

**MEETING MINUTES
CVP GENERAL MEETING
HOUNSLOW CIVIC CENTRE,
18 JANUARY 2016**

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1.	<p>Attendance: Ilse Steyl (Green Corridor - Chair); David Allister (LB Richmond); Amanda MacLean (Environment Agency [EA]); Tom White (London Wildlife Trust [EA]); Claudia Innes (Thames Water); Chris Slack (Carillion [LB Hounslow]); Gareth Ryman (Carillion [LB Hounslow]); Rob Gray (Friends of the River Crane Environment[FORCE]); Adam Cheeseman (EHM Ltd [Heathrow Airport Ltd]); Paul Leonard (Brunel University); Ajit Bansal (LB Hounslow); Frances Bennett (FORCE); Iain Cross (St Mary's University); Hayley Bristow (University of Birmingham); Andrew Flegg (The Conservation Volunteers); Hilary Thomson (Tidal Crane Association); Jon Staples (LB Ealing); Michael Murphy (Heathrow Airport Ltd [HAL]); Rob Pearson (EA)</p> <p>Apologies: Julia Balfour (Royal Parks); Russell Knight (HAL); Chris Cockel (Kew Gardens); Gordon Scorer (LWT); Joe Pecorelli (Zoological Society of London [ZSL]); Chris Bunting (LB Ealing); Bob Barton (Cranford Friends); John Dobson (Harrow Nature Conservation Forum); John Tovey (London Bat Group); Stefania Horne (LB Hounslow); Michael Bradshaw (LB Harrow); Mark Scrimshaw (Brunel University)</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting: Accepted. Paul Leonard asked which methodology was used on the Cost Benefit Analysis used for the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). It was noted that this is explained within the RBMP.</p>	
3.	<p>Summary of Invasive Non-Native Species study: Ilse gave a brief summary of the baseline study undertaken by the London Invasive Species Network (LISI) on the project funded through the Thames Water Pollution Fund. The report was submitted in the beginning of December 2015 and can be downloaded from the CVP website (http://www.cranevalley.org.uk/projects/INNS_baseline-2015.html). Data has been uploaded to the CVP GIS database. It was agreed to organise a subgroup for the CVP to discuss the implementation of a catchment-wide plan for the management of invasives.</p>	<p>Ilse to send email to CVP to partners to gauge support for invasive species sub group.</p>
4.	<p>Results of electro-fishing survey: Rob Pearson gave a summary of the Environment Agency electro-fishing results for the 2015 and the comparison with previous years. Three sites are monitored annually, namely Cranford Park (control site), Hounslow Heath and Crane Park. The summary is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.</p>	<p>Ilse to request data from Heathrow.</p>

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	A request was made at the meeting to include the data from the Heathrow surveys to the analyses.	
5.	<p>Summary discussion of project workshop held in November 2015:</p> <p>A very successful workshop was held on 9 November 2015 at Mogden Sewage Treatment Works. The proceedings of the workshop can be downloaded from the CVP website (http://www.cranevalley.org.uk/news/partnership-meetings.html - scroll down to the bottom of the page).</p> <p>Progress has been made in the planning of some of the the projects discussed at the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lower Crane Restoration</u> A subgroup will be established to act as a Steering Group for the planning stages of the possible restoration project. Ilse to send an email to interested parties to invite them to join such a group. Rob Gray and Ilse to meet up with the River Restoration Centre (RRC) to discuss their possible involvement to assist with planning and review. • <u>Only Rain in Rivers & SuDS</u> The project was discussed at the last Citizen Crane steering group and it was agreed that the project scoped at the workshop was more geared towards information gathering, whilst the initial step should be awareness raising. It was noted that the Citizen Crane project outfall monitoring project could be linked to such a campaign, coordinated via twitter/facebook. Hilary Thomson from the Tidal Crane Association agreed to assist with the coordination and Amanda MacLean from the EA will assist. • <u>Natural River Project</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two projects will also commence in the upper part of the catchment (Harrow) – Headstone Manor and Newton Park. It is anticipated that the work will start in spring. ○ Projects are planned in Hillingdon and Ealing along the Yeading Brook West (Hillingdon) and Yeading Brook Meadows (Ealing). LWT will be assisting with the project planning and management. ○ Improvements are also planned at the water course along Avenue Park (Hounslow). • <u>Access project</u> Ilse to combine all information on access currently held within CVP GIS database and present in consistent format. Once completed, further work will be discussed with CVP partners and funding sought to expand project. 	<p>Ilse to setup meeting with RRC.</p> <p>Hilary and Amanda to coordinate ORIR awareness campaign. Campaign to coincide with Citizen Crane outfall project.</p>
6.	<p>Year ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of projects and events are planned for 2016. The Thames Water Pollution Fund currently has approximately £120,000 left. Next application deadline is 28 January 2016. Further dates available on CVP website (http://www.cranevalley.org.uk/news/thames-water- 	

