

The image features a dark blue background with large, flowing, abstract shapes in a lighter blue and teal color. The RYA logo is prominently displayed in the center in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

RYA

Clean Water Sports Alliance
World Sailing March 2025

Phil Horton, RYA Sustainability Manager

RYA

Who we are



100,000 members



250,000 volunteers



2,200 recognised training centres



1,500 clubs and class associations



The home of competitive racing and the British Sailing Team



A respected voice



RYA
NORTHERN
IRELAND

RYA
CYMRU • WALES

RYA
SCOTLAND



RYA

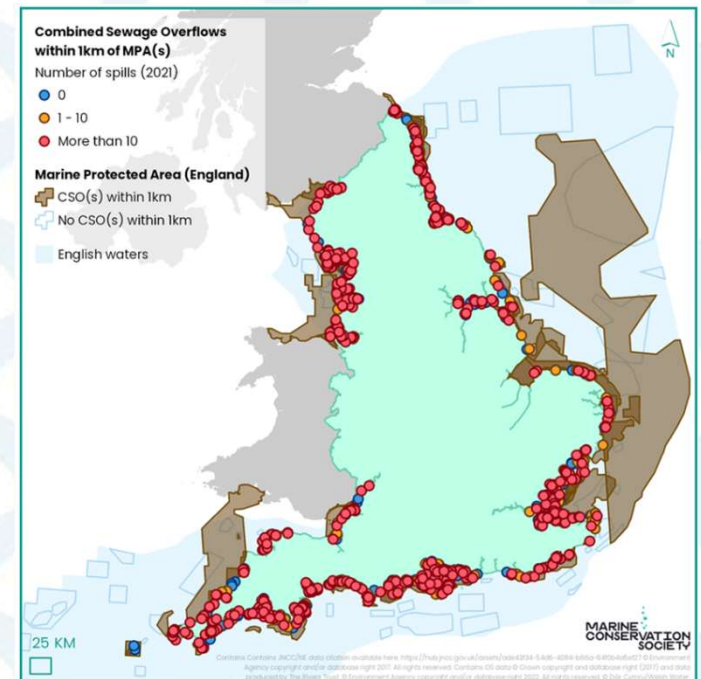
Clean Water Recent History

2022 – increasing concern over sewage pollution

- Brading Haven Yacht Club joins Marine Conservation Society action
- Northern Ireland events cancelled



©Friends of the Earth



Avian Flu 2023

- Midlands clubs closed due to health concerns
- Big impact on rowing as well as sailing
- Offer from a consultancy to look at a wide range of water quality issues
- Recognition of need to balance messaging around risk against fear of participation



Water Quality Group set up Feb 2023

Common concern over sewage pollution

- RYA
- Angling Trust
- Triathlon
- Rowing
- Paddling
- Outdoor Swimmer Magazine
- Swim England



Work with Surfers Against Sewage July 2023

- Members and clubs keen to see RYA taking action
- Others already well established in this space
- Accept messaging different from RYA's historic approach
- Good response to more activist approach

