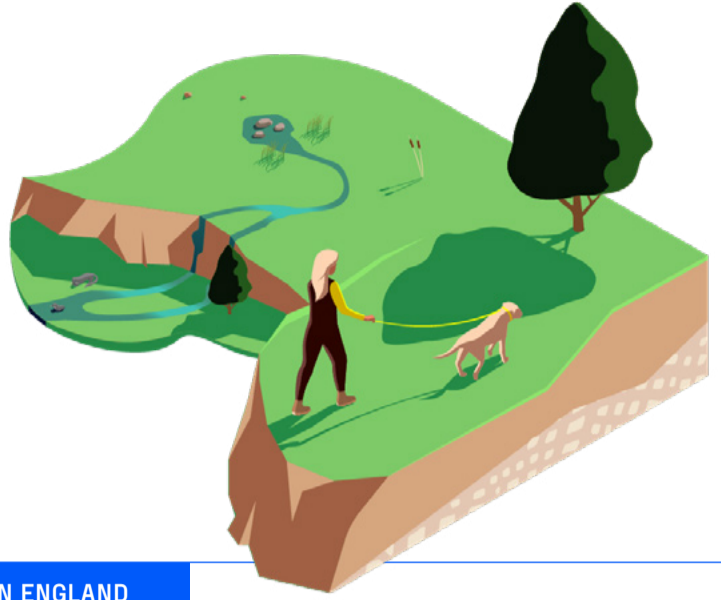


FACTSHEET

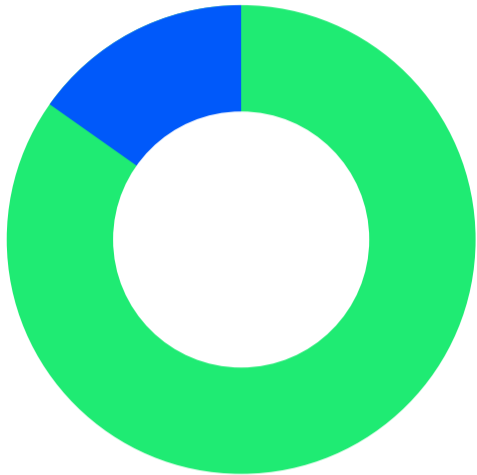
CUTTING THROUGH CONFUSION ON:

# CHALK STREAMS

Wide, shallow and crystal clear, chalk streams are rivers almost unique to England. They rise from springs, flow through chalk and their mineral-rich water is a haven for aquatic plants, insects and species including otters, kingfishers and water voles.



CHALK STREAMS IN ENGLAND

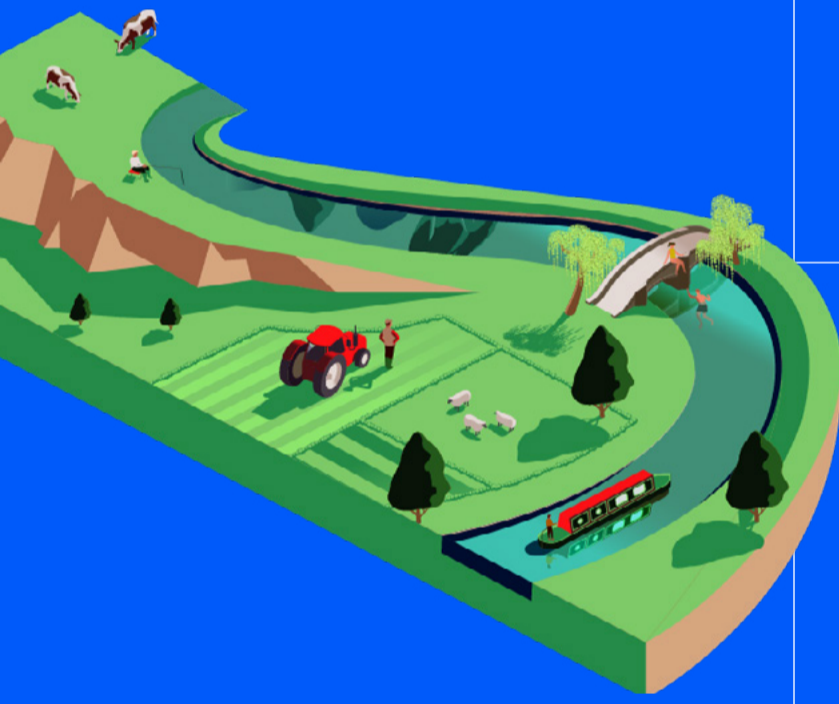


ONLY 200 CHALK STREAMS ARE KNOWN TO EXIST GLOBALLY  
85% OF THESE ARE IN ENGLAND (1)

