

Summer advice for fishery managers

Act now to protect your fishery

July 2013

The current warm and dry spell is affecting most of the country. Fish stocks and fisheries can be adversely affected during this time. We are encouraging fishery managers to take action now to minimise the risk to their stocks.

River fisheries

- Think carefully before cutting weed as it helps to hold up water levels and avoids disturbing quantities of silt, which can compromise water quality.
- If you stock fish, consider lower stocking densities.
- Avoid stocking locations that are vulnerable to drying out such as headwaters, perched or raised channels - particularly from mid summer when groundwater and river levels are likely to fall most sharply.
- Discuss issues of flow splits and hatch control with neighbours and all interested parties so as to avoid ecological impacts.
- On raised or perched channels, check hatches and structures for unnecessary leakage in order to maintain depth. Even with low flows, deeper areas will still provide useable fish habitat.
- With the potential of low flows and high temperatures, take care over fish welfare, particularly on salmon and trout fisheries.
- Low flows and reduced water levels can increase the risk of avian predation. To reduce this pressure, maintain as much rough and overhanging marginal cover as possible, particularly adjacent to pool habitats which provide areas for fish to hide.

Stillwaters

- Keep a close eye on water levels and look for any signs of fish in distress. Visit the water early in the morning when dissolved oxygen levels are at their lowest.
- To help maintain water levels repair leaking sluices or control structures so as to preserve valuable water resources.
- Consider restricting bait and groundbait use to avoid unnecessary pressure on water quality.
- Minimise the use of keepnets. If a match is planned consider using multiple weigh-ins to avoid unnecessary stress to fish stocks.
- Avoid stocking further fish.

- Consider reducing fish stock densities to avoid problems later with reducing water levels and low dissolved oxygen levels. Make sure you have the Environment Agency's consent before you move any fish.
- With potential low water levels and high temperatures, take care over fish welfare.
- If you believe your fishery may be at risk from low dissolved oxygen levels due to algal growth, low water levels, elevated temperatures or over-crowding, be prepared and check that you have access to water pumps, aeration equipment and generators.

Please note:

- Please make sure you hold an abstraction licence if you are abstracting more than 20m³/day and comply with the conditions of your abstraction licence. For more information please see <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/water/32020.aspx>.
- Talk to us before you relocate fish, as our written consent is required. This is designed to reduce the spread of fish diseases and invasive non-native fish species.
- In exceptional circumstances, we may rescue vulnerable fish, if we can find somewhere safe to move them to and on the condition that the fish have been health screened within the last six months.
- Please report any dead carp to us immediately as this may be due to a disease outbreak.

If you see any fish in distress please tell us immediately by calling our National Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For further information

Please contact your local fisheries team by calling 03708 506 5061 (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm) if you would like advice or assistance.

For the current water situation in your area please look at our website at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/34015.aspx> You can also find the latest river and groundwater levels² for a number of strategic sites across the area at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/default.aspx>

Thank you for your support in helping us minimise the impacts of the dry weather.

¹ Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone

² This information has been gathered from our telemetry equipment so is not subject to quality control