

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 31/8/26

- [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

- 29 August 2026: [The race to stop England running out of water](#): BBC news has an excellent, in-depth overview of Britain's growing water supply problems, from better demand management and sensible water pricing to building reservoirs, stopping leaks, and greater recycling.
- 27 August 2026: [Greens call for temporary ban on new data centres](#): The Green Party's Zack Polanski rightly called out data-centre water consumption this week, but didn't argue the issue too well -- so was swiftly brushed aside by a government rebuttal: "'A pause on building new data centres would simply send investment and good jobs abroad, while leaving Britain dependent on overseas computing for the processing of sensitive health and defence data". He might have been better off highlighting the possibility of locating data centres in less water stressed regions of the UK (perfectly feasible) or obliging them to use recycled water in their cooling plants instead of high-grade drinking water.
- 27 August 2026: ['Forever chemicals' surge during pilot of Thames Water plan to combat drought](#): Levels of a toxic "forever chemical" rose to 13 times the legal limit during Thames Water pilots for a controversial multimillion pound water recycling scheme that will pump millions of litres of treated sewage into the River Thames during drought.

- 27 August 2026: ['Stop treating rivers like a toilet': South West Water slammed over 300 hours of sewage spills in one week](#): South West Water says it is doing its best to keep track of storm overflow sewage spills despite claims that its monitoring systems are not up to the job.
- 27 August 2026: [Southern Water Drought Order could "devastate" River Test, WildFish tells Hearing](#): A Planning Inspectorate Hearing is currently considering Southern Water's application for a Drought Order on the River Test. WildFish objects, arguing the order would see the company continue taking water from the River Test when flows have dropped to dangerous levels.
- 27 August 2026: [The Wildlife Trusts warn: As England smoulders, Westminster's war on nature must stop](#): A new report by The Wildlife Trusts warns that the Government is on track to harm nature's ability to protect us against dangerous weather unless forthcoming policies which undermine nature's protection, including the Nuclear Regulation Bill, are reconsidered.
- 27 August 2026: [MP slams sewage discharges into South Cambridgeshire rivers after first major rain since June](#): Liberal Democrat MP for South Cambridgeshire Pippa Heylings has criticised sewage discharges into local rivers after storm overflows began releasing sewage within an hour of the first significant rainfall the county has experienced since June. "You just couldn't make it up," she said. "After the driest summer in years, all it took was one hour of rain and our rivers are once again being used as an open sewer."
- 27 August 2026: [These are the areas of Derbyshire with the most polluted rivers and waterways](#): Tom Hardwick surveys "the areas across Derbyshire with the most polluted rivers and waterways – where sewage has been discharged for thousands of hours".
- 27 August 2026: [Flea Treatments and River Health: An Overlooked Threat to Wildlife](#): Over at Ribble Rivers Trust, Charlotte Ireland summarizes the pesky "pet pollution" issue that's been steadily working its way up the political agenda: "Most pet owners use flea treatments for one simple reason: to keep their cats and dogs healthy. But growing evidence suggests that some of the chemicals used in common flea and tick treatments may be having unintended consequences for river health".
- 26 August 2026: ['Serious situation' as E. coli spikes in river](#): E. coli levels have "spiked alarmingly" in the Avon and the Stour in Dorset. Christchurch Harbour and Marine Society (Chams) says its figures show E. coli levels in the Stour peaked on 19 August at 370,000 E. coli colony-

forming units (cfu)/100ml of water compared with 4,217 E. coli cfu/100ml for the same week in 2025.

- 25 August 2026: [River Ribble recovery brings hope for Atlantic salmon](#): Efforts to improve the quality of Lancashire's rivers are "paying off", conservationists have told BBC News this week, with research suggesting Atlantic salmon are making a comeback in the county. At one site, surveyed by Ribble Rivers Trust, more than 100 juvenile Atlantic salmon were recorded in a few minutes this year while another location had its first salmon sightings in more than a decade.
- 25 August 2026: [New grant is good news for Arctic charr recovery in the Lake District](#): The Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) is growing its team to support an ambitious new phase of work to secure the future of one of England's most threatened freshwater fish. Following the award of £690,000 from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme (SRP), the FBA is strengthening its team to support delivery of the Lake District Charr Recovery and Management (LD-CHARM) project.
- 25 August 2026: [Paul Powlesland: The river will not wait](#): The Roding River champ shares his skills and experience in a new webinar. You will: "Learn how to become a River Guardian in your own community with practical actions you can begin immediately, whether you're just getting started or already involved. Understand what's really happening to Britain's rivers and why pollution, sewage and environmental decline continue despite growing public concern. Gain practical tools to restore your local river, from improving biodiversity and water quality to creating public access and mobilising your community".
- 25 August 2026: ['Small changes can make a big difference': how getting farmers, fishers and beavers together could save a Cornish river](#): The Guardian reports on a team effort to fight algal blooms on the River Fal, which threaten two of the UK's most biodiverse and carbon-rich marine habitats: lush seagrass meadows and purple-pink carpets of ancient maerl seaweed.
- 24 August 2026: [Nearly half of England and Wales bathing spots have sewage alerts](#): Swimmers, paddlers, and other water users express consternation about widespread sewage alerts and discharges this week after the first meaningful rain in months.
- 24 August 2026: [Telegraph takes aim at "Paddleboarding idiots... forcing wildlife to flee our rivers"](#): Suffolk farmer Daniel Bunting spent years making the Stour a nature haven, but says it has been decimated by an army of waterborne tourists: "We're seeing around 100 paddleboarders an hour... With river traffic at that volume, the wildlife gets no respite".

