ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NRA

National Rivers Authority
South West Region

River Cober Catchment
River Water Quality
Classification 1990

NOVEMBER 1991
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B L MILFORD

GORDON H BIELBY BSc
Regional General Manager

C V M Davies
Environmental Protection
Manager

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Further enquiries regarding the content of these reports should be addressed to:

Freshwater Scientist,
National Rivers Authority,
Manley House,
Kestrel Way,
EXETER,
Devon EX2 7LQ

RIVER WATER QUALITY IN THE RIVER COBER CATCHMENT

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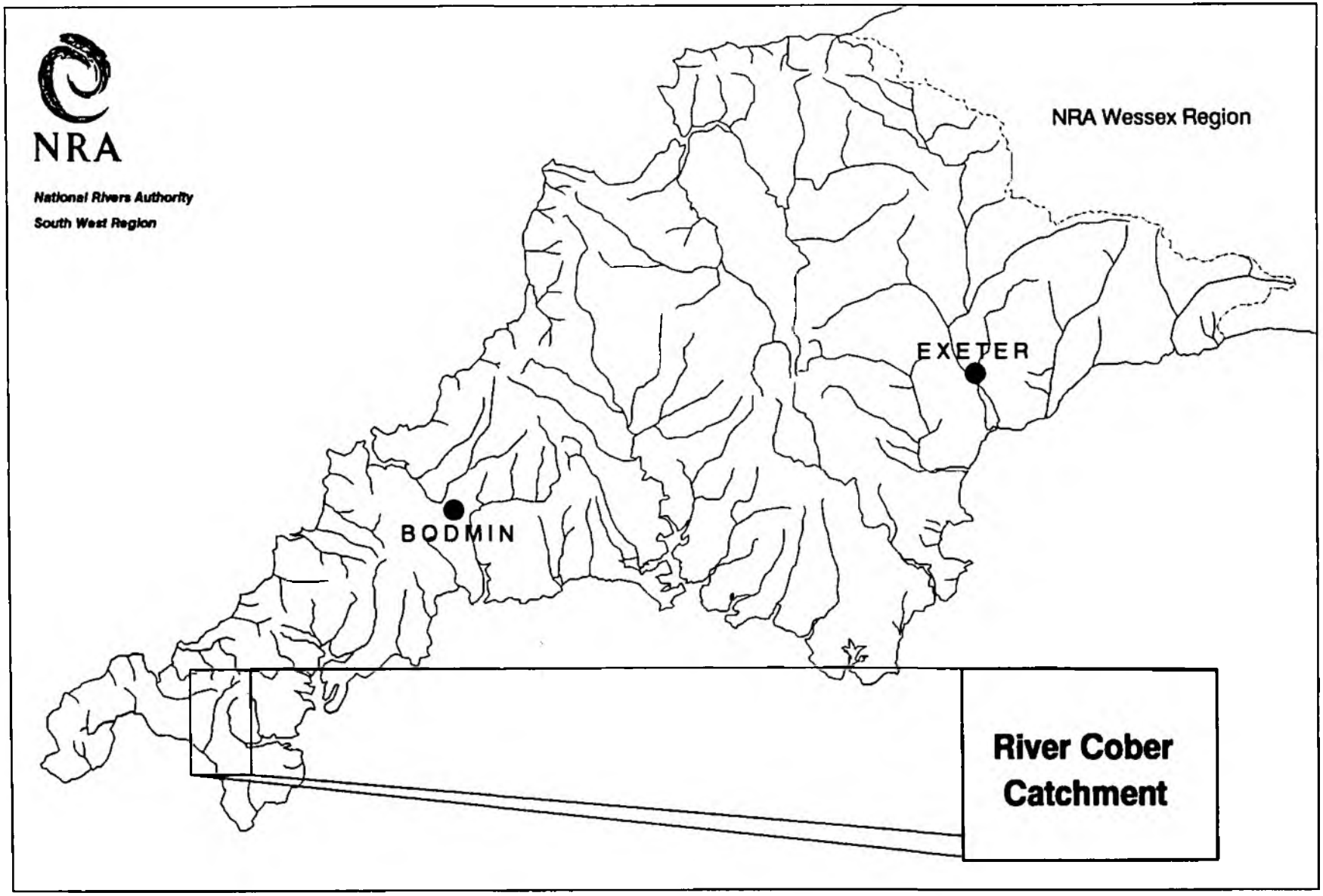


River Cober Catchment

1. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring to assess the quality of river waters is undertaken in thirty-two catchments within the region. As part of this monitoring programme samples are collected routinely from selected monitoring points at a pre-determined frequency per year, usually twelve spaced at monthly intervals. Each monitoring point provides data for the water quality of a river reach (in kilometres) upstream of the monitoring point.

River lengths have been re-measured and variations exist over those recorded previously.

Each water sample collected from each monitoring point is analysed for a range of chemical and physical constituents or properties known as determinands. The analytical results for each sample are entered into a computer database called the Water Quality Archive.

