

Aire
Rivers
Trust

Connecting
People.
Places.
Nature.



Becoming a Riverfly Monitor



Introducing The Aire Rivers Trust

The Aire Rivers Trust was formed in 2011 by a group of like minded individuals who are passionate about improving the River Aire. We are a charity dedicated to improving our River Aire and its catchment.

The Aire Rivers Trust is part of a national network of Rivers Trusts, each of which works to improve their river for people, wildlife and the environment. We believe in connecting people, places and nature.

Our local volunteers help care for the Aire by improving the habitat, clearing litter from the riverbanks and undertaking citizen science projects to generate evidence to explain the importance of looking after their river.

Joining us makes you part of the revival of our great river. We couldn't do this without you!

Reasons people volunteer with us:



"It keeps me fit and active"

"Helping my local community"

"It's fun meeting new people"

"I've discovered new parts of the river I didn't even know existed"

Riverfly Monitoring

What is Riverfly?

Riverfly monitoring is a volunteer-based program that assesses rivers for pollution, by counting 8 very different groups of river bugs. Each of these types of bug has different tolerances to pollution. Counting their numbers can tell us if there is a pollution problem in a river.

The scheme is run nationally by the Riverfly Partnership with the entire scheme overseen by local contacts at the Environment Agency.

Local volunteers and groups are coordinated by angling clubs or conservation charities such as Aire Rivers Trust.

A good introduction to the partnership can be found on their website:

www.riverflies.org



Details of our riverfly work can be found at

www.aireriverstrust.org.uk/riverfly

How Do We Sample?

How Do I Take A Sample?

Riverfly samples are gathered by pairs of volunteers who kick the riverbed to loosen the fine gravel and bugs that live within the sediment. These are then emptied into a tray to allow counting. The results of which are entered into an online recording system. Unusually low counts are then reported to the Environment Agency for investigation.

What is The Time Commitment For Riverfly?

Riverfly is a long-term process that requires volunteers to monitor a river once a month between March to October for 2-3 hours, over several years. Allowing long-term trends in insects populations to be observed.



What Do I Need To Take Part?

All equipment needed to carry out river fly sampling is provided by Aire Rivers Trust. The only things you need to bring are:

A commitment to sample a site once a month during Spring/Summer.

Riverfly charts the long-term change in a rivers health, so results only become visible after several years.

A reasonable level of physical fitness.

You need to be able to carry the equipment to the river as well as be able to get in the water and kick the stones in the river bed for 3 minutes to gather a sample.

A positive attitude and a willingness to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Riverfly sampling is not a lone activity. As a minimum volunteers need to work in pairs to complete the survey and stay safe around the river. We also try work in groups to cover sites that cannot be monitored every month.

Sufficient digital literacy to log results online and communicate digitally with others.

All of the results we gather are logged onto an online database by the volunteers who gather the results. Either by a mobile app or website. Most of the coordination between volunteers and Aire Rivers Trust is managed via WhatsApp and email.



Where Do I Sample?

Monitoring takes place at fixed points along the river. Normally, these sites are at the confluence of two stretches of river or upstream and downstream of a known pollution problem. After discussion with the local co-ordinator volunteer pairs are allocated a vacant pair of sites to monitor near their home.

Moving forward, Aire Rivers Trust is focusing on developing local monitoring hubs. These Whats App hubs join volunteers from a local area who work together to sample a number of sites. This allows monitoring pairs to support each other and ensures there are sufficient volunteers to sample the pre-established monitoring sites.

Currently, we operate six main monitoring Hubs: Skipton, Silsden, Keighley & Worth Valley, Middle Aire (Bingley, Shipley Baildon), Bradford and North Leeds. We are currently working on opening hubs focusing on Malhamdale and South Craven. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust look after South Leeds.

Outside of these areas, we are seeking further funding to develop monitoring hubs and are unable to support new volunteers at the moment.



How Do I Start Sampling?

Qualification

Becoming a riverfly Monitor requires some learning to become qualified to record samples. Primarily, you need to undertake a one-day training course that we call a "Qualification Day," which covers how to stay safe in the river and identify the 8 groups of river bugs.

Taster Sessions & Development

In reality, the necessary bug ID skills take more than 1 day of training to develop. As such Aire Rivers Trust runs taster and skills development sessions every month along the river.

