

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –20/7/26

July 2026

- 16 July 2026: [Protecting our rare 'Amazonian' chalk streams - in Wiltshire and beyond](#): The UK is home to 85% of the world's chalk streams but there are concerns about their future, with the usual threats to rivers hanging over them, including pollution. The BBC went to Langford Lakes nature reserve in Wiltshire, home to the River Wylye chalk stream, to find out more about local support for protections.
- 16 July 2026: [Southern Water admits polluting sensitive stream](#): Southern Water has admitted causing a pollution incident which sent a dark plume of sewage four miles (6.5km) along a sensitive Hampshire chalk stream. The Environment Agency (EA) said the company allowed "potent amounts of suspended solids and iron" into the River Test near Stockbridge in March 2023.
- 16 July 2026: [Newton Abbot salmon lifeline planned as £400k River Lemon scheme unveiled](#): A £400,000 scheme to remove a "crumbling" weir on the River Lemon in Newton Abbot could open up almost 50 miles of spawning habitat for endangered salmon. The proposed removal of Bradley Manor weir was outlined to Newton Abbot Town Council's Community Engagement Group during a meeting at Newton's Place on July.
- 16 July 2026: [How cities are turning their polluted rivers into swimming havens](#): National Geographic has an update this week on the ever-growing Swimmable Cities campaign: "Paris is just one of many cities in Europe that has fought to make their waterways swimmable again."



Copenhagen, Basel, Zurich, Bern, and Oslo have all spent years improving their sewage management systems, creating stormwater infrastructure, and implementing policies to better control water pollution. Their efforts have been largely successful, with city-dwellers across the continent returning to their waters in throes".

- 15 July 2026: [Burnham urged to drop 'flawed' plans that may let developers bypass environment laws for £1](#): Allowing firms to dodge biodiversity protections by paying into levy will harm nature and economy, say 100 experts in a joint letter.
- 15 July 2026: [Teigngrace: The campaign that saved Devon's rivers Teign and Bovey!](#): Twenty-nine years ago this week, a dawn swoop by a group of determined eco activists led to one of the defining victories of the naughty nineties. A deeply flawed plan to "relocate" the Rivers Teign and Bovey to make way for an expanded clay quarry in the village of Teigngrace, near Newton Abbot, found itself undercut by a fleet-footed campaign fuelled by optimism... and chocolate cake!
- 15 July 2026: [Northern Ireland: 'I looked into the river and saw all these dead fish'](#): Fisherman and wildlife photographer Plunket Scullion knew something was seriously wrong when he discovered hundreds of dead fish in his local river. A slurry spill had polluted the water creating what was described at the time as a "dead zone". It was just one of 65 separate pollution incidents in rivers and waterways that have killed more than 50,000 fish in the last five years, mostly in counties Armagh, Tyrone and Fermanagh.
- 14 July 2026: [The sewage-filled chalk stream where pollution is 100 times above target](#): A local sewage plant is being blamed for a spike in the level of phosphates in the River Cam in eastern England, as Anglian Water said it had switched off technology designed to filter out the nutrient, citing difficulties transporting the necessary chemicals.
- 13 July 2026: [Wildlife Trusts: "New UK Government delivery plan offers no credible plan to bring wildlife back"](#): The plan should set out how government intends to meet its commitment to protect and manage 30% of England's land for nature by 2030 (30 by 30) - yet falls short of showing how they will deliver this for nature on the ground.
- 13 July 2026: [Worldview: A journey down one of the last wild rivers in the American west](#): The Guardian takes a trip down the Yampa River, a tributary of the Colorado River facing unprecedented pressure.
- 13 July 2026: [Heatwaves Remind Us Why Healthy Rivers Matter More Than Ever](#): Simon Hunter, CEO, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, explains why "river restoration isn't simply about conservation. It's about building resilience".

- 13 July 2026: [The Rivers Trust: What do we really mean when we talk about nature-based solutions?](#): "Nature-based solutions" (NbS) is a phrase you hear more and more in conversations about climate, water and infrastructure. It sounds intuitive - but it can also feel a bit vague. So, what do we actually mean when we use it? The Rivers Trust's Tessa Wardly explains.
- 13 July 2026: [Growing Ideas: Our Visit to a Regenerative Agriculture Festival](#): Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust explains the rivery benefits of regenerative agriculture, among many exciting developments on display at last week's Groundswell farming festival.
- 12 July 2026: [More chicken megafarms spell bad news for rivers](#): The poultry industry is planning a major expansion of factory farms across England, creating new hotspots for air and river pollution. A joint investigation by The i Paper and investigative journalism outlet Grilled has found there are plans to build at least 600 new chicken sheds in response to new supermarket welfare standards.
- 12 July 2026: [Defra cuts halt peatland restoration in Lakes and Yorkshire – while South gets funding](#): Projects to boost biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions across places including the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Dartmoor are being cancelled as the Government cuts funding for peatland restoration.
- 12 July 2026: [Cam Valley Forum: Welcoming the hosepipe ban](#): River groups can play a big part in championing wiser water use. This week, the Cam Valley Forum has welcomed Cambridge Water's decision to introduce the first hosepipe ban in more than 30 years, having long campaigned for the company to use the tool in periods of drought.
- 4 July 2026: [This is where children aren't learning to swim - and why that needs to change](#): Finally, blinkered news reports about summer swimming deaths in open waters are turning into a more practical, constructive debate. Former Olympic swimmer Baroness Sharon Davies is among those pointing out that there is a likely link between deaths from drowning and the trend toward the steady closure of local authority swimming pools.
- 4 July 2026: [Scotland's "Working with Rivers" interns are tomorrow's river stars in the making!](#): Here's an inspiring update from some of the young people learning their craft through Scotland's Working with Rivers Internships in 2026, which offers hands-on experience in working with rivers – particularly in river restoration, natural flood management, control of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and riparian woodland creation.

