

Inspiring a Positive Future by Connecting People and Nature



RIVERFLY—citizen science in action on the Torridge

Riverfly is a national project that connects people with their local rivers; how they function and what some of the wildlife can tell us about their ecological health.

Connecting to nature: What was the 'nature' and who was connected to it?



Each volunteer samples the bottom living invertebrates at their sample site once per month from May to September.

The invertebrates are separated into eight indicator groups that reflect the different degrees of tolerance the invertebrate species have to pollution. The numbers in each group counted and based on those, an index is calculated (the ARMI). The higher the ARMI score, the higher the water quality at that particular site.

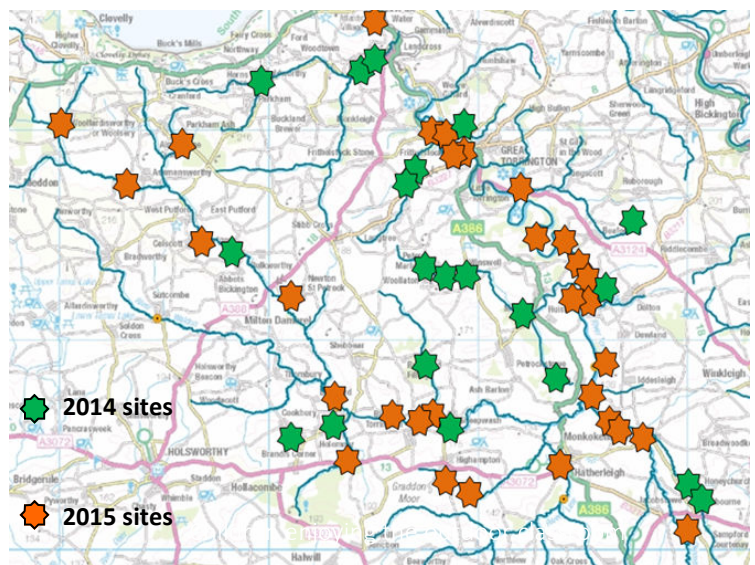
The ARMI score is compared to a 'trigger level' for that site set by the Environment Agency. If it falls below the trigger level, the Environment Agency is informed and they investigate the nature of the breach and if necessary, take the appropriate action

How was the Biosphere involved?

During 2014 and 2015 the North Devon Biosphere, using the community engagement capacity within the North Devon Nature Improvement Area Project, recruited and trained volunteers to take part in the Riverfly scheme within the Torridge River catchment.

Two training days were organised, one in May and one in July 2014.

Each trained volunteer has been sampling a point on the River Torridge or one of its tributaries on a monthly basis



Devon
Wildlife Trust

The Biosphere has also helped promote the scheme within local communities and with partners, and has helped gain the funding to pay for the volunteers' training and equipment.

The Biosphere has also provided the ongoing volunteer support and project co-ordinator functions for the scheme



The Future - In 2015, we intend to increase number of volunteers involved and the number of sites covered. There has also been interest in setting up a Riverfly volunteer network in the Biosphere's River Taw catchment area

For the community/people involved, what has changed because of what was done?

Learning and research is one of the three core functions of a Biosphere and is a key part of the journey towards more sustainable decision making. Citizen science activities such as Riverfly are part of this journey and involve as many people as possible in providing observations and data on our local environment.

The Nature Improvement Area (NIA) project is led on behalf of the Biosphere Partnership by the Devon Wildlife Trust. It is working with communities to support them in learning more about their local environment and the social and economic benefits that it brings to the area. Through active participation and engagement the project is bringing people together and increasing their awareness of and pride in their shared natural heritage and strengthening the connection between people and place.

50 volunteers have been trained

50 separate sites in the Torridge catchment sampled

290 samples taken since July 2014



£2816 – the amount granted by the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) to buy invertebrate guides and the right sampling and sorting equipment for the volunteers, and venue hire for training. Torridge District Council's Biodiversity fund provided £1394.



Results showing the number and status of samples

