



The  
Rivers  
Trust

the umbrella body of the rivers trust movement

where there's water, there's life



The Rivers Trust Review 2018



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# Our top 8 moments of 2017



1. Launched our cross-border project in Ireland



2. Continued projects on integrated water management



3. Signed an MoU with National Flood Forum



4. Launched Replenish with Coca-Cola and WWF-UK



5. Launched Nature Needs You with WWF-UK



6. Funded local trust work via Greggs Community Challenge



7. Launched a new Rivers Trust website and brand!



8. Held our first fundraiser – Ride for Rivers

## Introduction

The Rivers Trust is the umbrella body of the Rivers Trust movement, working to protect, promote and enhance our freshwater ecosystems for both people and wildlife.

With the support of 60 local trusts across the UK and Ireland, we work on the ground, in the heart of the community, to embed a sustainable and integrated approach to managing our rivers and their catchments.

### Welcome to The Rivers Trust Review 2018

In our second Rivers Trust review, we are again delighted to report on the fantastic work carried out by the Rivers Trust movement in the previous year.

Rivers Trusts delivered an incredible £19.2m of work to improve rivers in 2017, supported by over 11,000 volunteers, despite challenging financial times for charities.

Our trusts now have over 253 local professionals covering nearly every river catchment in England and Wales, with strong growth across Ireland. In England, trusts are critical to the delivery of Government's Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) and deliver over £8 of work on the ground, for each £1 of public funding. This shows that communities can take a strong

lead in delivering the river environment that they value, and Rivers Trusts provide an effective charitable vehicle to deliver high quality and affordable work on the ground.

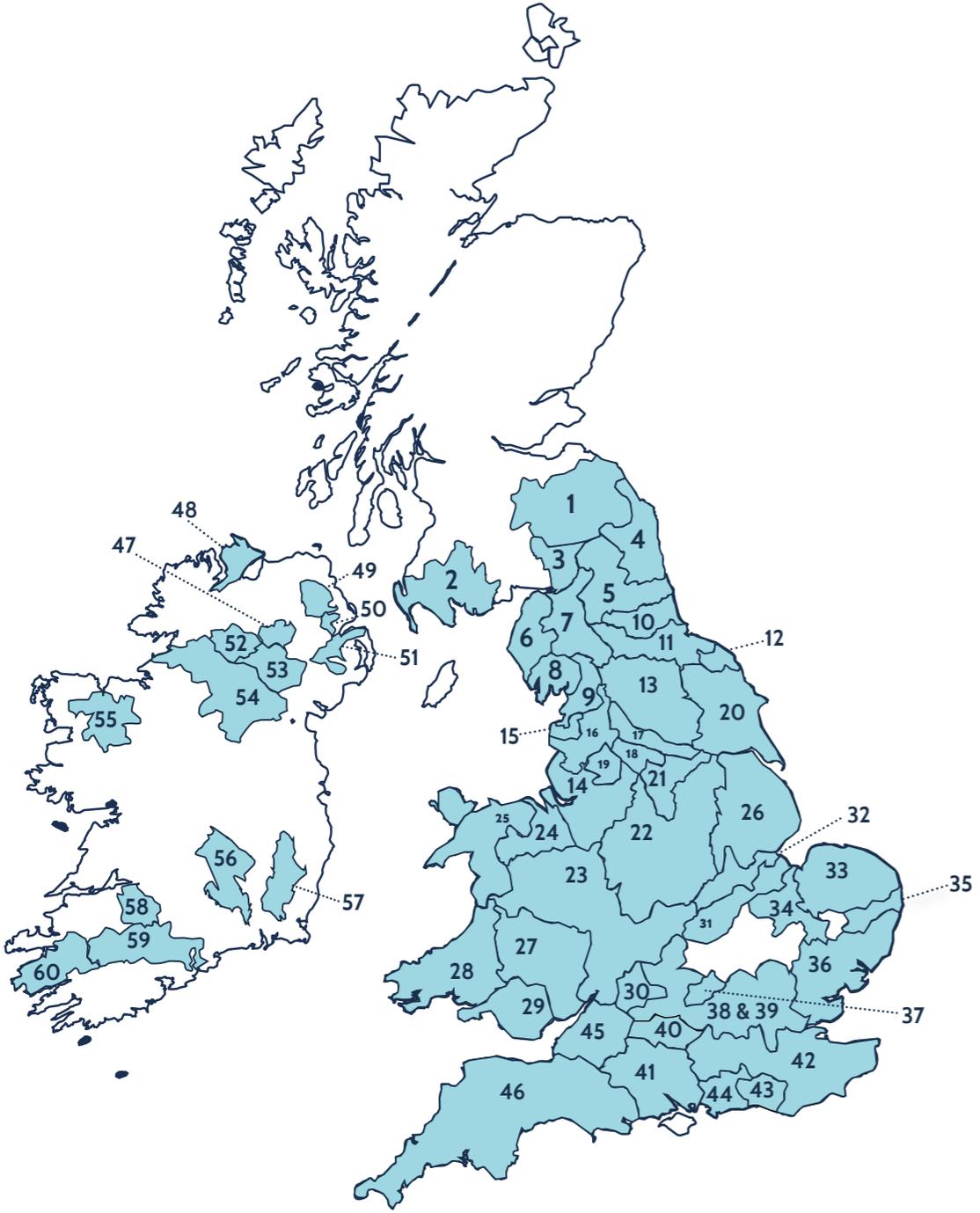
2018 is likely to be a decisive year for the future of our environment. The UK Government's 25-year Environment Plan challenges us to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state. We are working hard to understand what that looks like for rivers, but if we are to be successful we need to ensure that our rivers are fit for a future climate and protect people from flood and drought.

