Adur River Recovery

River users survey: Summer 2023

ADC ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

Horsham District Council

KNEPP WILDLAND FOUNDATION

Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust

The Wildlife Trusts Sussex Wildlife Trust

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Environment Agency

NATURAL ENGLAND

Landscape Recovery

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Executive Summary

Gathering information from Adur River users

Between July and September 2023, a survey canvassed the views of local people from the Adur catchment. The survey sought to understand how people access the river, what activities they undertake, what they value about it, and their perception of its health and condition**. 591 responses** were achieved from across the catchment. Responses highlight users' love of the river, what they get from it, and their wealth of knowledge about it.

The survey's findings will contribute to River Adur recovery efforts, informing public engagement and enhancing our understanding of its users for future knowledge sharing. A programme of volunteering opportunities and events will be rolled out across 2024. Visit our website to find out more.

What we learned

- Survey respondents are regular visitors to the Adur with 63% of people visiting every week or more. 64% have been visiting for over a decade.
- 72% of respondents walk to the Adur. Nearly 70% access it from the Shoreham Estuary. 74% find it easy to access the river and surrounding area.
- Users undertake a variety of activities whilst at the river. The most popular are walking (79%), watching wildlife (55%) and cycling (41%).
- 92% of respondents like being in nature and watching wildlife there. 85% think its good for their mental health and 82% for their physical health.
- Respondents had varying views about its condition. 26% think the Adur is in good or very good condition, 25% think its condition is poor or very poor and 40% think its moderate or average.
- Reasons cited for why the river might be in good health include its abundant wildlife, its cleanliness and ability to manage itself. Factors that contributed to a poor condition included water quality issues, disturbance of wildlife, silting and man-made river structures obstructing its flow.
- Respondents have seen many changes in the time they'd been visiting. More people was noted by 76% of respondents, more recreational use by 75% and more dogs by 75%. Meanwhile 44% had noticed a decrease in water quality and 34% had seen a decrease in wildlife.
- A raft of improvements were suggested including removal of flood defenses, consistent water quality monitoring, habitat restoration and signage.
- Over 400 respondents provided their thoughts on what a thriving Adur might look like in the future.
- Almost all (99.8%) of respondents would take at least one action to ensure a healthier river, from changes at home to volunteering.
- Finally, 69% said they'd be happy to take part in future surveys and 31% are interested in becoming an Adur River ambassador.

Introduction

Adur River Recovery is a land manager-led project to revitalise and restore the River Adur in West Sussex.

The project aims to improve the health of the river by creating and enhancing wetlands and restoring habitats. Benefits include improved water quality, reduced impact of flooding and increasing the river's resilience to climate change.

Working together

The initiative is one of a select few Landscape Recovery projects in the country. It brings together the project's partners including Knepp Wildland Foundation, Adur District Council, Horsham District Council, Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust, and Sussex Wildlife Trust, with local landowners and the local community. Together they want to create and realise a collective vision for the Adur that benefits nature and people.

Landscape Recovery is a Defra funded programme which funds long-term, large-scale projects to restore nature. These projects are being administered by the Environment Agency who are working closely with the project partners.

Why is the project needed?

The Adur Valley is home to priority habitats and hundreds of protected wildlife species. It has a rich cultural and historical heritage and is full of dynamic and engaged communities. However, it cannot currently reach its full potential as it faces a number of challenges. The water quality along the Adur is low and does not meet the required Good Ecological Status under the Water Framework Directive. The modification of the landscape for human activities has rendered the functioning of floodplains inefficient, increasing the effects of drought and floods on local areas. The river ecosystem is also fragmented due to artificial barriers along the river.

About the River Adur

The Adur is one of the biggest rivers in Sussex.

It meets the sea at Shoreham. In its upper reaches it flows through Shipley and West Grinstead in the West and between Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill in the East.

www.adur-river-recovery.org

Engaging the local community

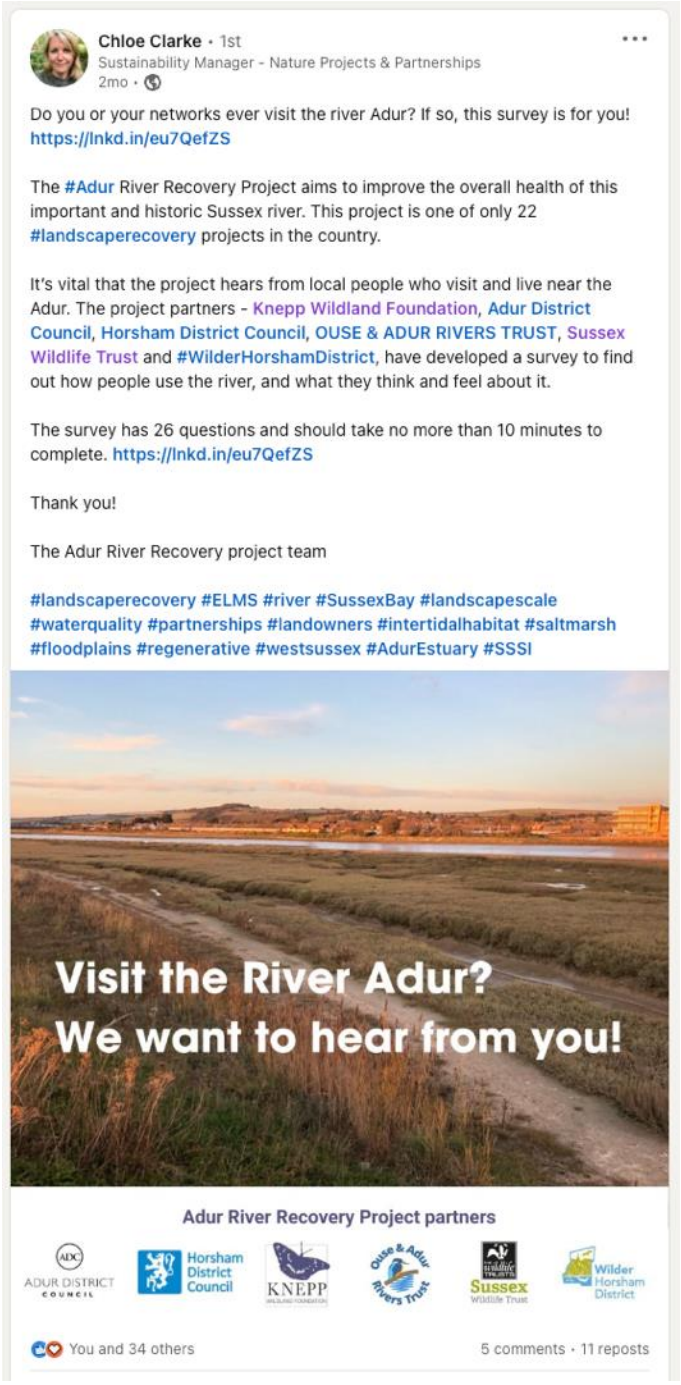
An online survey was created to engage the local community in the Adur River Recovery initiative.

It was promoted to local residents and businesses via the communication channels of project partners and affiliated organisations, which included social media and emails to local community groups.

The online survey went out for public consultation between July 2023 and September 2023 and achieved 591 responses.

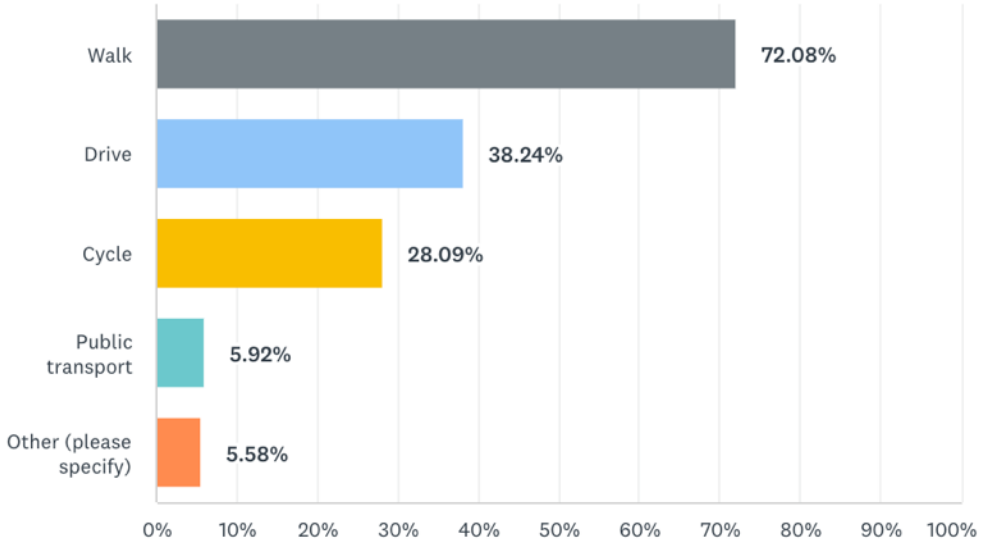
The survey sought to:

- Explain why a recovery project is needed for the River Adur and what it will involve;
- Canvass views from local people about how they interact with the river and what they value most about it;
- Glean if local people have seen changes in the health of River Adur over time and what they think the causes might be;
- Ask if they'd like to be involved in the process going forward and in what ways.



Survey questions and answers
►Travel & access

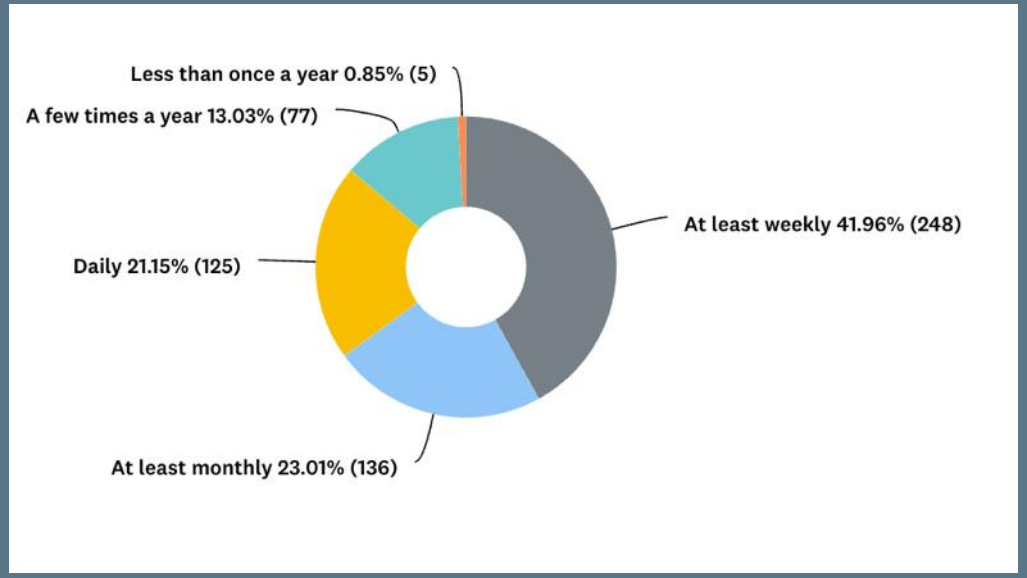
How do river-users normally get to the Adur?



