

Dogs and Ponds in Lye Valley

J A Webb, 2021



One of the ponds dug in the 1980s in a peat area in the Lye Valley North fen (summer)

WHY SHOULD I KEEP MY DOG OUT OF THE PONDS?

SEDIMENT

Sediment stirred up by paddling or swimming coats leaves, blocking sun so plants die, then the animals that feed on the plants have no food. In Spring, sediment coats frogspawn blocking oxygen for respiration, so spawn may die.

PET FLEA TREATMENTS

Some of these contain toxic compounds banned for agricultural use in 2017. These are still allowed in veterinary pet products for flea and tick control. Can be Spot-on solutions, topical spray treatments and chemical impregnated collars. Some compounds, the **Neonicotinoids** (**'Neonics', well known to be damaging to bees**) are extremely toxic to aquatic pond and river life. The Neonics **Fibronil** and **imidacloprid** from dog flea treatments have been extensively found in English rivers: see references below (1), (2), and (3).

Many dogs love to play in water, especially when it is hot and people love seeing their dogs having fun. Finding a balance that satisfies both recreational and wildlife needs in ponds might be possible on some sites, but not on others.

High wildlife-value ponds are not the place for dog paddling or swimming for several reasons – ***it's important for the wildlife to thrive that dogs (or people) do not swim or paddle in the ponds in Lye Valley as these are so important for their biodiversity.***

WHAT LIVES IN THE LYE VALLEY PONDS?

The six ponds in the valley have a lot of wildlife, thriving now that Friends of Lye Valley have done a lot of work increasing the light levels by willow reduction and scything and raking the pond vegetation on margins twice a year. Most obvious are the many frogs spawning producing vast numbers of tadpoles in the spring, but also present are the young larval stages of the dragonflies and damselflies that are such attractive flying insects in summer.



Frog spawn newly hatched to a wiggling mass of tadpoles, March. J A Webb



Damselfly nymph in the pond water. Terry Newsome



Broad bodied chaser dragonfly adult. Terry Newsome

The Freshwater Habitats Trust website has accessible information on dogs and ponds, see :

<https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/flagship/dogs-in-ponds/>

https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Buster_Molly_web.pdf

References to further detail on neonicotinoids in pet flea treatments....

1. <https://www.buglife.org.uk/news/new-research-reveals-widespread-contamination-of-english-rivers-with-potent-pesticides-commonly-used-as-flea-treatments-for-pets/>
2. Read more here: <https://www.theguardian.com/.../pet-flea-treatments...>
3. And here is a link to the scientific paper:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/.../pii/S0048969720370911...>