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	<p>fund.html). Thames Water also has two other project funding sources, namely the Community Investment Fund and their Charitable Fund. Details are available on the TW website (http://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/3484.htm). The first deadline for both funds is 18 March, for review by the charities committee by 20 April. The committee meets four times a year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The London River Restoration group (subgroup of the Catchment Partnerships in London) discussed the possibility of a London Rivers Week campaign, date not yet decided, but most likely in June. Partners are encouraged to badge any events they will be organising during that week as part of London Rivers Week. • FORCE is organising three walks over the next three month, from the bottom of the catchment (DNR) to the top (Headstone Manor). The first event will be on Saturday, 30 January. Further details are available on http://e-voice.org.uk/force/calendar/view. A host of other events are also planned during the year. • The Tidal Crane Association will be holding their annual River Clean-up during June and will also be auditing the flora at their local Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC). • LB Hounslow is consulting on their Local Plan review for the Great West Corridor and West of the Borough. The review of concern to the CVP is the West of the Borough. The consultation will run until 22 February and comments should be sent to ldf@hounslow.gov.uk. LB Hounslow is also actively working on improving Portlane Brook, which potentially could be included within the Crane Catchment management area. • Heathrow has also announced the possibility of spending £105m within the Colne and Crane Valleys if expansion of the airport is approved. Progress has been made on the improvements to the Eastern Balancing Ponds project. Suppliers are being interviewed and the detailed design stage will progress once suppliers have been appointed. In addition, source controls and a couple of dedicated de-icing pads are under construction that will improve Heathrow’s ability to contain de-icer at source. Another Earthwatch Water Day will also be held later in the year, encouraging community engagement from employees. • London Wildlife Trust has appointed a project officer to their small mammals project to work on London Water Vole project. • As part of the Lower DNR project, opportunities to enhance the water course and environment around Mogden will be investigated. A meeting has been arranged between Thames Water and members of the DNR Steering Group for 8 February. • The Environment Agency is in the process of planning for the replacement of Mereway weir, which will take place within the 	

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	<p>next 6 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunel University’s Institute for Environment, Health and Societies has been successful in their bids for Horizon2020 funded projects (http://www.brunel.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/news-items/ne_456753). Drs Mark Scrimshaw and Evina Katsou will lead the projects. 	
7.	<p>Future of CVP:</p> <p>The meeting discussed the future of the CVP and how the Partnership will be managed and coordinated. Currently Green Corridor is playing host to the Partnership, which has worked well since Green Corridor is an independent organisation not necessarily actively involved in project delivery. The departure of Jean Rolfe at the end of 2015 means that a new CEO might have a different view of the Partnership. The new CEO has not been appointed yet.</p> <p>The management and coordination of the CVP is currently financed through members of the Core Strategic, limited project contributions, the Defra catchment fund and the Thames Water Pollution Fund. None of these have been confirmed to continue for the next financial year.</p> <p>A number of models can be pursued, e.g. continuing with current model; forming a trust, which will manage and coordinate the Partnership; changing the host to a different organisation within the Partnership.</p> <p>Rob Gray and Frances Bennett from FORCE have met with David Allister (LB Richmond) and AnnMarie Newbigin (Chair of Green Corridor) to discuss the CVP and its future. A meeting of the Core Strategic will be organised in early March at which point the governance of the CVP will be reviewed. Rob Gray has agreed to send through potential models for discussion.</p> <p>The partners will be kept informed of future plans and potential changes to the management and coordination of the CVP.</p>	<p>Ilse to organise meeting with Core Strategic re CVP governance models</p>
8.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ilse thanked LB Hounslow for hosting the meeting. • Julia Balfour from the Royal Parks sent information through on proposals for HS2 to use a section of the ZSL car park at Regent’s Park during construction, which will impact on the hedgehog community (considered to be a hotspot area). Although not within the Crane catchment, it was felt partners might be interested. Further information can be found on the following web sites: Volume 2: Community forum area reports CFA1 Euston Station and Approach report and map book. Ecology is section 10 of the report; HS2 AP3 documents; Camden HS2 webpages 	
9.	<p>Next Meeting:</p> <p>To be confirmed. Potential venue Bushy Park, hosted by the Royal Parks.</p>	

APPENDIX 1

River Crane fish 2015

Catchment overview

The River Crane rises, initially under the guise of the Yeading Brook, to the north of Harrow, flowing south through Ruislip, Hillingdon, Hayes, Hounslow, Feltham and Twickenham before joining the River Thames at Isleworth. The main tributaries are the West and East arms of the Yeading Brook, and the Duke of Northumberland's artificial river which enters the Crane at North Feltham. The river flows for approximately 40km, draining a catchment of 104km².

Much of the river corridor passes through urban and suburban developments and industrial sites, most notable amongst which is Heathrow airport. In places the river also flows through significant areas of green land, such as Yeading Meadows, Hounslow Heath and Crane Park, all of which provide important conservational habitat.

Water Framework Directive classifications

Waterbody	Fish	Invertebrates	Macrophytes and Phytobenthos	Ammonia	Dissolved Oxygen	Phosphate
Crane	Poor	Moderate	Moderate	High	Good	Poor

Table 1: Water Framework Directive 2015 classifications for fish and other key elements affecting fish within the Crane WFD waterbody.

Main pressures affecting fish populations

Physical modifications: Flood defence and impounding structures significantly alter the hydrological regime of the River Crane and create significant barriers to fish migration.

Water quality: The River Crane is affected by elevated phosphate levels. Misconnected sewers are also a major source of pollution into the river. Major pollution events in both 2011 and 2013 severely impacted upon both the invertebrate and fish communities present.

Fisheries survey results 2015

In response to the major pollution event of 2013 which severely impacted the fish population throughout much of the River Crane, a programme of investigative surveys has been carried out at three sites to assess the recovery and current status of fish populations. This recovery has been aided by the stocking of approximately 15,000 fish from the Environment Agency's Calverton fish farm since 2013, in-line with the stocking programme decided in partnership with the Crane Valley Partnership Fisheries Group.

