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<http://wgme.com/news/local/dam-blamed-for-hundreds-of-dead-fish-in-brunswick>

Dam blamed for hundreds of dead fish in Brunswick

BY WGME THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20TH 2016

Ed Friedman says around a thousand migrating alewives were cut up by the dam's turbines. (Ed Friedman)



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TOPSHAM (WGME) – Hundreds of fish are dead along the Midcoast, and one watchdog group believes a hydropower plant in Brunswick is to blame.

Ed Friedman says he took photos Sunday underneath the green bridge separating Brunswick and Topsham. He says around a thousand migrating alewives were cut up by the dam's turbines.

"There are three major turbines," Friedman said.

Friedman believes they got sucked into the turbines of Brookfield Energy's power plant.

To avoid the turbines, the fish could go through gates, but because the river is so low, the gates are closed, leaving a drain pipe as the only other safe option.

"In the middle between the turbines there's an 18-inch pipe," Friedman said. "And in the current conditions we have, that's the only non-turbine passage for fish to find."

Brookfield Energy told CBS 13 when they found out about the alewives, they shut down the turbines at night.

The company says it seems to be working; they haven't seen any fish kills since.

But Friedman and the Department of Marine Resources say shutting off the turbines at night won't help.

The Department of Marine Resources says tens of thousands of fish still make it safely through the dam.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay say the fish kill constitutes a federal violation.

But the Department of Marine Resources says the power plant may not be to blame.

The Department of Marine Resources says it also observed a large fish kill a few days ago above the dam, meaning this power plant and its turbines may not be responsible.

There are two other power plants upstream.

At this point, the Department of Marine Resources says there's really no way of knowing exactly how these fish were killed.