Selected data are accessed from the Archive so that the quality of each river reach can be determined based on a River Classification System developed by the National Water Council (NWC), (9.1).

This report presents the river water quality classification for 1990 for monitored river reaches in the River Cober catchment.

2. RIVER COBER CATCHMENT

The River Cober flows over a distance of 17.4 km from its source via Loe Pool to the tidal limit, (Appendix 10.1). Water quality was monitored at six locations on the main river. Samples were taken at approximately monthly intervals.

Throughout the Cober catchment two secondary tributaries of the River Cober were monitored.

2.1 SECONDARY TRIBUTARIES

The Bodilly Stream and Medlyn Stream flow over a distance of 5.4 km and 5.5 km respectively from their source to the confluence with the River Cober and were both monitored at one location at approximately monthly intervals. Monitoring points are located in the lower reaches.

Each sample was analysed for a minimum number of determinands (Appendix 10.2) plus additional determinands based on local knowledge of the catchment. In addition, at selected sites, certain metal analyses were carried out.

The analytical results from all of these samples have been entered into the Water Quality Archive and can be accessed through the Water Act Register, (9.2).

3. NATIONAL WATER COUNCIL'S RIVER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

3.1 River Quality Objectives

In 1978 river quality objectives (RQOs) were assigned to all river lengths that were part of the routine monitoring network and to those additional watercourses, which were not part of the routine network, but which received discharges of effluents.

For the majority of watercourses long term objectives were identified based on existing and assumed adequate quality for the long term protection of the watercourse. In a few instances short term objectives were identified but no timetable for the achievement of the associated long term objective was set.

The RQOs currently in use in the River Cober catchment are identified in Appendix 10.1.

3.2 River Quality Classification

River water quality is classified using the National Water Council's (NWC) River Classification System (see Appendix 10.3), which identifies river water quality as being one of five quality classes as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - National Water Council - River Classification System

Class	Description
1A	Good quality
1B	Lesser good quality
2	Fair quality
3	Poor quality
4	Bad quality

Using the NWC system, the classification of river water quality is based on the values of certain determinands as arithmetic means or as 95 percentiles (5 percentiles are used for pH and dissolved oxygen) as indicated in Appendices 10.4.1 and 10.4.2.

The quality classification system incorporates some of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) criteria (Appendix 10.3) recommended for use by the NWC system.

4. 1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY SURVEY

The 1990 regional classification of river water quality also includes the requirements of the Department of the Environment quinquennial national river quality survey. The objectives for the Department of the Environment 1990 River Quality Survey are given below:

1) To carry out a National Classification Survey based on procedures used in the 1985 National Classification Survey, including all regional differences.

2) To classify all rivers and canals included in the 1985 National Classification Survey.

3) To compare the 1990 Classification with those obtained in 1985.

In addition, those watercourses, which were not part of the 1985 Survey and have been monitored since that date, are included in the 1990 regional classification of river water quality.

5. 1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION

Analytical data collected from monitoring during 1988, 1989 and 1990 were processed through a computerised river water quality classification programme. This resulted in a quality class being assigned to each monitored river reach as indicated in Appendix 10.5.

The quality class for 1990 can be compared against the appropriate River Quality Objective and previous annual quality classes (1985-1989) also based on three years combined data, for each river reach in Appendix 10.5.

The river water classification system used to classify each river length is identical to the system used in 1985 for the Department of the Environment's 1985 River Quality Survey. The determinand classification criteria used to determine the annual quality classes in 1985, subsequent years and for 1990 are indicated in Appendices 10.4 and 10.4.1.

Improvements to this classification system could have been made, particularly in the use of a different suspended solids standard for Class 2 waters. As the National Rivers Authority will be proposing new classification systems to the Secretary of State in the near future, it was decided to classify river lengths in 1990 with the classification used for the 1985-1989 classification period.

The adoption of the revised criteria for suspended solids in Class 2 waters would not have affected the classification of river reaches.

The river quality classes for 1990 of monitored river reaches in the catchment are shown in map form in Appendix 10.6.

The calculated determinand statistics for pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total ammonia, un-ionised ammonia, suspended solids, copper and zinc from which the quality class was determined for each river reach, are indicated in Appendix 10.7.

6. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH QUALITY OBJECTIVES

Those monitored river reaches within the catchment, which do not comply with their assigned (RQO), are shown in map form in Appendix 10.8.

Appendix 10.9 indicates the number of samples analysed for each determinand over the period 1988 to 1990 and the number of sample results per determinand, which exceed the determinand quality standard.

For those non-compliant river reaches in the catchment, the extent of exceedance of the calculated determinand statistic with relevant quality standard (represented as a percentage), is indicated in Appendix 10.10.

7. CAUSES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

For those river reaches, which did not comply with their assigned RQOs, the cause of non-compliance (where possible to identify) is indicated in Appendix 10.11.

