



Barriers

Problems and causes

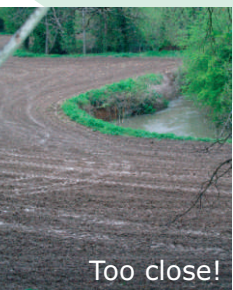
Man Made Barriers - The Bristol Avon and tributaries has dozens of barriers to fish passage. This often results in short impounded stretches which cannot provide the variety of habitats required by fish, plants and invertebrates, and ultimately the other wildlife that depends on them.

Run-off from roads - In many places the run-off from roads, particularly during the winter, is a significant source of pollution. Sediment and grit coated with pollutants such as oil, petrol, diesel and chemical gritting compounds are washed from roads to ditches and into our rivers.



Run-off

Erosion - Soil inputs to rivers have increased for a number of reasons. Ploughing of arable land often occurs too close to rivers, potentially wasting the valuable resource of topsoil which enters rivers in huge volumes during flooding causing a range of problems. Where livestock tramples river edges and banks, this can remove protective habitats resulting in sediment plumes and associated pollutants, particularly during wet weather. These areas can also become hard-packed bare 'deserts' supporting little vegetation. At the same time, reduction and simplification of flows in rivers due to abstraction, direct management (such as reinforcement of urban river banks) and barriers (such as weirs) allow excess sediment to settle and degrade habitat, including fish spawning areas. This damage to the environment has both direct and indirect implications for all of us, including adding to our water bills, loss of valuable agricultural land, a demand for compensatory inputs of fertiliser, and degradation of valued and characteristic landscapes and ecosystems.



Too close!



Trampled bank



We pride ourselves on getting our feet wet, getting our hands dirty, and getting things done. We do this by bringing together individual people, interest groups and community organisations with common interests and problems. We help them to express these as achievable projects by adding our experience and practical science and can sometimes help by offering volunteer support, or pointing communities to sources of funding that might be available.

BART relies on volunteers to do much of its work. There are no barriers to volunteering as anyone who has an interest in the river can make a contribution. Local knowledge, stories and the history of an area bring colour to a project; this can be as important as the more physical side of the work we do. If you are interested in volunteering please contact us.

To find out more about **BART** please visit our website at
www.bristolavonrivertrust.org

To contact **BART** you can either email us at info@bristolavonrivertrust.org or phone Ian on 07411 488 084 (mobile) before 6.00pm on any weekday.



A Clear
Future for
our River

BART is a community-led organisation which aims to deliver education, land and river management advice and practical river restoration work in the Bristol Avon catchment. Through promoting an ecosystem-based approach, we aim to reconnect communities to their rivers, and help river lovers and users better appreciate, conserve and improve their local rivers and streams.

What We Do

The Bristol Avon Rivers Trust exists to help you protect and improve your river in many ways.

- Improving riverside and in-channel habitat to increase diversity and numbers of fish, flora and wildlife.
- Bringing people together who have a common interest in a healthy functioning river system.
- Identifying funding sources and matching them to known local needs.
- Collaborating in or managing river-based improvement projects.
- Providing education about the ecosystem approach to protecting and improving our rivers.



About the rivers

The Bristol Avon could be just 19 miles long, as this is how far it is between its source at Acton Turville in South Gloucestershire to the Severn Estuary. It has chosen however to take a slightly longer route through Wiltshire and takes a 75 mile course to the sea at Avonmouth. This extended journey makes the Bristol Avon the 19th longest river in the UK.

Along its journey, the Avon meets a number of tributaries amongst which are the rivers Marden, Somerset Frome, River Chew and smaller streams such as the By Brook, Brinkworth Brook and the River Trym. The river has drawn communities towards it over many years and boasts two cities, Bristol and Bath, along its banks as well as many towns including Malmesbury, Chippenham, Melksham, Bradford-On-Avon and Keynsham as well as smaller settlements at Saltford, Avoncliffe, Freshford and Claverton which may be familiar names to many train passengers.

The river and its banksides provide important habitat for animals, birds, insects and fish. Trees, reeds, lilies and many other plants grow in and along the river creating a diverse and beautiful refuge for many river users as well as a home to wildlife. Even in urban settings, there is more to see than meets the eye and those who stand and stare are often rewarded with the sight of kingfishers, dragonflies, herons and, for the very lucky, the otter.



Problems

From source to sea, the River Avon is under constant pressure. This may be due to agriculture (to feed us), flood management (to protect us), abstraction (to supply our water), effluent (from systems that treat our sewage and from industry), or just by our using it for leisure and recreational purposes. There are other problems too, but they are mainly as a result of the pressures we place on the river. These pressures will not go away and will increase as the populations of all our local towns and cities increase. The Bristol Avon Rivers Trust recognises these pressures and aims to use innovative and natural approaches to work with partners to protect and improve the river wherever it can with the support of landowners, river users and local communities.

BART Beacons

BART Beacons are the way we are establishing a community of interest groups across the catchment who feed back news from across the catchment like old fashioned radio masts. They will be the "eyes and ears" of BART identifying problems or opportunities on their local stretch of river or stream. BART will share this information with other Beacons and look for opportunities to bring these together on logical projects to improve the health of the river. Local knowledge and interest is all you need to become a beacon; whether you are an individual who has something to share or a community or interest group we would love to hear from you.

