

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 24/8/26

- **[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

- 20 August 2026: [Rewilded land remains green amid drought-stricken English countryside](#): The National Trust is claiming a victory for "nature" at its relatively drought resistant, rewilded Holnicote Estate in Somerset.
- 20 August 2026: [Eastbourne swimming group criticize Southern Water for sewage release after first rain in months](#): Members of Eastbourne Sea Swimmers have shared their frustration at Southern Water after sewage releases were recorded in local bathing areas following the first rainfall in months.
- 20 August 2026: [Over 75% of UK wetlands have been destroyed - restoring them would help prevent wildfires](#): Christian Dunn, Professor in Natural Sciences, Bangor University, explains: "Over 75% of the UK's bogs, fens, marshes and other wetlands have been dug up, drained and destroyed since 1700, stripping the landscape of much of its natural ability to hold water. Restoring them would keep soils and vegetation wetter, providing less fuel for flames. Strategically placed wetlands could also form natural breaks that slow fires before they reach homes, forests or farmland".
- 20 August 2026: [Northern Ireland Wild Waters Survey - the results are in:](#) To better understand how people interact with Northern Ireland's waters and how water quality affects them, Surfers Against Sewage conducted a survey of recreational water users during summer 2026. The results paint

a clear picture: people use our waters year-round, many have experienced illness after water exposure, and there is overwhelming support for greater transparency, expanded monitoring and real-time pollution information.

- 20 August 2026: [Thames 21: 'First-of-its-kind' citizen science study estimates 600 million litres of sewage-contaminated water enter Lower River Roding each year](#): Around 600 million litres of sewage-contaminated water are estimated to enter the River Roding and its tributaries every year via unpermitted and previously unmonitored outfalls, according to a new citizen science study. This is equivalent to around 240 Olympic-sized swimming pools of polluted water. The research shows that sewer misconnections and faulty drainage infrastructure are major sources of pollution, leading to unpermitted sewage discharges directly into the river from surface water drainage outfalls. The findings reveal persistent discharges during dry weather, when there is less rainfall to dilute pollution. This raises serious concerns for the health of the Roding, its tributaries, its wildlife and the communities who use and enjoy the river. The study, led by environmental charities Thames21 and the River Roding Trust, used an innovative targeted monitoring approach to identify the biggest sources of sewage pollution in the Lower Roding. More than 70 outfalls across the Lower Roding and its tributaries were monitored over six months using citizen science water quality methods. By combining these methods with measurements of flow, researchers were able to create a “league table” of the most polluting outfalls.
- 20 August 2026: [Worldview: Rivers remember mining, long after the mines close](#): Stefan Lovgren works with the University of Nevada, Reno's Tahoe Institute for Global Sustainability. In this new article, he describes his ongoing reporting project on how mining is reshaping rivers around the world - and a [major project for Tyne Rivers Trust](#) in England's North East.
- 19 August 2026: [Drought order proposed for River Severn](#): A drought order on the River Severn could soon affect communities in Shropshire, as regulators warn that record-breaking dry weather is pushing the river system to its limits. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has applied to the Welsh Government for a Drought Order on the Severn, for the first time in 37 years. The Environment Agency has submitted a matching application for the English stretch, which includes Shropshire's section of the river, running through Melverley, Shrewsbury, Ironbridge and Bridgnorth.

- 19 August 2026: [Toxic algae found in London's first designated bathing spot](#): Health concerns have been raised over potentially toxic algae in the capital's first official bathing spot in west London, three months after the site won the designation. The Environment Agency (EA) said it had found a bloom of potentially toxic blue-green algae in the Ham and Kingston bathing area, high concentrations of which can produce toxins harmful to humans, pets and wildlife.
- 18 August 2026: [Freshwater pearl mussel recovery reaches new milestone to help restore wild populations](#): From the Freshwater Biological Association: "This year has shaped up to be the most successful year for releases back to the wild of the freshwater pearl mussel, *Margaritifera margaritifera*, since the project started back in 2007. In 2025, we reached the impressive target of 5000 pearl mussels released since the project's inception, helping to secure struggling pearl mussel populations and starting to turn the tide on the catastrophic declines during the 20th century, which saw a devastating decrease of over 90% of the *Margaritifera margaritifera* populations across Europe".
- 17 August 2026: [Farmed salmon DNA is now present in a fifth of Scotland's rivers](#): Scotland's most comprehensive survey of wild salmon genetics has found farmed DNA present across a fifth of the country's river network, with contamination nearly six times higher in salmon farming regions than in areas without farms.
- 17 August 2026: [CRT: Holding the line for a mink-free Britain](#): The Countryside Regeneration Trust's conservation team is holding the line in the final phase of mink eradication across Cambridgeshire and the surrounding area: "We have now secured funding, in partnership with the Waterlife Recovery Trust, to deliver the final operational element of mink eradication in and around Cambridgeshire. This will keep our network of mink traps running for a further 18 months, with 175 traps to monitor and maintain. As part of this next phase, the CRT will also expand our work into adjacent parts of Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex, while the Waterlife Recovery Trust continues to expand, now reaching over half of England with the latest round of funding from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme".
- 17 August 2026: [Greenpeace activists paint giant climate warning to Burnham on mountainside scorched by wildfires](#): Greenpeace says it has delivered a powerful message to Andy Burnham in a land artwork on the site of an extinguished wildfire in North Wales, urging the new PM to take serious action to address the climate impacts battering the country and reject more oil and gas drilling.

