

NRA Thames 202

The NRA in Business

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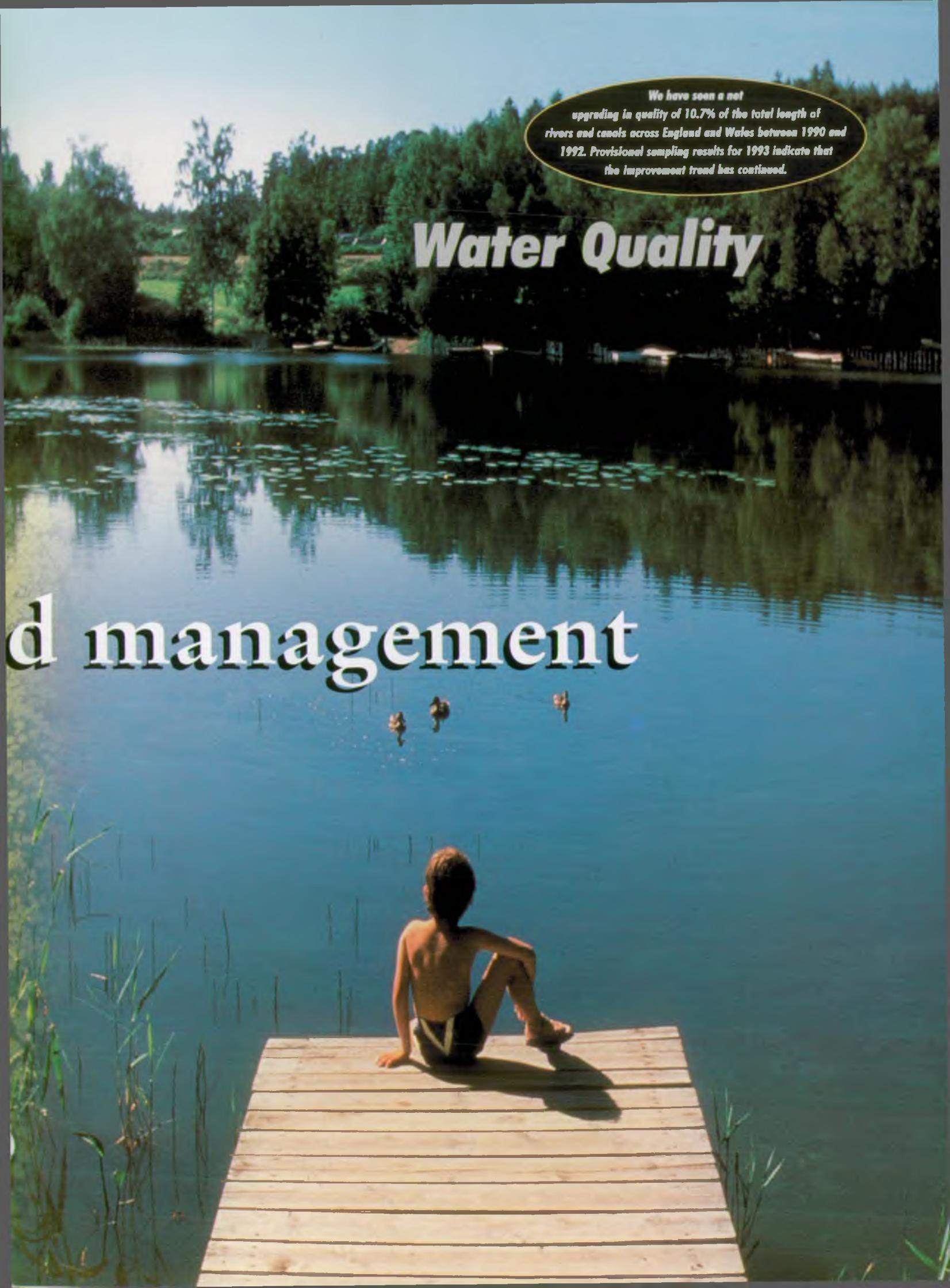
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NRA

National Rivers Authority

Annual Review and
Summary Accounts 1993-94



*We have seen a net
upgrading in quality of 10.7% of the total length of
rivers and canals across England and Wales between 1990 and
1992. Provisional sampling results for 1993 indicate that
the improvement trend has continued.*

Water Quality

d management

Navigation

The NRA manages some 800km of inland navigations with approximately 40,000 boat registrations which involve some 550,000 participants. In addition, an estimated 10.5 million recreation visits are made to these navigations for the purposes of walking, rambling and sightseeing, with lock sites being a focus of attraction.

the need for integrate

Corporate Statement

Our job is to make sure the rivers, estuaries and coastal waters in England and Wales are looked after properly, for this and future generations. ~ We have a legal duty to protect and improve the water environment and have not been afraid to prosecute law breakers when necessary. ~ However, in the longer term we prefer to work with, rather than against, all water users to strike a balanced approach. This is why we, together with a wide range of other organisations, are drawing up individual plans for every English and Welsh river and its surrounding area. ~ We measure our success by results - higher water quality, improving river flow, enhanced wildlife habitats, improved health and quality of fisheries, better flood defences and so on. ~ We are businesslike - making sure improvements are not only achieved in a balanced and lasting way, but also cost-effectively. And by charging users, encouraging investment by others, and through our efficiency programmes, we have cut the taxpayer's subsidy to the NRA.

NRA Thames 202



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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Five years of progress

The NRA has come a long way in five years. It has built an international reputation for successful management in protecting and improving the water environment. People now know the NRA uses a varied approach - collaborating with others but not afraid to regulate and enforce where necessary. Major steps have been taken to give impetus to the long-term task of improving the quality of water for inland and coastal waters in England and Wales.

