

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **New Forest Wilder for Water project**

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Water quality plays a critical role in freshwater and coastal biodiversity. The New Forest is one of the most Important Freshwater Landscapes in the UK supporting an exceptional array of wetland habitats and species. However, in recent years changes in water quality have been detected across the Forest as with much of the UK. These declines can be attributed to many factors and addressing these issues is necessary to halt and reverse the decline in freshwater species.

Our role as a catchment partnership is to protect, improve and expand the unique habitats to the very highest of standards. Our vision is to go further than the Water Framework Directive by including ponds, small lakes, headwater streams and mires.

Through the Catchment Partnership our work involves collating data and engaging with others to identify risks and opportunities which help target work where it can be most effective for the environment, providing sustainable and economically viable solutions.

This presentation provides an insight into the collaborative programme of work being implemented by Freshwater Habitats Trust in the New Forest National Park and how we have seen first-hand that landowners, businesses, and communities across the Forest are committed to change, working together to reduce their environmental footprint.

However, there is uncertainty around the actual biological impact this is having; this is not just true of the Forest, it's a challenge everywhere. More detailed monitoring is required to track changes in the longer term, and this will be driven by funding and research.