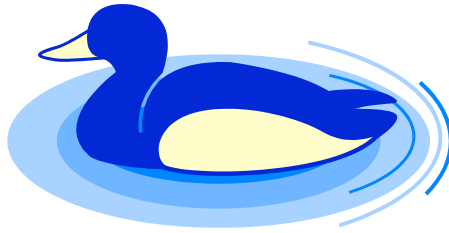


## COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LTD



## NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2009

Dear Member,

You will all have seen that over the last couple of months the water level has been dropping. This is due to the fact that the pipe running through the dam on the bottom sluice has developed a leak. The water level has had to be kept low for most of the season and the committee have had discussions during the year with British Waterways to determine a date for this work to commence. As the fish could not be moved until after the start of October unfortunately we have had this whole season with a half full lake!

However, this work is now nearing completion and we trust that depending on rain fall the lake will fill up quite quickly. British Waterways have agreed to pay for the cost of removing, storing and returning the fish.

The following reports are from White Swan Piscatorials fishing club.

### **A DAY AT THE LAKE**

We arranged for Furnace Mill Fishery to net the lake prior to work starting on the valves. Three nettings were carried out and approximately 300 large carp were removed. I received a call on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November informing me that the workers at the lake had noticed four or five large carp stuck in the box surrounding the lower vale. I called in to speak to the workmen who said that they intended to put a large pump next to the valve to lower the pool ready for them to start work on the removal of the valve. I went home and collected a trailer, water tank, chest waders and some nets. The work team very kindly loaded the tank on the forklift and took it down to the valve for me – we filled the tank with water and started to look for the fish. First we caught one or two, then three and four, and before long we were up to thirty plus fish. No, the problem was the sheer weight on my trailer. My first plan was to

catch the five or so fish and take them over to the lake in the Wyre Forest where they were being kept. It was clear that I would not get that far so I decided to head for home but looking in the valve box it was clear that there were still several fish still inside.

I spoke with Ian Marson who made his way to my house and looking at the fish they were in very dirty water and showing signs of distress. Now the problem was what to do with so many fish – we thought the best thing was to empty my wheelie bins and fill them with clean water and move the fish into them. We rigged up some air stones and Ian and myself then returned to the lake to get the rest of the fish. We managed to get another 14 fish out and the pool was now at its lowest level only leaving a small pool of water to one side which was holding most of the small fry. We returned home and all the fish were doing fine and now looked much healthier. All we had to do now was wait for Ed to arrive from Furnace Mill Fishery to collect the fish. The final count was 49 large carp safely removed. It was now just turned 6.30pm – What a day!

Many thanks to all the workmen from on site for their help – it would have been very hard work without them.

Guess what – Day Two!

1<sup>st</sup> December 2009

Yet another telephone call – This time the workmen had got two pumps on the go and the lake was almost dry except the constant stream from the hills still coming in. Low and behold another 5-6 fish had been seen. Off home I go and get the trailer and tank again. This time my wife came back to the lake with me. On arrival the workmen told me that they had seen the fish at the mouth of the lake where the pumps were. I netted one after the other until we had six. You can imagine the state of the water – nice and black and smelly! I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Schofield who let us get some fresh water for the tank. With fish on board off we go home. Well, they survived the night and the next day I took them to join up with the other 300 odd fish we had already netted out of the lake. Hand on heart I do not think there are any more large carp in that lake – but watch this space!

You've guessed it – Day Three

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009

I called in today just to get a progress report on the work only to be told that they had seen one more carp – will have to wait for a chance to net him out.

**Geoff Smith – White Swan Piscatorials**

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This has been a frustrating year which has been dominated by the repairs to the valves. Getting information from British Waterways has been difficult, and we have had conflicting information and a number of false starts. The main concern from the fishing club has been the timing of the works and the welfare of the fish.

It was not until September that BW confirmed that the lake would need to be completely drained and that we would need to remove all of the fish.

We were able to arrange the netting of the lake at short notice and spent 2 days removing the fish. However, these fish are slippery characters, and the article by Geoff Smith describes how he was called back on a further three occasions to rescue fish which had evaded the nets.

We were very pleased to recover almost 300 carp. Surprised too, as we only believed we had stocked a little over 200! The fish that came out were stunning. The majority of them were around 12lb with a good number in the 14 – 16lb bracket and a few around 18lb. No fish of 20lb and over though, so those reporting to have caught 20lb+ fish perhaps need to ask Santa for a new set of scales!

What was slightly disappointing however, was the number of silver fish that were netted. The Rudd, Tench and Crucian Carp, apart from one or two, did not appear. We can only assume that they have perished over the years. Our Cormorant friends may have had a part to play in that. The Roach also did not show in the quantity that we would have expected based on the numbers being caught. Their fate remains a mystery.

We hope that the valve repairs will complete before Christmas, and the lake will refill. The fish will be returned during January and all being well, the lake will re open for fishing in March. We will also replace the Roach. Before the lake fills, we will take the opportunity to repair the floating islands and improve their anchorage. Replanting will take place in the spring.

The Club have carried out general maintenance of pathways and bank side vegetation. Our working party in June was attended by some residents, and we thank you for your support.

Following your approval at the last AGM we purchased a container for storing tools, which has been placed in the car park area. This will make it easier for us to carry out maintenance of the lake area, as tools will be on site. Our plans for 2010 are to continue to improve the general conditions of the pathways, and to complete the repair and replanting of the floating islands.

**Dave Townshend – Secretary White Swan Piscatorials**

Once the lake is refilled we shall be raring to go next year to ensure this lake and surrounding area is maintained. If anyone would like to join the working parties in helping to cut back undergrowth and keep the pathways clear please get in touch with a committee member. Three more benches have been purchased and it is hoped they will be installed in the Spring. If anyone would like to donate a bench please let us know.

We are still having problems with dogs fouling the lake area. Please note that all dogs must be accompanied by their owners and not allowed to run free as it states in the Rules.

Annual Subscriptions are due in January. Please remember that the amount due is now £12. (This increase was agreed at the AGM). Many thanks to all members who pay more than the amount asked for. This is very much appreciated especially now with low interest rates we get from our deposit account. This interest used to cover the cost of our annual Public Liability insurance but of course it nowhere near covers this cost now. We have also had an increase in charges from the man who cuts the grass near the car park area. Fortunately all the big expenditure has now been paid for ie: boardwalk and bridge so we can now concentrate on general maintenance.

We would point out that minutes of meetings and newsletters and photographs are shown on our web site and we thank Simon Munn for looking after this on our behalf.

**PLEASE NOTE THE LOCK NUMBER WILL CHANGE ON 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY TO 7142**

*The AGM is to be held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 4.00 at Cofton Hackett Village Hall. Please put this in your diary. We hope you will all be able to attend.*

The Committee once again, thank you for your continued support during 2009 and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

**Diane Carr on behalf of Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd**

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Please return this slip with your payment:

<b>COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LTD ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION</b>
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For new members please note that cheques for subscriptions should be made out to Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd and sent either to the registered office which is 19 Cofton Lake Road or delivered to Sue Garvey our Treasurer at 58 Ashmead Drive. Please do try and get this money in on time as it is most time consuming having to chase late payers. Will you please also note that this payment does not include permission to fish. If you do want to fish there is an additional £10 annual fee payable to the White Swan Piscatorials.

**Cheques to be made out to Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd and to be paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

Name.....

Address.....