

Swimming in the “Brugse Reien” also in 2020 due to this special device

Bart Huysentruyt | October 21st, 2019 | 10u05

BRUGES An ultrasound device, that has to prevent blue-green algae in the waters of Bruges, will be deployed in a swimming area. Tests with this device at the “Stil Ende” proved successful last summer.

Bruges has problems with blue-green algae since 2017.

The cyanobacteria thrive when the water temperature rises above 22 degrees centigrade, when the water is stagnant and contains nitrogen and phosphor.

Last year, starting with the summer till late in the autumn of 2018, there was a massive algae bloom at the “Stil Ende”.

Due to the presence of the released toxic compounds, the city swans had to be transferred to another place.

One swan did not survive this trip. Also, some city rivers became multiple times contaminated.



© Benny Proot - Zwemmen in de Coupure zal ook in 2020 kunnen.

“Today we measure a considerable better water quality, with an evolution from bad towards acceptable water quality”, says alderman of environmental services Ms. Minou Esquenet (CD&V).

“There are extra measures taken by the municipal services departments to improve the water quality further. Each year limestone (Coccolietenkrijt) is added and aerators are applied to bring more oxygen into the water. Also, sludge (slib) dredging can bring an improvement to the water quality on the long term.”

Ultrasound

But also measures in the short term can be deployed in the fight against blue-green algae blooms. “The city laboratory started a pilot project with a patented ultrasound device to reduce the algae bloom”, said Ms. Esquenet. “This device was placed in October 2018 to profoundly evaluate the effectiveness during 2019. These small ultrasound devices are continuously submerged and send out a specific signal. The result is that algae are affected and the growth reduced. The ultrasound signal is limited to a distance of 200m.”

This test succeeded, because the water quality was significantly improved since last year. “This summer there were also no blue-green algae detected, despite an increases water temperature. The city swans could also remain at the “Stil Ende” last summer.

Blue-green algae

Also in the recreational swimming area at “The Coupure” there were problems with these algae in 2018. “The placement of one ultrasound device protected the region and maintained the swimming area free of blue-green algae. The toxic compound (produced by the algae’s) was not detected in the water, despite the presence of blue-green algae in the adjacent channel near the yacht club.”

If the recreational swimming area at “The Coupure” will be operational in 2020 – and it looks like it – the ultrasound device will be permanently deployed in the same way as at the “Stil Ende”.