- 17 August 2026: [Soil Association: Taking aim at "Big Chicken"](#): "As a new documentary from British comedian Mo Gilligan demonstrates, our love of Big Chicken is a risky business... [a] threat to human health, animal welfare, rivers, climate and biodiversity that never seems to diminish".
- 17 August 2026: [CPRE raises eyebrows over new planning policy framework](#): From CPRE this week: "A 'default yes' to development near any train station, regardless of its capacity, could see thousands of homes built in places with no prospect of extra trains or other essential infrastructure. Integrating new homes with public transport is good for people and the planet but this blanket approach risks locking in car dependency while putting the Green Belt and other protected landscapes at risk".
- 17 August 2026: [Rivers don't burst their banks on a schedule - but the world's flood maps assume they do](#): New research led by Oxford University's Dr Yinxue Liu shows that the frequency with which rivers fill their channels varies in line with local climates. The findings challenge a decades-old assumption used in global flood inundation models and could help improve flood-risk estimation worldwide.
- 17 August 2026: [UK government 'irresponsible' for not publishing emergency drought plans](#): The UK government has been accused of a lack of transparency and of acting irresponsibly for refusing to publish the emergency drought plans that are produced by water companies.
- 17 August 2026: [Worldview: Europe's Great Rivers Are Dying. The Continent Is In for a Shock](#): In The New York Times, Ben Coates (author of "The Rhine: Following Europe's Greatest River from Amsterdam to the Alps") describes how drought is undermining our dependence on rivers: "Europe needs to think seriously about how to develop alternative transport and energy networks that reduce its reliance on rivers. That could take decades and require huge investment in new infrastructure".
- 15 August 2026: [The areas new reservoirs will be finished first... and why they take so long to build](#): The I Paper reports that the UK is only just building its first reservoir in 30 years, with a further nine still years off construction. Among its other coverage of the water industry this week, The I ran stories on [The obstacles to Reform's plan to end hosepipe bans for good](#) ("Reform wants to scrap hosepipe bans and build its way out of the water crisis - but the projects would take a long time to become reality and could mean higher customer bills"), [The hosepipe ban hypocrisy that will make you furious](#) ("Water bosses pocketed billions. They should have built more reservoirs"), and [What UK can learn from](#)

[Europe about using water bills to fight drought](#) ("Some European countries and cities charge heavy water users more").

- 14 August 2026: [Why gravel matters...](#): Charlotte Ireland looks at why gravel is so important for salmon... and what Ribble Rivers Trust is doing to help them out.
- 14 August 2026: [Assessing river restoration using Extended Riverfly monitoring](#): Steve Brooks (Riverfly Partnership Co-Chair) explains how riverfly counts, water quality scores, and tests of silt and flow can be used to assess the effectiveness of a river restoration.
- 12 August 2026: [Amid Drought, Hundreds of French Rivers Are Drying Up](#): Across Europe, meager rainfall has sapped rivers, threatening the supply of water for households, farms, and power plants. Low water levels on the Danube have exposed Nazi shipwrecks and forced the shutdown of several nuclear reactors, which draw water from the river for cooling. On the Rhine, water levels hit a record low, measuring just 10 inches deep at the German city of Kaub. Meanwhile, [satellite images from the European Space Agency](#) reveal the dramatic impacts of drought across Europe's major rivers: the Loire in France, the Po in Italy, the Rhine in Germany, and the Danube in Hungary
- 12 August 2026: [Dorset Chalk Stream Salmon Restoration plan is up and running!](#): Frome, Piddle and West Dorset Fisheries Association have an encouraging progress report from their pilot trial restoration plan: "At present the salmon run has declined so much that the river has only about 1/3 of its 'Conservation' capacity of fertilised eggs. Our plan is to try to add 25,000 fertilised eggs into the pristine upper catchment each year for the next few years, using a range of different types of protective egg boxes".
- 5 August 2026: [Seaweed surveys discover species never seen before and new to science](#): Natural England's underwater surveys of maerl beds off the south coast of Cornwall have uncovered a remarkable array of rare and scientifically important seaweeds, including species never before recorded in the UK.

[More news...](#)

Events in August

- 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

- [General Manager: WWT \(Slimbridge\)](#) (14 September 2026)
- [Head of Internal Services: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Head of Projects: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Senior Project Manager: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Citizen Science Project Officer: River Waveney Trust](#) (13 September 2026)

- [Water Team Senior Project Manager: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (8 September 2026)
- [Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships: Tyne Rivers Trust](#) (6 September 2026)
- [Systems Officer: Tyne Rivers Trust](#) (6 September 2026)
- [Project Officer: Tees Rivers Trust](#) (6 September 2026)
- [Head of Science and Research: Froglife](#) (4 September 2026)
- [Project Assistant: Newt Conservation Partnership](#) (4 September 2026)
- [Pool Frog Recovery Manager: Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) (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)
- [Farm Adviser: South East 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)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust](#) (10 October)
- [Trustees \(x2-3\): ClientEarth](#) (15 September)
- [Volunteer crayfish surveyor \(North Yorkshire\): Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#)

- [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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