THE END SEWAGE POLLUTION MANIFESTO

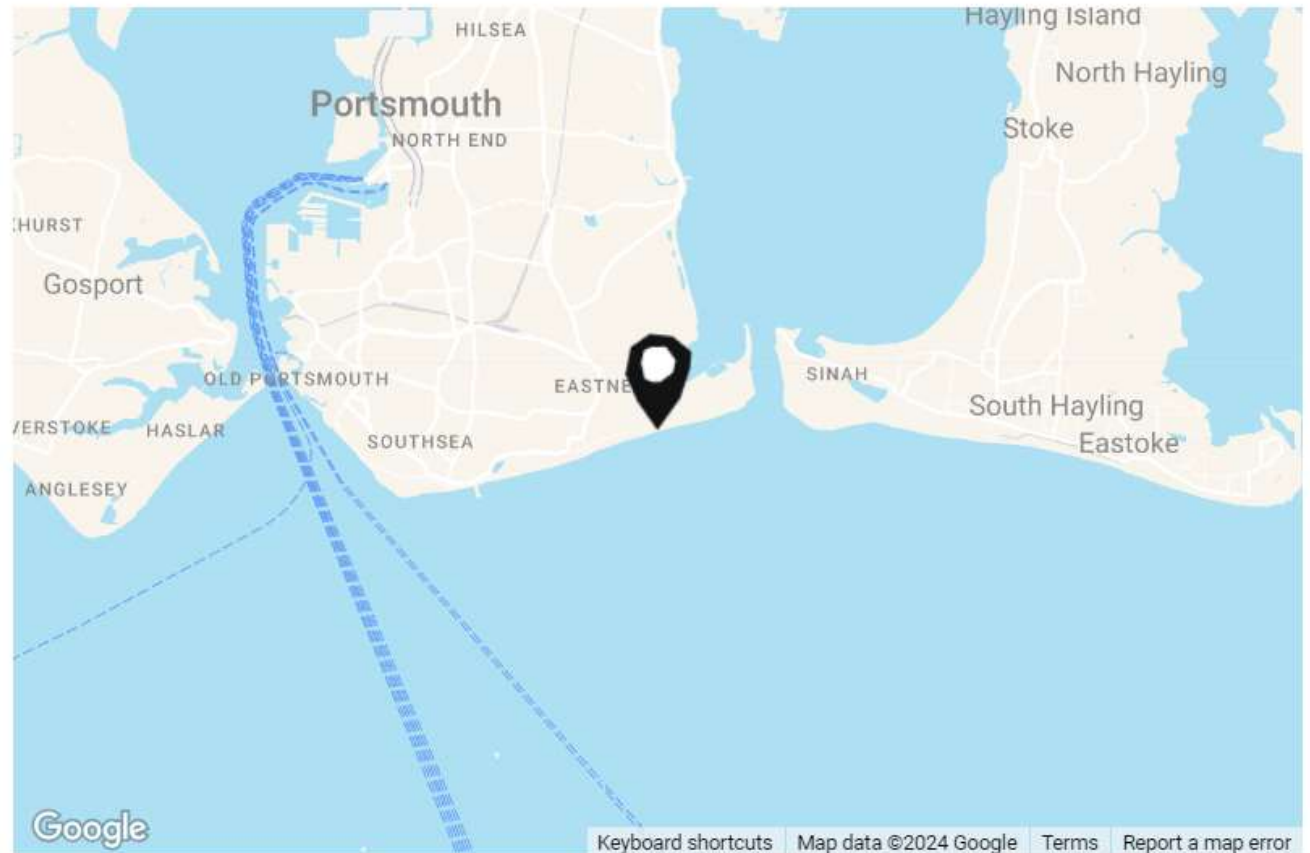


Kite Europeans September 2023



**EASTNEY**

There has been a sewage discharge at Eastney which started at 13:15 on September 17, 2023. Southern Water is responsible for this discharge.



RYA Southampton International Boat Show 2023



RYA

(Lack of) Regulation

Legislative Background

1991	2000	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	202?
Water Industry Act	EU Water Framework Directive	Environment Act	Storm Overflow Reduction Plan	Environmental Improvement Plan	Water Special Measures Bill	Water Commission	“Radical further legislation”

Where has this got us?

- No single stretch of river in England is in good overall health
- Just 15% of English river stretches reach good ecological health standards
- Office for Environmental Protection: “Government remains largely off track to meets its environmental ambitions”



