



PRESS RELEASE

6 September 2016

RARE EEL DISCOVERED ON BIRMINGHAM CANAL

A rare 5lb 10oz eel thought to be more than 20 years old has been found living in the canal near West Bromwich, Birmingham.

The eel was discovered by the charity, Canal & River Trust, after nearly 200lbs of fish were rescued from the waterway after a pollution incident along the Ridgacre Branch Canal.

John Ellis, national fisheries and angling manager at the Canal & River Trust, said: "Finding an eel this size is pretty amazing as its not something you see every day. I'm delighted we've had a chance to admire this wonderful creature.

"Eels are such a fascinating animal, they start life as a little egg in the Sargasso Sea near Bermuda and make an epic 4,000 mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean to end up in canals and rivers across Europe and North Africa. Once they enter in the canal they will spend their life growing and maturing before returning to the Sargasso Sea to breed."

Eels are protected by law and are capable of surviving for periods of time out of water and, according the legend, are capable of crossing land and damp meadows in their search for water systems. Once eels have left the rivers to return to the sea to spawn, they stop feeding, and so have to rely on stored energy alone.

John continues: "We have safely put the eel back in a nearby canal so it can continue exploring our wonderful waterways. And if you're really lucky you might just catch a glimpse of it swimming somewhere near you!"

To find out more about the work of the fisheries and angling team visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing

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For further media requests please contact: Sarah Rudy, National Press Officer on 01908 302 584 / 07788 691 219 or email sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

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