



## **Virtual Fisheries Forum 26/05/21 – South West Environment Agency Updates**

### **Q&A Session with Liam Timothy**

Q. Do topmouth gudgeon have any impact on crayfish numbers?

A. Honestly, I'm not entirely sure. I would imagine that topmouth gudgeon would probably like eating crayfish eggs, but it would be a question of whether or not they could find those eggs. I doubt they would ever make any significant impact on crayfish numbers however. Both signal crayfish and topmouth gudgeon eat coarse fish eggs so it would likely have a negative impact on recruitment in a fishery.

Q. With your fish rescue at Langport, did the fish enter that through flooding? Is that the reason for such a build up of fish in this drain?

A. We haven't had much rain in the winter, so I'd imagine that the amount of fish in there at present is due to successful spawning in recent years.

Q. Where are we at with the eradication of topmouth gudgeon at a national level? A few years ago they were talking about there only being 3 sites left in the UK

A. As far as I'm aware, there are 2-4 sites left nationally where eradication was due to take place. There was lots planned for this winter just gone, but unfortunately covid has pushed much of this work back. I think we're back on track for the coming winter however.

Q. Is there any monitoring system in place to alert for topmouth gudgeon on the Somerset Levels?

A. When we find a site with topmouth gudgeon, we will start monitoring all nearby rivers, streams, drains and ditches and ensure they haven't spread in the local area. Thankfully we've yet to find any outside of their original sites.

Q. With the habitat improvement works happening on the Tone and the Yeo, is there any much effort to engage with farmers? I know you mentioned siltation occurring in these catchments which I'm guessing is mainly caused by agriculture.

A. There isn't anything specific as of yet, but I know the Westcountry Rivers Trust are currently in the first phase of a project which will see them go out to the landowners and look into any practices which can be changed, any improvements that can be made to the river etc. They will then move forward once this has been established.

Q. Are there any new projects on the horizon?

A. Not too much out of the ordinary now we can get back to some of our survey work. Electrofishing might be out of the question for a while yet given the close proximity of multiple people in one boat, but backpack type kits are usable on smaller waters by one person. Seine netting we can carry on with once again – in fact we've just successfully carried out one on the Blind Yeo for Clevedon Anglers last week.

Q. Can you help clubs who want to carry out projects on their waters? Is there any funding available?

A. Twice a year we have funding come up through the [Fisheries Improvement Programme](#). If a fishery wants help on this, they can send me an email and we'll get the ball rolling. This year we're looking pretty full when it comes to project capacity, but with the increase in fishing licence sales, there will likely be more of this funding as time goes on.

Q. I help run Lavington Lakes and we are about to start phase 2 work. How do we get involved with the crucian carp scheme and is there any potential to get help with stocking some crucians?

A. The main focus with the [NCCP](#) is to try and get some true crucians back into waters around the country -i.e genetically pure fish which haven't interbred with species like carp or brown goldfish. The first question we would ask is are there any of these fish present – if the answer is no then it's highly likely that we can get some crucians stocked from Calverton fish farm or some of our ark sites in the Wessex area, providing that the fishery would make good crucian habitat.

Q. Have you had to deal with a higher level of river anglers in the closed season due to covid?

A. There hasn't been a significant increase in river anglers on the bank during this years closed season, although there has been a slight increase in junior anglers doing so.

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