RYA

Regulation

Economic Regulation

ofwat

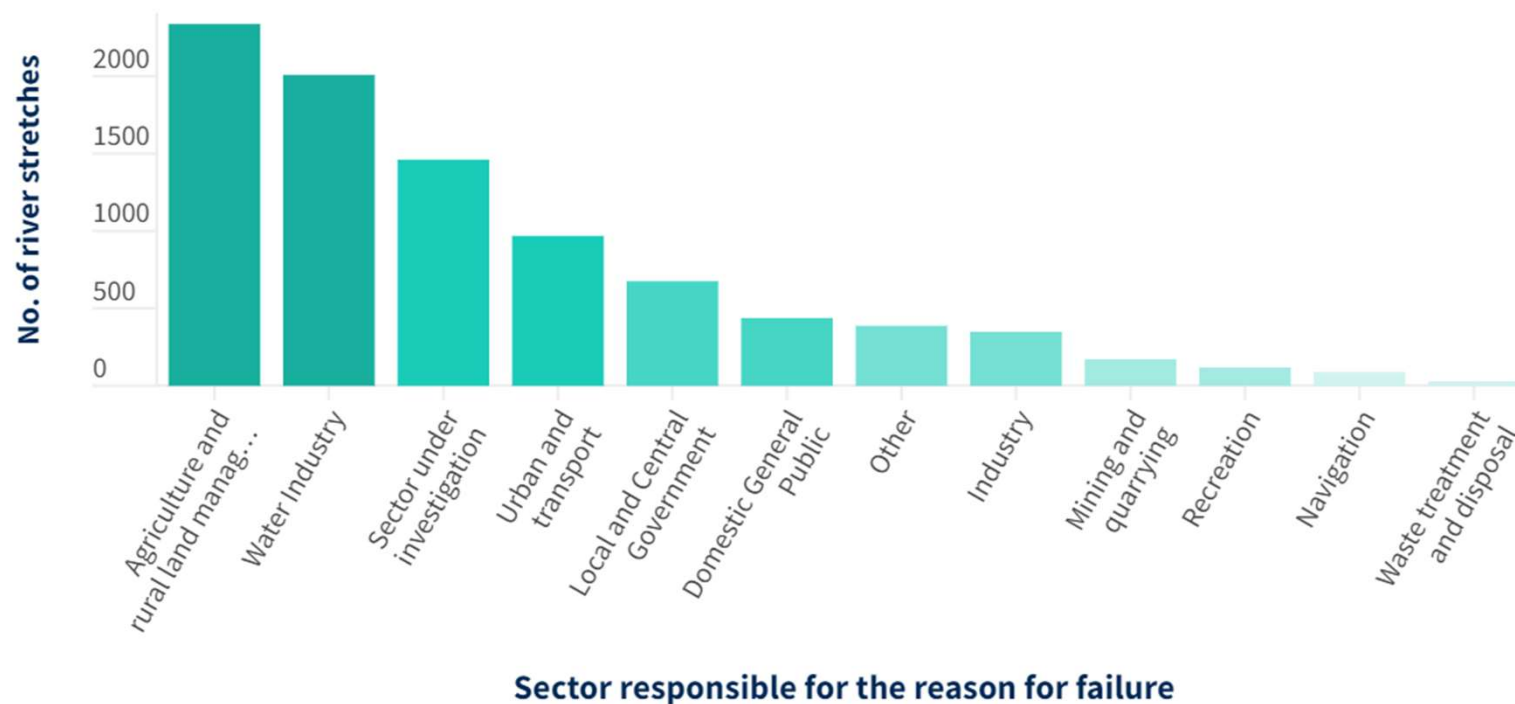


Environmental Regulation



UK Situation

Number of river stretches failing WFD assessments, with the reason for failure attributed to sectors of the economy



