

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 17/8/26

- [Are you ready for The Big River Watch? It's nearly here!](#): From The Rivers Trust: "Twice a year, we call on everyone to spend 15 minutes observing their local river, answering a few questions about what you can see (from wildlife and water colour to signs of pollution) using the free Big River Watch survey app. All of this data helps us to get a clearer picture of river health across the UK and Ireland, identify issues and support our fight for cleaner waters. So far over 9,000 people have taken part in a Big River Watch, with the next one taking place between 6th-12th September".

August 2026

- 15 August 2026: [Why Are Rivers So Mathematical?](#): A fascinating article by science writer Natalie Wolchover in Quanta this week explains the maths and science behind the branching, tree-like structures of river systems.
- 13 August 2026: [How do you save fish suffocating in warm rivers? The Environment Agency has the solution](#): Sky News had a short (3 minute) video clip this week demonstrating how Agency staff are using electrofishing to trap and relocate fish imperilled by the heat.
- 13 August 2026: [Millions facing higher water bills... from firms losing 1.18bn litres a day to leaks](#): Nearly 25 million households are facing extra bill hikes from water firms losing more than a billion litres of water a day to leaks, analysis by The i Paper has found. River Action's Amy Fairman argues further bill rises are "an insult to water customers... For 30 years, where was the investment in our crumbling water infrastructure? Tens of billions went to investors while essential water and sewage works were neglected. We got leaks, pollution and soaring bills". But Water UK, the water-industry's umbrella group, counters: "Water companies have cut leakage by around 40% since privatisation and will reduce it by a further 17% by 2030. Almost £700 million is being invested to hit this target. In 2024-25 water companies in England and Wales repaired 45,383 burst

pipes. Companies have reduced leakage by 9% over the 2020-2025 period".

- 13 August 2026: [Hosepipe bans make climate change more tangible... but restrictions can provoke resistance](#): Hosepipe bans have prompted mixed reactions, but one unexpected benefit is the way they make climate change immediate, visible, and personal, according to Sayed Elhoushy of Queen Mary University of London: "A hosepipe ban succeeds where abstract messaging often fails, because it turns a distant risk into a visible, felt experience".
- 13 August 2026: [Drought officially declared in the Trent catchment](#): Trent Rivers Trust looks at the practical implications of continuing drought in the Midlands: "River flows have declined, with many sites in the East Midlands now classed as below normal, notably low or extremely low for the time of year".
- 12 August 2026: [Just 20 of 6,600 Defra staff working on climate adaptation amid drought and wildfires](#): More evidence that Britain is woefully underprepared for climate change was revealed by a Guardian freedom-of-information request this week: "Just 20 staff are working on climate adaptation... 0.3% of staff within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs".
- 12 August 2026: [Lords pile the pressure on river-risky pet treatments](#): There's been another step forward in the campaign to save rivers from pet treatments. From BugLife: "Last week the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee published an inquiry report investigating veterinary medicines and their impact. Paws for concern: pets, parasites and pollution (2026), concludes that the widespread routine use of pet parasite medications (PPMs) containing pesticides such as fipronil and imidacloprid is not supported by a sufficiently robust evidence base and poses an avoidable risk to the environment. The Committee found that these chemicals enter rivers and soils from treated pets, where they threaten aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, while significant gaps remain in understanding their full ecological and human health impacts. The report criticises weaknesses in the current regulatory system, including inadequate environmental risk assessments, poor data on product use, and the potential for regulatory capture. It recommends adopting a precautionary, risk-based approach to prescribing parasite treatments, restricting access to products through trained professionals, improving environmental risk assessments for all products, strengthening advice to pet owners, and investing in independent research to address evidence gaps".

- 11 August 2026: [NFFN: "Climate crisis demands fundamental rethink of farming"](#): Another NGO, another call for greater climate preparedness. From the Nature Friendly Farming Network this week: "Water is the single most important resource on any farm and increasingly the biggest challenge farmers face. This summer has shown the new reality. Without fundamental change, it will only become harder and the impact will become bigger. Too much of the debate still focuses on responding to the latest drought or flood. That approach is no longer enough. We need a long-term rethink of how we manage water across entire landscapes so farms are better prepared for both extremes".
- 11 August 2026: [Clean River Kent: Think before you dip!](#): If we're thinking twice about letting flea-treated pets "poison" rivers, we have to apply the same standards to ourselves, argue campaigners from Clean River Kent: "Sunscreen, moisturiser, shampoo, conditioner, insect repellent and other personal-care products can contain substances that can enter natural waters".
- 11 August 2026: [Ribble Rivers Trust: Help Us Track Drought Across the Ribble Catchment](#): From the RRT this week: "The Ribble catchment covers thousands of kilometres of rivers, streams, and tributaries, and we can't be everywhere at once. That's why we're asking for your help. If you've seen a beck, stream, gill, or watercourse that has dried up or is significantly lower than normal, please let us know... Every report helps us better understand what's happening on the ground".
- 11 August 2026: ["Poorer" schools missing swimming targets](#): Multiple deaths from drowning during this year's serial heatwaves have prompted a rather half-hearted debate about the general decline in children's swimming skills. This week's news that poorer children are less likely to be able to swim to save their lives might prompt a bit more discussion?
- 11 August 2026: [Thames Water 'flagship' chalk stream rated as poor](#): The water quality of a Berkshire chalk stream - named by Thames Water as part of a "flagship chalk stream restoration project" - has been classed as "poor" by the Environment Agency. In the figures released last week, the River Pang also failed a test for hazardous substances.
- 11 August 2026: [Major Update: Save the Spring, River Dee](#): From the Atlantic Salmon Trust: "This month marks a defining milestone for Save the Spring, a partnership between the River Dee Trust, Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and Atlantic Salmon Trust. The partnership has now completed its detailed catchment audit for the entire Upper River Dee watershed -- an area spanning over 1,200 square kilometres upstream of Aboyne. This is one of the largest and most detailed

catchment mapping exercises ever undertaken for a river system in Scotland, linked to wild Atlantic salmon recovery as a focus species within a wider audit for river recovery".

