

Fish population survey report

The Cut Off Channel

31st May - 22nd June 2023

This report provides a summary of results from recent fish population surveys on the Cut Off Channel between Stoke Ferry and Denver. The surveys were carried out to assess the health of the river and enable successful management of our principal fisheries.



Image 1: A common bream from the Cut Off Channel at Denver

Summary

- 5 sites on the Cut Off Channel were surveyed by seine netting between the **31st May and 22nd June**.
- A total of 1220 fish of 13 species were recorded.
- Roach were the dominant species by density (>99mm) followed by pike and rudd. Roach were also principal by standing crop.
- The average density and standing crop estimates derived from the four sites surveyed equate to 6.13 fish per 100m² and 649 grams per 100m² respectively.

Introduction to Environment Agency fisheries surveys

The Environment Agency has a statutory duty to maintain, improve and develop fisheries. Our policy is to do this in a way that maximises the social, recreational and economic benefits arising from the sustainable exploitation of the fish stocks that underpin fisheries. To help deliver this duty, we have a National Fisheries Monitoring Programme (NFMP) to describe the status of our fish populations and inform our fisheries management to meet international (WFD, Eel regulations, ICES reporting), national and local data needs.

Sites are regularly reviewed to maintain a representative sample of fish populations and the water body as a whole in order to retain a comparable dataset. Sites designated for the national fisheries monitoring programme cannot be altered, unless there is a valid health and safety concern or there has been a review of policy during the monitoring period.

Survey locations



Table 1: Site name	Reference	Survey Date	Length (M)	Width (M)	Area (M)	NGR
Stoke Ferry	ANCE16	31/05/2023	70	34	2380	TL6992198680
Wretton	CAM685	07/06/2023	55	35	1925	TL6818099301
Wissington	CAM686	12/06/2023	63	32	2016	TL6677299545
Hilgay Bridge	CAM688	21/06/2023	56	36	2016	TL6124999439
Denver	CAM689	22/06/2023	55	33	1815	TF5908700795

Survey methodology

5 sites on the Cut Off Channel were surveyed by seine netting. Seine netting is our primary survey technique utilised on lowland watercourses where depth and width of the river channel preclude the use of electric fishing. The netting process starts with staff positioning stop-nets across the river channel to isolate the survey area and prevent fish from migrating into and out of the site. A 100-meter seine net is then laid by boat to encircle the entire survey area. The nets are constructed from 10mm knotless mesh, which is relatively soft and helps to minimize fish damage. Floats are attached along the top edge and a lead line along the bottom to ensure that the net hangs vertically within the water column. This net is then hauled in by hand and fish are removed and retained in floating keep-cages.

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The netting is repeated until a 50% reduction in the total number of fish caught in the first catch is achieved. The fish captured are measured to the nearest millimetre (at the fork of the tail) and scales are taken from a sub sample of fish to determine age, growth, and other statistical analyses at the National Fish Laboratory in Brampton.

Density and standing crop results are derived using Carle and Strub depletion methodology and will principally be reported utilising fish with a fork length greater than 99mm, our survey methods losing efficiency on fish below this size.

Note: number and population estimate of juvenile fish and small species (such as minnow) should be viewed as a minimum estimate only.

Results

- 5 sites on the Cut Off Channel were surveyed by seine netting between the 31st May and 22nd June.
- A total of 1220 fish of 13 species were recorded.
- Roach were the dominant species by density (>99mm) followed by pike and rudd. Roach were also principal by standing crop.
- The average density and standing crop estimates derived from the four sites surveyed equate to 6.13 fish per 100m² and 649 grams per 100m² respectively.

Table 2: Total number and largest (mm) fish captured for key species during the survey.

Site	Roach		Pike		Rudd		Perch		Common Bream	
	Number	Largest	Number	Largest	Number	Largest	Number	Largest	Number	Largest
Stoke Ferry	26	180	2	590	-	-	58	95	-	-
Wretton	81	149	12	855	5	110	86	345	-	-
Wissington	-	-	4	474	1	76	1	80	-	-
Hilgay Bridge	549	225	4	330	25	194	9	191	10	154
Denver	140	220	7	475	4	130	11	175	7	550

Tables 3-4a: Density estimate and Standing crop estimate for fish >99mm & All fish

Species	Stoke Ferry		Wretton		Wissington		Hilgay		Denver		Mean
	31/05/2023	+/-CI	07/06/2023	+/-CI	12/06/2023	+/-CI	21/06/2023	+/-CI	22/06/2023	+/-CI	
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	0.67	0.02	2.03	0.80	0		17.46	2.27	3.64	0.31	4.76
Pike [Esox lucius]	0.08	0.20	0.88	1.07	0.20	0.06	0.20	0.14	0.39	0	0.35
Rudd [Scardinius erythrophthalmus]	0		0.21	0	0	0	1.29	0.31	0.11	0	0.32
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	0	0	0.42	0.09	0	0	0.30	0.10	0.55	0.59	0.25
Silver bream [Abramis bjoerkna]	0	0	0	0	0		0.35	0.09	0.72	0	0.21
Common bream [Abramis brama]	0		0		0		0.15	0.07	0.39	0	0.11
Bleak [Alburnus alburnus]	0		0		0		0		0.39	0.94	0.08
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0.04	0	0.05	0.18	0		0.05	0	0.06	0	0.04
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0		0		0		0		0.06	0.19	0.01
Total	0.80	0.20	3.58	1.35	0.20	0.06	19.79	2.30	6.28	1.17	6.13

Species	Stoke Ferry		Wretton		Wissington		Hilgay		Denver		Mean
	31/05/2023	+/-CI	07/06/2023	+/-CI	12/06/2023	+/-CI	21/06/2023	+/-CI	22/06/2023	+/-CI	
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	26.4	0.86	43.1	16.91	0		1128.4	146.86	166.8	14.41	272.9
Pike [Esox lucius]	84.9	203.86	870.3	1056.23	86.3	25.89	16.4	11.40	90.3	0	229.6
Common bream [Abramis brama]	0		0		0		4.4	2.12	446.1	0	90.1
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	0	0	59.6	12.64	0	0	13.5	4.65	17.9	19.21	18.2
Rudd [Scardinius erythrophthalmus]	0		4.3	0	0	0	80.4	19.61	3.6	0	17.6
Silver bream [Abramis bjoerkna]	0	0	0	0	0		25.2	6.68	17.9	0	8.6
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0		0		0		0		35.8	121.58	7.2
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0.9	0	2.3	7.75	0		2.7	0	10.5	0	3.3
Bleak [Alburnus alburnus]	0		0		0		0		7.5	18.24	1.5
Total	112.2	203.86	979.5	1056.47	86.3	25.89	1271.0	148.84	796.4	125.26	649.1