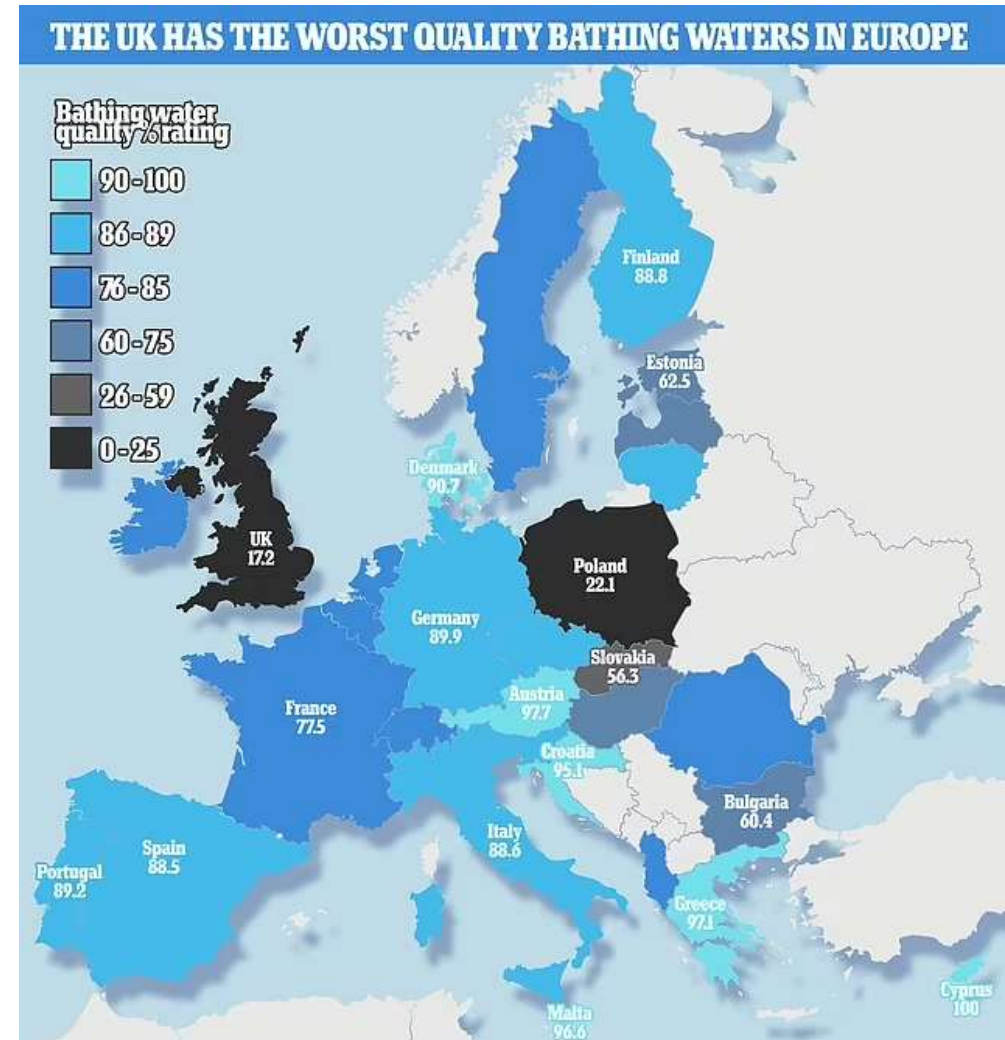
Focus on bathing waters

ONLY Bathing Waters are tested – and ONLY between May – September

Significant criteria to be designated

Before Feb 2024, only 3 inland rivers had bathing water status on ONE stretch

Different protocols for inland and coastal waters – adds complexity for event organisers and sporting organisations



RYA

The Clean Water Sports Alliance





Full Alliance formed
October 2023

Launch of Campaign 30th
April 2024

CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE



OUR VISION

Healthy and nature rich blue spaces across the UK for everyone to enjoy water sports.

WHO ARE WE?

A coalition of National Governing Bodies who represent almost 450,000 members, elite athletes, participants and many more water users. Together we rely on the use of UK waters for sport and recreation. We are advocating for the restoration of our blue spaces for the enjoyment of all. We want these environments to be free of pollution and havens for wildlife. We are working together to drive positive change, improve water quality and the health of our blue spaces for all.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Further and faster action on pollution. Improving the health of UK waters by 2030.

Enable people to make real-time informed choices about where and when to participate in water-based sports and activities.

Recognition of all recreational water users across decision making and policy.

WE'RE CALLING FOR...

ASK 1

Regulators to be adequately funded to monitor, investigate and hold polluters to account, harnessing nature based solutions.

ASK 2

Enable accurate access to real-time water quality information all year round including the compulsory monitoring of all sewage outlets; recognition of open source science relating to water quality and the creation of a centralised information hub for all water sports users.

ASK 3

Advocate a change from 'bathing waters' to 'recreation waters' within government policy to recognise the wide range of activities that depend on clean water.

WHY WE EXIST

In just the last 6 months of 2021, approximately 69 paddle sport training sessions were lost, equating to 106 hours in Nottingham alone.



In the 2023 triathlon season, an unprecedented number of events were changed to duathlons after the swim being cancelled due to water quality concerns.



In April 2024, a number of rowers who participated in the Boat Race became ill through E-coli contamination in the River Thames.



Formula Kite European Championships in Portsmouth September 2023 were subject to sewage discharges along the coast in the days leading up to the event.



Only 15% of rivers achieved good or above ecological status in England creating a serious public health risk and a threat to wildlife.

15%

£4bn

Biodiversity is also being put under immense pressure, costing the UK £4 billion a year.

RYA

Coverage in images



INDEPENDENT

UK watersports facing 'pivotal moment' as authorities urged to tackle pollution

seven governing bodies have come together to form the Clean Water Sports Alliance.

Twitter Credits · 2 hours ago



There was a lot of water quality in the Thames for the Boat Race Under 19s (RYA) (RYA)

"End the discharge of raw sewage" – Sports join forces to demand clean UK water



Laura Hodgetts
April 30, 2024

f t p 0 shares

Seven national governing bodies of water-based sports have announced they're coming together to form an alliance calling for clean open water across the UK.



Water that is unfit to host water-based sport has caused events, training sessions and activities to be cancelled or postponed. Photo credit: RYA

Practical Boat Owner
EST. 1967

MailOnline

UK watersports facing 'pivotal moment' as authorities urged to tackle pollution

By PA MEDIA

PUBLISHED: 12:11, 30 April 2024 | UPDATED: 12:11, 30 April 2024

f Share t p

Watersports in the UK face a pivotal moment because of pollution and action must be taken before it is too late, according to the head of the Royal Yachting Association.