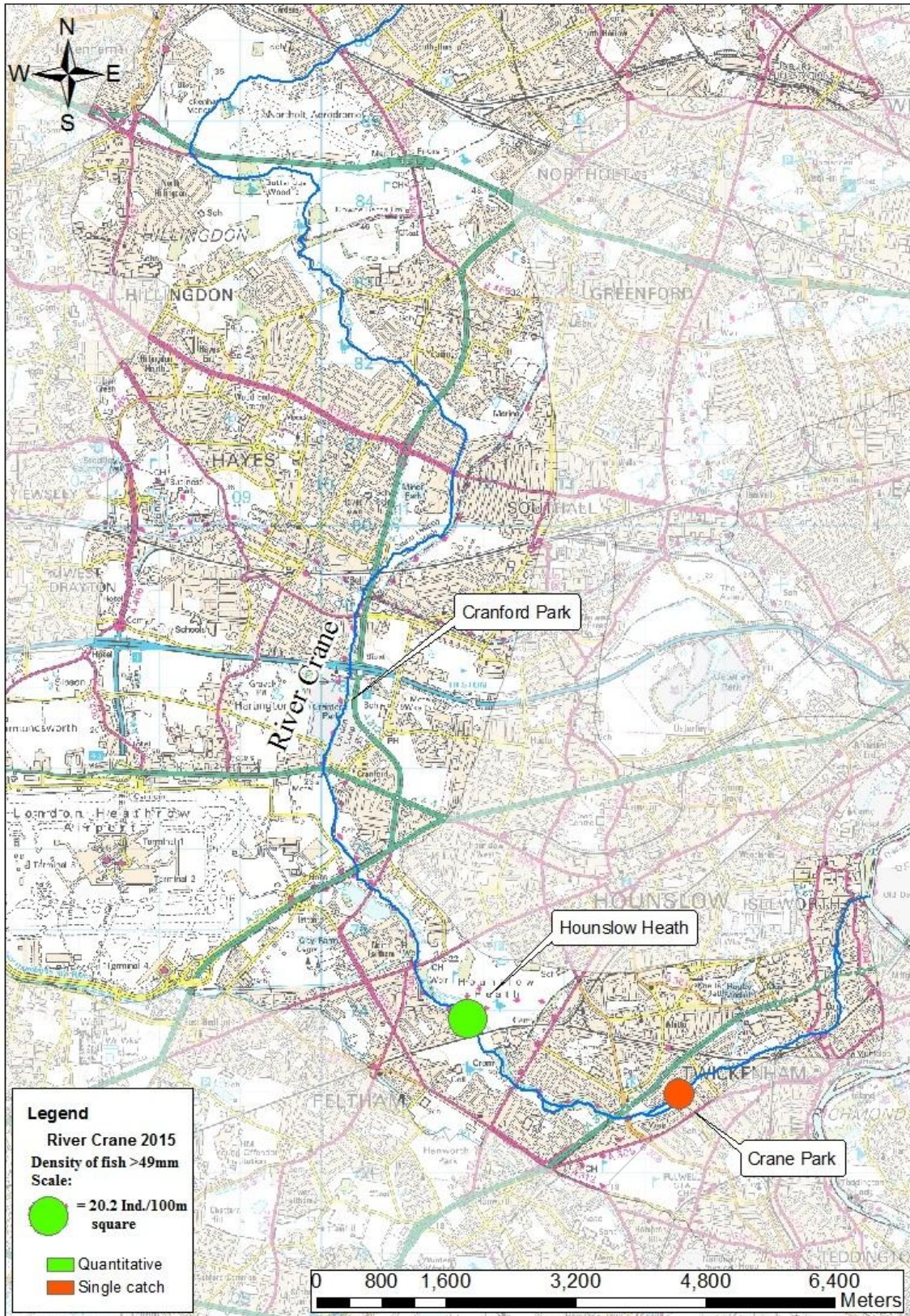


Figure 1: River Crane catchment showing location and comparative density of fish species >49mm at fisheries monitoring sites 2015.

Fisheries survey results 2015

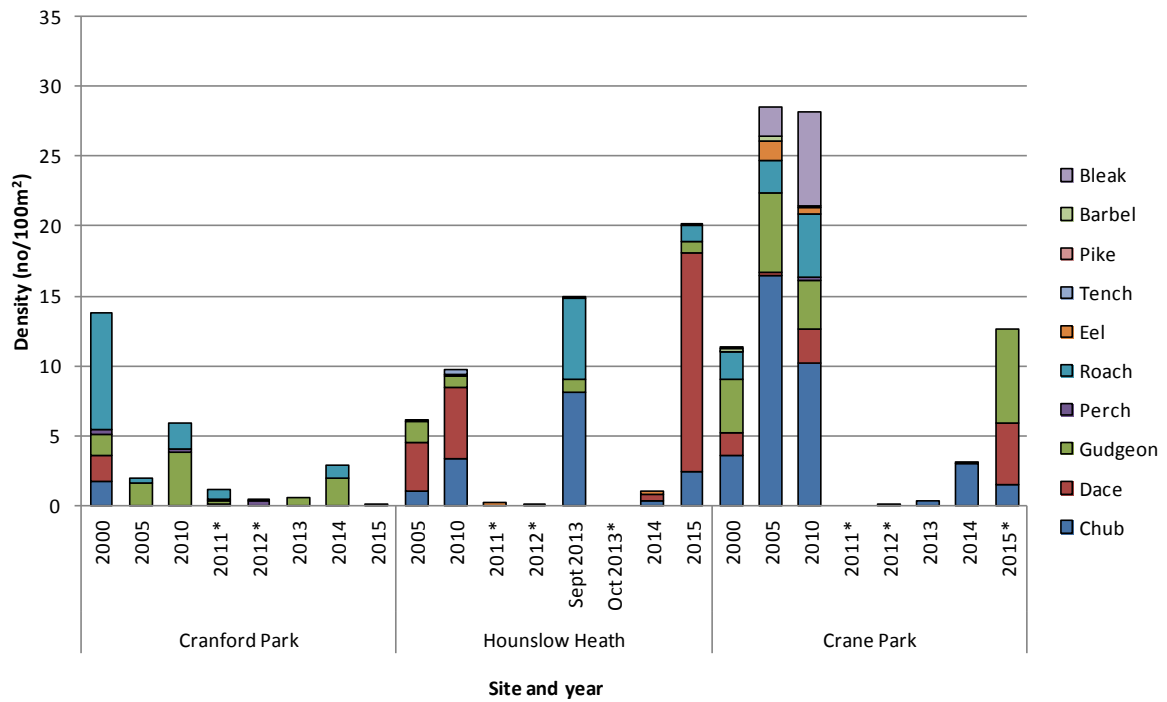


Figure 2: Density of fish species >49mm at monitoring sites on the River Crane 2000 – 2015 (*denotes results based on a single catch and not a quantitative estimate)

