

# Westcountry Rivers Trust report to April 2026 Taw-Torridge Estuary Forum

The Taw Torridge River Champions group has now formed, bringing together local volunteers to carry out our Citizen Science Investigations monitoring collaboratively. Working as a group is improving consistency, confidence and shared understanding in data collection, while also creating a physical space for peer learning. The group integrates a broad range of community members, including parish councillors, helping to strengthen links between local knowledge and decision-making. Alongside monitoring, the group provides clear social value — supporting nature connectedness, wellbeing, and a shared sense of stewardship for the river.

WRT have submitted a bid to Species Recovery Programme for continued research and monitoring in establishing the current population and spatial distribution of both shad species in the Taw Torridge. If successful, the project will be a large partnership with Bournemouth, Exeter and Swansea University linking up existing fish tagging and tracking systems in the Bristol Channel.

**Teign and Taw Fisheries Management - Mole Maize Project update:** This project is working to improve maize growing practices and identify alternative crops for maize grown as feed stock for the Anaerobic Digester plant at South Molton to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation of the river. We are working with Engie UK (operators of the AD plant) and North Devon Biosphere Reserve as project partners to deliver this work. Maize growing practices to be trialled include strip tilling, under sowing with grass and drilling into a living mulch. Early autumn harvested miscanthus has been identified as a potentially viable alternative crop and we are planning to do a 2-acre trial on a long-established crop present in the Taw to explore this. A monthly water quality run on the River Mole is ongoing.

WRT undertook electric fishing across the Taw in summer 2025, the report is available [here](#).

**Mole river channel walk over & potential habitat improvement work:** This spring, WRT will be undertaking a walkover and assessment of approximately 1.5 mile section of the River Mole, with a view to producing a report of recommendations and to hopefully deliver some work to maintain and improve the river channel.

Mark Haworth-Booth