

Yorkshire drought order application approved

This week the Environment Secretary granted the application. It means the Environment Agency can ask Yorkshire Water to slow the flow of water leaving the reservoir to manage habitats and river flows to protect wildlife. The flow from the reservoir will reduce from 2million litres per day to 1million litres.

The order will have no impact on the public water supply as the Holme Styes Reservoir is a historic mill reservoir and not part of the public water infrastructure.

Victoria Slingsby, environment planning and engagement manager for the Environment Agency in Yorkshire, said:

We're pleased the drought order request we submitted for Holme Styes reservoir has been approved, which means we can reduce the flow from the reservoir to protect habitats and wildlife. Without it, the reservoir could run dry and plants and animals that rely on it would die.

It's an example of the action we are taking right across the country as the extreme temperatures increase the likelihood of local impacts and put pressure on the water environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency declared prolonged dry weather in Yorkshire on 13 July.

Prolonged dry weather is a natural event which has become more likely with climate change. It occurs as a result of low rainfall for an extended period of time. Once prolonged dry weather is declared, actions are taken to minimise impacts on the environment.

Action is being taken by Government, Environment Agency, water companies, environmental and angling groups and farmers to manage the impacts. For example, the Environment Agency is responding to environmental risks and increasing fisheries incident response, as well as operating a large number of augmentation and water transfer schemes.

In Yorkshire, they have worked with holders of 128 abstraction licences to issue 'hands off flow' conditions, which means licence holders have been told that river levels are low and as a result abstraction must stop to protect the environment.

July recorded the fifth month in a row of below average long term average rainfall for Yorkshire, with most of Yorkshire's rivers in below normal flow

conditions.

If people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, it should be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60.