BACKGROUND

## THE THREAT TO CHALK STREAMS

Drawing water from rivers and chalk streams – known as ‘abstraction’ – is needed to meet the increasing demand for water from the public, agriculture and businesses. However, if chalk stream levels drop too far or if they dry up, their unique ecosystems will disappear.



MISCONCEPTION

Water companies drain chalk streams of water.

REALITY

Significant efforts are being made by the water industry to reduce the volume of water abstracted from rivers, including chalk streams. Through the Water Industry National Environmental Programme (WINEP), companies are investing heavily in chalk streams, delivering a large number of activities including: river restoration and habitat improvement schemes, water treatment wetlands, sustainability reductions as well as investigations and investment into the impacts of combined sewer overflows to reduce pollution.

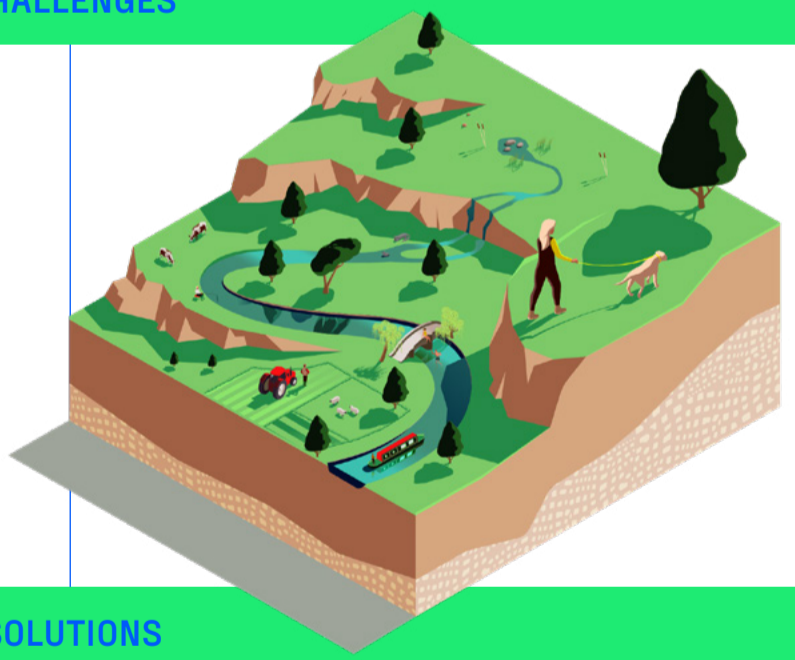


To help preserve chalk stream ecology, four water companies who have chalk streams in their regions – **Anglian Water, Thames Water, Affinity Water and Southern Water**, have pledged millions of pounds of investment to reduce the volume of water drawn from chalk streams. More details of this can be found at: [Water companies pledge to protect rare chalk streams | Water UK](#)

CHALLENGES

## LACK OF ALTERNATIVE SUPPLY

In many areas there’s an unavoidable need to draw water from rivers, including chalk streams. This is because they supply essential drinking water that can’t be sourced from elsewhere and halting abstraction would literally turn off the tap for everyone locally.



SOLUTIONS



CUTTING BACK

- Although we can’t always halt abstraction, we can reduce it. Water companies are taking actions today to achieve this. They include:
- Educating consumers to reduce water usage
  - Fixing and preventing leaks
  - Developing new sources of supply
  - Increasing storage through new reservoirs
  - Metering to help customers reduce consumption
  - Capping abstraction levels from chalk streams and from ground water aquifers which support them



INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS

The focus for reducing water usage tends to be on the general public. If the government were to incentivise businesses to also act, it would further reduce demand for abstraction and ultimately help to protect river levels.



TACKLING POLLUTION

Water and sewage companies have said they will stop sewage discharges into chalk streams from sewers. These are currently allowed to relieve pressure on the system when there is heavy rain.

(1) Source: The State of England’s Chalk Streams report, WWF, 2014