



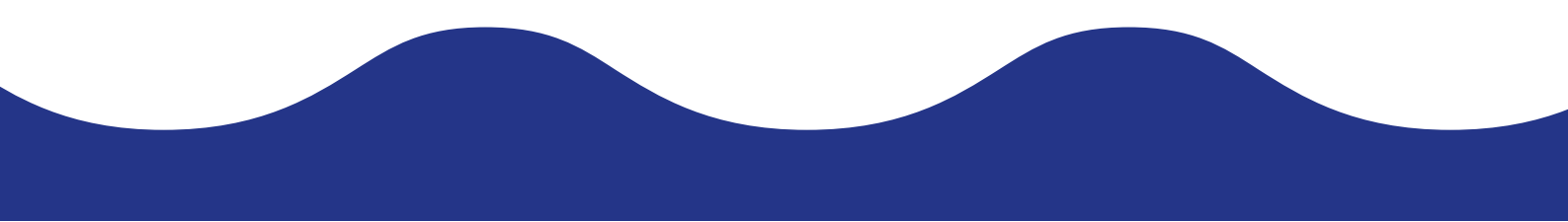
Yellow Fish

Case study



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Introduction

The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) delivered a Yellow Fish campaign with local communities to raise awareness of river pollution.

This case study summarises the project, the methods used and the lessons learnt to help inform future schemes.



What is Yellow Fish?

Yellow Fish is a national scheme to raise awareness about sources of water pollution and the quality of water in streams, rivers, lakes or ponds.

Many outside drains which take rainwater from our gutters and roads flow directly into the nearest river, a fact of which most people are unaware.

Yellow Fish symbols are stencilled or attached next to drains to share the message “only rain down the drain”.

Steps

In this report we'll go through the key stages to running your Yellow Fish campaign:

01 Permissions and logistics

A partnership with the local authority is crucial as markers require council permission to locate relevant drains and install markers on pavements.

02 Choosing the right marker

There are lots of options for how to mark your drains, ranging in cost, longevity, suitability and sustainability.

03 Health and Safety

Safe working is vital when running any volunteer events and especially when working near roads. We've included our full risk assessment and method statement.

04 Community engagement

This scheme is designed to be delivered with volunteers from the local area.

05 Yellow Fish event

Finally, your step-by-step guide to running an event!

Permissions

It is against the law to put unauthorised markings on a road and the responsible party may be fined. Therefore, it is an essential first step to gain permission to mark road drains from the Highways Team at your local council.

Leave plenty of time for this stage as each council has different requirements. It's good to do this stage before outlaying money on markers or planning any community engagement in case your council has requests at this early stage, for example the need for a specific size, thickness or material of marker.

Logistics

The Yellow Fish campaign is designed to target pollution entering surface water drainage systems. These are drains that convey water from roads and other hard surfaces directly to the nearest watercourse without being cleaned at a sewage treatment works.

So, how do you find out which drains to mark?

Local knowledge - if you have a specific outfall in mind which is regularly polluting, you can submit a Freedom of Information request to your local water company to find out which local roads are connected to the surface water drainage system.

Environment Agency - your local Environment Agency pollution incident response team are a good point of call to find out which roads are connected to the surface water system and may benefit from a Yellow Fish campaign.



Choosing the marker

SERT researched the different markers used and methods of attaching the markers from previous projects. We decided to go with the metal marker and chalk decorations outlined below.

Spray paint

The original scheme was designed using a semi-permanent paint to stencil a yellow fish shape onto the pavement. While this was simple to use, install and get permission for; it did not last forever. It was also found that as the paint broke down it could contribute to pollution of rivers via the drain as it contained ingredients highlighted as harmful to aquatic environments.

Chalk

Colourful chalk can also be used to decorate drains with the "only rain down the drain" message and eye catching motifs. While this method is more environmentally friendly than spray paint, it did not last past the first rainfall event, limiting the longevity of the message and project impact.

