

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 10/8/26

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.

August 2026

- 7 August 2026: [Walking the Ribble Way!](#): Ribble Rivers Trust's Cody Beaghan takes us on a 72-mile journey along the Ribble Way, a captivating long-distance trail that traces the course of the River Ribble from its mouth near Preston all the way to its source in the stunning Yorkshire Dales.
- 7 August 2026: [Scottish ministers failing to meet legal duties, ESS finds](#): In June 2026, Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) published a report concluding that the Scottish Government failed to protect the seabed.
- 7 August 2026: [Could the UK ever run out of water?](#): Half of England and all of Wales are officially in drought. But what does this mean and could the UK's taps eventually run dry? Pippa Neill and Safeerah Ahmed investigate for The Guardian.
- 7 August 2026: [The 132 worst rivers in England for pollution... and the four that are clean](#): Precious chalk streams and rivers polluted by mining are among the water bodies that have been branded the worst in England following six years of extensive research by the Environment Agency (EA). The I expands on this week's horror story with its own analysis and an interactive map.
- 6 August 2026: [Using river water: what's permitted?](#): Cam Valley Forum's Anne Miller looks at how water abstraction works in her catchment... and why it can cause concerns.
- 6 August 2026: [What We Flush Away : Period Products](#): Paddler Bonnie Ireland reprises an all-too familiar complaint: "For many people, flushing period products can feel like the easiest option. It's quick, convenient and,

for generations, it has often been treated as normal. But the truth is that toilets are only designed for three things: pee, poo and toilet paper. Everything else becomes a problem somewhere down the line".

- 6 August 2026: [Paddler Spotlight: A Day on the Water with Roots of Resilience NW](#): Paddle UK looks at how a recent community paddlesports event at Lock 50 on the Rochdale Canal demonstrated the positive impact that accessible outdoor activities can have on confidence, wellbeing and community connection.
- 6 August 2026: [All bodies of water in England polluted with toxic chemicals, official data shows](#): This week's big story is no news at all: only around one in seven of Britain's surface waters are in "good" ecological condition, while no single waterway passed a separate test for chemical pollution. Meanwhile, the Environment Agency (see below) continues to spin the bad news.
- 6 August 2026: [Environment Agency: Still spinning good news from bad water quality](#): We've been pointing out the chasm between the Environment Agency's public statements on river/water quality and the reality for over 25 years. Back in 2011, we lobbied The Guardian's John Vidal to investigate, and he published two stories on the issue: [UK environment healthy? Beware the government spin](#) and [How the Environment Agency has spun the news on river quality](#). How depressing, then, to wind the clock forward 15 years and find much the same thing happening today. With widespread outrage at the continuing dire state of Britain's inland waters, the Environment Agency once again dares to deflect: "The underlying data shows 82% of individual ecological indicators are now Good or High demonstrating the underlying health of many waterways is encouraging even where overall classifications haven't shifted". There's the usual "smoke and mirrors" quibbling about statistical methods and datasets, which utterly misses the point: our rivers are in a hell of a mess. Alan Lovell, departing Chair of the Environment Agency, has quietly moved on from his former career as boss of construction company Costain, which saw him [publicly shamed](#) as an alleged eco-villain. In his new incarnation, he does at least concede: "We share the public's ambition for faster progress which is why we are transforming our enforcement work with better data, stronger powers and our largest ever enforcement workforce". So it's mere "ambition" that things might get better? Let's just remind ourselves how many times we have been here before. Way back in 2009, the news was that [three-quarters of rivers in England and Wales fall below a new European environmental standard](#) and a decade earlier, we learned from WWF that in the UK [most... rivers](#)

[and streams \[are\] severely degraded and no longer able to support significant wildlife](#). That was almost 30 years ago! Many have questioned Ofwat's fitness for purpose, but the same criticism applies equally to the Environment Agency. With its tiresome, excessively narrow focus on "statutory obligations"; its woefully relaxed attitude to enforcement; its hollow claim that rivers are getting better when, clearly, many have got a lot worse; and (most recently) its mind-boggling threat to prosecute a community river group, it has repeatedly fallen short of what the public expects and deserves from a "watchdog".

