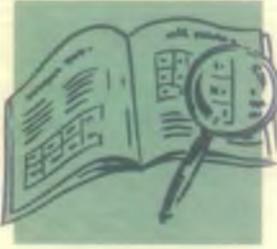


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93-94
annual *conservation*
access &
recreation report



NRA

National Rivers Authority

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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mission and aims

The NRA's mission is:

- "We will protect and improve the water environment by the effective management of water resources and by substantial reduction in pollution. We will aim to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging our duties we will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters. We will be businesslike, efficient and caring towards our employees".

Our aims are to:

- Achieve a continuing overall improvement in the quality of rivers, estuaries and coastal waters, through the control of pollution.
- Manage water resources to achieve the right balance between the needs of the environment and those of the abstractors.
- Provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea.
- Provide adequate arrangements for flood forecasting and warning.
- Maintain, improve and develop fisheries.
- Develop the amenity and recreational potential of inland and coastal waters and associated lands.
- Conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and archaeological features associated with inland and coastal waters under our control.
- Improve and maintain inland waters and their facilities for use by the public where we are the navigation authority.
- Ensure that dischargers pay the costs of the consequences of their discharges and, as far as possible, to recover the costs of water environment improvements from those who benefit.
- Improve public understanding of the water environment and the NRA's work.
- Improve efficiency in the exercise of our functions and to provide challenge and opportunity for employees and show concern for their welfare.



NRA

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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foreword

This Report records the NRA's activities during 1993-94, in fulfilment of its Recreation and Conservation duties. It is produced in compliance with the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation, under Section 18 of the Water Resources Act 1991. In drafting the Report, we have taken account of guidance notes issued by the Department of the Environment (DoE) Standing Committee on the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation, which state that it should provide the Secretary of State, the general public and other agencies with information about NRA Conservation and Recreation activities.

This is the first year that the NRA has produced such an annual report. It provides information about NRA owned sites, site management methods and projects undertaken or commenced during the financial year, beginning in April 1993. Research and Development projects, from which much new knowledge is derived, are also included. In subsequent years it will be possible to assess any changes in recreation and conservation activities.

To aid the report's production the NRA has established a Database which covers NRA owned or leased sites. This Database, which will be periodically updated, provides national and regional information on the type of sites, their conservation or recreation use and what activities and facilities exist at each site. The Database also records those conservation and recreation projects undertaken, either nationally or regionally by the NRA, or in partnership with other organisations.

Although we are not specifically required to report to the Standing Committee on the activities of the Fisheries or Navigation functions they both contribute to conservation and recreation and have therefore been mentioned briefly.

In the introductory section of this Report, the extent and range of our Recreation and Conservation duties are explained. More comprehensive details are available from strategy documents which cover Conservation, Recreation, Navigation and Fisheries. These strategies set out the aims and objectives of each function and identify key tasks and areas to be addressed in the future.

The NRA also publishes an Annual Report and Corporate Plan which contains information about all NRA activities. A list of relevant publications and a glossary of acronyms are provided for guidance and information at the rear of this report. The strategy documents, Annual Report and Corporate Plan may be obtained from the NRA Bristol Head Office address shown at the rear of this report.

conservation



The NRA is entrusted with conservation responsibilities in respect of wildlife, landscape and natural beauty, geological and physiographical (landform) features, buildings and other objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest. These responsibilities relate to all inland and coastal waters, and to land associated with them, in England and Wales.

NRA legal requirements

Under Section 16 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and Section 12 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, we are obliged, when formulating or considering any proposals relating to our functions, to:

- further the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of special interest. The expression “to further” implies a positive obligation towards conservation;
- have regard to the desirability of protecting and conserving buildings, sites and objects of archaeological, architectural and historic interest;
- take account the effect any proposal would have on the beauty or amenity of any rural or urban area or on any such flora, fauna, features, buildings, sites or objects.

In addition to the above, Section 2(2) of the Water Resources Act 1991 makes it a duty of the NRA, to such extent as it deems desirable, generally to promote

- the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of inland and coastal waters and land associated with such waters;
- the conservation of flora and fauna which are dependent on an aquatic environment.

Under Section 17 of the Water Resources Act 1991, English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales are obliged to inform the NRA of any land which, in their opinion, is both

- of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna or geographical or physiographical features and may be affected by activities carried out or authorised by the NRA.



There is a similar obligation on National Parks Authorities and the Broads Authority in respect of land which they consider to be of interest. In turn, we must consult the above bodies before carrying out or authorising any activities which appear likely to damage the special interest of the land in question.

The NRA is able to establish nature reserves on suitable land that it owns and, once these have been established, may charge visitors to recover costs.

Other legislation gives us an important role as a consultee in relation to applications for planning permission and various waste and industrial processes. Our views and advice are therefore taken into account by the appropriate authority.

who pays for conservation?

The NRA is funded by a combination of Government Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and self-generated income from NRA charging schemes. As conservation measures rarely allow us to charge directly for enhancement projects, our programme of conservation work is dependent on GIA.

Expenditure during 1993-94 was £3.2m which, at first glance, appears small. However, a significant proportion of expenditure associated with conservation is recovered during operational work, with the prime contributor being flood defence through its operational works to river and sea defences.

Total spend by the NRA as a whole on conservation is estimated to be in the order of £18m annually.



recreation

The NRA has a general duty to promote the amenity and recreational potential of inland and coastal waters and associated land. It must also make the best recreational use of land and water in its control and ensure that recreation is taken into account in the course of other NRA activities

NRA legal requirements

Section 16 of the Water Act 1989 imposes on the NRA a number of environmental duties which include:

- the preservation and maintenance of access for the public to places of natural beauty and to buildings, sites and other objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest
- to ensure that water and land under the NRA's control is made available for recreational purposes, and that in doing so the needs of persons who are chronically sick or disabled are taken into account.



Section 2 of the Act also imposes a general duty to promote:

- the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of inland and coastal waters and of land associated with such waters
- the use of such waters and land for recreational purposes.

who pays for recreation?

Recreation is funded partly by income from the use of our sites, partly by other NRA functions and partly by GIA. Where possible the NRA seeks to recover from users the costs of providing facilities. In practice very few NRA sites, due to their size and operational constraint are able to generate income.