The achievements so far are:

- ~ Water quality of rivers and canals is steadily improving, with a 10 per cent uplift recorded between 1990 and 1992.
- ~ Statutory water quality standards have been agreed so that all controlled waters will be classified and legally-binding standards set for uses of the waters.
- ~ Low flows have been investigated and solved in a number of rivers.
- ~ A groundwater protection policy has received widespread acceptance and is now in operation. Other resource protection work has been done, particularly in nitrate sensitive areas.
- ~ A water resources development strategy has been developed and published to help ensure future water demand can be met in an integrated way.
- ~ More people, property and places are being protected from flooding as the NRA has added almost 900 new kilometres of defences to the 32,000 or so kilometres it already maintains.
- ~ Links with Local Authority planners now ensure they take account of the risks posed to the water environment by proposed development. Strong representations are made at public inquiries.
- ~ A new national two-tier rod fishing licence and charging scheme has been introduced and fisheries have been maintained, improved and developed.
- ~ Navigation regulations are now in place on inland waters for which the NRA is responsible. Boat safety standards are being harmonised and boat users have better facilities.
- ~ Individual catchment management plans, the NRA's major plank in its aim to balance the needs of both the water environment and its users, are being agreed right across England and Wales.
- ~ Pioneering work to treat water from the disused Wheal Jane tin mine in Cornwall has begun. It could prove invaluable elsewhere in England and Wales.
- ~ Around 600 kilometres of rivers and streams are affected by discharges from abandoned coal and metal mines. A report has been published which suggests ways of dealing with these problems over the long term.
- ~ A new charging scheme has been introduced to make polluters pay towards the costs of protecting the water environment.
- ~ Customers now have a say, as explained in the NRA's customer charter.
- ~ A national free 24 hour hotline - 0800 80 70 60 - has been introduced to speed up reports of environmental emergencies.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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one aspect in common -

Conservation

Surveys of over 8,000km of river corridor, some using aerial interpretation techniques, and work on a river habitat survey methodology provided essential information to manage and target our operations more effectively.



During 1993/94 we have made considerable progress in protecting and improving the water environment and our efforts have been rewarded by significant improvements in water quality. We have implemented a range of efficiency initiatives and embarked on a programme of market testing to ensure we are providing a value for money service. It is now vital that the momentum of environmental improvement is maintained and that the resources which we need to continue the good work are not compromised.

Investment made by the Water and Sewerage Companies (WS Plcs) has significant potential to influence the quality of the water environment. Our input into the second phase of their investment programmes (AMP2) has been designed to ensure that investment is prioritised and targeted to deliver maximum benefits for the environment.

Following the OFWAT review of WS Plc's capital expenditure for the period 1995 - 2000, we welcome the declaration, on 6th July 1994, by the Secretary of State for the Environment, that expenditure of £522.3 million could go ahead on additional improvement schemes by the water companies. This will enable a good proportion of the NRA list of discretionary schemes, not covered by EC directives or domestic legislation, to be progressed. We will be continuing our close liaison with WS Plcs to take advantage of any additional opportunities to influence their investment to the mutual benefit of water consumers and the environment.

We also welcome the long-awaited agreement on procedures for introducing statutory Water Quality Objectives (WQOs). Their implementation will ensure

Chairman's Statement

Lord Crickhowell
CHAIRMAN

8 July 1994

that money is well spent in making improvements in river quality when and where they are most needed.

We have also been seeking to influence the debate on contaminated land and abandoned mines. It is our belief that the extent to which remedial action can and should be taken needs careful consideration. Our experts have provided advice to Government and we welcome the review that is now taking place.

European legislation has also been a target for our input and influence. This input is designed to ensure that EC Environmental Directives are based on firm scientific evidence and are prioritised according to need. NRA support for the principle of subsidiarity will remain, as long as it is not used as a pretext for "thinning down" the valuable environmental improvements that are being introduced.

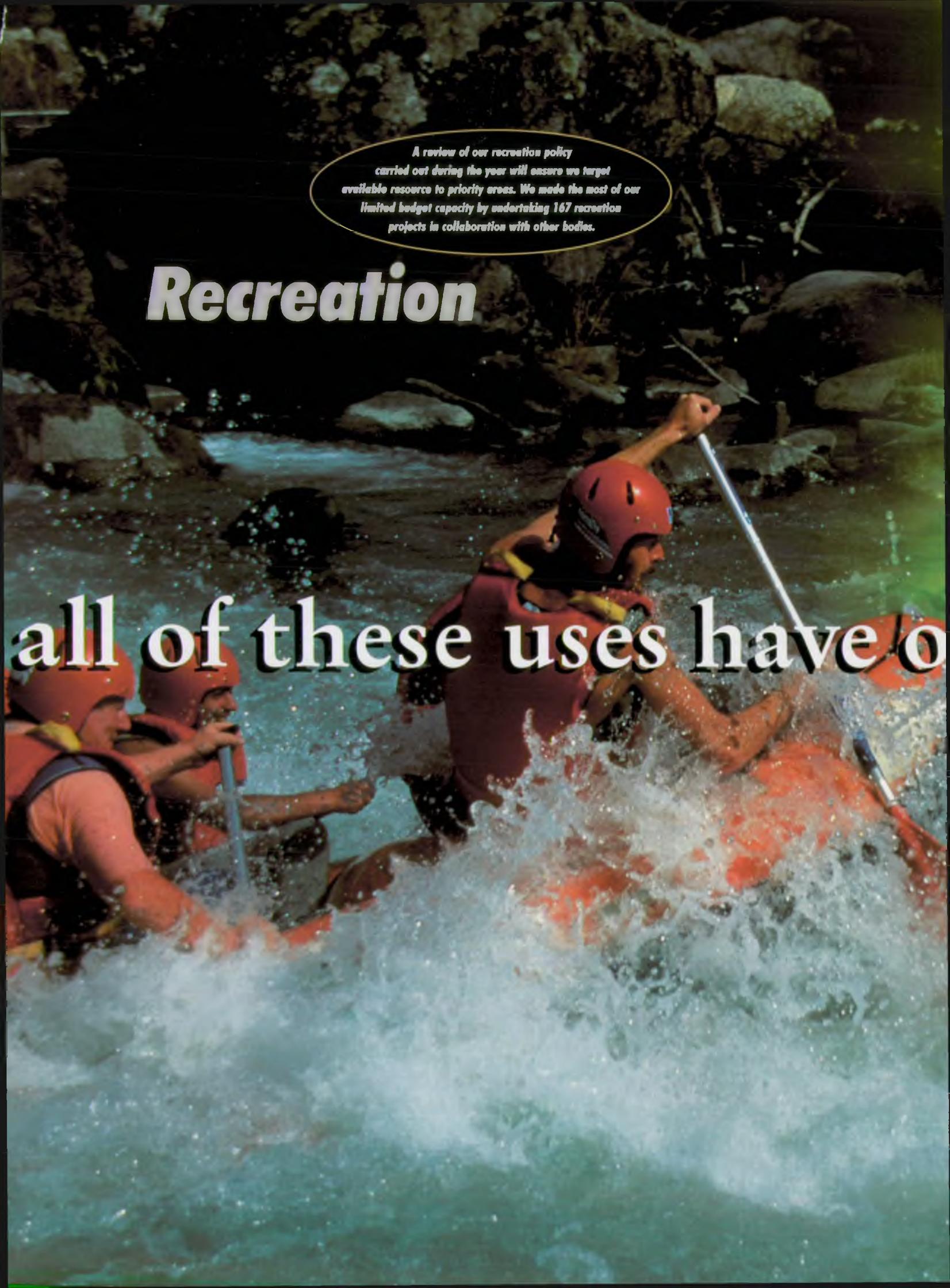
We welcome Government strategies on sustainable development and biodiversity and will take forward these principles in our own corporate strategy.