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

RIVER REACH	A segment of water, upstream from sampling point to the next sampling point.
RIVER LENGTH	River distance in kilometres.
RIVER QUALITY OBJECTIVE	That NWC class,which protects the most sensitive use of the water.
95 percentiles	Maximum limits, which must be met for at least 95% of the time.
5 percentiles	Minimum limits, which must be met for at least 95% of the time.
BIOLOGICAL OXYGEN DEMAND (5 day carbonaceous ATU)	A standard test measuring the microbial uptake of oxygen - an estimate of organic pollution.
pH	A scale of acid to alkali.
UN-IONISED AMMONIA	Fraction of ammonia poisonous to fish, NH^3.
SUSPENDED SOLIDS	Solids removed by filtration or centrifuge under specific conditions.
USER REFERENCE NUMBER	Reference number allocated to a sampling point.
INFERRED STRETCH	Segment of water, which is not monitored and whose water quality classification is assigned from the monitored reach upstream.

9. REFERENCES

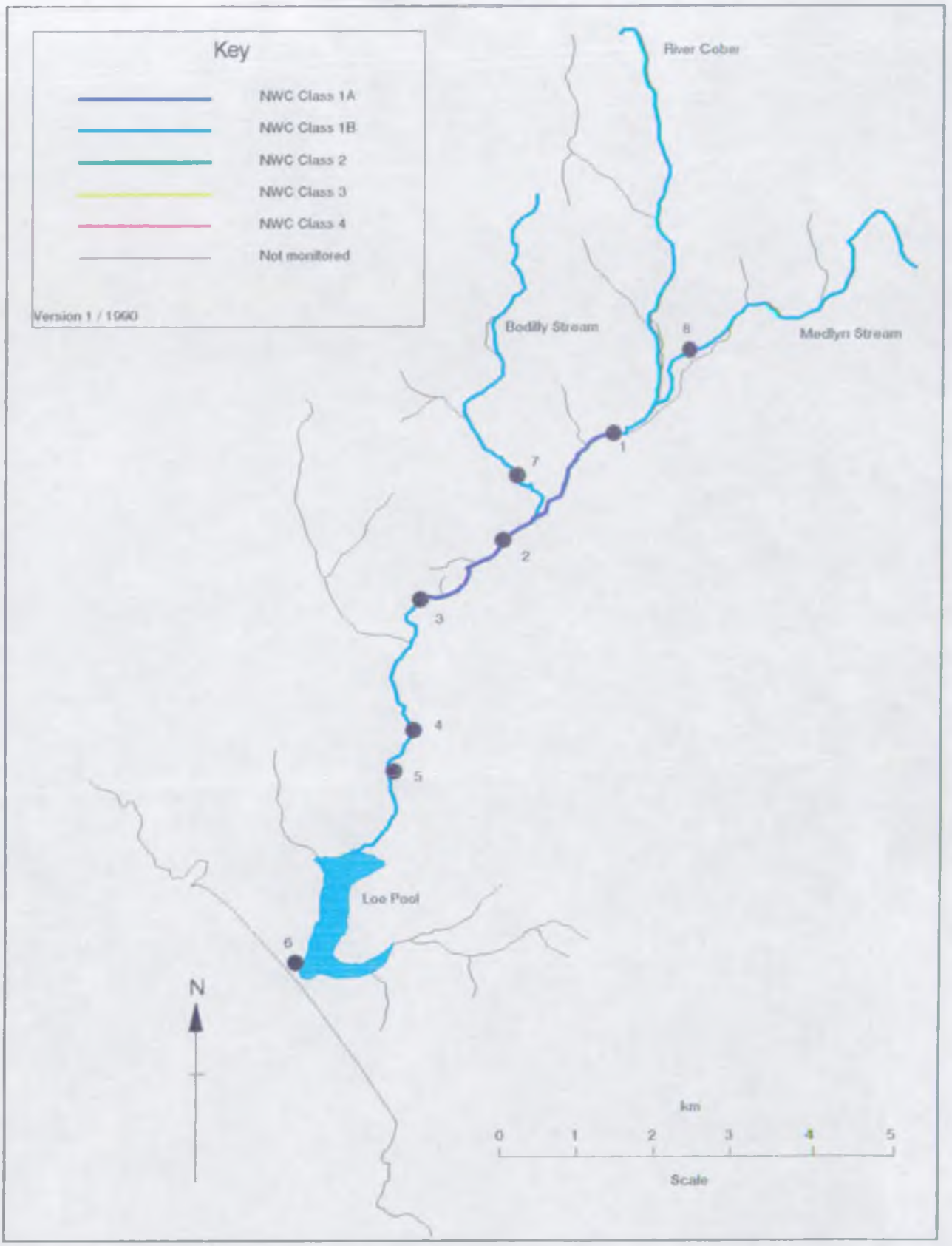
Reference

9.1 National Water Council (1977). River Water Quality: The Next Stage. Review of Discharge Consent Conditions. London.

9.2 Water Act 1989 Section 117

9.3 Alabaster J. S. and Lloyd R. Water Quality Criteria for Freshwater Fish, 2nd edition, 1982. Butterworths.

Cober Catchment
River Quality Objectives



BASIC DETERMINAND ANALYTICAL SUITE FOR ALL CLASSIFIED RIVER SITES

pH as pH Units

Conductivity at 20 C as uS/cm

Water temperature (Cel)

