

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –16/2/26

February 2026

- ➔ 13 February 2026: [Swimming spots that could become designated dips](#): Lots of coverage on the 13 proposed new inland bathing waters. It's wonderful to see the community-driven enthusiasm here, something the UK Rivers Network first called for when we were formed back in the late 1990s.
- ➔ 13 February 2026: [River Thames spot among 13 sites shortlisted for swimming status](#): An alternative take on the story from Sandra Laville at The Guardian explores some of the tricky conflicts that will need to be resolved before new bathing waters can be designated.
- ➔ 13 February 2026: [Grassroots River Avon documentary announces online premiere](#): A multi-award winning documentary about a female-led grassroots campaign to clean up Bristol's waterways will be made available to stream online for the first time. Rave on for the Avon captured the joy, frustration and creativity at the heart of the Conham Bathing group's determined efforts to make their local river safe for swimming.
- ➔ 13 February 2026: [Transforming the River Ribble for people and wildlife](#): Supporting communities to appreciate their river environments was at the heart of the Ribble Life Together project. Industrial pollution, agricultural impacts and the changing climate had put stress on habitats and endangered wildlife in the river's catchment. To tackle these problems, community groups joined forces with environmental organisations, businesses and local authorities.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: [Salmon numbers in some premier angling rivers 'exceptionally low'](#): The Loughs Agency says the Atlantic salmon needs "urgent" conservation measures. New rules to protect Atlantic salmon are to be introduced on four of Northern Ireland's premier angling rivers after fish numbers dropped to "exceptionally low levels".

- ➔ 12 February 2026: [New Japanese Study Reveals Floods Are the Biggest Drivers of Plastic Pollution in Rivers](#): Many previous studies have examined microplastic and mesoplastic (MMP) concentrations in river water during normal, low-flow conditions. However, they have largely overlooked what happens during floods.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: [Worldview: China's draconian Yangtze fishing ban seems to be working](#): Decades of overfishing and habitat degradation led to huge declines in freshwater biodiversity in China's longest river, but there are signs of recovery after a fishing ban was implemented in 2021.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: ['Encounters with the Calder': a photographic exploration](#): A new exhibition, "Encounters with the Calder", is a personal exploration of the impact and influence of human activity along West Yorkshire's River Calder, by local photographer and riverfly monitor Jim Souper.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: [Winterbournes: The Disappearing Rivers Returning This Season](#): Alex Mackay explores and explains the wonderful phenomena of the chalk-catchment winterbournes for Wessex Rivers Trust.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: [More than 26.8 million UK adults \(nearly half\) admit to littering](#): Research released ahead of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean reveals nation's shocking littering habits that hard-working volunteers are battling to deal with.
- ➔ 12 February 2026: [The Radley Lakes Story: Celebrating 20 Years of Environmental Success](#): A reminder from The Radley Lakes Trust: "Celebrate 20 years since the Save Radley Lakes campaign began with The Radley Lakes Story. This beautifully illustrated 152-page book tells the remarkable tale of how local residents united to protect the Radley Lakes area, transforming it into a thriving hub for wildlife and a tranquil retreat for the community".
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [Environment Agency \(finally\) steps up enforcement workforce](#): Yet another misleading press release from the Environment Agency tells us: "The regulator has increased its water enforcement workforce almost fivefold – from 41 roles in 2023 to 195 by March 2026, with a further increase planned later in 2026. Water company environmental performance has continued to decline in recent years, and this has driven the need for stronger, more visible enforcement action". Or was it that the lack of enforcement action caused the decline, perhaps...?

- ➔ 11 February 2026: [Gloucester exhibition celebrates Britain's longest river, the Severn](#): The River Severn is in the spotlight at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester until 14 April, with a photography exhibition, model boat trail and activities focussing on the waterway.
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [Webinar: River Restoration with Pete King](#): Find out how river restoration projects are delivered and what a good river looks like through "Wet Wednesday Webinar: River Restoration - The Practicalities of Delivering Successful Projects" with Peter King, Director Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust. So just how do you restore a river? What does a good river even look like? What's all this about re-wiggling? This talk guides us through the processes involved in delivering river restoration. From the use of data and evidence, through developing ideas to completion of works we will look at the successes, the lessons learnt and the hurdles to overcome across a variety of projects from small scale to large engineering approaches.
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [Severn Rivers Trust: Invitation to Tender: Wetland Creation at Worthen Hall, Shropshire](#): Severn Rivers Trust is inviting suitably qualified contractors to submit tenders for the construction and delivery of a Natural Flood Management scheme at Worthen Hall Farm, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 9HN.
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [More beavering away on Cornish rivers](#): Beavers have been released into the wild in Cornwall in a bid to help nature recover. Two pairs of beavers have now been let out at a Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) nature reserve at Helman Tor within the Par and Fowey river catchment area.
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [What's it really like to work in science at the RSPB?](#): To mark International Day of Women and Girls in Science, RSPB spotlights six of its female Conservation Scientists.
- ➔ 11 February 2026: [WildFish spotlights stale river data](#): More on that story we first brought you last week: "WildFish has released a startling new report compiled from files obtained by freedom of information requests to the Environment Agency (EA), which reveals that more than half of the invertebrate river health assessments by the EA have been relying on outdated data. Our analysis of the Agency's data for its river monitoring during 2019 shows 52% of invertebrate assessments in England were recycled from past data and not newly assessed. While 3,645 water bodies

were 'assessed' in that year, only 1,781 had new monitoring while the rest were assessed using only 'rolled over' data from the previous cycle."

