

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –27/7/26

July 2026

25 July 2026: [National Fishing Month is here again!](#): Rivers may be suffering in the heat, but, that apart, it's the perfect time to try fishing for the first time or blow the dust off your old rods in the annual, month-long celebration running until the end of August.

- 25 July 2026: [Riverfly Writers Call Out](#): Estuary Festival is seeking four creative writers to work alongside river monitoring initiatives in four locations, Minster (Kent), Mayland (Essex), Coldfairgreen (Suffolk) and Ingoldisthorpe (Norfolk), over the course of a year. Embedded within the Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (a citizen science effort tracking freshwater health) each writer will follow the activities of local volunteers to inform a creative response to the biodiversity and environmental stories uncovered. The final written works produced by each writer will be published together in a beautifully designed digital publication to be published by Estuary Festival and shared widely.
- 25 July 2026: [Rare heron seen at Somerset estate where river has been allowed to run free](#): Another confirmation of the benefits of letting rivers "take their course".
- 25 July 2026: [WildFish: The Soil Association's approval of "organic" salmon farms is a mistake](#): A stinging rebuke from WildFish: "Some activities are just wrong. One of them is the Soil Association's certification of some farmed salmon as organic. Something it has been doing now for 20 years. The Soil Association is carrying out a much-delayed review of its UK organic salmon standards. It is now due to hold a 'witness session' with industry figures and campaigners later this month, before announcing a final decision in October. If the Soil Association insists on seeking to certify the industrial farming of salmon as organic it should immediately ban the use of inorganic chemicals and cleaner fish and provide total transparency over its certification process. However, we can probably

expect a lot of weasel words about working with the industry to improve practices and little real progress".

- 25 July 2026: [Almost 75% of England's riverbanks 'off limits' to public, figures show](#): Almost three-quarters of riverbanks in England have no public access, according to data released by the Right to Roam campaign. Across the country, the public cannot use riverbanks or gain access to the rivers themselves in most of the river catchments from the west of Cornwall up to the Tweed, which flows through northern England and Scotland.
- 24 July 2026: [Why Rivers Matter: Reflections from the Rivers4Life Exhibition](#): Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust reflect on their public celebration of rivers at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes, which runs until September.
- 24 July 2026: [Four new ways to join Trent Rivers Trust](#): It's hiring time in the Midlands, where Trent Rivers Trust is seeking an Operations Director, an Environment and Farming Advisor (Maternity Cover), a Nature-based Solutions Manager, and a GIS Technical Project Officer.
- 23 July 2026: [Besieged by lobbyists, will UK ministers protect our ecosystems? No, they'll chicken out](#): Long-time river-champion George Monbiot draws on one of his favourite themes (corporate capture) and takes Emma Reynolds to task in a warning about the impacts of past, present, and future chicken farm pollution - notably, a major threat to the River Wye.
- 23 July 2026: [Drilling for water: QWAG probes Lewisham Hospital's heat pump plan](#): Heat pumps are great, right? Yes, but we should still consider their environmental effects: they remove heat from the earth or something like a river or lake (in winter) or dump it back there (in summer). Quaggy Waterways Action Group recently started digging into the potential impact of a local ground-source heat pump on rivers and aquifers, during construction and operation.
- 22 July 2026: [Most sewage spills in England may be illegal, new research suggests](#): WASP's Prof Peter Hammond is back in the news this week with a new analysis suggesting "on average, 87 per cent of the spills happened when rainfall was below 25mm and could therefore be classed as illegal". The Environment Agency contests that claim with the almost hilariously inappropriate rebuttal: "Monitoring is in place across every storm overflow in England, so there is nowhere for poor performance to hide".
- 22 July 2026: [Eden Rivers Trust plan to bash another million balsam](#): Not content with removing a million Himalayan balsam plants already this

year, Eden Rivers Trust has just doubled its target and is putting out another call to volunteers who can help during July and August.

