



WATERSHED
INVESTIGATIONS

Annual Report

2023

Introduction



Launched in January 2023, Watershed Investigations has delivered **impactful reporting on PFAS pollution, water and climate resilience, and land use** — garnering national and international media attention.

Watershed's investigation for the cross-border Forever Pollution Project made the **front-page of The Guardian**, revealing widespread PFAS contamination in the UK and producing Europe's first PFAS pollution map. Our work **created public awareness of this issue, in the UK, for the first time, winning multiple awards**.

Watershed's investigations **prompted UK government action**: introducing **new PFAS risk assessments**, proposals to **restrict PFAS in certain products** and form an **expert advisory board**. Our reporting led to a **prohibition notice against Cambridge Water, after we exposed contamination in the drinking supply**.

In **Europe**, the Forever Pollution Project was **cited in parliamentary debates**. In **France** it was **used to make the case for new legislation**. It was presented at major international forums, **influencing policy discussions and regulatory agendas** across the continent.

Watershed **exposed drought risks, weak regulation, and pollution from roads and offshore industries**. The findings **shaped political debate** and featured in **major outlets** with further coverage in our podcast.

In our **Sunday Times investigation**, we brought to light the **growing industrial footprint within UK Marine Conservation Zones**, and **threats to marine ecosystems**.

We revealed the **impact of farm and sewage pollution on shellfish and river health** linked to **severe E. coli contamination in UK shellfish waters**.

We demonstrated **farm runoff is the main cause of river failures in nutrient neutrality zones, blocking housing** in 35 councils. Our findings influenced public debate and **helped challenge government efforts to weaken river protections**, with further insights shared through our **podcast** and **social media** channels.

Access to clean water is the issue of our time, which, with your help, we hope to continue to **drive up the public and political agenda**.

About us

This is a watershed moment. Rivers, lakes, aquifers, wetlands, coasts, oceans and the wildlife they support are under threat from climate change, pollution and misuse. Drought, flood and sea-level rise makes swathes of land uninhabitable or unproductive. At times up to two-thirds of the global population live in water-stressed areas. Water scarcity leads to conflict. Dirty water leads to dead zones and disease. Yet there's a paucity of media coverage of these issues.

That's where WATERSHED comes in. Our independent, not-for-profit, investigative journalism shines a light on the water crisis in its many forms, using in-depth, rigorous, evidence-based stories which hold the powerful to account, uncover abuses, illuminate overlooked stories, and champion solutions. Working with established national and international media outlets, WATERSHED provides stories in multi-media formats to reach a wide audience.

Our values are to undertake ethical investigative journalism, using the highest reporting standards to provide coverage with due impartiality that is fair, accurate and in the public interest.

WATERSHED's investigative journalists are environmental journalist Rachel Salvidge (The Guardian, The Times, BBC and the ENDS Report) and filmmaker and broadcast journalist Leana Hosea, who has spent 18 years working at the BBC. She worked in four BBC foreign bureaus covering international news, as well as investigations for all media platforms.

OUR ADVISORY BOARD



Dr Mohammad Shamsudduha



Carole Day



Feargal Sharkey



Prof Michael Depledge



Roger Harrabin



Ruth Davis

In numbers: 2023

Millions reached through investigations

published in **18** major media outlets

picked up in **20** publications in **12** countries

3 awards **1** 'highly commended', British Journalism Awards

Reports on major media platforms:



Investigations

Forever Pollution Project

Watershed tested tap water across the country for PFAS, compiling our results, alongside official data obtained via Freedom of Information requests, working with European journalists to create an award winning [map of PFAS pollution](#), the first of its kind in Europe.

PFAS do not break down in the environment and many are known to be toxic. In gaseous form they can have a climate forcing effect thousands of times more potent than CO₂.

Until our investigation broke, there was very little UK coverage of this issue and almost no action by water companies, regulators or government to understand or tackle contamination in the UK. The UK's chemicals strategy which might have addressed concerns about PFAS pollution is overdue (first promised in January 2018).

