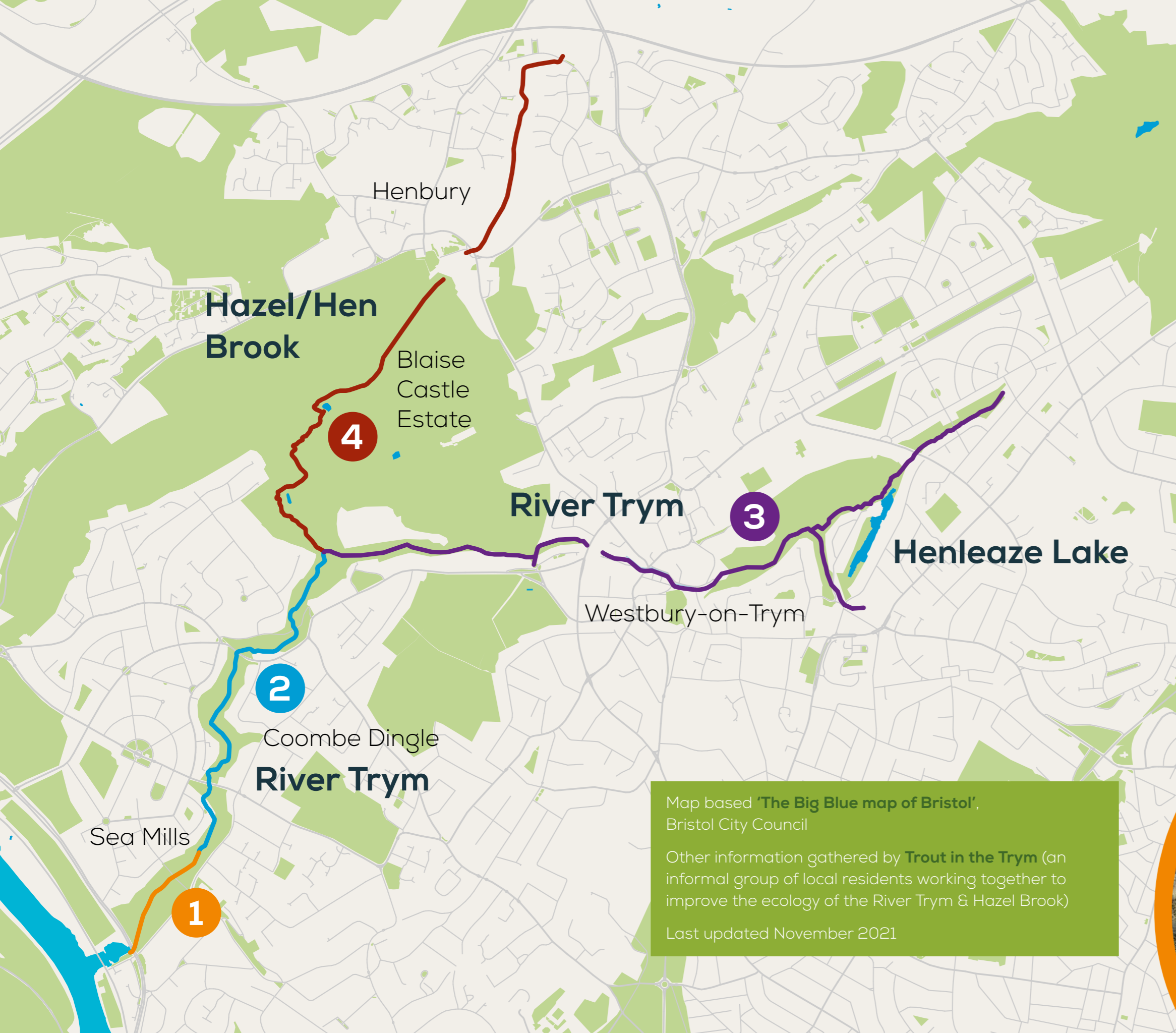


# Introducing the wildlife in and around the River Trym & the Hazel Brook





Map based 'The Big Blue map of Bristol', Bristol City Council

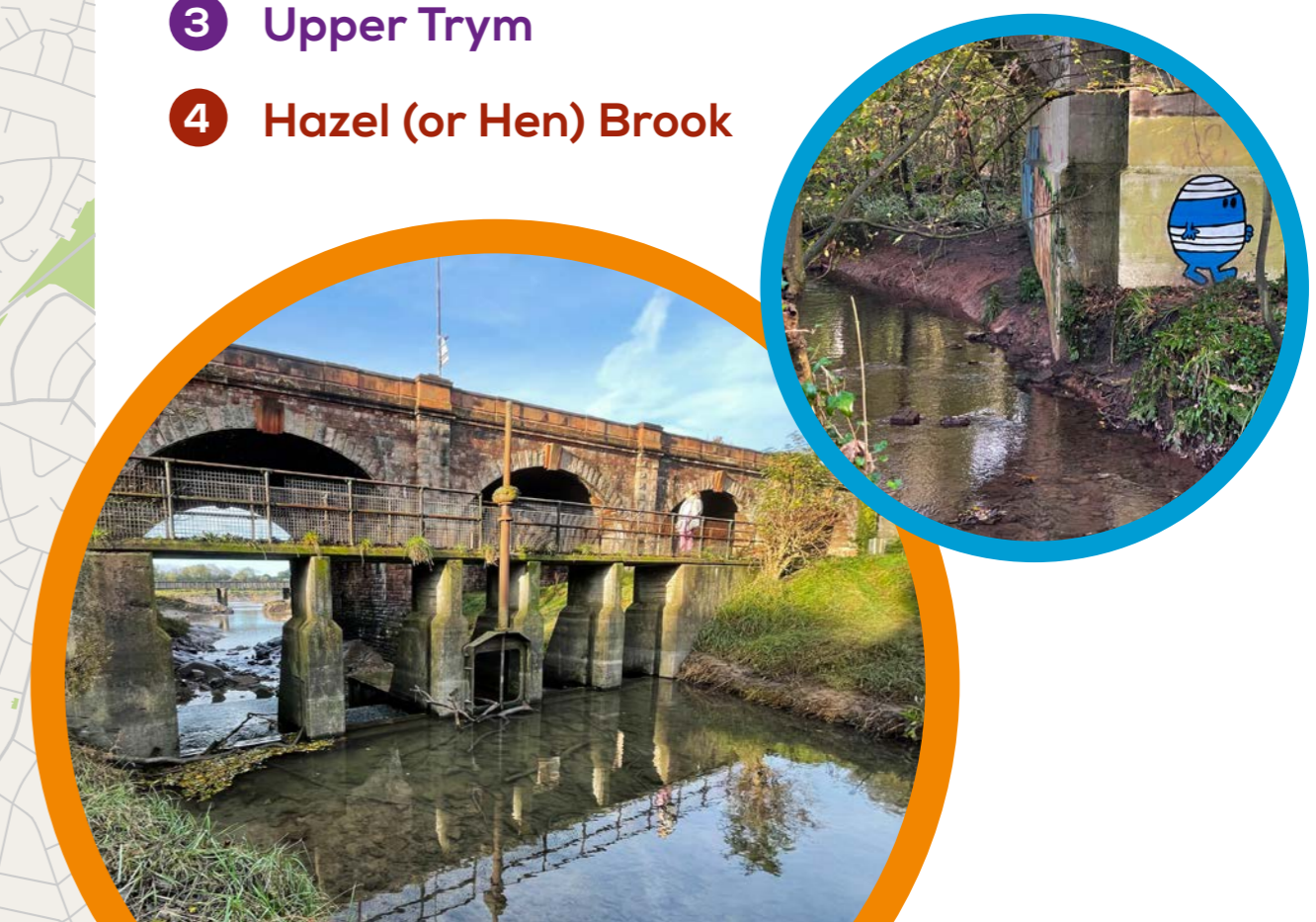
Other information gathered by **Trout in the Trym** (an informal group of local residents working together to improve the ecology of the River Trym & Hazel Brook)

Last updated November 2021



Different sections of the River Trym & Hazel Brook provide different habitats and you may encounter different wildlife in them.

- 1** Tidal/brackish Trym
- 2** Lower Trym
- 3** Upper Trym
- 4** Hazel (or Hen) Brook



# Fish you might see as you walk along the River Trym or the Hazel Brook



**Three spined stickleback**

Typically 2.5 to 4cm long



**Bull Head (Miller's Thumb)**

3 to 4cm



**European Eel**

Variable, from 5cm (transparent elvers) up to 15 to 30cm



**Flounder**

Typically 7 to 15cm

“If we all take care of our streams – and pay attention – we will see many more fish...”



**Brown Trout**

Typically 10 to 20cm



**Roach**

Hard to tell apart, typically 7 to 15cm



**Rudd**

- Fish are often **very** wary and may feel your footsteps through vibrations in the water
- To see one: choose a deeper pool, move slowly, keep off the skyline and (if you can) try a dull overcast day or an early morning/late evening. Wearing polarised sunglasses also makes a huge difference. If you don't see any they probably realised you were there!
- We know each of these fish species is in the river from sampling (by the Environment Agency in 2014) and more recently by observations made by Trout in the Trym members). Other fish – eg Grey Mullet, Chub, possibly even Sea Trout – may well be present though this awaits confirmation

# Aquatic bugs you might see in or around the River Trym or the Hazel Brook



Juvenile (aquatic)

Adult (air-borne)

Spinner



Juvenile (aquatic)

Adult (air-borne)



## Olives (olive mayflies)

Typically 1-1.3cm long

excluding the tails. True mayflies are much bigger but we haven't found those in the Trym/Hazel Brook yet. Olives are also called up-winged flies because of how they hold their wings vertically. Nymphs have 3 tails. The nymph hatches to become a dun (with dull wings) which itself then sheds its skin again to become a spinner (with transparent, shiny wings) which is the true adult.