Additionally, if there is an active group of monitors near you, we try to "mentor" you with them so you can learn how to ID and monitor. This also enables us to get you involved with monitoring while we recruit sufficient applicants to run a training day.

Before undertaking the qualification day, we ask that new volunteers undertake a minimum of 2 taster events to help you learn the identification skills needed to complete the qualification day.

To see our current riverfly taster and training opportunities please visit our volunteering website:

www.aireriverstrust.org.uk/volunteer/



Becoming a Riverfly Monitor

1. Contact

Get in touch with your local coordinator to find what monitoring local opportunities there are

2. Taster Days

Attend 2-3 taster sessions to build your understanding of monitoring

3. Qualification Day

Gain your certificate of training and access to the riverfly database

4. Join A Hub

Following your training day, you will be added to the local monitoring hub on WhatsApp and a sampling partner will be found

5. Start Monitoring

With your co-ordinator and new sampling partner visit your new sampling site to start recording

6. Ongoing Sampling

In your pair sample, once a month submitting records to cartographer. Communicating with others on WhatsApp

Riverfly Volunteering Information

Aire Rivers Trust Riverfly Co-ordinator: Sam Riley-Gunn

Email: sam.riley-gunn@aireriverstrust.org.uk

Telephone: 01274 061902

Our volunteers help us to work towards restoring and protecting our river, thus improving it for both nature and people.

As a new volunteer with us you will receive an induction. Often this is just a chat on the riverbank as part of a taster session but it is designed to help you feel welcome and safe.

It should include:

- Who you are working with.
- How to keep safe.
- Where to find out about volunteer opportunities.

Top Safety Guidelines for Riverfly Sampling:

- Life jackets **MUST** be worn when working near water over welly depth or when you work in waders.
- Children under 18 **MUST** be accompanied and supervised by a parent/adult guardian.
 - If you see anything sharp or dangerous, leave it where it is, inform others around you and call your co-ordinator.
 - Cover up cuts on hands and wear gloves to protect from river diseases and **ALWAYS** wash hands before eating or smoking.

Volunteering Code of Conduct

Volunteering shouldn't cost you anything.

We offer all riverfly training for free and equipment on a permanent loan basis. To be returned if you finish monitoring with us.

Volunteering should be safe.

Our staff provide training and supervision. We expect people to work in a manner that keeps them and others around them safe.

Volunteering is open to all.

Our work programme is shared through our website, email and Facebook . We keep in touch with regular volunteers through local Hub WhatsApp group which you can join once you have signed up.

We supply personal protective equipment need to stay safe when sampling. This could include inflatable life jackets, hand gel, wellingtons or waders, depending upon what the site-specific risk assessment says you need to be safe. Volunteers and staff are expected to wear them.

We expect volunteers to treat others with respect.

We encourage people to work together to achieve more as a team. If you have any safeguarding concerns contact our designated trustee via safeguarding@airerivertrust.org.uk

Before you start volunteering we ask you to register with us.

This ensures we have details of an emergency contact and any relevant medical conditions. These will be kept securely on an electronic register by the Trust.

We may use photos from events in marketing materials, online, in press releases and in reports to funders. Speak to a staff member if you do not wish to appear in them.

Biosecurity

Help us protect the nature you love.

Bio-security refers to practical precautions that can be taken to reduce spread or introduction of pests, diseases and Invasive Non-native Species (INNS). Bio-security is simple, quick and inexpensive, and will help us protect the environments we love.

INNS are animals, plants and diseases introduced to the UK through human activities. They can cause damage to our environment, the economy, our health and the way we live. INNS are considered one of the greatest threats to biodiversity worldwide, as well as cost.

INNS, pests and diseases can 'hitchhike' on footwear, equipment, clothing and even pets and vehicles. They can be transferred to a new environment through seeds, fragments of plants, microscopic larvae or spores. They can then become established and cause devastation.

Some of the invasive species found in our catchment include (from left to right) Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed and American Signal Crayfish.



When you come to volunteer for the Aire Rivers Trust, please ensure that your footwear, clothing and any equipment you may bring (such as wellingtons & Sampling kit) are **CLEAN** and **DRY BEFORE YOU SAMPLE**.

CHECK

Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

CLEAN

Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly.

If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

DRY

Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions.

Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

It is costly and ineffective to control or eradicate INNS once they have become established, so we need to make sure we prevent their introduction and spread through good bio-security.



Thanks to our funders:

