



About the Predation Action Group

The Predation Action Group was formed during the last two years to address the escalating problem of the impact predators are having on our fish stocks. During the last 20 years the combined impact of signal crayfish in some river systems, cormorants on rivers and on stillwaters, and the nationwide spread of the otter, which was artificially reintroduced in the late-'80s and '90s, has resulted in a serious decline in our eel and coarse fish stocks. The reintroduction of the otter was well-intentioned, but didn't take into account the fact that cormorants were already making serious inroads into the otter's natural prey – small fish in our river systems. In many rivers fish stocks are now at an all-time low, with the result that some years ago the otter turned its attentions to stillwaters for its prey. Where small fish stocks are low, eels, barbel and carp are now the otter's prime targets. Eel levels are at an all-time low, the big barbel have disappeared from some of our rivers, and we are receiving numerous reports of carp mortalities, including some very big fish. Fish farms and carp fisheries have had to resort to fencing their properties to keep the otters at bay, but, of course, the river systems and our big, natural waters are unfenceable, and at the otter's mercy.

The cormorant issue has been with us since the '90s and authorities are still searching for proof that there is a problem! It is possible to obtain a licence to shoot a limited number of cormorants if you can prove due cause, but until there is a cormorant

cull the situation will get rapidly worse. Otters are a bigger problem because they are protected by European law, and perceived as loveable by the general public. To kill an otter, even if you are protecting your valuable property, is punishable by law. But the predation problem doesn't stop at fish stocks. Because there simply isn't enough natural prey to go round, predators' diets are becoming increasingly diverse and some of our best-loved bird species are suffering too.

The PAG's remit is to research the extent of the predation problem and report to a higher authority, in the first instance that authority being the Angling Trust. All the PAG's work is voluntary and fund-raising via donations and specially arranged meetings has resulted in the current funding standing at a figure of £8681.50. Why raise funds? Because eventually it may be necessary to lobby parliament direct, and working through a lobbyist costs of the order of £50,000!

The PAG was started at the instigation of John Wilson MBE, who is a tireless worker in its promotion, and he is backed by fish farmer Keith Wesley, John Slader of S&TA, Mike Heylin, Angling Trust, Tony Gibson, Ian Chillcott of ECHO, Martin Bowler, Jerry Bridger, Mark Holmes, chairman Tim Paisley and treasurer Pip Dean. The work of the PAG and its aims are outlined on the recently opened website: www.thepredationactiongroup.co.uk

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Confirmed Patrons supporting the work of the PAG:

- Chris Ball
- Chris Burt
- Bob Church
- Kevin Clifford and Carp Fishing News
- Bill Cottam *Nutrabaits*
- Julian Cundiff
- Jim Davidson OBE
- Danny Fairbrass *Korda*
- Jerry Hammond
- Len Gurd *Linear Fisheries*
- Terry Hearn
- Rob Hughes
- Rod Hutchinson
- Kev Knight and Steve Morgan *Mainline*
- Kevin Nash *Nash Tackle*
- Chris Tarrant
- Des Taylor
- Les Webber MBE *Angling Projects*

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You can support our cause by making a donation or reporting any serious predation issues in your area. Report forms are available on our stand or via our website. The PAG is a member of and supports the work of the Angling Trust.