

# Riverfly project shows top water quality

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Water quality, habitat and flow are the usual measures of river quality but riverflies are sensitive indicators of water quality and the size of the population reflects the health of the river.

Numbers of riverflies are being noted to establish the health of the River Wensum in a new Anglers Monitoring Initiative (AMI) by the Riverfly Partnership.

Launched on 1 April at a workshop hosted by Anglian Water at Taverham Mill Fishery and Nature Reserve, the AMI trains volunteers and conservation organisations to monitor water quality in their local rivers. This extra monitoring can provide the Environment Agency with an early warning of a pollution issue.

Volunteers will take macro-invertebrate (animals without a backbone that can be seen without a microscope) samples from eight sites on the River Wensum regularly throughout the year. They will record the families of mayfly, stonefly and caddis fly larvae and freshwater shrimp present. The species of riverfly they find will tell the partnership much about the water quality and river habitats.

The Wensum Riverfly Programme is funded and supported by the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, the Norfolk Anglers' Conservation Association (NACA), Sayer's Meadow Fishery and Ketteringham's Fishery.

Amy Buckenham, Environmental Monitoring Officer for the Environment Agency said: "It's good to be able to support the Riverfly volunteers - the extra people and pairs of eyes on the river bank will be really useful. It's great to see anglers getting involved in conservation which will ultimately benefit fish. We'd like to see more groups set up like this one."

Biodiversity is a vital consideration for Anglian Water. Sites such as water and sewage treatment works provide important habitat for a variety of species.

Kylie Jones, Anglian Water's Biodiversity Surveyor, said: "Our Taverham Mills site provides an excellent setting for recreation including angling and nature walks as well as being a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

"We are very keen to gather information regarding biodiversity across all of our sites and the Riverfly Partnership is a great opportunity to help create a detailed picture of the biodiversity at Taverham Mill."

For further information and images

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