

## Boost for Biodiversity Fund

**Success story:** Kate Aubury at Kemerton Conservation Trust



**“Severn Trent funding helped to preserve an array of habitats for wildlife in our wetland nature reserves.”**

- Kate Aubury

Kemerton Conservation Trust’s Support Co-ordinator, Kate Aubury secured funding from Severn Trent’s Boost for Biodiversity scheme to rejuvenate the biodiverse habitats within one of the organisation’s wetland nature reserves.

The site, known as ‘Beggar Boys Wetland’, intercepts two streams coming down from Bredon Hill and accumulates a significant amount of water each year.

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So in April 2018 when the local FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) adviser recommended the Boost for Biodiversity grant, Kate thought it sounded the perfect opportunity to fund the repairs and reduce the build-up of silt to improve water flow.

Kate said “the application process was straightforward, we requested a sum of nearly £500 to cover the relatively small project and were granted the full amount ready to start work in the late summer - a perfect time when the streams were at their driest for ease of access.”

The money funded the cost of hiring a digger to fully clear the silt traps, while the Trust also employed a professional contractor to cut back brambles and hawthorns that were

overtaking the reedbed, making the area less habitable.

While these tasks may seem relatively minor, they were extremely important for the local flora and fauna that call ‘Beggar Boys Wetland’ their home. The work has helped to maintain the mosaic of habitats in the area, supporting a huge array of species, including the nationally rare Club-tailed Dragonfly.

“If anyone is thinking of applying for the funding, I’d certainly recommend it. For the short time the application took to complete, the silt traps will now last another 10 years before they need to be re-dug, so it’s certainly time well spent” said Kate.

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## Boost for Biodiversity Fund

**Success story:** John Field at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust



**“Funding from Severn Trent is helping conserve an internationally recognised endangered species.”**

- John Field

With the help of our Boost for Biodiversity scheme, John Field and the team at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, have secured vital habitats for endangered native white-clawed crayfish.

In the past the trust has had real difficulty sourcing funding to protect the native crayfish.

“We jumped at the chance of the unique funding opportunity, that allowed us to protect the crayfish while improving natural flood management and once we

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heard our application for the grant was successful, we received the money very quickly” says John.

The funding they received allowed them to hit the ground running with surveying populations in the headwaters of the river Frome. Following this, the trust soon realised there was imminent threat from non-native invasive signal crayfish, that out-competed their native white-clawed cousins.

So, the project then became an urgent rescue mission, as soon as a Natural England granted a licence for of translocation of a protected species.



“Fortunately, we’d already identified a suitable receptor site for the native crayfish – the stretch of the Dillay Brook. This had natural flood management practices in place and is protected by a series of sumps and syphons, meaning the invasive species is unlikely to break in,” said John.

They then set about catching over 220 white-clawed crayfish to be re-homed, ensuring only healthy individuals made the grade, to minimise the population’s susceptibility to disease.

Once they’d hand-picked the crayfish out and separated males and females into tanks, they then slowly drove them to Dillay Brook and released them at specific points, leaving them to get acquainted with their new home.

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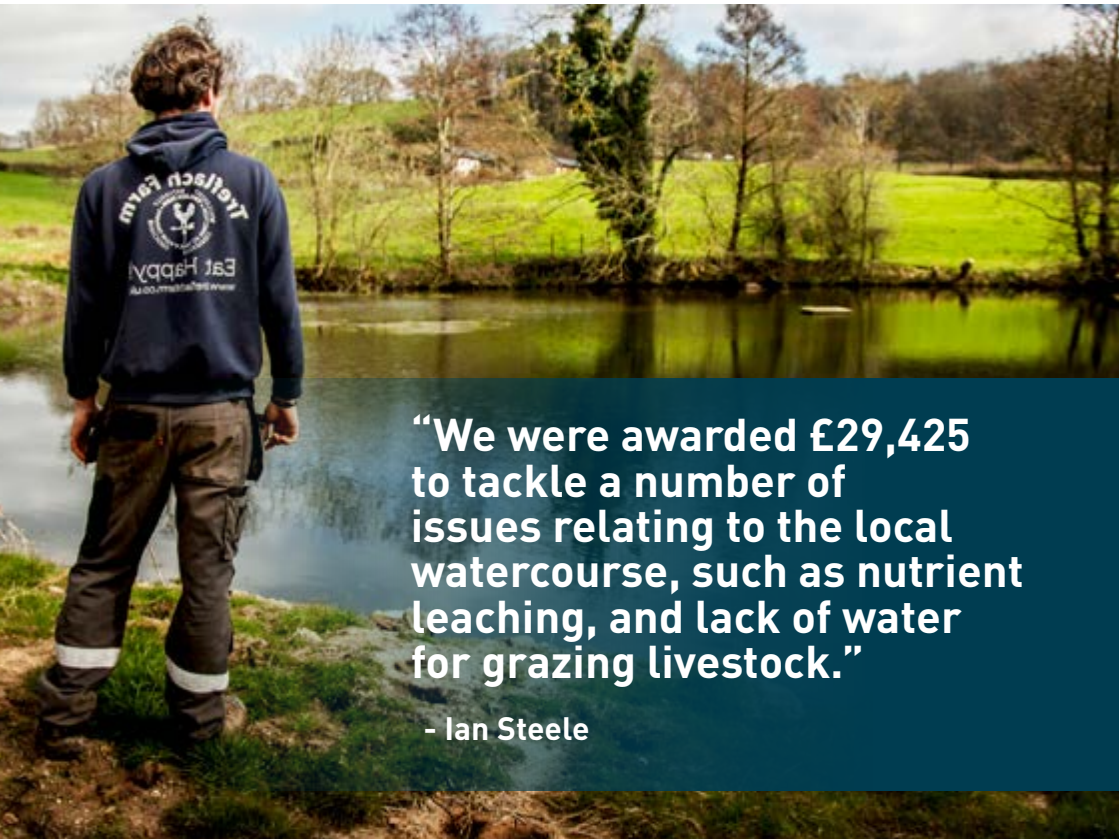
The first stage of the project was successfully completed in October 2018. John and the Trust are still making regular checks on the crayfish and are hoping to learn the full extent of the success in the late summer, when the females have released their hatchlings.

The Trust continues to ensure natural flood management techniques are used to enhance habitats of crayfish and other native species, as part of their wider plan to improve local watercourses.



## Boost for Biodiversity Fund

**Success story:** Ian Steele at Treflach Farm in Shropshire



**“We were awarded £29,425 to tackle a number of issues relating to the local watercourse, such as nutrient leaching, and lack of water for grazing livestock.”**

**- Ian Steele**

One of last year’s successful applicants was farmer, Ian Steele, who’s enterprise works towards sustainable farming practices to produce wholesome food. Ian applied for funding to support a wetland and drainage improvement project at his farm in Shropshire.

Ian was awarded £29,425 to tackle a number of issues relating to the local watercourse, such as poaching, nutrient leaching, silt build-up and lack of water for grazing livestock. Ian put the funding towards various solutions including alterations to the cattle shed drainage to prevent nutrient leaching, installing a more efficient septic tank system and restoring a pool to enhance biodiversity through the protection of amphibious species and improving flood-risk management.

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