



Chris Hinchliff

Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 7569

Emma Hardy MP
Minister for Water and Flooding
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

30th July 2026

Dear Minister,

Protecting England's Small Waters

We are writing to draw your attention to the issue of small waters and urge you to recognise these overlooked but critically important habitats in upcoming reforms to water policy.

Small waters, including ponds, headwater streams and small lakes, are a major part of England's freshwater environment and are critically important for biodiversity. Because of their small catchments, small waters are more likely to contain clean water, and support the species which rely on this ever-diminishing resource.

In practice, almost all small waters have been excluded from statutory monitoring and management under the Water Framework Directive. This has stymied investment in simple, cost-effective actions like pond creation, and undermined nature recovery.

Government now has the opportunity to correct this oversight and bring small waters into statutory monitoring and management. Because these habitats are comparatively quick and easy to create or restore, this modest reform would drive significant near-term progress towards England's nature recovery goals.

Bringing small waters into the Water Framework Directive would enable the Government to bring clean water back to England's landscapes and begin reversing the long decline of our freshwater wildlife.

In upcoming water reforms, we urge you to ensure small waters are properly recognised, protected and supported as a vital part of England's freshwater environment.

Yours,

Chris Hinchliff MP

**Jeremy Biggs, CEO,
Freshwater Habitats Trust**

**Richard Benwell, CEO,
Wildlife and Countryside
Link**

Paula Barker MP

Siân Berry MP

Matt Bishop MP

Richard Burgon MP

Ian Byrne MP

Irene Campbell MP

Sarah Champion MP

Dr Ellie Chowns MP

Victoria Collins MP

Adam Dance MP

Carla Denyer MP

Josh Dean MP

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Ian Sollom MP	Mohammad Yasin MP	Nadia Whittome MP
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Joan Edwards OBE, Director of Policy & Public Affairs, The Wildlife Trusts	Janina Gray, Head of Science & Policy, Wildfish	Mark Lloyd, CEO, The Rivers Trust
Craig Macadam, Co-Leader & Director of Conservation, Buglife	Mark Owen, Head of Fisheries, Angling Trust	Joe Pecorelli, Freshwater Programme Manager, ZSL
Mark Robinson, Senior Campaigns Manager, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	Paul Shaffer, Director of Policy & Projects, CIWEM	Kit Stoner, Chief Executive, Bat Conservation Trust
Andy Lester, Head of Conservation, A Rocha UK	Kathy Wormald, CEO, Froglife	Amelia Womack, Head of External Affairs & Advocacy, RSPB