

# Fishery Plan for Baffins Pond, Portsmouth



March 2012 Issue 2  
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## Description of Water

PDAS (Portsmouth and District Angling Society), was formed in 1948 to provide coarse angling to the residents of Portsmouth and the surrounding areas. Baffins Pond was the most popular of our society venues which in its heyday boasted a membership of over 1500. We have enjoyed many events there and the water has provided a lot of pleasure for freshwater anglers in the Portsmouth area over the years.

Baffins has also traditionally provided an environment for prolific recruitment and the aim for the club will be to make the fish stocks sustainable, even providing some stock for our other venues.

The PDAS Overall Fishery Policy has identified Baffins Pond as being key to meeting the objectives of the club. Baffins is one of a dwindling number of inner city waters that are so valuable to the community at large. The water itself is ideally located in Portsmouth, easily accessible and is very suitable for freshwater angling. This means it is ideal for the section of members that our society was formed to help, namely members without transport, unemployed, less able bodied (Disabled), older members and the younger members of the populous. It is also ideal for junior coaching events. The water is on a major bus route as well as being within walking/cycling distance of most areas of the city.



## Stocking Levels

Over the past few years, Baffin's pond has held carp (medium and small), roach, and some gudgeon. During the re-generation work (2007/8), the society has removed a large number of carp, approx, 300 medium fish from 3lbs to 20lbs, under EA approval. In addition,, during the monitoring period (2009), the society has removed another 1500 small carp (upto 12 oz) and an additional 15 medium carp up to 12lb.

The removal of the carp has been carried in conjunction with the EA and the Council as part of the programme to improve the water quality. At the time of writing, there is still a small number (estimated at around 50) of medium sized carp in the water. The numbers of small carp are unknown but are unlikely to be large due to the cormorant predation.

To become a successful sustainable general fishery (and coaching venue), more stock will be required over a period of time. The stocking of silver fish is ideal as these are particularly suitable for junior angler. The club has some stock (specifically small rudd) that it can provide - these are being removed as part of management plans on other club waters. However we would recommend that further fish be stocked....the actual species are to be agreed with the EA. The initial stocking level has been agreed at 200lb/acre (this is a low stocking density for a fishery because of the problems of the past but it may be increased in consultation with the EA and PCC if the water quality allows. The total size of Baffins Pond area is 4.35 hectares (ref: <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/visiting/4532.html> ) which is over 10 acres. For the purpose of this plan, the water size is assumed as 5 acres.

The timetable for stocking is important so that the pond can retain a healthy status. Any stocking will be carried out in stages, checking the success of the previous stage before embarking on

the next. Discussions with the EA and Council have led to the following agreed approach:

2012: No stocking, continue to remove carp and monitor fish health and sizes. Establish initial fish havens. Carp removal will be carried out on 2 evenings in June/July (further sessions may be planned depending on outcome)

2013: Spring - Stocking of all target species (actual species to be agreed) in small numbers. Continue to remove carp to improve water quality and free up biomass.

2014: Spring - Increased stocking based on growth and health of fish stocked in 2013 upto 200lb/acre.

2015 +: If successful, consider taking stocks up to a higher stocking density

An example target stocking plan is tabulated below, the actual species need further discussion with the EA, and may be further modified depending on success of any 2013 stocking:

Species	Current stock	Future stock
Carp	Under 50 medium sized fish, unknown numbers of small fish (estimated total weight 250lb)	Continue to reduce numbers (target weight - under 100lb)
Bream	None	No change initially - To be discussed with the EA
Rudd	None	1000 mixed 2oz- 1lb (target weight 500lb)
Gudgeon	Small number estimated at < 250	No change (target weight 12lb)
Tench	None	Potential for smaller fish in the longer term
Perch	None	50 size 4oz - 12oz (target weight 25lb)
Crucian	None	Potential to experiment with small number in longer term if cormorant problem resolved

## Current Status

Baffins Pond is not currently fished. The aim is to work with the EA and the Council to develop Baffins into a sustainable fishery providing good and safe general purpose angling facilities for Portsmouth city residents and specifically for juniors, less mobile and disadvantaged anglers.

A new fishery management team needs to be established for the water. This team will be made up a pond warden and a team of local bailiffs. This document provides the fishery management plan which the team will execute to achieve the aims of the club.

## Identified Problems

The water quality has been an issue in the past. The removal of silt, the reduction in carp stocks, the installation of a fountain, the planting of vegetation and the restrictions on feeding birds bread have all contributed to water improvements. To maintain that trend, there needs to be a restriction on the introduction of excess bait and also restrictions on the types of bait. Continued removal of carp is also though sensible. The continued monitoring of the water quality should be carried out until some confidence in the stability is achieved

The water has attracted a large head of cormorants (reaching double figures in numbers at times). It is not sensible to stock additional 'cormorant sized' fish to the water without some further actions to limit the damage the cormorants will do. It is suggested that fish havens are introduced, and a reduction in the dead branches/posts on the islands is carried out (see appendix 1). Both these actions are needed prior to stocking any fish under 1.5lb. note: fish havens need to be deployed when cormorants are active - it is possible that these need to be deployed all year round at Baffins rather than just the winter months. Based on best practice (ref: Natural England's Technical Information Note TIN

028), havens will work in Baffins. Current thought is that 5 medium sized havens will be most effective for angler and fish. See Appendix 2 for more detail.

The Baffins area is a busy public area, there is residential accommodation around many sides and it is also a social meeting place (particularly for youngsters in the evening). The fishery needs to be controlled to prevent unnecessary conflict between anglers and the public. Night fishing will not be allowed to avoid noise for the residents. Fishing will be from well defined and the number of anglers will be limited to prevent overcrowding on those areas. The fishing areas will be clearly signed so the public are aware of the bounds. Fishing will be restricted to members only as this is easier to enforce rules. A limit of 10 anglers will be allowed on the water at anyone time which will prevent overcrowding and the temptation to fish outside the defined areas. The exception to this will be junior coaching which are under the control of qualified coaches and where any junior may partake (member or not). Coaching events will only be run by Angling Development Board Qualified Coaches (all CRB checked and trained in safety and risk management of fishing coaching). In these situations it is possible to have upto 3 juniors at one fishing station being coached.

The club will bailiff the water using its normal practices. There are no schedule times for visits but each water is generally visited at least once a day. Busy periods see the water being patrolled more frequently. Individual fish mortalities can always occur (e.g. cormorant injury) and these will be dealt with by the warden within 2 hours of them being reported. Significant water problems (e.g large scale fish distress/mortality) are always handled in conjunction with the EA using their processes. The club, in line with normal practice, will report all potential problems to the EA.

Baffins Pond is a haven for a large population of birds. The fishery management needs to limit any disturbance or damage that that anglers cause. Therefore no floating baits will be

allowed. In addition, a specific procedure will be implemented so the club can react to situations which will include a local emergency phone contact. This number (or numbers) will be available to all members and also to the PCC team and local residents. The club will react to potentially dangerous situations within 2 hours (e.g. line left in trees, snagged birds) and will be given access to a locally stored boat to assist any action required. All calls will be logged and subsequent action recorded. The club has general rules on tackle and baits which ensure the welfare of fish and wildlife. These will be emphasised to Baffins anglers however further additional local rules may need to be introduced as the fishing is monitored. Club bailiffs have the power to check all the rules at all times (e.g. rigs, hooks) and members who break club rules are handled by the club disciplinary procedure.

In addition, it would be helpful if the public is asked (via signs) to feed the birds outside of the fishing area. This will serve to minimise conflict between public/angler and also reduce the risk of birds coming into contact with tackle

### Long Term Plan

Traditionally the Club managed the water as a general pleasure fishery, and it is the intention of the club to continue that approach in the future. This water will be maintained as a fishery which will be ideal for the City freshwater anglers whom are elderly, disabled or young. In addition to the easy access the water affords, the venue will be managed to provide a safe environment.

On the fishing front, the water itself has proven over years to support healthy fish populations in sizes and numbers which are suitable for the pleasure angler. The plan is to reintroduce those stocks and provide them with an environment where they can recruit to make the fishery sustainable. Initially this will be with silvers. It is also proposed to introduce some small numbers of perch to provide some predation of the weaker fish. All stocking

will be discussed and agreed with the EA and PCC. The stocking policy gives capacity for fish growth and additional stocking in subsequent years depending on the results of the initial stocking

In the future, if the cormorant problem can be resolved, an experiment with crucians could be undertaken as they are particularly suitable fish for the target anglers. Small tench may also be considered after that assuming the carp have been thinned.

### Requirements for successful instigation of plan

These requirements have been discussed in full above, but below is a list of reminders.

- Establish a fishery management team for the water including bailiffs (who will be known to the local PCC City Wardens).
- Creation of fish havens to support the introduction of new stock.
- Agree new stock with EA/PCC and decide sources of fish
- Continue water quality monitoring
- Survey stock success (growth, numbers, impact on water quality) and action new stock as appropriate with EA/PCC
- Carp removal programme to be continued with agreement from EA/PCC.
- Removal of posts/dead branches which afford good roosting for cormorants
- Establish signs to inform public and anglers of fishing area (and bird feeding area?)
- Establish a procedure for dealing with emergencies. Identify and publish on site local club emergency contact (will be warden or bailiff)
- Members only, no day tickets (junior coaching days are open to all and require no membership)
- Introduce initial local rules as follows:
  - Fishing Dawn to Dusk (1 hour before and after)..NO night fishing

- 10 (this number to be confirmed with PCC following identification of fishing stations) Anglers limit on the water at any one time (except for junior coaching days which often have 2 or 3 per fishing station) - this may require a formal booking in system
  - No keepnets allowed
  - No groundbait
  - Natural baits only, (no pellet)
  - 0.5kg bait limit
  - No floating baits
  - No fishing outside the defined fishing area
  - No scheduled close season but water may be closed to angling for fishery management or other purposes
  - Any snagged terminal tackle to be reported immediately via the emergency contact number
  - Any wildlife which has become tangled with tackle to be reported immediately via the emergency contact number
- Monitor Local Rules and adjust to suit the circumstances/issues of the fishery and those fishing it.
  - Provide boat locally for PDAS warden/team to recover any lost tackle.
  - Inform PCC of all events planned in a timely fashion (e.g. coaching, fish removal)

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Baffins Pond has the potential to be a valuable recreational facility for the city providing a much needed venue accessible to all members of the community. The fishing will integrate with the other users of the pond (people and wildlife) by managing the habitat, the fish population and the anglers.



## Appendix 2 Fish Havens

### **Numbers**

5 Havens are proposed. Initially 2 will be tried out as prototypes enabling designs to be improved.

### **Time Table**

The 2 prototype havens will be installed prior to fishing commencing. They are only really required prior to any restocking in Spring 2013 but it will be useful to see their impact on the retained resident stock. The 3 additional Havens will be installed in line with the Spring 2013 stocking.

### **Construction**

The initial refuges will be based on ''cage'' units, each measuring approx 2 m by 2 m by depth of location (the haven will be built so the top is level with the top of the water at normal water level).

Initially, a frame is assembled using galvanised steel tube secured at the corners using proprietary fittings, and this was then covered with light-gauge stock fencing around all four sides and the top, secured with cable ties. A

layer of shade netting is placed on the top to provide overhead shading, also secured with cable ties. Some off cut branches and drainage pipes will used inside the refuges to provide most of the internal ''structure''. If thought



appropriate by PCC, the top of the Haven can be planted with aquatic plants (same as already on site) and roots can be grown through the netting to provide additional cover within the Haven.

The plants will need to be chosen to avoid them being eaten by the resident wild bird population.

The havens will be secured by driving the steel tubes into the bottom of the pond.

## Appendix 3 General Club Rules

In addition to the specific water rules, described in the main plan, the club has a number of rules which apply to all waters. These are aimed at fish welfare, good practice and environment protection. These rules are regularly reviewed and can change to reflect best practice, and can always be found in the club handbook. An abridged extract of some specific Fish Welfare rules are shown below:

21. (a) *Unhooking mats must be used at all times. No fish to come in contact with the ground*

(b) *No nut baits on any water.*

(c) *No pre-baiting on any water and do not discard any excess baits in or around any and all waters.*

(d) *1 kilo maximum of any bait per visit*

(e) *All particle seed baits must have been soaked and boiled before use.*

(f) *All hooks size 12 and smaller must be microbarb or barbless.*

23. *Braided mainline is banned on all Club waters, this does not affect your use of braid for terminal tackle.*

24. *No fixed rigs or feeders (all leads, feeders and rigs must be free running)*

26. *Landing nets of an appropriate size must be set up for each individual angler., at least one net minimum size of 20in.*

## Appendix 4 Signs

All signage, location and wording, will be agreed with PCC before it is erected. The club utilises two types of sign normally. The first is a rigid plastic (4mm thick) which can be erected on posts, trees, fences etc. Normal size is 500x300x4mm although occasionally we use half these sizes. The club also has more traditional large wooden signs which are custom built for the water. For Baffins we will use the rigid plastic.

It is proposed that each fishing area has a sign, and that the Non fishing areas also have signs which say 'No Fishing from This Area'. The club may also use temporary signs to close areas to fishing if the need arises (e.g low water levels).

An example sign is shown below:

