

13 December 2019

Oil spill hits River Kennet in Reading

Thank you to the members of the public who alerted ARK and the Environment Agency to the oil spill on the River Kennet in Reading on Thursday.

The Environment Agency were swift to respond and teams have been working out on site around the Madjeski Stadium and through the Oracle Centre on Thursday and Friday. They are focussing on tracing the pollution source and minimising the environmental impact by deploying oil absorbent materials. A specialist contractor has been employed to support the remediation.

Action for the River Kennet's director, Charlotte Hitchmough said 'Oil pollution can have a devastating impact on the water environment, oil spreads over the water surface in a thin layer that stops oxygen getting to the plants and animals that live in the water. Wildfowl are particularly vulnerable because oil damages the waterproofing on their feathers and they can eat it as they preen. Mammals such as water voles are also affected.

At the moment there is a good flow in the river and the oil slick is responding well to the Environment Agency's efforts, but it's a timely reminder for homes and businesses to check their oil storage and know how to prevent or deal with a spill.'

There is good advice on the oil care website <http://oilcare.org.uk/> on how to prevent spill and also what to do if you cause one. Polluting rivers is an offence and you could be liable to prosecution if it is found that you or your business did not store or dispose of oil correctly.

The Environment Agency pollution reporting line is **0800 807060**. Please call this number to report any pollution you spot, it's thanks to members of the public calling in that such swift action could be taken.

More information: www.riverkennet.org or 01672 512700

Oil care advice: <http://oilcare.org.uk/>