Plastic marker

Previous schemes have used plastic marker disks, attached to the pavement near the drain. These off-the-shelf markers are extremely cheap to purchase and have a polished and professional look when compared to the original spray painting method. However, due to general wear and tear under harsh environmental conditions some markers do not stand the test of time and are washed down drains, contributing to plastic pollution in our rivers.

Metal marker

Another option is to use a custom-made round marker fabricated out of metal and attached to the pavement near the drain. This has a similar high-quality and professional finish to the plastic marker without the risk of contributing to plastic pollution. However, the cost of purchasing these markers is much higher.

Marker design

Material: Grade 316 brushed Stainless Steel

This material was selected because 316 Stainless Steel contains an addition of molybdenum that gives it improved corrosion resistance. This is particularly important as roads can be high chloride environments when salt spreading takes place in winter.

Size: 70mm diameter

Curb stones are variable in height, especially if roads have been resurfaced which can reduce the step. 70mm worked in the vast majority of locations. We trialled a larger, more eye-catching 100mm marker but often found it was too large to fit on the vertical face of the pavement.

Thickness: 0.9mm

This very low profile reduces the chance of slips and trips by pedestrians as well as vehicles accidentally brushing against it.

Design

SERT chose a colour design to tie in with the name of the campaign - Yellow Fish. The brushed stainless steel catches the light and draws people eye from across the road. The reverse of the disk has an indented crosshatch pattern etched into it to create a rougher texture to aid adhesion to the curb.

Production company: FineCut Group

We wanted to choose a local company to manufacture our markers to reduce the miles involved in transporting the markers and reduce the delivery cost to make it easier to order more when needed. Unfortunately, the increased prices of raw materials because of the Covid-19 pandemic meant each marker cost more than originally planned, coming in at around £5 including resizing the artwork (one off fee) and delivery.
www.finecut.co.uk



Health and Safety

We've included our full risk assessment and method statement at the end of this report to allow readers appreciation of the full range of risks mitigated for when running a Yellow Fish event. Below are some key tips:

Before the event

There are Health and Safety concerns to address before you start advertising your event and the volunteers get involved. The key is to select roads for drain marking that have low volumes of traffic and where vehicle speeds are low , for example quiet residential roads.

It is essential that you have visited the area at the time you're planning to run the event to assess the traffic levels and speeds to determine that it's a safe area to run the event.

PPE including gloves and high-vis vests should be purchased ahead of the event. Read the COSHH sheet for the glue you purchase and consider any other safety measures it recommends.

During the event

The event organiser should run a thorough Health and Safety briefing at the start of the event to ensure everyone knows the role they play in keeping themselves and other volunteers safe.

Volunteers should work in at least pairs with one person keeping watch for traffic and warn the others to move out of the road when a car approaches.

The event coordinator should provide close supervision and ensure volunteers are adhering to all health and safety rules and advise if any roads should be skipped as they are too busy.

Community engagement

How to recruit your volunteers

Yellow Fish events are suitable for wide range of people of varying ages and physical ability to take part in. Therefore you can target many different community groups to recruit your volunteers. You could contact local Scout or Guide groups, corporate groups from nearby businesses and friends of groups alongside your existing volunteer base.

As well as contacting our existing volunteers, we advertised our events using:

- local posters
- what's on guides
- social media posts (including sharing them to local Facebook groups)
- council newsletters

Help save your local river from pollution!

We are looking for local residents to help with our Yellow Fish campaign to help spread the message - Only Rain Down the Drain.

By raising awareness locally, we hope to stop polluting substances from being poured down road drains which head straight to the river.

Tuesday 24th of August and Tuesday 31st of August, both sessions 6pm - 8pm

Limited places available and booking is essential. To find out more and reserve your place, please visit:

www.southeastriverstrust.org/events

Or scan this QR code!



Example poster and Facebook post

South East Rivers Trust
Published by Jessica Mead · 6 August 2021 ·

We're looking for volunteers to help us stop pollution from reaching the River Wandle and Pyl Brook.

Many of the drains that line our streets flow directly into the nearest river, a fact which most people are unaware of. This means that detergents, paints, oils and other toxic substances are often poured down road drains and head straight to the river, negatively affecting the wildlife that calls our rivers home.

