

Dear Member

Apologies for the lengthy email but we would encourage you to take time to read it all as it contains some important Club information.

Hopefully you will have seen our recent emails about working parties at Silver End and how the club has been preparing for the installation of an Otter Fence around the Front Pit at Silver End. A handful of hard-working member volunteers along with members of the committee have now cleared some 600m of bushes, small trees, undergrowth and tree stumps. This has not been an easy task and the Club is extremely grateful to those members who have found the time to assist and help and prepare for the anti-predation measures at Silver End on behalf of us all.

We are now pleased to announce that the installation of this new Anti-Predation Otter Fence by Embryo Angling Habitats will commence on Monday 12th of May 2025.

Work is expected to take at least one week and during the installation both the Front and Back Pits at Silver End will be closed for the entire duration of the work. This closure is necessary to ensure site safety for both members and contractors as the car parks will be utilised for machinery and materials with contractors remaining on site 24/7 during the works.

The closure of both pits will commence on Sunday 11th May at 4pm and provisionally re open on Monday 19th at 9am. Any members fishing on Sunday 11th must have vacated the car park by 4pm after which time the gate codes will be temporarily changed to avoid any unauthorised entry.

Depending on the progress of the work there is an outside chance that the closure may be extended for one or two more days, but both the Club and Contractor are hopeful that the works can be completed within the time frame.

So there are a few questions to consider; Does KDAA have a predation problem? Why are we installing an Otter fence and why is it only at Silver End front pit?

Predation - We are sure you will have all seen reports in the angling press and through social media that predation on and around UK fisheries is potentially on the rise. This predation comes in many forms and we are often contacted by members reporting Cormorants and Mink on our waters.

The Club currently works in partnership with the Water Recovery Trust to assist in the long-term efforts to eradicate Mink from the UK and we have Mink traps on a majority of our waters. Mink are a non-native invasive species and have a devastating impact on our UK native species such as Water Voles, kingfishers and Moorhens. Fisheries involved in the programme last year managed to trap some 2758 Mink with Essex being the 4th highest County for captures. This is important work and we are very pleased to be involved with a project that aims to help our native species.

We also record Cormorant sightings on our waters which in turn allows us to report these sightings to Natural England who are able to grant licences to scare, and where necessary, shoot cormorants that are causing serious damage in order to protect fisheries. Cormorants are apex predators and their population has risen dramatically in the UK from around 2000 birds in the 1980's to an estimated 62,000 birds currently. Each bird needs around 1lb of fish per day to survive so the potential impact on freshwater fisheries across the UK is easy to see. Many of the birds that are sighted are likely to be a European sub species that tend to overwinter here in the

UK, but we encourage members to get in touch with us to report sightings (time location and date) as this greatly assists us in keeping a record of the activity.

Otters are another apex species, a well-adapted and voracious predator. Otters are a protected species in the UK and their historically low numbers have allowed fisheries to develop over the years without the fear of Otter predation. This lack of predation has also allowed fisheries to rear significant numbers of specimen fish. Otter numbers are now flourishing due to conservation work and fisheries across the UK are now reporting increased instances of Otter predation. Otters have a conservation/protected status which is written into UK Law and there are very serious consequences for any person who deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild Otter. Deliberately disturbing wild Otters or their breeding sites or holts is also an offence.

In order to avoid the potential for Otter predation the best and only option open to fisheries, is the installation of an Otter fence that is specifically designed to prevent Otters climbing over or digging under the fence. The only weakness in an Otter fence are the pedestrian gates, although these are only weak if those using the gates fail to close them or leave them open for a period of time!

Why Silver End? - We should start by saying we don't currently have a problem with Otter predation at Silver End or other waters, and members may be aware that the Club own the land surrounding the Front Pit, whereas all other Club waters are leased.

An Otter fence is a long-term investment for the Club and although we have aspirations to continue with anti-predation measures at other Club waters, it seemed sensible to invest on members behalf in a fence which we expect to last in excess of 20 years on land which the Club owns.

If you are interested finding out more about predation, check out the Angling Trust link which also covers Goosanders and Seals in freshwater fisheries, yes Seals!

<https://anglingtrust.net/predation-2/>

Tight lines!

KDAA Committee