

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 14/9/26

September 2026

- 13 September 2026: [MPs will debate a petition relating to a referendum on public ownership of the water sector](#): Ash Smith's WASP petition gets airtime on Monday 14 September. You can watch the debate on live TV or YouTube or read the transcript (when it's published) here.
- 10 September 2026: [The Big River Watch is here](#): Apologies, everyone, that we got the dates wrong in recent updates (carrying them over from last year)... but at least we were premature, and you didn't miss anything! The Big River Watch happens this week, from 18th to the 24th of September 2026.
- 10 September 2026: [Heatwaves are making toxic algae worse, but the real problem is what we are putting into our rivers and lakes](#): Two researchers from Dublin City University explain why algal blooms happen... and how climate change is making matters worse.
- 10 September 2026: [How heavy rain powers a microplastic surge from the rivers to the seas](#): Rivers worldwide delivered an estimated 263,000 tons of microplastics to the ocean in 2022, according to researchers. About 96% came from the Global South, with Southeast and East Asia together accounting for more than half of the total.
- 10 September 2026: ["Broken Rivers": new WildFish report reveals how in-river barriers are driving wild fish decline](#): WildFish have published a new report about the artificial barriers driving wild fish decline, and the steps we can take to restore river connectivity. The "Broken Rivers" report highlights the shocking scale of river fragmentation and the number of obsolete barriers that no longer serve their original purposes, yet continue to block migratory routes for wild fish.
- 10 September 2026: [Good news: climate solutions most likely to reach 'positive tipping points' revealed by scientists](#): A rapid global shift to clean electricity could trigger a "cascade" of progress towards repairing the damage to the planet by the climate crisis, according to a report

identifying the environmental solutions most likely to bring about change.

- 10 September 2026: [Archelon: The biggest turtle to ever live](#): From the Natural History Museum this week, a handy "spotter's" guide to archelon, the largest turtle that ever lived. The biggest specimen, discovered in South Dakota in the United States, measures 4.6 metres long, with a flipper-to-flipper span of four metres (about the same length as a small SUV and quite a bit wider).
- 10 September 2026: [New Glasgow alliance formed to take River Clyde into new era](#): Leading names in Glasgow's maritime and engineering industries have joined forces with education and public-sector organisations to embark on a new drive to unlock the economic potential of the River Clyde, reports The Herald (£££££).
- 10 September 2026: [The failure of the Fisheries Act 2020](#): Open Seas, who work on Scottish marine protection, are taking aim at what they see as an ineffective piece of legislation: "The Fisheries Act was supposed to see the UK 'take back control of its waters' and deliver sustainable management of fish populations. Six years on, the UK Government claims it's been working 'as intended'. We disagree. Independent scrutiny of this flagship legislation is urgently needed - that's why we're asking the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee to take a closer look at whether the law is being implemented effectively".
- 9 September 2026: [Grimsby's "Canoe River Cleaner" on his latest mission](#): James Elliott, "The Canoe River Cleaner", will soon be taking to the waterways to clean up the riverhead near Grimsby Town Centre. He has spent almost five years of his life cleaning the waterways around the borough and says now is the perfect time to clean up the town centre location as part of Grimsby's regeneration efforts.
- 9 September 2026: [Eden Rivers Trust balsam bashers uproot almost two million plants](#): Eden Rivers Trust has hosted several days this year to pull out the non-native plant - recognisable by its pink bonnet-shaped flowers and thin stems - from Cumbria's riverbanks, paths and fields. Volunteers have been now invited to the final "balsam bashing" events in a bid to uproot a target of two million invasive Himalayan balsam plants by the autumn.
- 9 September 2026: [Witney MP Charlie Maynard scoops Rivers and Seas Award 2026!](#): An MP has won a national award for taking Thames Water to court over its handling of sewage and finances. Charlie Maynard, Liberal Democrat MP for Witney, received the Rivers and Seas Award at the 2026

Political Purpose Awards, held at the House of Commons on Tuesday evening.

