



Action for the River Kennet



20/04/2021

## **A new project celebrating eels is coming to the River Kennet and the River Pang**

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) are looking for schools, groups and individuals who would like to be part of their exciting new eel project. The iconic European eel, once a common fish in the Kennet and the Pang, is now critically endangered.

The project is offering free workshops and assemblies for schools, as well free eel talks and riverbank walks for community groups and the general public. Participants will learn all about the European eel's incredible life cycle and migration, as well as the importance of the rivers Kennet and Pang to the survival of eels.

This summer we are looking for volunteers to be trained to become part of a regular volunteering Eel Force team. We are particularly looking for volunteers on the River Kennet from Reading to Hungerford and the River Pang from Pangbourne to Reading. One reason for the eel's steep population decline is man-made barriers in rivers, which prevent eels moving up and down the river system. We will be training volunteers to surveys and map where these barriers are. This is a great opportunity for anyone who would like to regularly spend time near their local river at the same time as doing something useful to protect the European eel.

The project area covers the River Kennet including Kintbury, Newbury, Thatcham, Woolhampton, Theale, Tilehurst, and Reading; and the River Pang around Pangbourne, Tidmarsh, Sulham, Englefield, Bradfield, Stanford Dingley and Hampstead Norreys.

Mia Ridler, Project Officer at ARK said, "This project is really exciting, and we can't wait to talk to the community about this amazing fish and the wonderful habitat it lives in - your local river!" Mia said 'Please get in touch if you or your local school or community group would like a workshop or a community talk.'

Please get in touch with [mia@riverkennet.org](mailto:mia@riverkennet.org) if you are in the project area and are a teacher or parent interested in a school workshop or assembly for your school; a community group interested in an eel talk; or if you would like to get involved with volunteering for our citizen science eel walkover surveys.

The Thames Catchment Community Eels project is a partnership, led by Thames Rivers Trust with Action for the River Kennet, South East Rivers Trust and Thames21. We are working together to aid the long-term survival of the European eel. Through new citizen science monitoring we will be collecting and analysing robust data, to be used for strategic decisions for future eel recovery projects.

The Thames Catchment Community Eels project is funded by the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The fund is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

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## Notes to editors

Supporting media attached to email

Image 1- European eel

Image 2- a young European eel called a glass eel.

