalities. There have, however, been events in some of the river's tributaries.
13. Due to tidal constraints the date of this year's event was a month earlier than is customary. Consequently, the water temperature was higher than usual which can affect fish numbers.
14. There were several common seals in the vicinity of the Experiment, and these can reduce the number and species of fish, but they are a good indicator of the health and diversity of the river.
15. This year's fishing experiment saw eight species taken and the majority of fish caught were flounder. There was a lower number of whiting this year due to the earlier date, as these fish move into the middle estuary during the autumn months.
16. The return of eels to the catch is welcome following their absence in 2012 and 2103. The current populations within the Thames are believed to be at a sustainable level, and this year's 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.
17. The data collected by the Fishing Experiment are very much a snapshot of the river's fish populations. The number and size of fish caught were fewer than in most previous years, but the overall picture shows the potential of the river as an important nursery and on-growing habitat for small fish. Consequently, the Experiment should be repeated in 2015.

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 £8,764.99 and the cost to my local risk budget was therefore £3,214.99. 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 Corporation's commitment to maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities.

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

22. The 2014 annual fishing experiment was a successful event which was well supported by Members and guests, and should be repeated in 2015.

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Appendix A

42nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment Summary of Results

Lady Howard Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Kent Angling Team	23	140
2	PLA Angling Team	24	130
3	Essex Count Anglers	28	120
4	Charles Stanley Angling Team	11	75
5	Public Services Angling Team	9	50
6	Thamesiders Angling Team	4	15
7	Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	2	10
8	City of London Invitation Team	2	5

School's Trophy

Place	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	City of London School for Girls	0	0
2	City of London School	0	0
2	Gravesend Grammar School	0	0

Adult Individual Competition

Place	Name	Team	Fish Caught	Points
1	Tim Fagg	Kent Angling Team	8	60
2	Alan Yeates	Charles Stanley	5	45
3	David Cousins	PLA Angling Team	8	40
	Graham Bolton	Essex County Angling Team	7	35
	Mick Sharp	Essex County Angling Team	7	35

Students Individual Competition

Despite best efforts, the schools were unable to catch any fish this year but were presented with a trophy for participating.

Bio-diversity Tankard

The catch, which in the judges' opinion, best demonstrated the conservation of the water was awarded to Kirk Watson of Kent Angling Team.

The Fishmongers' Cup

The best single fish was judged to have been a 35cm Sole caught by Tim Fagg of Kent Angling Team.