We have continued to provide advice and support to Government on the development of proposals for the Environment Agency. During the year we have developed close liaison with our future partners in the new organisation - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and the Waste Regulatory Authorities. Integrated environmental management - covering water, land and air - will form the cornerstone on which the new organisation will be built. This reflects the approach which we have developed in the NRA to manage the water environment in an integrated way and which we will continue to pursue with vigour for the organisation's remaining lifetime.

A review of our recreation policy carried out during the year will ensure we target available resource to priority areas. We made the most of our limited budget capacity by undertaking 167 recreation projects in collaboration with other bodies.

Recreation

all of these uses have o

A group of people in orange gear white-water rafting down a rocky river. The rafters are wearing helmets and life jackets, and are using paddles to navigate the turbulent water. The background shows large, dark rocks and a narrow channel of water.



Delivering real improvements in the rivers, estuaries and coastal waters of England and Wales is not an easy or overnight task. However, I am delighted to report that in 1993/94 the results of our efforts since 1989 are continuing to show through in tangible form.

Our monitoring has revealed a net upgrading in quality of 10.7% of the length of river and canal waters across England and Wales between 1990 and 1992. Bathing Water quality has continued to improve with 79.4% of designated waters, the highest recorded, meeting the EC Directive standard. More major sewage treatment works complied with their discharge consent conditions (93%) and the number of major pollution incidents has almost halved since 1989.

These real achievements reflect the sustained efforts that have been put into controlling pollution both through regulation and through collaboration and partnership with water and sewerage undertakers, with industry and with agriculture.

Consultation and close liaison with all interested parties in the production of our Water Resources Development Strategy - published in March 1994 - ensured that its conclusions were well received and supported. With a controlled programme of demand management, major water resource developments can be deferred well into the next century.

The heavy rainfall which occurred during the year challenged and proved the worth of our substantial investment in providing flood defences. These, together with the provision of flood warnings and the response of our emergency workforce, did much to reduce the destructive impact of flooding.

Chief Executive's Review

Ed Gallagher
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

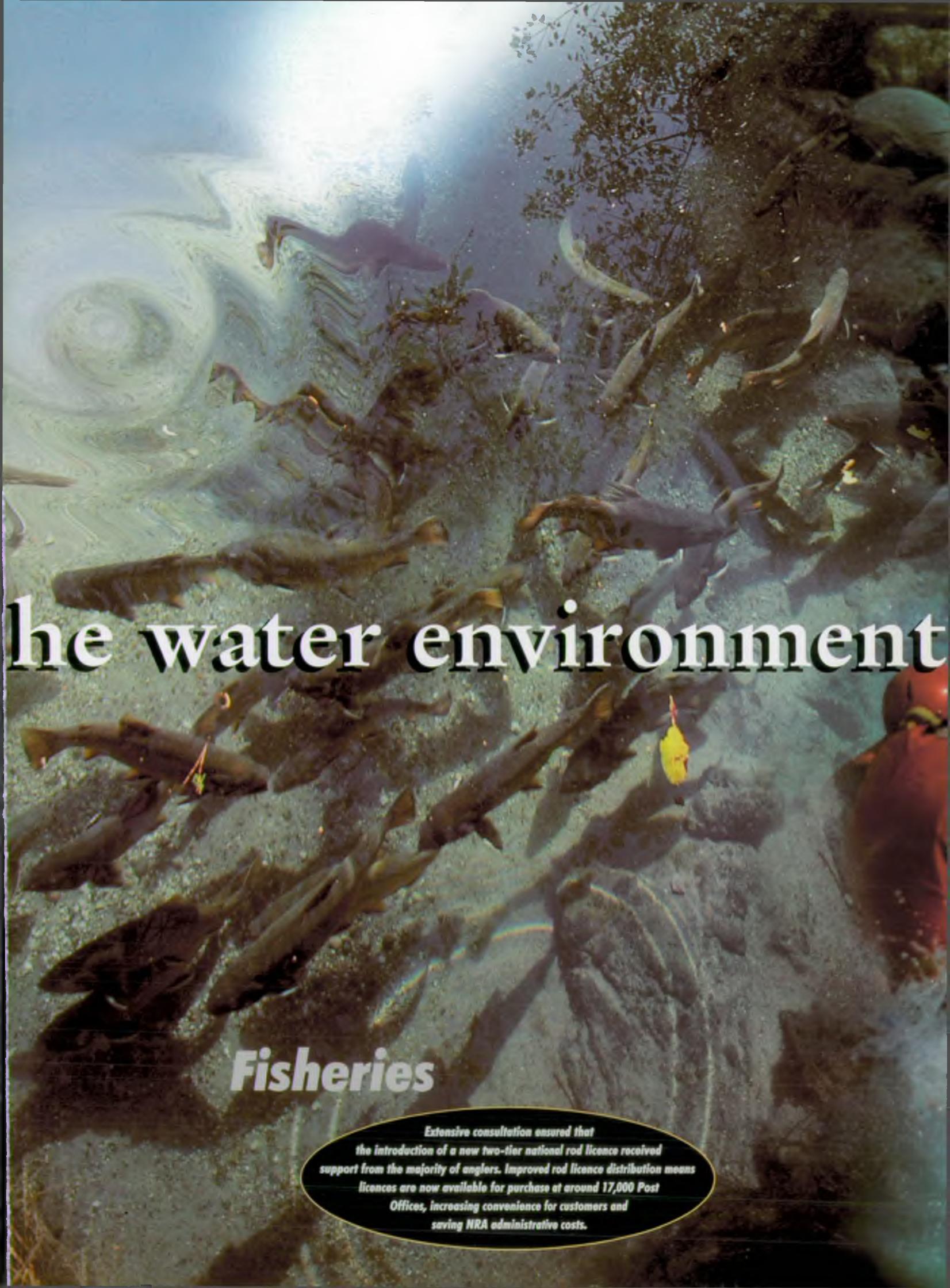
8 July 1994

As well as being a year of environmental achievement, 1993/94 has also been a year of considerable organisational change.