- ➔ 11 February 2026: [WildFish: SmartRivers 2025 Progress Report shows impact of citizen science!](#): WildFish has released its 2025 SmartRivers Progress Report, showcasing the impact of the 6,000 volunteer training hours delivered since the project's inception. The findings underscore the vital role of citizen science in reversing the decline of our rivers and wild fish populations.
- ➔ 10 February 2026: [The EU is working on a blanket ban of 'forever chemicals'. Why isn't Britain?](#): In The Guardian, Pippa Neill wonders why Britain is lagging on the issue of river-contaminating PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as "forever chemicals" due to their persistence in the environment).
- ➔ 10 February 2026: [The EDF makes distorted claims about Hinkley C fish deterrent](#): Matt Browne, head of public affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, says: "The developers of Hinkley C continue to misrepresent the impact that the nuclear plant will have on nature. Today's press release claims that a number of plant safety measures are fish protection measures. This is highly misleading and allows EDF to pretend that £700 million is being spent to protect nature, when the real figure is closer to £50m. It also misrepresents the number of fish affected by the proposed plant - they spotlight the suggestion that just two salmon will be killed per year when Environment Agency experts warn that 4.6 million fish will die every year – including critically endangered species such as European eel."
- ➔ 3 February 2026: [Afonydd Cymru welcomes "beacon of hope" green paper on Welsh rivers](#): According to the association of Welsh river trusts: "The Green Paper describes Welsh Government's thinking on change to the sector. After years of deterioration of the quality of rivers, inertia and lack of effective action from those responsible for their protection, it is just possible that these proposals provide a beacon of hope".
- ➔ 1 February 2026: [The hidden history flowing through British river names](#): Professor Christian Dunn, WWT Trustee and Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor at Bangor University, explores the history of river names: "Stand on the bank of any British river and you are standing beside a story that is thousands of years old. Not just a physical story of water shaping land, but a cultural one - of people naming, using, fearing and

revering flowing water long before there was a map of the UK; or even a concept of Britain itself."

- ➔ 1 February 2026: [River Wye Citizen Scientists surpass 50,000 samples!](#): Citizen scientists in the catchment of the River Wye have now taken over 50,000 water samples in an extraordinary show of people-power to monitor the health of an ailing river. Over 500 volunteers have contributed to this effort since 2020 to test the water quality of the River Wye and its surrounding rivers and streams. This community effort monitors far more locations, more regularly, than the government agencies, providing a more granular view of the health of the Wye catchment.
- ➔ 1 February 2026: [Reintroducing Species back to the River Don](#): A blog post from Sally Hyslop of the Don Catchment Rivers Trust explains how they reintroduced two species back to the River Don, True Fox Sedge and the Wild Tulip.

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- ➔ [Chief Executive Officer: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (15 March 2026)
- ➔ [Catchment Partnerships Manager: Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust](#) (8 March 2026)
- ➔ [26-week Internship: Galloway Fisheries Trust](#) (6 March 2026)
- ➔ [Catchment Advisor: The Wye and Usk Foundation](#) (6 March 2026)
- ➔ [Senior River Engagement Officer - Lead Inspiring Programmes for People and Rivers: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (1 March 2026)
- ➔ [Freelance Opportunities - River Learning and Engagement Officer: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (No closing date given)
- ➔ [Engagement Officer: WWT \(Scotland\)](#) (27 February 2026)
- ➔ [Catchment Specialist, Partnerships: Southern Water](#) (27 February 2026)
- ➔ [Estuary Project Officer: Tees Rivers Trust](#) (27 February 2026)
- ➔ [Data and Evidence Officer: Don Catchment Rivers Trust](#) (26 February 2026)
- ➔ [Agricultural Officer: Don Catchment Rivers Trust](#) (26 February 2026)
- ➔ [Wilder Rivers Adviser: Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#) (25 February 2026)

- [RiverCare and BeachCare Manager \(Maternity Cover\): Keep Britain Tidy](#) (23 February 2026)
- [Development Manager: Mersey Rivers Trust](#) (25 February 2026)
- [Chair: Wensum Catchment Partnership Chair](#) (19 February 2026)
- [Marine Engagement Assistant: Community of Arran Seabed Trust](#) (15 February 2026)
- [Senior Environmental Scientist: Canal and River Trust](#) (14 February 2026)
- [Senior Ecologist: Canal and River Trust](#) (14 February 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees: Devon Wildlife Trust](#) (22 February 2026)
- [Trustee: Bristol Avon Rivers Trust](#) (15 February 2026)

“River” of the week



Radley Lakes, Oxfordshire – Well done to Radley Lakes Trust, whose campaign we’ve been following and championing for the last two decades. Photo © [Des Blenkinsopp](#) 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.
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.