- 6 August 2026: ["I exposed the sewage crisis -- this is why water bosses aren't facing criminal charges"](#): The Environment Agency's (EA) prosecution of a former Southern Water CEO is for "publicity" and doesn't do enough to tackle current wrongdoing, a former employee who helped expose the sewage crisis claims. Robert Forrester, an Environment Agency whistleblower, points to the gradual decline in the number of pollution incidents being attended by the regulator and accusations that water companies were allowed to downgrade the severity of these incidents to avoid ramifications.
- 6 August 2026: [Archaeology: Historic slipway dig at Buckler's Hard enters river](#): An excavation of a slipway from the 18th Century where ships for Lord Nelson's fleet were built is continuing after the structure was first revealed last year. Buckler's Hard, the small hamlet in the New Forest where the slipway is located, was once home to one of the busiest private shipyards of the 1700s.
- 6 August 2026: [Plastic nurdle spill an 'environmental disaster'](#): A charity dedicated to protecting a river has called a spillage of plastic pellets into it an "environmental disaster". On 19 July tonnes of tiny beads, known as nurdles, entered the River Tyne when a vessel struck a shipping container in South Shields, with the Tyne Rivers Trust fearing the plastic could be in it for "years to come".
- 6 August 2026: [SAS: Northeast Nurdle Spill: What we're calling for](#): Surfers Against Sewage write: "This incident demands an urgent response. While the immediate priority must be containment and recovery of spilled material, it should also serve as a catalyst for stronger action to address the wider issue of plastic pellet pollution and microplastic contamination across the UK". Here's their analysis... and their plan for change.
- 6 August 2026: [Wildlife Trusts: Nature charity CEOs call out Kemi Badenoch's attack on Net Zero](#): In recent articles in the Telegraph, Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, has set out an approach to net zero that risks the future of British nature, despite the party promising

they care deeply about our wildlife and greenspaces. Leading nature charities are now urging Kemi Badenoch, alongside politicians of all parties, to urgently recognise the threat that climate change poses to nature, and the undeniable need to tackle these dual threats, including through efforts to reach net zero.

- 5 August 2026: [The water industry's answer to decades of failure? Weaken environmental law](#): From WildFish: "After years of under-investment, leaking infrastructure, sewage pollution and over-abstraction, the water industry now faces the enormous challenge of building new reservoirs, water transfers, recycling schemes and other infrastructure to secure future water supplies. That investment is desperately needed. Climate change, population growth and decades of political short-sightedness mean England is facing a growing water crisis. So, when Water UK (a trade association representing all of the water and wastewater companies across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland) publishes a report calling for faster delivery of water infrastructure, there should be much we agree with. Regulators should be properly resourced. Planning decisions should be timely. Government should provide strategic leadership and projects should not be trapped in endless administrative delays. But rather than asking how we can build infrastructure while protecting rivers and wildlife, the report repeatedly argues that environmental protections themselves are the problem".
- 4 August 2026: [Lakefly citizen science project set to continue as volunteers help shape the future of lake monitoring](#): The Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) has confirmed that its pioneering Lakefly citizen science project will continue, with volunteers across the UK playing a vital role in building the evidence needed to secure the project's long-term future.
- 4 August 2026: [Calls to ban 'toxic' pet flea treatments that harm UK wildlife and environment](#): Finally, the "pet treatment" story is getting serious media attention. Only a couple of years ago, anyone posting about this on social media risked an immediate caustic backlash from angry dog lovers.
- 4 August 2026: [UK plastic manufacturer could face legal action over toxic emissions](#): Water pollution comes from the air, as well as the land, so this week's Guardian report suggesting lax Environment Agency "regulation" of a benzene-emitting factory near Redcar is of much wider concern.
- 4 August 2026: [Water farce as firms lose 2.6bn litres a day... more than hosepipe bans save](#): Ministers have urged water companies to go "further

and faster" to tackle leaks after an i Paper analysis found 2.6 billion litres is being lost every day -- far more than hosepipe bans save.

- 4 August 2026: [River Wensum fading before our eyes, say campaigners](#): Campaigners who say they have witnessed a protected river suffer decades of decline fear for its future as a summer drought takes hold. Members of the Wensum Riverkin, a group campaigning to conserve Norfolk's River Wensum, say it is under increasing pressure from very low flows and pollution.
- 4 August 2026: [River Action: Big Chicken: the environmental costs of the UK's favourite meat](#): Amy Fairman at River Action considers the huge environmental impact of mega-chicken farms: "No river illustrates this better than the Wye. Over the past two decades, the catchment has become home to one of the highest concentrations of intensive poultry farming in the UK. The sheer number of birds has created a nutrient surplus that the landscape can no longer absorb, making the Wye a stark example of what happens when food production exceeds environmental limits. Around 23 million chickens are reared in the Wye catchment at any one time".
- 4 August 2026: [MCS: Positive ocean news: July '26 edition](#): Take a break from the doom and gloom with the Marine Conservations Society's uplifting monthly update.
- 4 August 2026: [How nature-friendly farmers are facing the drought](#): Farmers are certainly struggling at the moment, but forward planning after last year's waterless summer has offered some a little respite from the recent lack of rain.
- 1 August 2026: [YDRT July update](#): What's been happening with rivers up in the Yorkshire Dales? YDRT presents its July update.
- 1 August 2026: [A bird's eye view of drought in the Wye](#): Friends of the River Wye have been out with their drone recording the river in various locations to get a sense of how drought and climate change are affecting things. Their striking images capture just how low the water has become with the riverbed exposed in many places. The low flows and record high water temperatures are putting severe stress on fish populations throughout the catchment and encouraging the growth of unhelpful algae.