In 1993-94, the total spent on recreation was £2.25m, of which £1.8m was provided by GIA and £400k was raised in the form of rental for the use of our landholdings and sporting rights.

catchment management plans

A Catchment Management Plan treats a river, together with the land, tributaries and underground water connected with it, as a complete unit, or catchment. The Plan sets out a common vision for a river catchment, reached after consultation with all interested parties. It identifies objectives and lists actions for conservation, recreation and amenity, as well as including all of the other functions of the NRA. These actions can be fulfilled by the NRA or by other organisations who have an interest in the river and its catchment.

Catchment Management Plans are the primary method by which we are able to fully understand and plan any changes which are envisaged to a particular river. By using these plans, all sites along a river can be seen within a much larger context, ensuring that any changes elsewhere are neither harmful nor impact on existing recreational usage or on the general environment.

In order to promote the amenity and recreation potential of the catchment, an understanding of the supply and demand for water-related recreation is needed. This provides the appropriate level of information and recommendations for inclusion in the plan.

During the year Recreation and Conservation Officers contributed to the production of 20 Catchment Management Plans.



managing our sites

The NRA owns or leases more than 1200 sites. These sites vary in nature from linear riverbank, floodplain, estuary and coast, to structural assets such as bridges and locks.

TABLE 1.
NRA CONSERVATION
AND RECREATION SITES
BY REGION

REGION	RECREATION			CONSERVATION		
	IN USE	FUTURE USE	TOTAL	IN USE	FUTURE USE	TOTAL
ANGLIAN	168	265	433	75	367	442
THAMES	50	14	64	40	17	57
SOUTH WESTERN	47	1	48	39	11	50
SOUTHERN	123	208	331	138	218	356
NORTH/YORK	22	226	248	14	228	242
WELSH	21	0	21	17	1	18
SEVERN TRENT	43	11	54	34	21	55
NORTH WEST	13	9	22	19	3	22
TOTAL	487	734	1221	376	866	1242

NOTE: The data used to produce this table was from an initial review of NRA sites. The validation and data collection is ongoing and will be updated annually.

TABLE 2.
TYPES OF NRA SITES

ASSET	205
RIVER	497
STILL WATER	81
WOODLAND	56
MOORLAND/HEATH	1
GRASSLAND	510
WETLAND	83
ESTUARY	35
COAST	68

NOTE: Sites can be classified as more than one type.

In size they range from a few square metres to one or two hundred hectares, however, the majority are small or linear which limits opportunities for use.

In considering the use and management of a site, account is taken of its conservation or recreation value, and any activities which take place.

TABLE 3.
LAND BASED
ACTIVITIES AT
NRA SITES

TYPE OF ACCESS ACTIVITY	RESTRICTED	PERMIT	OPEN	TOTAL
BIRD WATCHING	1	2	103	106
CYCLING/MOUNTAIN BIKING			32	32
HORSE RIDING			17	17
MODEL BOATING	1	1	2	4
MOTOR SPORTS			2	2
ORIENTEERING			1	1
JOGGING/RUNNING			41	41
HUNTING/SHOOTING	9			9
WALKING	1		372	373

* *Restricted - access available for club members only or for groups organised by local authorities.*

* *Permit- access is open to everyone but a charge is made.*

* *Open- free access for everyone.*

TABLE 4.
WATER BASED
ACTIVITIES AT
NRA SITES

TYPE OF ACCESS ACTIVITY	RESTRICTED	PERMIT	OPEN	TOTAL
BOATING	12	6	53	71
CANOEING	12	8	47	67
COARSE FISHING	32	69	58	159
SEA FISHING	1	2	8	11
GAME FISHING	8	26	8	42
JET SKIING	1		2	3
SAILING	6	1	7	14
SUB AQUA		1	1	2
SWIMMING			3	3
WATER SKIING	1	1	2	4
WINDSURFING	5	1	4	10
ROWING	2	1	21	24

* *Restricted - access available for club members only or for groups organised by local authorities.*

* *Permit- access is open to everyone but a charge is made.*

* *Open- free access for everyone.*

A number of these sites have been classified with a wildlife, landscape or heritage designation.

TABLE 5.
NRA SITES WITH
WILDLIFE, LANDSCAPE
OR HERITAGE
DESIGNATIONS

NATIONAL TRAIL	38
REGIONAL	20
COUNTRY PARK	2
NATIONAL PARK	8
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY	97
HERITAGE COAST	4
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	180
NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE	5
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE	17
RSPB RESERVE	2
RAMSAR SITE	28
COUNTY TRUST RESERVE	15
SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA	29
SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT	18
LISTED BUILDING	4
SCHEDULED SITE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE	10
SITES WITH INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IMPORTANCE	1

TABLE 6.
TYPES AND
NUMBERS OF
FACILITIES ON
NRA SITES.

FACILITY	NO. OF SITES	SUITABLE FOR DISABLED
FOOTPATHS	295	56
CAR PARKS	61	14
PICNIC	21	10
INFORMATION/ VISITOR CENTRE	6	2
INTERPRETATIVE BOARDS	30	14
TOILETS	30	8
VIEWING POINTS	12	6
PLAY GROUNDS	1	0
CYCLE TRAIL	11	3
CAMPSITE	12	1
FISHING LODGE	2	1
FISHING PLATFORM	236	41
CLUB HOUSE	7	1
NATURE TRAIL	6	1
BIRD HIDE	11	3
BOAT HIRE	2	1
SLIPWAYS	15	0
MOORINGS	165	18

To assess the site more fully we may undertake a more detailed habitat or landscape survey. In 1993/94 a total of 23 landscape surveys and 304 habitat surveys were carried out on NRA sites. We adopt a variety of methods for both managing and maintaining NRA sites. Options range from direct management, lease or contract arrangements with statutory or voluntary organisations or establishment of joint management committees which encourage the involvement of users. At present, 68 NRA sites have formal management or maintenance plans in place.

At NRA sites which are used for land and water based recreation, we provide and maintain many facilities to encourage and enhance their use. (Table 6)

TABLE 7.
THE NUMBER OF
NRA SITES WITH
RIGHTS OF WAY

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS	306
BRIDLEWAYS	36
PERMISSIVE PATHS	37

Note: A site may have more than one type of right of way.

