

# POLLUTION

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*Healthy and unpolluted rivers, lakes and oceans are essential for healthy fish stocks, successful angling, and diverse and abundant wildlife. That's why the work of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign is so important.*

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**ANGLING TRUST**  
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# Background

The waters we fish are in crisis. Pollution is the main cause. Every water body in England assessed against the Water Framework Directive standard is failing. At its last assessment, the Environment Agency found that not one water body was considered to have achieved a good rating for its chemical health. Only 14% of water bodies were classed as good in terms of the ecological health. And things are becoming worse, not better. Our government has repeatedly said that the UK wishes to be a world leader in conserving both the environment and biodiversity but has frequently failed to back this up with action.

Our waterways are suffocating from all forms of pollution – from agricultural runoff to plastics, chemical pesticides to raw sewage – time is no longer a luxury we can afford in the fight for a cleaner tomorrow for our environment, our fish and our sport.

***The sources of all this pollution roughly break down as follows: 40% comes from agriculture and poor land management, 35% from the water industry (mostly from sewage spills), and 18% from urban runoff and transport (such as roads, urban drains, etc.)***

In our rivers, lakes, canals, sea or estuaries, the damage caused by litter pollution can be harmful to wildlife. It introduces toxic pollutions to the water as well as being an unsightly addition to our environments. Research from the Royal Holloway University in London found that 94,000 microplastic particles, many from larger pieces of plastic broken down, were flowing through parts of the River Thames every second.

## Why it matters

The two main ways pollution gets into our rivers and still waters is through either diffuse pathways or via single incidents. Diffuse pollution comes from sources such as leaching of pollution off land, through groundwater and via run off when it rains.

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Single incidents can include major failures and the deliberate release of pollution, such as through storm overflows releasing raw sewage.

The main sources of pollution that impact the health of our rivers and still waters are phosphate and nitrogen. They act to starve the water of oxygen, encourage the growth of algae, and reduce the quality of the water. Nitrogen comes from, among other things, the use of chemical fertiliser on the land, which then runs off into the rivers and still waters. Phosphates mostly come from human and animal waste but is also found in many domestic cleaning products.

***Litter is also a major problem, both from discarded litter and via the stuff people flush down the loo, which often finds its way into our rivers along with raw sewage.***

A sudden pollution incident, such as the failure a slurry storage, releasing tonnes of slurry into a river, can be catastrophic. It can wipe out thousands of fish within a short period of time, leaving a river stripped of all life: fish, invertebrates and other wildlife. Rivers can take years to recover.

Diffuse pollution, though not as visible, is often more damaging. It slowly kills the river, reducing its productivity, reducing water quality, slowly changing the environment fish need to thrive and prosper, impacting on spawning areas, reducing food supply, and destroying plant growth that provides shelter and cover. It builds up and, once it reaches a critical point, can tip over into the death of a river, as has been seen on large stretches of the Wye.

Pollution directly impacts on the quality and enjoyment of our fishing. It affects the health of our fish, their ability to respond to threat, their abundance, and the assemblage of fish in our waters.

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## What is the Angling Trust doing?

Pollution in our rivers, lakes, canals and seas is nothing new. Anglers have been at the forefront of fighting to protect our water environment from harm since the Anglers Co-operative Association was first set up in 1948. In more recent years, the ACA changed its name to the Anglers Conservation Association and then when angling organisations across the country merged to form the Angling Trust in 2009, the essential work of the ACA was taken on by Fish Legal who have continued the fight against pollution with even more determination.

***In the last 15 years they have won over £1.5 million in compensation for members impacted by pollution. They have taken the Government to court and changed the law five times. They have fought 140 legal cases on behalf of members and advised members on 181 planning threats to fisheries.***

This work is supported by the Angling Trust's campaigning and advocacy efforts. Through our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and Anglers Against Litter campaigns we demand action from Government and the Environment Agency and given anglers practical actions they can take.

We want to see the Government properly fund the Environment Agency, and the Environment Agency do a lot more, both in monitoring the state of our waters and in prosecuting polluters who do so much damage. It is simply not acceptable that polluters are not made to pay, and too often water companies get away with breaking the law.

The government must act on both sewage and agricultural pollution. We campaign tirelessly on this issue and work closely with MPs from across all political parties, through the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Angling.

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## How can you help?

- Be part of our fight for fish, fishing and the environment by becoming a member of the Angling Trust. Your membership subscription helps support our campaigns to protect waterways and get more people into fishing. Find out more at [www.anglingtrust.net/membership/](http://www.anglingtrust.net/membership/)
- Support the Anglers Against Pollution campaign. Raise concerns about pollution with your MP, local council, in the local media, and on social media.
- Wear our Anglers Against Pollution logo with pride by buying one of our T-shirts or Hoodies – all profits from sales support the Anglers Against Pollution campaign. [Click here to find out more.](#)
- Buy an Anglers Against Pollution supporters pack for just £4.99. You can find a stockist at [www.anglingtrust.net/get-involved/anglers-against-pollution/](http://www.anglingtrust.net/get-involved/anglers-against-pollution/)
- Anglers, clubs and fisheries can do a lot to help. If you see pollution, make sure you report it. Phone the Environment Agency on 0800 807060.
- Support our Anglers Against Litter initiatives by making sure you ‘Take 5’ every time you go fishing by collecting at least five pieces of litter or spending five minutes clearing litter. [Click here to find out more.](#)
- If they don’t do it already, ask your angling club to organise a litter clean up.
- Make sure you recycle your old fishing lines and spools. Look out for bins and collection points as part of the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme. [Click here to find out more.](#)

## Further reading

[Time to Fix the Broken Water Sector](#) – Angling Trust / Salmon & Trout Conservation  
[State of Our Rivers](#) – The Rivers Trust

# Thank You!

TO ALL OUR TRADE  
ASSOCIATE PARTNERS  
FOR SUPPORTING THE  
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ANGLING TRUST



IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE ANGLING TRADE AND WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT OUR WORK, FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED BY EMAILING [JOHN.CHEYNE@ANGLINGTRUST.NET](mailto:JOHN.CHEYNE@ANGLINGTRUST.NET)



## ANGLING TRUST

We are a not-for-profit organisation representing anglers, fighting for fish, fishing and the environment. We are recognised by the Government as the National Governing Body for angling in England and partner with Visit Wales and Natural Resources Wales to promote Fishing in Wales. We are a member-based organisation made up of anglers of all disciplines providing a united front to represent, grow and protect our sport. By becoming a member of the Angling Trust you are helping to protect the waterways you fish in and the fish which live within them, ensuring their health and protection for future generations.

[Click here for more information about how to join the Angling Trust](#)

Angling Trust Limited is a company limited by guarantee, company number 05320350.

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