Oxygen dissolved % saturation

Oxygen dissolved as mg/l O

Biochemical oxygen demand (5 day total ATU) as mg/l O

Total organic carbon as mg/l C

Nitrogen ammoniacal as mg/l N

Ammonia un-ionised as mg/l N

Nitrate as mg/l N

Nitrite as mg/l N

Suspended solids at 105 C as mg/l

Total hardness as mg/l CaCO3

Chloride as mg/l Cl

Orthophosphate (total) as mg/l P

Silicate reactive dissolved as mg/l SiO2

Sulphate (dissolved) as mg/l SO4

Sodium (total) as mg/l Na

Potassium (total) as mg/l K

Magnesium (total) as mg/l Mg

Calcium (total) as mg/l Ca

Alkalinity as pH 4.5 as mg/l CaCO3

NWC RIVER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

River Class	Quality criteria	Remarks	Current potential uses
	Class limiting criteria (95 percentile)		
1A Good Quality	(i) Dissolved oxygen saturation greater than 80% (ii) Biochemical oxygen demand not greater than 3 mg/l (iii) Ammonia not greater than 0.4 mg/l (iv) Where the water is abstracted for drinking water, it complies with requirements for A2* water (v) Non-toxic to fish in EIFAC terms (or best estimates if EIFAC figures not available)	(i) Average BOD probably not greater than 1.5 mg/l (ii) Visible evidence of pollution should be absent	(i) Water of high quality suitable for potable supply abstractions and for all abstractions (ii) Game or other high class fisheries (iii) High amenity value
1B Good Quality	(i) DO greater than 60% saturation (ii) BOD not greater than 5 mg/l (iii) Ammonia not greater than 0.9 mg/l (iv) Where water is abstracted for drinking water, it complies with the requirements for A2* water (v) Non-toxic to fish in EIFAC terms (or best estimates if EIFAC figures not available)	(i) Average BOD probably not greater than 2 mg/l (ii) Average ammonia probably not greater than 0.5 mg/l (iii) Visible evidence of pollution should be absent (iv) Waters of high quality which cannot be placed in Class 1A because of the high proportion of high quality effluent present or because of the effect of physical factors such as canalisation, low gradient or eutrophication (v) Class 1A and Class 1B together are essentially the Class 1 of the River Pollution Survey (RPS)	Water of less high quality than Class 1A but usable fo substantially the same purposes
2 Fair Quality	(i) DO greater than 40% saturation (ii) BOD not greater than 9 mg/l (iii) Where water is abstracted for drinking water it complies with the requirements for A3* water (iv) Non-toxic to fish in EIFAC terms (or best estimates if EIFAC figures not available)	(i) Average BOD probably not greater than 5 mg/l (ii) Similar to Class 2 of RPS (iii) Water not showing physical signs of pollution other than humic colouration and a little foaming below weirs	(i) Waters suitable for potable supply after advanced treatment (ii) Supporting reasonably good coarse fisheries (iii) Moderate amenity value

Poor ality	(i) (ii) (iii)	DO greater than 10% saturation Not likely to be anaerobic BOD not greater than 17 mg/l. This may not apply if there is a high degree of re-aeration	Similar to Class 3 of RPS	Waters which are polluted to an extent that fish are absen: only sporadically present. May be used for low grade industrial abstraction purposes. Considerable potential for further use if cleaned up
4 Bad ality		Waters which are inferior to Class 3 in terms of dissolved oxygen and likely to be anaerobic at times	Similar to Class 4 of RPS	Waters which are grossly polluted and are likely to cause nuisance
X		DO greater than 10% saturation		Insignificant watercourses and ditches not usable, where the objective is simply to prevent nuisance developing

otes (a) Under extreme weather conditions (eg flood, drought, freeze-up), or when dominated by plant growth, or by aquatic plant decay, rivers usually in Class 1, 2, and 3 may have BODs and dissolved oxygen levels, or ammonia content outside the stated levels for those Classes. When this occurs the cause should be stated along with analytical results.

(b) The BOD determinations refer to 5 day carbonaceous BOD (ATU). Ammonia figures are expressed as NH_4. **

(c) In most instances the chemical classification given above will be suitable. However, the basis of the classification is restricted to a finite number of chemical determinands and there may be a few cases where the presence of a chemical substance other than those used in the classification markedly reduces the quality of the water. In such cases, the quality classification of the water should be down-graded on the basis of biota actually present, and the reasons stated.

(d) EIFAC (European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission) limits should be expressed as 95 percentile limits.