Sustainable forms of travel are most frequently used to get to the Adur.

- Walking is the most common method with over 72% (426) of respondents doing so.
- Other forms of sustainable transport include cycling at 28% (166) and public transport c6% (35).
- Just under 40% (226) of people drive.
- ‘Other’ methods cited include living on it/next to it/on a houseboat (11), kayaking or boating (7), and horse-riding (2).

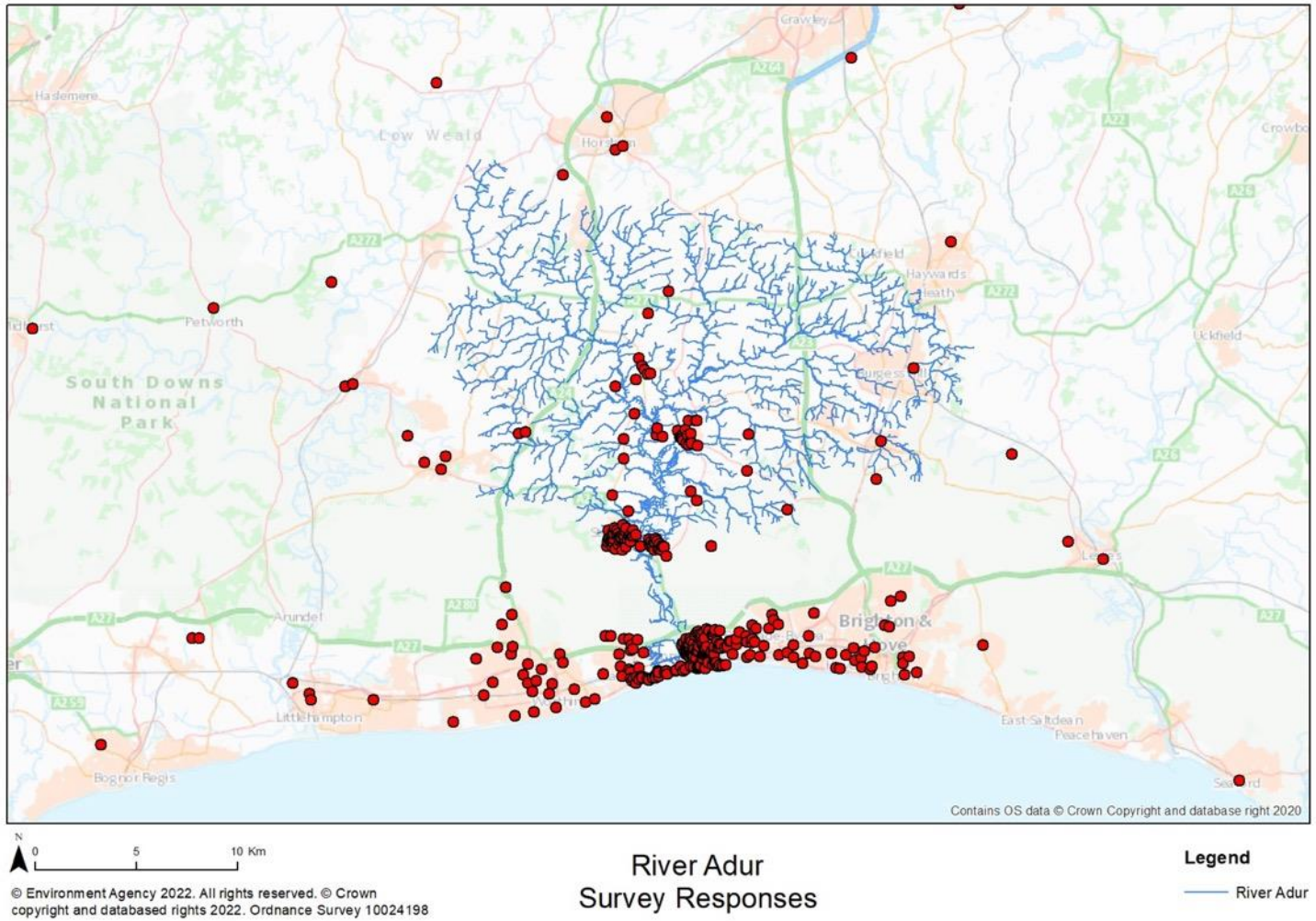
How often do river-users visit?



Most of respondents are regular visitors to the Adur.

- 63% (373) of respondents go to the river once a week or more of which 21% (125) go daily.
- 23% (136) go at least monthly.
- While just 13% visit a few times a year.

Where do river-users live?



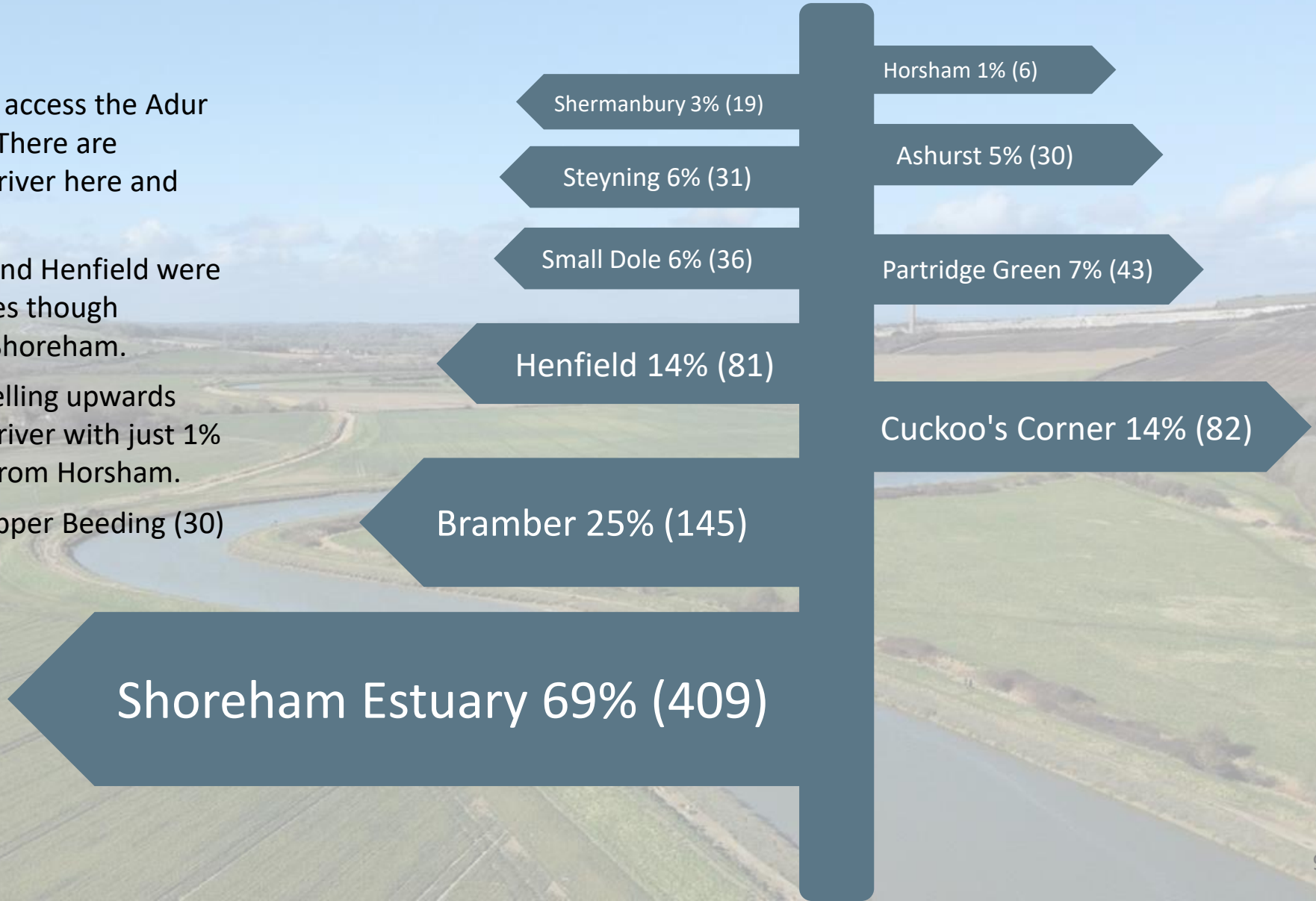
Most respondents live near the Adur in the more populated areas along the coast of Sussex.

- 41% (247) of people live in the BN43 postcode which covers Shoreham-by-Sea.
- 21% (125) of people live in BN44 postcode which includes the towns of Steyning and Upper Beeding.
- 5% live in BN5 which covers Henfield.

However, some outliers come from further afield including Bogor Regis, Portsmouth, Southampton, Sevenoaks, Ivybridge (Devon), and even Haverford West (Wales).

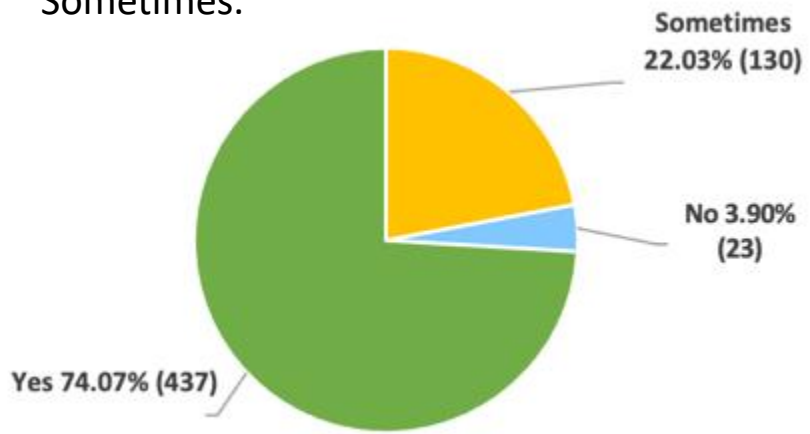
From where do river-users normally access the river?

