

■ Some of the young barbel being stocked to revive the River Thames.



Fresh hope after £20.3m pollution

● River revival kick-started ● 130,000 fish ● Water firm money

THAMES WATER have been making amends for their devastating pollution of the River Thames and tributaries with major fish restockings.

The bloated privatised utility firm allowed 1.4 billion litres of raw sewage to flow into six sites in Oxfordshire in 2013-14.

As we revealed last March, TW had to cough up a record £20.3 million in fines and costs. They also voluntarily added £1.5 million to the area's community fund and over £300,000 in compensation.

An initial consignment of 8,000 chub, roach and barbel

has just gone into the River Thames, with as many as 130,000 fish in total over the next few years.

Barry Mullen, chairman of Thame AC, explained: "The huge loss of fish lead to a big reduction in our membership, with nearly two-thirds departing.

"Along with other clubs, we are part of the Thame Consultative Group, trying to resurrect the river.

"TW compensated our club and others for loss in membership, and then agreed to a full analysis of the fish density and water quality of the river, conducted by the Environment Agency and private agencies.

"As a result they agreed to pay for restocking fish to the value of £50,000 in a three-year programme of which this was the first batch.

"Bream and a few tench will be added to the species already put in, and we are particularly delighted with the barbel, as



■ Some of the shocking levels of sewage in 2013/14, here seen on the main River Thames.

these are currently in very short supply.

"A further big consignment is expected from (the EA's) Calverton Fish Farm in October.

"Our club is recovering, with an influx particularly of new junior members since we followed the EA's lead on rod licences and made membership free for under-16s.

"We now have eight times the number of juniors, which is very healthy for the future.

"We are delighted by the way things have been done to rectify the damage caused by the pollution," he concluded.



■ Barry Mullen, seen here with a Thame chub, caught before the deadly pollution struck.

GOOD WEEK...

● **Line recycling** – as the nation moves ever further towards reducing



forms of plastic waste, unwanted fishing line can now be safely turned into new products rather than go to landfill. The Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme will recycle both nylon and braid. Already 80 tackle shops have got on board, and are taking part in the scheme with bins. Most, initially, are southern-based, but national chains Angling Direct and Fishing Republic are participating. Find out more at the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme page on Facebook.

● **Big restocking** – Parkdean Resorts has invested £225,000 at White Acres, in Cornwall, for 2018, including a 10,000 lb fish stocking. Clint Elliott, fisheries manager, said: "Work has been underway to enhance its offering as a diverse park for a fishing holiday with multiple lakes, comfortable accommodation and first-class facilities."

BAD WEEK...

● **Deadline fine** – a Newcastle man was ordered to pay £400 in fines and costs after adding an illegal set-line with four baited hooks while legitimately fishing with a rod and valid licence. He was caught in the early hours of July 26 last year when EA officers were on the River Tyne at Wylam. He was spoken to and produced a valid rod licence, but while checks were being carried out a search of the immediate area revealed the set line tied to a post.