EEC category A2 and A3 requirements are those specified in the EEC Council directive of 16 June 1975 concerning the Quality of Surfac: Water intended for Abstraction of Drinking Water in the Member State.

** Ammonia Conversion Factors

(mg NH_4/l to mg N/l)

Class 1A 0.4 mg NH_4/l = 0.31 mg N/l
Class 1B 0.9 mg NH_4/l = 0.70 mg N/l
0.5 mg NH_4/l = 0.39 mg N/l

NWC RIVER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

CRITERIA USED BY NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION FOR NON-METALLIC DETERMINANDS

River Class	Quality Criteria
1A	Dissolved oxygen % saturation greater than 80% BOD (ATU) not greater than 3 mg/l O Total ammonia not greater than 0.31 mg/l N Non-ionised ammonia not greater than 0.021 mg/l N Temperature not greater than 21.5 C pH greater than 5.0 and less than 9.0 Suspended solids not greater than 25 mg/l
1B	Dissolved oxygen % saturation greater than 60% BOD (ATU) not greater than 5 mg/l O Total ammonia not greater than 0.70 mg/l N Non-ionised ammonia not greater than 0.021 mg/l N Temperature not greater than 21.5 C pH greater than 5.0 and less than 9.0 Suspended solids not greater than 25 mg/l
2	Dissolved oxygen & saturation greater than 40% BOD (ATU) not greater than 9 mg/l O Total ammonia not greater than 1.56 mg/l N Non-ionised ammonia not greater than 0.021 mg/l N Temperature not greater than 28 C pH greater than 5.0 and less than 9.0 Suspended solids not greater than 25 mg/l
3	Dissolved oxygen % saturation greater than 10% BOD (ATU) not greater than 17 mg/l O
4	Dissolved oxygen % saturation not greater than 10% BOD (ATU) greater than 17 mg/l O

STATISTICS USED BY NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION

Determinand	Statistic
Dissolved oxygen	5 percentile
BOD (ATU)	95 percentile
Total ammonia	95 percentile
Non-ionised ammonia	95 percentile
Temperature	95 percentile
pH	5 percentile
	95 percentile
Suspended solids	arithmetic mean

NWC RIVER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

CRITERIA USED BY NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION FOR METALLIC DETERMINANDS

SOLUBLE COPPER

Total Hardness (mean) mg/l CaCO3	Statistic	Soluble Copper* ug/l Cu	
		Class 1	Class 2
0 - 10	95 percentile	< = 5	> 5
10 - 50	95 percentile	< = 22	> 22
50 - 100	95 percentile	< = 40	> 40
100 - 300	95 percentile	< = 112	> 112

* Total copper is used for classification until sufficient data on soluble copper can be obtained.

TOTAL ZINC

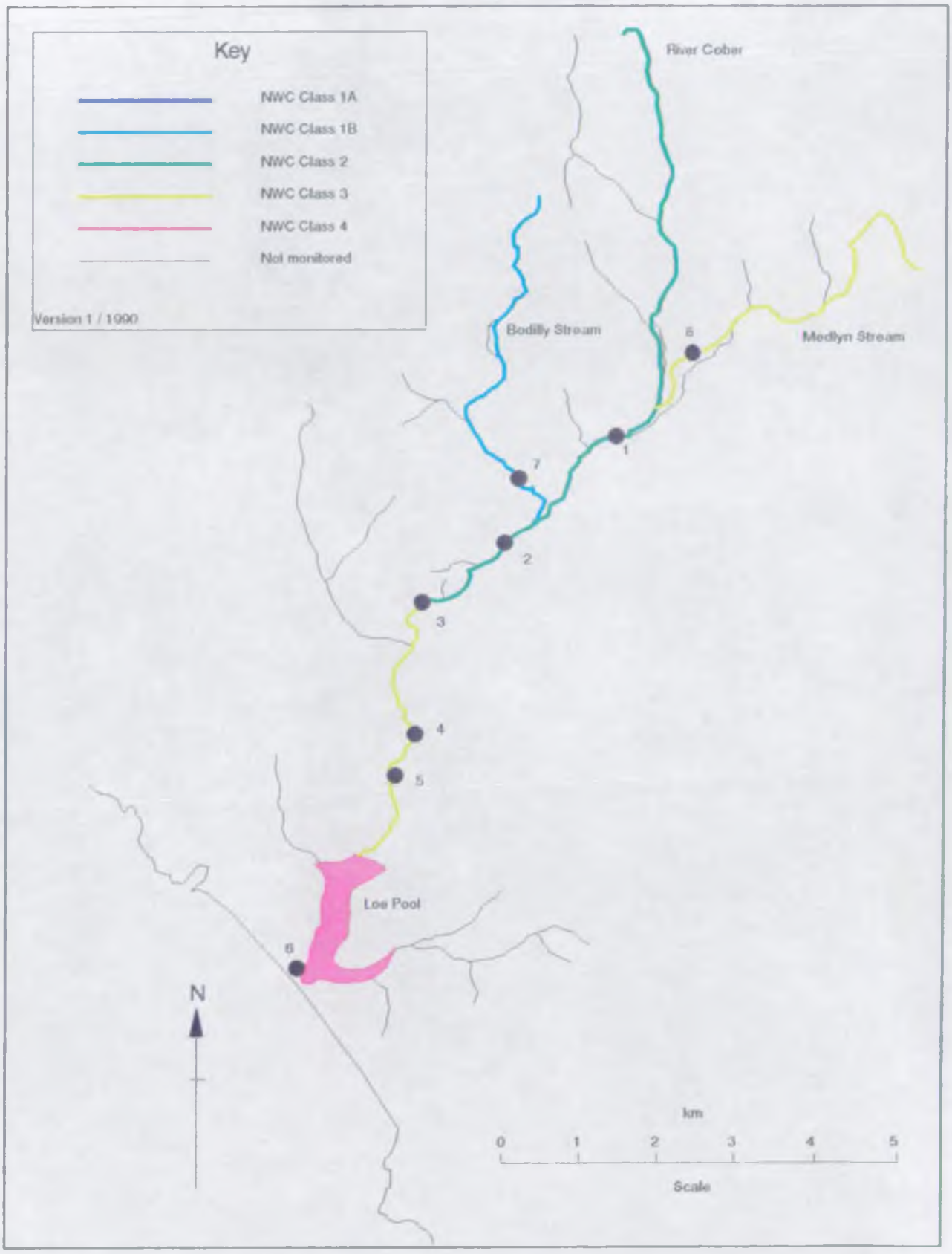
Total Hardness (mean) mg/l CaCO3	Statistic	Total Zinc ug/l Zn		
		Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
0 - 10	95 percentile	< = 30	< = 300	> 300
10 - 50	95 percentile	< = 200	< = 700	> 700
50 - 100	95 percentile	< = 300	< = 1000	> 1000
100 - 300	95 percentile	< = 500	< = 2000	> 2000

NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION
1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION
CATCHMENT: COBER (22)

1990 Map Position Number	River	Reach upstream of	User Reference Number	National Grid Reference	Reach Length (km)	Distance from source (km)	River Quality Objective	85 NWC Class	86 NWC Class	87 NWC Class	88 NWC Class	89 NWC Class	90 NWC Class
1	COBER	TRENEAR BRIDGE	R20A001	SW 6810 3138	6.6	6.6	1B	1B	2	2	2	2	2
2	COBER	COVERACK BRIDGE	R20A008	SW 6686 3013	2.0	8.6	1A	1B	2	2	1B	2	2
3	COBER	LOWER TOWN BRIDGE	R20A003	SW 6580 2913	1.7	10.3	1A	1B	2	2	1B	2	2
4	COBER	HELSTON PARK GAUGING STATION	R20A009	SW 6548 2723	2.3	12.6	1B	2	3	3	2	3	3
5	COBER	BELOW HELSTON STW	R20A004	SW 6526 2681	0.5	13.1	1B	2	3	3	2	3	3
	COBER	INFLOW, LOE POOL (INFERRED STRETCH)			1.3	14.4	1B	2	3	3	2	3	3
6	COBER	AT BAR OUTFALL	R20A005	SW 6425 2428	1.7	16.1	1B	2	3	3	3	3	4
	COBER	MEAN HIGH WATER (INFERRED STRETCH)			1.3	17.4	1B	2	3	3	3	3	4
7	BODILLY STREAM	BODILLY MILL	R20A002	SW 6700 3185	4.4	4.4	1B	1B	2	2	2	2	1B
	BODILLY STREAM	COBER CONFLUENCE (INFERRED STRETCH)			1.0	5.4	1B	1B	2	2	2	2	1B
8	MEDLYN STREAM	CHY BRIDGE	R20A006	SW 6935 3263	4.2	4.2	1B						3
	MEDLYN STREAM	COBER CONFLUENCE (INFERRED STRETCH)			1.3	5.5	1B						3