- The vast majority of people access the Adur via the Shoreham Estuary. There are multiple ways to get to the river here and parking nearby.
- Bramber, Cuckoo's Corner and Henfield were the next most popular places though significantly less used that Shoreham.
- Access dwindles when travelling upwards towards the sources of the river with just 1% of responders getting to it from Horsham.
- Other mentions included Upper Beeding (30) and Knepp (5).



Do river-users find it easy to access the river once there?

- Almost three-quarters (74%) of people find it easy to access the river and surrounding areas. While 22% struggle sometimes, less than 4% find it definitively difficult.
- Respondents provided some detail to support their answers. A selection of their comments is opposite, colour-coded to reflect whether they answered Yes, No or Sometimes.



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It's easy to walk the multi access path that has been created near to the Castle

Whether I park near Lancing college, or nearer the airport, it is a short walk to the Riverside

Never had a problem gaining access

Excellent track and walking path

It's easy by bike but hard to launch a boat

The paths can get very narrow during the growing season, tricky on a shared way with cycles/dogs/walkers.

Pathways very overgrown, many large areas of stinging nettles

Great place to walk apart from the speeding cyclists

Can access the river south by bike but not north

Access is frequently unkempt, and more points of access would be an improvement.

There is virtually no access for anyone wanting to launch a small boat, canoe, etc.

We have fantastic footpaths which give plenty of access to the river and almost all stages from source to sea.

Good public transport links make this an easy place to get to.

I am a walker and angler, and generally access is good. There is a good mix of paths and wilder area.

It's become difficult to access Shoreham Airport for launch from the path as it's steps only with no ramped access.

Need car parking space as mobility is not so good these days.

A lot of places I used to access for fishing etc. are no longer open.

The path is very overgrown close to Amber Bridge. It makes it dangerous for users as it is so narrow they can't be seen

You have to walk far in any direction to cross the river. The grass is often too high to continue along the riverbank

I regularly canoe on the Adur, as there is no access to the water it's a struggle to get the canoe up and down steep high banks.

I've taught paddle boarding on the Adur. I've never had a problem finding a space even though the water has gotten busier in the last 2 years. I love that there are two maintained slipways so my clients and I can access the river without damaging plant life on riverbanks.

Good footpaths either side of the river

Plenty of access from Steyning

We've been walking the dog for many years in a circuit but have been finding the fields fenced off recently

Depends on how overgrown it is or how busy the parking.

Public access for canoeists and paddle boarders is very limited, especially in the upper reaches

There is a dangerous, sharp, bend on the cycle route going from Shoreham to Steyning, next to the old cement works. It is not wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and dog walker.

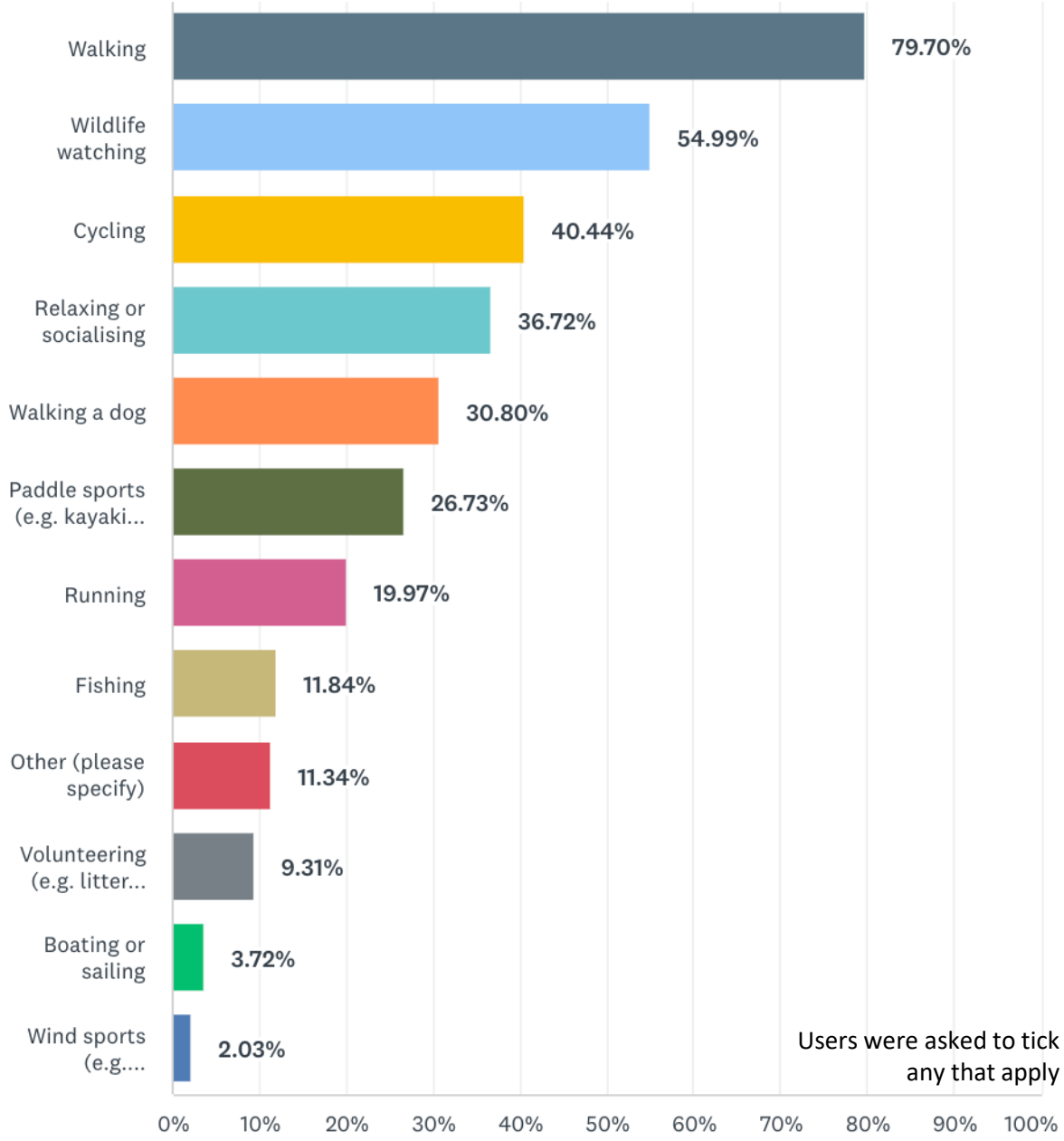
In winter we often find our footpath is waterlogged

Survey questions and answers
► Activities

What activities do river-users undertake whilst there?

The Adur provides a host of activities for river-users.

- Walking is the most popular thing to do with nearly 80% (471) of respondents selecting it. 31% (182) of people walk their dog.
- More active pursuits on land include cycling - enjoyed by 40% (239) people - and running by 20% (118), while on the water, 27% (158) of river users enjoy paddle sports such as kayaking or rowing, and less frequently, sailing and wind sports.
- Nature is a big draw with more than half of responders (55%, 325) watching wildlife. 9% (55)of visitors have undertaken volunteering whilst there, including litter-picking or citizen science.
- 36.7% (217) of people enjoy relaxing and socialising by the river.
- Fishing is enjoyed by 12% of people (70).
- 'Other' mentions included:
  - Swimming (17)
  - Bird surveys/watching (7)
  - Bait digging (3)
  - Horse-riding (3)



Survey questions and answers ►What respondents' value

What do river-users like or value most about the Adur?
(Sample comments)

Wildlife

Landscape and birds.

Bird life, waterbirds along the estuary itself and passerines in the scrub along the edge.

The wildlife. The estuary is very important for a number of red-listed birds as they migrate or overwinter here. The sound of whimbrel calling at this time of year is very special.

It is relatively unspoilt and a great place to see the natural world. Birdlife, insects and occasional surprises (kingfisher, stork, buzzards, leaping fish) make it special.

Biodiversity. Waders and ducks on the lower river and estuary. Owls and warblers near Upper Beeding and Bramber.

The Nature! Having an SSSI on our doorstep is wonderful

Tranquillity

It is a wonderfully calm, beautiful and wildlife rich asset - away from traffic noise and the hubbub of modern life.

I find being near the river a relaxing invigorating space where I can engage with nature and get away from technology.

The tranquillity, mental health benefits, a nice, flat off road run route for exercise and training. The wildlife the river attracts and supports is also vital for biodiversity.

The serenity.

It is restful away from the crowds.

I love the energy and wellbeing the river gives to those who access it.

It's so beautiful and calming. Excellent for mental health.

Community

Safe place to teach kayaking. Pleasant and easy walk for dogs/families.

The open, relatively natural space, birdlife - the community feel from a lot of people using the space, watching the sporting activities on the river. It adds a whole layer of interest to living in Shoreham that you wouldn't get from just living by the sea.

Wildlife, meeting other people and having conversations, beautiful surroundings, good for mental health.

Beautiful views. Friendly community. Peaceful. Being surrounded by nature.

The wildlife, the beautiful sunsets, that we can walk, run or cycle alongside it, that it's well used within the Shoreham community. Having it during lockdown was a godsend too.

Activities

Possible to catch my target species of mullet (always catch and release)

the very special sea-trout & pike

Picturesque, paths are easy to walk/run along, wildlife along the river

It's beautiful and unspoiled. I like the separate paths for walkers. I love that my dog does not have to be on a lead for large parts of it.

It's a special place and easy to get to and great for a short easy walk.

Easy and quick access to nature and green space

I teach paddle boarding on the river - my clients love it because of the accessibility, the bird life (although there is less of it) and the surrounding nature.

Scenery

Its constantly changing. it makes Shoreham by sea special. the air is different

It's like a friend you want to visit in all seasons and tide times. Sometimes it looks so beautiful, other times the high levels of pollution and soil erosion are painfully obvious. However, the river and its surroundings lift our spirits and are a reminder of life's continuity, whilst also indicating the negative impact man is having on nature.

It's beautiful and unique locally

It's constantly changing mood/colours/tide.....never boring to look at, pretty, therapeutic. The wildlife....