- 2 July 2026: [The Walcot Wiggle: a landmark river restoration project in the Shropshire Hills](#): A major restoration project has restored a long-straightened section of the River Kemp by reconnecting it with its floodplain in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. By restoring natural meanders and reconnecting the river with its floodplain, the Walcot Wiggle will improve water quality, create wildlife-rich habitats and help the landscape become more resilient to climate change.
- 1 July 2026: [Britain's rivers are trapped in a cycle of pollution, broken promises and disappointment - who will finally stand up for our waterways?](#): River Action's Emma Popplewell concludes: "Until somebody is prepared to use the law, hold polluters to account and put public health and nature ahead of institutional buck-passing, Britain's rivers will remain trapped in a cycle of pollution, broken promises and disappointment". That certainly feels like it's part of the solution. But the long-term answer isn't hoping for distant white knights ("someone else") to put things right, or not, as the government of the day dictates: it's continuing to work for a steady change in the culture that will see heavily invested, heavily empowered local communities taking ownership, fighting for their river rights, and being prepared to do that forever. Who will finally stand up for our waterways? Ultimately, we must do that ourselves.
- 1 July 2026: [UK rivers face rising risk of climate 'whiplash'](#): Climate change could push UK rivers to dangerous extremes and see more frequent rapid swings between wet and dry conditions – a phenomenon known as hydroclimatic whiplash – according to research led by the University of East Anglia (UEA). Researchers analysed almost 700 river catchments across the UK to project how river flows may change at two and four degrees of global warming. The results reveal stark regional contrasts and growing challenges for communities and water managers trying to plan for flood and drought risk – particularly in areas that will increasingly experience both.
- 1 July 2026: [MCS: Positive ocean news: June '26 edition](#): Here's a summary of recent, uplifting ocean news from the Marine Conservation Society.

[More news...](#)

Events in July

- 13-17 July: [Royal Swan Upping](#): The charming, historic annual swan census on the Thames.

- 18-19 July: [Bedford River Festival](#): The ever-popular Bedford River Festival returns for a spectacular weekend of entertainment, activities, and community celebration.
- 20 July to 7 September 2026: [Being a River](#): a series of five creative workshops exploring art, place, colour and connection in and around the riverside environment of Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- 25 July: [Maidstone River Festival](#): "We have dressed up boats, raft races, fun and games for all the family. There will be illuminated boats and paddle boarders in the evening and it will all end with a big bang the award-winning Firmin Family Fireworks Spectacular display which will go off from the top of Fremlin Walk in the town centre."
- 25 July: [Linslade Canal Festival](#): This one-day event is all about celebrating canal life, conservation, the countryside, and the charm of traditional rural crafts.
- 25-26 July: [St Neots Regatta](#): A river rowing regatta on the Ouse.
- 25 July-2 August: [Bristol Avon RiverBlitz](#): Community citizen science in the West Country with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART).
- 6 June-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 from 6 June to 27 September 2026, open 10am–4pm, seven days a week.

[More events...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Officer: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (23 August 2026)
- [Ecological Data Officer: Yorkshire Water](#) (21 August 2026)
- [Rivers Officer: Chilterns National Landscape](#) (10 August 2026)
- [Marine Policy and Campaigns Officer: Community of Arran Seabed Trust](#) (7 August 2026)
- [Severn and Wye Nature Programme Manager: Shropshire Wildlife Trust](#) (3 August 2026)
- [Project Officer Hull and East Riding: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#) (2 August 2026)
- [Ecologist / Senior Ecologist: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (31 July 2026)
- [Programme Administrator, Central Area Regional Programme: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (29 July 2026)
- [Principal or Senior Hydroecologist: Severn Trent Water](#) (27 July 2026)
- [Project Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)

- [Catchment Restoration Project Manager: Bristol Avon Rivers Trust \(BART\)](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Programme Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Marine Policy Officer: Marine Conservation Society](#) (22 July 2026)
- [Project Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Senior Waterways and Wetlands Officer: London Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July 2026)
- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Manager: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July 2026)
- [River Restoration Operations Manager: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [River Restoration Team Operative: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [Water Vole Recovery Project Officer: Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [River Project Officer: ARK, the Rivers Trust for the Kennet and Pang Catchments](#) (19 July 2026)
- [NCP GIS and Data Support Officer: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Head of Campaigns \(Maternity Cover\): River Action](#) (19 July 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustee: National Flood Forum](#) (7 August)
- [Trustee: Somerset Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July)
- [Trustee \(accounting skills\): Aire Rivers Trust](#) (N/A)
- [Volunteer Educational Activities Assistant: WWT Martin Mere](#) (Burscough, Lancashire, N/A)
- [Trustees × 2: Costwolds Rivers Trust](#) (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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