

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –29/6/26

June 2026

- 26 June 2026: [The 'failing' river pollution crackdown - with just 1 in 1,000 cases prosecuted](#): In The I Paper, river champion Lucie Heath explores the Environment Agency's record on prosecuting farm pollution: "New rules meant to stop farms polluting Britain's waterways have led to only nine convictions and fines as low as £137". While it's true that the enforcement and prosecution record is unimpressive, the Agency counters that it "carried out over 19,000 farm inspections and nearly 20,000 improvement actions have been completed by farmers, with the vast majority bringing themselves into compliance without us having to take further action". But the state of our rivers speaks for itself, as Heath points out: "The majority (84 per cent) of water bodies in England are failing to meet ecological health standards... Around 40 per cent of these are failing at least in part due to agricultural pollution..." And more than a few people will be wondering why the Agency has time to threaten community river groups with prosecution (see below), but not chase up egregious farm pollution.
- 26 June 2026: [Urgent calls made to protect West Wales rivers](#): Campaigners from across Ceredigion and north Pembrokeshire are calling for urgent government action to protect the area's rivers. Representatives from river groups will meet on Monday, June 29, to propose and discuss actions with new Senedd member Anna Nichols. Groups representing the Teifi, Cleddau, Nanhfer and Gwaun rivers will be joined by farming union representatives at the session in Haverfordwest.
- 26 June 2026: [BART calls for help to measure river health](#): People are being invited to join a community effort to measure the health of rivers and streams in the Downend area. Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) runs the annual Bristol Avon RiverBlitz, which this year is taking place from July 25 to August 2.
- 25 June 2026: [Buglife: New data on insect pollinators shows dramatic decline in hoverflies](#): New Official Statistics on insect pollinators have

been published from the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) during Insect Week 2026. The data collected every year across Great Britain (GB) between 2017 and 2024 show a mixed picture for pollinators across the survey methods and a wide range of insect groups, with hoverflies declining by around a third in both their abundance and number of species recorded during this time, signalling possible risks to the health of our ecosystems.

- 24 June 2026: [Dorset River Stour - concerns raised after children fall ill swimming](#): Concerns over water quality have been raised following reports of children being hospitalised after swimming in a river. North Dorset and Mid Poole MP Vikki Slade has spoken out after a young boy reportedly developed flu-like symptoms and blurred vision after entering the River Stour near Canford School.
- 24 June 2026: [CPRE 'Running Out' conference explores growing demands on land use](#): CPRE hosted a conference in London this week, gathering policymakers, farmers, planners and researchers to confront the growing pressures on England's land and explore what joined-up thinking could make possible. According to the charity, "England is losing countryside at an alarming rate with 17,000 hectares [42,000 acres] lost to development every year. At the same time, finite land is expected to grow food, restore nature, support new homes, generate clean energy and help communities adapt to climate change".
- 25 June 2026: [Environment Agency "sets the record straight" on the River Roding?](#): Following the news that the Environment Agency has threatened Paul Powlesland and The River Roding Trust with prosecution for "remedial work" on their river, we now have a public clarification in the Agency's blog: "To be clear, no decision has been made to prosecute the River Roding Trust. The Environment Agency has issued a warning to the trust following an investigation into unpermitted work carried out at Alders Brook in Ilford [which].... damaged wildlife habitats, and led to the spread of invasive species Japanese knotweed, due to a failure to follow biosecurity protocols". These sound like very fair points. But while we can understand the Agency's concerns ("we would not be fulfilling our statutory role if such work were to proceed without the appropriate environmental permit in place"), the idea that "warning letters were a proportionate response on this occasion, recognising the trust's genuine commitment to improving the local environment" seems utterly ill-judged. What sort of a message does it send to voluntary, community river champions if you threaten them with *prosecution*? Sadly, its likely to reinforce the perception that the Agency is massively out-of-touch with

public opinion and ill-suited to the daunting task of turning our lifeless, filthy rivers around, which requires a huge team effort and empowered community engagement.