In the EU, tighter regulation of PFAS is proposed, while the UK lags ever further behind the EU on regulation of these chemicals of concern.

Initially, we had six stories, including the map, across three days in the **Guardian**, and got the front page splash.

The main article, published on 23/2/23 received **349,000 page views** by 2pm the following day. **Guardian** editors told us this was a huge success.

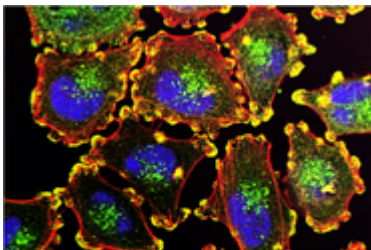


Forever Pollution Project

The **Guardian's** coverage was picked up by media in the UK and across Europe:

The **Global Investigative Journalism Network's** included it in their [top 10 data stories](#).

Evening Standard



Forever chemicals found across UK and Europe

According to a major mapping project, man-made chemicals shown to increase cancer risk have been found across the UK and Europe.

• Evening Standard / Feb 24, 2023

The Ends Report



Is the UK absent from the fight against PFAS 'forever chemical' pollution?

Nations are scrambling to combat the risks posed by forever chemicals in rivers and drinking water by toughening up regulation, but the UK appears to be lagging behind. Find Rachel Salvidge and Leana Hoses...

EndsReportMainNet / Feb 21, 2023



How much do we know about the UK's PFAS problem?

Datasets used to produce a map of PFAS contamination across Europe reveals a number of hotspots across the UK, however knowledge of the scale of the problem remains limited. Find Rachel Salvidge and Leana Hoses...

EndsReportMainNet / Feb 21, 2023

Euronews



'Frightening' scale of Europe's forever chemical pollution revealed

An investigation has revealed that 17,000 European sites are contaminated with these persistent manmade substances.

Euronews / Mar 7, 2023

Scientific American, Italian edition



Take a Look at This Map of PFAS Pollution Across the UK and Europe

The Guardian, together with other media organizations such as Le Monde and NRC, have...

Envirotech Online /

The Week



What are 'forever chemicals' and how are they harmful?

The widely used pollutants have been linked to thyroid disease and cancers

The Week / Feb 27, 2023

La Scienze



Inquinamento eterno, la mappa interattiva della contaminazione europea con PFAS

Queste sostanze tossiche, presenti in innumerevoli prodotti d'uso quotidiano, persistono nell'ambiente per lunghissimo tempo. Un'ampia indagine internazionale ha individuato oltre 2000 siti europei in cui la lo...

LS Le Scienze / Jun 8, 2023

Euractive

Belgium has highest levels of PFAS chemical pollution in Europe, study reveals

Major mapping project reveals PFAS have been found at high levels at thousands of sites across Europe. EURACTV's media partner, The Guardian, reports.

EURACTV / Sep 29, 2024

Forever Pollution Project

Environmental Analyst UK



The map element enabled local press to run their own stories:
Devon Live:

Ecowatch



In Your Area



Thred



Devon Live



The PFAS Project Lab



The impact of Forever Pollution Project coverage across so many platforms, continent-wide, resulted in 'PFAS' becoming a trending term on Twitter. Our stories were retweeted by influencers and experts, including Rob Bilott, Mary Creagh, Feargal Sharkey, media and NGOs.

Forever Pollution Project

This was followed by a dedicated PFAS **Guardian Science Weekly** podcast, in the form of a one-to-one interview with Rachel. The podcast has an **audience of 518k on soundcloud** alone. Leana was interviewed on **PRX The World, American Public Radio**, with a **weekly audience of 2.5 million**. The story was picked up on **Radio 4's** morning review of the papers.

The wider European work of the **Forever Pollution Project** was undertaken in **collaboration with a consortium of European journalists**. The project's website collated stories from across the region and got **10,700** unique visitors and **17,300** page views.

