



Volunteers surveying for Water Voles



Water Vole swimming



The Northwest Lowlands **Water Vole Project**

How can you help us to conserve Water Voles in the northwest?

- By taking part in our Water Vole surveys
- you can either assist the Project Officers
or be trained to survey your local area yourself.
- By allowing us to survey your land for Water Voles.
- By managing your land in a Water Vole friendly way
or even creating new Water Vole habitat on your
land - we can provide advice on how to do this.

For more information, please contact
either of the Project Officers:

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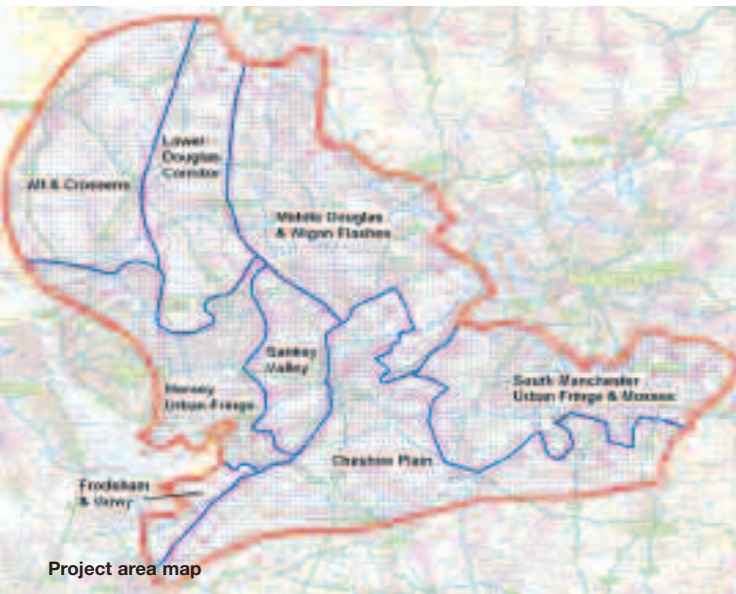
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**Wildlife Trust for Lancashire,
Manchester and North Merseyside**





Project area map



Water Vole latrine



Ideal Water Vole habitat

The Water Vole has suffered dramatic population declines in Britain due to habitat loss and predation by introduced American Mink. Consequently, it is now fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to harm either Water Voles or their burrows.

Limited survey work suggests that the northwest of England still supports some healthy populations of Water Voles. However, until now no initiatives have been in place to ensure that this remains the case.

The Northwest Lowlands Water Vole Project aims to gather evidence to allow the northwest to be recognised as an area of national importance for Water Vole conservation.

It also aims to ensure that current Water Vole populations within the Project area are enhanced by targeted habitat improvement works.

The Water Vole survey season runs from April to September. This coincides with the Water Vole breeding season when they are most active and leave behind plenty of field signs for us to spot, including latrines (piles of droppings), burrows and feeding remains.

During this time, the Project Officers are conducting and coordinating surveys across the project area, supported by volunteers.

Outside the survey season, the Project Officers are collating and mapping the survey data. This information is then used to target landowner liaison and habitat improvement works in order to increase connectivity between isolated Water Vole populations.

Habitat improvement works that will benefit Water Voles, along with many other species, include:

- fencing banks to prevent overgrazing by livestock
- ditch re-profiling
- pond and reedbed creation
- scrub clearance and tree thinning
- sympathetic bankside vegetation management