UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 16/11/26

- 14 November 2026: 'An environmental and welfare disaster': British salmon loses its organic status: It's official: farmed salmon is no longer "organic". More about this from WildFish down below, but here's The Guardian's headline report.
- 13 November 2026: Right to make green challenges to planning decisions under threat, say UK lawyers: The Starmer government's misplaced war on environmental campaigners seems to be continuing under Andy Burnham, with news this week that capped court costs in judicial reviews may be under threat.
- 13 November 2026: Bristol aims to become UK's first 'wetland city' and reduce flood risk: WWT's ambitious plan for 200 interconnected wetland projects in Bristol are now gaining traction... and made national news this week. Here's the original announcement, in case you missed it.
- 13 November 2026: Chippenham Avon river project is still £16 million short: Chippenham's MP Sarah Gibson seized the opportunity of a Prime Ministerial visit to the town last week to make a personal pitch for government backing for its long-awaited River Avon transformation, currently held back by a lack of cash.
- 13 November 2026: Children's exposure to home wood-burning could be as significant as traffic exhaust, study suggests: Imperial College's Gary Fuller reports that "children living in homes with wood burners could be exposed to over three times more particle pollution than those in non-wood-burning homes". Wood burners, linked to 2500 deaths a year in the UK, also contribute to water pollution when sooty particulates are deposited back on land or water.
- 13 November 2026: Worldview: UNEP: Nature on the rebound in the Ganges... and elsewhere: Positive news is out there. UNEP review five uplifting stories of nature on the rebound in India, Colombia, Jordan, and elsewhere.

- 13 November 2026: Surfers have a (four-year) plan!: News this week of a shift in long-term campaigning strategy by Surfers Against Sewage, taking the group from 2026 to 2030: "Over the next four years, we're putting everything we have into ending sewage pollution of the UK's waters". Interestingly, they'll be "stepping back from… plastic pollution campaigning", which more than a few of us saw as a distraction (albeit a very important one) from the group's core focus and original purpose: "cutting the crap".
- 13 November 2026: Using Data and Evidence to Create a Healthier River: When people think about river conservation, they often picture volunteers working along a riverbank; restoring habitats and nurturing greenspaces. But before any of that happens, there's an important question to answer. How do we know what's wrong? Where should we focus our efforts? And how do we know if our work is making a difference? For Ribble Rivers Trust, Charlotte Ireland explains how evidence-based science underpins the hard graft of practical conservation.
- 12 November 2026: £11m pumping station upgrade boosts Somerset flood resilience: New, more reliable, efficient and greener pumps are being rolled out across Somerset pump stations as part of an £11 million programme to help protect communities from the devastating effects of flooding. Because much of the Somerset Levels and Moors lies below average sea level, pumping stations are used in the winter to lift water from flooded land into rivers and drains, which flow towards the sea, helping to reduce the depth and duration of floods. In the summer they are used to irrigate land for farmers and nature.
- 12 November 2026: Scientists granted new funding to research wildlife impact of River Tyne nurdle spill: ITV News had a short video report this week on a new study of the impact of plastic pellets spilled into the River Tyne in July after a collision between two ships.
- 12 November 2026: New report shows progress in cutting levels of 'forever chemicals' in England's rivers: Levels of two 'forever chemicals', PFOS and PFOA, in England's rivers and freshwater fish have fallen significantly over the past 10 years, according to a new Environment Agency report, which says restrictions and targeted action from government have helped.
- 12 November 2026: How marine life will colonise the SS United States - the world's largest artificial reef: This week, one of the world's most famous ocean liners, the SS United States, was sunk off the coast of Florida. At 302 metres long, it has become the world's largest artificial reef. Nottingham

Trent University ecologist Nicholas Ray describes how it's likely to change as marine life makes it home.