The **PFAS map** was published by, and generated articles in, a range of media, including **Le Monde** (France), **NDR, WDR** and **Süddeutsche Zeitung** (Germany), **RADAR Magazine** and **Le Scienze** (Italy), **The Investigative Desk** and **NRC** (Netherlands).

We wrote three PFAS stories for **The Ends Report** which is read by **UK government departments and regulators**, including the **Treasury, Defra, Environment Agency** etc.



PFAS

The Forever Pollution Project catapulted the little known issue of forever chemical pollution to prominence in the UK. The **Guardian** commissioned a series of articles on PFAS pollution from us:



and one written by their in-house journalists:



AGC Chemicals

We broke the story of a **chemicals company releasing large quantities of a “very persistent, mobile and toxic” forever chemical into the River Wyre in Lancashire each year**, which, owing to the **dearth of legislation on chemical pollution**, is not illegal.

It followed on from earlier work where we revealed effluent coming from the site of AGC Chemicals Europe in Thornton-Cleveleys could contain about **700 types of PFAS**. The **Environment Agency and AGC** say they are **working to improve their processes** and we have taken another sample of AGC’s effluent to check whether this is true. The results should be available before the end of the year.

Front page in the online edition and lead environment story in the **Guardian**:



[Al Mayadeen](#)
[Chemical Engineering News](#)

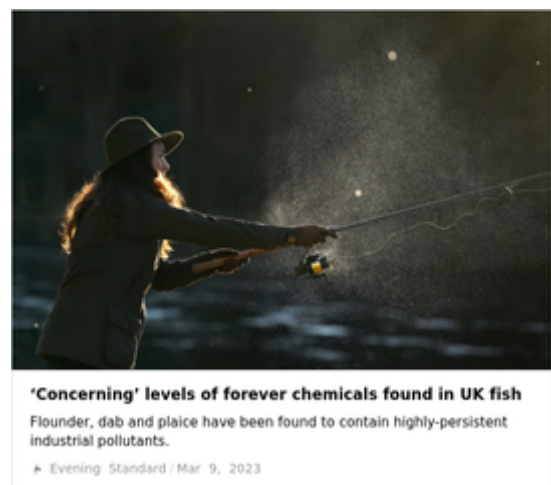
PFAS in fish

In March, we released further PFAS data to the press. This time in relation to **PFAS-contaminated fish**. We appeared on **Sky News Climate Show** to talk about our findings.

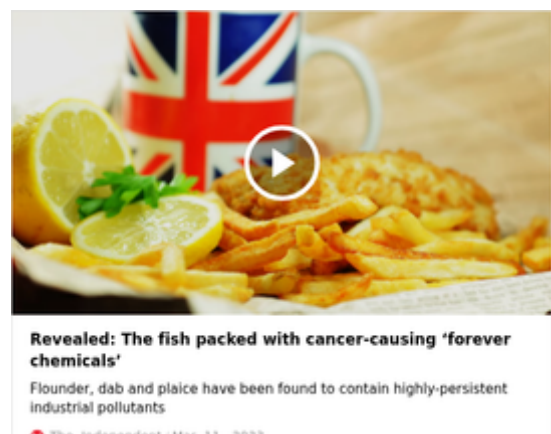
Daily Mail



Evening Standard



Independent



PFAS in fish



The Ends Report



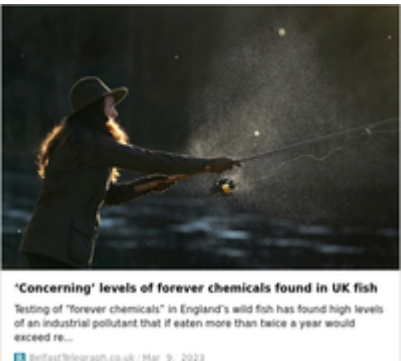
Yahoo



Irish News

Daily Express sidebar 10 March 23.