The RYA is one of seven governing bodies representing water-based sports that have come together to form the Clean Water Sports Alliance.

The CWSA, which also includes the Angling Trust, British Rowing, British Triathlon, GB Outrigger, Paddle UK and Swim England, is calling for greater and faster action to tackle the release of sewage and other pollution into UK waterways.

Sports come together for clean water

by RYA Press Office 30 Apr 05:55 BST

RYA



British Triathlon Outrigger © RYA

Seven national governing bodies of water-based sports have announced they're coming together to form an alliance calling for clean open water across the UK.

The Clean Water Sports Alliance of Angling Trust, British Rowing, British Triathlon, GB Outrigger, Paddle UK, Royal Yachting Association and Swim England has united over the issue of water pollution, setting the vision to achieve healthier and more vibrant habitats across the UK for swimming, sailing and other water-based activities.

YACHTS
ANDYACHTING.COM

sky news

UK water sports demand clean-up, blaming sewage for illness and event cancellations

The Clean Water Sports Alliance of seven national bodies representing people who sail, swim and row, among others, says dirty water is forcing event cancellations and making activities ill. It wants the government to tackle the problem and hold polluters to account.

Emma Gledhill
Content Editor, Sky News

© SKY NEWS, 30 APRIL 2024, 10:00 AM



CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE

Working to make our waterways cleaner and safer for everyone



Broadcast coverage

Radio & television channel

BBC London

BBC Radio 2, 4, 5 Live, 6 Music + regions

BBC Scotland, Wales + regions

Greatest Hits Radio
(South Coast, Berkshire & North
Hampshire, Surrey & East Hampshire)



CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE

Total press coverage

Media outlets	395
---------------	-----

Online coverage

Media outlet	Reach*
BBC Online	527,987,809
Mail Online	369,259,679
Guardian Online	322,000,000
The Independent	109,458,054
Telegraph	76,025,319

*Monthly visits sourced Vuelio



**CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE**

Marine press

Media outlet	Reach*
Practical Boat Owner	147,330
Yachts & Yachting	13,187
Towpath Talks	3,806

*Monthly visits sourced Vuelio



**CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE**

CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE



WHO ARE WE?

A coalition of National Governing Bodies who represent almost 450,000 members, elite athletes, participants and many more water users. Together we rely on the use of UK waters for sport and recreation.

We are advocating for the restoration of our blue spaces for the enjoyment of all. We want these environments to be free of pollution and havens for wildlife.

We are working together to drive positive change, improve water quality and the health of our blue spaces for all.

OUR VISION

Healthy and nature rich blue spaces across the UK for everyone to enjoy water sports.

