



# Opening the Sid:

## River Habitat Surveys

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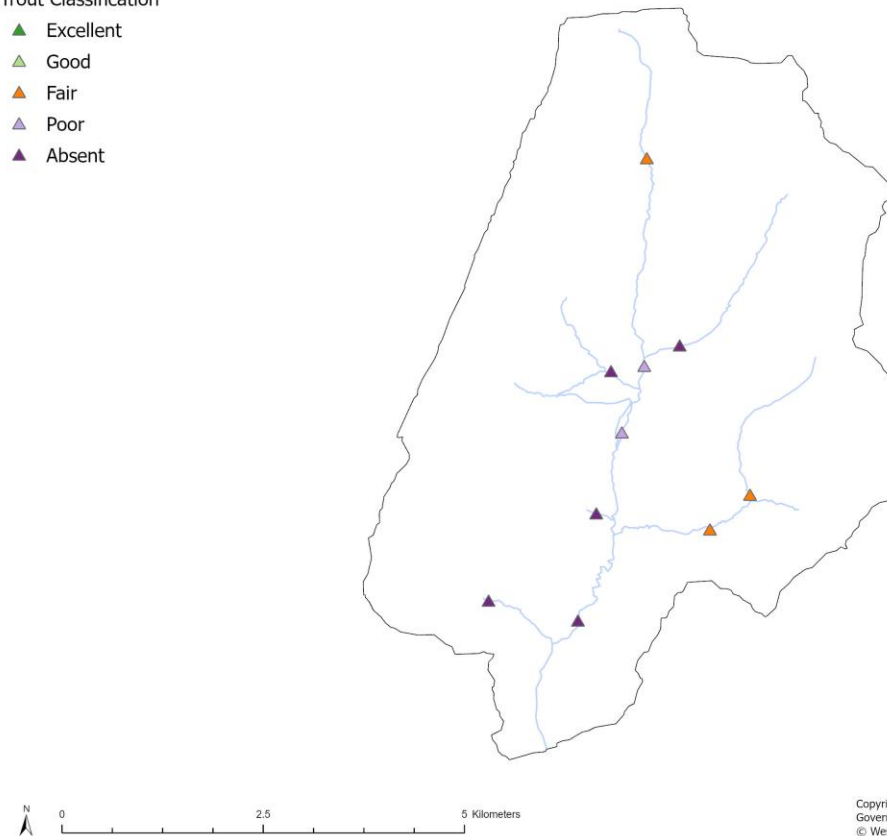
# Background: Why are we concerned?



- Freshwater migratory fishes fastest declining vertebrate group.
- Atlantic salmon endangered in UK, European Eel critically endangered.
- Fragmentation and degradation of habitats.

Sid Catchment Fry Index Surveys 2025

Trout Classification  
▲ Excellent  
▲ Good  
▲ Fair  
▲ Poor  
▲ Absent



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# Background: Opening the Sid



- Partnership Project - River Sid Catchment Group, Westcountry Rivers Trust and Environment Agency.
- Understand extent and impact of barriers in the Sid, quality of available habitats and developing solutions to address these.



# Habitat Walkover Surveys



- 22.1km of river surveyed – habitats and features of interest recorded.
- Rapid Barrier Assessment.
- GIS digitisation and barrier prioritisation.

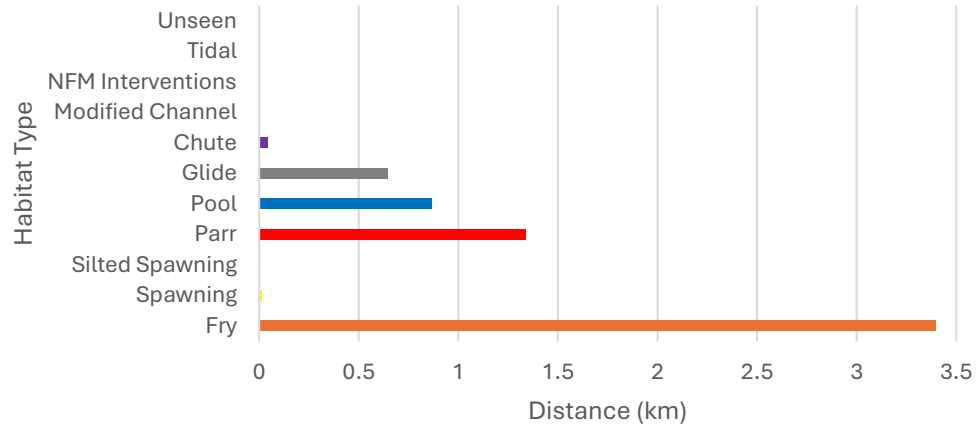


# Snod

- Good availability of juvenile fish habitats, currently supporting most trout spawning.
- Good availability of well sorted gravels for spawning and aquatic invertebrates.
- 11 barriers to migration.
- Status threatened by areas that lack riparian buffers and bank erosion.



Snod Brook



# River Sid

- Mixture of habitats that support different life stages of fish, though habitats are fragmented by barriers.
- High concentration of invasive plant species (Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam) in lower reaches.
- Some areas of diverse, healthy river channel.
- Areas of erosion from cattle access.



# Roncombe Stream

- Trout are absent but local population of bullheads.
- Weir at Cotford Road Bridge.
- Good habitat available upstream of barriers.
- Areas of channel incision and erosion.