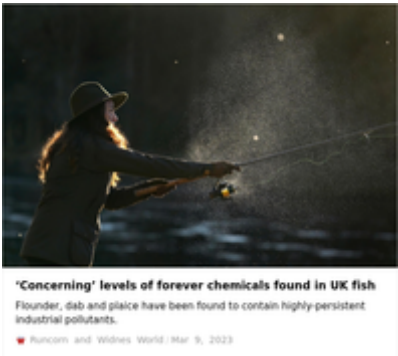
Local Press Coverage



Belfast Telegraph



Yorkshire Bylines



Runcorn and Widnes World



Hull Live

PFAS regulation

Pressure to regulate PFAS ramped up on Wednesday 18 October, when the **Royal Society of Chemistry** called on the UK Government to **reduce the cap on PFAS levels** that require immediate water treatment

Our Forever Pollution Project data was the starting point for the Royal Society's analysis.



We were the first to cover the Drinking Water Inspectorate's report on the first England-wide testing of PFAS in raw and drinking water.



We interviewed lawyer Robert Bilott – who successfully sued DuPont for harm to health caused by PFAS, and activist, Kyla Bennett, in our podcast, [The David and Goliath scrap over PFAS 'forever chemical pollution'](#)



PFAS IMPACT: political and regulatory

The UK government responded to our PFAS work in a number of ways. The **Environment Agency's** hired consultant **requested our data to aid their work** on PFAS pollution. Commenting in our article, **Defra** said it is "working at pace across government to assess the levels of PFAS occurring in the environment. We will shortly **publish further analysis of the risks of PFAS** which will also **make recommendations to inform future policy** - with further details on our approach to be announced later this year. We will also **establish an expert advisory board** who will consider a range of international research to help us **ensure our drinking water standards and regulations continue to be based on the latest evidence.**"

Defra responded in a dedicated blog: [Coverage of PFAS chemicals](#).

Environment Secretary Therese Coffey, said on 4/4/23 the **government** would focus on **restricting forever chemicals' use in products**.

In April the **Health and Safety Executive** published a [report on PFAS](#) which **suggests developing statutory standards for PFAS in drinking water**. It recommends **restricting the use of foam with PFAS, and the manufacture and sale of consumer articles likely to cause pollution or exposure including textiles, leather, clothes, rugs, carpets, paints, varnishes, waxes, polishes and cleaning products**. The **government** is set to start developing a restriction proposal on **PFAS in firefighting foams** by the end of this year.

In relation to the [PFAS pollution we uncovered at AGC Chemicals](#), the **Environment Agency** told us on 10/3/23: "We have recently commissioned **additional monitoring at locations in Morecambe Bay and the River Wyre**. We do not have the full quality-assured data sets available at this stage as the work is ongoing." An industry insider who sits on a number of working groups with the Environment Agency says the topic of his **meetings have been largely focused on PFAS since the investigation broke**.

In the European Union [The Forever Pollution Project](#) was mentioned in the European Parliament's [Environment Committee](#).

The [French National Assembly](#) discussed it at a roundtable on PFAS and has [proposed a law](#), which **cites our investigation**.

There was a [plenary exchange in the European Parliament](#), requested by MEP Toussaint which we are told was **triggered by the Forever Pollution Project**.

Numerous **political groups in the European Parliament** [commented on the Forever Pollution Project](#) on [social media](#).

Our Forever Pollution Project partners presented our joint work at international professional and official forums, including the **OECD PFAS Forum**, the **COP side event on POPs**, the **International HCH & Pesticides Forum**, the **Belgium Presidency of the EU PFAS conference**, the **EU Commission Annual Forum on EDCs**, and at the annual meeting of the **FAO Global Soil Partnership International Network on Soil Pollution**.

Earlier work **exposing Cambridge Water's PFAS contaminated drinking water supplies** in the **Guardian** led to a [Drinking Water Inspectorate \(DWI\)](#) report, **Cambridge Water only notified the DWI of the pollution on the day of the article's publication and as a result of the article**.



The subsequent investigation by the Drinking Water Inspectorate into PFAS contamination of Cambridge Water referenced our [article](#) in their [April 2023 report](#). Cambridge Water was served with a precautionary prohibition notice to protect water quality and ensure the supply could not be returned to service even in times of water stress in the region unless proven treatment could be installed to remove PFAS with certainty to below 0.1 µg/l.