- 12 November 2026: Science: Curbing six key sources could halve pharmaceutical mixture exceedance in global rivers: A new study by Chinese researchers reported in Nature this week suggests tackling six focus areas (especially livestock, aquaculture operations and wastewater treatment plants) could dramatically reduce the problem of drugs in rivers.
- 12 November 2026: Far from farms and cities, dry climates are boosting river nitrate pollution: Typically, when people hear about nitrates, it involves runoff from farm fields, sewage systems and cities that can fuel harmful algae blooms and raise the risk of a serious illness in infants known as "blue baby syndrome." But a river can also run through a sparsely populated landscape with little farming and still contain surprisingly high levels of this form of nitrogen that can harm aquatic life, drinking water and human health, as Li Li, Penn State Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, explains.
- 12 November 2026: Better mapping shows the scale of sewage spills across Scotland: More than 76,000 sewage spills were recorded after new monitoring equipment was installed at waste overflow sites in Scotland, BBC analysis suggests. The addition of 1,009 sewer monitors in 2024 increased the proportion of the Scottish Water network being monitored from 6% to 30%. Now the latest figures have revealed tens of thousands of spills which would previously have been unrecorded, including hundreds at beauty spots like Loch Lomond.
- 12 November 2026: Picture This: How Remote Cameras are Helping Understand River Recovery: On the Denton Reserve in West Yorkshire, digital camera technology is helping Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust capture river restortion changes as they happen, providing valuable insights into how a river responds when given the freedom to flow more naturally.
- 11 November 2026: Against the current: Saving the Atlantic Salmon: For the Rivers Trust, George Cook explores the long, ongoing battle to save this iconic, keystone species.
- 11 November 2026: A win for transparency: Soil Association Certification withdraws logo from "organic" farmed salmon: The Soil Association has finally buckled under pressure from WildFish and others to stop the certifiction of "organic" salmon farms, but it's digging in its heels over the release of key documents that may reveal much more about this shameful saga. Nick Measham, CEO of WildFish, said: "It is welcome news that the Soil Association Certification has finally seen sense and decided

to stop providing an organic fig leaf for the industrial salmon farming industry".

- 11 November 2026: Back of the net! Scotland's historic salmon fishers - in pictures: Colin McPherson has spent three decades working on Catching the Tide, his moving portrayal of fishers and an old way of life that is dying out, featured in The Guardian this week.
- 11 November 2026: Hundreds of acres of farmland to become salt marsh: A planning application to turn hundreds of acres of farmland back into salt marsh has been submitted by a national charity. About 365 acres (148 hectares) of low-lying land on the Awre peninsula, in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, was bought by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) in December 2024.
- 11 November 2026: Historic clam bridge over River Bovey restored: A historic wooden bridge, originally dating from 1834, which was damaged during stormy weather, has just been restored. Natural England organised the work at the clam bridge which crosses the River Bovey near Lustleigh in Dartmoor, Devon, after it was damaged by storms which hit the area in January.
- 10 November 2026: Riverfly Partnership secures major funding to expand citizen science and help protect UK rivers: The Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) is delighted to share the excellent news that the Riverfly Partnership has secured £288,600 in funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, strengthening the continued development of this important citizen science initiative over the next three years.
- 9 November 2026: Lib Dems set Burnham end-of-year deadline on water: The Liberal Democrats have stepped up pressure on Andy Burnham this week to "set a deadline of the end of the year to publish a full plan to fix Britain's broken water industry"... or "explain why Environment Secretary Angela Eagle has made so little progress in more than 100 days in post".
- 9 November 2026: Separated by oceans, united by salmon: Eden Rivers Trust recently welcomed Indigenous peoples from Canada and Norway to Cumbria to share perspectives on the global decline of Wild Salmon and to visit the River Eden and find out more about work undertaken in Cumbria to protect this endangered species.
- 8 November 2026: Autumn update from the River Sid Catchment Group: The volunteers across Devon's River Sid Catchment Group have had a very busy summer; from balsam bashing, tackling japanese knotweed, to riverfly and water quality monitoring, and progressing our plans for adapting weirs in the catchment

