

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 5/10/26

October 2026

- 2 October 2026: [Still no plans to shut failing sewage watchdog Ofwat... a year after Labour's promise](#): From Lucie Heath: "The i Paper understands that Sir Keir Starmer's government had developed a plan to move regulatory powers from Ofwat, but Andy Burnham decided not to publish it as he plans to go further on water reforms than his predecessor". So what happens next?
- 2 October 2026: [Carlsberg Britvic and The Rivers Trust launch 10-year water replenishment partnership](#): The partnership will support the delivery of multiple projects across the Warwickshire Avon catchment, just 15 miles from Carlsberg Britvic's Rugby site, including on local rivers such as the Leam, helping to reconnect and enhance floodplains, create new wetland habitats and improve the landscape's ability to store and slow water.
- 2 October 2026: [Law: "Dammed if you don't": the impact of dam extensions explored](#): Many European dams are operating well beyond their original planned life expectancy in an entirely different climate. That's the problem examined in ClientEarth's new report "Past the Expiration Date", which looks at dam lifetime extensions and EU environmental law through case studies in Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania.
- 2 October 2026: [River rights: More councils adopt River Avon Charter!](#): Eleven councils have adopted a community-led charter recognising the River Avon as a living entity with rights, as campaigners say more than 20 similar charters are spreading across the UK.
- 2 October 2026: [FBA: New project aims to secure the future of the critically endangered Malham Tye Sedge](#): A new partnership project, funded by Natural England's Species Recovery Programme (SRP), has been launched to help secure the future of some of the UK's rarest

invertebrates, including the critically endangered Malham Sedge (*Agrypnètes crassicornis*).

- 2 October 2026: [Paddling for wellbeing: Sport in Mind's Waterside Festival](#): Paddle UK supported Sport in Mind's annual Waterside Festival this summer. Now in its fourth year, the festival brought people together facing mental health challenges to try on-water activities in a welcoming and supportive environment.
- 2 October 2026: [England's reservoirs continue to feel drought strain after sixth dry month of 2026](#): Most of England's reservoirs are now classed as notably or exceptionally low after another dry month and the government is working with water companies to ensure supplies are protected. At this time of year, the Environment Agency would expect England's overall reservoir storage to be almost three-quarters (74.3%) full. But because of this year's drought most are less than half full, with concerns for Ardingly (West Sussex) and Wimbleball (Somerset) that are 23% and 21% full respectively.
- 1 October 2026: [Worldview: The Colorado River is shrinking. What happens next?](#): Lake Mead is part of the Colorado River system and the largest reservoir in the United States. It is now at its lowest level since it was filled nearly 90 years ago.
- 1 October 2026: [You don't have to live by the coast to be connected to the ocean](#): The Marine Conservation Society explain how they're bringing the seas ashore with education outreach (or perhaps inreach?).
- 1 October 2026: [Exploring the Ribble Estuary](#): Kerry Stansfield wanders and wonders around Lytham for Ribble Rivers Trust.
- 1 October 2026: [Science: Why more precipitation does not always mean more river flow](#): A new study from Matthew P. Berzonsky, Valerie Smykalov, Kayalvizhi Sadayappan, and Li Li: "By analyzing over 10,000 river basins worldwide, we found that more than one in four watersheds show diverging trends in precipitation and river discharge. In 40% of these watersheds, river flow has declined even though precipitation has increased. We also found that frequent precipitation extremes and high atmospheric demand tend to drive these mismatches. These results show that precipitation alone cannot reliably predict changes in freshwater availability and highlight the need for long-term river discharge monitoring to support water resource management under a changing climate".
- 1 October 2026: [Fishing conservationists say the dry rivers could spell the end of the 'Sussex tiger'](#): A video report from ITV News on how months of

drought have left water levels in the few streams where the rare sea trout spawn perilously low.