# Lincombe Stream

- Natural Flood Management Structures in upper catchment.
- Some habitat available middle reaches.
- Highly modified lower reaches for flood conveyance.



# Burscombe Brook



- Straightened upper reaches, lateral connectivity limited by flood bund.
- Impassible barrier to fish migration.
- High levels of bank erosion observed.



# Woolbrook

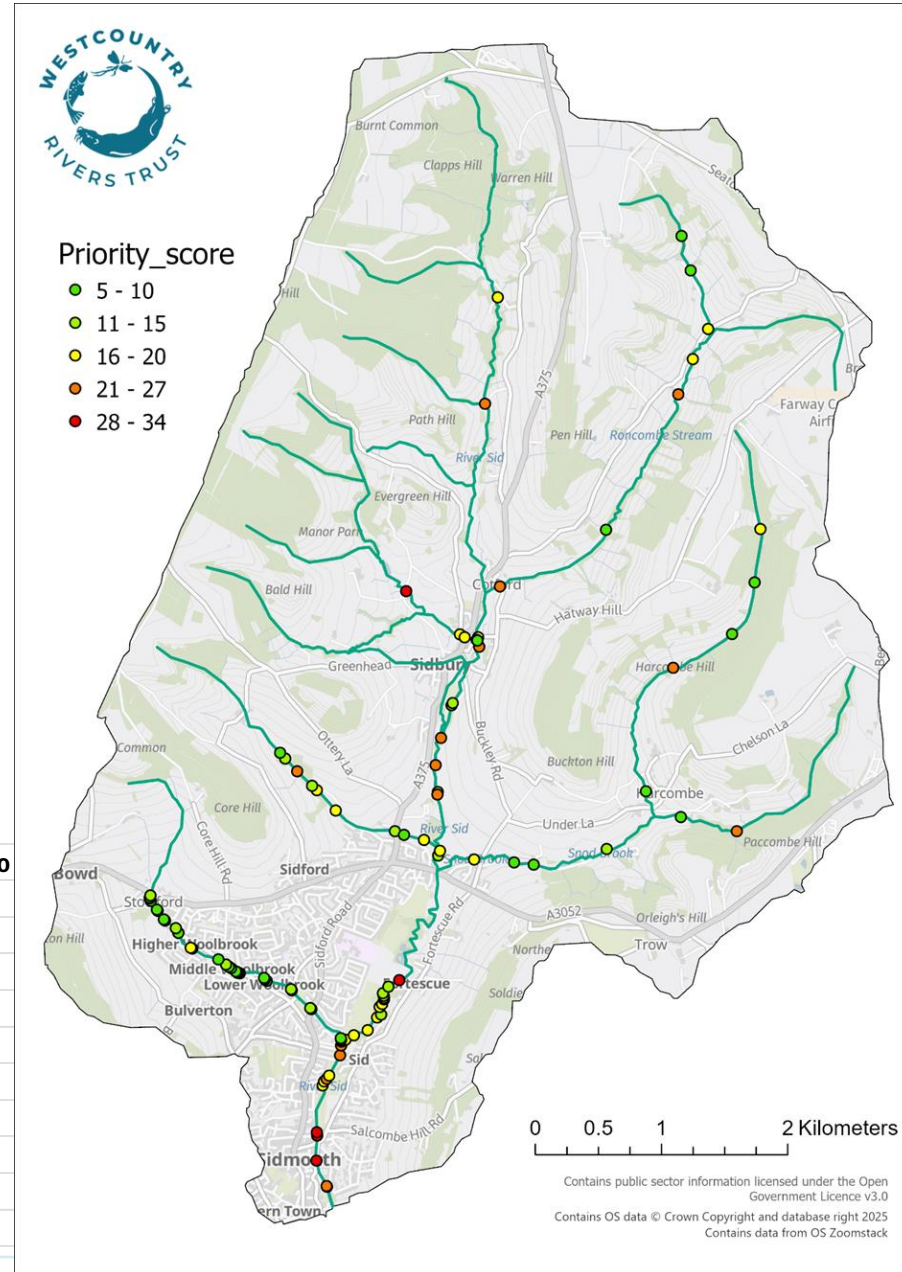
- Heavily fragmented and modified watercourse, over 30 barriers recorded including large culverted reaches.



# Barriers to migration

- Priority score based upon assessed impact to upstream and downstream migration, available habitat and distance to next upstream barrier.
- Objective prioritisation of which barriers to focus on.

Barrier	Waterbody	Colloquial Name	Strahler or	Total US Km	Available US Km	Impact to
MS27	River Sid	Fortescue Weir	3	38.42	1.93	
MS4	River Sid	School Weir	3	43.34	0.03	
MS5	River Sid	Old School Weir	3	43.31	0.39	
MS3	River Sid	Mill Ford	3	43.54	0.20	
LS1	Lincombe		1	4.35	4.35	
MS12	River Sid		3	42.64	0.08	
MS36	River Sid	Sidbury Mill Weir	3	20.69	0.10	
MS39	River Sid	Footbridge Weir	3	24.66	3.38	
SN8	Snod Brook		1	0.47	1.78	
MS13	River Sid		3	42.56	0.03	



# Habitat improvements

- Riparian fencing and buffers.
- Riparian tree planting.



- Large woody debris augmentation
- Channel restoration and floodplain connectivity



# Thanks for listening



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