- 24 August 2026: [Andy Burnham retreats from Thames Water intervention](#): Over at River Action, James Wallace highlights the concerning U-turn on Thames Water: "We are deeply concerned by the lack of leadership shown by Prime Minister Andy Burnham in apparently 'shelving plans' for a Special Administration Regime for Thames Water. Having called for greater public control of our water companies, starting with Thames Water, it is deeply worrying to see the Government potentially retreat from using the very mechanism Parliament created to enable the Government to intervene when a water company is failing".
- 24 August 2026: [River levels 'exceptionally low' as drought bites](#): Rivers in Devon and Cornwall have dropped to "exceptionally low" levels in places, after the prolonged hot, dry weather, the Environment Agency (EA) has said.
- 24 August 2026: [Empty North Sea oil fields could store enough green hydrogen to power the country for seven years](#): Durham University geologists are promoting a novel solution to Britain's energy crisis: "The depleted oil and gas fields that powered Britain for half a century could be refilled, this time with hydrogen made from our surplus wind and solar power. We found that suitable depleted North Sea fields could provide 3,659 terawatt-hours of hydrogen storage capacity, equivalent to more than seven years of projected UK electricity demand in 2040. Using them could also take conventional gas power stations off the grid altogether by 2040".
- 23 August 2026: [Campaigners call for immediate action to clean up 'neglected' rivers in Lincoln](#): Boaters say weeds, overgrown banks and litter are making Foss Dyke and the River Witham un-navigable and dangerous.
- 22 August 2026: [Stop neglecting wetlands, they are vital to our national infrastructure](#): If you need wellies to cross a patch of land, the first response shouldn't be to drain it and build on it argues Christian Dunn.
- 21 August 2026: [New map guides visitors along Salisbury River Park artwork trail](#): The Environment Agency has just launched the Salisbury River Park artworks map, providing an easy way to explore a series of marvellous new pieces located across the city and find out more about the stories and inspiration behind them "The map showcases work from a range of artists, each bringing a distinctive perspective on the natural world and heritage of the River Park to life".
- 19 August 2026: [Why heavy rain won't end hosepipe bans](#): The I's river champion Lucie Heath notes that "the wet weather is nowhere near enough to end the drought that is gripping large swathes of the country

and more restrictions could even be possible due to the prolonged period of dry weather".

- 14 August 2026: [Feargal Sharkey: Fish are facing a summer of death in UK's poisoned rivers](#): Feargal Sharkey, the singer and environmentalist who is also chairman of Amwell Magna Fishery on the River Lea, said the Hertfordshire club had shut its river bank – once fished by Izaak Walton, the world-renowned 17th-century author of *The Compleat Angler* – since June after water temperatures rose to levels which pose a mortal threat to fish such as trout and salmon.
- 14 August 2026: [PM: Farmers should not carry the risk of a changing climate alone](#): Farmers across England will receive new support to help manage the impact of prolonged dry weather, including a £65 million funding boost, as the government steps up its response to the ongoing drought.

[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

- [Project Officer: Dee Trust](#) (30 September 2026)
- [Ebdon Farm Site Manager: Avon Wildlife Trust](#) (22 September 2026)
- [General Manager: WWT \(Slimbridge\)](#) (14 September 2026)
- [Head of Internal Services: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Dartmoor Headwaters Officer: Dartmoor National Park Authority](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Head of Projects: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Assistant Manager \(England\): Buglife](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Senior Project Manager: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Water Resources Partnership Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Water Resources Partnership Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne Catchment Partnership Officer: Thames21](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Admin Officer: Trent Rivers Trust](#) (9 September 2026)
- [Water Team Senior Project Manager: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (8 September 2026)
- [Marketing and Communications Officer: Aire Rivers Trust](#) (8 September 2026)
- [Salmon Conservation Biologist: Atlantic Salmon Trust](#) (7 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)

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 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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