

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –23/2/26

February 2026

- 20 February 2026: [Restoration work in the River Usk will help rare and protected fish](#): Work is now complete to improve access for migratory salmon at Brecon weir on the River Usk. A new fish pass was installed last year as part of the Natural Resources Wales's (NRW) Four Rivers for LIFE Project.
- 20 February 2026: [Can 'natural' defences stop homes being flooded?:](#) A closer look at several natural flood protection schemes recently installed with help from the Ribble Rivers Trust in Lancashire.
- 20 February 2026: [Coming soon: the Spongeworks Project!](#): If you're over in Wicklow, be sure to check out the launch of the exciting new Spongeworks Project on 26 February, which focuses on nature-based solutions for climate resilience, and how we can better prepare for and respond to extreme weather events.
- 20 February 2026: [Love Your Pet, Not Pesticides: New Report Warns of Flea and Tick Treatment Threat to Rivers](#): From Buglife: "Pesticides banned for outdoor agricultural use are regularly used as pet tick and flea treatments. The two most commonly used pesticides, imidacloprid and fipronil, are known to cause significant harm to aquatic invertebrates and are found in waterways across the UK. A recent Welsh river survey linked high concentrations of the chemicals to over a 90% decline in invertebrates. One survey found 100% of wash-off samples from treated dogs contained both chemicals".
- 19 February 2026: [Could studying river sewage improve global health?:](#) The fact that antibiotic-resistant bacteria has recently been found in the river system comes as no surprise. However, little is known still of just how high the level of risk this poses to public health - in particular to people

who use our waterways for recreational purposes - which is of concern to anti-pollution campaigners in the UK.

- 19 February 2026: [Connecting Limbs: In the race to restore Sheffield's hidden rivers, can natural and industrial heritage coexist?](#): A closer look at the Connecting Limbs project to restore and revive Sheffield's hidden rivers, with help from the Environment Agency and Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust.
- 19 February 2026: ["Profitable negligence": Oxford plant pumps sewage into River Thames for 335 hours](#): The Oxford Mail probes pump and dumping in the Thames with help from Ash Smith, a campaigner from Windrush Against Sewage Pollution.
- 19 February 2026: [Country diary: Kneeling by the river, hoping the water is clean](#): Mary Montague goes riverfly surveying with conservation officers from Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP), an environmental charity, in a wooded glen below Wolf Hill, close to the former mill village of Ligoniel.
- 18 February 2026: [British crops still sprayed with pesticides banned by EU due to cancer, fertility and fetal health warnings](#): British crops, including strawberries, onions, potatoes, barley, and wheat, are being sprayed with pesticides banned across the European Union due to serious human and environmental health risks. Analysis by Unearthed, Greenpeace's investigative journalism unit, revealed that out of 14 chemicals banned by the EU since Brexit but still allowed in the UK, 10 were found to pose serious hazards to human health, wildlife or the environment.
- 18 February 2026: [Natural flood defence plan to protect the River Erme](#): Thousands of trees are being planted to improve water quality in the River Erme, Devon, which gained official bathing water status in 2024 but is currently unsafe for swimming.
- 18 February 2026: [Freshwater scientists urge action to defend Europe's water protections](#): Europe's environmental safeguards are currently facing unprecedented pressure. Under the banner of "simplification" and "cutting red tape", key laws designed to protect clean water, biodiversity, and public health risk being weakened. The scientific and freshwater community has an important voice in this moment. You can support efforts to defend Europe's nature laws by signing and sharing the Hands Off Nature petition. Within its first week, the petition gathered more than 130,000 signatures, demonstrating strong public support for maintaining robust environmental protections. Continued engagement from

scientists and freshwater professionals is essential to ensure that policy decisions remain grounded in scientific evidence and the urgent need to protect freshwater ecosystems.

- 18 February 2026: [Science: How threatened rivers change over time](#): Colby Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences Evan Dethier is studying how rivers change over space and time, particularly in response to environmental and anthropogenic disturbances, using a combination of satellite imagery and computer modeling.
- 18 February 2026: [Runners trace polluted Welsh river in bid to raise awareness](#): A team of runners have completed a 50-kilometre journey along a Welsh river to highlight the environmental challenges the river and the wildlife using it are facing. The runners documented their journey via a short film they released on YouTube.
- 18 February 2026: [Run for the Rivers, a WATER fundraiser like no other, March 2026](#): A reminder that John Mildmay-White is on a mission to raise awareness of pollution in our rivers and to raise funds to support the work of Wild About The Erme River (WATER), in restoring water quality and habitat across the Erme catchment. His 400 mile Ultramarathon will start at the mouth of the Erme, then follow the river up onto Dartmoor before heading to Princetown. His route then turns north east to Taunton and on to join the upper reaches of the River Exe before arriving at Exmoor's North Devon coast. Here he heads due east to Bristol and on to the Cotswolds where he will join the River Thames and follow it down to London, arriving on International Day of Action for Rivers on March 14th. .
- 18 February 2026: [Agencies warn of unsettled weather expected until at least mid-March](#): Homeowners and businesses across the south west of England are being urged to remain vigilant as the Environment Agency and Met Office today (Wednesday 18 February) warn that wet weather is set to continue for another month. High tides and strong winds may also bring tidal flood risk in some places during this period. The start of 2026 has been exceptionally wet – with a strong and unusually southerly jet stream bringing frequent rain, strong winds and wintry hazards. The south west of England has been particularly battered, experiencing 216 millimetres of rainfall so far – 184% of the long-term average for this time of the year.
- 17 February 2026: [River Action launches legal challenge, accusing NRW of "washing its hands" of intensive poultry pollution](#): From River Action: "We

have launched a judicial review challenging Natural Resources Wales (NRW) approval of three expanded poultry farms in Powys, accusing the regulator of 'washing its hands' of manure pollution by taking an unlawfully narrow view of its powers. The case focuses on whether NRW is properly using its role as environmental regulator to prevent pollution from intensive farming or whether responsibility is being passed to others while Welsh river catchments such as the Wye and the Severn continue to deteriorate."

- 16 February 2026: [Riverfly surveys continue to make progress](#): Impressive results in the latest report from the Riverfly Partnership. 2025 saw no fewer than 10,443 approved surveys, including 632 from BART and 631 from ARK, the top two surveying groups this year.
- 16 February 2026: [Why does the Beane turn brown after heavy rain?](#): A question people often ask of their local rivers, neatly and concisely answered by the River Beane Restoration Association.
- 15 February 2026: [Rivers and other green issues set to be major election issue](#): From filthy rivers to the threat of flooding, Wales is facing "mounting environmental crises on multiple fronts", campaigners have warned in advanced of the forthcoming election campaign. Friends of the Earth Cymru said a "stark gap" was developing between the public's desire for action on pollution and what politicians were proposing.
- 15 February 2026: [Sewage spills in London and South East worse than ever this year](#): Almost 80,000 hours of sewage spills have been recorded by Thames Water this year as Britain's sewerage network is overwhelmed by the ongoing wet weather, according to a report from Lucie Heath in The I.

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Estuary Restoration Officer: Wyre Rivers Trust](#) (16 March 2026)
- [Chief Executive Officer: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (15 March 2026)
- [Senior Project Manager: Major Projects \(Saltmarsh\)/Severn Estuary: WWT](#) (12 March 2026)
- [Project Manager - River Enhancement: Aire Rivers Trust](#) (9 March 2026)

- [Catchment Partnerships Manager: Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust](#) (8 March 2026)
- [Water Resources Specialist: Severn Trent Water](#) (8 March 2026)
- [Senior Project Officer \(South London\): South East Rivers Trust](#) (8 March 2026)
- [26-week Internship: Galloway Fisheries Trust](#) (6 March 2026)
- [Catchment Advisor: The Wye and Usk Foundation](#) (6 March 2026)
- [Project Officer \(South London\): South East Rivers Trust](#) (1 March 2026)
- [Project Officer \(West Region\): South East Rivers Trust](#) (1 March 2026)
- [Senior River Engagement Officer - Lead Inspiring Programmes for People and Rivers: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (1 March 2026)
- [Beachwatch Assistant: Marine Conservation Society](#) (1 March 2026)
- [Freelance Opportunities - River Learning and Engagement Officer: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (No closing date given)
- [Fundraising and Marketing Manager: River Thames Boat Project](#) (27 February 2026)
- [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)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees: Devon Wildlife Trust](#) (22 February 2026)

Other opportunities

The Rivers Trust has a useful page of [current vacancies](#) with the various trusts, including voluntary posts and openings for trustees.

River of the week



River Cleddau, Pembrokeshire – Well done to the runners promoting Rivers at Risk with their 50-km journey along the River Cleddau to the sea. Photo © [M J Roscoe](#) originally published on [Geograph](#) under a [Creative Commons \(CC-BY-2.0\)](#) licence.

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