

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and fishing

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been disappointed to read a number of recent inaccurate reports regarding our policy and approach to fishing. These are unhelpful in encouraging cooperation between the interests of angling and nature conservation. This statement provides clarity on Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's current position and work we are doing in partnership with the angling community.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust position on fishing

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, in line with The Wildlife Trusts nationally holds the following policy in relation to field sports, including fishing:

1. In relation to field sports, The Wildlife Trusts will determine their policies on nature conservation grounds only.
2. The Wildlife Trusts recognise that many Trust members hold strong views both for and against field sports, and that field sports have contributed to the conservation of some natural and semi-natural habitats.
3. The Wildlife Trusts will remain neutral on whether field sports should be made illegal because they involve moral and ethical issues not central to nature conservation.
4. The Wildlife Trusts are strongly opposed to any field sport, or aspect of a field sport, which has a damaging impact on populations of quarry or non-target species, or habitats.
5. Because nature reserves are places for the quiet appreciation of wildlife, there will be a presumption against field sports on Wildlife Trusts' nature reserves over which the Trust has full control.
6. Where a Wildlife Trust nature reserve is not under full control of the Trust, conditions laid down by the landowners in relation to field sports will be respected, although Wildlife Trusts will always seek to discourage any activity prejudicial to the objective of a nature reserve.

Fishing on Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves

Reports have claimed that the Wildlife Trust has recently introduced a ban on fishing on its nature reserves. This is incorrect. In fact, the policy not to support fishing on our own nature reserves where we have full control has been in place since 1987 and the more detailed policy above was adopted in 1999.

Reports have also claimed that the 'ban' relates to '65 waters'. Again, this is incorrect. The Wildlife Trust has some 70 nature reserves of which only 21 contain water bodies with any likelihood of fishing. Of these 21, there has been

no interest in fishing on 8 sites and fishing is permitted on 5 sites. There are only 8 nature reserves where the Wildlife Trust actively discourages fishing, and this is because of the sensitivity of the wildlife on these sites to disturbance. In these cases we are working with angling groups to explain our position, and the importance of species not being disturbed by activities such as fishing. In addition, in all of these 8 cases, there are alternative open waters for fishing within a three mile radius.

Where there are fishing rights on our nature reserves, the Wildlife Trust takes a positive approach to working with angling groups to ensure responsible fishing while looking to minimise the impacts to sensitive areas. An example of this is at Attenborough nature reserve where in the past we have undertaken improvements to angling pegs for disabled anglers. We are committed to continuing to work positively with Nottinghamshire Angling Association as they continue to manage this fishery.

In addition, at Holme Pit in Clifton we have worked with the Holme Pit action group to de-silt the lake to improve the conditions for wildlife, angling and help understand the history of the site.

Reports have claimed that the Wildlife Trust has recently introduced a ban on fishing at its Idle Valley nature reserve at Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits SSSI. Again, this is incorrect. The Wildlife Trust has worked with the previous owners, Tarmac, since 2001 to limit angling. When the site was designated a SSSI, sport fishing and angling were highlighted as operations requiring Natural England's consent. This was on the basis that angling might significantly impact on some of the special interest features of the site for which it was notified, in particular breeding and wintering birds. Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust now owns a large part of this site and is continuing to enforce the position of no fishing.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's work with angling groups

Away from our own sites, the Wildlife Trust also works with angling groups across the county to promote responsible fishing alongside nature conservation.

This has included:

- Working with the CAST project at Quarry Lane, the Hermitage and Warsop Carrs in Mansfield
- Securing funds for fishing equipment which can be borrowed by young people for training in responsible angling
- Supporting Brierley Country Park in letting waters to the local fishing group
- Working with Mansfield District Council and local anglers to arrange rental agreements for angling at Warsop Carrs with funds generated being used for site management
- Working at Langold Country Park to provide fish cages to protect fish stocks from predatory birds

- Advice at Newstead pit tip to create new fishing ponds and areas of nature conservation interest as part of proposals for a new country park
- Land management advice to enhance the site at Hallcroft Fisheries adjacent to Bellmoor Lake at our Idle Valley nature reserve

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