As always, we owe special thanks to the many riparian landowners and farmers who support our work and allow access for restoration works. We are also encouraged by the growing trend of Rivers Trusts working with water industry and private companies. Healthy rivers for people and wildlife, is something worth fighting for and is a great investment for the future!

*Arin Rickard*

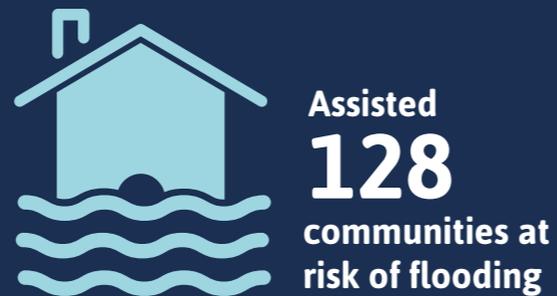
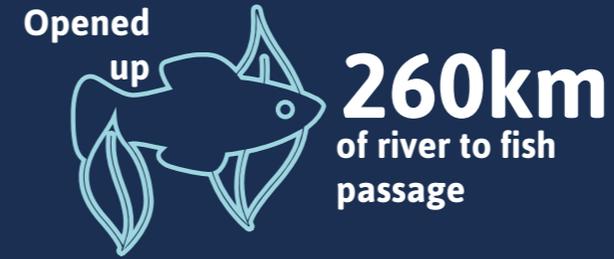
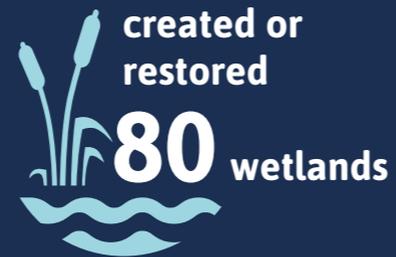
Arin Rickard,  
The Rivers Trust CEO  
August 2018

# Our member trusts



- 1 Tweed Forum and Tweed Foundation
- 2 Galloway Fisheries Trust
- 3 Galloway Fisheries Trust
- 4 Northumberland Rivers Trust
- 5 Tyne Rivers Trust
- 6 West Cumbria Rivers Trust
- 7 Eden Rivers Trust
- 8 South Cumbria Rivers Trust
- 9 Lune Rivers Trust
- 10 Wear Rivers Trust
- 11 Tees Rivers Trust
- 12 Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust
- 13 Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust
- 14 Mersey Rivers Trust
- 15 Wyre Rivers Trust
- 16 Ribble Rivers Trust
- 17 Aire Rivers Trust
- 18 Calder Rivers Trust
- 19 Irwell Rivers Trust
- 20 East Yorkshire Rivers Trust
- 21 Don Catchment Rivers Trust
- 22 Trent Rivers Trust
- 23 Severn Rivers Trust
- 24 Welsh Dee Rivers Trust
- 25 Glwyd, Conwy and Gwynedd Rivers Trust
- 26 Lincolnshire Rivers Trust
- 27 Wye and Usk Foundation
- 28 West Wales Rivers Trust
- 29 South East Wales Rivers Trust
- 30 Cotswolds Rivers Trust
- 31 River Nene Regional Park CIC
- 32 Welland Rivers Trust
- 33 Norfolk Rivers Trust
- 34 Cambridgeshire Acre
- 35 River Waveney Trust
- 36 Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust
- 37 River Thames Conservation Trust
- 38 Thames 21
- 39 Thames Rivers Trust
- 40 Action For River Kennet
- 41 Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust
- 42 South East Rivers Trust
- 43 Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust
- 44 Arun and Rother Rivers Trust
- 45 Bristol Avon Rivers Trust
- 46 Westcountry Rivers Trust
- 47 Ballinderry Rivers Trust
- 48 Inishowen Rivers Trust
- 49 Maine Rivers Trust
- 50 Six Mile Rivers Trust
- 51 Lagan Rivers Trust
- 52 Strule Tributaries Rivers Trust
- 53 River Blackwater Catchment Trust
- 54 Erne Rivers Trust
- 55 Moy Catchment Rivers Association
- 56 Nore Rivers Trust
- 57 Slaney Rivers Trust
- 58 Maigue Rivers Trust
- 59 Blackwater Rivers Trust
- 60 Waterville Lakes and Rivers Trust