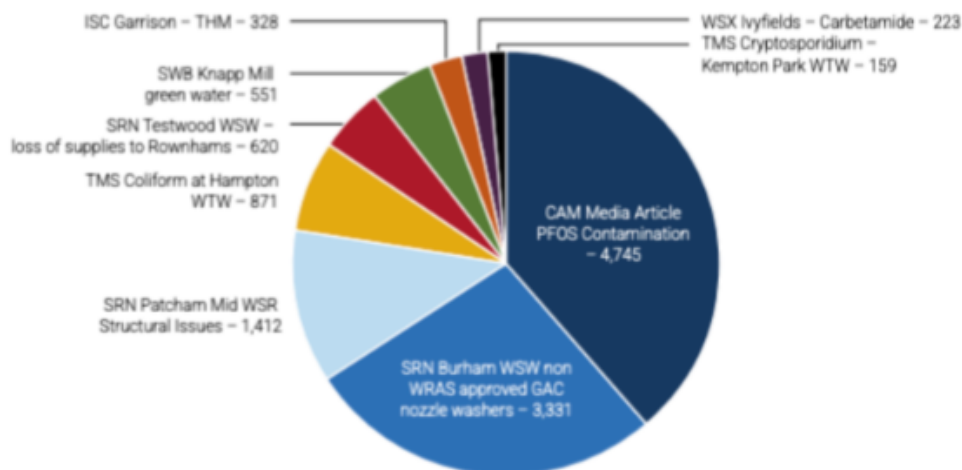
Expert toxicological advice was sought on exposure risk of harm to the public. Residents had been exposed to elevated levels of PFAS and our exposé prompted action to address this pollution and to better protect residents' health in the future.

Highest scoring events

The following pie chart shows the highest scoring events in 2022. The majority occurred at water treatment works, or storage reservoirs, and therefore scored highly, in part due to the large number of consumers at risk.

Figure 7.

Pie chart showing highest scoring events in 2022 (excluding networks and information systems events)



The Cambridge Water event relating to a Guardian media article on Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) scored highly, representing the negative impact on consumer confidence caused by this event. Full details of the event assessment can be found on the Inspectorate's website; [Investigation into the Water Quality Event of PFOS Contamination in Duxford – Drinking Water Inspectorate \(dwi.gov.uk\)](#)

PFAS Impact: scientists, communities, NGO partners

Rachel gave a **talk about chemical contamination in rivers and seas** at a [Labour Party Conference](#) fringe event, alongside **shadow environment minister Ruth Jones, CHEMTrust, the Marine Conservation Society** and Labour's environment group **SERA** at a time when polls suggest Labour could well be forming the next government.

Firefighters in particular are exposed to **PFAS in firefighting foam** and their protective clothes. **Our work was discussed at a London Fire Brigade meeting between management and the Fire Brigades Union.** One FBU rep told us **"It caused a stir,"** followed by a **management verbal promise to move to fluorine free foams** (which do not contain PFAS).

Our work on PFAS was discussed on the **firemans' cancer forum**, which is enlisting volunteers for a **UCLan health study on the impacts of toxins, including PFAS.**



The 'Forever Pollution Project' is the subject of a [scientific paper](#) in collaboration with scientists Alissa Cordner and Phil Brown which has been submitted to Environmental Science and Technology and is in the process of peer review.

Data from the project is being **used by scientists, researchers and consultancies** for their work, including ETH Zürich, University of Ljubljana, Gothenburg University, ARAGORN (Achieving Remediation And Governing Restoration of Contaminated Soils Now), Aarhus University, GRID-Arendal, European project SOS-ZEROPOL2030, and the Institut du Cerveau Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris.

We created a link on our website to the **PFAS in fish raw data so communities, NGOs, local journalists and others can use it to inform their work** and we intend to build on this with more data sources and maps going forward.

