

Press release: Environment Agency saves thousands of fish in Ampthill Reservoir

Over the hot weekend of 17 to 18 June, Environment Agency teams saved thousands of carp, roach and rudd from Ampthill Reservoir Lake, an amenity fishery in Bedfordshire.

The angling club reported seeing huge shoals of fish gasping at the water's surface throughout the fishery. A dedicated Fisheries Incident Officer was in touch within the hour and quickly on-site to monitor oxygen levels.

Recent hot weather and very high water temperatures encouraged algae blooms which had reduced oxygen levels in the fishery to a potentially fatal level for fish. Environment Agency fisheries officers dosed the lake with hydrogen peroxide into the early hours of Monday (19 June). They were then back on the scene first thing to monitor recovery. There are now no fish in distress, and the huge shoals of fish seen gasping have returned to normal behaviour.

Kye Jerrom, Fisheries Officer said:

Specialist officers are on duty 24 hours a day to respond to fish kills and fish in distress, all funded by rod licence income. Our team was able to respond quickly and we'd like to thank the angling club for knowing what to do.

The club suffered a similar incident 30 years ago and lost every fish in the lake. The scene when I arrived was very worrying and I am sure that our efforts have saved the fishery from a huge fish kill, which is great news for such a hardworking club, and for those who fish it.

We have provided advice and management options and will continue to work with the club to prevent a similar, and potentially devastating, event in the future. If anyone spots fish in distress then please call our incident helpline on 0800 80 70 60.

Summer can see Environment Agency staff responding to many reports of 'fish in distress' due to naturally occurring environmental changes causing lower oxygen levels in the water. Hot, sunny weather can lead to low flows in rivers and stillwater fisheries (ponds and lakes) starting to warm up. Small stillwaters are particularly susceptible.

As well as encouraging people to call them on 0800 80 70 60, the Environment Agency is encouraging private fishery owners to manage fish stocks to appropriate levels and install aerators.

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