

Fish of the Medway 2023

Fish of the Medway project focuses on **monitoring** and **analysing** the count of fish species in the **Medway No-Take Zone (NTZ)** and surrounding areas using variety of nets and ensuring no harm to fish, in order to illustrate the current condition of the Medway estuary and its fisheries.

In 2023, the surveys continued with same sites surveyed seasonally. We have 12 trained volunteers and for a second year were able to offer observer places on the autumn surveys at Stoke to take interested volunteers safely through the key parts of the training while not placing them straight into a survey.

For a second year we have had to manage the fyke nets during the falling tide & the green crabs. This is still an issue, particularly at Funton and Stoke. Stoke marsh had changed significantly in the autumn season, with increased soft sediment and consequentially the eastern fyke was not possible to safely install at all. A safer location or use of early tide will need to be considered for future surveys.

The number of gobies seen in 2022 in the sites has noticeably reduced in the 2023. There was a significantly presence of mullet in the autumn survey using the seine nets, and less bass this year and they are larger individuals with largest reaching 42 cm in length (see bottom left).



Fish of the Medway 2022

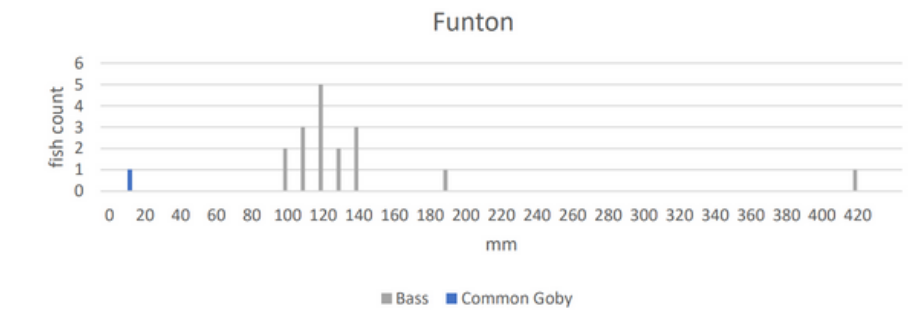
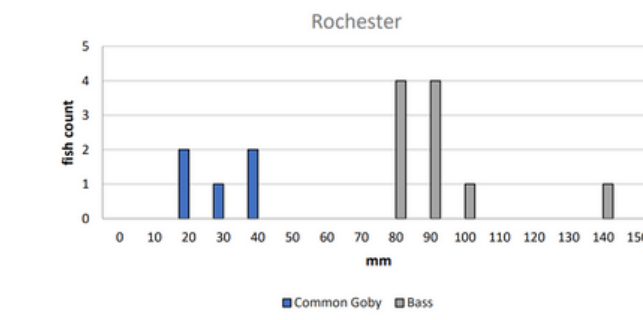
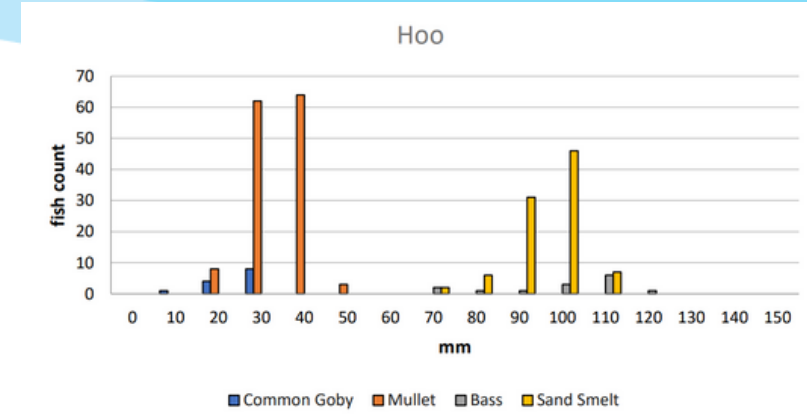
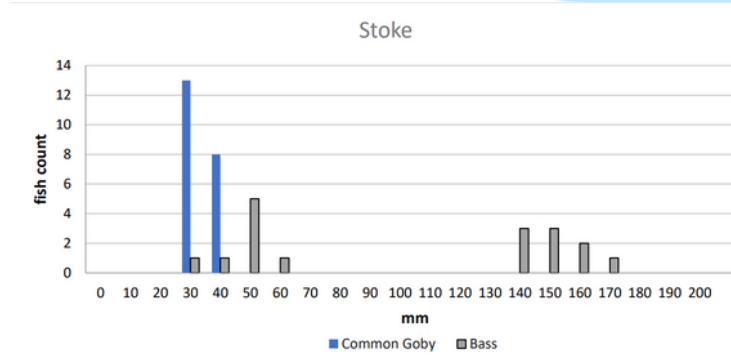
After the second year of surveying we are able to provide a comparative analysis of the fish specimen surveyed (bottom right). Lower numbers were recorded in the push netting this year. Fyke nets were similarly productive, mostly the location bass specimens were found was Stoke. Seine net produced the highest numbers of fish by method. Bass numbers were down from the previous year, however overall, with the mullet numbers replacing gobies the numbers of fish have remained relatively consistent. The number of species is low with only mullet and sand smelt joining the bass and common gobies.

