

## Workshop : “Pond management success stories”

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*Main ideas, questions and proposals addressed during the Workshop*

### Introduction

Pond management is a tricky business and it is probably true to say that any management decision never meets the approval of all stakeholders. Nevertheless, there are many success stories across Europe where appropriate management has had a significant impact upon pond resources. The purpose of this workshop was to consider examples of where successful management had been carried out and, importantly, to consider how we might measure that success. Finally, the workshop turned its attention to pond management failure and how the EPCN should report upon these less successful outcomes.



### How do we measure successful pond management ?

The workshop started with examples from Belgium and Italy (see pdf) of successful pond projects.

Evaluating successful pond management is not an easy task. Clearly, we might initially assume that an increase in biodiversity would be the most successful outcome. However, discussion revealed that a range of criteria equated to successful management outcomes and that these criteria related to the particular interests of stakeholder groups.

Firstly, before evaluating success, the criteria for a particular management practice needs to be considered. If, for example, a shaded pond is to be managed for amphibians then clearing the pond of surrounding and emergent vegetation may lead to a successful outcome. However, invasive management of this type may well be detrimental to other groups of animals such as invertebrates or birds, and in this context may represent an unsatisfactory outcome.

On this same theme, the opening up of shaded pond may provide an opportunity for children to experience at first hand the life which teems in and around open ponds. Whilst clearly this might not be seen as successful management for those animal species preferring shaded conditions, the trade off is to stimulate a group of young people introduced, perhaps for the first time, to the dynamics of pond life.

Other criteria identifying successful pond management were based upon the need for long term monitoring and review. Clearly, if a pond is managed, it is very difficult to assess whether or not that management has long term benefits. This can only be achieved by regular monitoring to see if the desired outcomes have not only been achieved, but are long lasting.

Another discussion point related to ‘perceived success’. Whilst pond management may be regarded as being successful by some stakeholders, for others, that may not necessarily be the case.

### Why only success ?

It was agreed that pond management failures are important to understand. However, it was felt that regularly stressing failures in public debate would not be beneficial. It was agreed that failures are not the same as negative results, and this distinction needs to be clearly understood. To fail is not to

know why things went wrong. If, on the other hand you understand why a particular management outcome did not achieve the desired results, then lessons learnt can be applied in future cases.

It was felt that by illustrating bad management practices people would be more likely to learn about the correct and incorrect procedures. Although, to show more examples of bad practice than good practice would be self defeating.

### **What messages do we want to give ?**

Firstly, it was agreed that before any pond management takes place, there is a need for a comprehensive ecological survey in order to determine the value of the pond.

Examples of good pond management and or creation schemes are very important and provide an impetus to new projects across Europe. In addition to the visual and written elements, it would be useful to give some consideration to the cost of management tasks and, in so doing, may encourage similar schemes.

It was felt that the EPCN website was a good place to store pond management stories whether they be successful or otherwise. It would provide a valuable record. In order to provide stories on a regular basis, it was suggested that an EPCN 'working group' be established to source management examples for regular inclusion on the website.