- 1 October 2026: [Tyne Rivers Trust secures £250,000 National Lottery funding](#): Tyne Rivers Trust received £249,579 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for its 18-month Foundations for the Future programme.
- 1 October 2026: [New plans for Norfolk's rivers. Will they work?](#): East Anglia Bylines takes a look at the controversial new plans to "compensate" freshwater habitats for new housing developments in the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, which we've highlighted a few times in recent weeks.

September 2026

- 30 September 2026: [Rivers Trust: Protecting Shared Waters in Ireland and Northern Ireland](#): Protecting Shared Waters, a major cross border initiative to enhance water quality in two vital drinking water catchment areas, has been officially launched at the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains in An Creagán, Omagh.
- 30 September 2026: [Only 28% of River Tyne nurdles 'recovered', researchers say](#): Only 28% of nurdles which spilled into a river have been recovered and are expected to continue washing up on beaches in the future, scientists have calculated. Almost 18 tonnes of plastic nurdles are estimated to have spilled into the River Tyne after a collision between ships at the Port of Tyne in July.
- 29 September 2026: [South West Water fined £8m for hundreds of sewage spills in Cornwall and Devon](#): A water company has been ordered to pay a record fine of almost £8m for hundreds of sewage spills at popular bathing spots and sensitive habitats in Cornwall and Devon. On one occasion, untreated sewage gushed through a harbour wall on a bank holiday weekend but South West Water (SWW) engineers took 10 hours to attend. Sewage was also discharged into the River Camel, which is home to otter and Atlantic salmon and is popular with birdwatchers and sailors.
- 29 September 2026: [A bumper year for dragonflies at WWT wetland sites this summer](#): This summer brought a diverse range of dragonfly and damselfly sightings across WWT wetlands, with rare and newly recorded species delighting visitors at sites across the UK.
- 29 September 2026: [Finally, sewage-dumping water bosses to lose their bonuses](#): CEOs of polluting water companies who have been taking home multimillion-pound payouts despite a ban on bonuses will be

subject to a new clampdown on the use of "loopholes", reports Lucie Heath in The I Paper.

- 29 September 2026: [Science: How can El Niño cause drought and floods at the same time?](#): Ligin Joseph from the University of Southampton explains.
- 28 September 2026: [Wildlife Trusts: Rise of 'mega-dairies' pushing nature to breaking point](#): The rise of "mega-dairies" is pushing nature to breaking point, according to a new report from The Wildlife Trusts. The report, *Doing Dairy Differently*, warns that the shift towards larger, more intensive dairy systems is putting growing pressure on the land, water and wider environment on which farms, people and wildlife depend. More than 40 mega-dairies (very large-scale dairy farms) exist across the UK, the largest housing 2,600 cows. Yet unlike intensive pig and poultry units, large dairy and beef farms are not subject to the same government monitoring, meaning their size and environmental impacts are left unchecked.
- 28 September 2026: [WildFish supporters raise over £116,000 to protect wild fish and their waters](#): WildFish's 2026 fundraising auction raised a staggering £116,083, breaking all of its previous records. The wonderful variety and exceptional quality of auction lots on offer captured the attention of a tremendous number of bidders, as evidenced by this year's total, which has broken all of its previous records.
- 28 September 2026: ["Are these forever chemicals in my blood?" How one community learned the truth](#): The Guardian explores a community fight against forever chemicals in Blackpool.
- 28 September 2026: [River Action: "KFC sponsors high-profile rally at Labour Party Conference ahead of Clean Water Bill"](#): River Action were dressing up as fast food workers this week in a protest against poultry expansion: "We are demanding answers from Labour ministers over KFC's sponsorship of a Labour-affiliated event, highlighting the stark contradiction between the Government's pledge to clean up England's rivers and its approach to intensive poultry production."
- 28 September 2026: [Getting river pollution investigated like 'pulling teeth'](#): An oil-like substance has been bubbling up in the River Avon in Bristol for years and killing wildlife, according to local residents who have made regular reports to the Environment Agency (EA). Nicola Irvine, who lives in Crews Hole, said it had been like "pulling teeth" getting the EA to investigate the pollution since she contacted them in July 2025.
- 28 September 2026: [Campaigners call for greater protection of River Severn](#): Campaigners gathered in Ironbridge on Sunday to raise

awareness of the importance of the River Severn and the fight to protect it from pollution. One of those marching, resident Helen Harvey, told the BBC: "I live here and I've seen the decline in the river over the last 10 years - before it was teeming with wildlife there were plenty of plants growing along the river bank."

