



Natural rivers and streams are made up of a mosaic of natural habitats supporting a diverse range of plants and animals. These include: exposed and riverine sediments; riffles and pools; and aquatic, marginal and bankside vegetation. Rivers and streams can also provide a wildlife corridor link between fragmented habitats.

Exposed and riverine gravels support a nationally important assemblage of macro-invertebrates such as stoneflies, caddisflies, spiders, carabids, mayflies and beetles. Aquatic vegetation includes internationally important water crowfoot *Ranunculus sp.*. The county also supports an internationally important assemblage of fish, mammals and birds.

In their natural state, rivers are dynamic systems. However, in many cases their ability to rejuvenate and create new habitat has been reduced as modifications to the catchment, water courses and erosion of banks has resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of flow. This has altered patterns of sediment transport and nutrient exchange in river systems. In order to increase biodiversity in rivers, a multi-agency response is required, including regional and cross border approaches.

Threats

- Excessive ground and surface water abstraction
- Water course channelisation and impoundment
- Inappropriate hydro-electric schemes
- Insensitive land drainage and flood defence works
- Point source pollution
- Diffuse pollution
- Inappropriate riparian management
- Invasive non-native plants and animals
- Climate change

Current Action

- Improving understanding of diffuse pollution - SCIMAP, DWPP, FH, NMP (HC, HWT, WUF)
- Reducing diffuse and point pollution - CS, WHIP, FH, SOS, LLL, AMP, CSF, PR19 (CFE, NE, EA, WUF, HWT, DWCC)
- Improving riparian habitats and geomorphology - TRAP, RRP, CS, LLL (CFE, NE, EA, WUF, HWT, DWCC, IDB)
- Reducing abstraction (EA, WUF)
- Controlling invasive species - GUTW, MP, RRP, (WUF, EA, NE)
- Improving fish migration (WUF, EA, NE)
- Exploring the potential of paid ecosystem services (WCP)
- The Water Framework Directive requires all rivers to be in good ecological condition by 2021.
- The Habitats Directive requires the River Wye SAC to be in favourable conservation status

	Objective	Action
A	Restore natural processes	4,5,6,7
B	Increase natural fish recruitment and habitat for priority species	ALL
C	Reduce diffuse and point source pollution	2,4,5
D	Improve riparian management	2,4,6
E	Ensure land drainage, flood defence and hydro-electric schemes are undertaken in an ecologically sensitive manner	8
F	Minimise impact of abstraction on the river	8,9
G	Manage invasive species	6

	Actions	Target
1	Gain funding to deliver the BAP	Annual
2	Improve awareness of diffuse pollution and encourage a risk based approach to land management	Annual
3	Improve habitat for priority species including native fish populations	Annual
4	Improve catchment management by obtaining funding, and targeting of agri-environment schemes	Annual
5	Implement and monitor WFD, NMP, SIP, RRP and DWPP	Annual
6	Control invasive species on priority sites	Annual
7	Remove or modify man-made structures to restore natural processes and improve fish migration	Annual
8	Work with regulators, planners and developers to reduce the impact on biodiversity	Annual
9	Increase water storage capacity within the catchment	Annual

Lead Partner	Environment Agency, EA
Key Partners	NE, HWT, WUF, LIDB, DCWW, CFE, MRA, FH