

Habitat Features in Rivers & Streams



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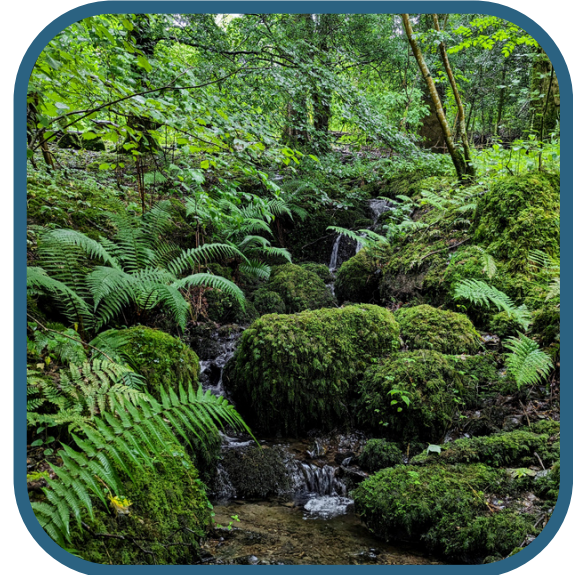
A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING KEY NATURALNESS
FEATURES



WATERFALLS & CASCADES

Waterfalls are steep, singular drops in water flow that separate two sections of the water body. Cascades are smaller falls of water, usually in a series of 'steps'.

Both provide vital habitats by varying the environment and flow of water along the river.



NATURAL MIRE-STREAM TRANSITION

Mires are usually areas of waterlogged ground that form bog, swamp, and wet-woodland type habitat mosaics across a valley bottom.

Pooling water may or may not be visible, but water-loving vegetation gives a good hint as to where mires are present.



MULTIPLE CHANNELS

Multiple river channels running alongside each other may be man-made diversions or naturally occurring.

Pipes can potentially create multiple channels through land drainage too.



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RIPARIAN WETLAND

Land adjacent to the water body that transitions through various stages of water habitats.

Healthy riparian wetlands will not usually exist in heavily modified areas. Unnatural features stop the natural vegetation progression from aquatic plants to marginal plants to wetland species.



FERN-FILLED GHYLLS AND RAVINES

Ravines and Ghylls are sections of rivers/streams that have high, cliff-like sides that provide crucial habitats for rare wildlife.

You may encounter many different fern species, and all are great indicators that healthy, natural processes are occurring.



EXPOSED SEDIMENT

Exposed cobbles/gravels/sands are present in areas where natural erosion and deposition processes are occurring.

Sediment is related to geology and there will be huge variance across England as to what materials you might see in waterbodies.

