

The background of the page features a large, stylized yellow fish shape. The fish is composed of several overlapping, rounded rectangular sections in a vibrant yellow color, set against a white background. The fish's head is at the top left, and its body extends towards the bottom right.

Yellow Fish

guidance manual

Pollution Prevention Guidance

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Introduction: Only rain down the drain!

Yellow Fish is a simple pollution prevention tool with the clear message: 'Only rain down the drain!' You can help to protect your rivers by stopping pollution incidents.

Yellow Fish is a scheme that builds on an international approach to protecting the environment. It involves marking drains with a Yellow Fish symbol and communicating the message 'Only Rain Down The Drain' to remind people that anything anyone puts down the drain may go directly to the nearest stream, river, lake, canal, beach or bathing water, causing pollution and killing wildlife.

The scheme raises awareness of water pollution issues, promotes positive engagement with local communities and businesses and provides opportunities to gain media interest. It also demonstrates your dedication to protecting your local environment.

What are the issues?

Road and surface water drains are designed to carry only rainwater, usually straight to the nearest watercourse. Allowing anything other than rainwater down these drains is like pouring it directly into our rivers, streams and other watercourses. This could be pollution from trading and industrial estates, manufacturing, industrial and waste premises, construction sites and housing developments. But it can also be things homeowners may not think can cause pollution - for example water from washing your car or wheelie bin, waste paint and concrete washings. The effects of the pollution can be acute (short term impact) or chronic (long term impact) and can range from the creation of an eyesore to the killing of fish and wildlife.

Different pollutants will affect watercourses in different ways.

Oils

Oils and related substances like cooking oils and fats can spread out across the surface of a watercourse. This is because they don't mix with water. In small amounts oil forms a thin film which can cause a rainbow effect called iridescence. Larger amounts can create a matt effect on the water surface and pools of oil that may weather and solidify. The effects can range from the creation of an eyesore to the killing of fish and wildlife and could affect pets if they go into the water.

Chemicals and sewage

Substances such as chemicals, wash waters and misconnection wastes can appear as 'grey water', which will spread through a whole watercourse. Grey water can also cause sewage fungus to grow at the pipes where drains enter a watercourse and in the watercourse coating plants and stones. These substances can cause low oxygen in the water and raised ammonia levels. This can cause living things to 'suffocate' and can also be directly toxic to animals, fish and plants.

Report pollution incidents on the Incident Hotline:

0800 80 70 60

The line is free of charge and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To report pollution in Wales call:

0300 065 3000

Press 1 (following selecting 1 for Welsh language, 2 for English). This is a 24-hour service to report pollution.

Residential area guidance

In residential areas local community groups can help to prevent pollution to their local rivers and streams by joining the Yellow Fish scheme.

There are two core parts to Yellow Fish:

- to raise awareness about sources of water pollution and how to prevent incidents taking place in your area
- to mark drains connected to the river with the Yellow Fish symbol to reinforce the pollution prevention message

The message 'Only rain down the drain!' can be delivered through painting yellow fish by drains that lead directly to rivers or fixing stickers to the kerbs by the drains.

Before you start, it's important that you have support or as a minimum permission from the landlord or landowner of the drains you wish to paint or fix a sticker to in the pavement or carriage way. You will need to contact the Highways Department of the Local Authority if you wish to mark road gullies.

Yellow Fish also provides an opportunity to engage with local schools and communities and is ideal as part of an environmental improvement project. It's useful to share an information leaflet informing residents about what the scheme aims to achieve when you mark the drains with Yellow Fish symbols.

For health and safety reasons, we recommend that you stay on the pavement and only mark kerbstones and follow the enclosed risk assessment. It's often not practical to put a yellow fish marker next to every drain along a road in residential areas so the yellow fish stickers or painted symbols need to represent a reminder to those using the roads that only rain should go down the surface water drains. When new occupants move in, you can provide the Yellow Fish leaflet to explain the drain markings. You could use this approach to

engage with the local community and schools to demonstrate your commitment to improving local environments.

If you're organising a Yellow Fish project in your local community you must carry out your own risk assessment. An example of a typical risk assessment is shown on page 6.

Commercial and Industrial areas guidance

Pollution from trading and industrial estates; manufacturing, industrial and waste premises; construction sites and housing developments can seriously affect water quality.

Preventing pollution is a responsibility for landowners, landlords and tenants. Yellow Fish can help prevent many types of pollution incidents from occurring through raising awareness and encouraging good practice.

The messages for commercial and industrial parks and areas are the same as for residential areas; 'Only rain down the drain!' You will need the landowners' permission to fix stickers or paint the drain covers or yellow fish symbols. The scheme has greater effect if all the companies in a business park take part in the scheme.

