

THE PREDATION ACTION GROUP

WHO, WHAT AND WHY?

The PAG committee has been formed to research and report on the effects of predation on fisheries and angling in Great Britain. The balance of nature is being destroyed and angling is under threat. The spread of imported signal crayfish means that all fish's food sources are being depleted and their spawn preyed upon in both rivers and lakes. The seas are being stripped of fish, a phenomenon which has resulted in cormorants being driven inland for their prey. The effect of cormorant predation on inland fisheries is well documented, with John Wilson rationalising that they account for up to 58,000,000 irreplaceable small fish per annum.

Against this background of increasing small fish predation, in the early-'70s a programme was put in place to rear otters in captivity and reintroduce them to the wild. The EA Otter Survey of 2010 reveals that the spread of otters has been far-reaching and they are now present in most areas of the country. Because of the impact of signal crayfish and cormorants destroying the small fish food chain, otters have had to learn to look elsewhere for their normal prey. As a result, their impact on specimen fish has been alarming. They have all but totally wiped out the specimen barbel population, and have been responsible for serious damage to, and the destruction of, an increasing number of carp fisheries. Fishery owners, controllers and fish farmers are in a difficult position when it comes to protecting their interests and livelihoods because otters and cormorants are protected. The authorities are in denial over the predation issue. Notwithstanding the fact that we spend

£25,000,000 per annum on licences, anglers are looked on as the poor relations compared to such bodies as the RSPB, English Nature, and so on.

The Angling Trust is there to look after anglers' interests but they are underfunded and have their hands full. The PAG has been formed to research the

predation issue and put together a convincing case for some measure of control of predators.

In the first instance the PAG's brief is to report their findings to the Angling Trust. If that doesn't have the desired effect then it may become necessary to lobby the government direct, a very expensive procedure. All the committee's work on behalf of the PAG is voluntary and no one claims expenses, but some areas of research and reporting will cost money. We need a stand to extend the lobby to shows, and if we do have to make a direct approach to the government then the estimated cost is £50,000. That is why the PAG needs funds: not to pay anyone for their

voluntary efforts, but to be prepared to move the battle onto another level, if necessary.

If you think you can help then send your money to Pip Dean, The PAG, Regent House, 101 Broadfield Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 0XH. Cheques to be made payable to 'Predation Action Group'. Further details about the PAG and predation will shortly be available through our website: PredationActionGroup.uk.org Email: info@predationactiongroup.co.uk

FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF FISHING



Who is in the Predation Action Group?



Mike Heylin
Mike has fished for 60 years and works full-time in angling and fisheries. He is fishery manager at Boxmoor and District Angling Society, runs an angling project for disadvantaged children, and is secretary of the Fish Welfare Group, director of the Dacorum Angling Project and secretary of Colne Valley Anglers Consultative. He sits on the Wildlife Group, the official committee looking into predation on fisheries.



Martin Bowler
Martin is a professional angler who writes for Angling Times and many European magazines. In addition to these regular columns he has been involved with angling films for the last seven years, including 'Catching The Impossible', which has been shown on Channel 4 and Discovery. Martin has his own production company, has held two British records, and has been described by Peter Drennan as '...the best angler I have ever known!'



Ruth Lockwood
Ruth is the owner of Yateley Angling Centre. Much of her time is spent campaigning against the illegal trade in carp through ECHO. She is a tireless, committed worker, ECHO vice-chairman, secretary of the PAG, and an extremely effective and influential angling politician. Ruth's greatest joy is music, and she can often be found 'on the fiddle' raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Support through Sloney & Friends.



John Slader
John works part-time for the Salmon & Trout Association which recently announced a working collaboration with the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and has taken an office at its HQ in Fordingbridge. John is an all round angler and an active qualified angling coach (both game and coarse) and as such likes to think that he does have an understanding of the threats to angling. He is also chairman of the Fish Welfare Group.



Danny Fairbrass
Danny is head of the Essex-based Korda Developments company and a successful carp angler, writer, filmmaker and maker of TV programmes. The Korda Underwater DVDs presented by Danny are considered 'must see' material by most carp anglers. He is a generous sponsor of carp and angling politics and has supported the concept of the Predation Action Group since it was first proposed.



Tony Gibson
Tony is one of the most successful and respected specialist/specimen anglers around and was the first person to be awarded both the annual Drennan Cup and the Fox Cup trophies, and has an almost unrivalled list of personal bests. Tony is a senior IT project manager at one of the country's leading financial institutions and has a wealth of experience in delivering complex, high-profile projects.



John Wilson MBE
John was born a Londoner who moved to Norfolk for the wonderful roach fishing, which no longer exists. He spent 26 years as a tackle dealer, 25 years in TV and broadcasting, and, concurrently, 40 years as an angling writer, for which he received the MBE two years ago. He has spent 30 years in fishery management after creating his own lake, which periodically gets preyed by otters and cormorants. He has good reason to be angry about the predation issue.



Keith Wesley
Keith is a Fisheries Consultant and runs his own fishery business in Hertfordshire, Bedwell Fish Farm. Through his day-to-day work he sees all the problems associated with predation in all its forms. Keith is in constant touch with institutes and universities researching all aspects of fish welfare, including predation, and his fishery expertise and contacts are an essential aspect of the Predation Action Group research remit.



Tim Paisley
Tim was the founder of the Carp Society in 1981 and has had an interest in angling politics ever since. He is a committed carp angler, runs two carp lakes in Shropshire, was the founding editor of Carp Fisher, and is currently editor of Carpworld. As chairman of ECHO and the PAG he feels that, like Ruth Lockwood, he acts as a necessary link between the two committees and helps co-ordinate their efforts.



Pip Dean
Pip is the treasurer of the Predation Action Group and one of its principal fundraisers through meetings. She is one of the daughters of Tim's late wife Mary and, with sister Jemima, one of the directors of Angling Publications. She has 20 years' experience of financial affairs and brings her expertise to bear in supporting ECHO and the PAG, and looking after the PAG accounts.

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