

UK Rivers Network

UK Rivers Network: Weekly News Update –15/12/25

- ➔ 13 December 2025: [The race for Britain's EVs is poisoning water supplies... 6,000 miles away](#): Are electric vehicles environmentally friendly? Yes, but don't forget the hidden environmental impacts. The I Paper reports from the front lines in Chile and Peru, where mining for minerals is destroying the environment and impacting the health of local communities.
- ➔ 13 December 2025: [London's other sewage scandal](#): Jim Waterson's London Centric investigates the huge, hidden problem of misconnections, where badly plumbed buildings send their sewage directly to streams and rivers.
- ➔ 13 December 2025: [Prehistoric sea monster bigger than a killer whale may have terrorised rivers too](#): The mosasaur may have occupied a similar niche to modern-day saltwater crocodiles, according to Vishwam Sankaran, writing in The Independent.
- ➔ 13 December 2025: [A murder mystery: who's killing the River Ems?](#): "Stand by the River Ems today and something feels wrong. This chalk stream, rising in the South Downs and slipping quietly towards Chichester Harbour, once ran cold and clear through its meadows. Now, in places, it is sluggish, shallow, or dry. What was once a living thread through the landscape now looks like a river that's been allowed to fade away while everyone involved insists they're doing their best". But who's really to blame for the death of the river?
- ➔ 12 December 2025: [LNER Life In The Leeds Becks Project](#): Aire Rivers Trust has produced a new YouTube video explaining how Riverfly monitoring is being used by local communities. The charity works with local volunteer groups to monitor eight groups of invertebrate life in a Yorkshire river, collecting data that pinpoints areas impacted by pollution.
- ➔ 12 December 2025: [Congratulations to campaigning journalist Lucy Heath!](#): Responsible for the I Paper's brilliant, hard-hitting "Save Britain's Rivers" campaign, Lucy has just been recognized for her work at the British Journalism Awards this week.

- ➔ 12 December 2025: [Charting Britain's spectacular otter revival](#): Still rare only 20 years ago, the charismatic animals are in almost every UK river and a conservation success story, The Guardian reports.
 - ➔ 11 December 2025: [New book: Murky Water: Challenging an unsustainable system](#): How to fix our broken water system? Private finance, public ownership... or something else? A new book by Luca Calafati, Julie Froud, Colin Haslam, Sukhdev Johal, and Karel Williams argues that "Parliamentary politics is stuck and not engaging with the complex, interrelated problems of water management and rectifying the legacy of historical under investment. What then can informed and indignant civil society activists do? They have already changed the terms of public debate by naming the water companies and the Environment Agency as the guilty men responsible for the condition of water ways. Can they now pressurise the politicians for a package of effective policies to address water management?" The solution, the authors argue, is charging reform that delivers water justice: "Murky Water's radical analysis of water and sewerage will challenge industry insiders, right and left politicians and civil society activists" and is published by Manchester University Press (paperback, £14.99).
- 
- ➔ 12 December 2025: [Small sites must not be excluded from Biodiversity Net Gain](#): Last month, along with more than 80 conservation charities, ecological consultancies and rural businesses, Freshwater Habitats Trust wrote to the Defra Secretary of State Emma Reynolds, warning against the proposed exemption of small sites from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), under which developers are required to deliver a 10% uplift in biodiversity, from a baseline pre-development state.
 - ➔ 9 December 2025: [Salmon 'functionally extinct' in river due to weir](#): Campaigners who say salmon are close to extinction on Devon's River Sid say the species could be re-established if improvements are made to an old weir.
 - ➔ 9 December 2025: [Northern Ireland's rivers are high on drugs](#): Cocaine is widely present in the water of some of Northern Ireland's major lakes and rivers, a new study has found. Ketamine and amphetamine, two Class B drugs that are also used as pharmaceuticals, were also found as well as painkillers and antidepressants.