- 9 September 2026: [What do the oceans need from politicians?](#): As party conference season speeds up, the Marine Conservation Society reveal their top policy priorities.
- 8 September 2026: [Water company fined record £900k after coastline sewage spill](#): United Utilities Water has been hit with £964,225 in fines and costs at Preston Magistrates' Court this week after pleading guilty to five environmental permit offences following a major pollution incident in Lancashire. The offences followed a serious environmental incident between 11 and 22 June 2023, when raw sewage was discharged into the Irish Sea along the Fylde Coast from three coastal pumping stations for more than 35 hours in total over several days.
- 8 September 2026: [South West Water visits help Devon schools save water](#): Keen to redeem itself after a run of recent bad publicity, South West Water has been doing useful educational outreach across the region, offering tips that could save 15 million litres of water a year. But...
- 8 September 2026: [South West Water revising St Mary's sewage plans following backlash](#): South West Water has updated councillors and residents on the Isles of Scilly on its amended plans for managing the wastewater on St Mary's after being told to deliver appropriate, secondary treatment by the Environment Agency. The firm must now bring the system up to legal standards by September 2027 or face enforcement action.
- 8 September 2026: ['River is flowing better than it has for 25 years'](#): Water levels in the River Deben in Suffolk dropped by more than a metre after heavy rain caused a weir structure at Ufford, near Woodbridge, to fall away and a bridge to partially collapse. While they are still to be fixed, water in the river is again running freely after a multi-agency and community effort saw vital excavations and tree removal take place.
- 8 September 2026: [Planning system ignores salmon farms cumulative risk to wild fish](#): A new expert report exposes the cumulative threat posed by Scottish salmon farms currently being ignored by local authorities and the regulatory failure leaving wild salmon unprotected. Nick Underdown, Scotland Director at WildFish, explains the findings and what this new information tells us about the impact of sea lice on wild fish.
- 8 September 2026: [How beavers can help create fire breaks as part of a drought preparation plan](#): Bangor University's Christian Dunn looks at rewilding lessons learned from the National Trust Holnicote Estate, which

suggest beavers are truly great "ecosystem engineers" and even, potentially, "firefighters".

- 8 September 2026: [Now is the time for the UK's first Wetland City](#): Sarah Fowler of WWT offers a new vision for the future: "It may sound counterintuitive, but bringing water back to our cities offers a solution to so many of the climate risks we face. When the rain falls, the damper and more permeable the land, the more it can hold water and slow its flow. While so much of our cities are full of concrete, the blue spaces within them provide essential buffers during wetter weather - boosting our resilience to drought and floods while providing a refuge for people and wildlife alike".
- 6 September 2026: [Explore Eden in Autumn 2026](#): Eden Rivers Trust have just published the autumn edition of their 'Explore Eden' newsletter, with lots of ideas to help you to explore the Eden river catchment throughout the season.
- 6 September 2026: [September news from the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust](#): Great news from the North, including progress on reviewing and removing barriers as part of the Great Yorkshire Rivers project – a collaboration between Yorkshire Water, the Environment Agency, the Rivers Trust, and other regional rivers trusts in Yorkshire.
- 6 September 2026: [What has Save Our Swale been up to?](#): More news from the North, with an update on Swale pollution and the campaign to improve the quality of their designated bathing water.
- 5 September 2026: [Plea to give Thames seals space for everyone's safety](#): As the number of seal sightings along the River Thames increases, charity Thames Seal Watch has urged members of the public to give the animals space, noting how "the UK Government recently dismissed the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's (JNCC) recommendation to legally protect our UK Seals from intentional or reckless disturbance"
- 5 September 2026: [Kielder secrets: how a lake built for steel helps fight drought](#): Much of England has faced drought conditions during a summer marked by repeated heatwaves, but the North East has been spared water scarcity despite experiencing what the Environment Agency dubs "prolonged dry weather". One of the, quite literally, biggest reasons is that Northumberland is home to England's largest reservoir: Kielder Water.
- 5 September 2026: [Wildlife Trusts: New study finds large areas of Britain could support the return of pine martens](#): A new study has found that large parts of England and Wales offer suitable habitat for pine martens,

despite the iconic species disappearing from much of the UK more than a century ago.

