

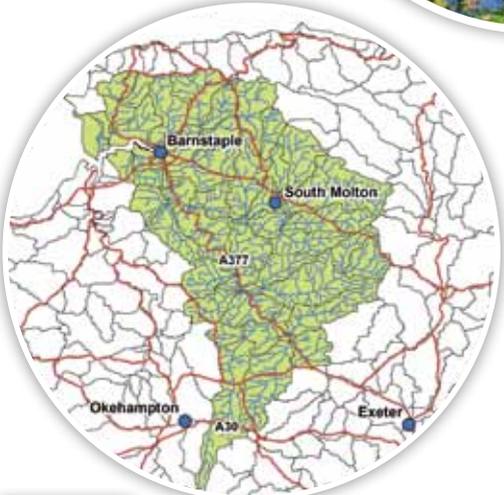
What do we hope to achieve?

The work delivered through the Taw River Improvement Project will:

- improve water quality and help support water resource regulation
- improve the ecological health and biodiversity of the river and surrounding habitats
- contribute to flood attenuation and management
- improve fish stocks
- improve the leisure environment for recreation and angling
- increase capacity for carbon sequestration within the catchments.



Support Your Local River
 Help us to ensure a healthy environment for future generations. You can find out more about the Westcountry Rivers Trust, the project and how to support our work by visiting our website at www.wrt.org.uk



Our Project Partners



Taw

RIVER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Through the **Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP)**, the Westcountry Rivers Trust aims to restore river and riparian habitats, improve river connectivity for fish and other wildlife and reduce the amount of diffuse pollution entering the rivers.

Your River, Your Catchment

The Taw catchment is large and varied with the main Taw headwaters rising on Dartmoor and Exmoor.

These moorland streams quickly move into more productive agricultural land covering a range of enterprises, from very extensive beef and sheep grazing to more intensive arable or dairy use. The predominantly rural nature of the catchment means that it is extremely important for agriculture and is also home to communities from the Beacon villages on the Dartmoor fringe to the larger conurbations of Barnstaple and Braunton.

The river Taw flows through the protected landscape of Dartmoor

National Park at Belstone and South Tawton Common and to the north-east the catchment borders the edge of Exmoor National Park. This sizeable catchment includes a number of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), County Wildlife Sites (CWS's) and National Nature Reserves (NNR's), as well as North Devon's North Devon's Biosphere Reserve. The rivers and streams that make up the river Taw catchment include the Mole, Bray, Little Dart and Lapford Yeo. These multiple designations contain some of the finest

nature conservation sites in the South West and host a diverse array of wildlife. The Taw river system, the land in its catchment and the ecosystems it supports, provide for the communities that live in the area. We enjoy them as places to live, work and spend our free time, they provide us with food to eat and water to drink and they influence how water is stored and moves throughout the landscape. They are the lifeblood of our countryside.



The Project

Fish populations have become impacted by a number of issues such as lack of access to their spawning grounds in upper reaches due to man-made barriers. A number of barrier removals and fish passes will serve to re-connect river habitats, opening up further sections for colonisation. The river habitat itself may be degraded, either from diffuse pollution, sedimentation or over-shading. The prevalence of agriculture means that land use must also be considered for any impacts on the watercourses and riparian habitats. Low level diffuse pollution may originate from fertiliser or nutrient run off, which causes enrichment and will be detrimental to the natural ecological balance. Soil erosion caused by poaching of the ground by livestock,

over stocking or intensive cropping can result in soils being mobilised by rainfall and ending up in the river. This build-up of sediment effectively smothers the riverbed which should provide clean, oxygenated gravel beds for fish spawning. The soil also picks up and transports nutrients. Phosphorus binds to sediment particles and hence is easily mobilised from land to water.

To tackle the issues in the Taw catchments, the Westcountry Rivers Trust will be working in partnership with other organisations to deliver: Farm plans and advice, including:

- free and confidential farm visits to assess impacts on the river catchment.
- grant assistance for fencing of

watercourses and provision of drinking points or alternative drinking supplies for stock, improvements to gateways and crossings.

- free soil testing to enable appropriate management and reduce inputs to watercourses.
- In-stream and riparian habitat management, including:**
- selective coppicing and woodland creation and management to promote a diversity of bankside vegetation and prevent excessive erosion
 - management of woody debris to provide diversity of in-stream habitat
 - gravel augmentation to restore areas of fish spawning habitat and increase population numbers and survival of fish including salmon, trout and bullheads, in the early stages of their life cycle.

Improve river connectivity and passage for fish including salmon, sea trout and eels past man-made obstacles.

Advice on woodland management, planting and grant applications. Wetland, coastal and floodplain management advice.

Surveys to help conservation work for the endangered freshwater pearl mussel.

Scientific research with key academic partners to monitor and further understand issues across the catchment relating to water quality, such as soil and phosphate inputs.