The peace and views. Lovely view of the bridge in Shoreham at sunset

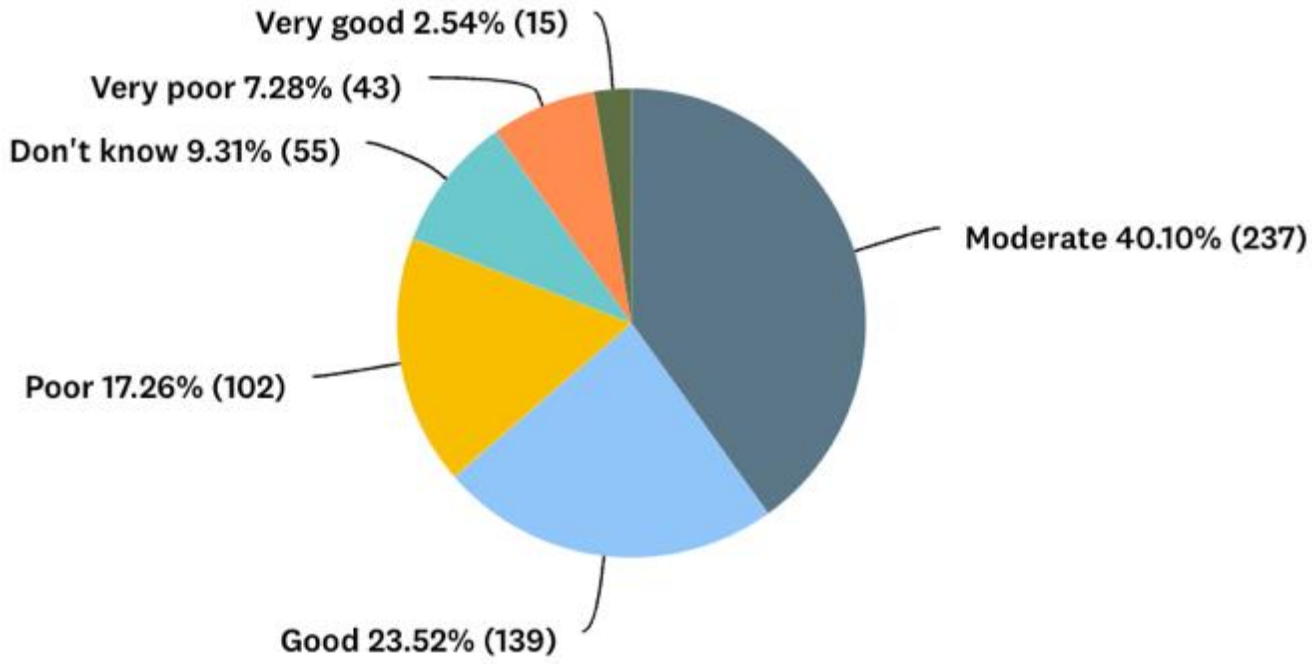
What statements do river-users agree with about the Adur?

92%	Like being in nature/watching wildlife (543)
86%	Find it relaxing (506)
85%	Like being on or near water (502)
85%	Think it's good for their mental health (502)
82%	Think it's good for their physical health (485)
78%	Find it beautiful (462)
58%	Think it's a good place to do the activities they like (343)
56%	Think it's convenient (328)
36%	Think it's easy to get around (210)
11%	Think it's the only local place to do the activities they like (64)
0%	Don't agree with any of the above statements

Survey questions and answers
►Condition, pressures and changes

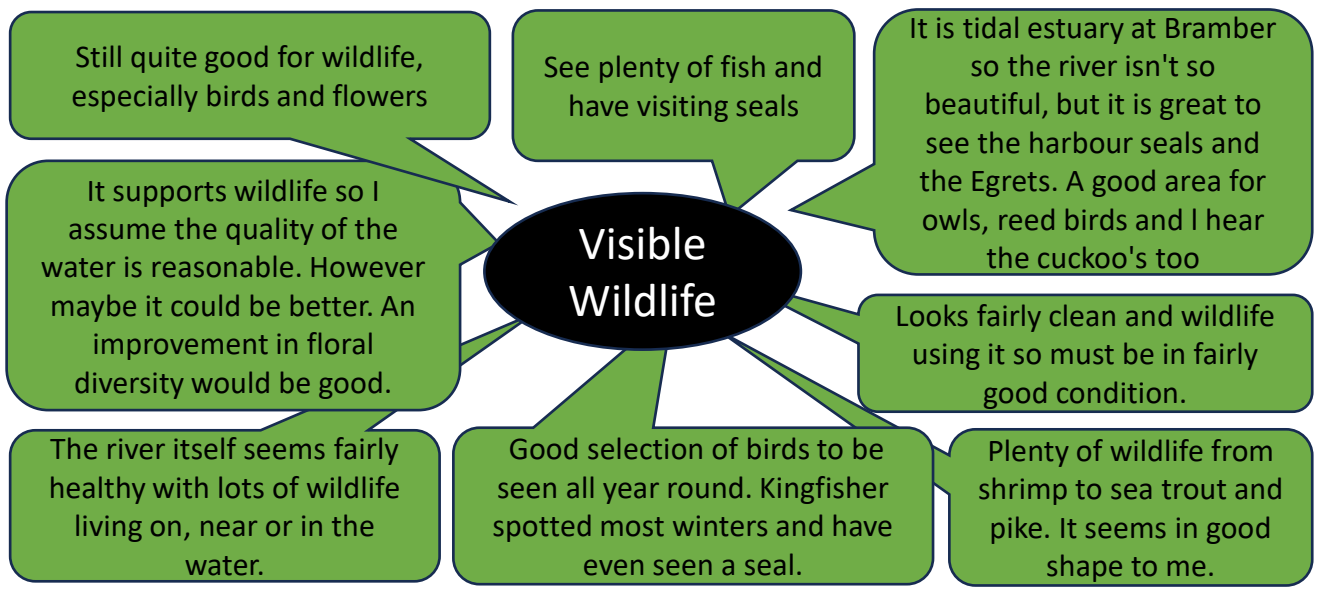
What do river-users think about the Adur's condition?

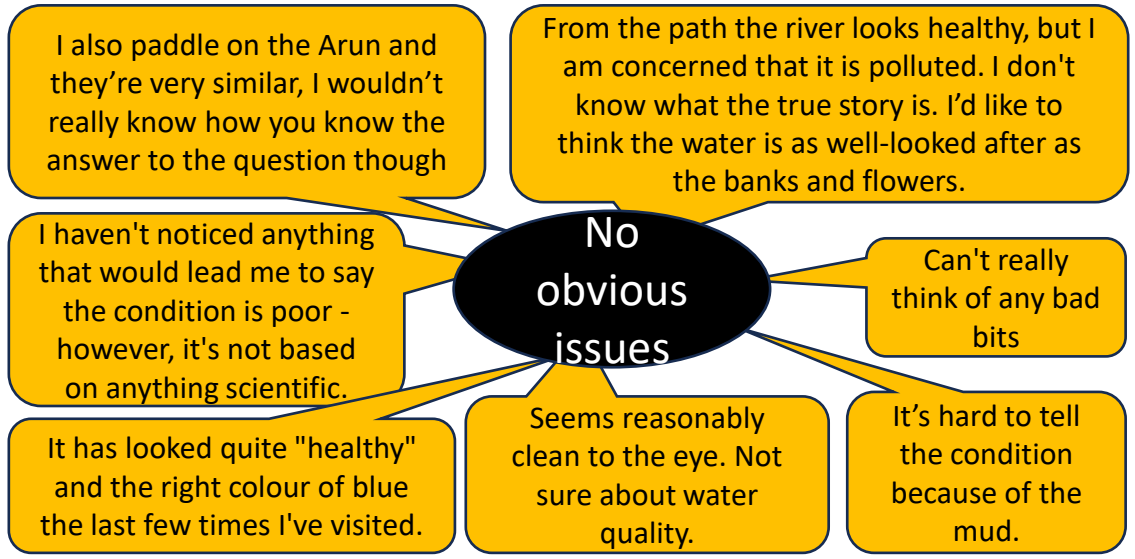
- Just over a quarter 26% (154) of respondents think the Adur is good or very good condition.
- A similar number 25% (145) believe it is in a poor or very poor state.
- 40% (237) think its condition its condition is moderate or average/passable, and the remainder (9%) aren't sure.

