

Summer advice for stillwater fishery managers

May 2022

Act now to protect your fishery

Prolonged dry weather can affect fish stocks and the fisheries they support. Where water levels fall, low dissolved oxygen levels can put fish at risk, especially during warm weather and where there is a lot of weed growth. Fishery managers will be all too aware of the risks affecting their waters, but we hope this advice will be a useful reminder.

- Think ahead and be prepared. Plan what to do in the event of an incident. Sharing your plans with staff or with angling club members will help them be aware and prepared to reduce the impacts of warmer weather incidents at your fishery.
- Be vigilant. 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. You may want to measure the dissolved oxygen at regular intervals: at dawn; dusk; 4 hours after dusk; and during the day if needed.
- If you think your fishery may be at risk of low dissolved oxygen (due to algal growth, low water levels or rising temperatures), be prepared and check that you have access to aeration equipment. You may be able to make your own Venturi aerator with help from our [online step-by-step videos](#).
- If you need to remove weed, leave it on the bankside for 24 to 48 hours to allow any invertebrates to return to the water. But after that, make sure you remove it to avoid any organic run-off further reducing dissolved oxygen in your fishery.
- To help maintain water levels, repair leaking sluices or control structures. Please make sure any work doesn't have unintended consequences on neighbouring watercourses.
- Consider restricting ground-bait and fish feed to avoid a reduction in water quality.
- Take care with fish welfare. Minimise the use of keepnets. If a match is planned, consider using multiple weigh-ins to avoid unnecessary stress to fish stocks.
- Avoid stocking your water with further fish during warm, dry weather. If stocking is necessary, consider delaying until cooler conditions are restored and/or stocking at lower densities.
- Consider reducing fish stock densities to avoid problems later. Perhaps remove smaller fish to protect larger, more valuable specimens. Any fish that are removed should be restocked legally and without increasing the risk to the receiving water or be dispatched humanely.
- Fish may be more vulnerable to fish diseases during warm weather and when they are stressed. Please report any suspected disease outbreaks to us immediately.



Be vigilant - check your dissolved oxygen levels

Please note:

- Please make sure you hold an abstraction licence if you are abstracting more than 20 cubic metres/day and comply with the conditions of your abstraction licence. For more information, please see <https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/water>.
- If you need to stock your water with fish, you must make sure you have a site permit and can comply with your obligations. This is designed to reduce the spread of fish diseases and invasive non-native fish species. You may need an authorisation from us to remove fish from your water (other than by rod and line). Details of these permits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/permission-to-move-live-fish-to-or-from-a-fishery>.
- If you need to control weed, please remember you will need our agreement to use herbicides in or near water. You can find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-use-herbicides-in-or-near-water>.
- We may be able to provide aeration for affected waters. 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. It may be beneficial to obtain a health check for your stock prior to the summer season so this doesn't delay you later.



Check you have access to aeration equipment

If you see any fish in distress or suspect a fish disease outbreak 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 506 506 (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:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england>

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

Environment Agency Fisheries team

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88