

Rivers and Streams



The mosaic of features found in rivers and streams supports a diverse range of plants and animals. Riffles and pools are important for invertebrates and fish which in turn provide food for Otters and birds. Marginal and bankside vegetation supports a diversity of wildflowers and provides cover for breeding birds and mammals.

Rivers and streams provide important corridors of undisturbed habitat in intensively farmed areas.

Habitat Management for Rivers and Streams

Restricting Livestock

- Fencing along watercourses to exclude stock will allow grasses and other vegetation to become established and help to stabilise the bank, thereby reducing the rate of bank erosion, soil loss and nutrient input
- Locate the fence at least 1.5m from the bank top to allow the re-growth of bankside vegetation
- Consent will be required from the Environment Agency/IDB for fencing along a Main River/IDB maintained watercourse
- Provide alternative stock watering systems such as designated drinking bays in the fenceline, gravity fed troughs, stock operated troughs/pumps, mains supplied troughs, ponds

Tree Management

- Undertake selective coppicing of bankside trees along over-shaded sections of watercourse
- Coppice outside of the bird breeding season (March to October) and following checks for the presence of protected species such as bats and Otter

Non-native Species

- Where possible control stands of non-native invasive plants such as Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed, following specific guidelines
- The use of herbicides in or near any watercourse will require agreement from the Environment Agency

Water Quality

- Create buffer strips adjacent to watercourses to help reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals, nutrients and silts that end up in the water
- Avoid spreading manure/slurry within 10m of drains and ditches
- Clear water and a good range of aquatic plants and invertebrates indicate good water quality



For further information please contact: