

Eden Catchment

Water Quality Update – Spring 2024

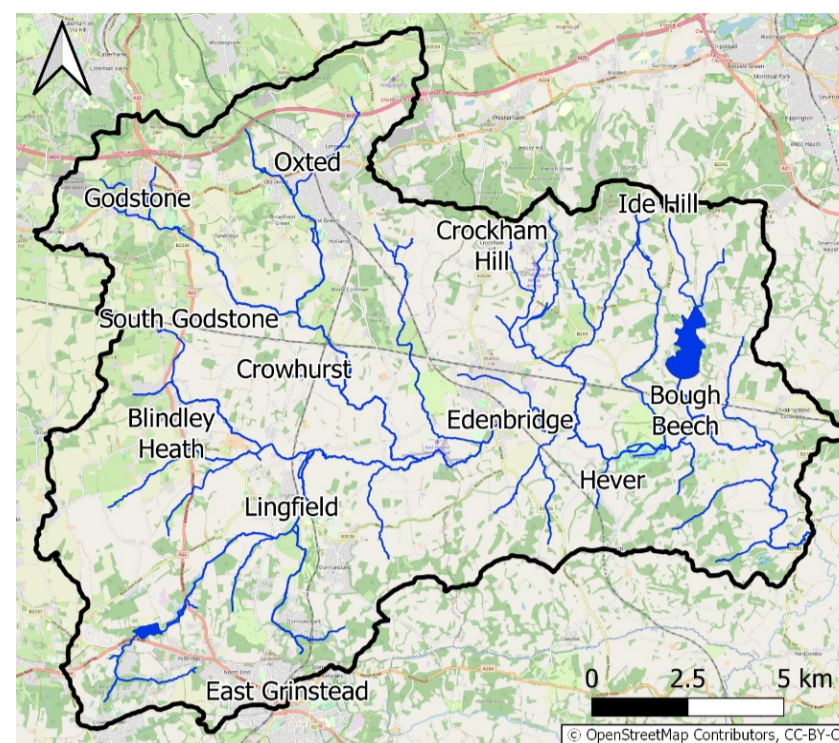


Hello from SES Water

At SES Water we are working in the catchment to help protect drinking water quality at source. Drinking water in England is tightly regulated and pollution from various sources, including agricultural pesticides and fertilisers, can prove a significant challenge for water companies. Preventing contamination at source rather than relying on 'end of pipe' solutions, such as additional energy intensive treatment processes, offers a more sustainable and cost-effective way of tackling water quality issues and can have many wider benefits for farmers, the environment and local communities too.

This biannual newsletter is designed to provide an update on the latest water quality data in the Eden catchment and provide you with the latest news from the SES Water Catchment Team.

Visit our [SES catchment management](https://www.seswater.co.uk/catchment-management) webpage or email catchment@seswater.co.uk for more information.



The Eden catchment - more information on the catchment can be found [here](#)

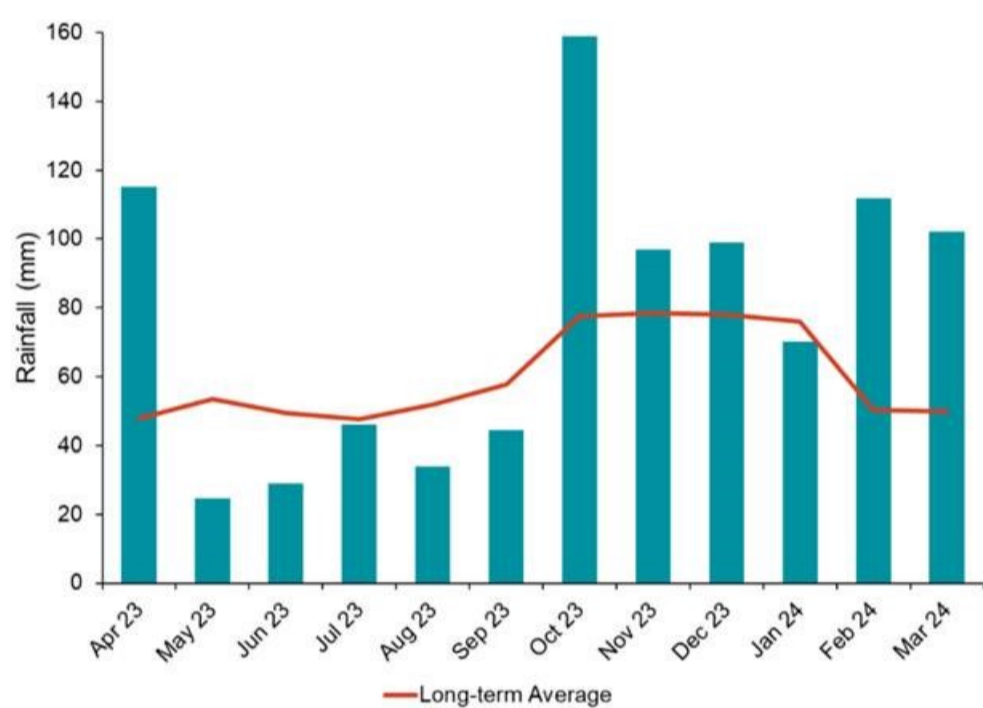
Water Quality

SES Water is permitted to fill Bough Beech Reservoir with water from the River Eden between September and May (flow dependent). This period coincides with winter crop pesticide applications, as well as higher rainfall rates, increasing the risk of pesticide runoff into the river which in turn may be abstracted into the reservoir. For this reason, SES Water monitor river water quality closely over this period – data on the pesticides that have posed a challenge this winter can be found [here](#).

