

# EXTRA EXTRA!

## READ ALL ABOUT IT

### Your country's rivers need you!

This is an edited version of a story from  
© The Guardian (7/9/2024)

A new “Big River Watch” scheme has asked for the general public to help monitor the state of Britain’s rivers after years of deregulation.

Rivers will be checked for sewage and other pollution by the general public this month.

Reduced regulations since the UK left the European Union mean there is little independent monitoring of the state of rivers in Britain. The new government has not indicated whether it intends to continue this deregulation.

“Citizen scientists” have therefore been increasing efforts to check rivers for pollution to try to find the true level of the problem.

The Rivers Trust has developed an app for its “Big River Watch”. It is asking users to spend 15 minutes by their local river and to send information on river wildlife and signs of pollution.

Tessa Wardley, a director at the Rivers Trust, said: “We know that no rivers in England are in good overall health, but we also know that environmental monitoring is currently very sparse.”



She continued, “As well as learning where pollution and wildlife are spotted, we also want to know how spending time near rivers affects people’s wellbeing, so I’d encourage anyone and everyone to spend some time by their river and make their voice heard.”

This week, the government announced it would force water bosses to clean up rivers in England and Wales.

Water bosses who attempt to hide sewage spills could be jailed for up to two years under the plans. Companies could also be punished for failing to meet environmental targets.

The environment secretary, Steve Reed, also announced a review into the structure of the water industry.

However, campaigners said these measures alone would not end the sewage crisis and that regulators needed more funding and strengthening. They are calling for a plan with targets and milestones to reduce spills of human waste into rivers and seas.

## TRUE OR FALSE?

**Not all news is based on truth. Do you think this story is based on true or false news?**

Most of Britain’s rivers are not safe to swim in due to high pollution levels.



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## READ MORE



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by Anna Pêgo  
Greystone Books

## LEARN MORE



### Learn

Watch [this report](#) on why Britain’s rivers are polluted.



# CHECK YOUR FACTS

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## WHAT

is the government doing to address pollution?

**ANSWER:**  
Forcing water companies to help

## WHO

is being asked to send in information about river pollution?

**ANSWER:**  
The general public

## WHERE

are people being asked to collect information about pollution?

**ANSWER:**  
Their local rivers

**WHEN**  
is the Big River Watch?

**ANSWER:**  
September 2024

## WHY

have scientists asked the public for help?

**ANSWER:**  
The UK's rivers have not been surveyed for five years

## HOW

can people send in information about river pollution?

**ANSWER:**  
Through a new app

