



## CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

*Navigation authority for the River Cam, between Cambridge and Bottisham Lock*

### ***SWANS, THE CAM AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS***

The River Cam has the highest density of registered craft in the UK with just shy of 1,500 craft on a 14 mile stretch of river. This equates to over 100 craft per mile of River and at what at times is only 10 metres wide, making us officially the UK's busiest River.

We also have a large number of swans living on the Cam – peacefully and often with nests to protect. The number of swans varies throughout the year, but it is estimated there are at least 50 breeding pairs<sup>1</sup> on the Cam.

The combination of these two factors, and the fact that swans nest during spring and summer, can result in swans feeling the need to defend their nest from boats that they sometimes perceive as being threatening.

The original Mr Asbo was a very unusual case. In my 15 years of experience of working on Rivers across England I have never seen such repeated aggressive behaviour from a swan. Mr Asbo was observed causing minor injuries to rowers through swooping attacks and would even do the same against larger motor boats. I received over 25 reports of similar instances – including my own staff. There was significant risk of him causing smaller craft to capsize and it was this that led to Mr Asbo (and his partner) being moved to a wetland area<sup>2</sup>.

To date, I have yet to receive any reports of injuries to the public on the river from 'Mr Asbo' or the latest incarnation 'Asbaby'. I would welcome reports from anyone who has seen aggressive behaviour from swans. This is essential to me, as my role is to ensure safe navigation on the river and also protect the needs of wildlife.

I would further recommend that people do not feed swans – this encourages them to view boats as a reliable source of food. This is leading swans to swim alongside punts and rummage around for sandwiches and snacks – a disconcerting experience for anyone.

*Jed Ramsay*

River Manager  
0770 6262 457

[www.camconservancy.org](http://www.camconservancy.org)

Follow us on twitter: [@camconservancy](https://twitter.com/camconservancy)

Find us facebook: [facebook.com/camconservancy](https://facebook.com/camconservancy)

---

<sup>1</sup> Swans usually pair for life – and in fact can go through a 'grieving process' if their partner dies.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Asbo is reported to be much calmer now that he is not surrounded by boats and people