Appendix 10.5

Cober Catchment
Water Quality - 1990

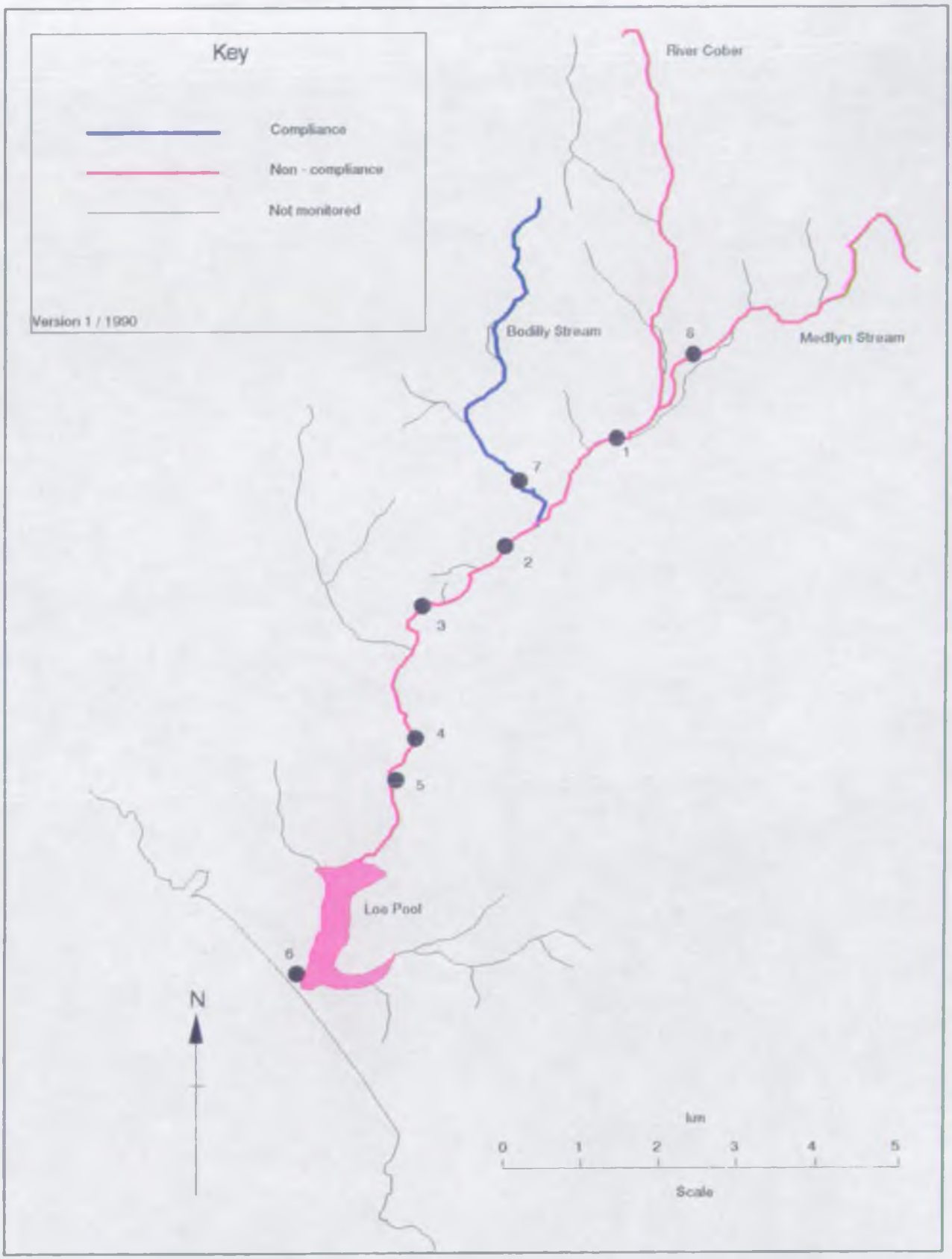


NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION
1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION
CALCULATED DETERMINAND STATISTICS USED FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT
CATCHMENT: OTTER (22)

River	Reach upstream of	User Ref. Number	90 NRC Class	Calculated Determinand Statistics used for Quality Assessment																			
				pH Lower		pH Upper		Temperature		DO (%)		BOD (ATU)		Total Ammonia		Union. Ammonia		S.Solids		Total Copper		Total Zinc	
				Class	5%ile	Class	95%ile	Class	95%ile	Class	5%ile	Class	95%ile	Class	95%ile	Class	95%ile	Class	Mean	Class	95%ile	Class	95%ile
OTTER	TIDEMEAD BRIDGE	R20A001	2	1A	6.0	1A	7.5	1A	14.7	1A	80.7	1A	2.7	1A	0.150	1A	0.010	1A	7.1	2	45.4	2	552.6
OTTER	COMBPYNE BRIDGE	R20A008	2	1A	6.2	1A	7.2	1A	15.7	1B	77.1	1B	3.8	1A	0.208	1A	0.010	1A	7.7	2	51.9	1A	45.7
OTTER	LOWER TOWN BRIDGE	R20A003	2	1A	6.4	1A	7.4	1A	15.6	1A	84.0	1A	2.4	1A	0.199	1A	0.010	1A	7.2	2	48.2	1A	90.0
OTTER	HELSTON PARK GAUGING STATION	R20A009	3	1A	6.5	1A	7.5	1A	15.6	1B	74.7	1B	3.8	1A	0.255	1A	0.010	3	48.9	2	198.5	1A	140.1
OTTER	BELOW HELSTON STW	R20A004	3	1A	6.3	1A	7.7	1A	16.7	1B	61.0	3	12.1	3	2.580	1A	0.010	1A	18.4	2	45.3	1A	53.9
OTTER	AT EMR OUTFALL	R20A005	4	1A	6.5	3	10.6	2	22.2	1B	63.6	4	42.5	2	1.114	3	0.046	1A	21.4	1A	28.8	1A	62.2
BOWLLY STREAM	BOWLLY MILL	R20A002	1B	1A	6.0	1A	7.4	1A	14.7	1B	79.0	1B	3.6	1B	0.451	1A	0.010	1A	20.1	1A	19.0	1A	43.0
MILLEN STREAM	OTT BRIDGE	R20A006	3	1A	5.2	1A	7.0	1A	17.7	3	28.6	1A	2.2	1A	0.234	1A	0.010	1A	6.0	2	24.6	2	250.7