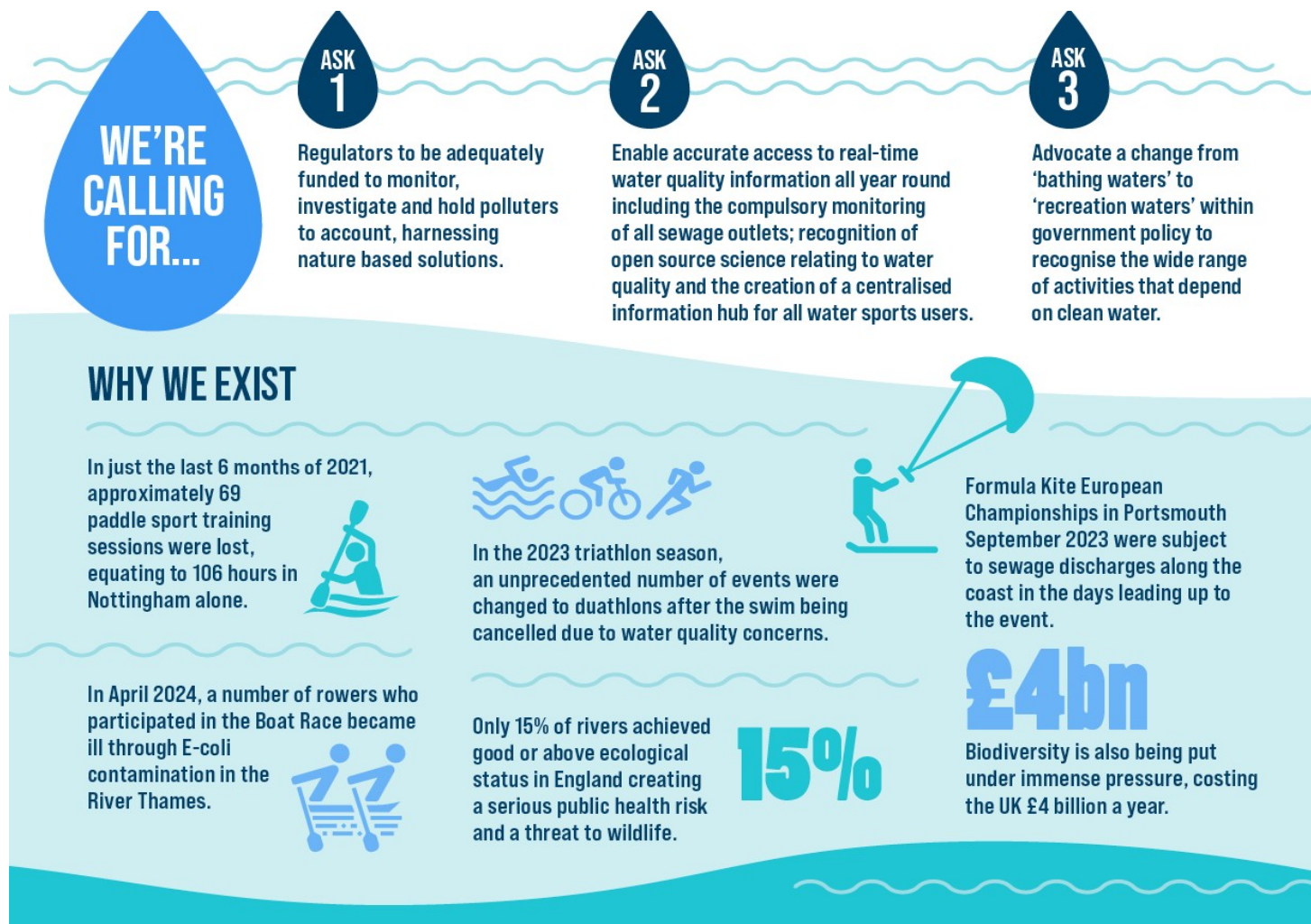
PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Further and faster action on pollution. Improving the health of UK waters by 2030.

Enable people to make real-time informed choices about where and when to participate in water-based sports and activities.

Recognition of all recreational water users across decision making and policy.

Comms – What and Why?



OUR PRIORITIES

Further and faster action on pollution.

Real-time informed choices.

Recognition of all recreational water users.

WHAT WE'RE CALLING FOR...



Regulators to be adequately funded to hold polluters to account.



Accurate access to real-time water quality information all year.



A change from 'bathing waters' to 'recreation waters' within government policy.



In practice

Core Alliance is divided into 3 sprint groups:

- ASK 1: **Paddle UK and Angling**
- ASK 2: **British Triathlon, Paddle UK and British Rowing**
- ASK 3: **Swim England and RYA**

Actions are both policy and operationally connected:

Policy examples:

- Policy briefing doc for all members
- Attended political party events: *e.g. Labour Party conference, Launch of the Water Special Measures Bill*
- Support & create suitable policy related engagements: *e.g. British Rowing hosting hustings with River Action ahead of Henley Regatta*

Operational examples:

- Single water quality guidance for all alliance events
- Data centralisation and management with wide network of water quality groups including CastCo and the EA
- Engage with water companies in multiple ways

CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE



CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE

RYA

Impact



RYA

Immediate response



Meeting with EA Researchers

Interested in club locations for planning water testing
Shared data, awaiting results



Meetings with Water UK

The water company trade body



Working with Surfers Against Sewage

Specifically around standards for water quality reporting



Changing tone from Agencies

Defra 27 new bathing sites.
Referencing extending testing outside bathing season and expanding beyond swimming.

**CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE**





5th September 2024

Announcement of the
Water (Special Measures)
Bill and a commitment to
“radical reform of the water
industry” by Steve Reed, UK
Environment Secretary

Thames Rowing Club





Southampton Boat Show 2024
Expansion of the Alliance

CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE



CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE



12th November 2024 – Launch of CWSA Cymru



CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE CYMRU WALES

WHO ARE WE?

A coalition of Welsh National Governing Bodies who represent over 50,000 Welsh members, elite athletes, participants and many more water users. Together we rely on the use of water for sport and recreation. As the Welsh Cohort of the Clean Water Sports Alliance, we are advocating for the restoration of our blue spaces for the enjoyment of all. We want these environments to be free of pollution and havens for wildlife.

