

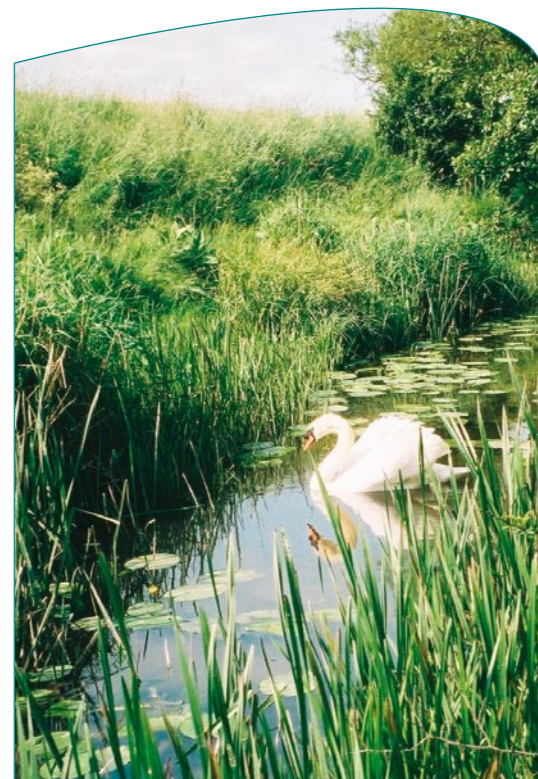
The wetland landscape and Climate change

We are already seeing the impacts of climate change today, with increases in temperature, sea level and the intensity and frequency of storms.

If we continue to emit green house gases at the current rate then we are likely to see even more dramatic changes by 2100. Temperatures could rise by up to 5C, winter rainfall could increase by 30% and summer rainfall could drop by 50%.

These changes will put further pressure on our wetland landscape; competition for water resources between people, wildlife and agriculture; low flows exacerbating the impact

of pollution in wetlands and water resource sites; run off from storm events causing the pollution, erosion or siltation of systems. Water for Wildlife would like to see a more integrated catchment management approach which may provide a solution to many of these impacts. We would like to see catchment-scale projects being developed, to create a more robust countryside for people and wildlife, as well as improve the quality of water in rivers, lakes and aquifers. This approach will help preserve water resources and quality, support biodiversity whilst reducing the need to develop energy intensive treatment processes to meet environmental standards.



What next?

We face challenges to our wetland environment through the impacts of climate change, continuing urban development and the subsequent increase in domestic water use. However, there are also enormous opportunities out there to find more sustainable ways of managing our wetland ecosystems, to provide a more robust environment for both wildlife and humans. We are committed to:

- Supporting water companies to plan in a more joined-up way to encourage sustainable management of our wetland environment, rather than energy intensive and carbon rich end-of-pipe technologies.
- Creating a holistic approach to water vole conservation, bringing it in to existing and planned area-based projects and linking up projects across the UK.
- Developing large scale wetland projects in partnership, to create areas of high conservation value that will help mitigate against climate change and development.
- Support delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan, targeting resources to those species

and habitats that are most endangered in the UK.

- Promoting the message of responsible water use by the consumer to reduce the impact of domestic use on water supplies.

For more information on the Water for Wildlife project, contact the Water for Wildlife UK Manager, based at the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, RSWT, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, NG24 1WT, 01636 677 711, crostron@wildlifetrusts.org.

Taking forward wetland conservation across the UK, through partnership between The Wildlife Trusts, the water companies, Water UK, the Environment Agency and local communities

Water for Wildlife is a partnership of The Wildlife Trusts, the Environment Agency and Water UK representing the water industry. We are working together to secure a brighter future for our wetlands.

Contact: info@wildlifetrusts.org

Water for Wildlife is supported by the RSWT, the Environment Agency and the following water companies: Anglian Water, Bournemouth and West Hampshire Water, Bristol Water, Folkestone and Dover Water, Mid-Kent Water, Portsmouth Water, Severn Trent Water, Southern Water, South East Water, South Staffordshire Water, South West Water, Thames Water, Welsh Water, Wessex Water



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WORKING TOGETHER FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION



Introduction

Water for Wildlife is a partnership approach, combining the strengths of the Wildlife Trusts, the Environment Agency and the water industry. We are all working to push forward wetland conservation, but recognise that what we do can be made much more powerful if we work together to focus and direct our work.

Human activities have always had an impact on the water environment, from clearance of forests, to land drainage and reclamation, and direct changes to rivers through canalisation and straightening. Our wetlands are a shadow of their former selves, barely recognisable as a 'natural', functioning water system. This leads to problems of flooding in our towns and cities, water shortages due to lack of storage and pollution of water bodies.

The WfW partnership delivers much of its work through a co-ordinated network of officers across the 47 Wildlife Trusts, supported by the water industry and the Environment Agency. Project officers work with land-owners, local volunteers and other partners to develop and implement projects on wetland restoration, species survey and protection, and encouraging sympathetic wetland management in the wider countryside.

Water is the most basic requirement for humans and wildlife. Working together, we can improve wetlands for recreation and biodiversity, flood storage, improved water supply and even better water quality. Water for Wildlife offers a chance to make the most of this most precious resource.

Case study 1: Sustainable Catchment Management

Severn Natural Assets Project (SNAP)

The Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust are working on a large scale upland bog restoration project in the headwaters of the Severn. The SNAP project's aim is to remove parts of the conifer plantations, block land drains, and create wetland areas that can soak up water in high rainfall events. This will create areas of permanently and occasionally water-logged ground that will provide habitat for wildlife and improve water quality in streams and rivers, as well as reducing flood risk in town such as Shrewsbury.



