

THE GOVERNMENT MUST PROTECT ENGLAND'S MOST PRECIOUS PLACES

In 2009 the government promised to improve the health of 57 of our most protected rivers and wetlands by 2015. Yet despite this 50 sites are still affected by agricultural pollution, caused by pesticides, sediment and nutrients running off farmland.

These places are the jewels in the crown of our natural environment, home to important and legally protected wildlife. But the government is failing to protect them.

- Protected sites affected by agricultural pollution
- Highlighted case studies



RIVER EDEN, CUMBRIA

Home to the Atlantic salmon, a protected species that's vulnerable to pollution – its eggs can only survive in clean water. In 2014 there were under half the expected salmon in the Eden.



RIVER LUGG, HEREFORDSHIRE

The Lugg supports several protected species, including the bullhead, a fish that's important to the food chain in lots of river systems. Bullheads like clean rivers and streams.



POOLE HARBOUR, DORSET

Among the iconic birds in the local waterways is the protected Kingfisher, which needs clean water to survive. Numbers have dropped in the past decade, partly due to river pollution.



MARAZION MARSH, CORNWALL

One of the rare places to find the elusive bittern, a bird that's one of the UK's most threatened species. Bitterns can only thrive in clean, pollution-free reedbeds and wetland habitats.

The government needs to work with farmers and others, using all the tools at its disposal, to tackle agricultural pollution to make sure these precious places are properly protected and healthy.

Visit wwf.org.uk/protectedareas