

River Wardens Newsletter: January– February 2015

Welcome to the new river wardens newsletter. This will be produced once every couple of months to update everyone on what we have been doing across Essex. If you have anything that you would like to contribute to the next newsletter then please get in contact with Emily Godfrey, the Essex Rivers Hub Assistant based at Essex Wildlife Trust emilyg@essexwt.org.uk

New Volunteers along the Colne!

At the beginning of February a meeting was set up to update those who are interested in the water vole translocation that happened five years ago on the Colne. Potential volunteers were also invited. Unfortunately, due to illness, there was no presentation given about the translocation project. The event however was extremely successful as we now have an additional 15 people interested in monitoring the river Colne (right)! Over the next month we will be getting landowner permissions and organising a second meeting; hopefully we will have surveys happening by the beginning of April! A huge thank you to all of those who showed interest.



Thaxted River Wardens Find and Solve Problems

This month, along with regular surveys and riverfly monitoring, members of our Thaxted group of wardens noticed a few issues on their monthly surveys. Firstly a damaged sewer pipe was noticed, this was reported. Anglian Water responded quickly and the pipe is now fixed and a pollution incident has been prevented (left). The other issue noticed was an area of the river bank that is heavily eroded and starting to undercut a pathway. This is a problem we will be trying to solve over the next month and hopefully we will get an action plan in place to prevent further damage.

New Twitter Page

Essex Rivers Hub has a new Twitter page @EssexRiversHub If you use twitter then please follow us and help to spread the word about all of the great work we are doing.



Volunteer Day

Last weekend, Essex Wildlife Trust held a volunteer day at Writtle College. This was extremely successful with over 80 people attending. Among this 80, 25 people signed up to be river wardens. This is a great success and we can't wait to start working with all of these new volunteers!



Mystery on the Wid

This month one of our wardens on the river Wid, John Allen, noticed a strange orange substance in the water (right). After sending the image around the conservation team at Essex Wildlife Trust, we decided to pass the picture on to Mike Neale at the Environment Agency. He quickly responded to reassure us that what we were seeing was actually iron ochre. This is common where there are iron rich soils, and where there is low flow it will be most obvious. He reassured us that it is not a pollution incident that we need to worry about. Thank you to Mike for helping us solve the mystery; and thank you to John for showing us something that many of us had never seen like this before!



New group in Radwinter

Last month I met with four volunteers based in and around Radwinter (left). They have kindly agreed to volunteer monitoring a large stretch of river and even getting involved in riverfly monitoring. Parish groups are really great as people can share knowledge and meet up regularly. If you think you would like to start a parish group then please get in contact.

New Records Centre Website

We have a new records centre website:

<http://www.essexwtrecords.org.uk>

If you have sightings that you would like to record, then please get involved and submit them. We hope to make this a key part of the river wardens project, making it really easy to submit your surveys; this is in progress and you will be updated when the system is in place. If you would like more information on our records centre website then please let us know.

Training Courses

We know that many of you are keen to start training courses. I am now being given dates when our trainers are available and will be spending the next couple of weeks booking venues. Once this is organised I will email out a timetable so that you can sign up. You can look forward to species ID, watervole & otter, riverfly, pollution monitoring and more. We would also love to hear suggestions.

EVENT: Completed Project on the Chelmer

On Friday the 20th of February, we will be holding an event at Little Waltham Memorial Hall. It is a chance to view our first habitat management project completed as part of the Essex Healthy Headwaters Catchment Restoration Project. All wardens along the river Chelmer will have received an invite about this, but if you are interested in attending then please get in contact.