



LDAS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2026

SOME GOOD NEWS – most of our waters are now OPEN

- Long Copse – Small Pond OPEN
- Long Copse - Top Pond OPEN.
- Ashtead Park – BOTH LAKES CLOSED until further notice
- The Splash – OPEN
- River Mole – OPEN Young Street to Mickleham Bridge.

If fishing the Mole please take care on the river banks as they can be muddy and slippery.

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NEW FOR LDAS MEMBERS – TILLINGBOURNE FISHERIES

We are delighted to announce a new fishing opportunity for LDAS members at **Tillingbourne Fisheries, Abinger Hammer.**

Frog Island Lake offers quiet coarse fishing for silvers, roach, tench, perch and carp.

Members' rates:

- 🎣 Day ticket: **£5 – HALF PRICE**
- 🌙 Night fishing: **£13**
- Maximum **4 LDAS members per day**
- Booking via the **Clubmate App or LDAS website**

We hope this new partnership will provide a valuable additional benefit to members.

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‘Parents of junior members are politely reminded that under 12’s may only fish on our waters if supervised by a responsible adult at all times.’ The **responsible adult MUST be 18 years minimum to supervise any member under 12. THIS WILL BE ENFORCED BY OUR BAILIFFS**

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As all members are aware, **Anti-Social behaviour** at any of our waters will not be tolerated. There is the Incident Report found on the App to send a report to our bailiffs, but the committee have introduced a faster way of alerting us of anti-social behaviour by calling a dedicated phone number where immediate action can be

taken. This number is **07395 835986** It can also be found on the App. in a new Icon called **ANTI-SOCIAL REPORTING**

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CLUB MATCHES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR:

1. Sunday Nov. 22nd Long Copse - Both Ponds. DRAW: 8.00am MATCH: 9.00am to 2.00pm **BOOK NOW**
2. Sunday December 20th XMAS MATCH Long Copse TBA

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RATS AT LONG COPSE:

We approached a third party company to visit the ponds, but not a lot of progress was made. We will continue to monitor the situation and attempt a second flushing out in the new year.

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BUYING TACKLE

We do appreciate that not all members will want to invest in new tackle, especially rods and reels, and even poles. However, we would urge you to consider carefully what you need to suit your budget. We have a good relationship with **Surbiton Angling**, who offer 10% discount on all purchases when showing your **Clubmate App**. If you are a new member, or a junior, we may have some tackle that has been previously donated to the club, so please enquire first before buying something that may not last too long.

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Improving the River Quality

River Mole

No. 4 The Trapping and Removal of Crayfish

In the third of our series on environmental improvement of the River Mole, this article focuses on efforts of the club to trap and remove crayfish.

How annoying is it to be fishing a feeder or a float and have continuous 'bites' only to find your bait has gone and nothing to show for your efforts. Worse still to connect into something you think is a fish, only to find that on the end of the line is something out of a science fiction movie vaguely resembling a lobster! The chances are you have attracted and caught an American signal crayfish.

The American signal crayfish



The Signal Crayfish

American signal crayfish (also referred to as American signal or signal crayfish) were introduced to Europe from North America in the 1960s and bred on farms for restaurants to serve as a delicacy.

After escaping the farms, signal crayfish spread quickly across England, Wales and parts of Scotland. It is impossible to know how many of these invasive species there now are in the UK, but the Angling Trust report that their numbers are likely to run into the millions.

Why are they a problem?

Drawn to mainly still or slow-flowing freshwater habitats, like the Mole, signal crayfish can burrow up to two meters deep into riverbanks causing extensive damage and leaving banks vulnerable to collapse. They are also able to cross land and break through natural and artificial barriers leaving even still waters like Spring Grove liable to infestation.

As opportunistic omnivores, signal crayfish are not fussy about what they eat. They will consume anything from algae and aquatic plants to small invertebrates and fish. In doing so, they negatively impact on native ecosystems and food webs.

The species that has suffered the most is our native white clawed crayfish which is now protected and heading towards extinction. The American signal is larger and more aggressive, outcompeting its docile cousin for habitat and preying on their young. It also carries a fungal disease caused 'crayfish plague', which is fatal for the white-clawed, and can be spread by wet footwear and equipment.

How to identify an American signal crayfish

Lobster-like in appearance, American signals are brown-red in colour. Their claws have bright red undersides with a small white or turquoise mark on top, near the claw hinge.

American signals can be as much as 10cm larger than white-clawed crayfish. White claws are a green-bronze colour and have a pale cream or soft pink claws that appear to have a granular texture. They are also nocturnal, unlike signals.

Our native crayfish – the white clawed



The crayfish breeding cycle.

American signals mate in the autumn. Females can carry a clutch of 200-400 eggs on the underside of their tail throughout the winter. Once hatched in early spring, the juveniles remain attached to their mothers until late spring. At this point they visibly resemble adults and can feed on most plants and animals themselves.

A signal crayfish with eggs



What is LDAS doing about signals?

Working with the Environment Agency (EA) and the River Mole Angling Alliance (RMAA) the club are engaged in a programme of trapping and dispatching signals in our waters.

The club has applied for a licence to use up to six crayfish traps from the EA. The location of these traps have been registered with the agency and an agreement has been reached with the relevant landowner to set them.

Our traps are plastic mesh, cylindrical in nature averaging 500mm in length, with an entrance of 60mm and no larger than 300mm at their widest point. They are designed to prevent other threatened animals entering and becoming trapped. Each trap has a white tag issued by the EA for identification purposes, baited with dog food and checked every 24-48 hours.

A typical crayfish trap



Early signs are encouraging with over 20 crayfish removed from the bottom pond at Long Copse within the first 24 hours of operation.

Beware of the law.

Setting a crayfish trap without correct authorisation is an offence under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, even for a single crayfish. In July of this year two men were each fined £400 and £600 costs for the illegal trapping and sale of crayfish on the River Derwent. Traps on our waters must be set by our Fisheries Officer under licence from the EA.

Crayfish are also listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in England and Wales meaning it is illegal to release a signal crayfish back into a water course (including the water it came from) allow it to escape back into the water or transport a live crayfish away from a water course without authorisation.

Critically for anglers this means if you catch a signal crayfish you cannot legally return it to the water. You must kill it; keep it in order to eat (given the state of our rivers and ponds you might like to think about this) or dispose of it on land (where it will be consumed by wildlife).

The most common approach advocated by the EA is simply to kill the crayfish immediately on the bank by cutting it in half with a penknife or crushing the head, and leaving the carcass. As signal crayfish are not a protected species and there is no legal obligation to handle them carefully.

Health concerns

While signal crayfish can be eaten, the advice from the committee is not to consume them for fear of contracting a nasty 'stomach bug'.

Report illegal traps.

Please report any traps that do not have an EA white tag to a member of the committee via Clubmate. They are illegal and probably contributing to the spread of crayfish plague and serious human health conditions.

Help Keep Our Waters Signal Free

In the end it all boils down to biosecurity. The committee are doing 'their bit' by trying to trap and dispose of signals.

What can you do? The Check, Clean, Dry protocol recommended by the GB Non-native Species Secretariat (GBNNS) applies:

Check: Inspect all equipment, clothing, and footwear for live organisms, plant material, or mud before leaving any water body.

Clean: Wash all equipment thoroughly with water, paying attention to crevices and folds in landing nets, waders, and mat folds.

Dry: Allow equipment to dry fully before use in another water body. Signal crayfish can survive for several hours in damp conditions.

Paul Fidgeon LDAS Committee Member