Causing or knowingly permitting pollution to enter a river or not following pollution prevention legislation is an offence and further steps may be taken.

How to spread the message -Yellow Fish

The material you use to mark your Yellow Fish will depend on your needs and the age of the people marking the fish. What you use will mean you need to consider if people need personal protective equipment.

Temporary symbols can be made using chalk or non-toxic poster paint, for example if children are adding the symbols – these can be made permanent at a later time. More permanent symbols can be made using permanent acrylic paint, applied with a brush or sponge, permanent line marking spray paint or by affixing a Yellow Fish stickers. For health and safety reasons, we recommend that you only mark kerbstones.



Yellow Fish Sticker

You can raise awareness in a number of ways:

- newsletters
- toolbox talks
- posters
- training sessions

Make sure everyone in your local area knows what the Yellow Fish mean, they all have their part to play to prevent pollution. If you're working with the local

community you may want to get a local newspaper or local radio or television station involved.

General pollution prevention guidance

Yellow Fish can help prevent many types of pollution incidents from occurring through raising awareness and good practice.

General: Assume that your activities may cause pollution unless you can demonstrate otherwise and follow the Yellow Fish message – Only rain down the drain!

Householders: dispose of used oil, paint and other substances via your Local Authorities waste collection service or recycling centre. Don't pour things down the surface water drains.

Site drainage: Produce a complete drainage plan for your premises identifying foul and surface water drains and manholes. Drains can also be marked by type (foul = red, surface = blue or a red 'C' for combined drainage systems) and with the direction of flow in addition to using the Yellow Fish symbol. These measures can be invaluable if there's an incident on your site.

Storing materials: Poor storage of oil, chemicals or raw materials (both solid and liquid) causes many pollution incidents. Store materials in appropriate and sealable containers, in good condition, away from drains, watercourses or impermeable ground and protect from collision. Provide secondary containment for storage tanks, IBCs and bowers (to hold 110% of maximum capacity) and for drums and smaller containers (bundled pallets, drip trays, kerb bunded areas or sealable containers). This may be a legal requirement for your oil storage. Cover outside storage areas to prevent rainwater entering the secondary containment.

Spills: Spills cause pollution by entering drains directly or being flushed down by surface run off from rain. Prevent spills by storing and handling materials safely and clean up spills immediately. Have a spill kit on site, with materials that can deal with what you store, so that if you have a spill you have equipment to stop it spreading into nearby drains.

Waste storage: Store waste in appropriate sealable containers away from drains, watercourses and impermeable ground.

Trade effluent: Don't allow effluent to enter any drains without appropriate consent. Use oil interceptors to prevent oil contaminated water and suspended solids leaving your premises. Don't allow wash waters to pass through oil interceptors as detergents can stop them working.

Yellow Fish facts

- Most road drains and surface drains are designed only to take rain water. Pouring pollutants down these drains is like pouring them straight into the river.
- One litre of oil can pollute one million litres of drinking water.
- The oil from one car engine can pollute an area the size of two football pitches.
- Oils don't mix with water and can spread out across water in a layer one molecule thick.
- Oil is toxic to aquatic life and prevents oxygen being absorbed on the surface.
- Cooking oils and fats shouldn't be disposed of down drains even when mixed with detergents.
- Cooking oils and fats can be used to produce biodiesel or used as a biofuel.
- Cooking oils and fats may be disposed of at dedicated collection points or could be collected by local schemes for recycling.
- Run off from industrial/trade sites can contain highly polluting substances that cause environmental damage.
- Sewage, grey water and cooking oils and fats can cause oxygen levels to decrease due to high Biochemical (Biological) Oxygen Demand (BOD).
- Ammonia contained in sewage is directly toxic to fish and aquatic life.
- Phosphate in sewage and grey water can cause increased plant growth and eutrophication.
- The high nutrient levels in sewage and grey water can cause 'sewage fungus' to grow on the bottom on rivers and brooks.
- Pollution entering rivers inland can cause pollution on beaches and in bathing waters.
- Soils and sands entering drains can cause sediment pollutions in rivers, affecting fish spawning areas.
- Misconnected premises can lead to river banks being covered with used toilet tissue and sanitary products.
- Yellow Fish can help you to make improvements to your local watercourse and environment and prevent them deteriorating.