Case study 2: Species specific work

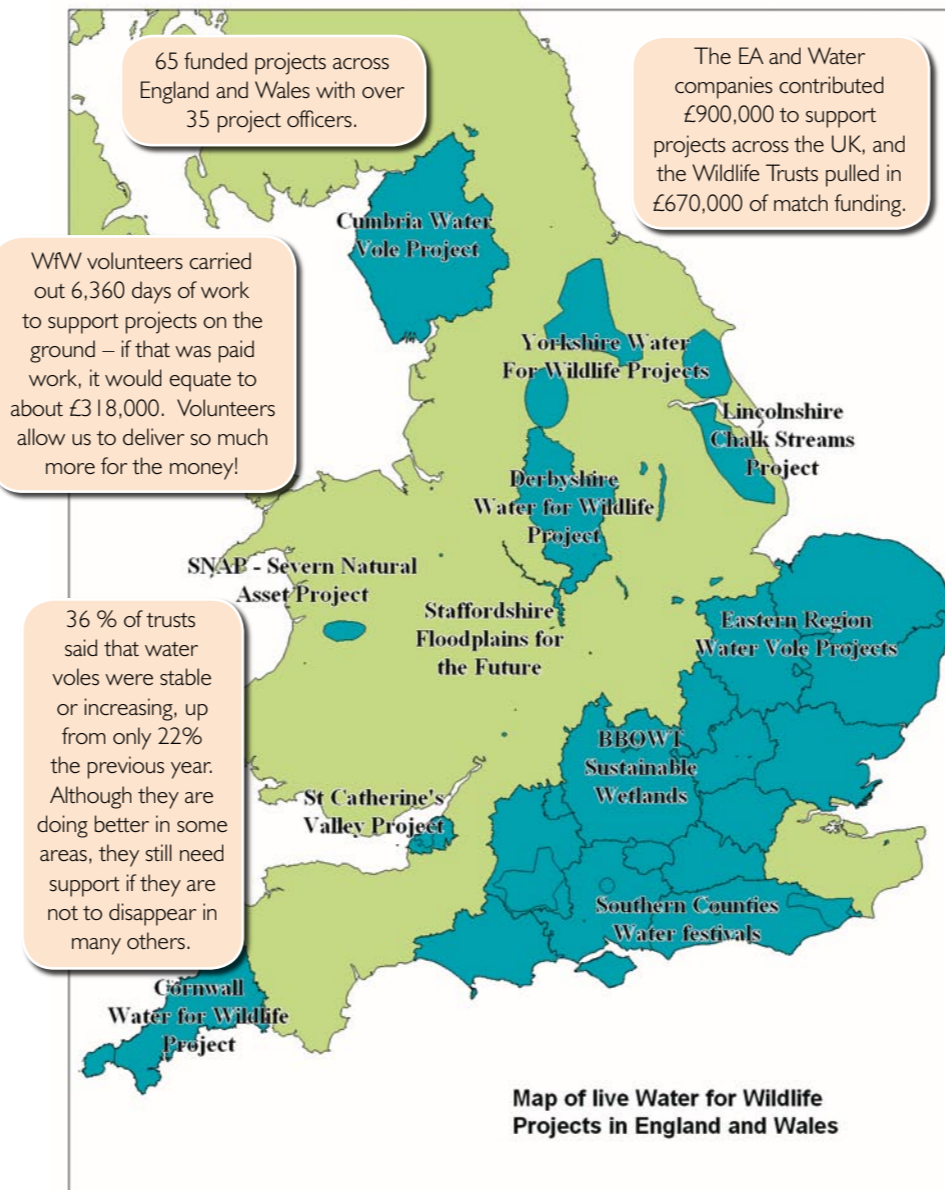


Water Voles

This much loved water-side animal is the fastest declining mammal species in the UK, at the time of last survey in 1996 the population had fallen by 89%, with further declines in the 1990's. More recently, populations have started to increase where habitat restoration and control of American Mink are being carried out.

"The Wildlife Trusts' Water Vole Project Officers are invaluable watchdogs for water vole conservation. Their work on co-ordinating local surveys and ensuring that development proposals take account of water vole conservation, is one of the main reasons why this threatened species is still seen at all" says Alastair Driver, National Conservation Manager, Environment Agency.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust has worked with partners to run a water vole re-introduction programme on the MoD range at Warcop, with mink control work and habitat restoration delivered by the Trust. Water vole colonies are now successfully established and being closely monitored.



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Case study 3: Habitat restoration

Chalk Streams

Chalk streams have been identified as a globally rare habitat that is suffering from pollution, modification and the competition for water resource. They are historically associated with extremely good water quality, supporting rare populations of plants and animals.



The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has been working with partners to create a chalk streams centre in Winchester, raising the profile of this important habitat. The Wessex Chalk Streams project works with landowners and fisheries groups to access funding for river restoration work. It also works with local communities to raise awareness and involve people in practical work on the river, as well as leading a 20-year river-wide strategy for the control of invasive plants

Case study 4: Public awareness raising and involvement

Southern Counties Water Festival

Following the successful Hampshire Water Festival that has been running since 2003, the idea of public events to celebrate water has been extended to cover East and West Sussex and Kent. Two new events were held at Arundel and Ashford in 2006, to take the message out about the importance of water to both wildlife and people.

The core WfW partners worked with local councils and other partners to deliver varied events ranging from walks and talks, arts and crafts, performance and film. Information on water issues was available, ranging from how to save it to how to maintain a garden pond. The events are hugely popular, with the Romsey event attracting in excess of 10,000 visitors.



Support from local volunteers also allows us to deliver a huge amount of work. One key area is training local people to monitor species such as water voles and supporting them to collect data which informs our work. Another is the Cumbria Tams project (pictured) which trains and supports local people to survey upland water bodies. Anglian Water staff have been trained by the local Water for Wildlife project to survey for otters at their sites.