[More news...](#)

Events in August

- Until 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.
- 5 to 9 August 2026: [Llandysul Paddlers River Festival 2026](#): A month-long celebration of British angling. Perfect for lapsed anglers and those keen to start, with friendly events all over the UK.
- 8 August 2026: [Wye Float River and Music Festival](#): The UK's only music festival with a 2-mile inflatable river float adventure, all set in the heart of beautiful Hereford!
- 8 August 2026: [Cardigan River and Food Festival](#): Over the years this festival has grown in stature, and is now recognised as West Wales. premier food festival. The aim of the festival is to celebrate the River Teifi and the diversity of food grown or prepared in the area.
- Weekends until 16 August 2026: [Labyrinth on the Thames 2026](#): Unique within London's live music landscape, Labyrinth on the Thames brings internationally renowned artists to one of the capital's most iconic historic locations, creating an unforgettable open-air experience for music lovers.
- Until 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.
- Throughout August: [Thames 21 events](#): Hands-on London activities this month include "Urban Riverfly Training on the River Brent" (18/8), "Thames Road Wetland management" (21/8), "Foots Cray Meadows reedbed management" (26/8), "Isle of Dogs Clean Up" (30/8), and more.
- 26-28 August 2026: [Introduction to Conservation for 16-30 yr olds](#): Grow Wilder, Bristol. Do you want to get into conservation, learn more about nature and wildlife or meet like-minded people? Check outn this three-day course with Avon Wildlife Trust.
- Various events until 27 September 2026: [CARP Bewdley River Festival 2026](#): The Bewdley River Festival runs from 7 June to World Rivers Day on 27 September, a summer-long programme put on by Communities Against River Pollution, the local citizen science group working for a cleaner, healthier River Severn.
- Until 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.

- Until 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.
- Saturday 29 August 2026: [Eel Fest](#), Stonebridge Wild River Reserve, Marlborough: "Join us for some 'eely' good fun and a walk around the Wild River Reserve at Stonebridge Meadow to learn more about the creatures that live in the meadow and the River Kennet. Meet at Stonebridge Lane Footbridge, Marlborough, Wiltshire".

[More events...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Water Team Senior Project Manager: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (8 September 2026)
- [Farming for Water Agricultural Community Animator: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Water Team Senior Project Manager: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Water Champion - Parishes and Communities: Western Sussex Rivers Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Programme Manager: Water Company Partnership: Thames Rivers Trust](#) (30 August 2026)
- [Project Manager: Froglife \(Yorkshire\)](#) (24 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)
- [Agricultural Projects Officers: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (19 August 2026)

- [Evidence Project Officer: Thames21](#) (19 August 2026)
- [Nature-based Solutions Manager: Trent Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Environment and Farming Advisor: Trent Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Operations Director: Trent Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [GIS Technical Officer: Trent Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [River Restoration Officer: Thames21](#) (17 August 2026)
- [General Manager: The Inland Waterways Association](#) (20 August 2026)
- [Geomorphologist: West Wales Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Devon Beaver Field Officer \(Tamar and West\): Devon Wildlife Trust](#) (16 August 2026)
- [Catchment Partnership Manager: Mersey Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Senior Project Manager: Mersey Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Geomorphologist: West Wales Rivers Trust](#) (17 August 2026)
- [Wild Salmon Inshore Policy Manager: Fisheries Management Scotland](#) (14 August 2026)
- [Senior Officer People and Places, Fisheries: Natural Resources Wales](#) (12 August 2026)
- [Rivers Officer: Chilterns National Landscape](#) (10 August 2026)
- [Farm Advisor / Senior Farm Advisor: Lune Rivers Trust](#) (9 August 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees \(x2-3\): ClientEarth](#) (15 September)
- [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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