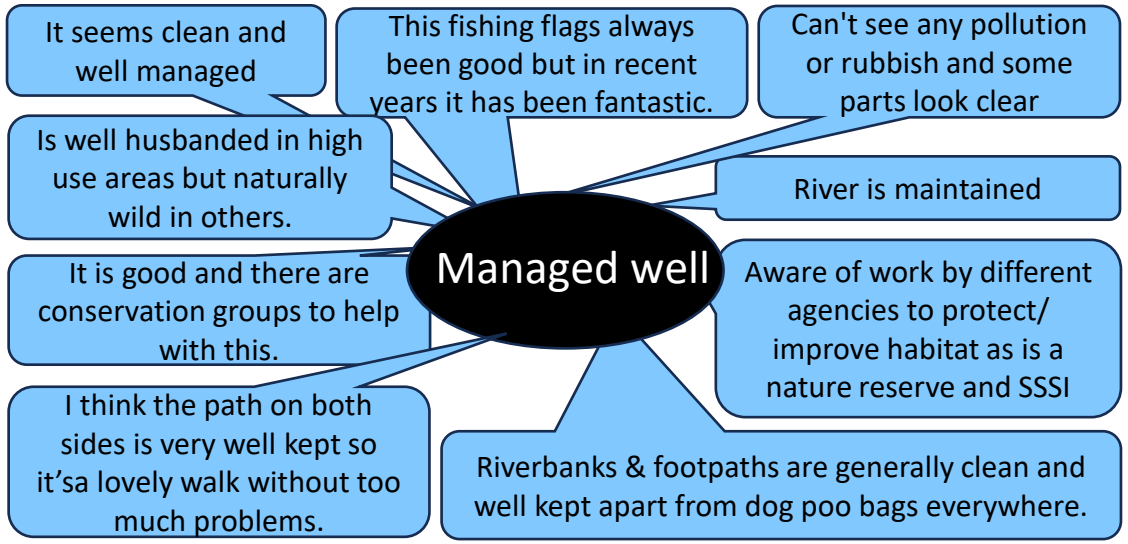


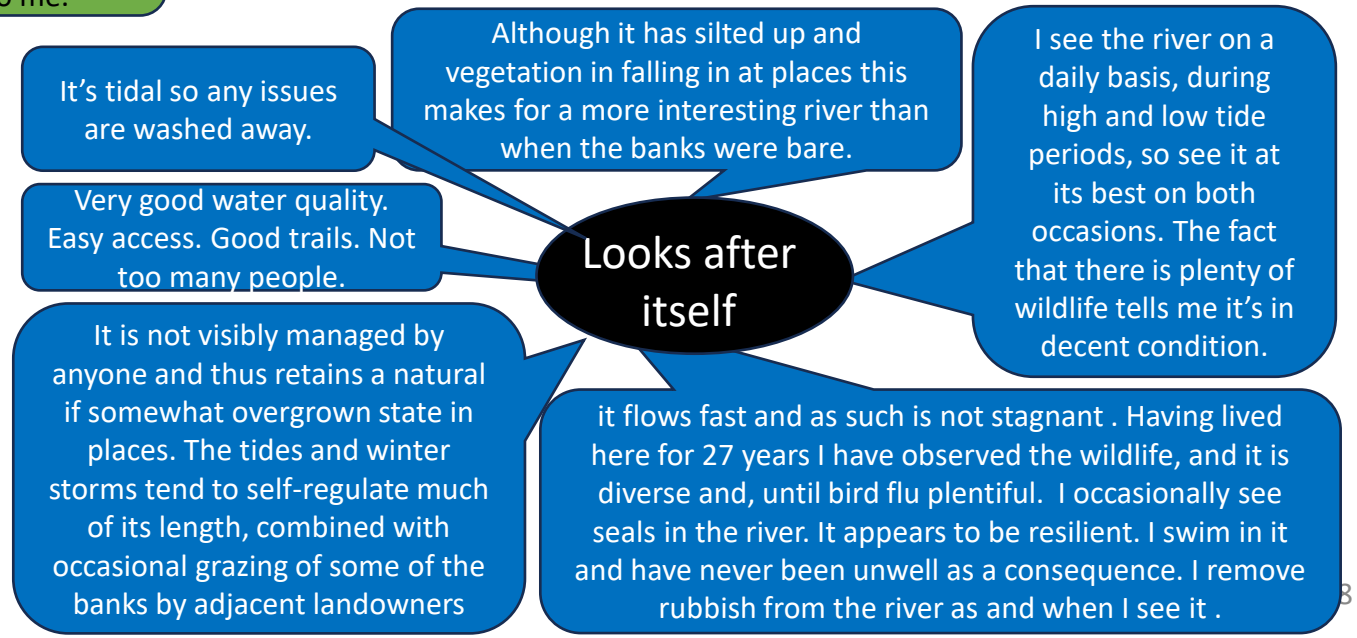
Why river-users think the Adur in a good or very good condition

(sample comments)



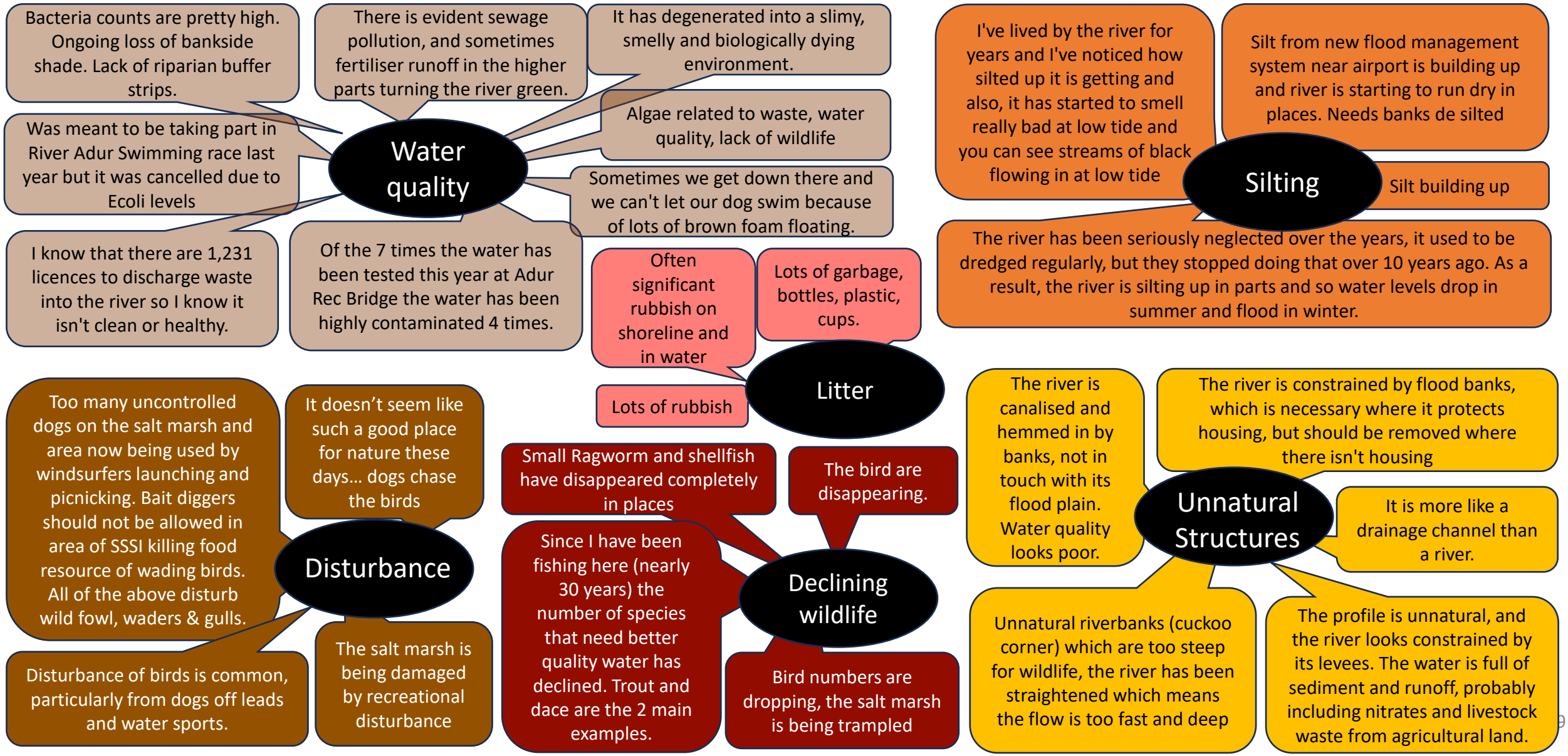




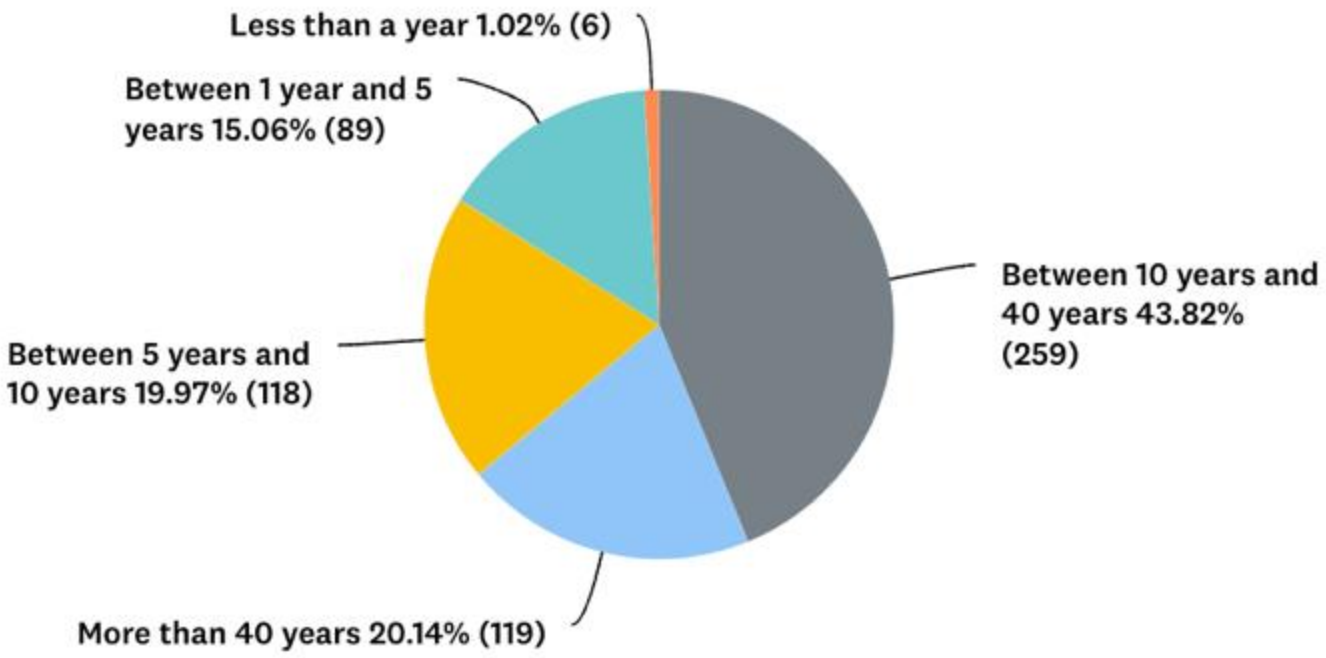


Why river-users think the Adur in a poor or very poor condition

(sample comments)



How long have river-users been visiting the Adur and what changes have they seen it that time?



There is a wealth of knowledge about the river and how it has changed amongst respondents.

- The majority of people (64%, 378) have been visiting the Adur for over decade and within this 20% have been visiting for over 40 years.
- While those who've visited for less than a year had not noticed any changes in that time, those who'd been visiting for longer posted over 400 comments (samples overleaf).
- Changes sited include new developments and an increase in people and dogs. Improvements to access and declining or increasing wildlife were also mentioned.

What river-users have noticed in the time they've been visiting (sample comments)

1-5 years
(56 comments)

- The river doesn't seem to flood as much which is disappointing
- More flood defences, tarmacked paths and facilities for visitors (e.g. nice coffee shack)
- Riverbank deteriorating with local building projects
- Sewage is getting worse! A swimming race was cancelled last year due to poor water quality.

