

Fish return to Cullompton ponds thanks to rod licence money

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A fresh lease of life - and fish - have been given to ponds in Devon thanks to local anglers, the Duchy of Cornwall and the Environment Agency.

Berry Ponds in Cullompton was created in the 1970s on tenant farmer land owned by the Duchy but fell into disrepair during the Covid pandemic. Members of Exeter and District Angling Association made it their mission to restore the three ponds and have been busy pouring effort into desilting the water and cutting back vegetation.

A starter stock of 500 crucian carp and 500 tench reared at the Environment Agency's Calverton Fish Farm in Nottingham was delivered on 11 February. Rod licence money is used by the Environment Agency to raise fish to replenish waterbodies and watercourses where the fish population has suffered due to climate changes, pollution and other causes.

The Environment Agency has also given the angling association £4,000 from its Fisheries Improvement Programme to go towards four disabled platforms to make angling accessible.

Exeter and District Angling Association have worked hard to restore ponds

Mark Walker of Exeter and District Angling Association said the group is delighted to manage the ponds and been enthusiastically restoring them. Everyone involved is grateful for the support received from the local Environment Agency team. From initial fish sampling to ongoing guidance, he said the Environment Agency played a key role throughout the process.

Mark said:

We were also very lucky to acquire financial assistance from the Fisheries Improvement Fund, which is a major benefit to the project.

We are also grateful for the provision of high-quality fish supplied free of charge from the Environment Agency's fish farm in Calverton, these contributions have greatly aided the association's efforts. Overall, we have a deep appreciation for the collaborative support received from the Environment Agency.

Nick Maye, Environment Agency fisheries officer, said:

The work done here is very exciting and is a perfect example of rod licence money being reinvested to improve not just angling but the habitat for everyone.

The angling association expects the ponds to be open for use next year.

The Fisheries Management Programme reinvests money generated by rod licences to improve the habitats of a range of fish species. It supports angling clubs and fisheries to improve access to nature and secure a sustainable future for English fisheries in our changing climate.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1-day licence costs from just £7.30 and an annual licence costs from just £36.80 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 - 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fish-return-to-cullompton-ponds-thanks-to-rod-licence-money>