

Fact File

RIVER BLACKWATER



GUARDIANS OF THE WATER ENVIRONMENT



NRA

Thames Region

Fact File – RIVER BLACKWATER

FACTS IN BRIEF

- The Blackwater rises to the south of Aldershot and flows in a northerly direction to its confluence with the Loddon at Swallowfield.
- The Blackwater catchment covers an area of 356 sq.km.
- The upper part of the Blackwater valley is highly urbanised and includes Aldershot, Home of the British Army, and Farnborough, home to the Royal Aircraft Establishment.
- The average rainfall in the Blackwater catchment is 710 mm.
- The fall in the river from its source to its confluence with the Loddon is 82m.
- From its source to its confluence with the Loddon it is approximately 37 km.

THE NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY

Established on 1st September 1989, the NRA is an independent public body charged with safeguarding and improving the natural water environment. It is responsible for flood defence, regulating the quality of rivers and groundwaters, balancing the needs of various water users, protecting and improving fish stocks and promoting water based recreation of all kinds. The NRA is committed to improving wildlife habitats and conserving the natural environment in all it undertakes.

TRIBUTARIES

The Cove Brook rises on Laffin's Plain in Farnborough, and joins the Blackwater at Frimley. The Whitewater rises at Greywell and meets the Blackwater at Risely. The Hart has its source at Crondall, and is joined by the Fleet Brook at Hartley Wintney before its confluence with the Whitewater at Bramshill. The Basingstoke Canal crosses the southern part of the Blackwater catchment. It is fed with water from the Whitewater at Greywell.

PLANNING LIAISON

The NRA works with local planning authorities to protect the Blackwater catchment from undesirable development.

WATER QUALITY

The Blackwater drains a heavily urbanised area in which there has been a rapid growth in the last 30 years. The quality of the water is dominated by treated sewage effluent from a series of sewage works between Aldershot and Sandhurst. The Fleet Brook is similarly dominated by treated effluent from Fleet Sewage works. The lower part of the Blackwater is rural as are the catchments of the Whitewater and Hart. The Whitewater is a high quality river. There are 24 regular quality monitoring points within the Blackwater catchment.



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WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES

From	To	Length KM	Objectives
BLACKWATER			
Upper Hale	Aldershot	1.2	E*
Aldershot	Aldershot STW	4.5	3 – Poor
Aldershot STW	Cove Brook	11.7	3 – Poor
Cove Brook	Eversley	12.3	2B – Fair
Eversley	Loddon	7.1	2A – Fair
COVE BROOK			
Source	Hawley Lake Stream	3.8	2B – Fair
Hawley Lake Stream	Blackwater	2.7	2B – Fair
HARTLEY WINTNEY			
Source	Hart	15.6	1A – Good
Hart	Blackwater	3.5	1B – Good
HART			
Crondall	Elvetham Park	9.7	2B – Fair
Elvetham Park	Fleet Brook	4.3	2A – Fair
Fleet Brook	Hartley Wintney STW	2.4	2A – Fair
Hartley Wintney STW	Whitewater	5.1	2A – Fair
FLEET BROOK			
Church Crookham	Hart	8.4	2B – Fair
MINLEY BROOK			
Source	Fleet Brook	3.6	2B – Fair

* E – Ephemeral: When flowing it should comply with the objective of the downstream reach.

BIOLOGY

The rivers of the Blackwater catchment are regularly sampled for aquatic invertebrates by the biologists of the NRA. The fauna of the Blackwater itself reflects its use as an effluent carrier for treated sewage. Only animals tolerant of organic pollution are present. Many of the minor urban tributaries also contain only pollution tolerant invertebrates because they are subject to regular pollution incidents.

The rivers Hart and Whitewater have higher water quality, fewer pollution incidents, and are biologically more diverse. As many as 30 types of invertebrate can be present in a simple sample. These may include pollution sensitive animals such as the mayfly (*Ephemerella ignita*).

DISCHARGES

The following are the major discharges into the Blackwater and its tributaries. The figures given are the maximum amount permitted to be discharged.

Discharge	Cubic Metres per Day	Type of Effluent
BLACKWATER		
Aldershot STW	29,700	Sewage Effluent
Aldershot Military STW	16,400	Sewage Effluent
Ash Vale STW	16,500	Sewage Effluent
Camberley STW	88,800	Sewage Effluent
Sandhurst STW	39,000	Sewage Effluent
HART		
Hartley Wintney STW	20,500	Sewage Effluent
FLEET BROOK		
Church Crookham Military STW	1,560	Sewage Effluent
Fleet STW	23,700	Sewage Effluent

There are also a number of small sewage treatment works in the rural parts of the catchment. All discharges are regularly monitored by NRA Environmental Quality staff.

