

Press Release 3rd November 2009

Fish Destocking at Henleaze Lake

Last year the Management Committee of Henleaze Lake commissioned a specialist report on water quality and fish stock at the Lake. We received the final report of 164 pages in May 2009 and it has since been considered in detail.

The good news is that there is no evidence of pollution at the Lake. The consultants compared the Lake water to a natural mountain Lake in term of its low pollution levels.

The consultants did identify other issues including:

- The Lake is heavily overstocked with fish especially carp, bream and roach. The stock levels are many times the Environment Agency's recommended stocking levels. There is a need to decrease the fish stock.
- The fish have poor growth rates. It is hoped that by destocking the condition of the fish stock will improve and growth rates increase.
- Some fish have a category 2 fish parasite which means no fish from the Lake can be transferred to another water environment except to another enclosed lake that already has the same category 2 parasite.
- Dissolved oxygen (DO) levels can be too low especially during periods of hot weather, giving cause for concern and could result in significant fish deaths. Overstocking increases the likelihood of such significant fish deaths because of low DO levels. We hope that by reducing the fish stock the risk of significant fish deaths from low DO levels will be reduced.
- Water clarity is poor and has declined over the last 20 years. It is believed the overstocking of bottom feeding fish is one of the reasons the water clarity has declined. .

A copy of the report was sent to the Environment Agency who approved the various actions to be taken including the fish destocking.

A ten year Water Management Plan is being drawn up by the consultants, and we will again consult with the Environment Agency before this is finalised. This plan will require significant investment by the Club but will benefit all users. The first major action from this Plan will be to reduce fish stocks in the Lake by removal of some carp, bream and roach. Those fish that are kept will be selected as the best specimens. The Lake will still be overstocked after the fish removals. The strategy being adopted is to leave a high proportion of predators (pike and perch) so that the smaller silver fish will be further reduced over the coming years.

Unfortunately because the fish have the category 2 parasite and we and the Environment Agency have not been able to find another water environment where they could be transferred to, the fish will have to be destroyed. This will be done in a humane way according to Environment Agency guidelines. We deeply regret this but have no other option.

The Club is completely committed to angling at the Lake and maintaining a mixed coarse fish stock, at a level compatible with good water quality, suitable for a local fishery.

Mark Thompson
Management Committee
Henleaze Swimming Club

Note to Editors:

Henleaze Lake is a 9-acre site in North-West Bristol. It is owned and managed by Henleaze Swimming Club (HSC), established in 1919. HSC has around 1500 swimming members, and its principal activity is open-water swimming. The Club also manages a stock of general coarse fish at the Lake, and facilities are provided so that anglers may enjoy recreational fishing. The Club actively encourages other appropriate use of the lake: for instance, Bristol & District Triathlon Club has an arrangement for regular training at the Lake; a Bristol-based project for a group of teenagers to swim the English Channel has recently been training at the lake.