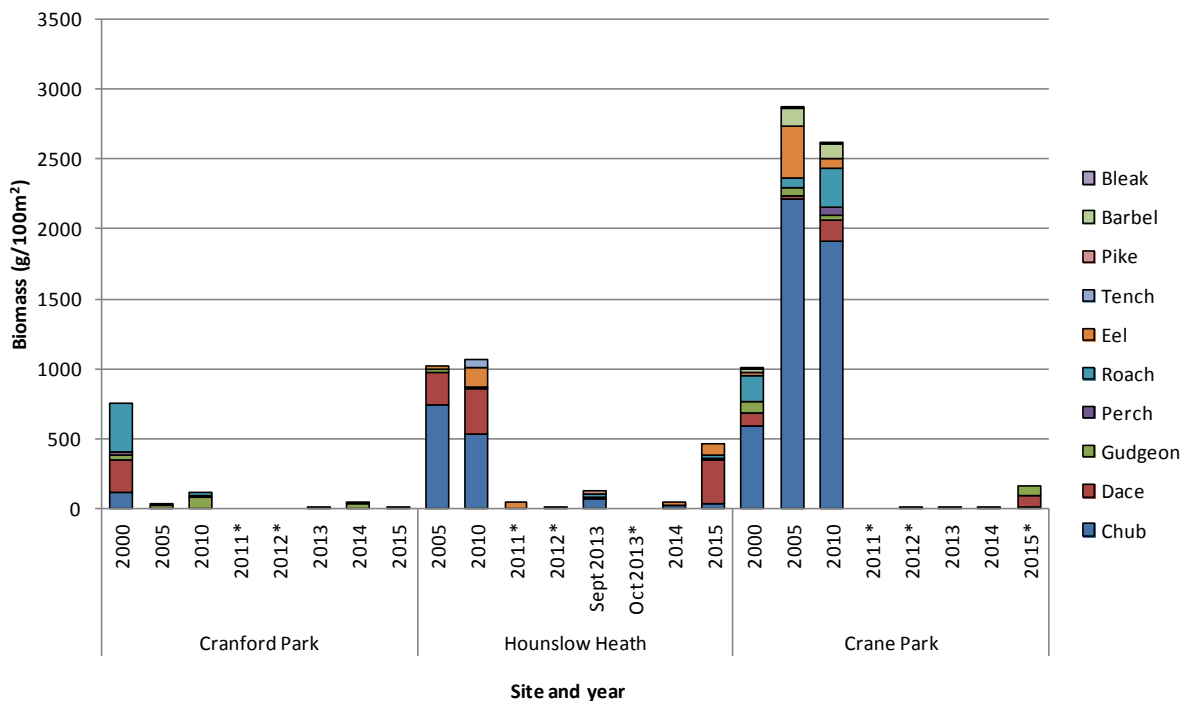


Figure 3: Biomass of fish species >49mm at monitoring sites on the River Crane 2000 – 2015 (*denotes results based on a single catch and not a quantitative estimate)

Cranford Park	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bullhead	0	0	10-99	0	0	0	1-9
Minnow	191	100-999	100-999	100-999	100-999	100-999	100-999
Three-spined stickleback	64	10-99	10-99	0	10-99	10-99	0
Stone loach	2	10-99	10-99	0	10-99	10-99	10-99

Hounslow Heath	2005	2010	2011	2012	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	2014	2015
Bullhead	0	10-99	2	10-99	10-99	0	10-99	100-999
Minnow	12	10-99	0	100-999	1000-9999	0	1000-9999	100-999
Three-spined stickleback	1	0	2	100-999	10-99	1-9	10-99	0
Stone loach	2	10-99	0	10-99	100-999	1-9	10-99	10-99