Our Forever Pollution Project partners have presented our joint work at numerous European journalism conferences, such as Dataharvest and the Global Investigative Journalism Conference, to share skills and inspire other journalists.

One of our **academic partners** on PFAS, **Dr David Megson from Manchester Metropolitan University**, said: "following the publications in the **Guardian** I have received **more interest and invitations to give guest lectures** than I ever have from

producing a scientific paper. The work has provided a platform for me to secure potential future funding with 6 different industrial partners who have all contacted me about doing PFAS analysis."



CHEMTrust used the findings of our project and featured them on a postcard handed to MEPs and stakeholders at EU REACH Revision committee meetings and still use it. Our story featured in their newsletter and website.

A petition to get the US FDA to increase regulation of PFAS cites our article. We worked with Wildlife and Countryside Link to incorporate their work on PFAS into our suite of Guardian articles.

Awards For PFAS Coverage

Our BBC Radio 4 documentary on PFAS, 'Britain's Dark Waters', for 'Costing the Earth' won a [Royal Society and Association Of British Science Writers Best Audio Award](#)

Alongside our European collaborators, we won second place for the [Kevin Carmody Award for Outstanding Investigative Reporting](#) and third place for a Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation prize. We have been shortlisted for the [British Journalism Awards 2023](#), in the Energy and Environment category for our series of articles on PFAS for the **Guardian**. For our work on raising awareness around water issues we were recognised as **River Warriors**, by the Lewis Pugh Foundation.



BBC Radio 4 - Costing the Earth, Britain's Dark Waters
PFAS chemicals are linked to mass poisoning in the US. Are they having an impact here?
BBC

Water and climate

Climate change is bringing more frequent, more intense **droughts**. **Water companies do not appear to be adequately preparing, or investing in infrastructure to ensure continued water security.**

We worked with **Wildfish** to investigate whether water company management plans are fit for purpose, worked with Environment Agency whistleblowers who told us they had little faith in the system, providing inside information.

Water and climate phase 1: water resources, drought and regulation

We reported in **The Times** that **England faces an 'ecological disaster' if a severe drought strikes this summer.**

Water companies **will not be able to supply enough drinking water** to meet demand and will have to **extract millions of extra litres from struggling rivers to avoid shortages.**



Water companies plan to pump rivers if summer drought strikes

England faces an "ecological disaster" if a severe drought strikes this summer, with water companies turning to rivers to avoid drinking water shortages. Ana

Our analysis of **water companies'** plans uncovered **huge shortfalls** in the event of **severe protracted drought**, with Southern Water facing the biggest deficit of 188 million litres every day, followed by Affinity Water with 98ML/d and Yorkshire Water with 23ML/d.

Ofwat, who we approached while researching the article, [announced](#) "water companies need to improve long-term water supply plans" just before the article was published.

Water companies, Water UK and regulators issued statements in response to our research. [Southern Water](#) announced plans for additional water resource infrastructure, following our article.

In the **Guardian**, we revealed the **Environment Agency slashed its water-use inspections** by almost half over five years and now **lacks the ability to control how much water businesses abstract, preventing climate-ready drought planning or mitigation.**



The article **headlined in the UK News section of the Guardian** (online and newspaper). The **Environment Agency**, who we approached for this article, said the regulator was **“recruiting and training more staff to carry out water resources compliance work** and strengthening the way we regulate to drive better performance from the water industry, with **additional specialist officers and new data tools** to provide better intelligence”.

Water and climate phase 2: water and climate planning

Building on this work, we are taking a look at the **lack of consideration of water in climate planning**.

We reported **wide-ranging concerns among experts that water is missing from climate planning despite being a threat to billions** to the press from the **UN Water Conference** generating coverage in the **Independent**, [Evening Standard](#) and [Echo](#).



Water missing from climate planning despite threat to billions, scientists warn

Billions of people face water shortages by the end of the decade with floods, droughts and water-borne diseases becoming more frequent and intense.

