Green energy to help fish suffering effects of dry weather

The Essex fisheries team wanted to tackle the impact of hot and dry weather on stillwater fisheries and so launched a partnership project, which uses solar technology to improve water quality.

Funded by fishing licence fees, they sourced two solar-powered aeration systems, which have now been installed at the Haverhill Newt Pond and Washlands Haverhill in Essex.

As it gets hotter during the summer months, temperatures increase, which lowers dissolved oxygen levels and causes fish to become distressed.

Water levels may decrease and algal blooms can also become more of a risk, both of which can impact oxygen levels.

The aeration helps to increase oxygen levels in the water, which will reduce the risk of fish dying.

Washlands Solar Aerator.

Ben Norrington, Environment Agency fisheries officer in East Anglia, said:

> These are the first aeration systems of this kind that we have seen in the area.
>
> We are keen to use similar technology to respond to incidents of low oxygen in the water as it is much more sustainable than the conventional aerators that use gas or petrol.
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> By aerating the water, it improves the water quality, which helps create better habitats for the fish, and boosts angling participation.
>
> We hope that we can use green energy to ensure the health of fisheries and fish farms going forward.

The aerators were funded through the Fisheries Improvement Partnership scheme at a cost of about £6,000.

The partnership consisted of Haverhill Town Council, Haverhill Angling Club, Newt Pond Angling Club and Air By Solar.

Leader of West Suffolk Council, councillor John Griffiths, said:

> We are pleased to have worked with the Environment Agency to install this new solar power aerator, which will help improve the water quality during the hot weather.

Earlier this month the Environment Agency launched its 5-year plan, outlining how it plans to lead the way toward a greener, healthier future – including by improving more than 4,000 kilometres of river across the country.

EA2025 sets out three long-term goals: a nation resilient to climate change; healthy air, land and water; and green growth and a sustainable future.

Some of its ambitious targets for 2020/21 include improving more than 4,000 kilometres of river, creating nearly 1,200 hectares of habitat and being on track to be carbon-neutral by 2030.