



River Wensum, Norfolk © Major Gilbert/Alamy Stock Photo

# DELIVERING WATER SENSITIVE FARMING IN EAST ANGLIA

Across England, only 17% of rivers are classed as healthy by the Water Framework Directive, which is designed to preserve, restore and improve the water environment. They are under pressure from rural and urban pollution; over-abstraction to supply homes, businesses and agriculture; and physical modifications.



Swallowtail butterfly © Milo Bostock/Flickr



River Bure © Hugh Mehta/WWF



Bittern © Andy Hay/rspb-images.com

In East Anglia, The Rivers Trust and Norfolk Rivers Trust are working together with partners in the Cam & Ely Ouse and Broadland Catchment Partnerships to tackle some of these threats affecting rivers across the region. The project, which runs until June 2018, is providing support to farmers and land managers to implement changes in land management that help to enhance soil quality to improve water efficiency, increase yields, and reduce both the likelihood and impacts of run-off pollution. The project aims to directly improve river health, but to also help provide a long lasting partnership approach for delivering water sensitive farming and promoting the positive role that businesses have to play in improving the water environment.

## England's chalk streams

The majority of the world's chalk streams are located in England, with many in East Anglia. They are fragile, unique river systems, holding a supply of clear, mineral-rich water which provides a perfect habitat for important wildlife such as Brown trout, otter and kingfisher.



Damselfly © Andrew Parkinson/WWF

## Protecting and restoring East Anglia's rivers

Initially, the project is working in two catchments to deliver water sensitive farming.

### The Cam & Ely Ouse

- A large catchment draining significant parts of Cambridgeshire, Suffolk & Norfolk.
- Predominantly rural, including high-grade agricultural land.
- Home to over 30 chalk streams and rivers such as the Rivers Lark & Wissey.
- Encompasses the historical cities and towns of Cambridge, Ely & Bury St. Edmunds.
- Over 80% of water bodies in the catchment are failing to reach good health.
- Rural pollution and over-abstraction are significant challenges.

### Broadland Rivers

- Covers the Broads National Park - England's largest wetland home to 25% of England's most rare and endangered species.
- Home to the Wensum, one of England's iconic chalk streams.
- The dominant land use is arable agriculture (and horticulture) covering around 80% of the land.
- Over 90% of rivers in this area are failing to reach good health.
- Rural pollution and over-abstraction are significant issues.

## INCREASING THE IMPACT

The work undertaken in these two catchments will be used to promote and support more widespread adoption of water-sensitive farming; so helping improve rivers throughout England. To achieve this, the project will:

- Work with farmers across the catchments to support water sensitive farming and reduce the impacts of pollution derived from agricultural sources.
- Showcase these catchments as best practice to demonstrate the impact of a partnership approach to water sensitive farming.
- Develop support and strategies for wider adoption of this approach across other catchments.
- Inspire businesses - including manufacturers, supermarkets, and water companies - to take collective action.
- Talk to government to showcase the potential benefits these partnerships and projects can have on the water environment.
- Engage and inspire local communities to support the project and proactively engage in river catchment management.



Broadland Rivers catchment © Hugh Mehta/WWF

This work is part of the WaterLIFE project, an EC LIFE+ funded project led by WWF-UK, which aims to work with communities, business and government to improve the health of the freshwater environment. For more information, visit: [www.waterlife.org.uk](http://www.waterlife.org.uk)

It is also part of a three year programme between WWF-UK and Coca-Cola, to scale up previous sustainable farming work to aid supply chain sustainability and protect England's unique chalk streams.

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TOGETHER TO  
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