Example Risk Assessment for Yellow Fish Campaign

Activity	Hazard	Risk Rating	What/who's at risk	Control measure	Training	Emergency	Remaining risk	Frequency of control/ review
Taking volunteers out of school	Illness/non-attendance	Medium	Activity and volunteers.	Central contact telephone number prior to activity.	n/a	Abandon activity	None	Each session
Taking volunteers out of school	Poor volunteer behavior.	Low-medium	Activity and volunteers.	Return offender to school.	Rules of conduct and sanctions if breached.	Phone school	None	Each session
Working near roads	Vehicle collision	Medium high	Volunteers	High viz clothing and stay on pavement	Inform volunteers not to step into road. Ensure you are easily visible to road users.	999 and first aid	None	At all times
Road crossing	Vehicle collision	Medium - high	Volunteers	High viz clothing and cross road with adult.	Rules of conduct and sanctions if breached.	999 and first aid	None	At all times
Delivering flyers	Trip/fall/dogs, other injury etc.	Medium - high	Volunteers	Adult supervision.	Rules of conduct and sanctions if breached.	999 and first aid	None	At all times
Painting	Over-spray onto road.	Low	Highway, street furniture.	Use spray box and dust-sheet.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time.	Wipe up	None	During spraying
Painting	Over-spray onto cars. Setting off alarms.	Low	Cars, criminal damage, Insurance claims.	Use spray box and dust-sheet. Don't spray where doubtful. Don't touch cars.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time. Assess actual risk.	Wipe off	None	During spraying

Activity	Hazard	Risk Rating	What/who's at risk	Control measure	Training	Emergency	Remaining risk	Frequency of control/review
Painting	Over-spray onto members of the public	Low	Public	Use spray box at all times. Wait until person has passed spray area.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time.	Swap name and address, compensation.	None	During spraying
Painting	Over spray onto clothes, hands shoes.	Medium	Volunteers	Wear old clothes.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time.	Change gloves, wipe off.	None	During spraying
Painting	Paint inhaled, ingested or in eyes.	Medium	Volunteers	Goggles and mask when spraying.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time.	Assess and take to hospital if severe.	Abandon activity.	During spraying
Painting	Public tread in wet paint and tread into school /house/business.	Medium	Shoe and property damage	Wet paint labels, put paper to cover fish.	Adult to demonstrate technique first time.	Swap name and address, compensation.	None	After spraying, until paint dry.
Painting	Inclement weather	High	Activity and volunteers.	Stop spraying and return to school or vehicle.	Explain procedure before-hand.	Assess and abandon session if necessary.	Slipping	At all times

Glossary

Ammonia – a toxic compound that dissolves in water to form the ammonium ion; it's an animal/human waste product and used in fertilisers.

Bathing water – parts of the sea or inland waters that have been designated as waters for people to swim in.

Biodiesel – a type of biofuel made from used cooking oils that are treated with chemicals to remove glycerol; normally used in vehicles.

Biofuel – a fuel that is made from virgin plant material or recycled from waste plant material.

Biochemical Oxygen Demand – the amount of oxygen required by aerobic microbes to break down the organic material in a sample of water. The breakdown of organic material removes oxygen from the water.

Bowser – a mobile tank often used to transport water or oil.

Combined drainage system – a combined foul and surface water sewer. Designed to transport toilet waste, waste effluent and rain water to sewage treatment works.

Effluent – treated or untreated waste water, such as foul sewage or grey water. Also covers waste water from industrial processes.

Eutrophication – the process responding to excessive levels of nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphates from fertilisers or sewage. This is most often observed as algal blooms, an uncontrolled increase in the growth of bacteria or algae, in warm weather.

Foul drain – drains and pipes designed to transport toilet waste and waste effluent to sewage treatment works.

Grey water – waste water from sources such as washing machines, sinks and dishwashers.

IBC – intermediate bulk container made of plastic with a metal cage that holds approximately 1000 litres.

Impermeable – does not allow substances, such as water, to pass through.

Iridescence – rainbow effect caused by thin layers of oil on water.

Misconnection – a sewer connection that results in wrong disposal taking place e.g. a toilet to surface water sewer.

Oil interceptor – usually a series of tanks designed to remove oil from water by slowing the flow rate and allowing the oil to separate and float on top of the water.

Personal protective equipment – equipment designed to prevent injury.

Phosphate – a chemical required for plant growth often found in fertilisers and sewage.

Pollutant – a contaminating substance or object that causes pollution.

Pollution – the introduction of pollutants into the natural environment that have a negative impact.

Sewage – contaminated toilet water containing human waste.

Sewage fungus – bacteria that grow in response to increased nutrient levels from sources such as sewage, often forming 'hairy' mats on the bottom of watercourses.

