

Eel net and trap fishing



Standard authorisation conditions

Introduction

All authorisations issued in England and Wales will be subject to certain standard conditions. These are listed below and are also available from www.environment-agency.gov.uk/net-fishing. We will only change these standard conditions in consultation with fishers and on approval by government.

Your authorisation may also be subject to local conditions. These are specific to the region where the authorisation has been issued and reflect local circumstances. In particular, these may prohibit fishing in certain protected sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation).

These standard authorisation conditions will be specific to the method you use. Please ensure you read and understand the set of conditions relevant to the method you propose to use as you must comply with these.

You must also submit a catch return to the Environment Agency by 31 January of the following year. A catch return form will be enclosed with your authorisation.

Standard conditions

What

Authorisation may be granted to use any of the following instruments:

Fyke Nets (with leaders or wings)

- A fyke net must be a conical net with in-scales and a circular or D-shaped opening, with not more than two leaders (or wings acting as leaders). Each wing or leader must not exceed 10 metres in length. The net, excluding wings or leaders, must not exceed 5 metres in length or 1 metre at its widest point. The height of any wing or leader must not exceed the width of the net opening at its widest point.

Small wingless traps and small wingless fyke nets

- Putcheons, pipe traps, criggs pots, baskets, hives or like instruments (without leaders or wings), baited or unbaited, fitted with a single inscale (or two inscales if double ended). You may not use a trap that exceeds 2 metres in length, 75 cm in height and 75 cm in width. Any trap must not be hand-held or be attached to any handle.

or:

- fyke nets without wings or leaders. You may not use a fyke net that exceeds 5 metres in length or 75 cm at its widest point



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Permanent Fixed Traps

- A fixed trap must:
 - a) be permanently fixed to a permanent built structure such as a weir (a weir trap);
 - or:
 - b) consist of devices partly or wholly fixed permanently at one location (an eel rack).

A weir trap must be a fixed trap incorporated into a weir or outflow structure, in which water flows through a grating set to intercept eels. The gap between the parallel bars must be no less than 12 mm. You may not use netting in the construction and operation of a weir trap.

When

- The authorisation holder may only fish with instruments covered by this authorisation between the 1 April and 10 December in any year, both dates inclusive.

How

- Unless otherwise authorised, the authorisation holder must return any salmon, migratory trout, trout, lamprey, shad, smelt or freshwater fish caught in any instrument authorised to take eels as soon as practicable to the same water from which it was taken and with as little injury as possible.
- The authorisation holder must return any eel of less than 30cm as soon as practicable to the same water from which it was taken and with as little injury as possible.
- The authorisation holder may not use any net, wing or leader that is wholly or in part made with a mesh greater than 36 mm full stretched mesh.
- The authorisation holder may not use a net that is wholly or partly made of monofilament material.
- The authorisation holder may not set any instrument such that any part capable of retaining fish becomes completely exposed from the water.
- The authorisation holder must inspect any instrument and remove any fish caught before it is completely exposed.

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- The authorisation holder may not set any instrument or groups of instruments, such that their width or combined width exceeds one half the width of the waters in which they are set.
- Except when fishing in tidal waters, the authorisation holder may only fish a fyke net and leader parallel with the flow in the water. You may only set nets individually or in pairs and no part of any net or pair of nets shall be set closer than 30 metres to any part of any other net or pair of nets.
- Except where authorised, the authorisation holder may not fish for eels with any instrument, other than rod and line, in any waters within 10 metres above and 10 metres below any inlet or outlet of any dam or any obstruction, whether natural or artificial, which hinders the passage of eels. (The 10 metre limits referred to shall be measured from such point on the obstruction as shall be the furthest upstream or downstream extent respectively of the said inlet or outlet of the dam or obstruction, and this limit shall have effect and extend to the same extent on either bank of the relevant water).
- The authorisation holder must not use any instrument covered by this authorisation, in any water frequented by salmon or migratory trout before the 25th June in any year.
- The authorisation holder must fit an otter guard to all eel traps where the entrance to the trap is greater than 95 millimetres internal diameter. The otter guard shall consist of either:
 - a) tightly stretched flexible netting with a mesh size measured when wet of not more than 75mm knot to knot or 300mm round the perimeter; or
 - b) a rigid square grid with bars separated by not more than 85mm; or
 - c) a rigid ring with internal diameter of not more than 95mm.and shall be fitted to the funnel leading to the first chamber of the net or trap.
- The authorisation holder must attach the tags provided by the Agency with this authorisation to the instruments for which this authorisation applies. You must make sure that these tags attached to the instruments at all times whilst fishing.

Regional conditions



Anglian Region authorisation conditions

Fishing is not allowed upstream of the points stated on the following rivers:

- River Gipping at Horseshoe Weir (NGR TM1498644728)
- River Gipping at Handford Lock Sluice (NGR TM1525444280)
- River Stour at Cattawade North Channel Sluice (NGR TM1023032995)
- River Colne at East Mills (NGR TM0068025296)
- River Chelmer / Chelmer & Blackwater Canal at Beeleigh Main Weir (NGR TL8386808220)
- River Pant / Blackwater at Langford Waterworks Weir (NGR TL8351209015)

Thames Region authorisation conditions

- No fixed engines or traps to be used in the River Thames and its tributaries upstream of Tower Bridge (NGR TQ3367780266) at any time.
- At all times, no instrument authorised for taking eels shall be placed in any river or stream upstream of a line drawn across:
 - i) Tidal River Cray at the railway crossing points located at NGR TQ 5284975569 and TQ5287875517;
 - ii) Tidal River Darent at the A206 (Bob Dunn Way) roadbridge at TQ5369675652;
 - iii) Tidal River Roding (Barking Creek) at the Barking Barrage lock and half-tide weir at TQ4408483309;
 - iv) Tidal River Lee (Bow Creek) at Bow Locks at TQ3829482332;
 - v) Tidal Ravensbourne (Deptford Creek) at Lewisham College Weir at NGR TQ3741677009.

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Thames Region authorisation conditions cont.

- During the period 1st October to the 31st March inclusive, no instrument authorised for taking eels shall be placed in any river or stream upstream of a line drawn across:
 - i) Dartford Creek (River Darent and Cray) at its confluence with the tidal Thames from NGR TQ5408378051 to TQ5426077956;
 - ii) Barking Creek (River Roding) at its confluence with the tidal Thames at the tidal barrier at NGR TQ4559981706;
 - iii) Bow Creek (River Lea) at its confluence with the tidal Thames from NGR TQ3950580625 to TQ3956480593;
 - iv) Deptford Creek (River Ravensbourne) at its confluence with the tidal Thames from NGR TQ3766077922 to TQ3772577890