

Discovering Priority Habitats



FRESHWATER
BIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Are you interested in helping to protect and restore our freshwater habitats?

ABOUT *priority habitats*

Priority rivers and lakes are freshwater habitats where action to protect and restore biodiversity is a priority. However, much of what we know about freshwater habitats relates to larger waterbodies, with little to no focus on smaller streams and lakes. Therefore, the Priority Habitats project works to train citizen scientists to carry out naturalness assessments on these smaller waterbodies in England and to map these sites onto our Priority Habitats map.

WHAT *is a naturalness assessment?*

Naturalness surveys assess four key components of natural functioning: physical, hydrological, chemical and biological. These components can be assessed through simple visual inspection, River Habitat Surveys and any other available data. Each component is given a score from one (highly natural) to five (highly unnatural) and accompanied by a confidence class (high, medium and low) to help account for uncertainties.



Naturalness

Protect & Restore



This data is then mapped using *Cartographer* and will be used by Natural England, the Environment Agency and planning authorities to highlight where decision-making needs to take account of habitat naturalness and can also be used to plan restoration measures to enhance/restore natural processes.

HOW *can you help?*

Become a citizen scientist! Join us at a face-to-face training day. During this course you will learn how to conduct naturalness surveys and how to upload this valuable data to our Priority Habitats map.



Citizen Science

For more information visit: priorityhabitats.org