Appendix 10.7

Cober Catchment
Compliance - 1990



NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION
1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION
NUMBER OF SAMPLES (N) AND NUMBER OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING QUALITY STANDARD (F)
CATCHMENT: OTTER (22)

River	Reach upstream of	User Ref. Number	pH Lower		pH Upper		Temperature		DO (%)		BOD (ATU)		Total Ammonia		Union. Ammonia		S.Solids		Total Copper		Total Zinc	
			N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F
OTTER	TIVERTON BRIDGE	R20A001	37	-	37	-	28	-	28	-	37	-	37	-	27	-	37	1	26	3	26	1
OTTER	COVERACK BRIDGE	R20A008	22	-	22	-	22	-	22	1	22	1	22	-	22	-	22	1	21	2	21	-
OTTER	LOWER TOWN BRIDGE	R20A003	40	-	40	-	32	-	32	-	40	1	40	1	31	-	40	1	25	2	25	-
OTTER	HELSTON PARK GAUGING STATION	R20A009	21	-	21	-	21	-	21	-	21	-	21	-	21	-	21	5	21	5	21	-
OTTER	BELOW HELSTON STW	R20A004	29	-	29	-	29	-	29	1	29	3	29	3	29	-	29	6	22	2	22	-
OTTER	AT BAR OUTFALL	R20A005	38	-	38	8	28	1	27	1	38	3	38	9	26	1	38	3	23	-	23	-
BOTTLEY STREAM	BOTTLEY MILL	R20A002	38	-	38	-	29	-	29	-	38	1	38	1	29	-	38	2	26	-	26	-
MEDLYN STREAM	CHY BRIDGE	R20A006	22	-	22	-	22	-	22	2	22	-	22	-	22	-	22	-	21	1	21	1

Appendix 10.9

NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY - SOUTH WEST REGION
1990 RIVER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATION
PERCENTAGE EXCEEDENCE OF DETERMINAND STATISTICS FROM QUALITY STANDARDS
CATCHMENT: COBER (22)

River	Reach upstream of	User Ref. Number	PERCENTAGE EXCEEDENCE OF STATISTIC FROM QUALITY STANDARD									
			pH Lower	pH Upper	Temperature	DO (%)	BOD (ATU)	Total Ammonia	Un-ionised Ammonia	Suspended Solids	Total Copper	Total Zinc
COBER	TRENEAR BRIDGE	R20A001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	106	176
COBER	COVERACK BRIDGE	R20A008	-	-	-	4	25	-	-	-	136	-
COBER	LOWER TOWN BRIDGE	R20A003	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119	-
COBER	HELSTON PARK GAUGING STATION	R20A009	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	396	-
COBER	BELOW HELSTON STW	R20A004	-	-	-	-	141	269	-	-	13	-
COBER	AT BAR OUTFALL	R20A005	-	18	3	-	750	59	119	-	-	-
BODILLY STREAM	BODILLY MILL	R20A002	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MEDLYN STREAM	CHY BRIDGE	R20A006	-	-	-	52	-	-	-	-	12	25

Appendix 10.10

NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY – SOUTH WEST REGION
IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RQO
CATCHMENT: COBER (22)

* = WORK ALREADY IN HAND

1990 Map Position Number	River	Reach upstream of	User Reference Number
1	COBER	* TRENEAR BRIDGE	R20A001
2	COBER	* COVERACK BRIDGE	R20A008
3	COBER	* LOWER TOWN BRIDGE	R20A003
4	COBER	* HELSTON PARK GAUGING STATION	R20A009
5	COBER	* BELOW HELSTON STW	R20A004
6	COBER	* AT BAR OUTFALL	R20A005
8	MEDLYN STREAM	* CHY BRIDGE	R20A006

Reach Length (km)	Possible causes of non-compliance
6.6	MINING, CATCHMENT GEOLOGY
2.0	MINING, LAND RUN-OFF
1.7	MINING, CATCHMENT GEOLOGY, DROUGHT
2.3	LAND RUN-OFF, MINING, CATCHMENT GEOLOGY
0.5	LAND RUN-OFF, SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS
1.7	BLUE-GREEN ALGAE, MINING, SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS
4.2	DROUGHT, MINING, CATCHMENT GEOLOGY, FISH FARM EFFLUENT