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Table 3a: Results Table for Density (Ind./100m2)											All fish
Species	Stoke Ferry		Wretton		Wissington		Hilgay		Denver		Mean
	31/05/2023	+/-CI	07/06/2023	+/-CI	12/06/2023	+/-CI	21/06/2023	+/-CI	22/06/2023	+/-CI	
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	1.09	0.03	5.20	1.29	0		30.36	0.60	8.43	0.76	9.01
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	2.65	0.37	5.30	1.06	0.05	0	0.45	0.08	0.66	0.30	1.82
Silver bream [Abramis bjoerkna]	0.04	0	0.16	0.08	0		3.97	0.06	1.54	0.09	1.14
Rudd [Scardinius erythrophthalmus]	0		0.26	0	0.05	0	1.34	0.30	0.22	0.07	0.37
Pike [Esox lucius]	0.08	0.20	0.88	1.07	0.20	0.06	0.20	0.14	0.39	0	0.35
Common bream [Abramis brama]	0		0		0		0.50	0.03	0.39	0	0.18
Bleak [Alburnus alburnus]	0		0		0		0		0.55	1.71	0.11
Bitterling [Rhodeus sericeus]	0		0.10	0.10	0		0.15	0	0.06	0.19	0.06
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0.04	0	0.05	0.18	0		0.05	0	0.06	0	0.04
Ruffe [Gymnocephalus cernuus]	0.04	0.14	0.05	0.18	0		0		0		0.02
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0		0		0		0		0.06	0.19	0.01
Bullhead [Cottus gobio]	0		0		0		0.05	0.17	0		0.01
Spined loach [Cobitis taenia]	0		0		0		0.05	0	0		0.01
Total	3.95	0.44	12	2.01	0.30	0.06	37.10	0.71	12.34	1.92	13.14

Table 4a: Results Table for Standing Crop (g/100m2)											All fish
Species	Stoke Ferry		Wretton		Wissington		Hilgay		Denver		Mean
	31/05/2023	+/-CI	07/06/2023	+/-CI	12/06/2023	+/-CI	21/06/2023	+/-CI	22/06/2023	+/-CI	
Roach [Rutilus rutilus]	30.7	0.98	69.2	17.21	0		1045.4	20.59	202.6	18.37	269.6
Pike [Esox lucius]	84.9	203.86	870.3	1056.23	86.3	25.89	16.4	11.40	90.3	0	229.6
Common bream [Abramis brama]	0		0		0		7.6	0.52	446.1	0	90.7
Perch [Perca fluviatilis]	20.1	2.78	109.3	21.93	0.4	0	15.4	2.68	17.3	7.70	32.5
Rudd [Scardinius erythrophthalmus]	0		4.5	0	0.3	0	80.4	18.29	4.1	1.22	17.9
Silver bream [Abramis bjoerkna]	0.4	0	0.9	0.44	0		49.1	0.71	25.7	1.54	15.2
European eels > elvers [Anguilla anguilla]	0		0		0		0		35.8	121.58	7.2
Tench [Tinca tinca]	0.9	0	2.3	7.75	0		2.7	0	10.5	0	3.3
Bleak [Alburnus alburnus]	0		0		0		0		9.6	29.68	1.9
Bitterling [Rhodeus sericeus]	0		0.5	0.48	0		0.6	0	0.3	0.95	0.3
Ruffe [Gymnocephalus cernuus]	0.2	0.84	0.4	1.29	0		0		0		0.1
Bullhead [Cottus gobio]	0		0		0		0.2	0.81	0		0.05
Spined loach [Cobitis taenia]	0		0		0		0.1	0	0		0.03
Total	137.2	203.9	1057.4	1056.6	87.0	25.9	1218.0	29.9	842.2	126.7	668.4

Mean density estimate and standing crop by species

Figure 1 shows mean density estimates derived from the survey expressed at species level.

Roach were dominant by density representing 78% of the overall density with a population estimate of 4.76 Ind./100m². Pike were subdominant by density (6%) followed by rudd (5%) and produced density estimates of 0.35 and 0.32 Ind./100m² respectively.

Figure 2 presents mean standing crop at species level and shows roach also dominant by standing crop with a mean estimate of a little over 272.9 g/100m² across the five sites sampled, which equates to 42% of the standing crop. Pike ranked second by standing crop 229.6 g/100m² (35%) and common bream were third with 90.1 g/100m² (6%), a result that was principally due to a catch of larger individuals made at Denver.

Figure 1: Mean density estimate by species (>99mm)

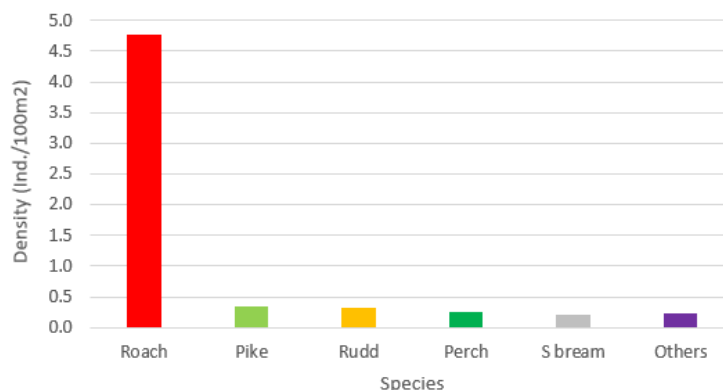
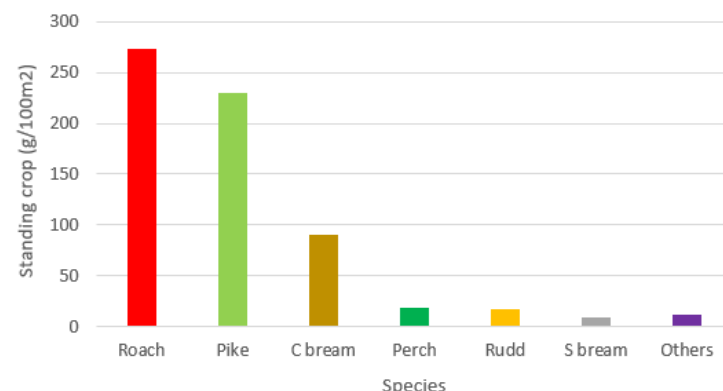