- ➔ 9 December 2025: [Obituary: Professor Peter Maitland FRSE \(1937-2025\)](#): The freshwater science community has lost one of its most respected and influential members with the death of Professor Peter Maitland FRSE on 24 November 2025: "A prolific scientist and writer, with 260 scientific papers and 15 books, Peter's name will be well known to those who have an interest in all aspects of freshwater science and conservation policy".
- ➔ 8 December 2025: [Drought update: more rain, more floods, more science...](#): An update from the Environment Agency and the National Drought Group: "November saw 149% of the long-term average rainfall, which helped kick-start drought recovery but also brought flooding to many parts of the country. As several areas announced a change in drought status, the expert group also heard how the latest science is being used to better protect England against future water shortages."
- ➔ 8 December 2025: [Devon County Council considers river rights](#): Devon County Council has stated its commitment to safeguarding the county's rivers, recognising their vital role in ecology, heritage, and community wellbeing. Councillors last week considered recommendations from its Cabinet in response to a Notice of Motion originally submitted by Councillor Jess Bailey (Independent, Otter Valley) calling for formal acknowledgement of the intrinsic rights of rivers in Devon. The motion highlighted the importance of Devon's waterways--including the Otter, Axe, Tamar, Dart, Exe, and Torridge--which support wildlife, livelihoods, recreation, and local economies. Let's hope their mineral planning department is listening.
- ➔ 7 December 2025: [Should £68m plan to protect Dumfries from flooding go ahead?](#): Controversial flood protection plans for the Whitesands area of Dumfries will be discussed by the local council on 11 December.
- ➔ 7 December 2025: [Grantham river group receives prestigious King's Award!](#): Keep Britain Tidy's Grantham RiverCare group has been honoured with a King's Award. Having carried out more than 150 river clean-ups since 2004, Grantham RiverCare is one of Keep Britain Tidy's longest-running volunteer groups. From its beginnings in picking litter along the banks of the River Witham, this group of dedicated volunteers now also manage habitats, monitor and protect wildlife, and inspire others to get involved in their vital efforts.
- ➔ 7 December 2025: [Farmers work together for cleaner drinking water in Wales](#): Over the next few months, Nature Friendly Farming Network (NFFN) Cymru will be teaming up with water company Dwr Cymru Welsh

Water (DCWW) to raise awareness of how day-to-day farming decisions influence the water that ends up in people's taps.

- ➔ 3 December 2025: [Jim Murray's Art for the Wye](#): Activist, actor, and artist Jim Murray is sharing profits from his innovative river art with Friends of the River Wye.
- ➔ 2 December 2025: [The UK government's new Environmental Improvement Plan is a gift to the pesticide industry](#): Pesticides Action Network asks why pesticide-friendly language drafted by lobbyists has been finding its way into the wording of government eco-policy documents.
- ➔ 21 November 2025: [The Mutual Benefits Of Working With Nature To Manage Floodwater](#): This summer, East Mercia River Trust's Sam Valman travelled to Scotland to help and learn from an international team of researchers monitoring a novel flood management scheme. Here's his report.

[More news...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- ➔ [Project Managers: Welsh Dee Trust](#) (12 January 2026)
- ➔ [Rivers Project Officer: Great Ouse Rivers Trust](#) (9 January 2026)
- ➔ [Catchment Coordinator: Western Sussex Rivers Trust](#) (6 January 2026)
- ➔ [Species Recovery Officer: London Wildlife Trust](#) (5 January 2026)
- ➔ [Field Officer - Solent Seascape: RSPB](#) (4 January 2026)
- ➔ [Head of Consultancy: Forth Rivers Trust](#) (31 December 2025)
- ➔ [Community Ecologist: Somerset Wildlife Trust](#) (17 December 2025)
- ➔ [Ecologist: Wendling Beck](#) (16 December 2025)
- ➔ [Outreach and Communications Officer: Cromarty Firth Watershed Environmental Trust](#) (15 December 2025)
- ➔ [Conservation Breeding Programmes Assistant: Ballinderry Rivers Trust](#) (15 December 2025)
- ➔ [Senior Farming and Catchment Programme Manager: Kent Wildlife Trust](#) (15 December 2025)
- ➔ [Catchment Advisory Modeller \(GIS and Hydrology\): The Wye and Usk Foundation](#) (Unspecified)
- ➔ [Evenlode Catchment Partnership Administration Officer \(Maternity Cover\): Wild Oxfordshire](#) (14 December 2025)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustee: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (12 January 2026)
- [Trustee: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (31 December 2025)

River of the week



The River Sid near Sidmouth, Devon – salmon free, but hopefully not for long if the River Sid Catchment Group have anything to do with it! Photo by [Derek Harper](#) originally published on [Geograph](#) under a [Creative Commons \(CC-BY-2.0\)](#) licence.

***** Help us grow – please forward to your friends! *****

Our weekly newsletter is available by email, RSS feed, or download from our website (in HTML and PDF formats).

Find out more at <https://www.ukrivers.net/subscribe.html>

Please send your news, events, press releases, campaign alerts, job posts, and anything else you'd like us to circulate to hello@ukrivers.net.

UK Rivers Network newsletters are published under a [Creative Commons \(CC-BY-SA 4.0\) Licence](#), which means they're free to copy, distribute, and remix as you see fit, with credit.