The project will continue into 2024 with same sites planned for surveying.

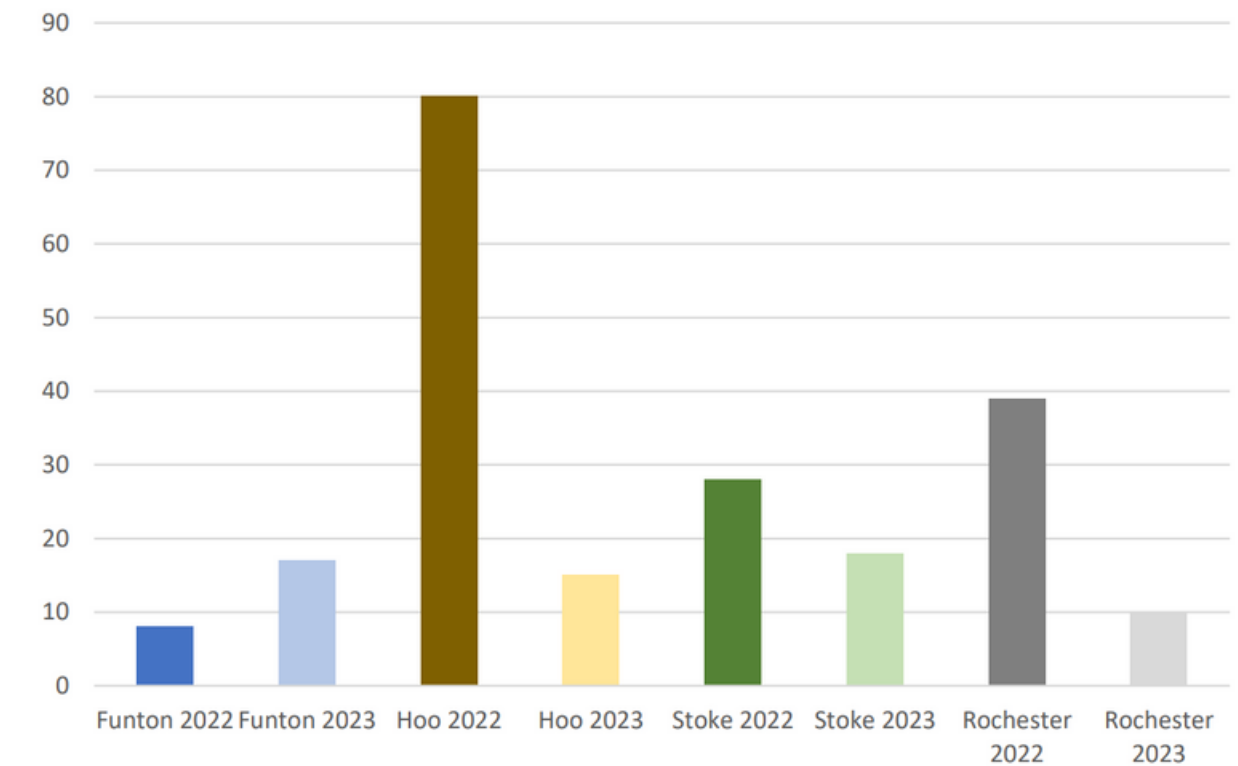
Our surveys would not have been possible without the help and support of individuals and communities. We would like to extend special thanks to our volunteers and supporters. We are also extremely grateful to our sponsors for their continuing trust and help:



Rochester Rotary Club



Total bass count 2022 vs. 2023



We are thankful for all those who took part in 2022 surveys, and are looking forward to next years of surveying!