Figure 2: Mean standing crop by species (>99mm)



Site level density and standing crop by species

Figures 3 & 4 show density and standing crop at site level and by species.

This table clearly shows the importance of roach to the overall density estimate, but also demonstrates the extremely variable distribution of stock observed during the 2023 survey, with poor catches at Stoke Ferry and Wissington and improved catches elsewhere, particularly and at Hilgay. It is encouraging to see fish return to this previous 'hot spot' after some poor survey years, and it will be interesting to see whether fishery performance will show improvement also.

Standing crop data shows the importance of roach and common bream at Hilgay and Denver and Pike at the remaining three sites. The population estimate of pike at Wretton (870g/100m²) should be viewed with some caution due to the absence of a catch depletion for this species which has led to standing crop estimate with very wide confidence limits (+/- 1056 g/100m²). By way of comparison, a manual calculation of pike biomass at this site equates to around 600g/100m².

Figure 3: Density at site level by species (>99mm)

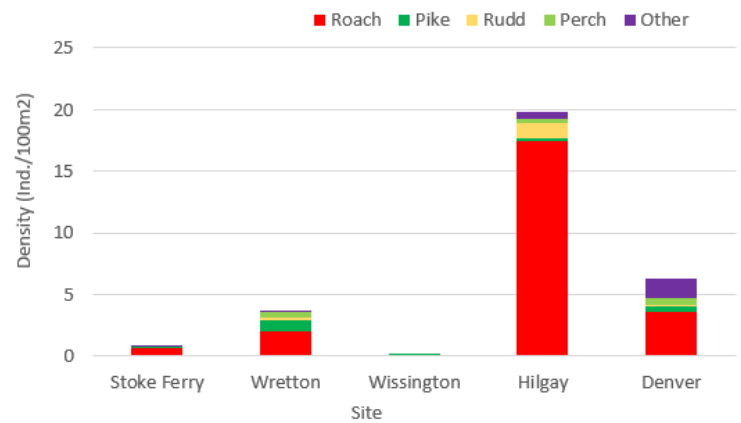
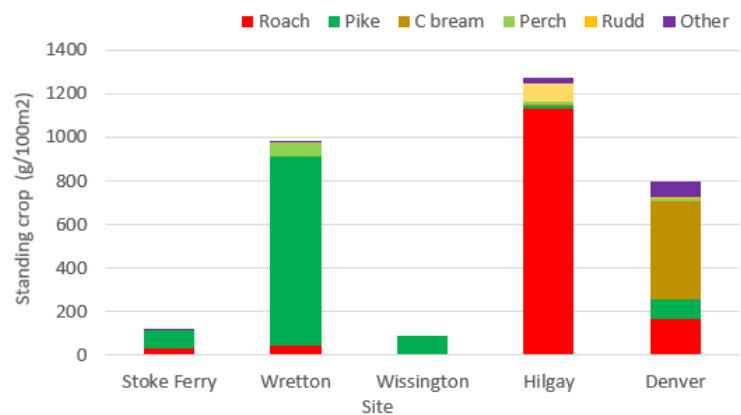


Figure 4: Standing crop at site level by species (>99mm)



Note: The population estimate from the year 2000 survey cycle is derived from only three sites as a large aggregation of roach at Hilgay far eclipses all other results and inclusion of this exceptional catch obscures detail within the long-term dataset. Because of this omission, data for the 2000 should be viewed with some caution. For interest, the single catch at Hilgay in 2000 composed of almost 8000 roach and 1500 common bream, with a site level population estimate of 520.3 Ind./100m² and 35493.6 g./100m². Such a catch is obviously an exceptional aggregation of stock, and the site does not represent the channel as a whole.

Long-term density estimates from the Cut Off Channel 1986 - 2023

Figure 5 shows mean population density of fish >99mm, from the long-term dataset of sites with comparable sampling regime. As can be seen density has been quite changeable and largely dominated by roach.

It should be noted that the high 'other species' values apparent in 1986 and 1990 were due to unusually large catches of eel made at Wissington with 75 and 113 individuals being caught respectively. There is no length data available for the species, the eels being weighed and counted prior to return. Why these fish were at this location and in such high density is uncertain. The long-term density of these sites sits around 10 Ind./100m² and in this respect the 2023 result is an encouraging step towards returning to this population value after the particularly poor 2014 and 2017 results. Further analysis of long-term density values will be discussed later in this report at species and site level.

Long-term standing crop estimates from the Cut Off Channel 1986 - 2023

Standing crop estimates at the four sites in this long-term dataset appear to have been in steady decline between 1986 and 2003 before showing consistent standing crop of around 1000 g./100m² for the subsequent four years. Standing crop then declined once more, before showing a continued growth over the most recent two survey cycles with the current standing crop estimate now being close to the long-term average.

