

# Chalk Streams

of Lincolnshire

## Introducing Lincolnshire's chalk streams

### WHAT ARE CHALK STREAMS?

Chalk streams are one of the most important wildlife habitats in Lincolnshire. They originate from springs from the chalk aquifer that forms the higher parts of the Lincolnshire Wolds and can flow over the chalk for a substantial distance. Springs occur either at the edge of the chalk where it meets the clay or where water rises through the chalk along structural weaknesses. Typical chalk streams are shallow and narrow with a gravel bed. The flow is stable and the clear mineral-rich water is relatively warm and ice-free in winter and cool and oxygen-rich in the summer, with an associated high diversity of plants and animals.



A chalk stream in good condition.



A chalk stream in poor condition.



### WHERE ARE THE CHALKS STREAMS?

Chalk streams are found throughout the Lincolnshire Wolds. The map shows the larger chalk streams, but there are also many smaller tributaries.



For further information and opportunities to improve Lincolnshire Chalk Streams contact:

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## WHY ARE CHALK STREAMS IMPORTANT?

Chalk streams are a priority habitat for conservation and enhancement in both the UK and the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plans. In Lincolnshire they are home to a number of important characteristic species such as lampreys, brown trout, grayling and otters, in addition to five nationally important and twelve locally or regionally important invertebrates. Over fifty chalk springs have been surveyed and rare assemblages of flat worms and a rare water-crowfoot species have been discovered. However, many of these species are threatened by changes to their chalk stream habitat.

## WHAT ARE THE THREATS?

- **Over Abstraction** of water from the chalk aquifer and directly from chalk streams for public water supply, industrial use and irrigation can contribute to low flows and lead to the streams drying out, changes in aquatic vegetation, a reduction in water quality and excessive siltation.
- **Structural changes** including the damming of streams to create lakes or simply to raise water levels locally have obstructed the movement of aquatic species. Land drainage and flood defence improvements have resulted in streams being straightened and deepened.
- **Pollution** from sewage works and agricultural run-off can lead to changes in plant and animal communities. Feeding at trout farms can cause additional nutrient enrichment.
- **Intensification or changes to catchment land use**, such as the conversion of grassland to arable and overgrazing, can result in increased nutrient run-off, siltation and destruction of stream-side habitats.
- **Spread of non-native species**, such as signal crayfish, Himalayan balsam and even rainbow trout, causes competition and can result in the loss of native species, destruction of habitat and the introduction of disease.

## THE LINCOLNSHIRE CHALK STREAMS PROJECT

The Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project is working to conserve and enhance this nationally important resource. It brings together a partnership of organisations, the Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service, English Nature, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Anglian Water and the Wild Trout Trust, to take action to ensure that the nature conservation, landscape, community and economic opportunities offered by Lincolnshire's Chalk Streams are fully realised.