Note: These are not necessarily NRA built or maintained footpaths.



WILDLIFE PROJECTS

Site improvements at Solva in NRA Welsh Region consisted of construction of a floating otter holt and an observation hide and associated fencing. The project was undertaken to enhance the wildlife potential of an NRA landholding and to provide low intensity recreational use.



FACILITY PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

A site leased by NRA South Western Region primarily for the purpose of fish rearing and holding has been developed as a camp site and area for canoeing and windsurfing. The camp is used mostly in the summer and is home to a number of children's camps.

Facility management at Canolfan Tryweryn, the white water canoeing centre, has taken place by NRA Welsh Region to ensure that the site is up to standard for the 1995 World Canoeing Championships. Footpath construction, bank protection, vantage points and some in-river works have all taken place. Some of this work was carried out in conjunction with the Welsh Canoeing Association.

A number of NRA car parks in the North Wessex Area of NRA South Western Region have been "settled" by travellers and fly tipping has also been a problem. A prevention scheme has helped to solve these problems, with access barriers being installed to prevent entry by larger vehicles.



FOOTPATH AND CYCLEWAY PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

NRA Severn-Trent Region contributed to the development of a cycleway on the top of a flood bank at Toton. This project was undertaken in conjunction with the Countryside Commission and Erewash Borough Council.

Bank repairs to the towpath of the River Thames at Wallingford where the path route is threatened by erosion were undertaken with Oxfordshire County Council and the Countryside Commission.





FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A review was undertaken of an NRA site at Little Candford in NRA South Western Region. This was to provide more effective management of the site and to improve facilities for the disabled.

Access was improved along the bank of the Relief Channel of the Great Ouse for angling, and a stile was constructed to improve access to the river. A fishing platform for use by people with disabilities was constructed on the bank of the River Lark in NRA Anglian Region.



RIVER RESTORATION AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Habitat enhancement works were undertaken at Western Cleddal in NRA Welsh Region, to introduce spawning gravels. Blockstone was used to enhance the fishery potential and to reduce macrophyte growth of a once-productive river.

NRA Anglian Region has undertaken a number of works to improve the fisheries potential of various rivers. At Withern Bridge, pools and riffles were created to increase habitat diversity. Similar projects were undertaken on the Belleau, Witham (Barkson), Barlings Eau, Fosson, Eyebrook and on the rivers Glen and Welland. A tyre reef was constructed in the Coronation Channel to give fish both shelter and foraging areas.

A management plan was produced and agreed for Pinkhill Meadow Nature Reserve by NRA Thames Region and Thames Water.



A river restoration project was undertaken on the Brinkworth Brook in NRA South Western Region. This involved tree planting and channel engineering to benefit all functions, particularly conservation and fisheries.

A degree of managed retreat - land given over to the sea - has taken place at Pawlett Hams, which is part of Bridgwater Bay SSSI. This was carried out to improve the conservation value of the site. Work was also undertaken by NRA South Western Region to excavate a number of ditches to improve this type of habitat for conservation purposes.

NRA Anglian Region and the Countryside Commission undertook a project at Long Eau to create a washland. This was to increase flood storage and reduce maintenance costs but also created a valuable habitat for wildlife conservation and an open space for recreational purposes.



**EDUCATION AND
INFORMATION PROJECTS**

To promote the work of the NRA in general and in relation to Fisheries, Recreation, Conservation and Navigation, NRA Severn-Trent Region built and installed interpretation panels along the River Severn.

NRA Anglian Region own land that the Wensum Valley Project and the Norfolk Naturalists Trust wanted to use to develop an information centre. The site was a fish farm and planning permission was needed to change the use of the site. This is an ongoing project and the aim is to increase and provide better environmental educational facilities for the general public, local schools and youth groups.



working with NRA functions

The NRA also has water quality, water resources, fisheries, navigation and flood defence responsibilities. During 1993/94, Recreation and Conservation staff worked closely with these other functions to provide advice and identify opportunities to promote or further recreation and conservation.

The operational duties and activities of the NRA can impinge on the existing uses of water and associated land. This can create opportunities for enhancing habitats or incorporating recreation facilities.

These activities include flood defence works, water resource schemes, water quality improvements and flow monitoring structures, together with work undertaken for fisheries or navigation reasons.



**POND CREATION
AND IMPROVEMENT**

Newcastle City Council and NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region have together worked to improve an onstream pond on the Ouseburn at Woolsington to help flood storage capacity and to further the nature conservation value of the pond.

A weir was constructed at Tocil Pool in order to control water levels, which improved the habitat upstream of the weir. This project was undertaken by the NRA Severn-Trent Region with the University of Warwick, to encourage the educational value of the water environment for all ages.

A tree nursery and pond were created on an NRA Anglian site at Wixoe Pumping Station. The tree nursery is to provide stock for use by the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley project.



WILDLIFE PROJECTS

The foreshore at Peewit Island was recharged by NRA Anglian Region and Essex County Council, providing an ideal habitat for nesting birds whilst at the same time helping to improve sea defences.

The River Wye Avian Predator Survey was undertaken by NRA Welsh Region and the Countryside Commission for Wales, to survey the numbers and distribution of cormorants and goosanders. This data will be used to quantify anglers concerns and to provide a base for future policy.

The Hawk & Owl Trust together with NRA South Western Region, undertook a Barn Owl project along the banks of the River Huntspill, in order to increase the breeding population of barn owls in Somerset. The project involved the careful siting of breeding boxes, together with a degree of habitat enhancement and modifications to the river bank and associated land.



**RIVER RESTORATION
AND HABITAT
ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS**

The Boroughs of Bromley and Croydon worked with NRA Thames Region, looking at the feasibility of restoring sections of the Ravensbourne to “natural” river through parks in their boroughs.

A management plan for Otmoor SSSI was prepared by English Nature and NRA Thames Region to look at the feasibility of hydrological management of the site. The plan made recommendations for water level management.

The Bradford Initiative was a project undertaken by NRA South Western Region to ensure that existing land uses have sufficient water of sufficient quality. The conservation aspects of this project are two water meadows, one of which is an SSSI, a small lake and associated side ditches.



**FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**

A project at Seven Sisters Country Park, replacing stiles with kissing gates to allow better access to flood embankments, was completed by the South Downs Conservation Board and NRA Southern Region.

working with others

Working with others is an important theme in all of our activities. Collaboration, partnership and consultation with others enable us to achieve our objectives whilst making best use of our resources.

Throughout the year at a national and regional level we have maintained and developed a network of contacts with statutory and voluntary organisations, governing bodies for sport and individuals.

The NRA's Regional Rivers Advisory Committees (RRAC) which include recreation and conservation representatives, received regular reports on activities and provided advice across a range of policy and operational matters.

working in partnership

During the year, partnerships with others enabled us to initiate a broad range of projects which promoted and furthered recreation and conservation. By this means the NRA was able to support initiatives beyond the constraints of its own landholdings.

Partnerships ranged from the strategic; for example an assessment of supply and demand for watersports in the North of England by two NRA Regions, and the Sports Council, to the site specific; for example habitat improvements with wildlife trusts.





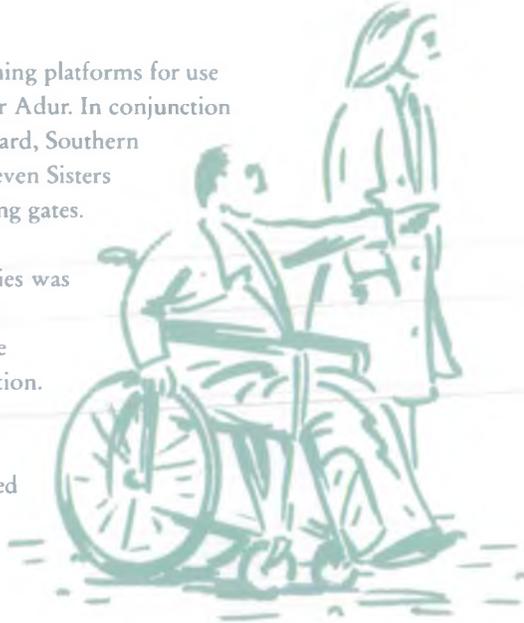
FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES

At Hafren Forest, NRA Severn-Trent Region, Forest Enterprise, Montgomeryshire District Council and the Countryside Commission for Wales (CCW) built a bridge to improve access for the disabled.

NRA Southern Region has provided fishing platforms for use by the disabled on the banks of the River Adur. In conjunction with the South Downs Conservation Board, Southern Region undertook an access project at Seven Sisters Country Park, replacing stiles with kissing gates.

A pool for use by children with disabilities was created by NRA Severn-Trent Region at Springfield Special School, improving the educational facilities for nature conservation.

The "Rachel" is a boat which has been specially converted for use by the disabled on the Kennet & Avon Canal. NRA Thames Region contributed to the project, which was undertaken by the Bruce Charitable Trust.



At Climbing Gap, NRA Southern Region, together with Arun District Council, created wheelchair access and undertook hedge and pond work.

Gwent Trust and NRA Welsh Region have improved access for the less able by installing bridges and boardwalks at Magor Marsh Nature Reserve.



WILDLIFE PROJECTS

The Upper Thames Otter Project is a joint initiative by BBONT, British Telecom and NRA Thames Region to assess habitat for otters and prioritise enhancement by negotiations with local landowners. A similar project was undertaken by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Trust, British Telecom and NRA Thames in the North East Area of the Region.

Yorkshire Electricity Board and the NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire have provided bird deflectors on power lines by the River Hull, to prevent bird fatalities.

An enhancement scheme to the Upper Wye was undertaken by NRA Welsh Region, RSPB, Radnor Trust and various landowners to create new wetlands, erect riparian fencing and provide dipper and barn owl boxes.



Severn-Trent Water plc, British Telecom, Worcester Nature Conservation Trust and NRA Severn-Trent Region are jointly involved in an Otter Project. The Project aim is to raise the profile of otters and their habitat requirements amongst the general public and riparian landowners.



**EDUCATION AND
INFORMATION PROJECTS**

The Countryside Commission, Local Authorities, the Development Corporation and NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region have undertaken landscape and habitat improvements to the Kirkstall Valley Country Park in Leeds. Work was carried out on the banks and land adjacent to the River Aire to improve the river for education and recreational purposes.



To help promote the River Thames for recreational purposes, the NRA contributed to the production of a promotional leaflet, "England's River", with Wycombe District Council.

Interpretation boards were supplied by NRA Anglian Region for two local footpaths and well known walks, the Ely Nature Walk and the Reach Lode Walk. Anglian Region, together with the Groundwork Trust, also designed, produced and erected a high quality colour and vandal proof interpretation panel at Gun Powder Mills.

Project Riverlife is a long term project with Derby City Council, English Nature and the Countryside Commission, supporting a project officer. The NRA does not pay for the project officer, but contributes to specific educational projects such as the production of a leaflet entitled "Riverlife Way".

The Rea Valley Project was undertaken by NRA Severn-Trent Region, Shrewsbury Atcham Borough Council and the Civic Society to excavate a historic mill channel, which will then become a valuable educational facility.

An education troupe called the Pageant Theatre Group have been supported by the NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region. The Group provide education on water based issues in a unique and lively way to local schools and the community, increasing knowledge and awareness of the water environment.



NRA Thames Region have contributed, together with Spelthorne Borough Council, to the provision of interpretation panels on the River Ash, increasing public awareness and promoting the recreational use of the river.

As part of improvements to the rivers Etherow and Goyt, NRA North West Region, in conjunction with local authorities, have erected way markers and an information panel. The NRA also contributed to a local authority leaflet covering the Bollin Valley Way.



POND CREATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Together with the City of Coventry Social Services Department, NRA Severn-Trent Region were involved in the clearing of Keresley Pool, a pond in need of habitat improvement. A further pool was created by NRA Severn-Trent for Vale Wildlife Rescue, to form an educational site.

A joint venture by Forest Enterprise and NRA Welsh Region created a new pond with boardwalks and interpretation boards at Dolgaer, to improve the conservation and educational value of the site.

The Southern Region of the NRA were responsible for pond surveys, together with new and refurbished ponds at Paddock Wood, Bowen's Field, Lower Upnor, Heath House YOC, Slindon Village, Ditchling Common and Piltdown.



