

# The River Crouch Conservation Trust Est. 2009

**Friends of the river bank:**

Roy H. Hart  
Peter Steward  
Steven Westall

Affiliated to the Angling Trust of Great Britain  
Patron H.R.H. Prince Philip Since 1951

R.C.C.T



PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED

SERIOUS REPORT FROM THE TRUST, ON THE  
POLLUTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER CROUCH  
THROUGH BASILDON AND WICKFORD AND  
BEYOND.

WE COULD DO WITH ALL THE HELP AS POSSIBLE  
IN ANY FORM.

YOURS VERY SINCERELY

ROY HART

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## River Crouch Conservation Trust

9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 View from the bridge

Our wonderful River Crouch has been in great danger over the last few weeks, which resulted in 1,200 beautiful fish dying, including roach, perch, dace, chub, and bull heads which are on the rare list of threatened species, they are very small fish and weigh less than 1oz.

Our river Crouch is one of the greatest populated in Essex for fish life. We also have otters, kingfishers, water voles etc. **This is a plea to all members of the public**, when you are walking along the riverbank, if you see dead fish in the Crouch, discoloured water, or a strong offensive smell, please ring us or send us an email.

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July we were called out to the Wickford Memorial Park bridge by the large main gates. Many fish were gasping for air and laying on their sides. I cleared any blockages of old branches etc to let the distressed fish able to make their way to deeper cooler waters down river with the current. I took water samples etc, it was getting very dark, and went back to my office in Battlesbridge and alerted Anglian Water who came out very quickly, and The Environment Agency. Their officers spent all weekend trying to trace the source of the pollution in the Nevendon Brook area and bagging up all the dead fish, with the help of Trust members

The next Friday evening on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August I followed up another complaint of sewerage etc near Crays Hill at about 8pm, I discovered sewage being discharged into a large drainage trench alongside London Road approaching Crays Hill. We found the discharge straight away coming off the A129. Sewerage and foul water was running into the ditch which was running to Church Road and into the River Crouch. The stench was extremely strong.

I then drove to the river, with Charles Keeling Esq who had alerted me to the problem. The stench was still extremely strong ¼ of a mile away, I took water samples from the River Crouch bridge. I spoke to a resident who informed me that the vile stench by the river had been there for almost 2 months!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> incident: I was sent an email from a kind lady. Her mother's garden and others near Basildon were flooded by discoloured water, which was tested by

Essex & Suffolk Water and was found to contain a high level of chlorine and was a real environmental problem. Chlorine is very dangerous; it was used in World War 1 as a choking agent. The foul water was coming from an old asbestos pipe on farmland, which had burst, unfortunately the garden ditches also run into the River Crouch.

If the River Crouch gets more violent pollution, especially in the hot weather and low water level, not only will the fish and wildlife suffer, it will also contaminate the shellfish beds of which there are many, and get into the food chain, this is a very serious situation.

On these three occasions, I must also thank Anglian Water, the Environmental Agency and especially Peter Steward, Paul Thwaites, Trust Members, for their prompt help and professional assistance.

Yours very sincerely

Roy H Hart



*The Bull Head, also known as the Millers Thumb are listed Internationally as being on the red list of endangered species and are very rare. They are very small only weighing less than 1oz. They favour gravel and small stones to build a nest especially under bridges (Wickford Park) They hunt at night and they live up to 5 years and must be protected at all costs. We missed many dead fish, the estimated total of dead fish was possibly twice what we managed to cover. The number of Bullheads was considered to be hundreds.*

*Our next work party on the River is on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September 9am at the Park Bridge.*