

Improving water quality in the River Avon – how can you help?

We want to improve water quality in the River Avon in Devon. This briefing note sets out the pressures facing the water environment in the catchment.



The Environment Agency in the South West has got ambitious targets to get 43 per cent of our 1,100 waterbodies into 'good' ecological status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) by 2015. The WFD looks at 37 measures of water quality, such as the health of river insects and plants.

The River Avon currently does not meet the standards to be classified as being at 'good' ecological status.

The River Avon, also known as the River Aune, rises in the southern half of Dartmoor National Park. In 1957, the Avon reservoir was formed when a dam was built near to where the river leaves

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Dartmoor. After leaving the moor it passes through South Brent, Avonwick and Aveton Gifford and flows into the sea at Bigbury on Sea. Land use in the Avon catchment is largely agricultural with livestock grazing and arable farming.

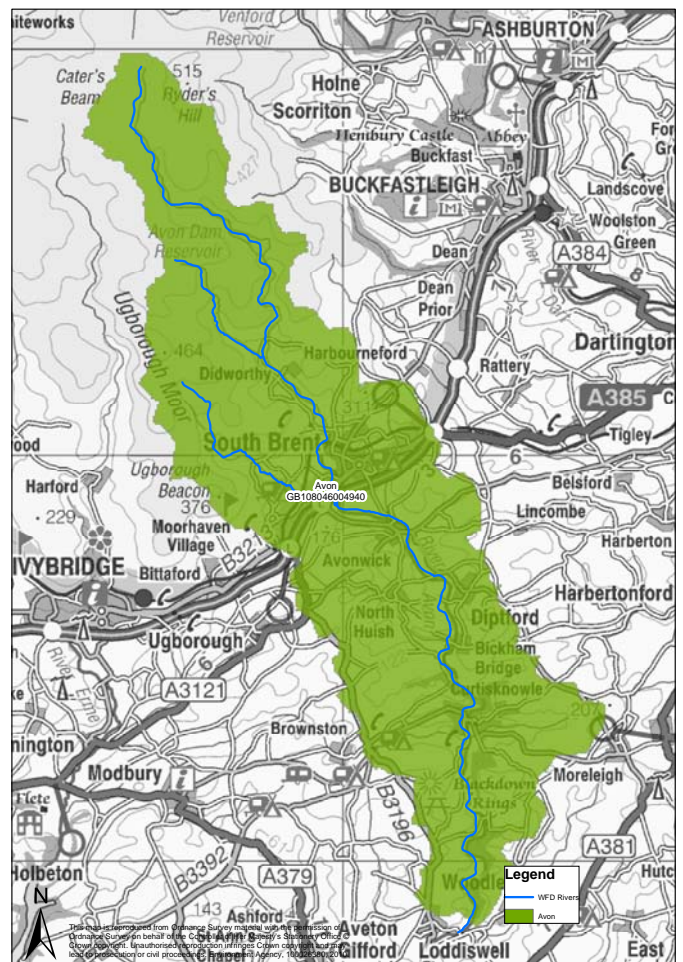
There are two main reasons why this waterbody is failing:

pH

- Low pH values in the waterbody are the result of moorland acidification in the upper catchment

Fish

- Salmon, bullheads and eels are present in lower numbers than expected
- There may be natural and man-made barriers preventing fish from moving around freely or migrating to spawn
- Moorland acidification and the influence of a reservoir could possibly be reducing the diversity of fish species



We are gathering further information to help us identify sources of pollution and understand whether they are affecting the ecology of the river.

How can you help?

These are your rivers - there are real opportunities for you and your community to get involved by:

- sharing what you know about the rivers with us;
- reporting any pollution you see;
- sharing your ideas about how we can improve water quality and habitat in these rivers
- getting involved in projects to improve water quality and habitats in this area.

We need your ideas and local knowledge of the challenges and opportunities in the area, so together we can improve the quality of this river. For example:

Opportunities

- environmental projects
- improvements to water quality
- habitat creation
- fish improvements

Challenges

- reports of pollution
- problem sites
- damaging activities

Please contact **Anna Harlow** on 01392 316233 or email: AEPDevon&Cornwall@environment-agency.gov.uk if you've got information or ideas that could help, or want to get involved.

Would you like to find out more about us, or about your environment?

Then call us on 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6)

Approximate call costs: 8p plus 6p per minute (standard landline).
Please note charges will vary across telephone providers.

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