

The Environment Agency is delivering a Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS) to better protect homes and businesses from flooding in the Kent Catchment, enhance the local environment and improve community amenities.

This briefing will provide you with an update on the habitat surveys and environmental assessments due to be carried out this summer across the Upper Kent catchment.

Habitat surveys and environmental assessments update

Over the coming months we will undertake a range of habitat assessments and environmental assessments across the Upper Kent Catchment. This work will broaden our knowledge as we continue to build a profile of the area. They will involve surveys of wildlife and habitats both in the river and on land, as well as the identification of any protected animals or species.

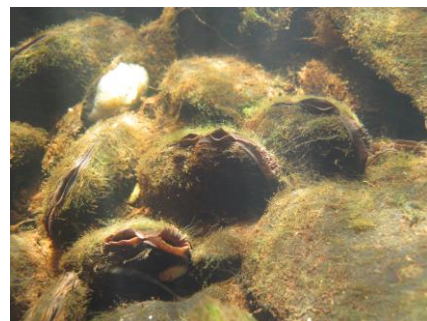
This work is important as it will ensure that we fully assess and consider local environmental factors and opportunities for environmental improvements when developing the flood risk management scheme.

What's involved?

A combination of desk-based studies and field surveys are conducted to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and to help conserve and improve biodiversity.

In river - A combination of general walkover surveys are used to map habitats such as large areas of gravel that are used by spawning salmon, and targeted species surveys, using glass-bottomed buckets to search the riverbed for, for example, white-clawed crayfish and freshwater pearl mussels. This allows experienced ecologists to determine the areas of the river that support the greatest number of these species and are particularly important for specific life-stages.

On land – Surveys provide a baseline identifying species such as birds, bats, otters, badgers, and their habitats. This process also identifies potential impacts on environmental features that will be taken into account through the scheme design. Dominant and notable plant species are recorded, as well as specific points of notable conservation interest, evidence of, or habitats that may support legally protected and notable species.



Fresh water pearl mussels



Badger set

This work is due to commence from the end of July and continue throughout the summer.

A river condition assessment - As part of this work we carry out an evaluation of the overall health and quality of river conditions. River characteristics such as width, length, shape, riverbank vegetation and structure, and riverbed substrate (or layer) are assessed through a combination of desk-based studies and site visits. The assessment is required as part of our commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which aims to enhance existing habitats and/or create new habitats through the planning process.



White-clawed crayfish



Adult white-clawed crayfish

What will this tell us?

Whilst the aim of the Kendal and Upper Kent Catchment Flood Risk Management Scheme is to protect people and properties from flooding, we also want to create a lasting benefit for the community and local environment. We plan to enhance the river corridor throughout the extent of the scheme, managing links with other projects to help increase habitat and biodiversity.

As with any other flood risk management scheme, there will be some impacts. However, we continue to undertake habitat surveys and environmental assessments to ensure we understand those risks and ensure they can be managed. By identifying opportunities across the catchment, our proposals will not only provide mitigation to lessen the impacts, but will result in an improved environment for wildlife, the community, and visitors to the area.



Habitat survey

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