Crane Park	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bullhead	0	1-9	0	10-99	0	0	10-99
Minnow	10-99	100-999	1-9	100-999	0	100-999	100-999
Three-spined stickleback	0	1-9	0	0	10-99	10-99	10-99
Stone loach	1-9	10-99	0	10-99	0	10-99	10-99

Table 2: Numbers of minor species recorded during surveys of the River Crane 2000 – 2015 (numbers in some survey years given as log abundance estimates)

Results of the 2015 survey of the River Crane suggest that fish populations are beginning to recover. The effects of two successive stockings of chub, dace, roach and barbel in December 2013 and December 2014, consisting cumulatively of in excess of 15,000 fish has no doubt contributed to this increase in fish numbers.

Cranford Park is located upstream of the area affected by either the pollution event of 2011 or 2013. The site had been surveyed prior to this time, and its inclusion in our post-pollution monitoring was aimed at providing a continuum of the baseline data already collected, as well as an unaffected site against which the recovery of affected sites could be gauged. Fish populations when first surveyed in 2000 were far healthier than at present. In recent years habitat quality for fish has deteriorated with the site now overgrown and heavily shaded limiting photosynthetic productivity. Better habitat for fish is to be found a short distance upstream of our site. In 2015 the catch consisted of a solitary chub of 139mm, and the minor species, bullhead, stone loach, and minnow.

Density of fish >49mm was the highest to date at **Hounslow Heath**, and is higher than observed prior to the first major pollution event of 2011. Dace were the most abundant species at the site with 110 captured during the course of the survey. The shallow, briskly flowing water over a clean gravel substrate found throughout the site provides habitat well suited to the species. The size of dace captured, averaging 116mm, suggests they are stocked fish. In addition 16 small chub, and 8 small roach, again are likely to be stocked fish were captured, as well as naturally re-colonising gudgeon and eel were also captured. The site is open with limited cover, and this may limit its utilisation by other stocked species such as chub and barbel.

At **Crane Park** results of surveys carried out between 2000 and 2010 suggest that the site previously supported the highest density, biomass and species diversity of the three sites surveyed. In 2010, the year preceding the first major pollution event, a total of 12 fish species including minor species were captured. In 2015 results of the survey are based on a single electric fishing run and as such are likely to under-represent the true status of the fish population present. Although not quantitative results suggest that density of fish >49mm is the highest since 2010. Species diversity is still low in comparison with pre-pollution levels, with chub, dace, gudgeon, bullhead, stone loach, minnow and three-spined stickleback captured in 2015. However, it is encouraging that natural re-colonisation of species such as gudgeon, which were found in the highest numbers of any major species in 2015, having been absent in 2014. The 2014 survey also revealed evidence of natural recruitment of chub occurring in the vicinity of the site with 83 juvenile chub with a mean length of 45mm captured. Due to the inefficiency of electric fishing as a capture method for fish of this size and the related difficulty in obtaining accurate population estimates, they are not represented within the results shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Although density results suggest signs of recovery at both sites, biomass still falls some way short of pre-pollution levels, and is indicative of the fact that those fish present are predominantly juvenile fish. Biomass at Crane Park and Hounslow Heath was previously heavily influenced by the presence of large individuals of species such as chub. The recovery of fish stocks to include larger individuals will occur naturally over time as stocked fish grow on.

Table 2 details the abundance of minor species at each of our sites on the River Crane. The fact that these species are both small and can be incredibly abundant, means that obtaining accurate quantitative population estimates can be extremely difficult. As such log abundance estimates of numbers are instead recorded. The ability of these species to rapidly re-colonise is clear. At both Hounslow Heath and Crane Park estimated abundance of minor species had returned to, or exceeded, pre-pollution event levels within a year. Booming populations of minor species may occur in response to a reduction in populations of larger cohabiting species, and the pressures from predation and competition that they may exert.

Figure 4 details length frequency histograms for fish species captured in 2015, and comparative length frequency histograms from the 2014 survey. The increase in gudgeon which have not been stocked is particularly encouraging, whilst numbers of dace captured is far higher than in 2014. For chub the large numbers of juveniles captured in 2014 were not replicated in 2015. However a greater number of larger chub were captured. Roach numbers are comparable to those captured in the 2014 survey.