- 6 November 2026: Keeping Chemicals out of River Char: Like Devon's Friends of the River Dart, Cumbria's Clean River Kent Campaign, and one or two others, The River Char Action Group on the Dorset/Devon border is trying to get across the message that we need to cut pollution *at source* from our homes, gardens, and pets. There's a public meeting in Charmouth on 25 November to discuss the issue if you're nearby and want to get involved.
- 6 November 2026: Adult salmon return to the River Muick: From the Atlantic Salmon Trust: "In early October, 91 adult salmon from Save the Spring's Smolt-to-Adult Supplementation (S2A) trial were returned to the River Muick at three release sites. These fish are the second annual cohort of adult releases under the Save the Spring pilot programme. Our focus is to understand how they behave after returning to their natal river. Because the sex ratio favours females, we hope this cohort will make a meaningful contribution to the river's overall egg production".
- 1 November 2026: Microplastics are raining down on Mount Everest... and in your river too: News that even Everest is suffering a deluge of atmospheric plastic will come as no surprise to air- and water pollution researchers. If the "Tibetan Plateau is receiving an estimated 56 tons of microplastics annually at altitudes above 4000 metres", just imagine how much enters oceans, rivers, and the rest of the hydrosphere.

More news...

Events in November

November 2026

- 18-19 November 2026: Friends of the Dart (Devon) Online householder event: helping the Dart from home: "We invite you to an evening of information sharing on the current health of our River Dart and actions each of us can take to make a real difference. Some of what harms the river starts in ordinary homes like yours and ours; the sink, the loo, the drive, the dog... And all of it is so easy to change!"
- 19 November 2026: Sustainable Water Systems, Shrewsbury: A talk by Larry Wolfe on SUDS techniques organized by Up Sewage Creek, Shrewsbury.
- 25 November 2026: Let's Keep Chemicals Out of the River Char: Wednesday 25th November at St Andrew’s Hall, Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth 7pm (for a 7.15 start).

- 28 November 2026: Action for the River Kennet: Harvest Mouse Surveying: "Volunteer and help us survey Stonebridge Wild River Reserve for harvest mice". Marlborough, 10am-3pm. Booking needed (contact Anna Forbes, ARK).
- Throughout November: Thames 21 events: Hands-on London activities this month include " "Back in Beck – River Restoration Project" (10/11, 11/11), "Action for Silk Stream – River Action Day" (26/11), and more.
- Throughout November: Don Catchment Rivers Trust events: Lots of hands-on practical/restoration/conservation activities.
- Throughout November: Ribble Rivers Trust events: Tree planting and woodland aftercare at Runley Mill, Settle; Vegetation management at Primrose Lodge.
- Throughout November: Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (Sussex): Leaky barrier building on Adur tributaries, Chalk stream restoration on the Lewes Winterbourne and Hedge laying in Sompting. Various activites on 11, 13, 20, 23 November. Contact Alistair Whitby at OART for more details.

More events...

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- Communications Intern: Westcountry Rivers Trust (6 December 2026)
- Chalk Stream Flagship Programme Coordinator: Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (1 December 2026)
- Project Officer: Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (1 December 2026)
- Farm Advisor - Cheshire: Mersey Rivers Trust (29 November 2026)
- Evidence and Engagement Lead (Hampshire Avon): For the Love of Water (FLOW) CIC (30 November 2026)
- Senior Project Manager (Waterscapes): WWT (29 November 2026)
- River Restoration Project Officer / Senior Project Officer: Norfolk Rivers Trust (22 November 2026)
- Farm Environment Adviser: FWAG South West (23 November 2026)
- Project Manager: Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (22 November 2026)
- Junior Catchment Restoration Officer (Lower Severn Catchment): Severn Rivers Trust (22 November 2026)
- Junior Catchment Restoration Officer (Upper Teme Catchment): Severn Rivers Trust (22 November 2026)

- Communications Director: Freshwater Habitats Trust (20 November 2026)
- Project Coordinator (Transforming the Thames): Zoological Society of London (20 November 2026)
- River Skills Officer: Thames21 (16 November 2026)
- Environment Project Officer: Trent Rivers Trust (16 November 2026)
- Nature-based Solutions Manager: Trent Rivers Trust (16 November 2026)
- Evidence and Engagement Officer: Westcountry Rivers Trust (15 November 2026)
- Fisheries Programme Manager: Westcountry Rivers Trust (15 November 2026)
- Project Support Officer: Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (15 November 2026)
- Environmental Team Leader: River Stewardship Company (15 November 2026)
- Part-time Project Manager: Nene Rivers Trust CIO (13 November 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- Chairperson: Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal Society (7 January 2027)
- Trustees: Campaign for National Parks (7 December)
- CPRE Avon and Bristol: Honorary Treasurer (30 November)
- Trustee (legal): Bristol Avon 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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