

Yateley Green Pond Report

1. Background

Yateley Green Pond has long been a valued feature of Yateley Green. Fed by a stream inlet and a natural spring at its centre, it has traditionally served as a junior fishing pond for children under 16.

In 2018, the pond was drained and desilted, and small fish species, including tench and bream, were reintroduced to support the continuation of children's fishing. Later that year, a large number of carp were illegally released into the pond by an unknown individual.

2. The Impact of the released carp

The illegal introduction of carp has increased the pond's appeal for anglers, as they are large fish and are relatively easy to catch. As a result, fishing activity has risen significantly. During the summer of 2025, as many as fourteen people per day were observed fishing at the pond. Given that the carp have since bred, it is likely that their numbers are now even higher than the initial release.

Carp can have a substantial negative impact on pond ecosystems by increasing water turbidity, uprooting vegetation, altering nutrient balances, and reducing biodiversity. Their presence is also likely to affect other aquatic species; notably, no frog or toad spawn was recorded in the pond this year. A site visit carried out by a member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian Group described the pond as being virtually devoid of aquatic life other than fish.

3. Present Situation

Since the restoration work in 2018, the pond's vegetation has matured considerably. Water lilies, reeds, and the goat willow on the island have all grown substantially. While this has enhanced the natural character of the site, it has also made fishing more difficult by reducing casting space and increasing the likelihood of lines becoming snagged.

Wildlife impacts associated with discarded or snagged fishing line are also a growing concern. In 2025, Danni from Swan Rescue attended the site on ten occasions to assist birds suffering injuries caused by fishing line or entanglement. In 2026, there have already been two further incidents involving a cormorant and a duck, and a gosling died last week after becoming tangled in fishing line.

The council has received a number of emails from residents calling for fishing to be prohibited so that the pond can be managed solely as a wildlife habitat. This view is also reflected in comments made on social media. At the same time, some members of the community continue to support the retention of fishing at the pond.

In summary, the council is currently facing two principal issues:

- **Harm to wildlife of discarded fishing line**
- **Loss of aquatic life due to the presence of the carp**

4. Options

- a) **Retain fishing at the pond** and create additional casting space by reducing the extent of water lilies and reeds and cutting back the willow on the island.

Pros – Maintains the current arrangement and avoids the loss of an established community resource.

Cons – Would not fully resolve the issue of discarded fishing line, would do little to improve biodiversity while carp remain present, and would require ongoing vegetation management.

- b) **Retain fishing but remove the carp** to support the recovery of aquatic species and improve biodiversity, subject to the practical feasibility of removing a single fish species.
- c) **Prohibit fishing and remove the fish.** Removing the fish would provide the clearest means of preventing continued fishing activity; otherwise, the council would need to monitor and enforce any ban on an ongoing basis.

Pros – Would address the issue of fishing-line-related harm to wildfowl and create the best opportunity for aquatic life to recover, improving overall biodiversity.

Cons – Would result in the loss of a free junior fishing resource for the community.

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