Responsibility has been delegated downwards to provide a more effective local delivery of services, closer to the customer. Catchment Management Plans, which identify balanced solutions to local environmental problems, have continued to provide us with a powerful tool to effect integrated environmental management.

We have continued our programme of market testing and efficiency measures. During 1993/94 manpower fell by 8.5%, achieved without compulsory redundancies. Market testing produced estimated savings of £2m in 1993/94; regional mergers reduced costs by over £3m; and national procurement initiatives produced savings of £2.6m. Faced with reductions in Government funding of our work we are continuing to review all of our activities to ensure we are providing the right level of service at the right cost. Particular attention in 1993/94 was focused on fisheries and navigation.

The transition into the Environment Agency will stretch our capacity for change. In 1993/94 we have continued to build on the foundations laid down since 1989 that will enable us to meet this challenge and apply our integrated approach, not just to water, but to the environment as a whole.



The water environment

Fisheries

Extensive consultation ensured that the introduction of a new two-tier national rod licence received support from the majority of anglers. Improved rod licence distribution means licences are now available for purchase at around 17,000 Post Offices, increasing convenience for customers and saving NRA administrative costs.

Key Achievements 1993/94

The water guardian of England and Wales - the National Rivers Authority - is growing into its job.

This is clearly shown in the Authority's annual report for the fifth year of its existence - April 1, 1993 to March 31, 1994.

It confirms:

- River and canal water quality rose by more than ten per cent between 1990 and 1992... and the trend is continuing.

- A record four out of five identified bathing waters now meet EC standards.

- Nine out of ten major sewage treatment works are now operating within prescribed water quality limits.

- The number of major pollution incidents was down by over a quarter on the year and has halved since the NRA was formed in 1989/90.

These figures are based on sound, scientific evidence and a wealth of practical experience. More than 444,000 water quality samples were taken and five million analytical measurements made in 1993/94 alone. Almost 32,000 pollution incidents were dealt with and of 455 prosecutions, over 90 per cent were successful with fines totalling £1 million being imposed.

But the NRA does not just deal with "dirty" water - it goes to people's aid when there is too much. Emergency

help was needed at more than 100 serious flooding incidents, for example the Chichester flooding in January, and the NRA's promptness prevented many more people being affected.

Nearly 2,000 flood warnings were issued, giving people time to move themselves and their belongings to safety. In all, 160 kilometres of new or improved flood defences were completed in the year as maintenance of 32,000 kilometres of defences continued.



The NRA and MAFF have been working with the farming community to prevent pollution to water courses caused by farming activities. Following the introduction of the Slurry and Agriculture Fuel Oil Regulations in 1991, thousands of farm waste management plans have been drawn up, leading to significant improvements in the collection, storage and disposal of organic wastes and agro-chemicals. The proportion of all major water pollution incidents caused by farm based activities has fallen from 36% in 1990 to 19% in 1993.

Agriculture

now being placed on t

The NRA has also been making major gains on the strategic front, emphasising all the while its commitment to partnerships.

Catchment management plans - crucial in meeting the Authority's desire to manage the water environment in an integrated way - have been completed for nine catchments, with twenty more under discussion. The aim is to have plans for the whole of England and Wales by 1998.

Local authorities are now taking greater account of the water environment in land use planning decisions, following the publication of NRA national guidelines.

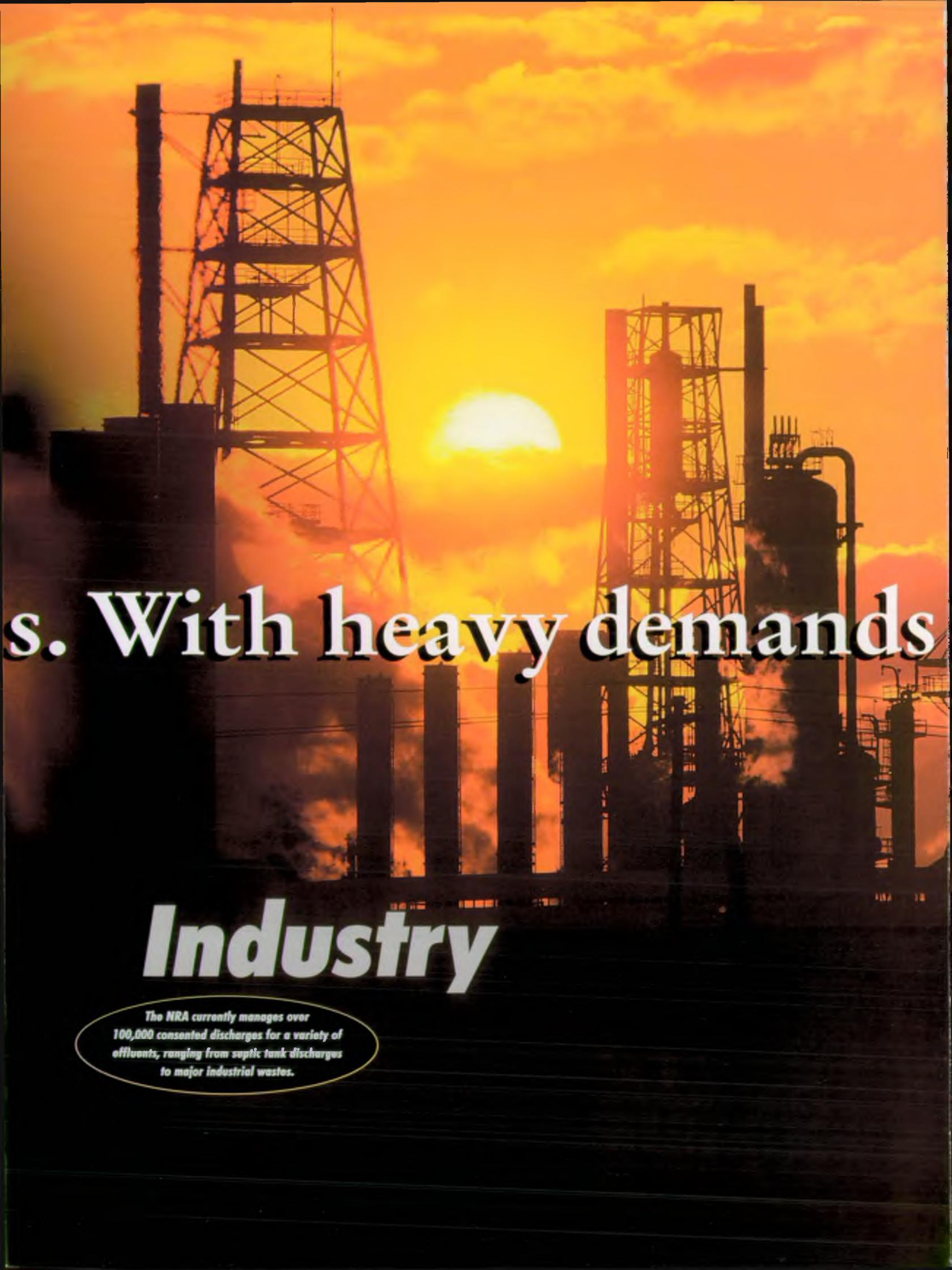
Close liaison with the water companies, who are embarking on a second major investment programme, will help ensure their work delivers maximum benefit to the environment.