RIVER RESTORATION AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

In order to improve the recreation and amenity value of Liden Lagoon, NRA Thames Region and Thamesdown District Council undertook work on the flood storage lake.

An independent ecologist carried out an environmental survey on the rivers in Huddersfield. Funded by NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region and the Local Authority, the survey was used to provide information on rivers and the adjacent land. Together with the Local Authority and English Nature, a Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken in Harrogate to increase the database of information available for the NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region. This type of information is essential to planning and assessing capital work programmes.

A wetland area was created by the side of Hawkwell Brook at Rochford. This project was undertaken with Essex Wildlife Trust and Essex County Council in order to increase the conservation value of the site.

As part of the Anglesey Wetlands Strategy, ADAS, NRA Welsh Region, CCW and RSPB cofunded a project to produce a strategy to conserve and enhance Anglesey Wetlands and, in particular, reedbeds.



**FACILITY PROVISION
AND MANAGEMENT**

NRA Severn-Trent Region and Wyre Leisure Ltd. have managed a sanitary facility to provide sewage disposal for boaters at Wyre Piddle on the River Severn. The NRA Severn-Trent have also funded a replacement pump at the Tewkesbury Marina sanitary station to provide sewage disposal facilities.

Together with the RSPB, NRA Anglian Region has contributed to the replacement and relocation of bird watching hides on the Ouse Washes.

The “Eager Beaver” is a purpose built vessel used to remove litter and debris from the River Tyne at Newcastle. The objectives of using the boat are to improve recreational facilities and visual amenity, prevent pollution and remove obstructions to navigation and other recreational users. The boat is funded by a number of partners, including the NRA Northumbria and Yorkshire Region, Local Authorities, the Port Authority, local businesses and the Tyne & Wear Development Corporation.

In order to boost the recreational use of the river by women, the NRA Thames Region contributed to the provision of a new ladies coxless pair rowing boat for Staines Boat Club.





**FOOTPATH AND
CYCLEWAY PROVISION
AND MANAGEMENT**

Forty miles of footpaths along the River Severn were created by NRA Severn-Trent Region, Worcester City Council, the Countryside Commission and Shropshire County Council to increase public access and create the Severn Way.

To create a new recreational asset for the general public and to help develop a network of waterside walks in West London, NRA Thames Region, together with the Countryside Commission, the Sports Council and the London Boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow and Richmond, have developed the West London Waterways Walk.

As part of the Cumbria Coastal Way, NRA North West Region, in conjunction with South Lakeland District Council, has been involved in footpath creation, the building of bridges, signposting and the creation of two access points for the disabled, along the length of the Regional path.

As part of the Wensum Valley Project, NRA Anglian Region contributed to the creation of a boardwalk to complete a circular footpath at Drayton. Anglian Region have also completed a footpath and the construction of a carpark at Mepal, purchasing a footbridge and materials. This project was undertaken to improve the access of the site to the general public.



research and development

Research and development makes an essential contribution to policy formulation and operational activities. It is commissioned by the NRA to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our work. In 1993/94 £200k was spent on conservation and £54k spent on recreation. This money was used to carry out a number of projects covering both conservation and recreation.

conservation outputs 1993/94

There is growing concern and circumstantial evidence that some fish eating birds, notably the cormorant which is protected by law, may, in some locations, be causing damage to fisheries. An R&D report, "Fish Eating Birds: Assessing their impact on Freshwater Fisheries" was published. The NRA, in response to this report, has produced a statement recognising the legitimate concerns of anglers and highlighting the need for strategic management planning.

A review of the NRA's duties with respect to archaeological sites and discoveries was carried out during the year. This was an R&D project and phase 1 involved a one day workshop attended by NRA staff from all functions and representatives from external bodies such as English Heritage.

recreation outputs in 1993/94

A project entitled "Socio-Economic Review of Angling" completed a survey and analysis phase. A 'state of the sport' report will be completed during the current year.

An R&D project "Impact of Recreation on Wildlife" began the first phase of its programme in 1993. Extensive consultation was undertaken by the consultants with governing bodies for sport and statutory organisations.

"Water-related Recreation-Participation Trends and Issues" is the title of an R&D report which was published during the year. This report covers current supply and demand issues and looks at participation at present and in the future for a number of water-related pursuits. In future years it will be refined and supported by regionally based data and will play an important role in influencing the work of the recreation function.



national projects



Conservation

- This year saw the successful conclusion of the three year national RiverWATCH project, which was supported throughout by the NRA. The project was sponsored by National Power and organised by the RSNC. The project aimed to promote and stimulate young people to produce an awareness of rivers and their catchments. Three colourfully illustrated and fun activity packs concentrated on particular aspects of the river environment including water quality, bankside habitats and catchments. The results of the project will be published later in 1994.
- An NRA otter strategy, which represents the NRA's contribution to a UK conservation plan for this very popular animal, was produced.
- The NRA published a guide to identifying native and introduced crayfish species to aid compilation of accurate records of their distribution. This will contribute valuable information and guidance to the national crayfish management strategy recently produced by the JNCC.
- A document entitled the NRA Conservation Directory was produced, which is a compilation of useful information needed by NRA Conservation Officers. The directory contains such items as site designations, legislation relating to wildlife conservation, references and useful addresses.
- Two publications in the Conservation Technical Handbook Series were produced during the year. These deal with Assessment of River Landscapes and River Habitat Management Suitable For Otters.

Recreation

- A Comprehensive policy review was completed during the year which looked at both existing and future policy. An outcome of this review was the setting up of a Recreation Technical Group. The first meeting of this group, made up of regional Recreation Officers, identified a number of projects which will be carried forward during the coming year.
- A postal questionnaire survey of NRA registered canoeists was undertaken during the year, which resulted in an overwhelming 72% response. The aim was to ascertain how many registered canoeists were also members of the canoeing governing body, the British Canoe Union (BCU). This information was used to assess the possibility of a licensing agreement with the BCU. Preliminary indications are that any such changes will require modifications to primary legislation. The NRA are seeking to secure any appropriate mechanisms for changes to legislation in the forthcoming Environment Agency Bill.



regional projects

Conservation

- The Erewash Project is a study by Loughborough University into the metals content of the river and the associated Attenborough Gravel Pits SSSI. The project is funded by NRA Severn-Trent Region, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and British Coal.

