



# Upper Ribble RiverBlitz

## Overview

On Saturday 1st June we held a fantastic RiverBlitz event in the Upper Ribble catchment, collecting water chemistry, habitat quality and biological community data across 11 freshwater sites. With the help from over 25 wonderful volunteers, we collated a comprehensive picture of water quality across the catchment, the results of which will inform focus for farm advice work, habitat improvements and further monitoring.

## Water Quality (Biological)

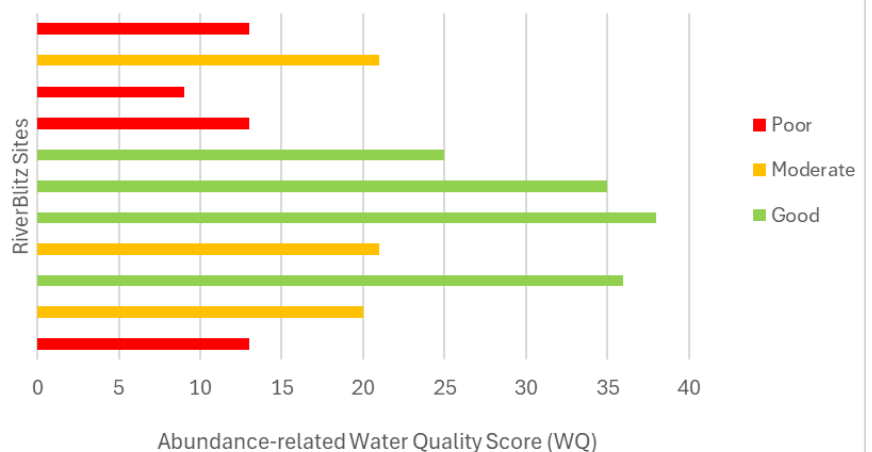
Our volunteers performed 3-minute kick samples at each site and identified all invertebrates to an Extended Riverfly standard. This gives a good indication of water quality (WQ). From the graph (right), we can see the majority of sites in the Upper Ribble catchment scored either 'Good' ( $WQ \geq 25$ ) or 'Poor' ( $WQ \leq 15$ ) water quality. RiverBlitz results can prompt investigative monitoring to identify issues at sites with poor scores.

Across the sites, our most abundant macroinvertebrate group was **olive's (mayflies)**, our rarest group were **hood case-maker's (cased caddisfly)**. And the highest scoring group found were **stoneflies**.

## Water Quality (Chemistry)

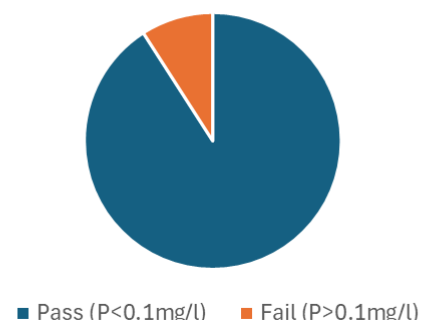
As well as invertebrates, we tested water for reactive phosphorus levels using Hanna Pocket Phosphate Checkers, which helps the RRT team to pinpoint potential sources of phosphate pollution, which can cause issues for river health. Our RiverBlitz data showed 90% of sites on the day 'passed', as their phosphate levels were under the threshold that the Water Framework Directive deems to be unacceptable.

Water Quality Score Based on Abundance of Extended Riverfly Groups



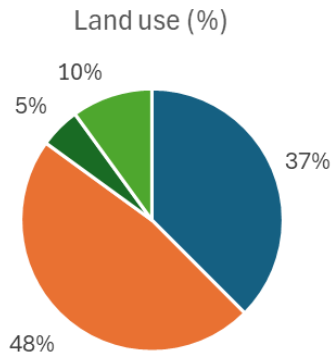
**Note: Scoring grades are arbitrary, and derived from comparison of scores gained on the day. Note also that the site numbers have purposefully not been revealed.**