5-10 years
(78 comments)

- More people seem to enjoy the space since lockdown. Which is great but does lead to littering and a lack of care from a minority of people. Also, more flooding, particularly towards Henfield / Partridge Green way.
- The river is getting dirtier every year.
- Paths have improved but traffic overhead and next to path has become noisier. Water quality not improving.
- Less birds. More dogs. More litter.
- The new defence and flood deterrents have gone up. It was sad to see that stage 1 didn't go to plan and a flood water structure had to be put in. It was nice to see it being re-shrubbed.
- The paths have been upgraded but it's less natural. More housing developments riverside, more paddle boarders and kayaks, new flood defences and the works to manage (natural) floodwaters for New Monk's Farm development (basically built on flood plain from what I can tell)

10-40 years
(194 comments)

- Fewer butterflies as the buddleia often gets cut down… Used to see lots of herons, curlews and snipes, but they're all very rare now.
- Bad! Destroyed good habitat for bird life in reedy ditches/corner when west riverbank was moved pre pumping station. Destruction of wader roost on quiet corner of airport. Far more people and dogs on rivers edge at low tide. Use of paddle boards etc allow landing in valuable habitat.
- It is more wildlife friendly these days. The creation of Bramber Brooks Nature Reserve has been a blessing and plans to rewild more of the river corridor have my full support.
- The waterways and pathways are no longer maintained by the River Authority. Annual flooding is increasing in severity because land drainage is now blocked.
- The sections we visit at Knepp are settling down and would appear to be in better shape than they were 12 years ago.
- Increase in bait digging – bad. Increase in use for water sports – positive.

40 years+
(102 comments)

- As a child we ate shellfish from the river, I wouldn't dream of doing that now for the fear from pollution.
- Back in the 1960s & 70s they were breeding Redshank and Snipe on the upper levels.
- I think there is actually more wildlife , ducks, egrets, owls and the odd seal.
- People are more aware of pollution. Access seemed more relaxed in 1970s/1980s.
- I used to walk up the railway sleepers in the 70s picking poppies and daisies with my mother. There were loads. I like the cycle path that was created on the old railway and access it creates to Steyning by bike.
- There's been a lot of building work close to the town - properties nobody can afford - but apart from that I think it's become more accessible and that's nice.
- Years ago the river was fuller, longer, but now because the mud banks have been allowed to increase you could practically walk across these from one side to the other.

River-users were asked if they had noticed an increase, a decrease or no change to different factors

River-users noticed an increase in…

People	77% (450) increase vs 1% decrease
Recreational use	76% (443) increase vs 2% decrease
Dogs	74% (435) increase vs 0.2% decrease
Sedimentation	38% (221) increase vs 0.3% decrease
Algae	27% (153) increase vs 2% decrease

River-users noticed a decrease in…

Water quality	44% (253) decrease vs 3% increase
Wildlife	34% (197) decrease vs 15% increase

River-users noticed no change to…

Litter	47% (274) vs 37% increase and 5% decrease
Flooding	34% (196) vs 26% increase and 9% decrease
Drought	25% (142) vs 23% increase vs 2% decrease

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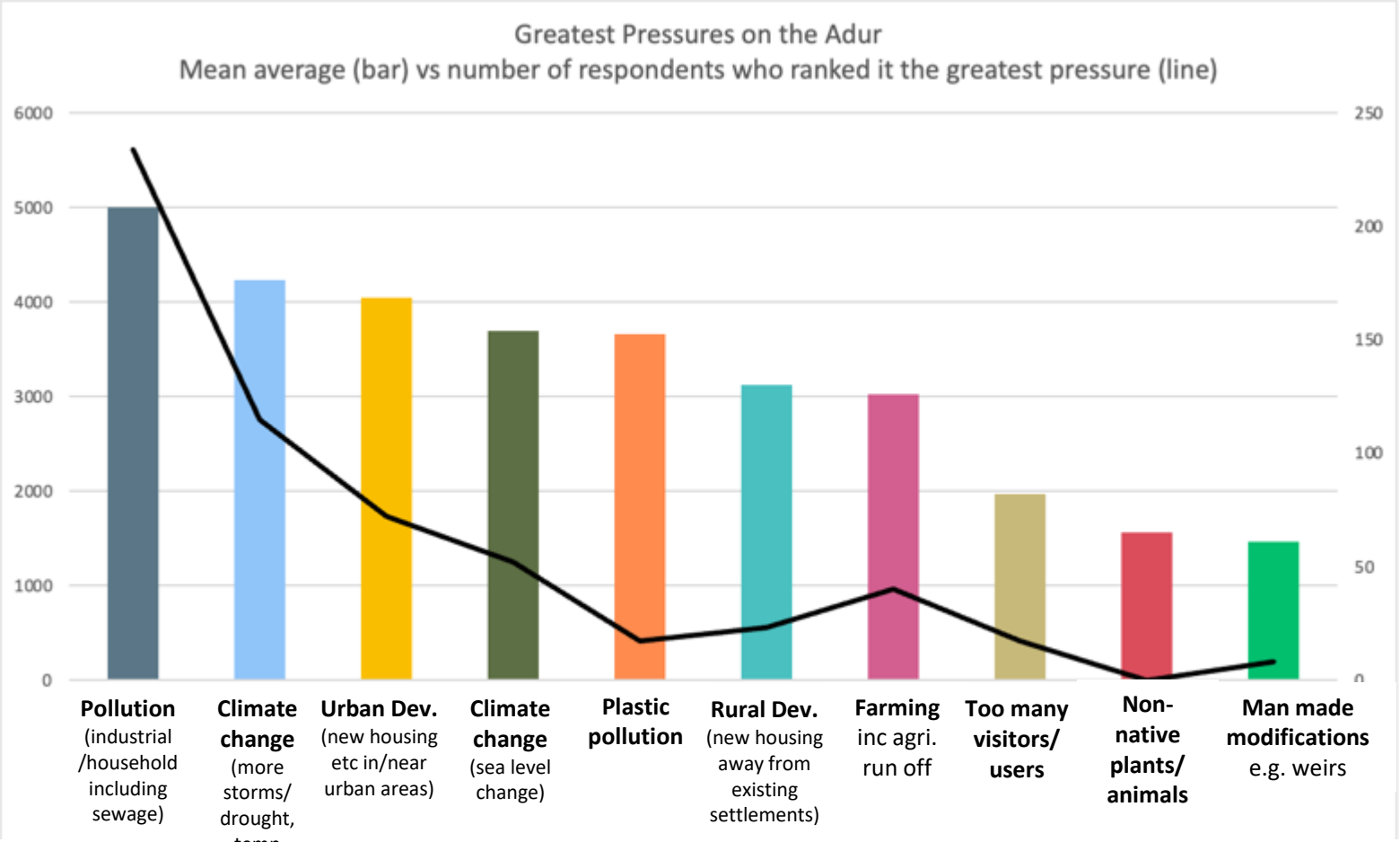
The pressures river-users felt were greatest



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Greatest pressures:

River-uses were asked to rank various pressures from greatest to smallest threat.

The top 3 pressures, both by number of times voted greatest and by their mean average score were:

- Pollution - industrial and residential sources including sewage (ranked as the greatest pressure by 40% of respondents)
- Climate change - increased storms/drought and temperature change (ranked as the greatest pressure by 20% of respondents)
- Urban development – (ranked as the greatest pressure by 12% of respondents)

Least pressures:

No responders ranked non-native species as the greatest pressure facing the Adur, while man-made modifications were ranked as the least concerning pressure more than any other.

What river-users said about the pressure that concerned them most

(sample comments)

Man-made Pollution

- Sewage makes it unclean and unsafe for animals and people
- Increasing pollution of the river affects wildlife, human health, tourism, biodiversity. The rivers health must be monitored regularly and those who pollute it held to account… with FINES
- Smallest amount of pollution from households causes enormous damage - long lasting and largely irreversible. And it is happening already.
- Irresponsible corporate farms and water companies.
- Too many houses being built, which means more sewage
- Unmonitored pollutants in our waterways and the sea should concern us all.
- I think it's a disgrace that raw sewage is allowed to freely run into the river. People of all ages enjoy using the river.
- Water pollution, I think, is the greatest threat to river health, and therefore affects everything and everyone who uses it.

Climate change

- Because there's no easy fix. It's easy to do small things as an individual but the reality is, it requires hardcore systems and government change for any real, tangible impact. Plastic bottles in a river is unsightly today, but there's much bigger long-term issues to resolve.
- Temperature change is a major concern as the warmer water will support less native species and combined with pollution greatly lower the water quality
- The unpredictability
- I have noticed flooding increasing in the winter over 35 years. Further and for longer periods. Cannot ignore climate change.
- Extreme weather is becoming more and more noticeable. This is a huge problem and not enough people seem to care, especially those who can do something about it.

Urban development

- The demand for water in Sussex is already high. With the intention to build lots more housing this will continue to be a factor.
- Excessive recreational disturbance to the SSSI.
- The infrastructure of Shoreham is not sufficient to sustain so much development
- Too many new homes so water is not percolating into the water table interrupting the water system. rapid runoff after storms diverting into storm drains and washing pollutants into the river

Plastic pollution

- Microplastics are everywhere now, from plastic fibres in clothing to non-recyclable vapes, Plastic AstroTurf to litter and rubbish. Plastic is everywhere and works its way into the watercourses and the animals in them. They have even worked their way into what we eat.
- Single use plastic is a totally out of control
- Litter is a huge concern and I feel there isn't enough emphasis on educating visitors on appropriate behaviour to avoid negative impacts.

Sea-level rise

- The Adur Valley is a natural flood plain, as sea level rises this will present a challenge requiring more and more defence works.
- Because I fully expect my house to be underwater in 30yrs
- The whole area will get flooded. Defences will have to be enlarged
- I've observed how high the river gets/ floods with high levels of rain and very high tides, increased sea levels will only exacerbate this, and with development plans to build new homes particularly in flood plains, there is nowhere for the extra water to go leading to more flooding

What river-users said about the pressure that concerned them most

(sample comments)

Too many people

- Too many dogs running loose. Too many people accessing the water without due care or consideration
- Dog walkers, kayaking etc is ruining the SSSI
- The problem is less the absolute number of people than the way in which the river and surrounding areas are used. These are (1) off-lead dogs result in ongoing wildlife disturbance; (2) bait diggers disturbance; (3) water users (kayakers, etc) flushing and disturbing wildlife
- Paddle boarders, canoeists, dog walkers, seem to think that the RSPB mud flats are a playground
- Wildlife doesn't always have a choice where they feed and rest. However, river users, especially bait diggers do. Why do they choose to dig huge holes through the layers of sediment to get some worms when commercially grown worms and other baits are available. Why don't they care about all the tiny molluscs and other organisms that they kill by their digging and trampling? Why do they choose to dig in a SSSI zone when they could dig elsewhere?