- Project Kingfisher is a joint venture funded by the NRA Severn-Trent Region, Birmingham City Council, Sandwell MBC and the Countryside Commission. The project undertook habitat improvement on the River Cole, involving the removal of some 500 metres of sheet piling and the provision of stepping stones across the river. The results provided an improvement to the environmental value and amenity use of a public open space, as well as increasing pedestrian access to the river.

- The Goscote Valley Project is jointly funded by Walsall MBC, BTCV, BW, Forest of Mercia, Black Country Urban Forestry Unit and the Groundwork Trust. This is a community based project to enhance the environment of an important green wedge in Walsall, specific work was undertaken by NRA Severn-Trent Region to improve the Ford Brook corridor. The success of the scheme can be judged as it received the RTPI Award for Planning Achievement.

- NRA Anglian Region, in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Wildlife Trust, has established a Biological Record Centre for Cambridgeshire, providing a County Data Archive.

- The Somerset Levels and Moors Project was ongoing through the year. A strategy document was produced which looks at means of managing the Levels for flood defence and conservation purposes. Part of this project involved the RSPB, English Nature and Somerset Wildlife Trust, together with NRA South Western Region, who undertook ornithological surveys of overwintering bird populations. Water quality work was also carried out, as this has important consequences for the special sensitivity of the wildlife and for conservation management.



Recreation

● NRA Southern Region has been involved in the Thames Waterfront Strategy, together with the Department of the Environment, National Power, and Blue Circle Groundwork Trust. This project looks at ways of improving access and the amenity value of the waterfront at Northfleet. The NRA has been involved specifically in the design of the waterfront and in providing materials to improve protection of the trail wall.

● Together with Swansea University, the Countryside Commission for Wales and the World Wide Fund for Nature, NRA Welsh Region undertook a project which looked at the effect of the Tawe Barrage by carrying out biological sampling in the Tawe Estuary. This enabled the NRA to use the data and subsequent report for consideration when studying barrage proposals at other sites.

● NRA North West and Northumbria and Yorkshire Regions, together with the Northern Region Sports Council and the Northern Council for Sport and Recreation, engaged consultants to undertake a study looking at the supply and demand and participation trends for watersports in the North of England. The outputs from this study included a database of watersport sites and a report which provides recommendations to the Sports Council and the NRA on how to manage the supply and demand for water related recreation in the future.

● The Medway River project, co-funded by NRA Southern Region, the Countryside Commission, Kent County Council and various local councils, undertakes work to promote conservation and recreation along the River Medway between the Leigh Barrier and the M2 Bridge. The project involves local people and helps to improve areas for conservation and encourages informal recreation whilst promoting understanding of the river and its associated countryside. The Kentish Stour Project is a further co-funded project using similar methodology and targeted at a similar audience.



navigation

The NRA is the navigation authority for approximately 800km of river navigation and annually registers/licences some 40,000 craft. It is estimated that 12 million visits are made to our locks and navigations annually. Navigation responsibilities cover three of the NRA regions: the River Medway in the Southern Region (31km), the River Thames in the Thames Region (207km) and the Great Ouse System, Nene, Ancholme, Glen, Welland and Stour in the Anglian Region (507km). Where the NRA is the navigation authority its principle aim is to improve and maintain inland waters and their facilities for use by the public. The Harbour of Rye, which is also managed by the NRA, also provides recreational facilities for yachting, sailing, waterskiing and bird watching.

Liaison and collaboration with the other two main inland navigation authorities, British Waterways and the Broads Authority were improved and developed at Chief Executive level and Officer level during 1993/94.

A National Inland Navigation Liaison Group (NINLG), made up of Officers from the three organisations, met regularly to discuss areas of commonality and to share ideas and information on various common issues. The work of the Group was underpinned by a Research and Development Group who meet to discuss new initiatives and explore opportunities for collaboration. In particular collaboration on research about Bank Erosion, Bio-manipulation and Disposal of Dredgings was undertaken.

A number of capital works took place within the regions to improve navigation and provide facilities for boaters and people who enjoy visiting sites next to NRA navigations. Improvements have been made to widen locks to alleviate bottlenecks, landing stages were installed and car parks, footpaths and signage was improved for land-based visitors.

The 1993 Inland Waterways Festival was held on the River Nene, an NRA navigation, at Peterborough in Anglian Region. The NRA, British Waterways and the Broads Authority also shared a stand at the 1994 Earls Court Boat Show.



fisheries and angling

Angling is one of the most popular water related recreational pursuits in England and Wales. The NRA has duties imposed by Section 114 of the Water Resources Act 1991 to maintain, improve and develop salmon, trout, freshwater fish and eel fisheries.

The work of the Fisheries function of the NRA relates largely, though not wholly to angling. The number of anglers in 1980 was estimated to be about three million and includes coarse, game and sea anglers. Angling takes place at over 200 NRA sites, of which over 100 are leased.

TABLE 8.
NRA SITES
WHERE ANGLING
TAKES PLACE

	RESTRICTED	PERMIT ONLY	OPEN ACCESS	TOTAL
COARSE FISHING				
WELSH		1		1
ANGLIAN	6	25	38	69
THAMES	6	21	6	33
NORTH WEST		2	1	3
SOUTH WESTERN	12	8	2	22
SEVERN-TRENT	6	12	10	28
NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE	1			1
SOUTHERN	1		1	2
NATIONAL	32	69	58	159
GAME FISHING				
WELSH	3	4		7
ANGLIAN		1	1	2
THAMES		14		14
NORTH WEST		1	1	2
SOUTH WESTERN			3	3
SEVERN-TRENT	1	4	3	8
NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE	1			1
SOUTHERN				
NATIONAL	5	24	8	37
SEA FISHING				
WELSH			1	1
ANGLIAN			4	4
THAMES				
NORTH WEST				
SOUTH WESTERN	1	1	1	3
SEVERN-TRENT		1	1	
NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE				
SOUTHERN		1	1	2
NATIONAL	1	2	8	11

* Restricted - access available for club members only or for groups organised by local authorities.

* Permit- access is open to everyone but a charge is made.

* Open- free access for everyone.

Note: The NRA may or may not own the fishing rights at these sites.