The NRA water resources development strategy will provide a framework for making sure future water demand can be met in an environmentally sustainable way.

On the conservation front, some 130 collaborative projects were undertaken.

And briefly...

- The public now has a Freefone number - 0800 80 70 60 - to make it easy to report pollution, poaching, flooding and other environmental emergencies.
- The NRA has introduced a new two-tier national rod licence after consultation with anglers. The licences are now available from around 17,000 Post Offices.
- A new customers' complaint handling system has been introduced.
- Cyclops, an automated water quality testing device, came into operation.
- Four out of five completed recreation projects were carried out in collaboration with other bodies.
- Over 8,000 kilometres of river corridor were surveyed, some from the air.
- Boating conditions have improved on the Thames, with the reconstruction of Hambleden Lock, and on the Nene, where navigation improvements have been made.

A photograph of an industrial facility, possibly a refinery or chemical plant, silhouetted against a bright, orange sunset sky. The sun is a large, glowing orb in the center, partially obscured by the industrial structures. The sky is filled with soft, orange clouds. The industrial structures include tall distillation columns, scaffolding, and various pipes and tanks. The overall scene is dramatic and emphasizes the scale of the industry.

s. With heavy demands

Industry

The NRA currently manages over 100,000 consented discharges for a variety of effluents, ranging from septic tank discharges to major industrial wastes.

Collaboration & partnership



THE NRA is considered to be one of the strongest, environmental protection agencies in Europe - but, wherever possible, it prefers persuasion to the use of legal force.

That is why it has chosen the route of collaboration and partnership with interested parties as its method for protecting and improving the water environment of England and Wales.



It sits round the table with bodies small and large to make sure nothing will upset today's delicate natural balance of the water environment or ruin it for generations yet unborn.



The NRA is using what it calls catchment management planning as its principal tool in this area.

This treats a river, connected land, tributaries and underground water as a single unit and develops a plan for action hand-in-hand with interested parties.



It is the NRA's intention to have a catchment management plan up and running for every river in England and Wales by 1998.