Rural development

- Concreting rural areas with big developments doesn't allow for natural drainage into the soil and thus some water retention in the land. It really doesn't take much rain these days to cause flooding from the river
- Over development eating into current open / free spaces and associated impacts on environment
- Far too many houses being built on or very near to river and flood lands.
- Rural and 'edge of town' developments rarely seem to respect the land they are built on affecting. I see it time and time again.
- Rural development makers all the other issues worse, more pressure on the environment, more flash water run, more disturbance, etc.

Farming

- Chemical pollution and sedimentation affecting quality of water for invertebrates and higher species.
- Eutrophication. It will destroy wildlife in the river and cause increases in algae.
- Any runoff into any river is a concern, given the rural nature of the Adur there will be a greater agricultural loading.
- In the short term, the greatest risk is an agricultural pollution incident. Slurry, pesticide etc etc.
- Agricultural runoff is polluting the water and lack of tree coverage, hedgerows and scrub along the river is detrimental to biodiversity
- Synthetic fertilizer creates excess nitrogen (reducing oxygen & promoting algae), herbicide, fungicide and pesticide kills the relevant life forms and all of which runs off into the water system following rain (including our aquifers).
- The algae bloom is toxic and seems to be caused by fertiliser/animal slurry pit spreading

River modifications

- It damages many ecosystems which help the Bramber Brooks thrive.
- Past physical modifications prevent the river functioning naturally.
- These have reduced the biodiversity and places for wildlife to live. e.g Trees and reeds have been removed on the airport riverbank.
- If the river remains highly modified and canalised it is less able to deal with high or low flow, and to cope with climate change induced effects, and wildlife will therefore suffer.
- It's limiting the natural capacity of the river to a) help handle flooding and sea level rise and b) does not support native ecosystems and wildlife

Survey questions and answers
►Future improvement & vision

What changes would river-users like to see made? (Sample comments)

Related to flooding

- Removal of flood defences in the upper reaches
- Allow the river to naturally flood in the Spring and the Autumn.
- To stop flooding install a sill (like the Thames barriers) lower down the river and to stop the English Channel coming up the river on flood times and Spring Tides
- Better flood controls
- Improve Lock Lane to prevent flooding, better use of flood plains for flooding, better fish transit capabilities, beavers, substantial water usage levy imposed on all development in the Adur river watershed
- Revert floodplain. They are essential ecosystem services. They would help prevent flooding downstream.

Related to pollution

- Stop discharge of raw sewage and reduce nitrate run off.
- Pollution control measures from water companies to farmers/landowners to housing needs.
- Install phosphate & nitrogen strippers on all Sewage works in the catchment; & separate & store rainfall so not going to sewage works.
- Better water quality on all levels
- Prevention of sewage and fertilizer release.
- Consistent monitoring
- Implementation of restrictions on pollutants.

Restoring wiggles

- Putting the bends back in, making sure flood marshes areas, no more pollution
- Speed the water up in places, add reeds beds and intermediate areas by widening the area between the dykes. Have more winter wetland.
- Removal /lowering of flood banks, especially on land of lower agricultural value, to restore river function.
- More of a naturalised channel.
- Managed wetlands around it - remove some of the manmade straightening and allow the river to slow and meander where it can be managed rather than risk flooding. It would provide habitat for wetland birds too.
- Removing the silt build up and repairing the collapsed and eroded areas in the upper bank.

Education & controls

- Signage about keeping dogs on lead near river as it is SSSI and its features are legally protected from disturbance. Also a positive mention of the river's ecological features. Increased wetland habitat - nearby scrapes etc that can be used by birds in an area free from disturbance.
- Stricter controls on unauthorised access especially by dogs allowed to defaecate unhindered on area of SSSI
- Pinch points to slow cyclists.
- Restrictions on water sports
- More information points (can be virtual) about what flora and fauna might be present at a given site / location.
- Dog free areas - especially on the saltmarsh between the old toll bridge and railway bridge at Shoreham.

Restoration

- More trees and shrubs
- Willow and alder trees along the banks. More wild plants. More meanders and water meadows. More grazing animals. Beaches.
- Rewilding of margins - as at Brooklands?
- Improvement in floral diversity
- An increase in plant and wildlife diversity.
- Restoration of marshland
- An increase in plant and wildlife diversity.
- More wild meadows at the water's edge that are not manured. Wild bird over-wintering area on the floodplain.

How do river-users imagine a thriving river in the future?

There would be natural marshes with boardwalks for people, the river would be higher and be teeming with life.

I'd like to see more wildlife using the floodplain - wet grassland waders and other waterbirds.

During migration more Willow Warblers, Chiffchaffs, Spotted Flycatchers, Whinchats etc.

More wildlife friendly planting zones. Bird hides. Improved paths access for all information boards

I see a more naturally behaving river system where possible. Removal of flood banks where there is no risk to properties. Pay farmers to allow for loss of farmland land to the river.

No pollution entering river, proper bends back in river, beavers on the river

New and more diverse species of flora and fauna, with reintroductions that may have died off / not survived. And that it's easily accessible for everyone. I love what they've done in downtown Singapore with suspended walkways to allow nature to be uninterrupted and yet, for it to be accessible to able and non-able bodied people.

See Marsh Harriers nesting in reed beds by the river like we do on the Arun. See white tailed eagles fishing like we do on the Arun. See the bottom of the river south of Henfield like we do Shermanbury.

Areas created which are dog free and people have been educated regarding limitations to their access to sensitive areas of the riverbanks. Rewilding of reed beds and ditches. I would celebrate the increase in wildlife and bird populations, both at high and low water.

More insect life along the river.

Rewilding schemes along the length of the valley

Beautiful clear waters with an abundance of wildlife and lack of pollution. Plenty of walk-ways and cycle routes, and easy access public transport, cafes and quiet enjoyment.

Banks allowed to degrade on at least one side to allow vegetation suitable for water-voles, nesting sites for a variety of warblers (sedge, reed and cetti's) and the cuckoos maybe bitterns too.

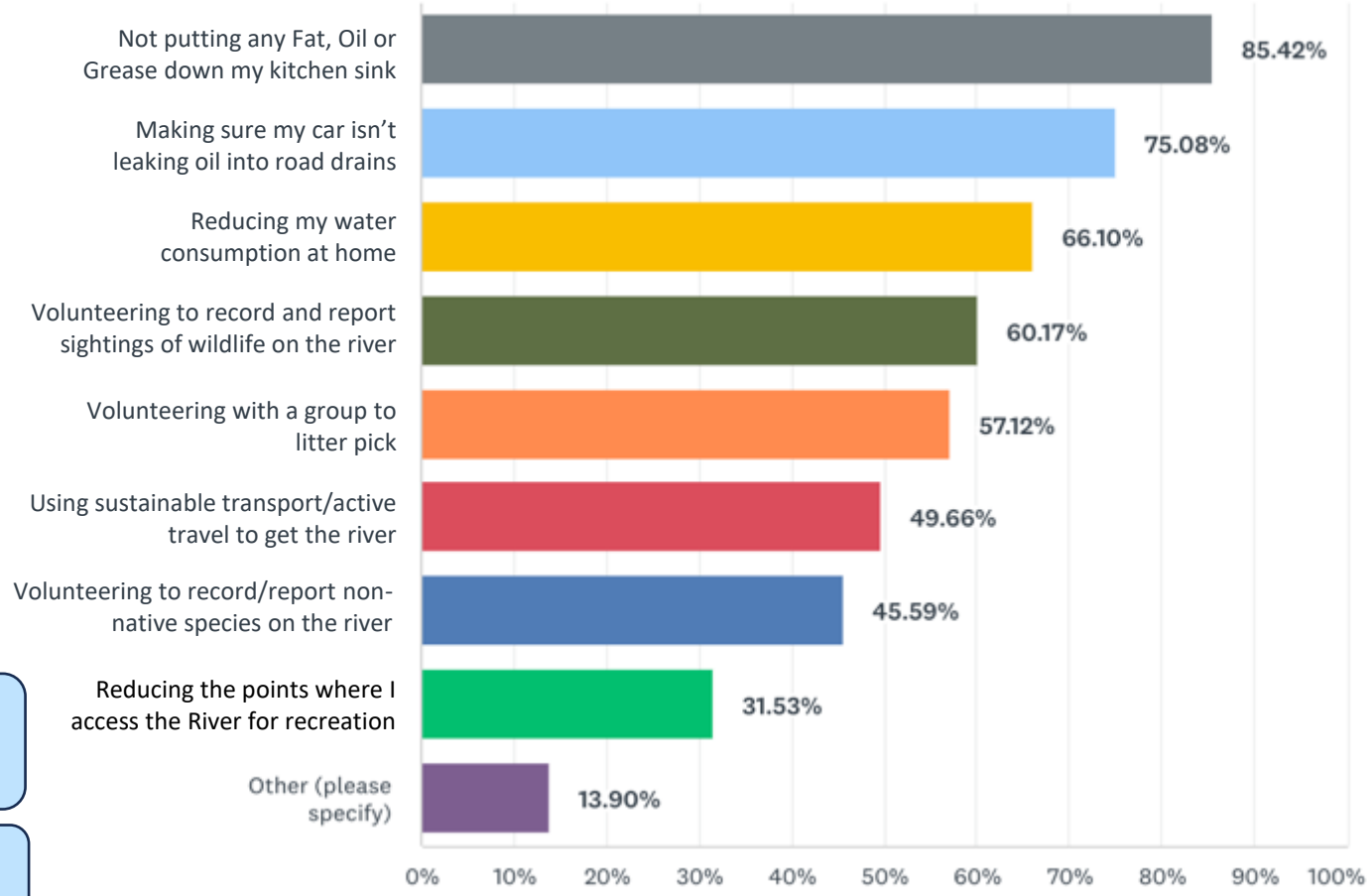
A greater sea trout migration and diversity of insect life. Absence of seals and mink. Continue to be able to find solitude with relative ease.

More trees such as Black Poplars... It is our rarest native tree. It would encourage mammals such as otters to use the river.

Wildlife has adapted successfully to life by the river. Native hedges and wetland areas exist, corridors for wildlife to move freely along the river have been preserved/created, wild landscapes link up.

What actions might river-users take themselves to ensure a healthier river?

- 99.8% of river-users would take at least one action to ensure a healthier river and the vast majority would undertake multiple actions.
- The most popular actions relate to reducing oil entering the river system (whether via the sink or from cars leaking in the road).
- The least popular actions related to reducing points of access to the river.
- A sample of 'Other' comments are below.