## Stoneflies

Typically 1-2.3cm long

Otherwise called needle flies because of their shape. Nymphs have 2 tails and shed their skins to hatch and fly off as adult stoneflies.

## Freshwater Shrimps

Typically 1-1.1cm long

Freshwater shrimps are amphipods with a curved, flattened body. They are greyish, green or an orange-brown colour.

## Dragonflies/ Damselflies

Typically 3cm+cm long

May be seen near the Blaise Estate ponds.

- Invertebrates are very seasonal. You may see the adults in the spring and summer, hardly any at all in the winter. The river-fly nymphs will be there all year around - though may be young, transparent and very tiny. Most of them eat algae or dead leaves

- We know these river-fly families are in the river from regular sampling by Trout in the Trym members
- If we all take care of our streams we will see many more, and more varied types of, river-flies. As well as being lovely to see this would be great (food) for the fish and birds



# Birds you might see or hear around the River Trym or the Hazel Brook



**Grey Wagtail**

Diet: invertebrates



**Kingfisher**

Diet: dive for small fish



**Dipper**

Diet: invertebrates



**Little Egret**

Diet: lunge for fish and frogs



**Grey Heron**

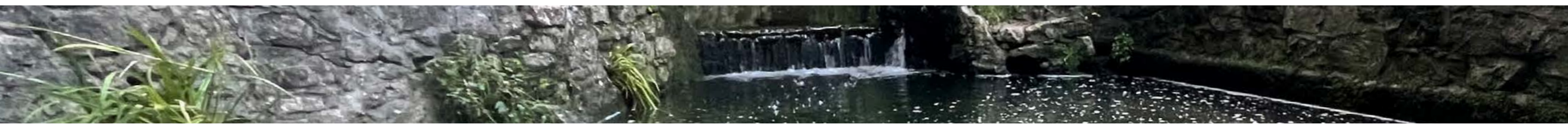
Diet: lunge for fish and frogs



**Mallard Duck**

Diet: eat weeds, invertebrates, small fish

- Woodland birds are also commonly seen and heard – Robin, Blue and Great Tits, Jays, Blackbirds, etc. Carrion Crows frequently wade the Trym in the Badocks Wood area – after invertebrates, including (we think) water snails
- In the tidal/brackish Trym at Sea Mills other birds may be seen as well including Mallard Ducks, Black Headed Gulls and the occasional Redshank, Oyster Catcher and other waders
- **Mammals** – look out for Grey Squirrels, Bats (summer evenings) and occasionally Foxes, Badgers, Brown Rats (which are confident swimmers) plus even, rarely, Roe Deer (Sea Mills meadows). Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) surveyed the river in 2023 confirming that Otters definitely visit occasionally (they have large territories, often active at night) but no Water Voles as the habitat isn't suitable.



# Where you may encounter wildlife in & around the River Trym or the Hazel Brook

		① Tidal/brackish Trym	② Lower Trym	③ Upper Trym	④ Hazel (or Hen) Brook	Notes
Freshwater invertebrates (bugs)	Freshwater Shrimps		Y	Y	Y	Live down among the rocks. Variable size, common
	Olive Mayflies		Y	Y	Y	Nymphs of both are live underwater. The adults hatch at the surface and may be seen flying near the stream
	Stoneflies				Y	
	Dragonflies				Y	Nymphs are fierce underwater predators. Adults hunt on the wing, often seen near the ponds on the Hazel Brook
Fish	Three Spined Stickleback			Y	Y	
	Bull Head (Miller's Thumb)		Y			
	European Eels	Y	Y	Y	Y	Baby Eels migrate from the Sargasso Sea across the Atlantic Ocean to feed and grow in our streams before re-crossing the Atlantic to breed and die
	Brown Trout		Y	Y		A small number live and breed in the river
	Roach/Rudd	Y	Y			Hard to tell apart
	Flounder	Y				Will be very tough to see as they mainly stay at the bottom in the muddier areas. Sea fish but can tolerate brackish or fresh water for extended periods
Aquatic & river related birds	Grey Wagtail		Y	Y	Y	
	Kingfisher		Y	Y	Y	To see one use your ears, listen for the single whistle call – and look. It'll be flying fast up or downstream
	Dipper		Y	Y	Y	
	Little Egret	Y	Y			Increasingly common
	Grey Heron	Y	Y			

# What can I do to help wildlife in & around the River Trym or the Hazel Brook?

If we all take a bit more care of our streams (and how we use water) we will see many more and way more varied types of river-flies, fish, birds and wild mammals. Wessex Water are currently working on site in North Bristol to deliver significant improvements to infrastructure (bigger pipes). This should benefit the River Trym catchment area by end 2023

However, it's not just down to them and all us can do a few simple things which will be a real help for our wildlife:



## Only the 3 PPPs

never put anything except Pee, Poo or Paper down the toilet. Anything else (eg wet wipes) will cause blockages leading to spills of raw sewage. None of us wants that. If you don't have a bin in your bathroom (lots of people don't, that's why they put stuff down the u bend) ask for one for Christmas!



