

Devon and Severn IFCA News

Severn Estuary Ecological Research Forum – November 2020

D&S IFCA's Senior Environmental Officer Runs Workshop on Research & Monitoring to Better Understand the Ecology of the Severn Estuary Area.

On 23rd November, Devon and Severn IFCA's Senior Environment Officer ran a virtual online workshop called the Severn Estuary Ecological Research Forum (SEERF). SEERF enables partnership working towards shared goals, which will support sustainable development and nature conservation and improve our understanding of the ecosystem of the Severn Estuary.



This meeting was attended by representatives from universities, D&S IFCA, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, North Devon Biosphere, Severn Estuary Partnership, Blue Marine Foundation and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. This group meets twice per year on a non-commercial basis to discuss current or proposed research and monitoring to better understand the ecology of the Severn Estuary area.

The group heard a presentation on tracking fish movement using a technique called acoustic telemetry, as part of the '[Unlocking the Severn](#)' project. This project aims to improve knowledge of fish movement, restore fish access to spawning grounds in the River Severn, and deepen people's connections with the river. The group also heard updates on a [bass research project](#), and a study of herring stocks around the south west of England and the coast of Wales. Herring in the area are currently managed as a large 'Celtic Sea' stock, but this [research](#) supports what some local fishermen have said about the existence of smaller local stocks in some areas.



Photo: Twaites Shad (Alosa fallax) is a key focus of the "Unlocking the Severn project. It is a migratory fish species in the herring family.

An afternoon presentation on the concept of Essential Fish Habitat informed broad-ranging discussions on topics relevant to management of marine developments and the conservation of habitats and the fish assemblage within the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation.

Over the course of the meeting there were interesting discussions that will help to increase ecological research in the Severn Estuary and surrounding waters, allowing a more scientifically- informed response to management. We look forward to the next meeting in late Spring 2021!

Interested in our Environment & Research Work?

If you're interested in our Environment and Research work, you can find some informative information in the [D&S IFCA Environment & Research website display pages](#)

You can subscribe to our free E-newsletter or find out more about SEERF by contacting D&S IFCA.