- 27 September 2026: [World Rivers Day: We need to give our rivers a fighting chance](#): Simon Hunter, Chief Executive of Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, explains why the fight for rivers must continue.
- 25 September 2026: [Would you like funding from the National Lottery?](#): Could your group be eligible for support?: "We support environmental projects of all shapes and sizes. We give out funding from £300 up to £20,000 through our open Awards for All programme, to over £500,000 through our Climate Action Fund".

[More news...](#)

Events in October

October 2026

- 15 October 2026: [What's polluting the River Char and what can we do about it?](#): Practical talks with local experts and Friends of Hardown Hill. James Hargreaves Hall, Morcombelake, Dorset DT6 6EA, 7pm.
- 16 October 2026: [Ceilidh for Clean Water](#): Meole Brace School, Shrewsbury, 7-11pm. A benefit event for Up Sewage Creek and Shrewsbury Green Party.
- Saturday 24 October 0 Sunday 1 November: [WWT Super Natural](#): This enchanting seasonal half-term event, running for one week only from invites families to discover the wonders, wildlife and folklore of wetlands through hands-on activities and outdoor adventures.
- 30-31 October: [Tweed River Festival](#), Melrose.
- Throughout October: [Thames 21 events](#): Hands-on London activities this month include " "Oxleas Woods - Slowing the Flow " (1/10, 21/10, 22/10), "Back in Beck (river restoration)" (7/10,8 8/10, "Dollis Brook Revival" (13/10, 14/10), and more.
- Throughout October: [Don Catchment Rivers Trust events](#): Lots of hands-on practical/restoration/conservation activities.

[More events...](#)

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Freelance Opportunities: River Learning and Engagement Officer: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (30 October 2026)
- [Environmental Education Officer: Tees Rivers Trust](#) (30 October 2026)
- [Project Officers: Tees Rivers Trust](#) (30 October 2026)
- [Radnorshire Rivers Intern: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (26 October 2026)
- [Environmental Advisor: Southern Water](#) (23 October 2026)
- [River Restoration Lead: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) (20 October 2026)
- [Smarter Water Catchment Programme Manager: River Thames Conservation Trust](#) (19 October 2026)
- [Fisheries Specialist: South East Rivers Trust](#) (18 October 2026)
- [Farm adviser: South East Rivers Trust](#) (18 October 2026)
- [Executive Support Officer: Norfolk Rivers Trust](#) (17 October 2026)
- [Farm and Community Engagement Officer \(River Irfon\): Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (16 October 2026)
- [Habitats and Species Officer \(River Irfon\): Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (16 October 2026)
- [Habitat Creation Officer: Cheshire Wildlife Trust](#) (13 October 2026)
- [Environmental Advisor: Mining Remediation Authority](#) (11 October 2026)
- [Conservation Officer: Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust](#) (12 October 2026)
- [Chair: Tidal Dee Catchment Partnership](#) (12 October 2026)
- [Engagement Officer \(London\): Thames21](#) (9 October 2026)
- [Catchment Partnership Manager \(Thames Valley\): Thames21](#) (6 October 2026)
- [Community Engagement Trainee: Eden Rivers Trust](#) (5 October 2026)
- [Projects and Technical Manager: South Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (4 October 2026)
- [SmartRivers Analysts and Trainers: WildFish](#) (Closing date unspecified)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Independent Chairperson: Paddle Cymru](#) (23 October)
- [Trustee: The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire](#) (16 October)
- [Trustees: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust](#) (10 October)
- [Trustees: Severn Rivers Trust](#) (10 October)

- [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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