## Don't pour stuff down the drain

oil/paint/chemicals/weedkiller/insecticides/etc – if you pour these liquids down a roadside drain they go straight into the nearest watercourse. Likewise disposing of cooking oil or hot fat down the sink can create fatbergs – another cause of blockages (and sewage spills)



## Use your eyes, nose and mouth

if you see or smell a problem (sewage in the river, pollution or dying fish) do take 2 or 3 minutes to take a photo and then report it:

Sewage to Wessex Water  
**0345 600 4600**

Other pollution to the Environment Agency (EA)  
**0800 80 70 60**

Save these numbers in your mobile phone, it will make it easy if you need to make the call



## Help out your local Friends of.../ Sustainable... Community Group

get to know a great group of people whilst picking up litter, pulling balsam or other activities organised by them to make the environment better for us and our wildlife

# Imagine what we might see alongside a really healthy River Trym and Hazel Brook

**We already enjoy a wildlife corridor, providing a home and also a route for migration for many species – but it could be so much more. Water quality isn't great and this is limiting aquatic plants, invertebrates and fish. But it's not the only problem for wildlife in our streams. We'd also see more and different wildlife if we had wilder, more dynamic natural watercourses and the micro-habitats this would provide. The physical streams themselves would be different, not just the life in them. Imagine (and this is all possible with real commitment):**

- **No pollution** – no grey sewage fungus, no nasty smells or 'sanitary litter' by manholes, no soap-sud episodes or submerged plastic or metal (including motorbikes!)
- **More water**, more of the time – (streams which are slower to rise and fall after heavy rain), more deeper pools, less time as a trickle in the summer
- **Active, dynamic stream channels** – no bank-to-bank stone or concrete weirs, much more large woody debris, vigorous meandering with erosion cutting new channels and depositing new sandy and gravelly beaches and runs. More rapid, narrower, deeper channels. Natural ponds and wetlands by the streams
- **No Himalayan Balsam** – so more UK native plants and less silt in the streams

**“...it could be so much more.”**

		More	New	Notes
<b>Freshwater invertebrates (bugs)</b>	Abundant Freshwater Shrimps, Olive Mayflies and Stoneflies. Numerous Damsel flies, Demoiselles and Dragonflies	Y		Improved water quality would see a rapid return of many invertebrates – which our Riverfly sampling would pick up.
	Also Caddis flies, true Mayflies. Possibly White Clawed Crayfish (the UK native species not the big invasive ones)		Y	
<b>Fish</b>	Abundant fish – many more Three Spined Stickleback, Bull Head (Miller's Thumb), European Eels, Brown Trout, Roach/Rudd, Flounder, Grey Mullet	Y		Many more fish, more widely spread up the course of our streams, more spawning sites
	Also, potentially a small number of Sea Trout (possibility even for a few salmon). Possibly also Brook/River/Sea Lampreys. Freshwater mussels???		Y	Weirs badly affect migratory fish (which are among the most threatened species)
<b>Aquatic &amp; river related birds</b>	More Grey Wagtail, Kingfishers, Lesser Egret, Grey Heron	Y		More birds and greater diversity. The bird song near the streams would be far richer
	Also in the open damp water meadows and salt marshes alongside the river, Wading birds including Lap Wing, Oyster Catcher, Redshank. Possibly Cranes. Barn Owls		Y	
<b>Plants</b>	Submerged plants – Water Moss, Water Starwort Floating leaved plants – Water Crowfoot (Ranunculus), Water Cress, Emergent plants – Purple Loosestrife, King Cup		Y	A real current issue for our streams is lack of plants growing in the streams, robbing them of fantastic habitat
	Algae – there would be some – but it wouldn't dominate or be the only plant type	-	-	
<b>Mammals</b>	Many more sightings of Otters, Roe Deer (occasionally seen now down near Sea Mills.	Y		Real re-wilding is beyond Trout in the Trym. Restoring Wolves might help the river * but it isn't going to happen! (* They did in Yellowstone)
	Water Voles – once widespread. Also in a truly re-wilded UK Wild Boar, Pine Martin, Lynx, etc.		Y	