Legislation which allows the NRA to control angling by licensing and which provides income is controlled by the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975. The work of the Fisheries Department is funded from five main sources, namely rod fishing licences, net fishing licences, income from sales and service, GIA from central government and recharge of costs from other NRA functions. In addition, much of the expenditure by other NRA departments benefits fisheries.

Anyone fishing for salmon, sea trout, trout and freshwater fish or eels in England and Wales must have an NRA rod licence, with the maximum penalty for default being a fine of £2,500. The cost of a standard, annual licence in 1993-94 was £13.25 (£6.75 for senior citizens aged 60 or over, registered disabled and juniors aged 12-16). From April 1993, a new short term licence was made available for visitors from abroad, holiday anglers and new starters. Costing £6.75, this was valid for seven days and, like the annual licence, covered all NRA regions and all species of fish. The NRA rod licence enabled an angler to fish with up to two rods, where byelaws and rules permitted. The rod licence structure will be revised for 1994/95 with separate licences for salmon and sea trout angling, as well as introducing a one day licence.

In October 1993, the NRA undertook national consultation on a review of the Close Season for coarse fishing, to address differences in regulations in different parts of the country. The NRA consulted widely with major bodies representing the interests of anglers, fishery owners and conservationists as well as with the Fisheries and Regional River Advisory Committees.

During the year the NRA also collated data to publish a document entitled "Salmonid and Freshwater Fisheries Statistics for England and Wales 1992". This was the fourth annual publication in this series.



glossary of acronyms

ADAS	Agricultural Development and Advisory Service
BBONT	Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire Naturalist Trust
BCU	British Canoe Union
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
BW	British Waterways
CCW	Countryside Commission for Wales
DoE	Department of the Environment
EU	European Union
FRCN	Fisheries, Recreation Conservation & Navigation
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GIA	Grant-In-Aid
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
NINLG	National Inland Navigation Liaison Group
NRA	National Rivers Authority
R&D	Research and Development
RRAC	Regional Rivers Advisory Committees
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSNC	Royal Society for Nature Conservation
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WSTAA	Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association
YOC	Young Ornithologists Club

NRA fisheries, recreation, conservation and navigation leaflets and reports available

HEAD OFFICE

Fisheries

Fisheries Statistics 1989

Fisheries Statistics 1990

Fisheries Statistics 1991

Fisheries Statistics 1992

Fisheries Technical Reports;

1. Sea Trout in England & Wales

2. Sea Trout Catch Statistics

3. Sea Trout Literature Review

4. Sea Trout Gene Banks

National Rod Fishing Licences leaflet (1994/95)

Conservation

Conservation Technical Handbooks;

1. River Corridor Surveys

2. Landscape Assessment

3. Otter Handbook

Conservation Directory (internal)

A Guide to Identifying Freshwater

Crayfish in Britain and Ireland

Guidance for the Control of Invasive Plants near Watercourses

Recreation

River Canoeists and the National Rivers Authority

Water Wisdom

Recreation Facility Design Manual (internal)

Navigation

National Navigation Leaflet

Boat Safety Scheme - technical standards (in conj. with BW)

Code of Conduct for Boaters (in Conj. with BW)

ANGLIAN REGION

Fisheries

Fisheries Byelaws

Guide to Fishing Clubs - Great Ouse, Cam and Fenland Waters

Guide to Freshwater Fishing in Norfolk and Suffolk

Guide to Fishing Clubs - Northern Area

Recreation & Navigation

Waterways - A code of conduct

NRA - Navigation in the Anglian Region

Navigation Notes - Advice to boat owners

Navigation - The Anglian Experience

River Stour Navigation, A brief history 1705 to the present day

Map - Navigation in the Anglian Region

Conservation

Conservation in Anglian Region

East Anglian Salt Marshes

Rivers Environmental Database System

NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE

Fisheries

Angling Guide - Northumbria only

Kielder Salmon Hatchery

Buyer Beware Poached Salmon

Keld Head Hatchery

Angling Clubs in Yorkshire

River Angling in Yorkshire

Stillwater Angling in Yorkshire

NRA Yorkshire's Catch - FRCN

Magazine

Rod Fishing Byelaws - Northumbria & Yorkshire

Conservation

Water Weed Control - take care to protect the aquatic environment

FWAG/NRA River Corridor Project Flyer

Pond Booklet

Ure/Swale Conservation Documents

Floodbanks in Flower

Recreation

Canoeist's Access hotline card

NORTH WEST REGION

Fisheries

Fishing Guide to NRA North West

Protecting & Improving Fisheries in the North West of England

Conservation

Conservation and Rivers

Bassenthwaite Lake - Home Sweet Home

Recreation

Spending a Penny on Windermere Could Cost You a Fortune!

SEVERN-TRENT REGION

Fisheries

Environment of Fish

Fish and Fisheries Biology

Monitoring and Control of Fish Stocks

Construction and Desilting of Still waters

Fisheries Habitat Improvement

Management of Specialist Stillwater

Coarse Fisheries

Management of Stillwater Trout Fisheries

Fisheries

Trout Farming

Predator and Pest Control in Fisheries

Useful Information for Angling Clubs

Fishing Guide 1994/95

Fishing News - magazine

Angling Contest Waters

Conservation

Provision and Maintenance of Nest and Roosting Sites on River Bridges

Operations and Protected Species

The Trent Aegir in 1993

The Severn Bore in 1993

The Water Environment - Our Cultural Heritage

Our Cultural Heritage (in conjunction with English Heritage)

Coed Cymru - Riverside Trees

Dredging and Archaeology

River Severn Otters Project - bringing otters back to our rivers

Water Plants

Conservation Designations

Recreation & Navigation

Navigation in the Severn-Trent Region

NRA Recreation Sites

SOUTHERN REGION

Fisheries

Fishing in the South

Freshwater Fish of the Southern Region

Buyer Beware of Poached Salmon

News Reel for Anglers - bi-annual newspaper

Conservation

Ponds and Conservation

Managing Aquatic Plants

Otters

Spotting the Otter

Recreation & Navigation

Guide to the Medway Navigation

The Medway Navigation

Boating on Sussex Rivers

Harbour of Rye

Rye Harbour Byelaws

Medway River Project

SOUTH WESTERN REGION

Fisheries

The Guide to Angling in South West England 1992/93 (published by Westcountry Tourist Board in co-operation with the NRA)

Salmon/Sea Trout Fishing 1992

Fishing 1993 (North Devon)

NRA Exe Fishery - fishing permit and regulations

NRA Lyn - Brown trout fishing permit and regulations

- Salmon and Sea trout fishing permit and regulations

Angling Guides : Avon and Dorset, Somerset, and Bristol Avon

Buyer Beware Leaflet

Conservation

Rivers Information - Conservation

Pond Pack

Wildlife Along Rivers

Somerset Levels and Moors Water

Level Management and Nature

Conservation Strategy

River Corridor Surveys

Pollarding

River Pack

River Tone

Conservation Legislation and the Law (internal guidance)

Aquatic Plants and their Identification

Glossary of Conservation Designations and Organisations within Wessex Region

Herbicides and their use in the Wessex Region of the NRA (internal guidance)

The Establishment and Management of Species of Rich Grassland

Contact List of Conservation Organisations

General Advice on Timber Treatment for Wessex Region NRA Staff (internal guidance)

Requirements for Breeding Waders

Design of Wader Scrapes and Coastal Pools

Creation and Management of Reed Beds

Otters and their Conservation

Recreation

Rivers Information - Recreation - River Canoeing Code

THAMES REGION

Fisheries

Angling Guide

Fisheries Byelaws 1978

Guide to River Thames - Lock and Weir fishing

Conservation

Dredging and Archaeology

Recreation & Navigation

River Thames Handbook

Cruising on the River Thames - A Boating Guide

Thames Launch Safety Specification

Locks and Weirs on the River Thames - how do they work?

Navigation Levels of Service

Power Operation of Locks on the River Thames

Enjoying the Waterside, Amenity &

Recreation in the NRA Thames Region

The Thames Barrier, The Eighth

Wonder of the World

Thames Path - National Trail

Hurley Walks

Pinkhill Meadow Nature Reserve

Abingdon Riverside Walk

Annual Navigation Newsletter

WELSH REGION

Fisheries

Juvenile Salmonid Monitoring

Programme Report

Rewards for Tagged Fish

Buyer Beware of Poached Salmon

Rod Fishing Byelaws

River Wye Angling Guide

Angling Guide for the Rivers Dee and Clwyd 1992/93

Fisheries Technical Reports;

1. Usk Salmon - Recommendations for Action

2. Spring Salmon - A review of factors affecting the abundance and catch of spring salmon from the river Wye and elsewhere, and proposals for stock maintenance and enhancement

3. Resident Brown Trout - A management strategy, implementation and progress report

4. Welsh rivers - stocking and taking stock - proceedings of the joint NRA Welsh Region/WSTAA seminar

5. Dee Stock Assessment Annual Report 1992

Glas-y-Dorlan magazine

Conservation

Conservation and Recreation: The Wye Challenge

Conservation & Rivers

Recreation

Canoeists Guide to the River Wye

Access on the River Usk, Sennybridge to Usk

River Wye Handbook

River Wye Code of Conduct

Calendar of Major Events on the River Wye

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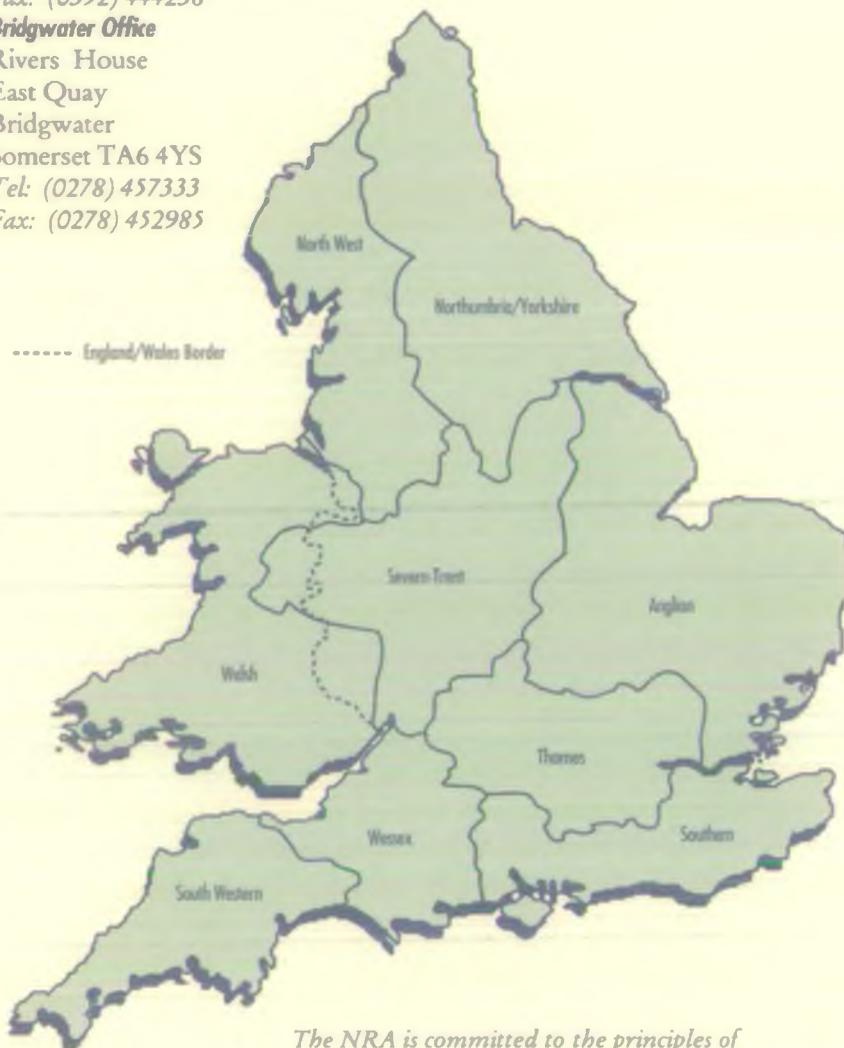
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The NRA is committed to the principles of stewardship and sustainability. In addition to pursuing its statutory responsibilities as Guardians of the Water Environment, the NRA will aim to establish and demonstrate wise environmental practice throughout all its functions.