# Impact from Rivers Trusts across UK\*



\*29 trusts surveyed in 2017.



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## Local case study - Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust

Working with farmers is an essential part of developing Natural Flood Management (NFM) solutions to help slow the flow of flood water downstream.

Through funding from Yorkshire Water, The Prince's Countryside Fund and the Interreg North Sea Region Programme project Water Co-Governance (WaterCoG), Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust (YDRT) have created an NFM pilot area in the Upper Wharfe catchment, upstream of Bolton Abbey. YDRT will focus on the delivery of NFM through a partnership with farmers, demonstrating how engagement and joint working can build relationships to deliver improved water quality and habitats, reduce flood risk and build community resilience to climate change. The project will combine the science, which has informed European and national policy with local knowledge and experience, to implement NFM solutions on a catchment scale. The results from this project will be shared with partners in Europe on the WaterCoG project.

## Restoring natural processes in rivers, for people & wildlife

**Our rivers are critical natural assets, yet with the increasing threat of climate change, combined with the growth of urban and agricultural landscapes, our rivers are facing extreme pressures which put local communities at risk. We believe it is essential to the future of our rivers, to restore the natural processes that give our rivers and water, resilience to extremes of flood and drought.**

These pressures are being faced across the world, so sharing best practice and learning from overseas is essential to helping us address the problem. In November 2017, we held an Autumn conference, supported by the EU Interreg North Sea Region Programme project, FRAMES and hosted by Trent Rivers Trust, to discuss Natural Flood Management and how we can best support catchment partnerships to implement natural flood risk management projects.

Chloe Palmer, Director of Trent Rivers Trust, said: “We were delighted to host the conference and to welcome our European partners to the Trent catchment. After the conference, we were able to show partners some of the SuDS projects we have been working on and also talk about how we have been building capacity to build resilient communities in both urban and rural areas.”

During the conference, the National Flood Forum signed a Memorandum of Understanding with The Rivers Trust. This will strengthen our partnership to support each other in empowering communities to be more flood resilient and to co-ordinate integrated delivery of the 25-Year Environment Plan and National Flood and Coast Strategy Review.

Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive for the National Flood Forum, said: “Working with organisations such as The Rivers Trust is really important to us, with their practical knowledge of water and land use and national coverage, we can really strengthen work on the ground to help communities at risk.

“Similarly, the National Flood Forum has a national reputation in supporting and representing flood risk communities. By working together we can achieve the outcomes that are of mutual interest, be they practical projects on the ground or improvements to the systems in which we operate.”

**In 2017, our Rivers Trusts completed 17 sustainable drainage (SuDS) projects and 51 natural flood risk management schemes, working with over 1000 farms and helping more than 100 communities at risk of flooding.**



## Local case study - South East Rivers Trust

The South East Rivers Trust are one of three Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) partners to be working alongside Coca-Cola, WWF-UK and The Rivers Trust, to help replenish water in the Thames and South East River Basins, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

Featured as part of a wildlife documentary narrated by David Attenborough, improvements to Beverley Brook in Richmond Park, are being funded through the global Coca-Cola 'Replenish programme'. Due to its close proximity to London, the brook had been heavily impacted by urban pollution and as a result, the ecology of the river was suffering. South East Rivers Trust used the funding to install a 3 metre hydrodynamic vortex chamber, known as a 'downstream defender'. The defender is a silt trap and will intercept urban runoff before it reaches the brook, improving the health of the river, which flows through both Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park.

## Taking a catchment-based approach to improving water quality

Rivers run through both rural and urban landscapes, crossing the surface of the earth from source to sea. They provide us with essential services such as drinking water, fisheries, food and are a valuable resource for society to enjoy. Yet, reports show that only 14% of our rivers in England are classified as healthy and it costs the UK at least £1.2 billion per year to remove pollutants from water.

