



MOORE & MOORE CARP

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REPORT : Hampden Pond

CLIENT **Mr Keith Shelley**
Clerk to Wendover Parish Council
The Clock Tower
High Street
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HP22 6DU

Water / watercourse: Hampden Pond, Wendover

Date: 18th October 2019.

Method: Seine Net

Environment Agency Permit: EP/EW047-O-594/16760/01

Species caught / removed		No	Size
		figures in brackets are estimates	
Carp	(<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>)	(40)	(0.5 - 5kg)
Crucians	(<i>Carassius carassius</i>)	(25)	(125-175mm)
Goldfish	(<i>Carassius auratus</i>)	(50)	(100-175mm)
Roach	(<i>Rutilus rutilus</i>)	(10,000)	(50-225mm)
Rudd	(<i>Scardinius erythrophthalmus</i>)	(<500)	(60-120mm)
Chub	(<i>Squalius cephalus</i>)	1	(350mm)
Tench	(<i>Tinc tinca</i>)	2	(300mm)
Perch	(<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>)	(>1,000)	(60-250mm)

Estimated Total Weight of fish removed 350kg

The pond was visited due to concerns over low water levels stressing the fish population, with the possible outcome of a fish mortality. On arrival the water had an estimated maximum depth of 0.5 metres, laying over a silt bed up to 0.25 metres deep. There was a significant algal bloom with the water also appearing fairly turbid. The aim of the work was to reduce fish stocks as far as possible and at least to a point where the threat of any mortality was removed.

Two sweeps of a 30 metre long seine net were carried out, the second yielding approximately 10% of the weight of fish removed in the first. It was felt that a very significant reduction in biomass of fish in the pond had been achieved as a result of the netting, estimated at close to 95%. The bulk of the remaining fish were thought to be small Roach and no Carp nor larger individuals of other species were seen to have avoided the second sweep of the net.

All fish removed were transferred to a day ticket fishery near St Albans that had the required Environment Agency documentation in place.

Observations.

Given the low water levels, the density of the fish population coupled with silt levels and recent warm water temperatures, the occurrence of a significant fish mortality may have only narrowly been avoided.

The total weight of fish in the pond prior to the work would have been close to the Environment Agency's recommended maximum of 1000kg per hectare, **even** when the pond would have been near its high water level. With the reduced area encountered on the day of our visit this maximum would have been easily exceeded.

The reduction in the fish population achieved during the visit should reduce the return of a similar situation for at least 4 years. This comment is made with the proviso that no significant stocking of the pond occurs. Unauthorised introductions of unwanted ornamental fish will be difficult to prevent but consideration could be given to signs discouraging this occurrence. These types of stockings have the potential for introducing inappropriate species, non-native species and harmful diseases. They can be accompanied by the discarding of plants, to which similar comments are applicable, and also on some occasions terrapins and turtles.

There are a number of future management factors that may require consideration, including:

1. The fish stocks should be monitored perhaps on a 4-5 year cycle. It is almost impossible to keep a waterbody of this type free of any fish. Unauthorised stocking is almost certain to occur.
2. The fluctuating water levels such as those recently experienced do make the establishment of a fishery very difficult, despite its potential as a local recreational resource.
3. Regular management of the fish stocks could hopefully result in a more balanced aquatic community, probably benefiting both sides of the picture discussed in the following point 4.
4. It may be possible to make an attempt to maintain a totally fish free pond. This approach would require a total drain down of the water to be certain that all fish had been removed. This type of approach would certainly benefit the local amphibian community and aquatic invertebrates. It would however remove an important prey item for piscivorous birds such as the Grey Heron and Kingfisher.
5. The fluctuating water levels do detract from the recreational appeal of the pond. Efforts could be made to encourage colonisation of marginal plants that could help to mask this impact. Some tree management may be needed to facilitate this approach. It could be valuable to obtain opinion from local wildlife groups, before embarking on this type of approach. These types of ephemeral habitats can be an important part of local biodiversity.
6. The fluctuation of water levels would be difficult to control given the local geology. It may be possible to have the pond de-silted and then clay lined, with a view to maintaining a less variable water depth. However this is likely to be an expensive and challenging project and specialised advice should be sought.
7. Obviously it is difficult to predict future weather and climatic factors. It is perhaps not inconceivable that the pond may totally dry out during some summers. That could put a somewhat different 'slant' on some of the above opinion.