Barbel which have been stocked over the last two winters have not featured in any of our surveys. The habitat found within our survey sites is likely to be the main reason for this, with Hounslow Heath and Crane Park offering little in the way of cover, with areas of river providing greater depth of water and increased cover from submerged macrophyte beds and riparian vegetation likely to be sought out by the species during its juvenile life stage.

It is hoped that an additional stocking of approximately 8,000 fish, introduced to the river in December 2015, will assist further recovery of fish stocks.

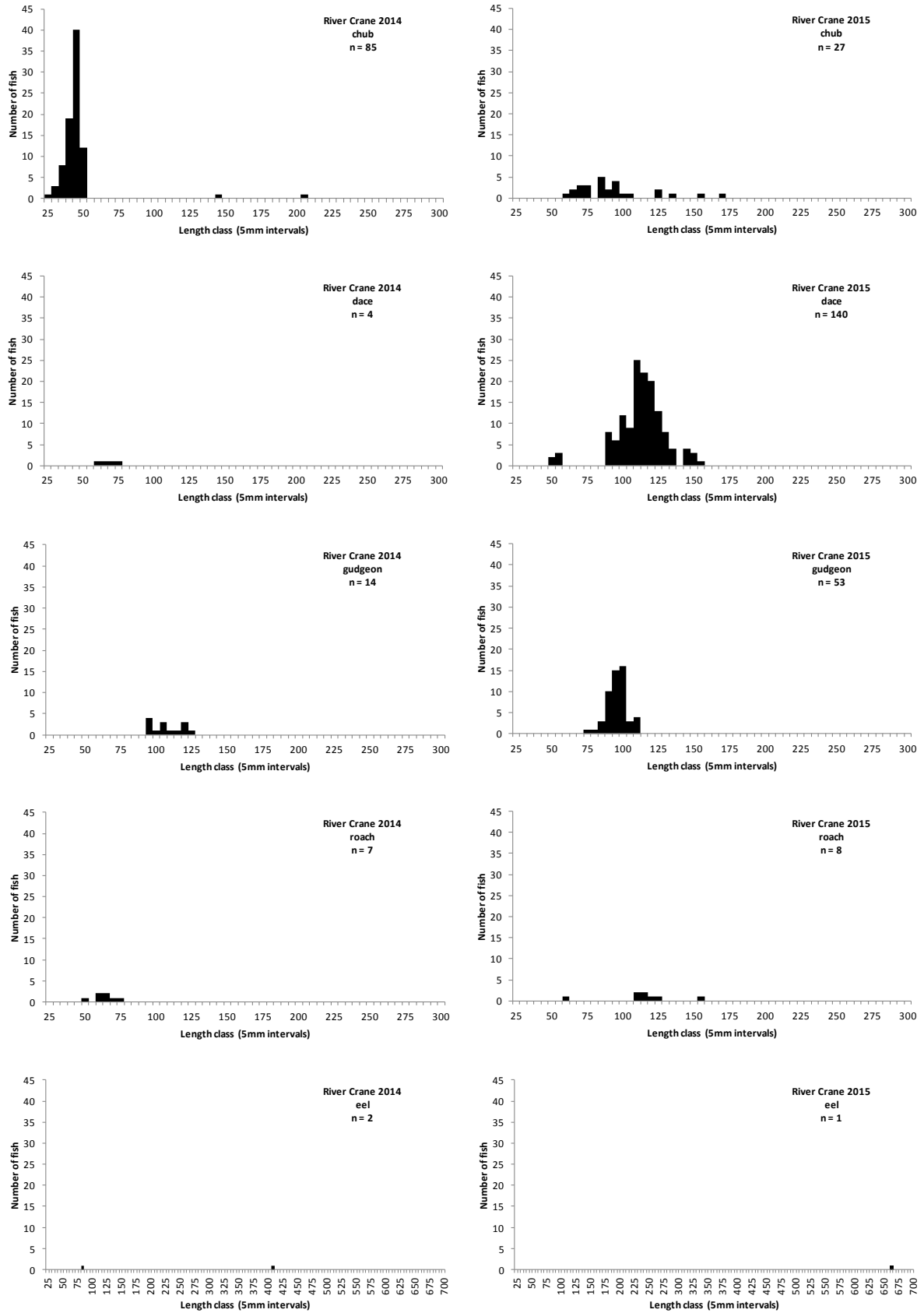


Figure 4: Length frequency histograms for fish species captured during the 2015 survey of the River Crane and comparative length frequencies from 2014.