Runoff risk this winter has been heightened due to the particularly wet weather, with October, February and March seeing close to double the long-term average rainfall.

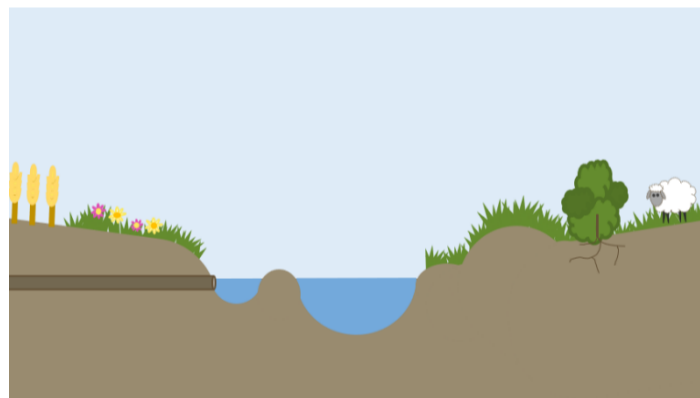
Under the Water Industry National Environment Programme, as set out by the Environment Agency, the Catchment Team are currently focused on reducing the impact of pesticides (specifically propyzamide, mecoprop(-p), carbetamide and metaldehyde) and the nutrient phosphate on water quality in the Eden.

Carbetamide and metaldehyde bans brought in from 2022 mean that these actives no longer pose a water quality challenge. Mecoprop is generally used outside of our abstraction window and therefore is also not generally considered a high risk to drinking water quality. We do however see significant propyzamide detections most autumn/winter seasons. As a key pesticide for growers of oilseed rape, we want to work with farmers to protect the use of this pesticide showing that, by managing and applying propyzamide responsibly, the impact on water quality can be managed.



Monthly rainfall 2023-24 at Bough Beech with long term average rainfall shown for reference

Support for 'water friendly' farming



Buffer strip pilot

We are looking for farms to join our pilot study trialling interception ditches/3D buffer strips – the scheme would be fully funded with maintenance costs covered for up to 5 years. Please contact catchment@seswater.co.uk to find out more.



Free static tanks

SES Water is looking to rehome a large number of our static water tanks. The stackable tanks come with a sight glass and can each hold up to 1800 L. They can also be linked in series. If your farm could benefit from one or more of these free tanks, please [get in touch](#).



Catchment Sensitive Farming

Working together for a healthy environment

Advice and support

New Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) actions are due to be launched in summer 2024 – our partners at Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) can offer free impartial advice on how this funding could be applied on your farm. You can contact your local CSF advisor at csf.southeasthames@naturalengland.org.uk.

For more information of on other 'water friendly' initiatives we are currently funding please click [here](#).

In other news...

Soil health event

In November, the SES Water Catchment Team ran a workshop for local farmers to discuss soil health and the range of positive impacts healthy soil can bring for farming, the environment and us as a water company. Experts from Agrovista led the workshop with CSF providing insight into the relevant funding options available through SFI. We received some great feedback from farmers who enjoyed the day and said they were going to apply what they learnt about soil health on their own farms.

Lower Eden Farm Cluster

We are pleased to announce that Sara Brouillette has recently started in her role as the Farmer Cluster Officer for the Lower Eden Farm Cluster. The role is funded for an initial 18 months by SES Water, the Swire Trust (via South East Rivers Trust) and Farming in Protected Landscapes (via Bore Place) and will support the development of the cluster. The Cluster aims to be a forum to facilitate joined-up dialogue and action between farmers and other key partners, enabling farmers to navigate potential support available and access collective funding to help achieve shared aims across the catchment. Please contact sara.brouillette@southeastriverstrust.org if you are interested in getting involved.

Cowpie Country Show

Visit our SES Water stand at Cowpie Country Show in Lingfield on 12 May. You can find out more about the work SES Water is doing in the catchment, support and funding we offer for 'water friendly' farming and you can find out if we may be able to save you money on your water bills.



Selection of photos from our November soil health event

Thank you for your interest in helping protect water quality in the Eden catchment. If you have any questions, feedback or ideas on how we might be able to work together to protect water quality, we'd love to hear from you.



catchment@seswater.co.uk