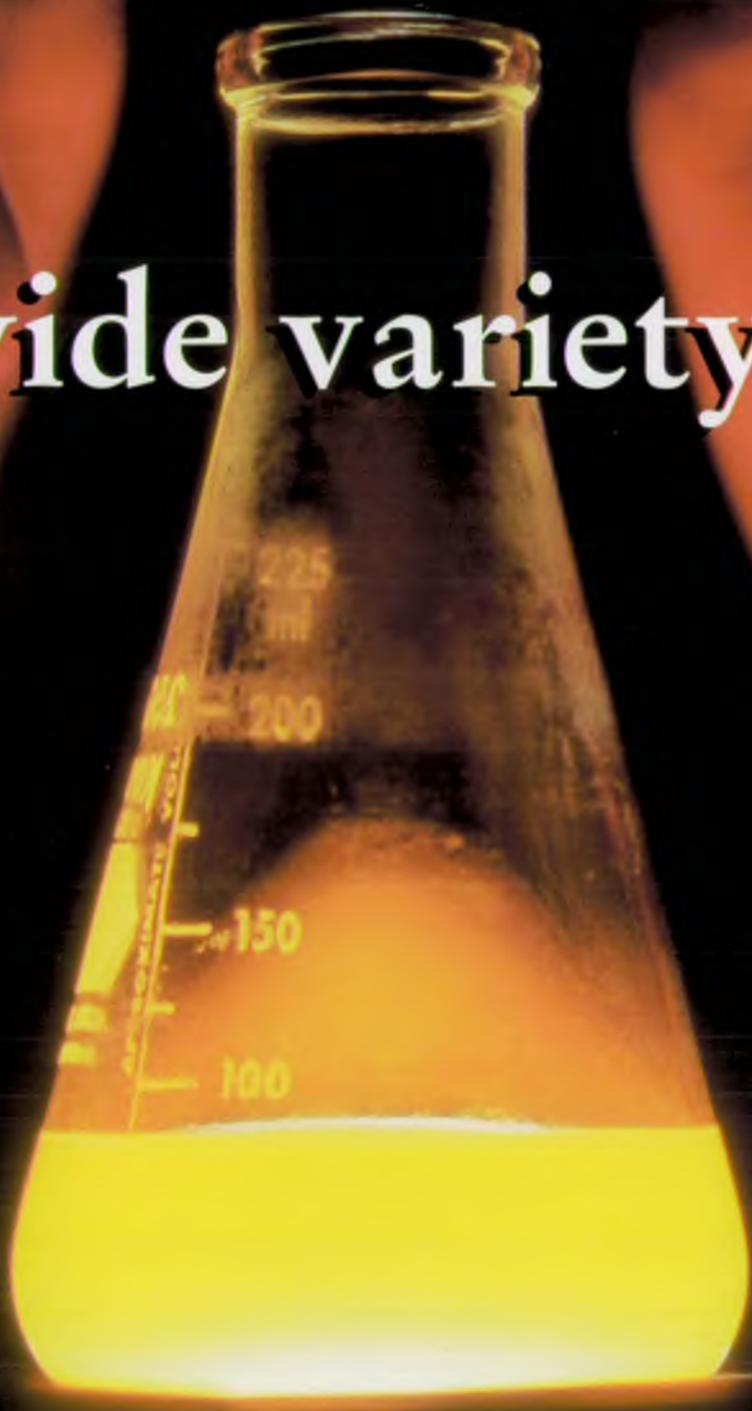


National Power

Research and development

*Completed 97 R & D projects.
Took 444,000 Water Quality samples and
carried out over 5 million analytical
measurements.*

to a wide variety of use



This consultation-based planning is already being turned into action in other ways. There are literally hundreds of collaborative projects on the go, involving something like £300 million a year.

The Aire and Calder project in the North East of England is a good example. The NRA and a range of businesses have come together to cut down on water use and consequently waste. They have proved the companies can save £2 million year and, crucially, the environment is suffering less pollution. So everybody is winning.

Other examples abound:

- ~ There is now a wetlands strategy for Anglesey and site management plans for Exminster and Amble marshes in the South West of England.
- ~ RiverWATCH, a three-year national drive to increase youngsters' awareness of rivers, has been completed in partnership with National Power and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation.
- ~ NRA, The Wildlife Trusts (formerly RSNC) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have linked up to produce The New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook, which points out the key partnership role that river engineers and conservationists have when working to provide flood protection while at the same time maintaining and enhancing the wildlife interest of our rivers.
- ~ Major sea defence work, which continues all the time, is done in consultation with local environmental groups.
- ~ Agencies, including the NRA, have launched the Making Waves strategy to make full use of the recreation potential of the Tyne and Wear estuaries.
- ~ Cardiff Bay Development Corporation has linked up with the NRA to upgrade a fish pass and open a new section of spawning ground to boost the number of salmon and sea trout.
- ~ Sites on the Colne and Skerne rivers are to become European restoration showcases. The NRA is linking with National Trust, English Nature, the Countryside Commission and Darlington Borough Council as partners in River Restoration Project Ltd for this project.
- ~ The Upper Avon Navigation Trust has approached the NRA with the idea of improving navigation on the Avon in Warwickshire and at the same time improving fisheries, assisting land drainage and maintaining water quality - an example of a lead by a local organisation that can have many benefits.
- ~ Co-operation with some of the fire and emergency services has led to the supply of equipment to reduce the effects of pollution.
- ~ The NRA is helping a swan rescue organisation in Surrey.

As Kevin Bond, the NRA's director of operations, puts it: "We will continue to seek the cooperative approach to environmental enhancement. Our role as the lead environmental body is to provide the leadership, the input of scientific and technical expertise and sometimes financial pump priming. Our skills, combined with the enthusiasm of local groups, provide the correct blend."

Living which is subject

Flood Defence

Over 1,900 flood warnings were issued to households and local communities, to allow time for possessions to be moved from risk areas and reducing the damage caused by flood water. Maintenance of over 32,000km of flood defences and construction of 160km of new or improved defences will help to protect many communities from flooding.

Financial summary 1993/94

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK Under the terms of our financial memorandum, we are required to:

- ~ break-even on income and expenditure from one year to the next, subject to specific carry-forward provisions;
- ~ spend income on the particular function for which it was raised;
- ~ establish fair charging schemes which maximise income from those who benefit from our services or otherwise cause our costs to be incurred.

INCOME The NRA derives its income from 3 main sources:

- ~ income raised from our own charging schemes;
- ~ levies raised on local authorities to fund flood defence activities;
- ~ Government grants (principally, DoE Grant-in-Aid and MAFF flood defence grants).

Since our creation in 1989, we have implemented new national schemes of charging for abstraction licences and discharge consents and have revised other charging schemes to better target those who benefit from, or give rise to, expenditure by the NRA. As a consequence, the burden on the general tax-payer, in the form of Government grants, has progressively decreased. Less than one-quarter of our total income in 1993/94 was funded from grant subsidy.

In raising income from charging schemes, we set limits on charge levels so as to recover only sufficient income to offset the costs which we reasonably incur in providing the service.

EXPENDITURE In its 5 years of operation, the NRA has spent £2 billion delivering its services.

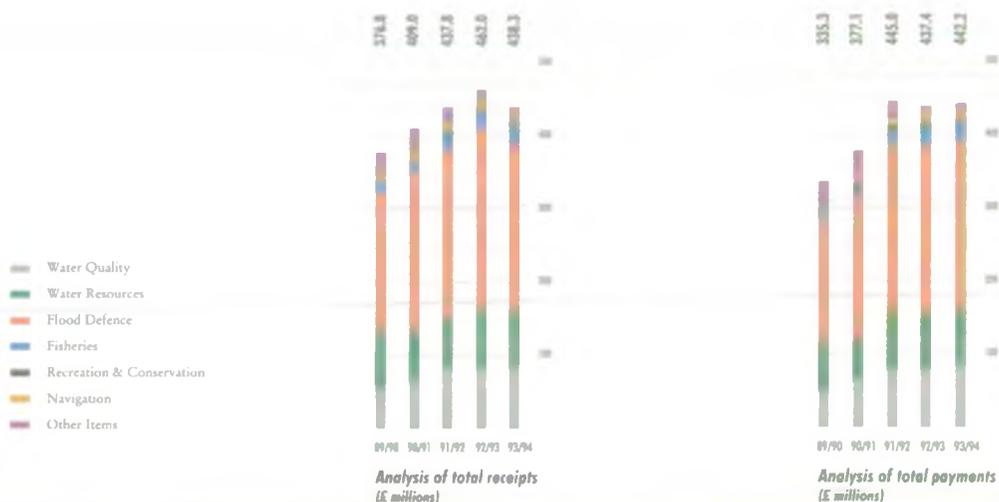
Total annual expenditure increased by 33% between 1989 and 1991 (from £335m to £445m). Since 1991, expenditure has largely levelled out (£442m in 1993/94).