 The Independent / Mar 24, 2023

Podcast: The Watershed Investigations; tales from the frontline of the water crisis

We focused several episodes of our new podcast on water and climate change:

Ugandan climate activist **Nyombi Morris** told how **climate-fueled floods destroyed his home**, a reality of climate displacement shared with so many others, in [‘Drought, flood and famine’](#)

[‘Water Rationing in Cape Town’](#), explored the **vast social inequalities in how water is distributed** and heard from the brave **local campaigners challenging this injustice**. Hydrologist Professor **Hannah Cloke** discussed her findings that **unequal access to water is the number one driver of water shortage the world over** - greater even than climate change or access to technological solutions.

Dame Julia King, Baroness Brown of Cambridge, spoke to us on **lack of government preparation to deal with the diminishing water supplies that climate change will bring** and the **urgent action needed to address this**, in [‘Hung Out to Dry’](#).



Water and climate phase 3: water pollution from vehicles

Vehicles, a major source of CO₂ emissions, also generate water pollution. Our report in the **Guardian** revealed the **cocktail of chemicals, heavy metals and polyaromatic hydrocarbons entering UK rivers via hundreds of road runoff outfalls**.



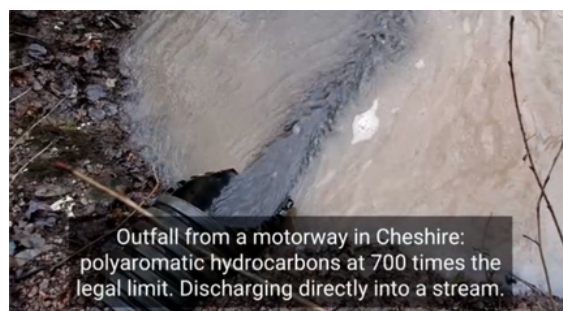
We filmed with the **BBC's** Jonah Fisher for [their coverage](#) of this story and **provided data to the Press Association**, so the story could be picked up by other media.

Responding to our coverage, the **Environment Agency** justified **lack of oversight and regulation**, saying outfalls and road drains are "not directly regulated by the Environment Agency but we do work with the government and partner organisations to reduce pollution from roads. This includes working closely with National Highways to influence their road investment strategy to include pollution mitigating schemes on their priority list of outfalls." They wrote about the article on the [Defra blog](#).

Stephen Elderkin, the director of environmental sustainability at **National Highways**, said: "We are committed to addressing all of our high-risk water outfalls by 2030 and our water quality plan 2030 sets out a high-level programme of work to achieve this ... National Highways has also invested in a programme of research to understand the risk of pollution from microplastics in road runoff."

Chris Gillham, convenor of the **Winchester Friends of the Earth**, submitted our article and the raw data we shared with him to an **Inquiry into National Highways capacity increase on the M3**.

We plan to make **an interactive map and data available** on our website to **empower journalists, NGOs and members of the public** to **investigate pollution** throughout the UK.



IMPACTS OF FARM AND SEWAGE POLLUTION

Phase 1: E. coli in shellfish

Internal emails shared with Watershed revealed **closures to shellfish areas** resulting from **very high E coli** readings. The main sources were **slurry from farms, and human sewage**.

Watershed collated and analysed official data uncovering locations of the worst E coli samples from the UK.

Our report, with ITV's Health and Science Correspondent, Martin Stew, was the half hour **lead story on ITV national TV news** at 7:30pm and 10pm and published online, and we wrote about the closures for the **Guardian**.



Worrying levels of E. coli in UK's shellfish as sewage spills into sea

Exclusive research has shown two shellfish areas on the south coast have recorded levels of E coli 700 times above the acceptable rating. | ITV National News



Sewage spills blamed as E coli forces Cornish shellfish sites to close

Producers accuse government of failing to tackle pollution after 'very

The ITV story was viewed **68,300** times and the Guardian story **373,400** times on Feargal Sharkey's twitter alone, with a further **84,200** views on ITV's Twitter account.

