

Newsletter: December 2024



Overview

Hello and seasons greetings river champions, thank you for taking the time to check at our latest newsletter. Just a few updates on things achieved in recent months, including:

- New volunteer group monitoring;
- Our largest training event yet & connected research;
- Pollution incidents and restoration opportunities;
- Where to find project information

New recruits

Since our last newsletter, we've had the Friends of Lifford Reservoir start monitoring the Rea (see below for further details on this) and Friends of Ley Hill Park have begun undertaking surveys along the Stone Brook. We've also had students at the University of Birmingham started monitoring the Bourn Brook and Chad Brook on campus. The group have already gathered multiple samples and will be contributing to the university's biodiversity improvement and sustainability aspirations. As we enter 2025, we are committed to get as **wider** and **diverse range** of volunteer groups involved with our project - so please do **encourage other groups to sign up!**

Training / accompanying research -

On Saturday 19th October, we delivered our **largest ever training session** where we had over 40 volunteers with us in Cannon Hill Park. Blending university and 'friends of' volunteer groups worked very well and the day was a great success, where we improvised with bug "speed dating" - rotating around different trays of macroinvertebrate samples. Also on hand that day was Neve Hughes, a masters student at the university who will compare the results from different groups and is assessing the accuracy of the national 'Urban Riverfly' technique that we use.



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birminghamriverchampions@gmail.com

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Pollution / restoration -

Our rivers are sadly experiencing pollution incidents regionally, which is why your data is so important for targeting solutions!

Along the Cole (top), in Springfield - along the same site that experienced a burst pipe in the [last newsletter](#) - the Birmingham River Champions recorded outflows discharging **polluted water** and registered this with Severn Trent's incident team. On the Rea (bottom), the Friends of Lifford Reservoir **found no critters** in their Urban Riverfly sample last month. Project leads visited last week and found various species, but still indicated a stressed ecosystem. We deduced that the site is being impacted by a Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) system just upstream.

But thanks to the Environment Agency and Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, there are visions to restore both of these stretches - with the Rea at Lifford undergoing works **next year** as part of the '[Natural Rivers and Green Corridors](#)' project.



Reminders

- Groups can upload their surveys via our [online survey form](#).
- Please check out [our website](#) to see results that **you** have collected.
- You can check out where and when CSOs have been discharged on [Severn Trent's website](#) – definitely worth checking out after heavy rain.
- Please contact us if you would like **more support**, project partners are keen to help support data collection and help make in impact.

FROM ALL OF US AT THE BIRMINGHAM RIVER CHAMPIONS, ENJOY THE FESTIVE BREAK AND HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS ALL! WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU AGAIN IN THE NEW YEAR.



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