Reactive Phosphorus Concentrations (mg/l) using Hanna Pocket Checker

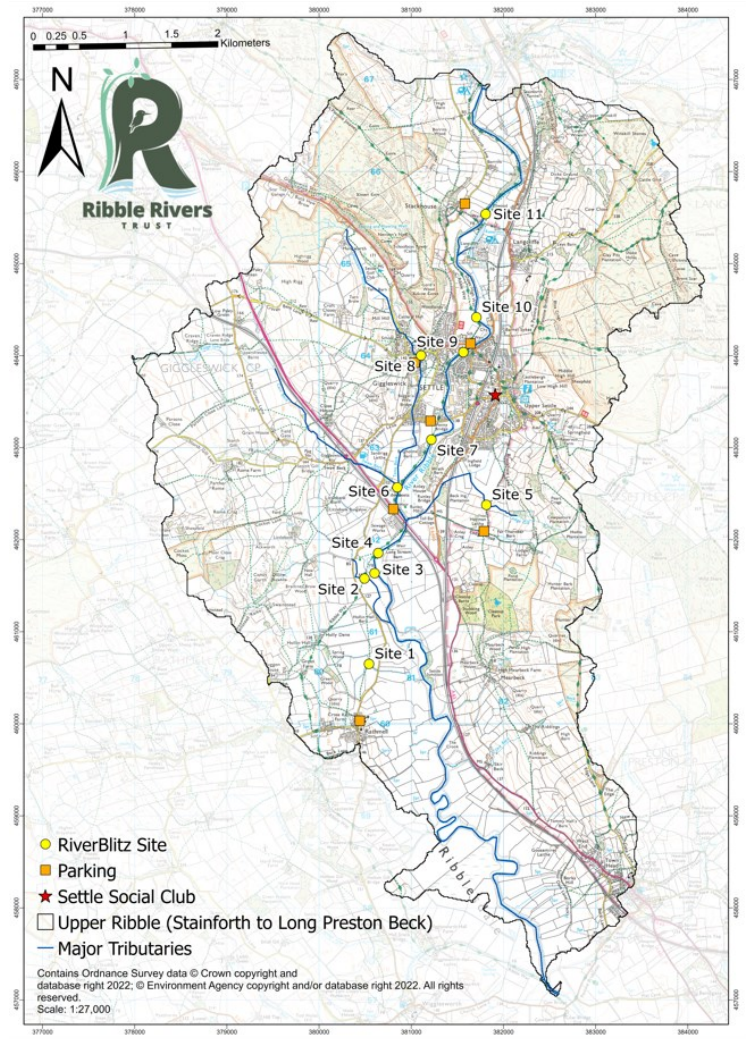


## Habitat Quality

The data collected relating to habitat features across the catchment confirmed high proportions of agriculture, with **grazed grassland** to be the **predominant land use (48%)**, followed by ungrazed grassland (37%), urban (10%) and woodland (5%). Some issues with bank structure were highlighted with **45% of sites having earth cliffs**, 18% of sites having 'poached' banks, and at 54% of sites livestock were able to access the river. Additionally, **55% of sites noted tree presence on at least one bankside**. Positively, **Himalayan balsam was absent from all sites**.



■ Ungrazed Grassland ■ Grazing grassland ■ Woodland ■ Urban



## What's next?

RiverBlitzes have proven an effective method to capture a wide-scale snapshot of catchment health, with sites being strategically located to collect data from multiple tributaries. All this in a very short period of time thanks to our amazing volunteers! We have been refining the RiverBlitz methodology after each event, with input from volunteer feedback, and aim to continue RiverBlitz events throughout the year. Eventually, building up a catchment-wide dataset for the Ribble catchment as a whole, identifying priority areas for our improvement works.

If you would like to get involved in more events, visit [ribbletrust.org.uk](http://ribbletrust.org.uk) or follow us on our social channels.



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