

New Research on Fishing

'The Social and Community Benefits of Angling'

**A 3-Year Research Project by Substance,
 funded by the Big Lottery Fund**

A major, new research programme on the social and community benefits of angling starts in January 2009. The research will be carried out by Substance, a social research cooperative, and is funded by the **Big Lottery Fund** research grant. It is entitled: *'The Social and Community Benefits of Angling'*.

The Big Lottery grant will fund a **three-year project** from **January 2009 - January 2012**, led by **Dr Adam Brown**. It will investigate the roles angling can play for those who participate in it, young people and the communities in which it takes place.

The research is also supported by the Angling Trust, Environment Agency, Get Hooked On Fishing, Trout in the Town and others.

Why Is the Research Needed?

Millions of people go fishing, but not much is widely known about the activity in terms of the particular benefits individuals, young people and local communities can get from it.

There have been some big claims made about angling - that it has a range of benefits for participants (including health, volunteering, socialisation); that it can help young people in terms of education and social inclusion; and that it can help develop rural communities and local environments. Yet the *evidence base* for this work is under-developed and organisations involved, as well as policymakers, need more research to understand, develop and maximise angling's profile. Those representing angling need such information to help 'make the case' for public and government support.

The project will work closely with angling and community organisations and charities, policymakers and anglers to help address gaps in knowledge and provide evidence of angling's role to help influence changes in policy as well as highlight best practice.

More Information

We are currently in the process of setting up a bespoke project website that will provide information on the project as it progresses, opportunities for you to contribute to the research, links to projects we are researching with, opportunities for you to publicise your work, and regular news.

In the meantime, please see overleaf and go to www.substance.coop/angling for a fuller summary of the research.

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The Social and Community Benefits of Angling

Key Research Questions

1. What constitutes participation in angling in England and Scotland and how do people perceive and receive benefits from it?

This element of the research will provide evidence of the different benefits that people and communities get from different forms of participation, in a variety of locations and in all the disciplines of angling.

We will: Work with angling bodies, groups, schemes and clubs to conduct surveys, online questionnaires and innovative data gathering, research visits to projects and clubs and digital mapping exercises.

2. How can angling help young people, particularly those who are marginalised or socially excluded?

This element of the research will help develop new knowledge about the benefits that angling can bring to young people and the best approaches for doing this. It will also use research to help the GHOF organisation develop best practice and maximise its impact.

We will: Conduct case study research with GHOF, including interviews, focus groups with young people, mapping and developmental work as well as investigate best practice with a range of other youth angling programmes and projects.

3. What role can angling play in rural communities and their development?

This element of the project will provide new knowledge about the role angling can play in wider organisational and community development in rural areas..

We will: Conduct a case study of angling in Assynt, Sutherland, in Scotland involving interviews and surveys of angling visitors, research with local angling groups, impact assessment and work to develop and research angling opportunities.

4. How can we disseminate this knowledge, engage stakeholders and implement change?

This element of the project is about making sure that information generated is shared as widely as possible.

We will: Establish an online angling research resource to make available research findings, reports and information. To ensure the project is 'plugged in' to the needs of stakeholders, we will establish a project Advisory Group including the Environment Agency, Angling Trust, Get Hooked On Fishing, academics and others. We will also develop links with policy makers and those that fund angling, youth and community projects to help inform future developments.