Example of mean standing crop data however hides significant detail within the dataset and Figure 6a displays this data broken down to show key lowland species (roach, common bream and pike) and 'other' species caught. This data shows that the loss of standing crop following 1986 was chiefly due to a decline of 'other' species, particularly eels, and

Figure 5: Long term mean density estimate 1986-2023

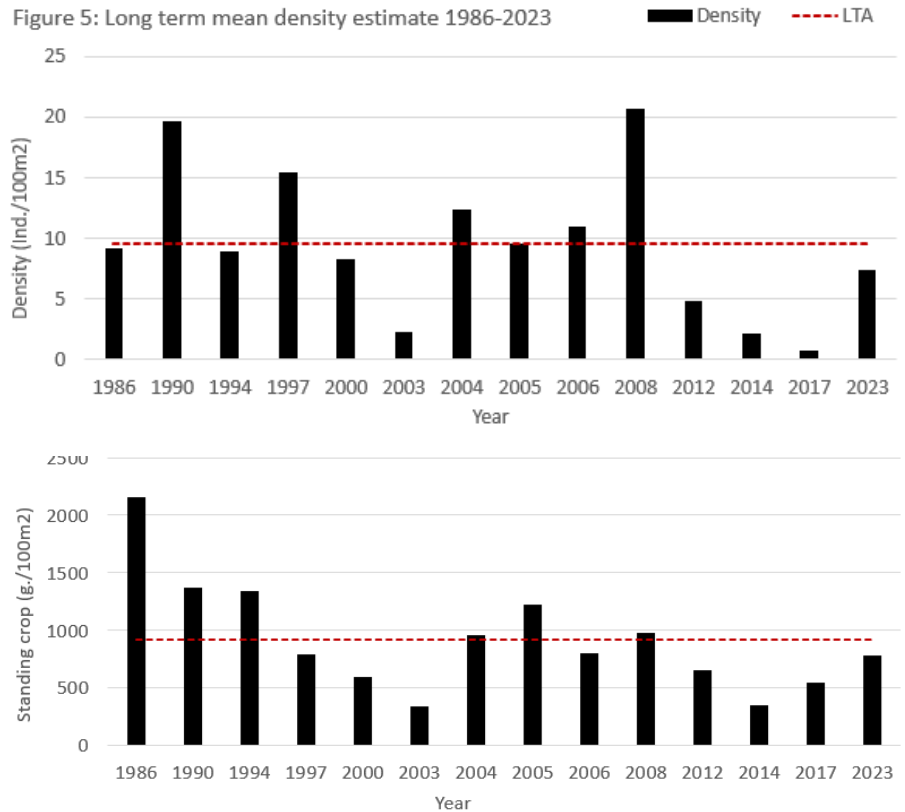


Figure 5a: Long-term density at species level

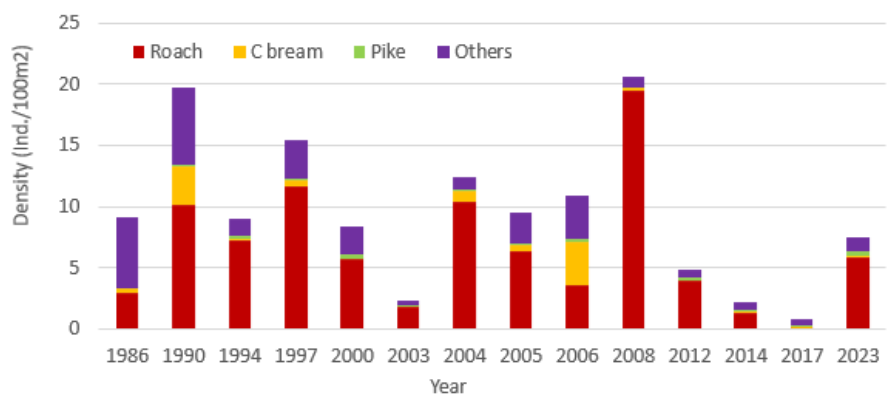
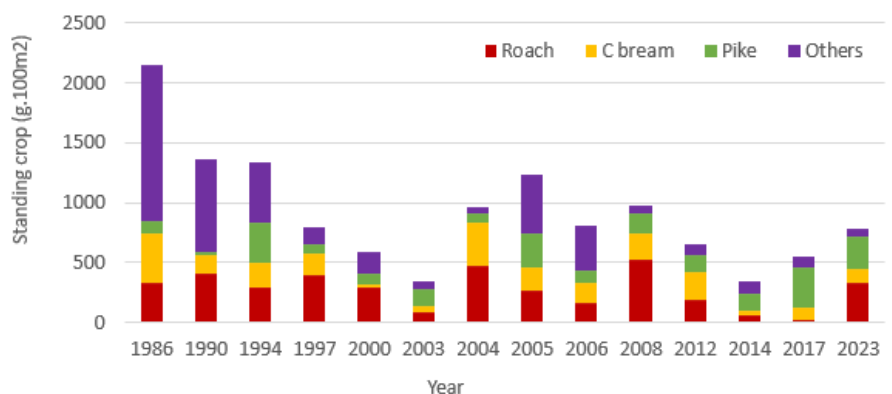


Figure 6a: Long-term standing crop at species level



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in terms of species such as roach, the current standing crop estimate is a little higher than determined by the 1986 sampling at these sites. The common bream standing crop estimate can be seen to fall significantly after the 1986 survey; however, this can be explained by the large bream mortality that occurred later in that year when approximately 45% of the population was considered to have been lost due to post spawning stress combined with low DO and the advanced age of the fish present.

Species level discussion

Roach: When the 2023 dataset is compared to historic catches made at the four remaining sites, then it is apparent that the current roach population is close to the long-term average, whilst standing crop comfortably exceeds the long-term average and sits within the range of pre-2000 biomass estimates.

Whilst in terms of density and standing crop, roach populations remain have returned to a value like the long-term population estimate, Figures 8 and 9 show density and standing crop of roach at site level and demonstrates how heavily this result has been influenced by the catch at Hilgay, this being the second highest density estimate derived from this site (excluding the exceptional aggregation found in 2000!) The species was scarcely represented at the other sites sampled and absent from Wissington, a site that has generally been quite productive up until the mid-2000's but which produced a mere six fish in this recent survey cycle.

Scale samples collected during the survey may let us determine a little more detail on the status of this species, by aging the species and comparing length and age to known national standards it is possible to determine a growth rate and discern how the fish are faring. Samples collected in 2023 found that roach were present between 1 and 7 years old and were exhibiting slow growth with a percentage standard growth (P.S.G) of 88%. This result suggests that roach growth is being retarded by an external factor, often this is due to competition from their brethren, and may indicate that the current population value is an underestimation of the stock present.