OUR VISION

Healthy and nature rich blue spaces across Wales for everyone to enjoy water sports

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Further and faster action on pollution, improving the health of Welsh waters by 2030.
- Enable people to make real-time informed choices about where and when to participate in water-based sports and activities.
- Recognition of all recreational water users across decision making and policy.

WE'RE CALLING FOR...

ASK 1

NRW (National Resources Wales) and other regulators to be adequately funded to monitor, investigate and hold polluters to account, harnessing nature-based solutions.

ASK 2

Expand the NRW water-quality information to include sites around Wales with significant recreational water sports activity, including freshwater rivers, reservoirs and lakes. Promoted to water sports users through the NRW portal.

ASK 3

Advocate a change from 'bathing waters' to 'recreation waters' within government policy to recognise the wide range of activities that depend on clean water. Ensure recreation waters better cover inland waters alongside coastal.

WHY WE EXIST

23% Increase in pollution incidents

Welsh Water caused 107 sewage pollution incidents in 2023-24, up from 89 the year before.

£8.4m in fines for Welsh Water Companies

Both Hafren Dyfrdwy and Dwr Cymru have been issued with warnings from NRW, and in October 2022 were issued with fines amounting to £8 million for Dwr Cymru and £400,000 for Hafren Dyfrdwy by Ofwat for their ongoing failure to meet targets.

Species Decline

The abundance of 380 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 20% across Wales since 1994. Within this general trend, 140 species have declined in abundance (37%) and 107 species have increased (28%).

The Severn

Britain's most polluted river 2021

Six of the UK's top 20 most polluted rivers are in Wales. The River Severn (which runs between Wales and England) was the most polluted river (in 2021) with 29,741 hours of sewage pumped into it.

Source: State of Nature in report / SEFYLLFA NATŵR: [Wales - State of Nature](#)

PROUD MEMBERS OF THE

CLEAN WATER SPORTS ALLIANCE

CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE

4. Proposed Reforms.

To meet the identified deficiencies in the current Regulations we are proposing three core substantive reforms that will:

1. Remove the automatic de-designation provision from the Regulations.
2. Amend the Regulations to include the feasibility of improving a site's water quality to a least 'sufficient' standard as a criterion for final designation.
3. Remove the fixed dates of the monitored bathing season from the Regulations.

6. Wider Reforms and Call for Evidence.

Wider reform 1 – Clarification and expansion of the definition of 'bathers' to include other water-users

Wider reform 2 – Use of multiple monitoring points at each bathing water site to classify water quality



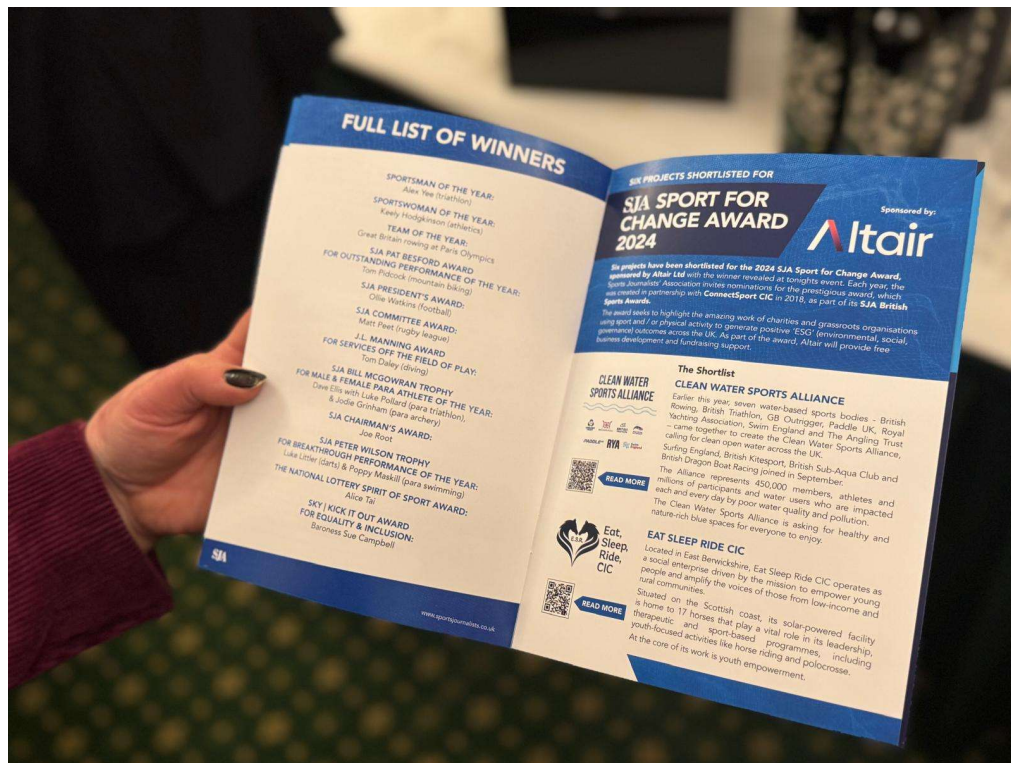
Grassroots Organisation of the Year nominees

