

## River Great Ouse Incident July 2018

We wanted to provide an update on our response to the pollution incident on the River Great Ouse between Brackley and Milton Keynes.

### What we are doing

10 Environment and Fisheries Officers have been out everyday recording evidence and collecting water samples to understand the environmental impact since Friday 29 June. Our incident room opened on Friday to oversee this activity which will continue for the foreseeable future.

Fisheries Officers were looking for evidence of fish mortality, impact on fish stocks and other evidence of environmental impact this will inform any appropriate mitigation and enforcement action.

### Current situation

Our current observations suggest that the impact on the environment has reduced and is having less impact further downstream. We believe that the pollutant has passed through Stony Stratford and into Milton Keynes with no immediate adverse impacts on aquatic life passed Thornton, Buckinghamshire. It would appear that the pollutant has had a significant impact on aquatic life but we currently don't believe there is a risk to humans or other animals (pets and livestock), however as a precaution we recommend that people stay out of the River Ouse and keep pets and livestock away from the river between Brackley and Milton Keynes until we have completed our investigation. We would also advise anglers not to fish in sections of the river if there appears to be pollution eg dead fish or turbid water.

### Next steps

Please continue to report anything unusual on the river downstream of Thornton where we have last recorded impacts. If you become aware of odours, foaming or dead fish please call our Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 – providing location details.

It is too early to tell exactly what damage has been caused but we know many fish have died and there has been an impact on invertebrates as well. We appreciate that people would like us to be able to give concrete time scales regarding the recovery of the river, but in reality it is simply not possible to say exactly how and when the river will recover. A river is a complex ecosystem made up of numerous species of plants, invertebrates and larger species. Different species recover at different rates. Some are likely to return relatively quickly whilst it may take years for other species to be back to recent levels.

We will continue to work after the incident to consider how we might support the river to recover from this pollution event and will be keen to work with anglers, landowners and other interested parties at that time.

### Contact us

If you have any questions please can you direct them to our National Customer Contact Centre via [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) or 03708 506 506 which will ensure your questions are tracked and responded to in a timely manner.

Follow us on Twitter @OusefishEA to stay up to date with Fisheries activity.

Finally, we are happy for you to share the information included in this update with others.

Yours sincerely,

Charles

Dr Charles Beardall

East Anglia Area Manager"

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