**The Angling Trust calls for measures to manage the problem of otter predation with progress made so far:**

1. **An increase in the funding made available from the Environment Agency for fencing of still waters, and for it to be made available to club and syndicate waters; it is currently limited to those selling day tickets.**

**Progress: Achieved.**

The two priorities for the most recent round of the Angling Improvement Fund were encouraging junior angling and tackling predation issues. These are going to be repeated for the next round to give more clubs and fisheries the chance to re-apply or submit new applications. The fund IS now available to club and syndicate waters which do not sell day tickets, thanks to lobbying by the Angling Trust. A further £200,000 is going to be distributed by us before the end of March. Further details about the AIF available [HERE](http://www.anglingtrust.net/landing.asp?section=1094%A7ionTitle=Angling+Improvement+Fund)

We will be going further than this by putting guidance on our web site, and holding workshops around the country, to advise clubs and fisheries about what they can do to control predation on their waters. We are also lobbying Natural England to try and get national guidance to give their local officers the information they need to take the right decisions at a local level with predation issues to support member clubs and fisheries.  To get this kind of boost in funding, at a time when the Agency has lost about 15% of its rod licence income and about 50% of its government grant in aid is a good achievement.  We are currently seeking ways of enhancing these funds with support from the private sector.

1. **The restoration of river ecosystems which can support healthy populations of fish that can withstand predation.  Nearly 75% of rivers are failing to reach good ecological status and many of these are failing because of poor fish populations.**

**Progress:** Our two Judicial Reviews of government on the Water Framework Directive, our many legal actions by Fish Legal, our many campaigns on abstraction, pollution and loss of habitat (see our Campaigns Grid [HERE](http://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=1139&sectionTitle=ANGLING+TRUST+%26+FISH+LEGAL+CAMPAIGNS+IN+2016), our support for catchment fishery plans, and our input to detailed action plans such as the [Blueprint for Water](http://blueprintforwater.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Blueprint-for-Water_Water-Matters.pdf) all contribute to achieving this objective.

**3.Investment in research into methods for deterring otters from still water fisheries where fencing is not feasible.  Current methods are not effective.**

**Progress:** We sought funding from the EA and others for this, but unfortunately we were knocked back. We would like to find funding to support research in this area, for those fisheries that can’t be fenced and for rivers which are suffering a particular problem in areas where specimen fish are threatened. Ideas welcome for funding sources!

1. **Recognition by government agencies that reintroductions of otters were misguided and mismanaged, and that lessons must be learned for any future release programmes for other species.**

**Progress:** We have repeatedly made this point to government and its agencies.  The EA has however never been involved in the release of otters.

1. **Acceptance from the government that ecosystems should be restored from the bottom up, rather than the top down.  This means restoring river flows, tackling pollution and re-creating healthy habitat, rather than introducing top level predators and/or building otter holts to encourage them to live in a particular site.**

**Progress:** We have made this point repeatedly to government and its agencies. For example, we challenged the Canal and Rivers Trust not to invest in otter holts on the canal network and not to use otters for their public fundraising as it would be perceived by anglers as a means of destroying their sport.

1. **An end to the release of rehabilitated otters which have been injured fighting with other otters, or on the roads.  It is thought that these otters have less fear of humans and can cause greater damage to fisheries.  They are also highly likely to fight with other otters when they are released into their territories.**

**Progress:** We have raised this with Natural England twice and will be seeking a change in the way that these rehabilitation centres are licensed over the coming year.

1. **Defra and the Environment Agency to accept that there is a serious problem from otter predation on many still-waters and some rivers and that the recovery of otters has now been successful.  Defra and the Environment Agency to stop referring to otter numbers as evidence of successful restoration of river systems when the majority of rivers are failing to reach good ecological status and many fish populations are severely depleted.**

**Progress:** We believe that EA fisheries has now accepted that this is a problem; hence their willingness to release rod licence funds to support tackling otter predation even on waters not allowing day tickets.  However, the EA is a big organisation and press officers are not always aware of the importance of this issue to anglers.