

Rare seahorses spotted in Thames

April 8 2008

British conservationists say rare short-snouted seahorses have been spotted in the River Thames.

The Zoological Society London said the presence of the seahorses in the Thames is a good sign the river's water quality is improving.

While conservationists have been aware of the presence of the seahorses for more than a year, they waited to reveal the information publicly until the aquatic creatures came under official protection Sunday of Britain's Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981.

Alison Shaw, head of the the society's Marine and Freshwater Conservation Program, said short-snouted seahorses have been found in the Thames several times in the last 18 months.

"It demonstrates that the Thames is becoming a sustainable biodiverse habitat for aquatic life," she said in a statement. "It is not clear how endangered short-snouted seahorses are because there is little data known, particularly in the U.K., so every scrap of information is valuable. Now they are protected conservationists are more relaxed about telling the world they are there."

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