



Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson  
Leader of the Council  
Portsmouth City Council

14 June 2022

Dear Mr Vernon-Jackson:

I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 1.3 million members and supporters to ask you to turn Portsmouth's upcoming Sea Angling Classic event into a *litter* fishing competition instead. Litter fishing – which involves using nets or pickers to collect the rubbish that is polluting waterways – has many of the elements people enjoy about traditional fishing, minus the cruelty to animals. Hosting such an event would have the added benefit of helping to clean up Portsmouth's aquatic habitats and protect other animals from harm, too.

If people were doing to dogs and cats what anglers do to fish, they would rightly be put in prison. Fish are sentient, intelligent animals, too, who feel pain and fear just like we do. They also talk to each other, show affection, and grieve when their companions die. Claiming that the Sea Angling Classic is humane because fish are returned to the sea is rubbish: most fish will die slowly and painfully from their injuries and stress. Even the event's own website [acknowledges](#) that when an angler yanks a hook out of a fish's mouth and tosses them back into the water, the chances are they will die.

Every year, anglers also leave a trail of other victims, including millions of birds, turtles, and other animals who sustain debilitating and deadly injuries after swallowing hooks or becoming entangled in fishing line. Wildlife rehabilitators say that abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear is one of the greatest threats to aquatic animals, and 640,000 tonnes of it enters the world's oceans every year.

We hope that instead of supporting angling – a cruel activity that tortures and kills animals and destroys habitats – you'll help tackle animal suffering and pollution by ensuring organisers switch to environmentally friendly litter fishing, which would also promote Portsmouth's sustainability agenda. PETA would be delighted to put forward a fabulous prize for the person who collects the most litter.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Werner  
Senior Campaigns Manager, PETA

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