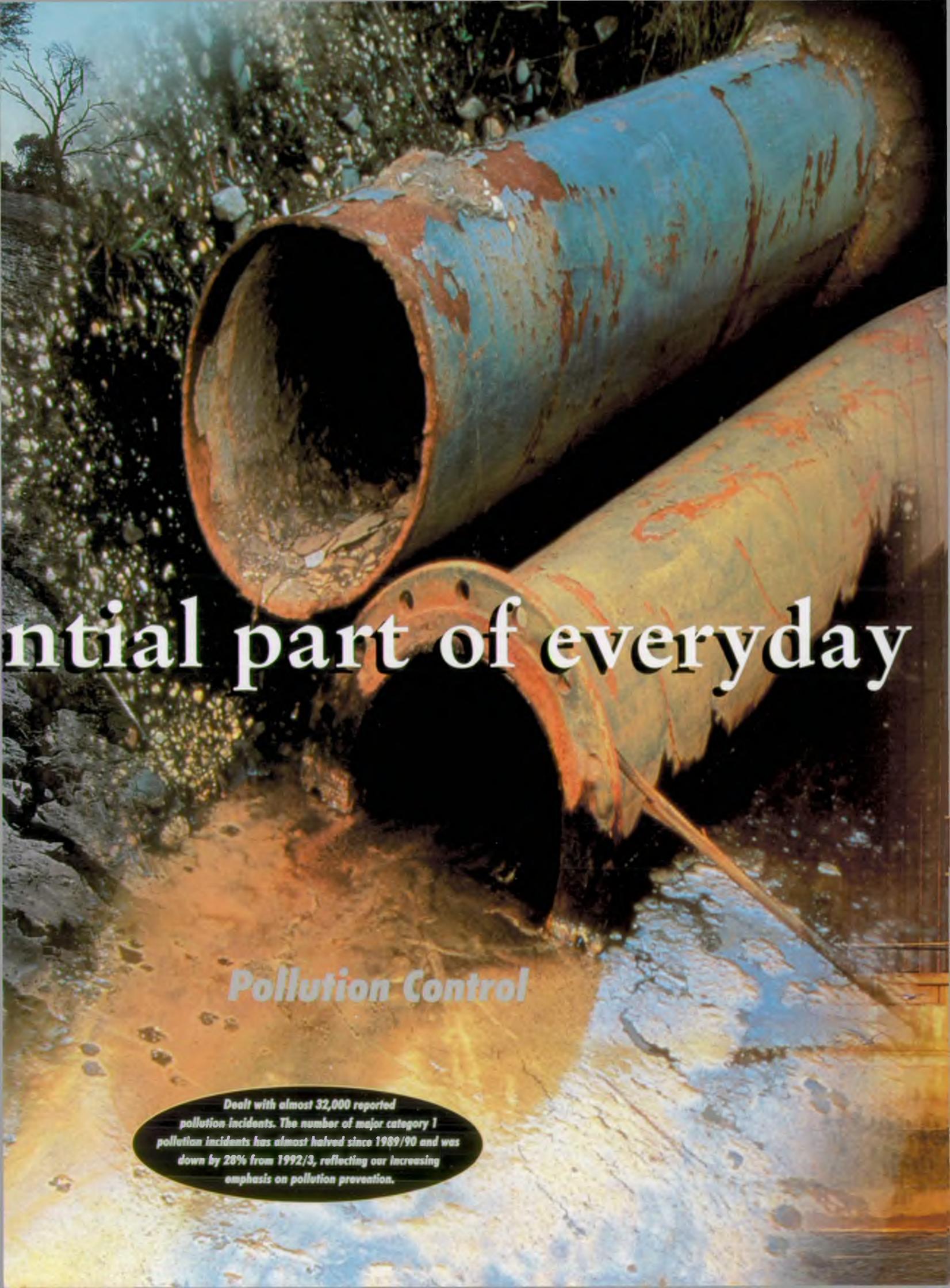
Expenditure on pollution control, in particular, has increased by about 70% since 1989 reflecting increasing emphasis on water quality matters. In absolute terms, expenditure on flood defence, with its high value capital programme, has consistently accounted for over half of total annual expenditure.

In addition to the money which the NRA spends directly on managing the water environment, we play an important regulatory role in influencing the environmental investment programme of industry generally and the privatised water companies in particular. Our aim is to ensure that expenditure is effectively targeted and results in maximum benefits for the water environment.

VALUE FOR MONEY During 1993/94, the Authority has continued its drive to maximise value for money in its use of resources and to ensure effective financial control.

Through an ambitious efficiency and savings package, planned expenditure from our 1993/94





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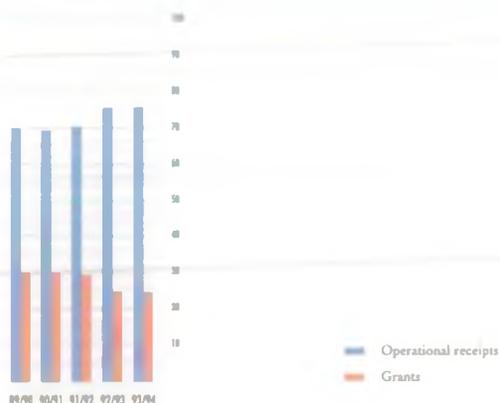
Pollution Control

Dealt with almost 32,000 reported pollution incidents. The number of major category 1 pollution incidents has almost halved since 1989/90 and was down by 20% from 1992/3, reflecting our increasing emphasis on pollution prevention.



Corporate Plan baseline budget has been reduced by over £200 million over the next three years. We will endeavour to deliver this savings package without significant impact on our operational performance. We have initiated a phased programme of market testing of our services which, together with structural re-organisation and rationalisation, will yield long-term cost savings. Major reviews of fisheries and navigation functions commenced during the year have involved critical appraisals of levels of service, costs and future finance strategies.

