

# News story: South West Water fail to report dead fish after polluting Devon stream

South West Water has been ordered to pay £89,000 in fines and costs for polluting a stream in Woodbury near Exeter. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

A court heard how large numbers of fish died following the incident at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) in September 2014 following an illegal discharge. CSOs are allowed to discharge during storm conditions to prevent the internal flooding of properties. They are not permitted to operate during periods of dry weather.

The spill was caused by a blockage that resulted in effluent being discharged into a nearby stream over one to two days. The pollution adversely affected water quality in the stream and killed more than 150 fish.

The water company must report any fish kills that occur following a pollution incident. It failed to report this important information to the Environment Agency.

Instead, a witness alerted the Environment Agency to the seriousness of the incident after seeing South West Water staff collect and remove dead fish from below the CSO discharge pipe over several days as part of its remediation work on the stream.

The discharge occurred during a period of dry weather. The dead fish included minnows, stone loach, bullhead and eels.

Pete Ball of the Environment Agency said:

It is important water companies regularly inspect and maintain their structures and assets such as CSOs to ensure they are operating in accordance with their permit and do not cause pollution.

While South West Water responded quickly to this incident, it failed to report the extent of the environmental impact of this spill, especially the fish deaths.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court, South West Water Ltd was fined £70,000 and ordered to pay £19,023 costs after pleading guilty to breaching its environmental permit at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), Woodbury on or around 27 September 2014.

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## Today's near-miss with a drone at Heathrow underlines why Government must step up measures – Richard Burden

**Richard**

**Burden MP, Labour's Shadow Aviation Minister, commenting on the recent near-miss between a passenger plane and a drone as it approached Heathrow Airport, said:**

"Today's incident underlines why Ministers must get a move on. There were 70 reported near-misses last year and the British Airline Pilots Association believe that the real number is likely to be even higher.

"Last year Labour urged the Government to take action this time last year but Ministers have been far too slow to act. By now they should be further towards making decisions on whether the UK should follow other countries by establishing a compulsory registration scheme and getting systematic geo-fencing in place to physically stop drones getting near airports and other places where they are a danger.

"Labour's approach – highlighted by our amendment to the Government's Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill this month – is to get a strategy in place to both ensure safety, and protect innovation and the responsible use of drones, linking in with initiatives expected to come out of the European Aviation and Safety Agency shortly."

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## Your SNP government: getting on with the job

This week the SNP in government has been getting on with the job: investing in communities, protecting the most vulnerable in society, and delivering the best public services anywhere in the UK.

Here's how.

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## [Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on plans for a new settlement in the West Bank](#)

The UK strongly condemns the Israeli government's decision to found a new settlement deep in the West Bank; the first such government decision for over 25 years. I am also disappointed that Israel plans to expropriate additional West Bank territory as 'state land', and press forward with plans for almost 2,000 housing units in spite of significant international concern.

These announcements are contrary to international law and seriously undermine the prospects of two states for two peoples. As a strong friend of Israel, and one prepared to stand up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, I urge Israel not to take steps such as these, which move us away from our shared goal of peace and security and make it harder to achieve a different relationship between Israel and the Arab world.

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## [John McDonnell responds to news of Google's tax bill only amounting to just £36.4 million](#)

**John**

**McDonnell MP Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, responding to news of Google's tax bill

only amounting to just £36.4 million, said:

"This

revelation only further proves that Philip Hammond and Theresa May are more interested in cutting Google's taxes, than making sure they are paying their fair share.

"It

seems that the so called "successful" tax deal with Google that George Osborne

boasted about last year has meant that they are still not paying their fair

share under his successor Philip Hammond. We urgently need clarity on HMRC's relationship with Google and what reassurances have been provided to the company.

"It is a national disgrace that by paying just £36 million in tax Google could have an effective tax rate lower than many working families in our country. And it exposes the complacency at the heart of this Tory Government, which is allowing this to still continue despite last year's scandal.

"It's time that the Tories got a grip of big corporations not paying their way, instead of going ahead with £70 billion in tax giveaways to big business and the super-rich, while cutting in-work benefits for the low paid, and threatening to turn our country into a tax haven.

"The truth is that the Tories have no interest in standing up for working people, only Labour with our Tax Transparency and Enforcement Programme will bring in full, public, country-by-country reporting.