- 5 September 2026: [Will the disposable barbecue ban become permanent?](#): Keep Britain Tidy (along with volunteer beach cleaners and litter pickers everywhere) will certainly be hoping so. In a 2022 KBT survey answered by 104 local authorities, 83% said that disposable BBQs cause significant issues for them, and 87% would like to see government intervention to help them tackle these issues.
- 5 September 2026: [The I: "We invited 9 water firm bosses to swim in their local bathing spot. Zero said yes"](#): No big surprise that water company bosses declined to take a quick dip between their local sewage discharges...
- 4 September 2026: [Friends of the River Wye: Macrophyte training begins](#): An exciting update on how citizen scientists are being trained for the new "Ranunculus Project", with their first gathering on the banks of the Usk in Usk town on 28th August.

[More news...](#)

Events in September

- September 2026: [Love Your Countryside Month](#): Celebrate all things country with rural champions CPRE.
- 18-24 September: [The Big River Watch](#): 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
- 19-27 September: [Join the Riverlution this September and celebrate the Sussex Ouse](#): The community festival taking place 19 - 27th September will be a series of events for local people to come together for a shared vision and collective action. Voices of the Ouse opens the festival bringing together key organisations and communities who represent, work alongside, and feel a deep connection to its waters. A very special Council of All Beings workshop in the Lewes Town Hall Council Chamber will bring the voices of the eel and kingfisher into our democratic spaces.
- Saturday 26 September 2026: [Melksham River and Food Festival](#): The Melksham Food and River Festival is a vibrant, free community event held annually on the last weekend in August at King George V Playing Field

and along the River Avon. Organised by the Festival Committee with support from the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust and Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club, the festival celebrates local culture, community spirit, and riverside heritage.

- 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.
- Throughout September: [Thames 21 events](#): Hands-on London activities this month include " Action for Silk Stream: River Action Day " (24/9) and "Oxleas Woods – Slowing the Flow " (29/9 until 1/10), and more.
- 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.
- September 2026 (TBC): [Great Stour Riverfest](#): Lots of things to see and do on the Great Stour in Canterbury.
- Friday 18-Sunday 27 September 2026: [MCS Great British Beach Clean](#): Every September thousands of people across the UK head to the coast to take part in the Great British Beach Clean. Find out how you can get involved and how it helps.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: [World Rivers Day 2026](#): Lots of events planned worldwide.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: [RiverKids: Create, Paint, Explore](#): Organised by Friends of the River Tyne, will be held on from 2pm to 4pm at the Trinity Centre in Haddington, East Lothian. Friends of the River Tyne will also be showcasing its new education boxes, which are set to be introduced into local schools to help pupils learn more about river environments, conservation and biodiversity.

[More events...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Community Engagement Trainee: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (5 October 2026)

- [Projects and Technical Manager: South Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (4 October 2026)
- [Head of Improvements: Thames21](#) (2 October 2026)
- [Brent Catchment Partnerships Officer: Thames21](#) (2 October 2026)
- [Project Officer: Dee Trust](#) (30 September 2026)
- [Project Delivery Officer: Tyne Rivers Trust](#) (30 September 2026)
- [Field Surveyors \(Humber Beaver Partnership\): Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust](#) (24 September 2026)
- [Project Coordinator \(Humber Beaver Partnership\): Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust](#) (24 September 2026)
- [Ebdon Farm Site Manager: Avon Wildlife Trust](#) (22 September 2026)
- [Project Manager \(Technical\): Aire Rivers Trust](#) (22 September 2026)
- [Communications and Campaigns Officer: The Rivers Trust](#) (14 September 2026)
- [Head of Campaigns \(Planning and Infrastructure\): CPRE](#) (16 September 2026)
- [SmartRivers Analysts and Trainers: WildFish](#) (Unspecified)
- [General Manager: WWT \(Slimbridge\)](#) (14 September 2026)
- [Head of Internal Services: Calder Rivers Trust](#) (13 September 2026)
- [Water Resources Partnership Manager: South East 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)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustees: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust](#) (10 October)
- [Trustees \(×2–3\): 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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