Figure 7: Roach density and standing crop 1986 - 2023

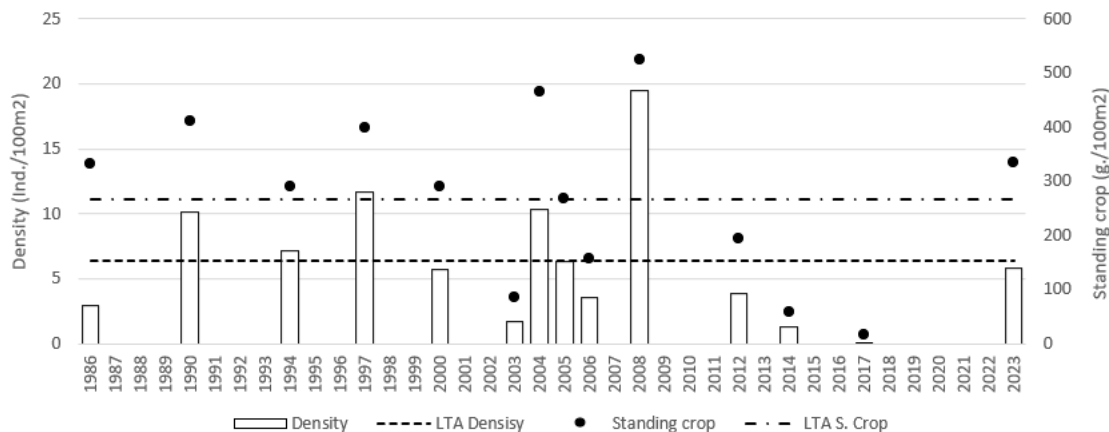


Figure 8: Aggregate of roach density at site level 1986 - 2023

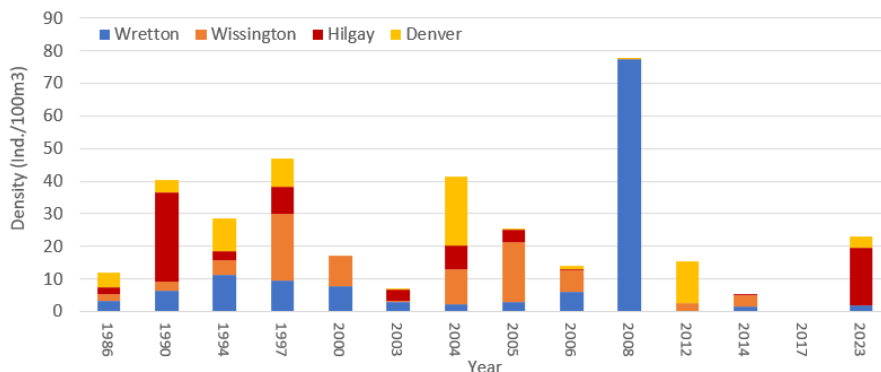
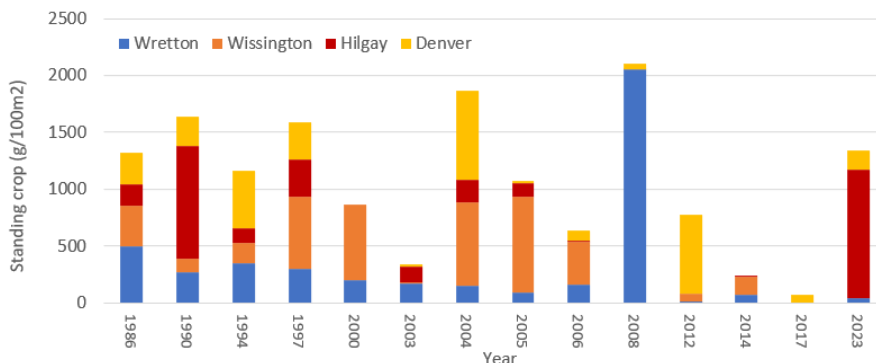
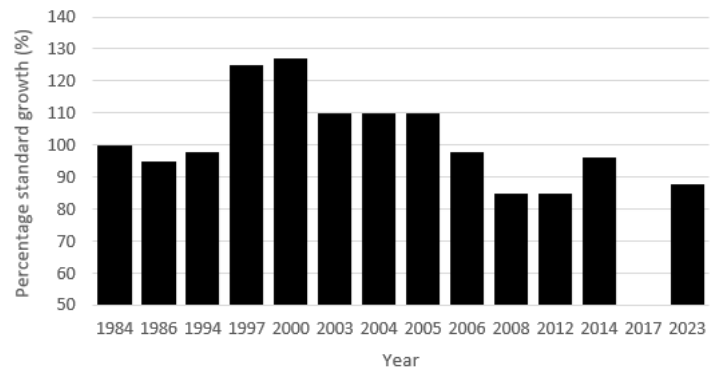


Figure 9: Aggregate of roach standing crop 1986 - 2023



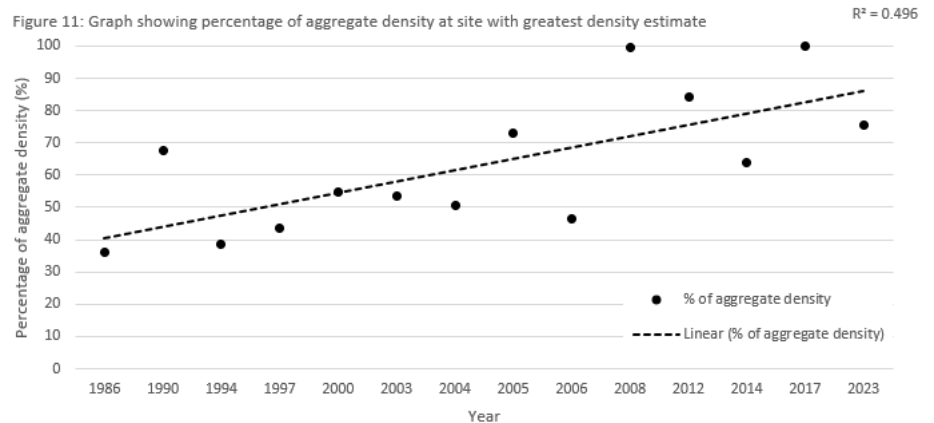
Looking at PSG data from previous survey cycles shows that roach growth has generally been fast/average; however, in 2008 and 2012 growth was slow, average in 2014 and slow again during the current survey cycle. It is perhaps not fair to directly compare earlier datasets as these data contain a greater number of sites that are more widely spread across the catchment thereby sampling fish from the upper channel where populations were generally lower, the population being managed as stock fish and may be expected to be faster growth rates. However, surveys from 2000 onwards surveys are focussed on the lower river and therefore this latter dataset does seem to suggest a slowing growth.