Clean Water Alliance

In April 2024, seven water-based sports came together to create an alliance calling for clean open water across the UK. The alliance will work together to influence decision-makers and drive positive change, working collaboratively to highlight issues and create solutions to help return the UK's blue spaces to be where nature can thrive and sport and recreation can be enjoyed. It will call for better funding for regulators, accurate and accessible real-time information and recognition of the wide range of activities that depend on clean water.



9th December 2024 - Sports Journalism Awards Winner – SJA Sport for Change Award



CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE

8th January 2025



Emma Hardy MP, Defra Minister for Water and Flooding
Stephanie Peacock MP, DCMS Minister for Sport

Roz Savage MP, promoting the
Climate and Nature Bill



**CLEAN WATER
SPORTS ALLIANCE**

Press release

Bathing water reforms keep pace with Britain's love of swimming

Reforms to modernise bathing waters could see swimmers enjoying cleaner water and flexible seasons, as government states plans to bolster bathing water rules.

UK government commits to modernising bathing water rules

New bathing water reforms, the first since 2013, could see the definition of 'bather' include other watersports for the first time.

12 Mar 25



RYA

Guidance



Advice for clubs and training centres

Collect data

Long-run data will help you to understand your local water body and how it reacts to weather and pollution incidents.

- Keep long-run weather data records to correlate any issues with weather patterns
- Sign up for discharge alerts with your local water company
- If you do have concerns over sewage pollution, undertake water quality testing following storms to see how the water body responds over the following days. You should test for, at a minimum, **coliform** bacteria and **E.coli**.
- Record incidents of algal blooms

Advice for clubs and training centres

Know your waters

You should include in your risk assessment your knowledge of:

- Local potential sources of pollution such as sewage (including combined storm water and sewage) outfalls, ditches that may channel agricultural runoff, road drainage and any industrial outfalls
- How your local water body responds to pollution incidents (e.g., how many days following a storm should you be concerned about your local combined sewer outfall)
- Alternative launch points should your usual location be suffering from direct pollution

Advice for clubs and training centres

Apply appropriate hygiene precautions

It may seem obvious but communicating with members about good hygiene is important to minimise the risk of people falling ill.

All water users should thoroughly wash their hands after being on the water before eating. Providing suitable washdown facilities for boats and equipment will help minimise transfer of pathogens as well as preventing the spread of invasive species.

Advice for clubs and training centres

Report

- Report any incidents that clearly relate to sewage pollution to your local water company and keep records of correspondence
- Report blooms of Blue-Green Algae to the Environment Agency or via the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology [Bloomin' Algae App](#).
- Report any other pollution concerns to the Environment Agency.
- If you undertake water quality testing, please submit your results via environment@rya.org.uk so that we can assess any regional issues. The Green Blue is developing a citizen science portal and information will be shared on that system in due course



<https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge/environment/water-quality/guidance-for-clubs-and-centres>

Advice for clubs and training centres

Useful Links

Current bathing water quality, if you are sailing in such an area, is available via:

- [Swimfo in England](#)
- [SEPA in Scotland](#)
- [NRW in Wales](#)
- [DAERA in Northern Ireland](#)

A wider view of river and bathing quality is available via a service from [Watershed](#).





<https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge/environment/water-quality/guidance-for-clubs-and-centres>

Advice for clubs and training centres

Water Quality Testing

Labs offering [water quality testing](#) at an affordable rate (it takes 3–4 days for the result).

Rapid testing kits

Development of AI based testing

Other approaches



RYA

Latest



- Water (special measures) bill received Royal assent
- Water Commission began its formal consultation on 27th February
- Meeting the Water Commission 1st April
- Interest from some water companies in working with us – we are being cautious
- Northern Ireland will launch their own scheme soon
- Considering other water pollution issues

The background of the slide features a dark blue field with large, abstract, curved shapes in a lighter blue and a teal color. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

RYA

Together on Water

Questions

phil.horton@rya.org.uk