But you can help by joining in one of our Yellow Fish volunteer events this August. Find out more and book your place at www.southeastriverstrust.org/events

Help stop pollution from reaching the Wandle and Pyl Brook!

Join one of our Yellow Fish volunteer events taking place:

14th, 24th and 31st of August
in the Sutton and Hackbridge areas.



Community engagement

Impacts of Covid-19

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were only able to run our Yellow Fish with small groups of six or less. Although this limited our reach slightly, we found it worked well by allowing for close supervision of participants so that we could work our way along the roads in a safe, logical and thorough manner.

Wider community reach

Alongside the volunteers, we also engaged local residents with the scheme. We felt this was a key part of the campaign because this is the target audience for our messaging: they are the ones who can help to reduce pollution through careful use of the surface water drains along their street.

We did this by delivering leaflets to every property along the roads where we marked drains. A copy of the leaflet we posted can be found on the next page.

This linked people to our Yellow Fish webpage that shares helpful advice on responsible disposal of commonly polluting substances:

www.southeastrivertrust.org/yellow-fish

During the six months we ran all our events, we had more than 1600 hits to that page. Therefore we believe our leaflet distribution was a successful way of raising awareness of the problem and hopefully affecting behaviour change.

We also made sure to make the time for any local residents who asked us questions while we were out marking drains. This is another reason to ensure the volunteers are well briefed at the start of the event as it equips them to share the campaign messaging with any interested parties.



Have you seen these fish?

Yellow Fish markers are being installed locally to remind everyone that drains empty into the local river.

Find out more about the Yellow Fish Project here:
www.southeastriverstrust.org/yellow-fish



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Did you know?

The majority of outside drains empty directly into the local river. This means our rivers are regularly polluted by whatever products we use or dispose of outside.

So remember:

Only rain down the drain!

- ✓ Do use environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- ✗ Don't dispose of chemicals and oils through the outside drain.
- ✓ Do report pollution you see in the river to the Environment Agency hotline: 0800 80 70 60.

Running an event

01

Permissions gained, roads selected, event advertised and volunteers recruited....it's time to run the event!

02

Volunteer briefing

Once your volunteers have arrived, distribute PPE to everyone and deliver a full briefing to the attendees. Make sure it includes:

- Introduction to the activity and key Yellow Fish messaging
- Health and Safety risks and mitigation
- Which roads you'll be working along - this helps define your area to supervise
- A demonstration of how to mark a drain
- What time the event ends.

03

Assign roles

Split the group into pairs or groups of three. In each group there should be one person keeping watch for traffic while the others mark the drain. The group can swap roles throughout the event but one of them must always be on traffic watch.

04

Mark drains and distribute leaflets!

Have one group on each side of the road and have them work their way along it and mark every drain they pass. The method for fixing and the ideal marker positioning can be found on the next page. As the volunteers move along the road they can also distribute leaflets to each property they pass.

05

Record your efforts

Make a note of which roads have been completed, how many markers you've installed and how many leaflets you've distributed to keep a track of your efforts.

Marker positioning and fixing



Curb face

Ideal positioning for drains along pavements. Fixing the marker to the vertical face of the curb reduces any risk of slips or trips by pedestrians.

Curb top

Ideal positioning for drains along sections of pavement with reduced pedestrian use, for example where there is a grass verge between the pavement and curb edge. Fixing the marker to the top of the curb increases the chance of it being seen before someone pours a polluting substance into the drain. Some councils do not allow for markers to be fixed on curb tops so it's important to clarify this before marking begins.



Dropped curbs

In our trials we found that for drains located in front of areas of dropped curb markers came off very quickly due to the high wear from cars driving over them. For these drains we only used chalk decoration.



Fixing method

Before fixing, clean the area of curb using a wire brush to remove any dust and debris. We then used high strength adhesive suitable for use outdoors. It's good to find one with a short drying time if possible. Apply in a spiral shape on the reverse of the marker and wipe off any excess that squeezes out around the edge.





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