Figure 10: Roach P.S.G on the Cut Off Channel 1984 -2023



Increased aggregation? Our data seems to suggest that fish distribution is more limited than observed in some previous surveys, this is to say that recent survey cycles have often recorded the bulk of the roach at one location with scant representation elsewhere. **Figure 11** shows simple analysis on the percentage of the aggregate density made through a survey cycle. These figures have been produced by combining the density estimate at all four sites within each years dataset, then the largest catch in each cycle has been expressed as a percentage of the aggregate value. These data seem to suggest that large catches at a single site are increasingly forming the bulk of roach caught, for example in all surveys since 2008 over 60% of the density of roach was found at one site, and in three of these 80-100% of roach were found in just one of the four surveys. Whilst shoaling is a natural behaviour, and it would not be expected that fish would be evenly spread across a river catchment, the data does seem to suggest that the bulk of the catch is increasingly being made at a single site.

Timing of historic surveys Most surveys on the Cut Off Channel have principally occurred during the May to July period, however, there have been outliers such as the sampling in October 2000 and it is important to note that the particularly poor 2014 & 2017 survey cycles were sampled in March and April, increasing the likelihood that fish will be shoaled either post-winter or pre-spawn and therefore decreasing confidence in the population data for these years.



Discussion and preliminary conclusions

Whilst the return to ‘average’ roach density is encouraging, there are still questions that deserve further investigation, these being:

- Is the survey a true reflection of fish stocks?
- Why is roach growth slowing?
- Is the fish population becoming increasingly aggregate when compared to historic distribution?

Are these factors interconnected? If fish are becoming more aggregate, and remaining this way throughout the year, then this may affect habitat use and feeding opportunity. A similar combination of low stock density but slow fish growth was also observed on some of the drains during the 2017 Middle Level survey. In this instance there was anecdotal evidence from the angling community which suggested that increased avian predation was influencing

stock distribution on these drains with fish forming tightly aggregated shoals and preferring to stay around cover, which offers some safety, or at least the perception of safety, from attack. Is it possible then that such behaviour is responsible for the decreased population density, yet slow growth rates, seen in recent survey cycles? If roach are remaining tightly shoaled around areas of refuge due to predation, or the threat of predation, then there may well be increased localised competition and could mean that our chances of catching these fish in surveys will also be reduced, as we cannot net around such habitat.

It is interesting to note that many of these aspects are possibly explained by the concept of 'the ecology of fear' which describes how the fear of predation affects the behaviour of prey animals and may lead to changed feeding patterns, altered use of habitat, changed behaviours (such as increased caution) and increased group size, for protection, which can affect the local food availability.

Further investigation

Under normal circumstances a hydro acoustic survey could be scheduled to assess the distribution of stock and determine a density estimate that could be compared against nearby watercourses such as the Middle Level Main Drain, Ely Ouse and Relief Channel, however this has been attempted previously on the Cut Off Channel and has only been partially successful due to macrophyte growth in the upper reaches that diminishes beam range and obscures fish stocks present. The lower channel between Denver and Hilgay is more suitable for sampling, however this is a comparatively small subsection of the overall channel length. Perhaps including this will be this may be feasible in future survey cycles. Summer surveys using side-scan technology have also been trialled but are subject to the same issues at traditional split beam sampling on the channel i.e., plant growth within the water column.

A winter survey may be better able to provide greater channel coverage, once macrophyte growth has died back, however this will exacerbate the likelihood of fish being heavily aggregated and not give a true reflection of fish during 'normal' conditions. Perhaps the most viable opportunity will be a survey scheduled 'early season' when plant growth is less established, and the survey will focus on the watercourse between Denver and Hilgay but will progress upstream beyond this until the data collected becomes untenable.

It would also be particularly interesting to be able to carry out further analysis within the upper extent of this survey reach, particularly around Stoke Ferry as this reports author has seen large aggregations of stock within this area, and particularly within the side channel from the River Wissey. Indeed, when visiting one evening the whole surface of the side channel and adjoining Cut Off Channel appeared moving with silver fish dimpling at the surface and was punctuated regularly by explosions of scattering roach as predatory species went on the feed. This observation suggests that the twenty-six roach and two pike caught in the 2023 seining survey may not be an accurate representation of stock present nearby! If fish are using the small side channel for the cover it provides, are they then moving back out into the main channel as darkness fall to forage? If so, this would be a similar to pattern to that observed when fish move out of backwaters and marinas etc under the security of darkness and would be easily tested by positioning an acoustic camera across the mouth of the backwater and observing subsequent fish behaviour. This work will be scheduled to occur in Autumn 2023 and any findings thereof will be added to this report.

It may also be worth considering whether a new site should be positioned on the side channel? Most of our current survey sites sample comparatively uniform wide & deep sections of channel, however if this is not giving a true measure of stock present perhaps there should be inclusion of data from the side channel as well as, or in replacement of, Stoke Ferry.

Common Bream were found at two of the five sites sampled, these being Hilgay Bridge and Denver. The total number of bream was rather low with just seventeen individuals overall, ten being found at Hilgay and seven at Denver. This is obviously a disappointing showing for the species and represents density estimate that is significantly below the long-term average, 82% below density and around 40% below standing crop. Common bream showed average growth with a P.S.G value of 106%, although the sample size was small and so these data may not be representative of the population overall. Common bream were aged between 1+ and 5+ Y.O with the two largest individuals 11+ Y.O.

