

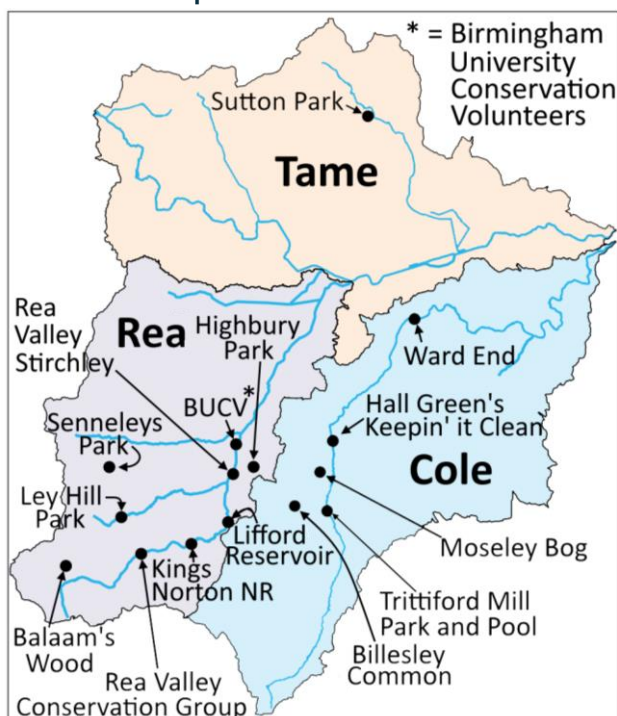
Newsletter: Summer 2024



Engagement

Welcome to Birmingham River Champions' first newsletter! Our project started last autumn with the view to train volunteers in river health monitoring across the West Midlands. This data is vital as monitoring cutbacks are leading to river pressures going undetected.

Since starting, **15 groups** and **over 50 volunteers** have signed up to our project, and we thank every one of you! These groups will monitor the Cole (four), Rea (six), or their tributaries (five). Sutton Park streams, located in the Plants Brook catchment feeding the Tame, will also be sampled.



Reminders

Volunteers can upload data on our **four** techniques *via* **this form**. **Urban Riverfly** and **water quality** (kits pending) samples together take \approx 30-mins. **Urban Outfall Safaris** take \approx 5-mins. For these, **monthly** surveys are recommended where possible. **Invasive species** records take less time if you spot unwanted visitors, like when 'Balsam bashing'.

Training

We've now ran **five** training sessions on **Urban Riverfly** – 'rivers answer to pond dipping'. These have been led by Dr James White from the University of Birmingham – who is a nationally certified riverfly trainer.



The river ranger team at Severn Trent have led training on **Urban Outfall Safari** – a way of monitoring pollution from the riverbank.



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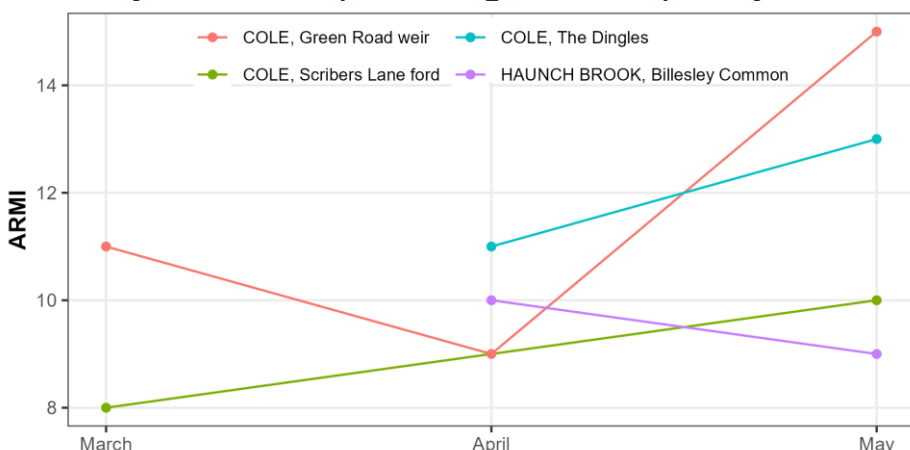
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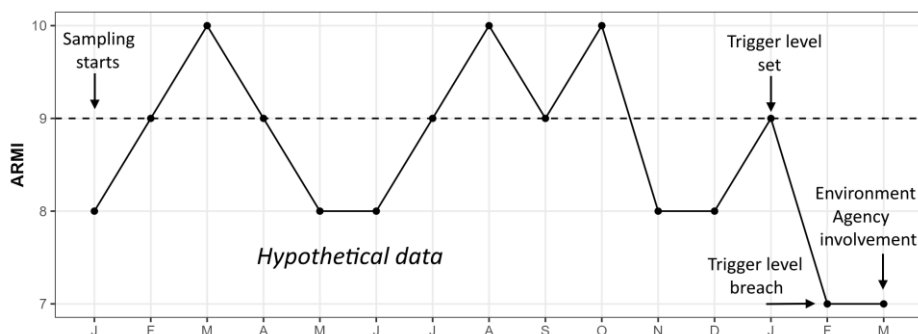


Results

We have now had **14** Urban Riverfly samples submitted, where **13** species and roughly **3500** specimens have been recorded. From this, we calculated Anglers River Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) scores to capture ecological health. Higher scores recently suggest improved river health, likely due to recovery after floods. Notably, the **'blue winged olive mayfly'** numbers have increased in the Cole recently, which requires high water quality levels.



A **special thanks** to The Friends of Trittiford Mill Park and Pool and Billesley Common who have been busy collecting multiple samples. This is key as the Environment Agency can set a **'trigger level'** after 1-year of monthly sampling, who will then investigate breaches to this when appropriate.



Hence your data can help protect your river!

Next steps

We are committed to **growing** Birmingham River Champions and engaging with more volunteer groups regionally. Any help **sharing** our project with others would be much appreciated!

We are developing an **online app** that will display project updates, resources and your citizen science data *via* interactive maps. This will be available soon.

We will soon be getting **water quality** test kits to measure pollution levels. We will provide training on this alongside Urban Riverfly and Urban Outfall Safari in the coming months - so stay tuned for details on future training events!



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