The implementation of formal project management monitoring and control procedures, the adoption of economic appraisal techniques and the strengthening of an on-going procurement programme will lead to a tightening of financial control ensuring propriety, regularity and the delivery of value for money, with consequential benefits both for those who pay our charges and the general tax-payer.



Government grant as a % of total income

The full version of the Annual Report is available from your local NRA office. Please see numbers listed below

Head office, Rivers House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol BS12 4UD. Tel: (0454) 624400. Fax: (0454) 624409

Anglian, Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5ZR. Tel: (0733) 231840. Fax: (0733) 231840.

Northumbria and Yorkshire, 21 Park Square South, Leeds LS1 2QG. Tel: (0532) 440191. Fax: (0532) 461889.

North West, Richard Fairclough House, Knutsford Road, Warrington WA4 1HG. Tel: (0925) 539999. Fax: (0925) 415961.

Severn-Trent, Sapphire East, 550 Streetsbrook Road, Solihull B91 1QT. Tel: (021) 711 2324. Fax: (021) 711 5824.

Southern, Guildbourne House, Chatsworth Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1LD. Tel: (0903) 820692. Fax: (0903) 821832.

South Western, Manley House, Kestrel Way, Exeter EX2 7LQ. Tel:(0392) 444000. Fax: (0392) 444238.

Thames, Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading, RG1 8DQ. Tel: (0734) 535000. Fax: (0734) 500388.

Welsh, Rivers House/Plas-yr-Afon, St Mellons Business Park, St Mellons, Cardiff CF3 0LT. Tel: (0222) 770088. Fax: (0222) 798555.

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Water Management

Following identification of some 40 low flow rivers, considerable effort has gone into rectifying the problem. The beneficial effect of high rainfall on low flows is often only transient, as these problems are caused by excessive abstractions rather than by drought. Our long term aim is to deal with the cause of the problem at source, regulating the inherited licence conditions which result in excessive abstractions rather than deal with the low flow symptoms which result.

Environment forms an esse



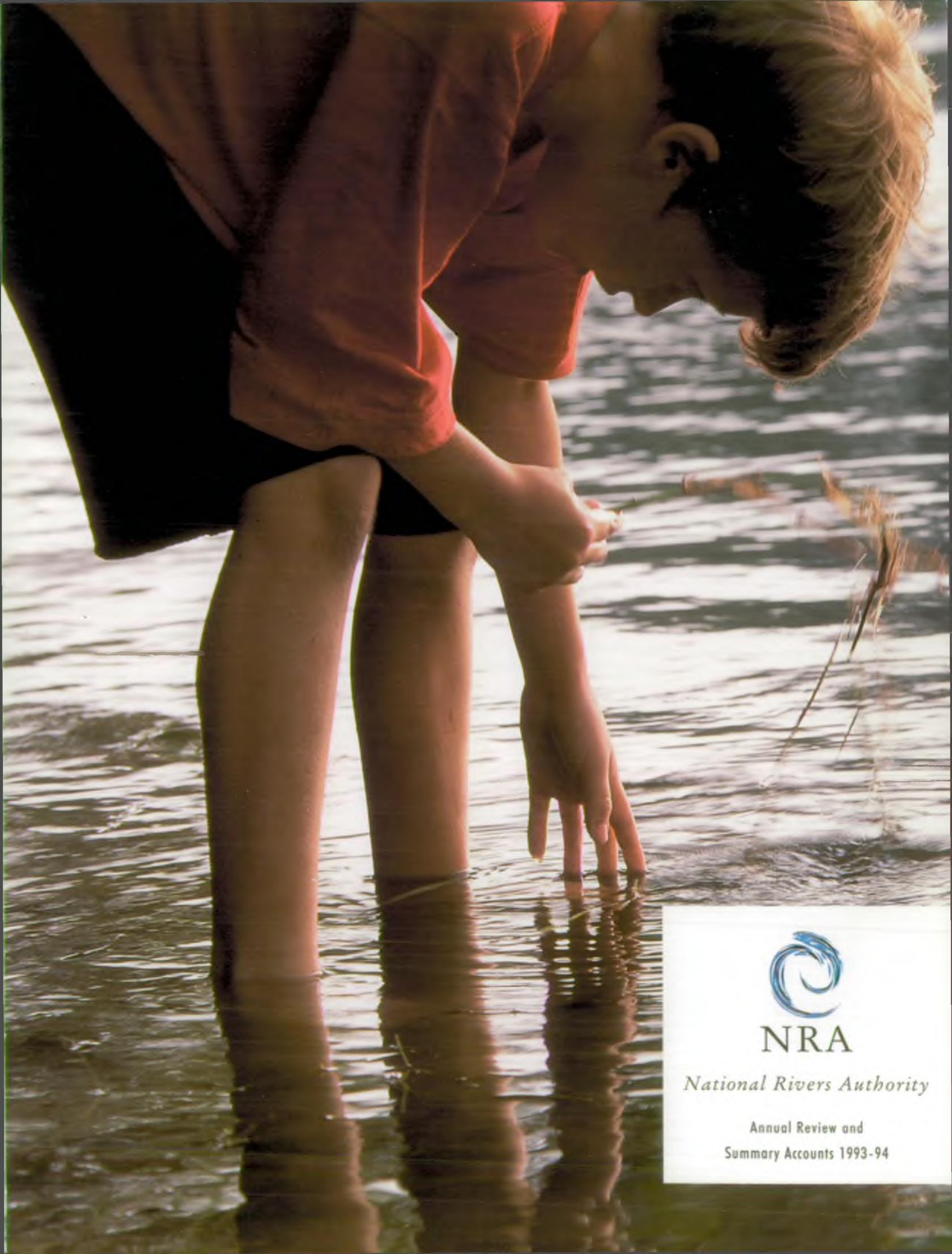
NRA

National Rivers Authority

The water env

The launch of our water resources development strategy has provided a framework for ensuring that future demand for water for public supply, industry and agriculture in England and Wales may be met in an environmentally sustainable way.

Water Resources



NRA

National Rivers Authority

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