

Applying for Fish Movements On-Line

Fish Movements Authorisations Team, Environment Agency

In accordance with legislation protecting native fish stocks from disease introductions and transfers, anyone who wants to

- introduce, remove or transfer freshwater fish
- carry out fish surveys
- trap crayfish

in inland waters in England and Wales must apply to the Environment Agency for consent. Currently applications have to be submitted, in writing, to the Fish Movements Authorisations Team (FMAT) at the Brampton.

However a new and exciting development is taking place within the fish movements industry in England and Wales. From April 2007, you will be able to access the application forms via the web, at home or in the office, and submit them electronically. You will also receive our decision electronically.

So what benefits do you get when you register and apply on-line?

- 1. A 24/7 facility:** You will be able to apply at any time of the day or night with the on-line system.
- 2. Information:** You will have access to all your previous applications, even paper-based applications, back to 2003. The on-line system will be a useful business tool. For example, if you have a surplus of a species of fish a search of your previous applications can highlight which customer has purchased these before. You can then contact them to see if they want to buy more.
- 3. Speed:** A set of drop down menus has been developed that will speed up the application process. These will detail all of your customers, receiving or source waters, water owners, fish farms etc that you have used in the past. You will have the ability to duplicate and overwrite old applications. If you are stocking or netting a water that you have done previously and the details are the same, you will be able to access the previous application form, change the dates of the task and resubmit it. This will avoid writing out another application from scratch. On such a duplicate application you will also be able to change task details, e.g. the fish species, sizes or numbers.
- 4. Security:** For business confidentiality purposes you will only have access to “your” previous applications details and information; you will not have access to any other applicant’s details. Security for this has been installed at the same level as that of on-line banking.
- 5. Monitoring progress:** You will be able to see the status of your application on-line, i.e. whether it needs a health check, if it is consented, refused or still being processed. This will reduce the time you spend having to telephone the EA.
- 6. Mapping:** The system development includes a detailed mapping facility. This will give you the ability to search for stillwaters and rivers around England and Wales, similar in process to google or multimap. Once found, you will be able to extract the exact National Grid Reference (NGR) of the water you are carrying out the task on.
- 7. Flexibility:** You may need to change the date of a consent that you have already received or one that is still pending, because of the weather, vehicle breakdown etc. With the new system you will be able to change the date on-line. There will

be business rules that mean you may not be able to change the dates and receive your consents at weekends. You will also need to provide one working day's notice, but the date can be changed within a 3 month (12 week) window of the original consent.

- 8. Financial savings:** If you already have a computer and paid for Internet access, you will obviously save on fax/postage costs.

What are the benefits to the Environment Agency?

- 1. Encouraging legal fish movements:** As applying for fish movement applications on-line will be a fast, modern, easy process, there is less incentive for people to do things illegally.
- 2. Data accuracy:** As the majority of the data entry will be completed by the applicant there will be increased data accuracy. If the applicant links in with the mapping facility there is less opportunity for water locations to be confused.
- 3. Financial savings:** As the consent/refusal documents will be sent electronically there will be less printing and postage costs. Less time will be spent clarifying unreadable handwriting, as the applications will be typed rather than hand written. Last year we returned over 10% of the fish movement applications to applicants as we could not read some of the details on them. The decreased need for data entry will save on labour costs which can be re-allocated elsewhere in fisheries.

Simple Consents.

Some applications are considered to be "simple consents" and can be processed quicker than others. Simple consents are those that are issued on an annual/monthly basis and are of low risk to the environment, e.g. ongoing fish removals/cropping from waters, and stocking in put-and-take trout fisheries.

Simple consents are identified by your local Fisheries Officers and then relayed to the FMAT as such. By compiling these lists the Fisheries Officers are effectively pre-authorising the consents. This way the FMAT can issue the consents on their behalf. The target turn-around time from receiving the application at the FMAT to issuing a simple consent is one day, if you have registered and applied on-line.

System Roll-out.

The system has been developed this summer, with the help and input of some farmers and suppliers within the fish movements industry. This was to ensure that the system is tailored to meet the requirements of those people who will be using it.

This announcement is part of a publicity drive over the winter and spring; the roll-out timetable is set for early April 2007. The user application forms and link will be posted on the website www.efishbusiness.co.uk in 2007.

How to contact the FMAT

If you want more information about fish movements in general or about the on-line application process, please contact the team on the numbers or email below.

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