Healthy and available water resources are essential to our economy and we believe that business can play a stronger role in implementing solutions to improve the quality of our rivers in ways that also ensure their own sustainability.

To help businesses make this change, we worked with WWF-UK to set up our Water Stewardship Service. The service is backed by Coca-Cola and M&S and supported by the EU WaterCoG project to help businesses work together with us and our CaBA partners, to deliver sustainable solutions for water.

Alex Adam, Water Stewardship Manager at The Rivers Trust, said: "The service will provide solutions to those businesses who want to address the water risks within their supply chains. It will facilitate targeted collective action within areas at risk of diffuse pollution or over-abstraction and in turn build resilience within supply chains and benefits to local communities."

Implementing these solutions at a catchment level is the only way to improve water quality sustainably, but rivers and their catchments don't stop for political boundaries. In 2017, we launched Source to Tap, a project in the Derg and Erne catchments which lie across the border of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The project will be delivered by a cross-border partnership and aims to develop sustainable, catchment-scale solutions for the protection of rivers and lakes, which are the main sources of drinking water shared between the two countries.

Mark Horton, Director of All Ireland at The Rivers Trust, said: "through the duration of the project, we will be working with farmers and land managers to reduce pesticides and soil run-off and will pilot measures with forestry operators to reduce water pollution caused by forestry felling and replanting. The project will continue to evolve as Brexit looms, taking cross-border collaborative water management to new levels."

**In 2017, Rivers Trusts worked with over 500 businesses to improve rivers.**



© Norfolk RT

## Local case study - Norfolk Rivers Trust

The European eel was historically prolific in the River Glaven in Norfolk but due to habitat loss, disease and exploitation, their recruitment has declined by 95% across the entire European range in just a few decades.

Norfolk Rivers Trust were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, administered by Norfolk Coast Partnership, to investigate eel numbers and behaviour, improve eel habitat, and record and promote Norfolk's eel culture. The team dug out new ponds, built eel passes to help migration, and recreated historical backwaters to improve the habitat not just for eels but for the fish and invertebrates that the eels eat and are eaten by. Working alongside UCL and ZSL, Norfolk Rivers Trust is continuing to collect data on the eels to pinpoint future conservation priorities.

Dr Jonah Tosney, Operations Director at Norfolk Rivers Trust, said: "the project has certainly improved habitat in the River Glaven, and we have learned a huge amount about eel ecology and their part in Norfolk's culture. Every young eel we see returning to the river gives us hope that this critically endangered species might win through".

## Promoting positive environments for fisheries & wildlife

**Sadly, four out of five rivers in England and Wales are not considered to be in Good Ecological Status and nearly a quarter of rivers in England are at risk from unsustainable water abstraction. Our river habitats and the wildlife they support are under constant threat from modern pressures. With freshwater pearl mussels, the European eel and Atlantic salmon on the rapidly increasing list of concern, we need more support to protect and improve these habitats.**

In July 2017, we launched 'Your Fisheries', an ongoing partnership initiative set up by The Rivers Trust, Angling Trust and Environment Agency. Supported by the EU WaterCoG project, the conference shared knowledge on monitoring, fisheries action plans, and angling and fisheries science. Attended by over 50 representatives within the Rivers Trust network, the conference highlighted the variety of expertise found within the Rivers Trust movement.

Jack Spees, CEO, Ribble Rivers Trust, said: "Last year, Your Fisheries helped us transform over 1.3km of river to allow migratory salmon, trout and eels to bypass a historic weir on the River Hyndburn, which meant they could reach habitats previously inaccessible since the middle of the 1800s. Volunteers then helped us to plant over 1,500 trees in the area, further increasing the surrounding habitat benefits. Now complete, we plan to monitor the effectiveness of the channel and follow the progress of the fish migrating upstream."

Throughout the year, anticipation grew around Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan, which challenges us to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. During the build-up to its release, we teamed up with WWF-UK to implement a community engagement campaign, Nature Needs You, to provide local trusts with a bank of resources needed to approach local MPs and call for a stop in over-abstraction and sewage pollution of our river systems.

Jodie Mills, Director of West Cumbria Rivers Trust, said: "We were really pleased to play a part in the WWF Nature Needs You campaign and it came at a really pivotal time when the issues surrounding our local rivers really needed government and community support."