Pike have long-term density and standing crop estimates of 0.15 Ind./100m² and 155 g/100m² respectively, making the current values of 0.4 Ind./100m² and 265 g./100m² a considerable increase over that previously observed. The

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2023 dataset is subject to rather wide confidence limits, however, numerically speaking, the total number of pike caught during 2023 does exceeds that caught during our previous surveys. The largest pike caught measured 855mm.

Perch were most numerous at Wretton, with 86 individuals caught, and the largest individual (of 345mm) was also found at this location. Perch density is currently around half of the long-term average for the species.

Conclusions

- There are some unusual aspects to the 2023 dataset that require further investigation.
- Roach are showing a pattern of slowing growth and appear to be showing increasingly clumped distribution.
- This may be making the true population of the species difficult to ascertain.
- Some sites showed very poor roach catches but held numbers of predatory species that suggest a source of fodder fish must be nearby.
- Bream were poorly represented, and 'middle aged' fish were absent. Acoustic technology may be used to assess their population status in the lower watercourse.
- Fixed point acoustic imaging should be undertaken at Stoke Ferry to assess use of the side channel by fish stock.
- It may be advantageous to add a survey site on the side channel to gain a more detailed view of stock and species composition in this vicinity.
- This report will be updated when further data becomes available.
- The six-year gap in monitoring (caused by the covid pandemic) gives insufficient resolution in the dataset and future sampling should continue on a triennial basis.

Justin Mould

Analysis and Reporting

Next survey due

2026

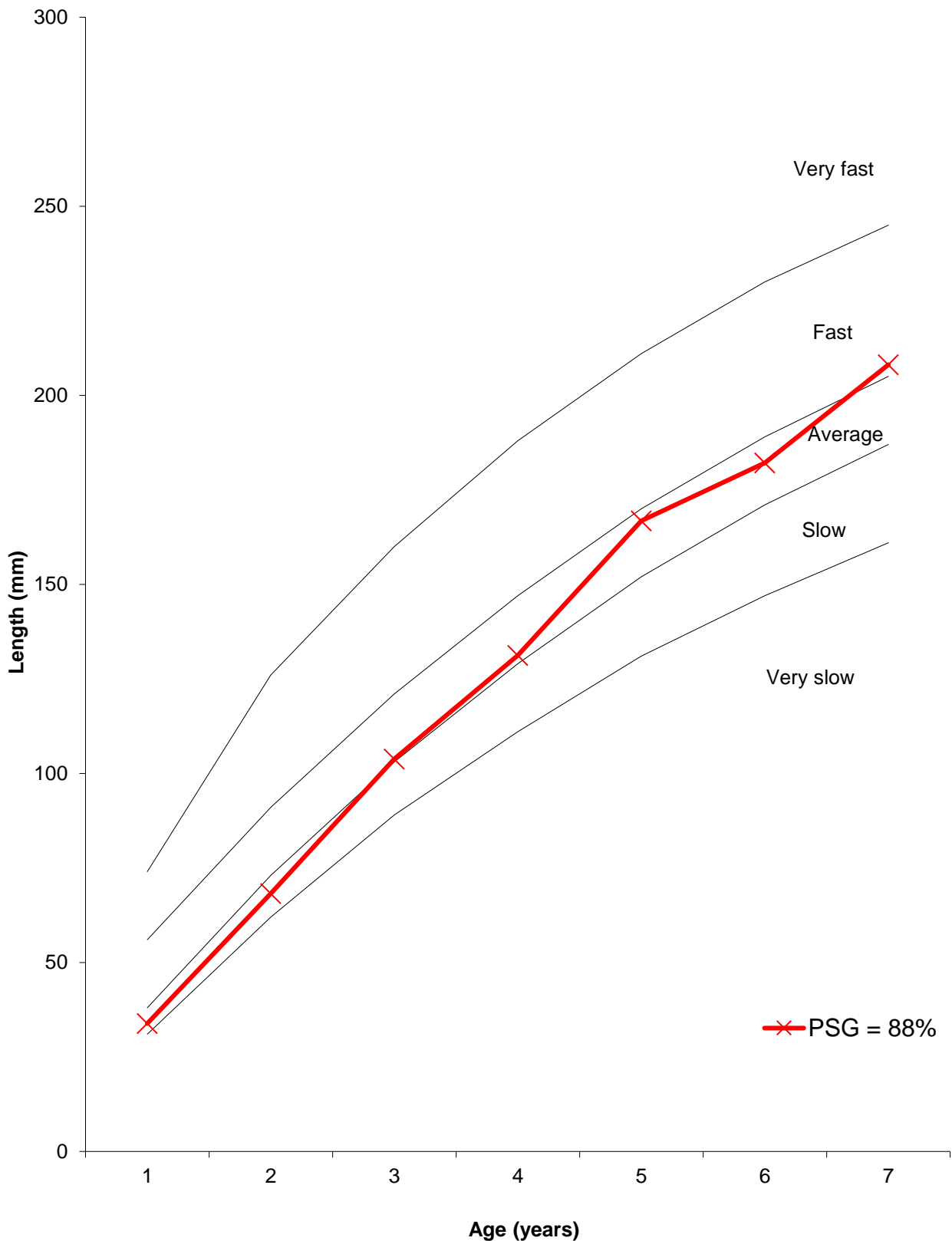
customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0345 988 1188
0845 988 1188

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Graphs showing growth rates for key species



