King’s Pond - What are the challenges?

Silt

The River Wey carries material from upstream and deposits it in Kings Pond. The pond is heavily silted and is now very shallow in some parts. Around 10,000m³ of silt would have to be removed to return to the depths achieved by the last dredging 30 years ago.

The silting is a continuous process. If we do nothing the pond would eventually be filled with silt.

The silt is contaminated with metals and with chemicals from road run-off.

Water Levels

Water levels in the pond fluctuate, partly due to changes in water volumes and partly due to frequent blockages of the screen at the weir where the water flows out. High water levels have caused erosion of the banks and islands.

Impounding the River

The pond and weir block the normal life and functions of the river. Fish and other aquatic life cannot move up or down stream past the weir. The river deposits silt and gravels in the pond instead of carrying them away downstream as it should do naturally.

Negative Impact on the River Downstream

The river downstream is adversely affected by the pond. Chalk streams such as the Wey are spring fed and the stream water is cool. However, while it is held in the pond, the water warms up and the large numbers of waterfowl and the pond fish change the nutrient content of the water that flows out over the weir into the river downstream. These temperature and nutrient changes have a negative effect on the chalk stream ecology downstream. This is particularly in the summer when through flow water volumes are lower and there is less dilution,

Waterfowl

The large population of wildfowl has an adverse effect on the vegetation surrounding the pond through grazing, fouling and trampling and an adverse impact on other species such as reptiles and amphibians.

Bottom-feeding Fish

Populations of bottom-feeding fish such as carp increase eutrophication, make the water cloudy and disrupt the establishment of underwater vegetation in the pond.

Condition of Paths

The surface of the path on the W side of the pond is compacted gravel. It was poorly laid and it is in poor condition. The surface is uneven and breaks up in wet weather.

Sources
The Pond Book published by The Freshwater Habitats Trust
Footprint Ecology Management Plan published November 2017
Aquamaintain Draft Management Plan published May 2022
Water Environment Weir Removal Study published February 2024
Environment Agency correspondence.