**80% of trusts surveyed had monitoring programmes, 13 trusts ran electro-fishing surveys, 10 trusts led river-fly monitoring programmes with community volunteers and over 20,000 children were engaged in educational activities about rivers and their environment.**



## Local case study - Trent Rivers Trust

In Autumn 2017, Trent Rivers Trust engaged the community to survey the Alfretton Brook for sources of urban pollution – one of the most polluted tributaries of the River Derwent, affecting water quality downstream.

This collaborative project, with Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency, funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, adapted a methodology originally developed by Zoological Society of London (ZSL), called the 'Outfall Safari'. Trent Rivers Trust were supported by The Rivers Trust, who liaised with ZSL to learn how to develop the 'outfall safari' mobile app, so volunteers could capture data easily. The Rivers Trust then developed a series of training guides and handouts, delivered training to use the app and provided technical support during the survey period. The survey results found 101 outfalls in the area with 28 showing signs of pollution which will be followed up by Severn Trent Water. The methodology and tools used in the project has been packaged for sharing with other Rivers Trusts, CaBA partners and any other groups who want to follow this approach. The final report for the survey is available online.

## Maximising outcomes through collaboration

**Working collaboratively is the backbone of our achievements to date. Partnership working is what ignited the Catchment Based Approach and continues to be pivotal in the Rivers Trust movement.**

River catchments are complex systems that interact with every part of our society. We can't protect them by putting them in reserves or isolating them from external pressures. We can only achieve healthy river systems by working collaboratively and having a shared vision across society on what we want and need from our natural water resources.

Alistair Maltby, Operations Director at The Rivers Trust, said: "The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) embeds collaborative working at a river catchment scale, delivering a range of environmental, social and economic benefits. In 2017, it was reported that for every £1 invested by the government, CaBA partnerships raised £8.63 from non-governmental funders with Rivers Trusts at the heart of the initiative, hosting 60% of Catchment Partnerships."

Through the EU LIFE Natural Course project, we have been taking collaborative working to the next level, working with United Utilities, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Natural England and the Environment Agency, to understand how we can work in a more integrated way to substantially increase the ambition for the North West River Basin Plan.

Working collaboratively with private, public and third sector is currently the only way to increase the resources we need to make a difference in the quality of our rivers. The project provides a platform for bringing knowledge and data together from various sectors and demonstrates how we can make water quality improvements more affordable.

Peter Evoy, Trust Manager at South Cumbria Rivers Trust, said: "Being a part of Natural Course has really helped us open doors to new opportunities, strengthen relationships with project partners and leverage funding for additional work. During phase one of the project, we used Natural Course to develop our catchment management plan helping us to identify target areas for projects and trial new innovative techniques to improve the health of our local rivers."

**Over 700 pollution incidents and water quality improvements were addressed in 2017 by Rivers Trusts.**



© Mike Beard

## Health & Safety in the Rivers Trust movement

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**At The Rivers Trust's annual Chairman's and CEO meeting in Spring 2017 Health & Safety was voted, by member trusts, as a priority area to build capacity across the Rivers Trust movement. We want an open H&S culture within the movement where trusts can learn from each other's experience, build on best practice and minimise the risk of accidents.**

A great deal of progress has already been made this year. A number of trusts have organised H&S training courses, on key subjects such as Construction Design & Management, which have been attended by trusts from across the country. The Rivers Trust has hosted the first in a series of webinars to start to build an open H&S culture and leading trusts have shared H&S resources widely across the movement to help younger trusts learn from their experience and knowledge.

In 2018, we held a joint Water Company, Environment Agency and Rivers Trust H&S conference hosted by Severn Trent Water and Severn Rivers Trust. This conference was used to share best practice from across the water sector and identify priority areas for improvement within the Rivers Trust movement and the wider CaBA network.

### Looking ahead

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**Government's 25 Year Environment Plan challenges us to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state. We consider this a rare opportunity to fulfil our collective ambition for rivers, and we are working hard to understand what steps we need to take to deliver on this, and how we will embed this in a high impact strategy.**

We recognise that we will never meet our objectives if we don't ensure that rivers deliver what society needs and expects for the future. With this in mind, we will continue to develop our work with business and industry to protect water throughout their supply chains, and to demonstrate that water stewardship is a sound investment for the future. We will also continue our work with communities to learn how sensitively managed river catchments can provide protection for flood and drought, and at the same time how we can protect nature for future climate scenarios.

Finally, we will continue to strengthen the movement by developing and expanding our capability to monitor the health of rivers. We will provide more access to tools, data, and knowledge for everyone involved in river conservation, through the launch of a new Catchment Based Approach website, and we will support the growth of the Rivers Trust movement throughout the UK and Ireland.

## The Rivers Trust

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