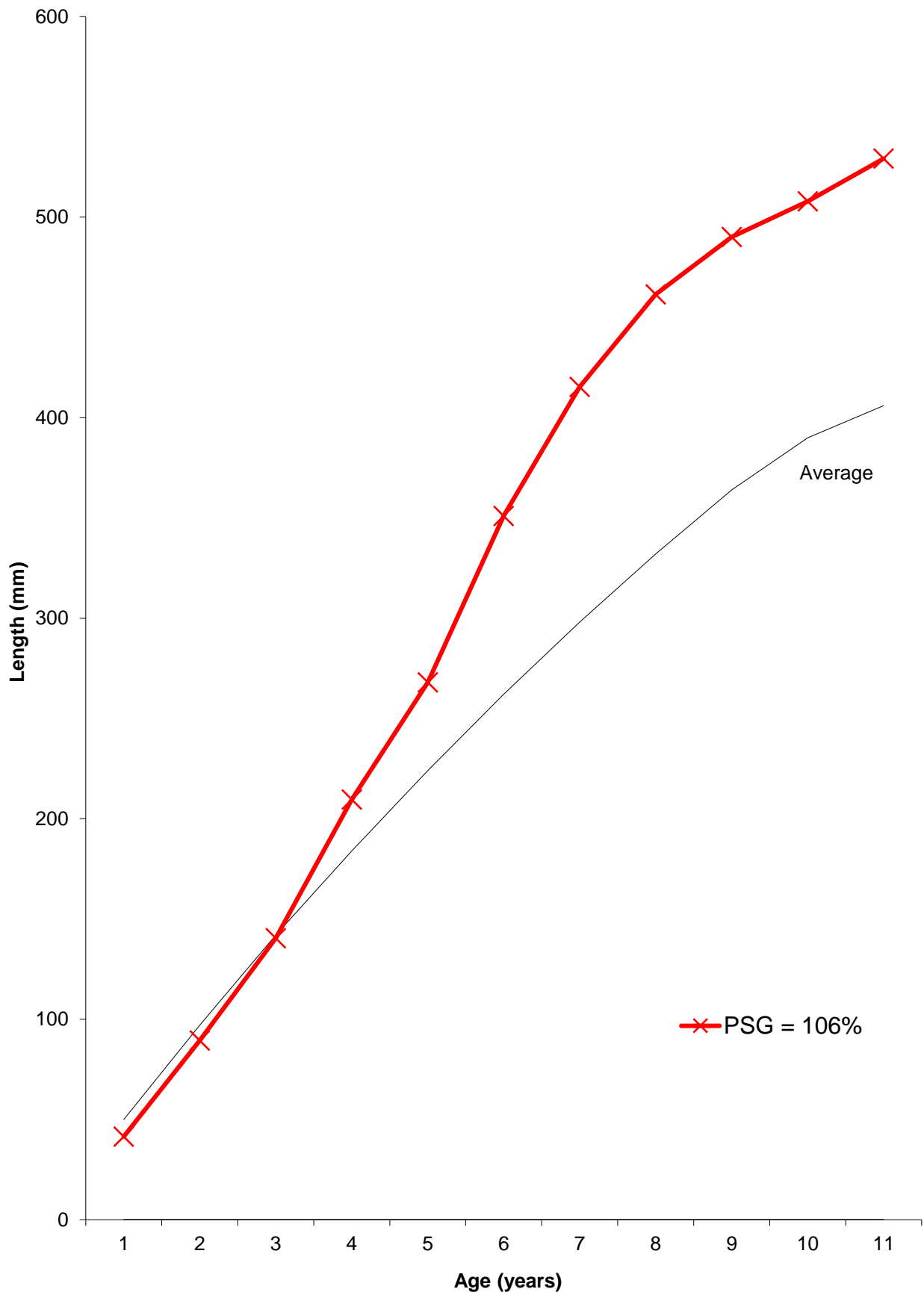
Graph to show the growth of roach in the Cutt-off Channel compared to the standard growth of roach in Southern rivers (National Fisheries Services unpublished data)

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Graph to show the growth of common bream in the Cutt-off Channel compared to the standard growth of common bream in rivers (Hickley & Dexter, 1979)

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Additional information

If any angling matches are held throughout this river length then angling clubs are encouraged to provide match results to feed into the Environment Agencies Match Catch Database which analyses angler catches to assess fishery performance. The output of this database can also be used as supporting evidence to assist analysis of routine survey results.

Angling Trust East of England: please click [here](#).

For information regarding the Fisheries Improvement Programme, please follow the link below:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fisheries-projects-needed-to-improve-the-environment>

For information regarding the Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) administered by the Angling Trust, please follow the link below:
<http://www.anglingtrust.net/landing.asp?section=1094§ionTitle=Angling+Improvement+Fund>

Before you go fishing don't forget:

☒ You must have a valid Environment Agency rod licence and permission from the fishery owner;

☒ You must comply with the fisheries byelaws;

☒ The coarse fish close season (15th March to 15th June inclusive) applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England and Wales but not most stillwaters. Stillwater fishery owners can still have their own close season and rules, so please check with them before setting out.

Report illegal fishing:

If you see any fishing, netting or trapping you think may be illegal, please do not tackle it yourself. Call us immediately on 0800 80 70 60 and tell us: Exactly where the alleged offence is taking place; What is happening; How many people are involved and their descriptions & The registration numbers of any vehicles involved.

If you prefer to remain report an environmental crime anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/give-information-online/>.

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Environment Agency Match Record

(Please complete after each match and return by email to chris.middleton@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Name of angling club:		Date of match:	
River:		Venue:	
Section / peg fished:		Number of competitors:	
Match start time:		Match duration (hrs):	

Number of anglers weighing-in:			
Total weight caught:		(lbs/oz) or (g) <i>delete as appropriate</i>	
Winning weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) <i>delete as appropriate</i>	
2 nd weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) <i>delete as appropriate</i>	
3 rd weight:		(lbs/oz) or (g) <i>delete as appropriate</i>	

Species Caught In:

Greatest number:	
Second greatest number:	
Other species present:	

River Conditions:

Level		Colour		Condition		River Temp	
Low		Clear		Falling		Cold	
Normal		Coloured		Steady		Normal	
High		Green		Rising		Warm	

Weather Conditions:

Brightness		Wind		Rain	
Dull		Still		Dry	
Changeable		Light		Drizzle	
Bright		Moderate		Light	
		Strong		Heavy	
				Hail	
				Sleet	
				Snow	

Any other comments:

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STOP THE SPREAD



Are you unknowingly spreading invasive species on your water sports equipment and clothing?

Invasive species can affect fish and other wildlife, restrict navigation, clog up propellers and be costly to manage. You can help protect the water sports you love by following three simple steps when you leave the water.



Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particular in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. Use hot water where possible. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

For more information go to www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry



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