

Frome Headwaters Chalkstream Restoration Project



Dorset
Wildlife Trust

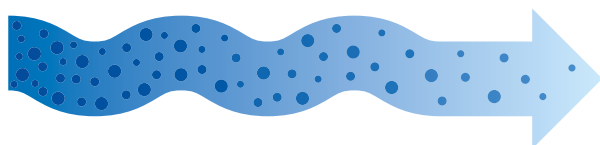
Year 1 Snapshot: April 2025 - March 2026

What is the project area?

Four river headwater catchments:

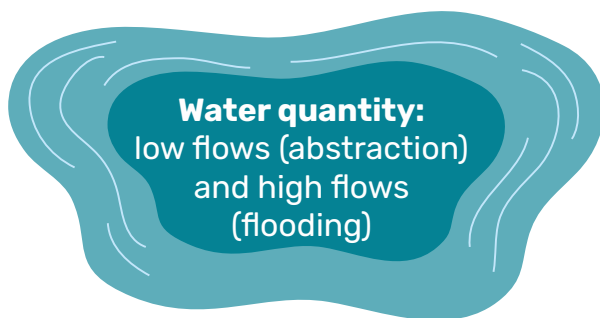
📍 River Frome (Headwaters and Upper) 📍 Wraxall Brook 📍 River Hooke

What challenges do these rivers face?



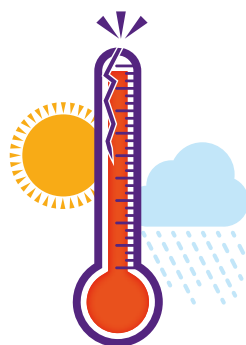
Water quality:

agricultural and road runoff,
sewage discharge, domestic



Water quantity:

low flows (abstraction)
and high flows
(flooding)

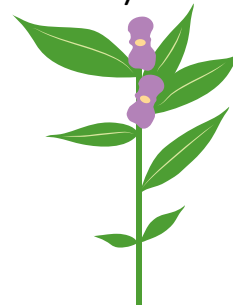


Climate change:

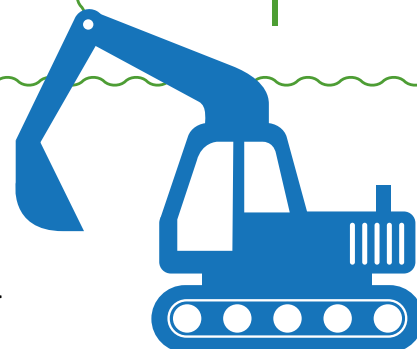
warmer, drier summers
and wetter, stormier
winters

Invasive non-native species:

mink, Himalayan
balsam, signal
crayfish



**Physical
modifications:**
straightening,
dredging, weirs or
dams, historic water
management



Who are the project partners?

Dorset Wildlife Trust (Lead) and Wessex Water (Primary funder) with support from Dorset Catchment Partnership, Dorset Council, Dorset National Landscape, Catchment Sensitive Farming, Environment Agency, Natural England, Wild Trout Trust, FWAG South West. There are many others involved as stakeholders.

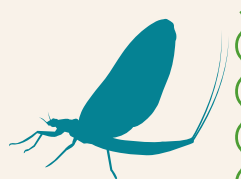
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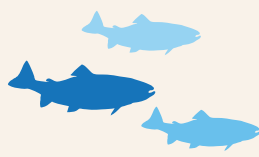
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What monitoring is being undertaken?



Aquatic invertebrates



Redd counts
(egg nests for salmon and trout)



Water quality
(pH, alkalinity, conductivity, turbidity, ammonia, nitrate, BOD)



Soil infiltration tests



Electrofishing

Citizen science initiatives

Mud spotter (in development)

Riverfly monitoring initiative

Water Guardians

Nutrient strip tests

How are farmers involved in the project?

Linked with the Farmers of the Upper Frome Cluster.

- **35 farmers** currently engaged, > 4500ha
- **2 farmers** sit on steering group and funding panel.
- High Tier Stewardship options explored on **5 farms**
- **11 funded schemes** (woody debris dams, leaky ponds, hedgerow planting, etc.)
- **Mink** monitoring and eradication

How has the project been funded?

Wessex Water has committed to **£2.1M** over five years with Year 1 contribution approx **£200k**.

Match funding has been secured from:

- **£25k** Environment Agency Chalkstream Partnership Fund
- **£12k** Forestry England
- **£4k** Farmers of the Upper Frome Farmer facilitation fund
- In kind contributions from Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset Catchment Partnership and farmers

What is happening with beavers in the project area?

Dorset Wildlife Trust runs an Enclosed Beaver Project. A wild release consultation is underway for the Hooke and wider Frome Catchment involving surveys, one-to-one meetings, public events and drop-in sessions.