- 24 June 2026: [Stephan Desouches: Meet The designer behind the Rivers Trust's stunning new merch!](#): Graphic designer Stephan Desouches recently joined The Rivers Trust to help create some bold new designs for their teeshirt store; in a new blog post, he talks us through his creative process: "Having worked in watershed protection, environmental regulation, and natural resource enforcement, I've seen firsthand how critical healthy rivers are - not only for wildlife and ecosystems, but for the people and communities that depend on them".
- 24 June 2026: [Burnham's blueprint to seize control of sewage-dumping water firms](#): According to The I: 'Andy Burnham's allies are drawing up plans to seize control of England's sewage-dumping water companies – using the model that returned Pariss water to public ownership. The blueprint aims to bring the utility firms back under public control, cut household bills and tackle the pollution scandal that has fouled the nation's waterways. The newly elected Makerfield MP launched a scathing attack on 'profiteering' water companies during his campaign to win the by-election for the constituency, arguing that dividend payments to shareholders should instead be used to lower consumer costs". But Burnham will need to overcome intense pressure from the Treasury, and failing water-company creditors, who have doggedly resisted repeated calls for public ownership with bogus claims about "nationalisation" (not the only public-ownership model on the table) costing £100 billion.
- 24 June 2026: [Worldview: A river crisis is unfolding in the American West](#): A great, indepth article in National Geographic looks at growing pressures on one of the United States' iconic rivers: "There is not enough water flowing in the Colorado River to meet the needs of the seven U.S. states and two Mexican states that rely on it. The river has been struggling for decades. This summer could bring it to the brink, threatening endangered wildlife and communities".
- 24 June 2026: [Fears for East Anglian rivers as flows 'exceptionally low'](#): A recent Environment Agency report found the rivers Yare, Bure, Wissey, Ely Ouse, Waveney and Wissey, which flow through parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, were all at "exceptionally low" levels. Only two waterways in East Anglia - the Heacham and Burn in west Norfolk - have normal flows following a period of prolonged dry weather.
- 24 June 2026: [Warnings of the dangers of river beaches](#): Rescue crews along the River Severn are warning that "river beaches" (stretches of river

bank that resemble sandy beaches) can quickly turn deadly, with hidden dangers including fast-moving tides, unstable sand and cold water shock. Matt Davies, from the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), said people are being caught out by conditions that can change in minutes: "It looks like we have a beach on our doorstep, but people don't understand the tides and they put themselves into extreme danger".

- 24 June 2026: [Balsam bashing volunteers clearing invasive plant from Shropshire](#): A group of volunteers in north Shropshire have said they are determined to get rid of an invasive plant which has taken root along their river. River Perry Water Watch, based in Baschurch, is pulling up Himalayan balsam from their riverbanks, one of the most widespread and common invasive plants that are not native to the United Kingdom.
- 24 June 2026: [WildFish: Why we are calling for farmed salmon to be banished from The Traitors breakfast table](#): The WildFish Off The Table campaign is calling on the BBC and its production company - Studio Lambert - to banish farmed salmon from the breakfast table of its hit series, The Traitors. An iconic, much anticipated feature of the show is the morning ritual around the breakfast table, with the buffet itself well known for drawing attention from viewers. But, nestled amongst the pastries and fruit, a real traitor to Scotland's environment lurks: farmed salmon.
- 23 June 2026: [Greenpeace tells PM: "If your government won't protect our seas, we will"](#): Greenpeace UK has today announced its intention to create new underwater boulder barriers in UK Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). A decade after the EU vote, the charity, backed by a raft of celebrities and ocean conservation organisations, has accused the government of failing to use its post-EU powers to properly protect UK seas from destructive industrial fishing.
- 20 June 2026: [Wildlife Trusts champion nature-friendly farming at Groundswell](#): What has been achieved since the "Scale of Need" report made its stark warning to the Treasury about the levels of funding required by the sector? What can butterflies tell us about the health of a hedge? How do you graze a water meadow? And whats next for the future of farming? These questions and many more will be debated at Groundswell, with input from leading experts and those on the frontline of the nature-friendly farming.
- 20 June 2026: [Archaeology: River Wear cauldron could be only one found in Britain](#): An iron cauldron lying in a river bank could be "the only one ever found in a British river", an underwater archaeologist has said. The

finding was made in the River Wear at Offerton, near Sunderland, next to a large Roman factory which was discovered previously.

