# Concerns rise over fish fatalities at East Beach pond



Concerns have been raised regarding the welfare of fish inhabiting East Beach pond in Selsey, located north of Chichester, as reports emerge of significant fish fatalities within the last week. Local fisherman Bobby Watman has indicated that an estimated 80 fish have died, prompting alarm among community members who have observed the distressing situation firsthand.

Mr Watman, who holds a deep passion for fishing, reported that area residents have noted an increase in struggling fish, with many found dead in recent days. "People noticed the fish were struggling, lots of fish were dying," he stated. In an effort to remedy the troubling circumstances, Watman and others took proactive measures by using a pump to try and bolster oxygen levels. He noted, “Since we have been doing that we have not lost any fish.”

However, efforts to address the issue have proven frustrating for Watman, who has made extensive attempts to seek assistance, stating, “I have made over 145 phone calls trying to get this sorted.” He voiced a sense of responsibility for the local wildlife, lamenting, “As humans we have a duty of care to look after them. It’s heartbreaking to see. It’s really frustrating trying to get anywhere.”

Watman believes that the fatalities may be linked to a heightened salt content in the water, attributing this to a failure of a valve that allows seawater to disperse from the pond after high tide occurrences. He observed the fish exhibiting unusual behaviour, swimming near the surface and clustering in specific areas of the pond, which he suspects may be a response to low oxygen levels.

In response to the situation, a spokeswoman for the Environment Agency confirmed that water samples had been collected from East Beach pond and revealed the presence of a naturally occurring algal bloom, which can escalate during warmer temperatures. She explained, "The fish were likely struggling due to a combination of factors including low water levels, salinity, and low oxygen caused by an algal bloom." The spokeswoman also mentioned that with significant rainfall anticipated, conditions in the pond may improve; however, she cautioned that such bodies of water remain susceptible to climate change impacts.

Chichester District Council has also been actively monitoring the situation in light of residents' concerns. A spokeswoman for the council noted, “Having recently received reports from concerned residents about the health of the fish in East Beach Pond in Selsey, we have been closely monitoring the site this week and liaising with experts to assess the situation and seek their opinions.” The council's environmental protection team has collaborated with the Environment Agency to perform water tests.

She further elaborated on the findings, stating that approximately 30 carp have been observed congregating near the pond's inlets, which may either represent a search for oxygen-rich water or potentially spawning behaviour. The council has acknowledged that periods of dry weather can lead to diminished oxygen levels in the pond, as the flow of new water from local drainage systems decreases. This situation has been exacerbated by a notably dry spell, with the Met Office recently reporting the driest March conditions in England and Wales since at least 1961.

Local authorities are committed to monitoring the pond's conditions closely to ascertain whether the current situation is a natural occurrence or indicative of a more serious issue. They plan to maintain dialogue with experts concerning potential interventions to support the aquatic ecosystem.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/24068/Coastal-recreation-and-byelaws> - This URL provides information on Chichester District Council's role in managing coastal areas and may be relevant to how local bodies monitor and address environmental issues like those at East Beach Pond. However, it does not directly address the fish fatalities or conditions specific to East Beach Pond.
* <https://www.mwhg.org.uk/east-beach-pond-group> - This URL informs about the East Beach Pond Group, which is involved in maintaining East Beach Pond in Selsey, providing context on community efforts to preserve the site. It does not specifically discuss the recent fish fatalities but highlights conservation efforts.
* <https://www.instagram.com/selseygrapevine/p/DIGgFxCu562/> - This Instagram post discusses the issue of dying fish at East Beach Pond, although it is a social media update rather than an official source. It follows a previous post about the poor condition of fish in the pond, aligning with community concerns and observations.
* <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/> - While not directly linked to East Beach Pond, this Met Office website could provide information on weather conditions, such as the dry spell mentioned in the article. The Met Office reported the driest March in England and Wales since at least 1961, which could impact water bodies like East Beach Pond.
* <https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/> - This Environment Agency website is a general resource, but it could offer information on environmental monitoring and algal blooms, which are mentioned as factors in the fish fatalities at East Beach Pond. The agency confirmed the presence of an algal bloom contributing to the issue.