

Extracting Gravel From Rivers



Environmental & Legal Information



Cymdeithas Cymru Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales



Asiantaeth yr
Amgylchedd Cymru
Environment
Agency Wales



The Wye & Usk Foundation
Action for fisheries



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Aggregates Levy Fund for Wales



Imagine this happening to your home and children.



Because this is what gravel extraction does to fish and their eggs when carried out at the wrong time of year.



River gravels are where many species of fish spawn, including the highly protected atlantic salmon and lampreys. Trout and grayling also spawn in gravel, so there will be eggs and fry in gravel from late autumn until July. Gravels are also home to a myriad of important invertebrates, on which fish and birds depend for survival.



Gravel extraction is as deadly to fish and their eggs as any pollution. Those that survive the physical removal or subsequent choking by the released silt are very likely to be predated (eaten).

Extraction can also be harmful to birds that nest on exposed gravel such as little ringed plover and sandpiper. It can also increase the spread of invasive weeds such as japanese knotweed.

General Guidelines:

- Plan any extraction well ahead so gravel can be taken out at safe times for use later.
- Avoid any disturbance of river gravels between 15th October and 31st July.
- Do not take vehicles or allow stock on shingle banks between 15th March and 31st July.
- Extraction of dry shoal material is usually far less environmentally damaging than river gravel.
- Seek all necessary consents from the Environment Agency, CCW/Natural England and your Local Authority before extracting gravel from a river - *you could be breaking the law if you don't.*

To extract gravel in the Wye and Usk SAC and Lugg SSSI you will need:

- Flood Defence consent from the Environment Agency if from a main river. For non-main rivers you will require consent from your Local Authority.
- Consent from CCW/Natural England in a SAC or SSSI - most of the Wye and Usk and their tributaries are so designated. Even if extracting from an undesignated site upstream you might still need consent.
- In certain circumstances, planning permission from your Local Authority.

Offences you might be committing if you extract gravel:

- Disturbance to spawning fish or their eggs and fry is likely (between mid October to the end of July in the case of the Wye and Usk) and, without permission from the Environment Agency, is an offence under the Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 (maximum fine £2,500).
- Dredging a navigable river without permission from the Environment Agency is also an offence under the Wye Navigation Order 2002 (maximum fine £1,000).
- Damaging the conservation interest is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and/or Habitats Regulations 1994 (maximum fine £20,000).

For more information please contact:
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