

Advice note to river fisheries

Protect fish and wildlife in dry weather

Water situation update

As you are no doubt aware, the last two months have been very dry following a drier than average winter in Sussex. Most rivers are low for the time of year. However groundwater levels remain not far below average and it is unlikely that a serious drought affecting public water supplies will develop this year. High temperatures with low flows will, though, increase the risk of environmental problems. The latest water situation report for the Solent and South Downs Area can be found on our website:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/127606.aspx

You can also find the latest river and groundwater levels¹ for a number of strategic sites across the area here:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/99556.aspx

Suggested advice to river fishery managers and owners

We recommend that you consider the following actions in order to minimise the risk of fish mortalities:

- 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.

¹ This information has been gathered from our telemetry equipment so has not been subject to quality control

- On raised or perched channels, check hatches and structures for unnecessary leakage in order to maintain depth. Even with low flows on these sections, depth will still provide useable fish habitat.
- With the potential of low flows and high temperatures, care must be taken over fish welfare particularly on salmon 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.

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

We have included a poster with this advice note, which you may wish to put up in an appropriate location at your fishery.

Thank you for your support in helping us minimise the impacts of the dry weather. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and keep you updated. For further assistance or advice, please contact our Fisheries and Biodiversity Department on 01903.703976 between the hours of 0900 - 1700.

customer service line
08708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk