

Fishery Plan for Brockhurst Moat, Gosport, Hants.



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Description of water

Brockhurst Moat is an excellent mixed fishery in Gosport, which neighbours both industrial and residential estates. It has a public footpath around the moat, which is frequented by numerous dog walkers etc.

It has a good head of carp, tench, bream, perch, roach, rudd and pike.

The water has at present 20 swims, which are built from railway sleepers and are all covered with a dressing of hardcore material such as scalpins.

The swims are spaced evenly around the fishing stretches of the moat, with 5 swims on each stretch.

There are 2 car parks which are shared with members of the public, neighbours and businesses.

Our landlords, English Heritage, open the Fort to the public at least one day a year, and vehicle access can be gained by the bridge nearest the Range superstore car park entrance.

There is no fishing allowed between swim no.1, along the industrial stretch, through the car park stretch and up to swim 20 on the A32. This area is a popular area for public to feed the birds, and numerous fish, some large, can be seen regularly in this area.

The water is fed from the rainfall that is collected from nearby factory roves and car parks, and the natural banksides. The water level has always been a major problem at Brockhurst as it can vary from very low in the summer, and very high in the winter which floods the swims making it unfishable for long periods.

Stocking Levels

The fish stocks in Brockhurst Moat are normally quite adequate for a mixed fishery, and most decent anglers will catch a good bag of fish. However, the Moat has recently suffered at the hands of fish thieves in the form of both poachers and foreign anglers who kill and eat their catch.

There is a surprisingly large head of carp up to just over 30lb, although some have been seen in the no fishing stretch which surpasses this weight.

The head of tench appears to have dwindled somewhat compared to past years of excellent catches. This is quite concerning as the Moat was known as one of the best tench waters in the Club, but recent catches do not reflect this. This also applies to the perch, which is a renowned species for appearing and disappearing for numerous years at a time.

The silver fish stocks are encouraging as they display fish of all age groups, and there are also some large bronze bream which are normally caught by the carp angler.

Brockhurst has never had a health problem with any of the fish stocks, and the water proves to be very high in natural foods.

Overall, Brockhurst Moat is capable of accepting more fish of any species in an effort to increase the catch rate of our members, but it must be borne in mind that a fair share of the fish reside in the 'no fishing' area. These are clearly visible to anyone, especially when bird feeding takes place.

Current Status

Brockhurst Moat is an excellent mixed fishery which provides a good days fishing to most who fish it. The Pond Warden, Richard Taylor, has recently been appointed, is keen to work with the fishery team to improve the fishery.

The swims are all built at a lower level than the path, away from the general public. However, this means that access to swims are via steps which are dug into the bank. Some of these steps are quite dangerous and steep, and will need improving in the near future.

As mentioned previously, the swims are often under water during the winter period due to high water levels. These will now need to be raised as English Heritage has stated that the water level will no longer be monitored by use of the pump as it has in the past.

Brockhurst Moat is not the most picturesque water as it suffers with litter, rubbish being dumped, graffiti and vandalism. The litter consists of fly tippers waste, industrial waste, lorry drivers and youths who discard bikes and trolleys etc. into the water. This is further increased when the Moat is frozen in the winter and pallets etc are thrown onto the ice, and obviously falls to the bottom of the Moat when the ice melts.

Litter is the biggest problem at Brockhurst Moat, and this is sadly worsened with deposits of dog's faeces around the footpath and its surrounds.

Identified Problems

Many of the problems have already been mentioned so I will now list them.

- Swims under water for large periods of the season which restricts our member's access to good winter fishing.
- Access to some swims are dangerous and too steep
- Fringed Lily is rampant in certain parts of the Moat and is spreading very quickly on most stretches.
- Litter in the water and surrounds are a constant problem and needs drastic measures to help reduce the amount that enters the water.
- The surrounding grass and banks that are normally maintained by contractors employed by English Heritage are not as regular as they used to be.
- Any negotiations with our landlords English Heritage prove to be very lengthy and even the smallest of tasks can be difficult and frustrating to approve within a reasonable timescale.

Long Term Plan

The long-term plan for this water is continue to manage it as a mixed fishery, and provide the Club members with a good bag of fish of all species.

Work is already underway in improving the swims, and many have been raised to a new agreed level which should solve any future high water problems.

The steps are also being improved as each swim is being raised. But this will always be an ongoing task due to natural wear and tear, and vandalism.

Lengthy negotiations are taking place to agree to two new swims being built in the present 'no fishing' stretch on the industrial side of the Moat. Their positions have been identified with the fishery team and we are awaiting consent from English Heritage. This will give members access to some quality fish that at present reside in safety in these areas.

It is also envisaged to hopefully negotiate some fishing rights on the restricted stretches which we used to enjoy several years ago. This will only be allowed with some rules being put in place such as:

- No shelters to be erected
- No swims or steps to be dug
- Public footpath not be blocked by the angler
- No juniors due to steep banks

The Fringed Lily will need to be sprayed and destroyed to avoid massive areas of the water being made unfishable. The other weed such as milfoil will need to be managed to allow swims to be fished and reduce fish losses.

Requirements for successful instigation of plan

This water is known as one of the hardest to run and maintain due to the many problems which exist, and the pond warden requires a lot of support and help in this matter. Recently some support from the fishery team has allowed some major improvements to be made at Brockhurst Moat, but this will need to be continued until the work is complete. It is envisaged to have all the swims on the A32 stretch raised, and at least two swims on the other stretches before the winter of 2009.

Litter is the biggest problem and has been for many years. Contact with local authorities may help in this matter, and this may apply to the local businesses too. This has helped in the past and is very worthwhile if it helps in any way.

The local council should also be asked to supply more bins in an effort clean up the public footpath.

More work parties should be arranged and directed to the specific task of litter collection, and possibly arrange sections of the community such as young offenders etc. to assist.

The weed will need to be managed to allow fishing at all times of the year. The employment of an outside weed management contractor will need to be considered with the budget for this water.

The vegetation behind the swims and their surrounds need to be pruned regularly due to the unknown attendance of outside contractors who normally maintain them.

Negotiations should be continued by the FMO to gain more fishing rights and more swims.

Conclusion

In truth, Brockhurst Moat is a first class mixed fishery which unfortunately suffers from being situated in the wrong place. This aside, Brockhurst Moat is a very important water to the Club both in geographical terms and as a fishery that can provide good sport. It also has the added bonus of being an ideal venue for matches and junior coaching.

It should always be remembered that due to the very durable nature of the swims and footpath, Brockhurst is more than capable of sustaining fishing all year round. Not only will this bring in added revenue to the Club, it will also help in reducing the poaching that takes place when the water is closed.

The water should always be considered for any additional fish stocking programmes to help improve catch rates, as these appear to be smaller than past years.

This especially applies to the tench stocks which appear to be dangerously low for Brockhurst at present.

I also recommend that the FMO continues negotiations with English Heritage to increase fishing rights as this will hopefully reduce the poaching from non-members, and move some fish that seem to reside in safety in these stretches.

I know from personal experience that managing Brockhurst Moat is a massive task for any pond warden and his small team, so I would recommend that Richard receive all the assistance that is possible.