

[News story: River Thames Scheme: Environmental Surveys 2018](#)

As part of the River Thames Scheme work to manage environmental impact, further ecological and environmental surveys are being carried out this year.

[News story: River Thames Scheme: Environmental Surveys 2018](#)

Background

Extensive data collection has taken place within the River Thames Scheme study area over the last 4 years. The programme of data collection covers soil and river investigations, ground and gas monitoring and a range of ecological and habitat surveys.

Fish and aquatic plants were the focus of our survey work in 2016, which is significantly contributing to the impact assessment work on the scheme.

2017 consisted of bat roost and Great Crested Newt surveys. 2018 saw the beginning of archaeological surveys.

2019 Surveys

This year, further environmental surveys are being carried out which will inform the development of the River Thames Scheme.

The ecological surveys will be carried out over the spring and summer to ensure species are surveyed at the optimal time. A range of species will be targeted in these surveys.

Land Species

- Trees
- Reptiles
- Badgers
- Water voles
- Otters
- Bats
- Birds
- Invertebrates

Aquatic Species

- Fish
- Aquatic plants
- Invertebrates

The surveys will take place in areas of Datchet, Horton, Wraysbury, Hythe End, Egham Hythe, Chertsey, Sunbury, Abbey Meads, Laleham, Desborough and Teddington.

These surveys will involve a team of ecologists. Most Environment Agency surveys are non-intrusive. The team will observe, measure, take notes and photographs, and may need to take soil or water samples. The surveys won't cause any significant disturbance to the environment or to land or property.

All work is carried out under the supervision of either consultant engineers or a member of Environment Agency staff, in accordance with an agreed method statement.

[News story: River Thames Scheme Outline Design](#)

During 2018, the outline design for River Thames Scheme was developed. The final outline design is now complete.

[News story: River Thames Scheme Outline Design](#)

Over the last 4 years the Environment Agency have been developing the design of The River Thames Scheme, reducing flood risk to 15,000 homes and 2,400 businesses in communities along the Thames between Datchet and Teddington.

The Environment Agency and their partner organisations have used environmental data collected from their programme of surveys to design a scheme that meets requirements set out in legislation as well as delivering the scheme's vision. They talked to communities who shared ideas on the design of the proposed channel, deciding what it will look like and how it could be used.

The final outline design is now complete, together with proposals for

landscape enhancement, recreation opportunities and habitat creation.

Flood Channel Route

As part of the design phase, several changes were made to the original alignment set out in the Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2009, including shortening the channel to just under 15km.

View [maps of the channel route](#).

New public green spaces

The landscape vision for the scheme was developed to visually connect the new flood channel with existing heritage sites and key landscape features through the creation of 4 new country parks and a wetlands centre.

These country parks feature new hills with viewpoints across the landscape from the top. During construction, materials dug out to create the flood channel will be used to create the country parks, which will avoid the need for thousands of additional lorries on local roads.

The creation of these new public open spaces will bring health benefits for communities and opportunities for tourism, recreation and leisure.

There is a lot of work to do to make this vision a reality. The team will continue to talk to partners, statutory bodies and communities to develop the design for these areas in the next phase of design work leading up to the submission of the River Thames Scheme planning application.

Recreation

In order to improve the current network for pedestrians and cyclists, the area around the flood channel will provide new footpaths and cycle paths that have been designed to connect to the existing network. New footbridges connecting footpaths will be built across the flood channel. The four raised viewpoints will become park areas with public access. The flood channel itself will provide opportunities for fishing, boating and canoeing on some sections.

Habitat Creation

The scheme is committed to minimise disruption to habitat and the environment as much as possible during the construction phase of the new flood channel. This will be achieved through the creation of two new habitats at Abbey Meads and Desborough Island and over 100 hectares (roughly 150 football pitches) of new habitat will be created. This will ensure the project does not cause a net loss in biodiversity.

Next steps

Preparations for the planning application and next phase of design work are underway. The planning application will include the opportunity for

communities to discuss the proposals and details of how to get involved will be published later this year.

For more information about the River Thames Scheme please visit the [information page](#)

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