- 22 July 2026: [Burnham has forced greater clarity at Thames Water. Now he must choose](#): Threats to put Thames Water into special administration have brought new concessions from the beleaguered company... but what will Burnham do next? Apparently, he's cooling on earlier suggestions he might nationalize (which, it now seems, may simply have been a negotiating tactic): there is [no immediate plan to take over Thames Water](#).
- 22 July 2026: [Ex-Southern Water boss among four charged over alleged plan to manipulate water tests](#): The ex-chief executive of Southern Water has been charged with three others over an alleged plan to manipulate water quality tests to avoid paying financial penalties of about £45m.
- 21 July 2026: [River Carron: back from the brink](#): I recently discovered this set of uplifting videos on the River Carron Conservation Association's website, featuring "lead scientist Bob Kindness MBE and Ian Gordon on the decline of salmon, the impact on rural economies, why native populations matter, what constitutes the tipping point and what can be done to help".
- 21 July 2026: [National Drought Group steps up response after third heatwave](#): The recent extreme weather is having a severe impact on our environment and affecting water supplies and food production, the National Drought Group heard yesterday. A lack of July rainfall, combined with the heat, is also putting pressure on public supplies, with demand for water soaring up to 30% on the hottest days. Seven water companies have now implemented or announced future temporary use bans for 23 million customers to protect the environment and reduce the strain on their treatment works and storage during peak demand. Farmers have had to begin their harvests early, with warnings that cereal yields will be lower than expected.
- 21 July 2026: [Not enough water for UK's datacentre plans, trade body says](#): The ever-growing environmental impact of ever-expanding data centres is causing new concerns for water companies. Why, when they can be located pretty much anywhere, would we want them clustered in the overheated, water-stressed South East?
- 21 July 2026: ['Recycle more sewage' for water - revisited](#): Looking back through our fascinating three decades of news archives, I discovered this gem from 2006, where a report by the Institution of Civil Engineers called for a 20% rise in water prices to fund improved supply and suggested "Britain should tackle future droughts by recycling more sewage effluent

as drinking water". This enormously promising idea, which never seems to get any traction, was roundly poo-pooed (no pun intended) by water companies. BBC News noted at the time: "The Institution of Civil Engineers' chairman, Gordon Masterton, said there would be a "huge shortfall" in around 20 years "if we do nothing at all about securing our water supplies".

- 19 July 2026: [Wessex Water chief pockets above-inflation pay rise despite bonus ban over sewage spills](#): Another week, another scandal about overpaid water executives. According to The Guardian: "Ruth Jefferson received a 14% base salary increase in October, from £590,000 to £670,000, before other benefits, according to accounts published this month. It was far above the 3.5% given to workers, and put her pay at 18 times that of the [Malaysian-owned] company's median employee".
- 19 July 2026: ["River restoration is a patriotic act"](#): Aimee Felus, Western Sussex Rivers Trust CEO, explains why she spends her life championing rivers.
- 19 July 2026: [Have your say on the future of Wales' freshwater](#): Friends of the River Wye argue "this consultation could not be more timely. Despite decades of regulation, the river continues to suffer from agricultural and sewage pollution, declining wildlife and repeated failures to meet environmental standards".
- 18 July 2026: [Greenpeace: Leaky pipes waste five times more water than hosepipe bans save](#): Water firms in England and Wales are wasting around five times more water through leaky pipes than a nationwide hosepipe ban could save, a Greenpeace UK analysis of official figures reveals. The findings come as millions of households face new restrictions on their water use following a prolonged spell of hot and dry weather. While this intervention from Greenpeace is very welcome and timely, it mustn't divert attention from the pressing need to manage demand: all of us need to use water more wisely.
- 24 June 2026: [Are swans dangerous when swimming?](#): Daniel Start, one of the best known advocates of "wild swimming", found out the answer the hard way: "I used to be pretty blase about swans, but a few days ago a serene afternoon dip turned into a trip to A and E, stitches to my head and a CT scan and I have a newfound respect for them". The problem is that a swimmer's body is mostly underwater, so a threatened swan sees a deceptively small and very easy target. Start offers some practical advice on what to do if you're attacked.

[More news...](#)

Events in July

- 17 July-9 August: [Butterfly Conservation: Big Butterfly Count](#): A nationwide citizen science survey aimed at helping Butterfly Conservation assess the health of our environment. It was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies.
- 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.

Saturday 25 July to Monday 31 August 2026: [National Fishing Month](#): A month-long celebration of British angling. Perfect for lapsed anglers and those keen to start, with friendly events all over the UK.

- 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 River Blitz](#): 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

- [Water Champion - Parishes and Communities: Western Sussex Rivers Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Arctic Charr Project Manager: The Freshwater Biological Association](#) (24 August 2026)
- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Officer: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (23 August 2026)
- [Living Tees Development Manager: Tees Rivers Trust](#) (Rolling closing date)
- [Dartmoor Headwaters Officer - Natural Flood Management x4: Dartmoor National Park Authority](#) (23 August 2026)
- [Ecological Data Officer: Yorkshire Water](#) (21 August 2026)
- [Catchment Manager - River Ure: Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust](#) (21 August 2026)
- [General Manager: The Inland Waterways Association](#) (20 August 2026)
- [Geomorphologist: West Wales Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Rivers Officer: Chilterns National Landscape](#) (10 August 2026)
- [Farm Advisor / Senior Farm Advisor: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (9 August 2026)
- [Marine Policy and Campaigns Officer: Community of Arran Seabed Trust](#) (7 August 2026)
- [Senior Waterways and Wetlands Advisor: London Wildlife Trust](#) (5 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)
- [Project Ecologist - Species Recovery \(Somerset Bittern project\): Somerset Wildlife Trust](#) (31 July 2026)
- [Farm Advisor \(Nature Based Solutions\): The Rivers Trust \(Northern Ireland\)](#) (30 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)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

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