Lobbying government. These micro steps are all nice but they're also short-lived and the impact at a macro level is negligible.

Stop using fossil fuels at home, for transport and consumption.

Pay more tax if this results in better water treatment and monitoring.

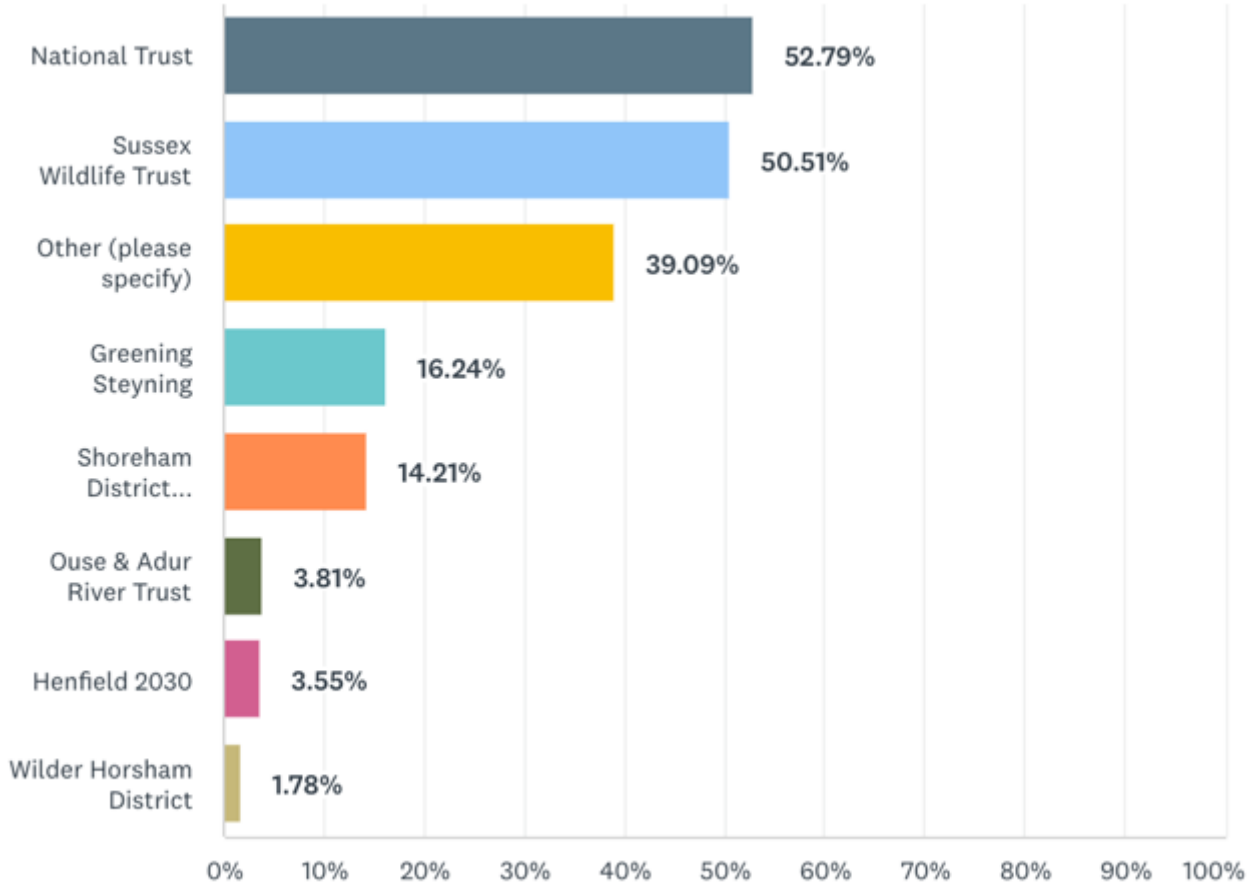
Using eco-friendly cleaning products. Continue to investigate ways for us house-boaters to deal with our sewage.

I'm not sure any of the above will actively improve river health. I think more is needed from water companies and housing companies and industries building / developing along the river.

Survey questions and answers
► About respondents

Are rivers-users members of any conservation groups or charities?

- 66% (394) respondents are involved in other groups or charities.



- Other memberships include:
  - RSPB (20 responders)
  - Angling Trust and/or Henfield Angling Club (9 responders)
  - Henfield Bird Watch (9 responders)
  - Sussex Ornithological Society (8 responders)

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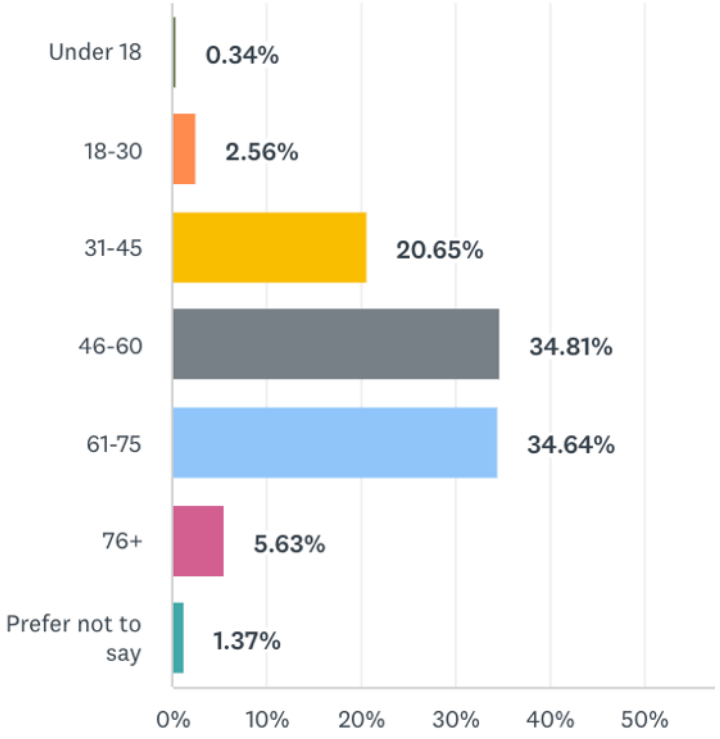
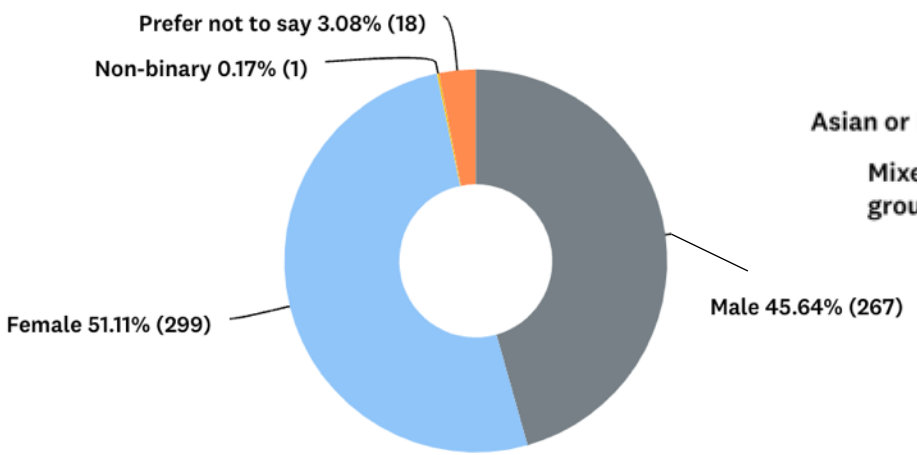
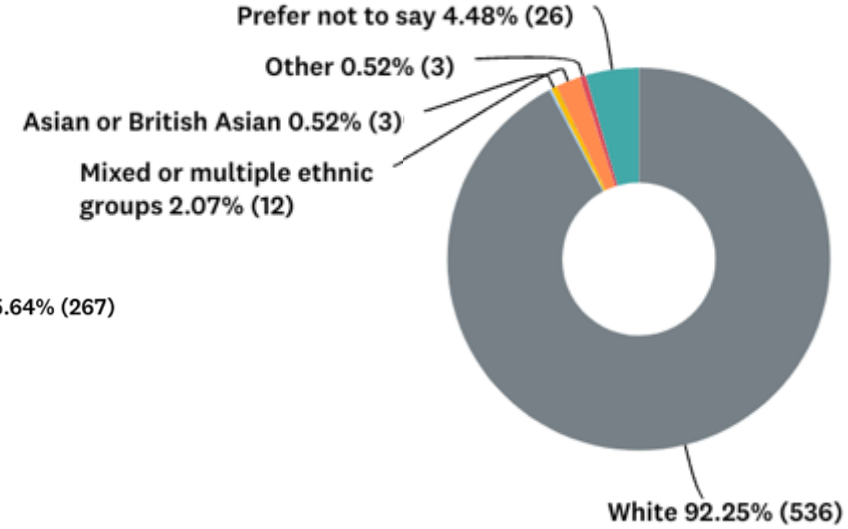
Respondents age, gender, ethnicity and disability status







Disability

- Nearly 9% (51) of respondents consider themselves to have a disability whether physical or mental
- 4% preferred not to say.

Do river-users want to stay involved in the Adur Recovery project?

Taking part in future surveys

69% (409) of respondents

Consented to being consulted on the project going forward, including taking part in further surveys.

Becoming a champion

31% (185) of respondents

Were interested in hearing more about becoming an ambassador for the project.

Acknowledgements and next steps

Adur River Recovery partners wish to thank all of those who participated in the survey and provided their information, views and comments, as well as those who helped to promote the survey via their networks.

What happens next

- Survey results are being reviewed to enhance our understanding of how the river is used by the public. They will be used to inform future public engagement activities as well as feeding into the wider plan.
- The project team are working with River Adur landowners and land managers on a suite of enhancement options in 2024. Options will then be designed and modelled, including flood modelling, to guide next steps.
- Water quality testing is being undertaken by the University of Brighton until Summer 2024.
- An engagement programme including events and volunteering opportunities will also roll out in 2024. Respondents interested in becoming a champion will be contacted in the Spring.

Visit our website for details of upcoming events and volunteering opportunities

RIVER RECOVERY ADUR

www.adur-river-recovery.org

ADC ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

Horsham District Council

KNEPP WILDLAND FOUNDATION

Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust

The wildlife TRUSTS Sussex Wildlife Trust

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Environment Agency

NATURAL ENGLAND

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