- 11 August 2026: [No Parson's Pleasure: 'Fluorescent' weed takes over popular Oxford bathing spot](#): The unusually dry and warm summer has left people unable to swim at a popular bathing spot in Oxford, after what was initially thought to be a bright green algal bloom coated the water. Signs were put up next to the River Cherwell in University Parks, warning visitors about the water, which one local resident described as "fluorescent".
- 11 August 2026: [Our water crisis is here: But it doesn't have to be this way. We know what needs to be done](#): Peter Gleick, who's been writing about the world water crisis for decades, explains where we are and how we can still the worst of a water-short future: "Constant news about worsening water problems must not become the new normal".
- 10 August 2026: [The 12 reservoirs at risk of running out of water](#): Almost all of England's reservoirs have been pushed below-normal water levels, as the most parched parts of the country prepare for a sixth heatwave of the summer. With several weeks of summer left to go and minimal rain forecast, a growing number of reservoirs are also reaching critically-low levels -- including five now deemed "exceptionally low".
- 10 August 2026: [Latest water quality figures reinforce the need to protect the places we paddle](#): Paddle UK has issued a statement about the Environment Agency's latest water quality figures, released last week: "The latest figures are stark and the lack of progress is unacceptable. Our waterways should be healthy, thriving places for people and nature -- not treated as somewhere pollution can be allowed to persist without consequence. Paddlers deserve clean water, clear and timely information about local conditions, and confidence that those responsible for pollution will be held to account".
- 9 August 2026: ['I lose all sense of time in the hypnotic flow': five writers on their favourite British rivers](#): From the source to the sea, some Guardian writers share their favourite ways to immerse themselves in nature by paddleboarding, canoeing, camping, walking and fishing.
- 9 August 2026: [Worldview: Meet five Indigenous advocates fighting to protect the planet... and their traditions](#): Highly invested local communities are always best placed to protect the planet: the 200+ local British and Irish river groups now beavering away to save our rivers are, in a very real sense, just like the indigenous communities fighting for

threatened places like the Amazon or Africa's Sahel desert, explored here in a fascinating UNEP feature.

- 9 August 2026: [Will Millard visits the Don Catchment Rivers Trust](#): The author and broadcaster, currently writing a book titled "Rivers Run Through Us: The crisis in our rivers (and how we can still save them)", recently visited the Don catchment to find out how people power is making a real difference.
- 1 August 2026: [ICYMI: Citizen science in river monitoring: a systematic literature review of the whys and hows](#): Last year, Gabrielle Pengyu Shao and Isabel Bishop of UCL published this detailed academic review of citizen science methods being used by local river groups around the world. It's worth a look if citizen science is your thing.
- 1 August 2026: [Guide to Participating in River Ceremonies](#): Stressed campaigners overly focused on annual "impact reports" can find gentler, more spiritual approaches to protecting the environment something of a challenge. Where are the charts? What are the metrics? Maybe it's time to slow down, reframe your mindset, and reimagine how to put the river first? Friends of the River Medway, at the forefront of the river rights movement, have published a welcome, timely guide to participating, respectfully, in sacred river ceremonies that just might do the job.

[More news...](#)

Events in August

- 16 August 2026: [Sketch the River Thame](#): Join River Thame Conservation Trust on Sunday, 16 August, from 10 am to 1 pm at The Old Fisherman in Shabbington (near Thame) to sketch the River Thame. This is a free event but registration on Eventbrite is required: "We'll spend the morning looking closely at the river through drawing, painting and sketching. It's a chance to really get to know this stretch of the river, so it doesn't matter whether you paint every day or haven't picked up a crayon since primary school. Help and guidance will be available if you'd like it, and we'll finish by sharing our work together at 1 pm. You're welcome to stay afterwards and have lunch at the pub if you'd like (lunch is optional and at your own expense)".
- 18 August 2026: [Ireland: Slowing the Flow: Protecting Inishowen's Heritage at Risk](#): Learn all about natural forms of flood defense with Inishowen Rivers Trust this week on Tuesday 18th August, at Market House, Clonmany, F93WR92 from 6-9pm.

- 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)
- [Head of Science and Research: Froglife](#) (4 September 2026)

- [Project Assistant: Newt Conservation Partnership](#) (4 September 2026)
- [Principal Salmon Conservation Scientist: Atlantic Salmon Trust](#) (1 September 2026)
- [Water Team Senior Project Manager: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Partnerships Manager: Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Water Champion - Parishes and Communities: Western Sussex Rivers Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Fisheries Specialist: South East Rivers Trust](#) (31 August 2026)
- [Programme Manager: Water Company Partnership: Thames Rivers Trust](#) (30 August 2026)
- [Grants and Partnerships Manager WildFish](#) (28 August 2026)
- [Head of Farmer-led Nature Recovery: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (25 August 2026)
- [Project Manager: Froglife \(Yorkshire\)](#) (24 August 2026)
- [Systems Officer: Tyne Rivers Trust](#) (24 August 2026)
- [Arctic Charr Project Manager: The Freshwater Biological Association](#) (24 August 2026)
- [Project Managers: Aire Rivers Trust](#) (23 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)
- [Policy and Advocacy Officer \(Ireland\): The 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)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust](#) (10 October)
- [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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