- 20 June 2026: [WildFish: The invasion of UK rivers and the SmartRivers volunteers monitoring from the frontline](#): SmartRivers volunteers are arming themselves with data to combat the aggressive non-native species that are disrupting the delicate natural balance of our freshwater environment. The information collected can be used to inform local conservation efforts and help reduce the impact of these disrupters on our rivers' natural rhythm.
- 20 June 2026: [River Action: Government Publishes Its Vision for Farming](#): River Action has welcomed the Government's recognition that restoring nature and producing food must go hand-in-hand. The Farming Roadmap rightly acknowledges that healthy rivers, soils and ecosystems are fundamental to resilient food production, and its emphasis on nature-friendly farming represents an important step in the right direction. However, River Action argues this vision will only succeed if it is reflected consistently across government policy. Plans that enable further expansion of intensive livestock production, particularly in already polluted catchments, undermine the very objectives the roadmap sets out to achieve.
- 17 June 2026: [UK backs communities on the ocean's front line with £13.9 million investment](#): Ocean ecosystems will be protected and resilience increased in some of the world's most climate-vulnerable coastal communities thanks to £13.9 million UK investment in new funding, Marine Minister Emma Hardy announced today at the eleventh Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa, Kenya.
- 12 June 2026: [Performance politics and the Thames Water scandal](#): Oxford University economist Professor Dieter Helm has just published another compelling "episode" in his ongoing analysis of the failed water industry: "If the current government survives through to 2029, Thames will be very much up there as part of its legacy -- unless, at this last moment, the government reasserts the importance of independent regulation, ensures that there is an SAR [Special Administration Regime], and gets Thames broken up and passed into the hands of new owners who can get on with that ever-elusive 'turnaround plan' promised in December 2023".
- 2 June 2026: [UNEP: Restoring the salmon: what lessons can we learn from Canada?](#): Indigenous and local communities are at the heart of an initiative called "Respectful Returns" that was developed in 2010 by Parks Canada, collaborating with these communities and other partners to restore wild salmon populations in rivers and streams in seven national

parks along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Canada. By addressing the habitat degradation and over-exploitation that have pushed various species toward extinction, Respectful Returns has seen wild populations of the fish increase in six of the seven areas -- giving hope that both the ecosystems, and the cultural heritage that they represent, can be secured for future generations.

- 1 June 2026: [ICYMI: Why rivers are important for everything from biodiversity to wellbeing](#): This week, I happened to re-read Graham Lawton's excellent celebratory review of rivers from New Scientist in 2023; if you missed it first time around, it's worth a look.

[More news...](#)

Events this month

- 6 June to 27 September: [Rivers4Life Exhibition](#): Join the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust for their Rivers4Life exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Rivers4Life runs daily until 27 September 2026, open 10am–4pm, seven days a week.
- Friday 12 June to Sunday 5 July 2026: [Malmesbury River Festival](#): A brand new river festival in Wiltshire!
- Wednesday 24 June to Sunday 28 June 2026: [Paddle UK SUPER Festival and the ICF SUP World Cup](#): Set against the turquoise waters and sheltered bays of Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham, this five-day celebration of stand-up paddle boarding brings together elite athletes, community paddlers, and newcomers ready to try something new.
- Thursday 25 June to Friday 26 June 2026: [FBA Pond Restoration Training](#): Ponds are increasingly being recognised as critical to biodiversity conservation in UK landscapes. This two-day course will introduce participants to pond restoration science and best practice.

[More events...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [River Restoration Operations Manager: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [River Restoration Team Operative: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)

- [Director, Central Team: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Public Affairs and Water Policy Officer: The Wildlife Trusts](#) (12 July 2026)
- [Senior Project Officer - New Forest: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (8 July 2026)
- [Farm Environment Adviser: Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West](#) (6 July 2026)
- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Manager: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (5 July 2026)
- [Communications and Marketing Officer: South East Rivers Trust](#) (5 July 2026)
- [Catchment Restoration Officer - Warwickshire Avon Catchment: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (5 July 2026)
- [Project Administrator, Headstart: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (3 July 2026)
- [Catchment Officer: West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (30 June 2026)
- [Landscapes Recovery Manager: Herts Wildlife Trust](#) (1 July 2026)
- [Consultancy and Development Manager: Norfolk Rivers Trust](#) (29 June 2026)
- [Specialist Lead - Monitoring and Evidence: South East Rivers Trust](#) (29 June 2026)
- [Fisheries Specialist: South East Rivers Trust](#) (29 June 2026)
- [Senior River and Fisheries Officer: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [River and Fisheries Project Officer: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Specialist Lead - Natural Flood Management \(NFM\): South East Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Catchment Officer: South East Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Senior Farm Advisor: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Project Officer – Woodlands: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Aquatic Species Officer: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (28 June 2026)
- [Technical Programme Manager, Headstart: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (26 June 2026)
- [Head of Flood Support: National Flood Forum](#) (24 June 2026)
- [Principal Research Officer, Wetland Science: WWT](#) (24 June 2026)
- [Project Officer \(Commons\): West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (24 June 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustee \(accounting skills\): Aire Rivers Trust](#) (N/A)
- [Trustee: Somerset Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July)

- [Volunteer Educational Activities Assistant: WWT Martin Mere](#) (Burscough, Lancashire, N/A)
- [Learning and Engagement Volunteer: West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (N/A)

Other opportunities

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

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