

**Freshwater  
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# Small Water Bodies



**Policy & Research** Small water bodies are vital for freshwater biodiversity but remain largely overlooked and widely excluded from policies that might protect them

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A small water body in the Weaver Valley, Cheshire

Small water bodies include [headwater streams](#), [springs](#), [ditches](#), [flushes](#), small [lakes](#) and [ponds](#). They can be found in all landscapes and by their very nature are highly varied in all aspects, from water chemistry to the species they support. These habitats are vital for freshwater biodiversity but remain largely overlooked and widely excluded from government policies like the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans which describe how we should be protecting freshwaters.

Small standing waters (ponds and small lakes) are particularly important compared to other freshwaters. In all landscapes so far investigated – including different parts of Europe and multiple UK landscapes – ponds surprisingly support a larger proportion of freshwater biodiversity than lakes or rivers, and are especially important for uncommon freshwater species. Thus collectively, at the landscape scale, small standing waters are critical to maintaining freshwater biodiversity. The targeted protection, management and creation of small standing waters to restore freshwater landscapes is particularly important for populations of threatened species, including some specialist habitats and species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive, which depend on networks of high quality small water bodies for their survival. We need to recognise the value of small standing waters, and that protecting them is relatively cheap and easy because of their small catchments.

In November 2013, the Freshwater Habitats Trust, in partnership with the [European Environmental Bureau](#), and the backing of the European Commission



## Important Areas for Ponds

Identifying networks of the most important ponds and their biodiversity.

[Find out more >](#)

## River Thames Catchment Project

The River Thames Catchment Project is working with local landowners to improve the quality of the River Thames and its tributaries.

[Find out more >](#)

and the government of Lithuania, ran a workshop to bring together water and nature managers from 18 EU states. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how better to protect the continents small waters, a first step in informing the development of future policies.

Read the [Report of the Workshop on the Protection and Management of Small Water Bodies](#).

## Million Ponds Project

The Million Ponds Project is a national partnership initiative to protect our freshwater wildlife by creating a new network of clean waterbodies across the UK.

[Find out more >](#)

## Donate now

Make a donation today and turn your pounds into ponds.

Just £10 will support our work to create and protect ponds through practical action, lobbying, research and advice. You can make a donation online with your credit or debit card.

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### General enquiries

Looking for more information about our work or need advice on ponds? Please contact us at [info@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:info@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk) or call [01865 595 505](tel:01865595505).

### Media

For media enquiries please contact Dr Jeremy Biggs on [01865 595 506](tel:01865595506) or our Oxford office on [01865 595 505](tel:01865595505).