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Barhale lands River Itchen Eel screens contract



The contract for improvements to Portsmouth Water's only river intake on one of southern England's most important salmon rivers has been awarded to Barhale.

The civil engineering and infrastructure specialist has been appointed by Portsmouth Water to install new eel screens on the River Itchen in Hampshire. They will replace the existing arrangement and will prevent eels and lampreys being drawn into the water treatment plant at Gaters Mill in West End, Hampshire.

Eels are a protected species and have been classified as endangered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The new screens will ensure that both eels and lampreys are not drawn into the intakes and can continue to thrive in their natural habitat of one of England's premier chalk rivers.

Barhale will manage the design and installation of the screens. According to project manager, Michael Clegg, the latter is made more challenging by the very tight time constraints facing the contractor.

"Salmon also populate the river and the times when work can be undertaken on the river needs to fit around their breeding and migrating cycles," he said. "Both Portsmouth Water and Barhale have worked closely with the Environment Agency to minimise the impact our works have on the fish and the river environment."

Completion is anticipated October 2020.