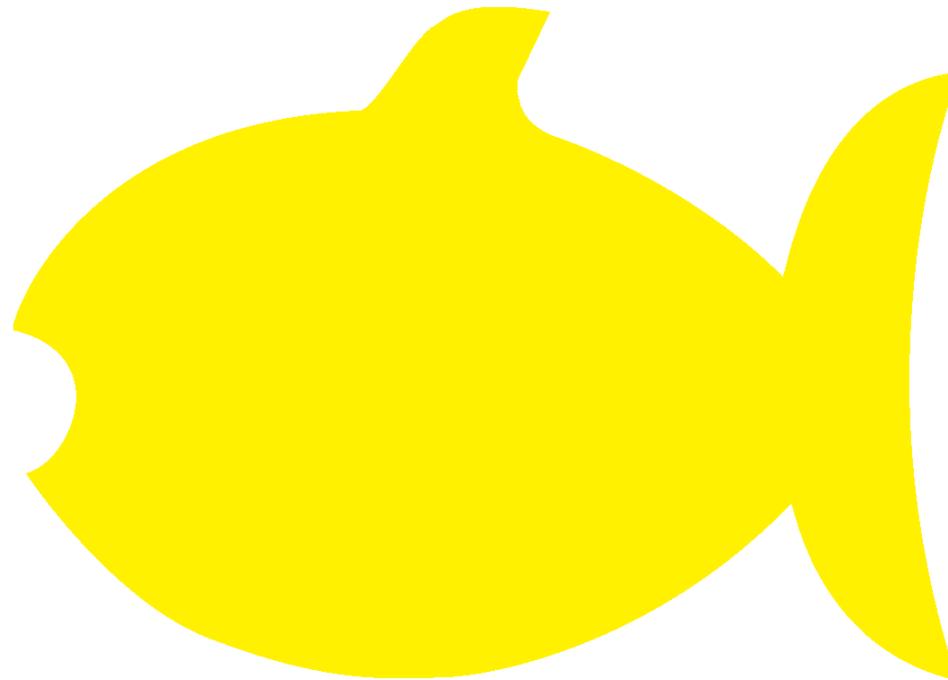
Sewage treatment works – a place that removes physical, chemical and biological contaminants from water before returning it to a river.

Surface water drain – drains and pipes designed to transport water from rainfall to watercourses.

Watercourse – any flowing body of water, such as a brook, river, pond or lake. It also covers canals and even dry ditches that carry rain water to a flowing body of water.

Yellow Fish painting template

1. Print out the template on A4 paper to make sure it's the correct size.
2. Carefully cut out the yellow fish.
3. The template can then be used or transferred to another material (eg card, cardboard, lino, plastic).
4. Create a box around the template to prevent paint drift if using spray paint.



Contact details

Please contact Yellow Fish by email:

yellow.fish@environment-agency.gov.uk

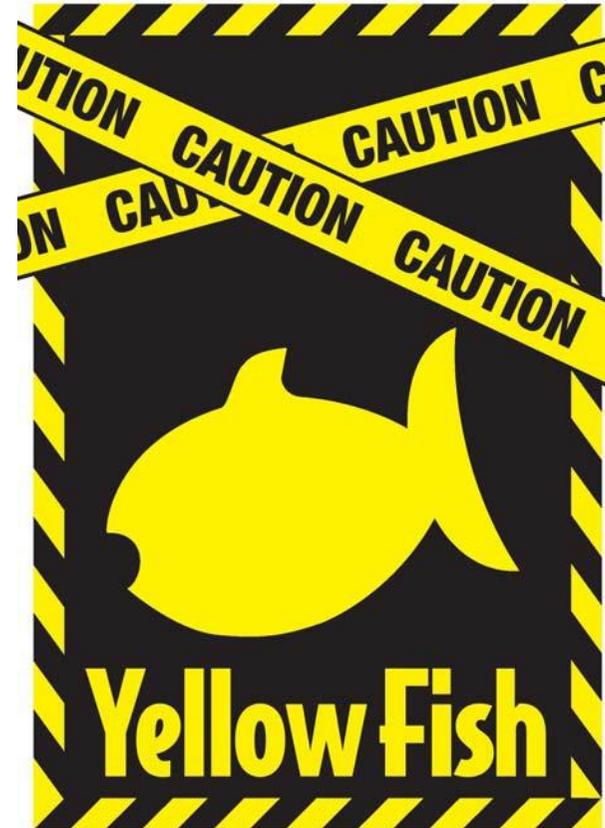
For more information visit:

www.oilcare.org.uk

We want to recognise your support and add your project to our Yellow Fish map showing the project location, who carried out the project and when it was you did it.

Please complete a feedback form available from the Oil Care website for your yellow fish project and send it to the email address above.

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