A spokesperson for **Defra** **responded**: "We work closely with partners to monitor shellfish sites, and we have been clear with water companies that the ongoing pollution of our rivers and beaches is unacceptable. That's why we've set the **strictest targets ever on water companies** to reduce discharges and required them to deliver the largest infrastructure programme in their history – with £56bn capital investment over 25 years."

Phase 2: Farming pollution and nutrient neutrality

Working with **ECIU**, Watershed analysed Environment Agency data, finding **agricultural pollution is the main reason for rivers failing to meet water quality standards in local authorities where Natural England had advised planners not to approve more housing unless they can demonstrate that would not add more nutrient pollution to water courses**.



Farm pollution blocks new homes across country

Pollution from farms has prevented housing developments being approved by 35 councils, analysis by The Times and Watershed Investigations, the not-for-profit organisation, can reveal. Natural England...

The Times / Jun 11, 2023

Recent coverage had singled out Natural England for creating problems for housebuilders. We were able to evidence the underlying source of delays is the way human and agricultural waste is managed.

Our article in **The Times** set out how **pollution from farms has prevented housing developments being approved by 35 councils**. Of the known reasons rivers failed to meet standards in these areas, **44% of failures were reported to be due to farm pollution and 21% a result of pollution by the water sector**.

As the government announced plans to **rip up nutrient neutrality rules**, the [Independent](#), [Evening Standard](#) and **Press Association** followed up our story, using our data to highlight the problems of farm pollution.

Tracking government efforts to water down regulation, in a **Guardian** investigation we revealed that a nationwide health check of England's water bodies, formerly carried out annually, will now take six years to complete, prompting anger from campaigners and politicians, amid growing public alarm at the state of

the nation's rivers and coasts.



Fury as national health check of England's waters faces six-year wait

Exclusive: Assessment that used to happen annually will now take six years despite rising concerns

The Guardian / Jun 19, 2023

Watershed in the media as experts

We are sometimes called on to comment on **water pollution** issues for national media. Leana was interviewed on **BBC News** about **illegal sewage dumping** and the impact of **slurry and sewage on rivers**.

The **BBC** interviewed Rachel following the announcement by the environment watchdog that the **government and regulator could be breaking the law concerning sewage pollution**.

Leana was a panellist on **TRT World, Roundtable's** half hour programme on the impacts of **farming and sewage pollution on British waterways**.



Watershed Investigations Podcast

We launched a podcast to dive deeper into the subjects we're investigating:



Feargal Sharkey brought all his passion to our episode called '[Up Poop Creek](#)', shedding light on the **regulatory failures** which have led to **sewage and farming pollution**.

We put out a short briefing podcast to demystify the [nutrient neutrality](#) issue, when the government announced it planned to **rip up river protection rules**.

In '[Rishi Sunak and the blooms of doom](#)', fly fishing guide **Nathan Jubb** lamented the impacts of chicken sheds on the River Wye and Greenpeace's chief scientist, **Doug Parr**, outlined **government failures and solutions**.



A briefing on '[Sewage and shooting at the Labour Party Conference](#)' outlined the party's promises on water pollution if they win the election.

Impacts

Watershed Investigations boosted the profile of these stories and provided critical facts to inform the debate, which saw the **attempts to quash nutrient neutrality rules defeated in the House**

Social media

Another goal is to grow our social media output and presence. We hired a part-time, freelance social media manager from July-October and this boosted Watershed's followers by 2300 on Twitter and 260 on Instagram.

Critically, our engagements have increased on twitter. In the last month our average tweet got 119 retweets, 177 likes and 16,876 impressions, indicating our followers are genuinely interested and involved.

We would like to expand our social presence across more platforms and increase our audience. Ideally, we would like to hire a dedicated part-time social media manager across the whole year to deliver this.

This is something we thought we would be able to manage ourselves but found quickly we needed to outsource to maintain a minimum level of engagement and that we need to invest more going forward to deliver fresh and dynamic bespoke postings derived from our work, in a range of formats, across platforms, to engage diverse audiences