Eutrophication

Eutrophication is the process of organic enrichment in a water body. The accelerated eutrophication of lakes and rivers represents one of the most pervasive water quality problems in the world. Excessive nutrients from fertilisers on land and nutrients discharged from sewage treatment works enter rivers. The resulting increase of nitrate or phosphate in the water encourages algae growth, which forms a bloom over the water surface. This prevents sunlight reaching other water plants, causing them to die. Bacteria break down the dead plants and use up the oxygen in the water so the water may be left completely lifeless.

Have you seen any signs of eutrophication?

The Environment Agency (EA) would like your help to improve its evidence on the effects of eutrophication in the catchment. WFD classification works on a "one-out-all-out" principle, if elements such as nutrients "fail" then a water body is classed as moderate status. However, through the "Weight of Evidence" approach the EA assess the evidence of not only levels of nutrients recorded but also their impacts on the environment.

The following are examples of the type of evidence the EA wish to gather:

- Excessive plant or algal growth.
- Impacts on recreational use e.g. cancelled fishing matches
- Aesthetic effects e.g. foam, odours or scum
- Anecdotal evidence of impacts to aquatic fly life

Please provide the following details:

- Reporter’s name/organisation
- Your contact details (For further information)
- Location: River name and site (National Grid Reference if possible)
- Date/ time: When did this occur and for approximately how long?
- Type of record: Survey/Photographs/Anecdotal/Other
- Extent of impact: How much of the river was impacted – the whole channel, the margins, how many kilometres/metres, does this happen every year or only infrequently?

Please send any records to:
ben.rayner@environment-agency.gov.uk

Reporting an environmental incident

If you notice any of the following please report it to the Environment Agency on their Hotline: 0800 80 70 60

- damage or danger to the natural environment
- pollution to water or land
- poaching or illegal fishing
- dead fish or fish gasping for air
- watercourses blocked by a vehicle or fallen tree causing risk of flooding
- flooding from main rivers or the sea
- illegal dumping of hazardous waste or large amounts of industrial waste
- incidents at Environment Agency-regulated waste sites
- illegal removals from watercourses
- unusual changes in river flow
- collapsed or badly damaged river or canal banks

For any other incidents please visit www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident for guidance on who to contact.