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Unique wetland habitats created by River Yare to support wildlife. Work is part of wider government commitment to restore nature and protect water environment.

Wildlife is returning to one of the world's rarest river types.

Wetlands created at Keswick Marsh in Norfolk are giving birds, amphibians, and plants a better chance to thrive on a threatened chalk stream.

The River Yare is one of only 210 chalk streams in the world, with 58 found in East Anglia. The Environment Agency, Norfolk Rivers Trust, and Water Resources East have worked together to reshape more than 7 hectares of riverbank and floodplain, reconnecting the river with surrounding land.

New ponds, shallow pools, and reshaped ditches now allow water to spread naturally across the floodplain in winter and hold water for longer during dry periods. This restores the natural water cycle, reduces flood-risk downstream, and creates the varied, mixed habitat that many wetland species depend on.

Amy Prendergast, catchment delivery manager at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

It has been fantastic to work in partnership with Norfolk Rivers Trust to create new wetland features at Keswick Marsh, delivering vital habitat for wildlife on the outskirts of Norwich.

Our rivers are facing increasing pressures from pollution, low flows, and habitat loss. That is why we are investing through our Water Environment Improvement Fund to restore and enhance the water environment, supporting projects like this that will benefit both wildlife and local communities for years to come.

Donna Dean, restoration and catchment development manager at Norfolk Rivers Trust, said:

The site is already piquing the curiosity of a range of wildlife. Egrets, coots, shelducks, newts, dragonflies, foxes and even a little ringed plover have been recorded visiting the works – some of them entirely new records for the site.

It's really rewarding to see wildlife returning so quickly, and we look forward to watching the site continue to establish.

The works deliberately create edge habitats, where open water meets land which support the greatest variety of species. Inland wetland birds, amphibians, and a range of wetland plants will benefit directly.

Hannah Gray, programme manager at Water Resources East, said:

The Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP) was pleased to support this project through funding provided to the Norfolk Water Fund from the Royal Bank of Canada. NWSP is collaborating across Norfolk to scale up nature-based solutions for water security.

The work carried out by Norfolk Rivers Trust at Keswick on the Yare is one of many projects which is helping that shared vision become a reality.

The 20-acre site was provided pro bono by Lady Dannatt, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk. Funding was provided by the Norfolk Water Strategy Programme, which is hosted by Water Resources East in partnership with Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water and the Nature Conservancy and by Anglian Water's Get River Positive programme and the Environment Agency.

Following a both wet winter and a historic summer drought - the driest July in nearly two centuries - the nation is now bracing for an intensified, wetter winter. The Environment Agency remains ready to respond to both ongoing drought conditions and any winter flooding incidents.

- For media enquiries, please contact Norfolk Rivers Trust: georgia@norfolkriverstrust.org / 07944 443711
- Photos are available to download from WeTransfer: <https://we.tl/t-Nn2LC6KiRzpPjRaK>. Available for 3 working days.
- The total project cost was £97,764, and it took 3 weeks to complete the on-ground delivery and species mitigation works. The feasibility work took place 2-3 years, including habitat and species surveys, consenting, peat core surveys, design work and securing blended funding sources.
- The Norfolk Water Strategy Programme (NWSP) aims to improve how water is managed in the chalk catchments of Norfolk through scaling up investment in Nature-based Solutions (NbS). More information can be found [here](#).
- Norfolk Rivers Trust is an independent environmental charity dedicated to protecting and restoring Norfolk's rivers, wetlands, and chalk streams for the benefit of wildlife and people. Find out more at norfolkriverstrust.org.uk.
- The Environment Agency launched Flood Action Week on 12 October to help protect the nation. The campaign aims to encourage people to prepare for flooding by taking proactive steps such as knowing their flood risk, preparing a flood plan, and getting flood warnings. Search "flooding" on <https://www.gov.uk/> to find the risk to your home, business or neighbourhood.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rare-chalk-stream-created-to-boost-wildlife-in-norfolk>