



**Sir Faesyfed
Radnorshire**

MEDIA RELEASE

2nd September 2021 – for immediate release

Save the Wye Campaign

Wildlife Charity asks Ministers to Cut the Cr*p from the River Wye

Radnorshire Wildlife Trust are urging people to let Welsh Government Ministers and Members of the Senedd know of their concerns about the River Wye. The Wye runs for 155 miles through some of the most spectacular scenery in Wales and is rightly awarded the highest environmental designation. But this isn't protecting it and the wildlife it supports is slowly dying.

This is due to algal blooms, caused by extremely high levels of phosphate pollution from farm manure. This smothers and kills river plants which oxygenate the river. This reduction in oxygen then causes the death of fishes and insects. Life in the river is quietly slipping away.

Many farmers have entered contracts with multinational corporations, for industrial scale production via Intensive Poultry Units (IPUs) of between 10 to 100,000 birds. These multinationals are extracting value (natural capital) from Wales at great cost to future generations and damaging Wales's desire to be seen as world leaders in sustainability. The situation is critical, and we recognise that Welsh Government has been addressing concerns and strongly support the introduction of new Water Pollution Regulations, but further urgent action is needed to deal with the management of existing manure.

Chief Executive, James Hitchcock said: As with climate change deniers over the past decades, proponents of the IPUs claim that they are not responsible for the problems in the Wye, relying on the inadequate monitoring of the river and the lack of enforcement by the regulator, Natural Resources Wales. "This lack of action to determine the impact of these IPU's on one of our most iconic rivers has led to the river slowly dying. Until the rise of the IPU mid Wales was largely pastoral and manure input onto the soil were very low. Now on the Wye catchment alone there is an estimated 40 million chickens being reared and all producing manure. It is (time) critical for the Welsh Government to address this issue. Along with Rachel Sharp, the Director of the Wildlife Trusts Wales, I have written to Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Rural Affairs and Julie James, Minister for Climate Change setting out the measures the Wildlife Trusts needed as a matter of urgency. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with them to discuss how we can work proactively with Welsh Government to bring back life to the River Wye. **Welsh Government have recognised that we are in a nature crisis and so we need action, and we need it now.**

We are urging people to help us protect this precious river by emailing Ministers and their local Member of the Senedd (MS's), demanding action.

Let's save the River Wye! have your voice heard:

<https://action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/86529/action/1>

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Notes to Editor:

Radnorshire Wildlife Trust is a registered charity, part of the federation of 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the UK to protect and restore nature, inspiring people to connect and take action for wildlife. We have over 1000 members and currently manage 18 nature reserves covering over 400Ha of land.

For further information please contact James Hitchcock on 07949 828589 or visit <https://www.rwtwales.org/blog-start-wye> to read RWT's blog on the state of the Wye and sign up for RWT's e-newsletter, donate or join online.

Links ** <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/news-and-events/news/nrw-issues-new-advice-tosafeguard-the-river-wye-special-area-of-conservation/?lang=en>

*** <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/22477/letter-to-defra-motion-from-counciljune-2021> **** <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/20/its-like-pea-soup-poultry-farmsturn-wye-into-wildlife-death-trap>

***** Friends of the Upper Wye (fouw.org.uk)

RWT wants to see the following as a matter of urgency:

- NRW's budget to be restored to 2013 levels as a minimum, followed up with future year on year increases, with specific sums ring-fenced annually for river pollution monitoring and mitigation work.
- NRW to urgently investigate and publish the exact cause or causes of the pollution and to take robust action to reverse excessive phosphate levels and protect the river catchment in future.
- NRW to make clear in its Annual Reports what it has done each year to combat river pollution in Radnorshire and what plans it has to improve water quality in the following year.
- Welsh Water to conduct an investigation into the condition of its mains sewage works within or upstream of Radnorshire, and to take urgent action to ensure that any pollution arising from these plants is reversed.
- NRW and Powys County Council to ensure that Manure Management Plans form a compulsory and central part of planning permissions for new or expanding farm enterprises in Radnorshire. Also, that these are properly designed with expert input, fully-approved and monitored for future compliance.
- The planned Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) for the whole of Wales to be fully implemented.
- For a well-funded catchment-based approach to be adopted for the Wye, through the Agricultural Act. This would allow statutory bodies, conservationists, farmers, landowners and community groups to work together to improve the standard of the river as it flows through their areas.
- For specific targets for the restoration of nature in Wales to be adopted – 30% of the land and 30% of the Sea to be actively managed for nature by 2030 – and this to be enshrined in the emerging Agriculture (Wales) Act.
- A Sustainable Farming Scheme for Wales that requires sustainable stocking levels and nutrient management planning, and provides a new Farm Assurance Scheme plus the provision of ecological advice. • There are also a number of ways in which our members and supporters can help us to drive this forward:

- Write to your Senedd member and County Councillor to outline your concerns.
- Contact Dr. Caroline Turner, Chief Executive, at Powys County Council and Cllr Hulwen Hulme, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, to request that Powys County Council declare an Ecological Emergency so that the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity is given equal weight to the climate crisis.
- Join the Citizen Science Project. <https://www.fouw.org.uk>