

# To hell and back

## - the story of the Thames restoration

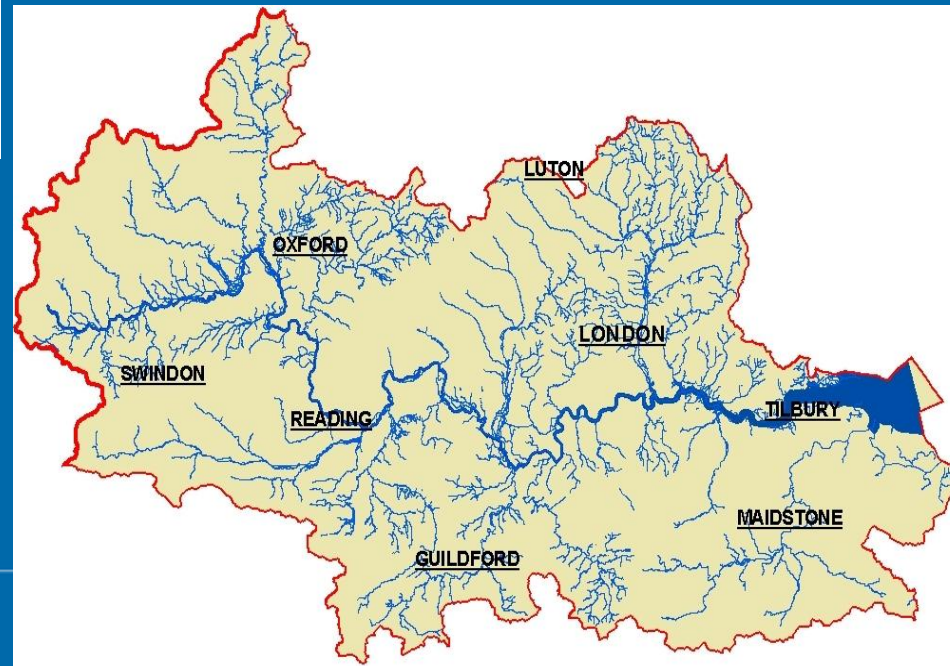
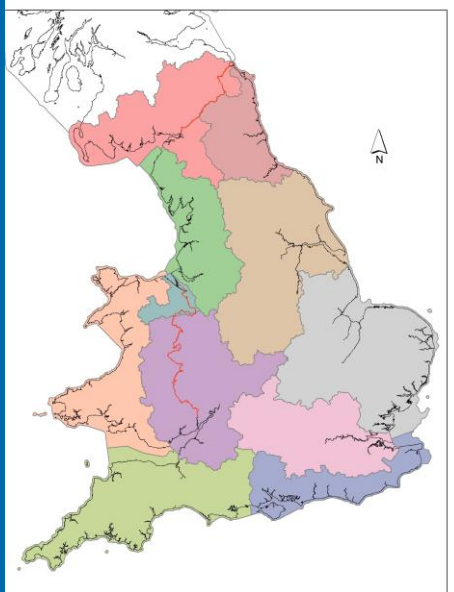
Alastair Driver

National Biodiversity Manager, Environment Agency, UK

Ambassador, International Riverfoundation

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# The Thames Catchment



# The beating heart of the South East

*The St Lawrence is water, the  
Mississippi is muddy water, but  
the Thames is liquid history”  
John Burns MP, 1929*



# Flooding and pestilence



## EAST COAST FLOOD DISASTER

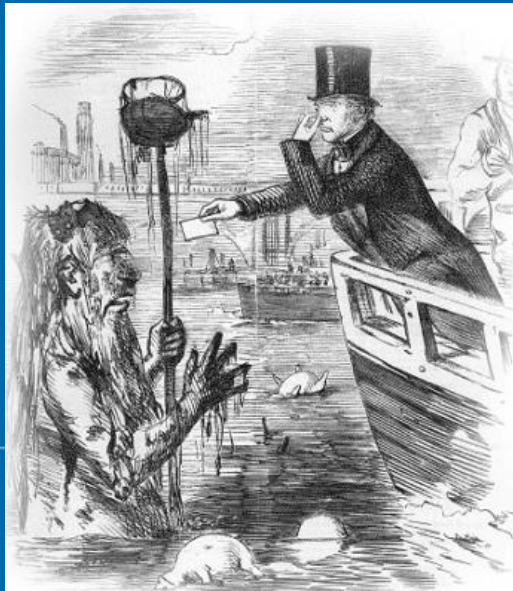
Over 150 Reported Dead

GREAT STORM SWEEPS  
SEA INLAND

Many Thousands Evacuated

The death-roll in disastrous floods along the East Coast from Middlesbrough to the Thames yesterday had risen to over 150 early this morning and was still mounting.

Towns and villages were swept by high seas driven by the storms which, on the other side of the country on Saturday, overwhelmed the Stranraer-Larne ferry and caused the loss of 133 lives. So far as is known deaths in the areas which suffered most severely



# The concrete age

River Quaggy, London



River Ravensbourne, London



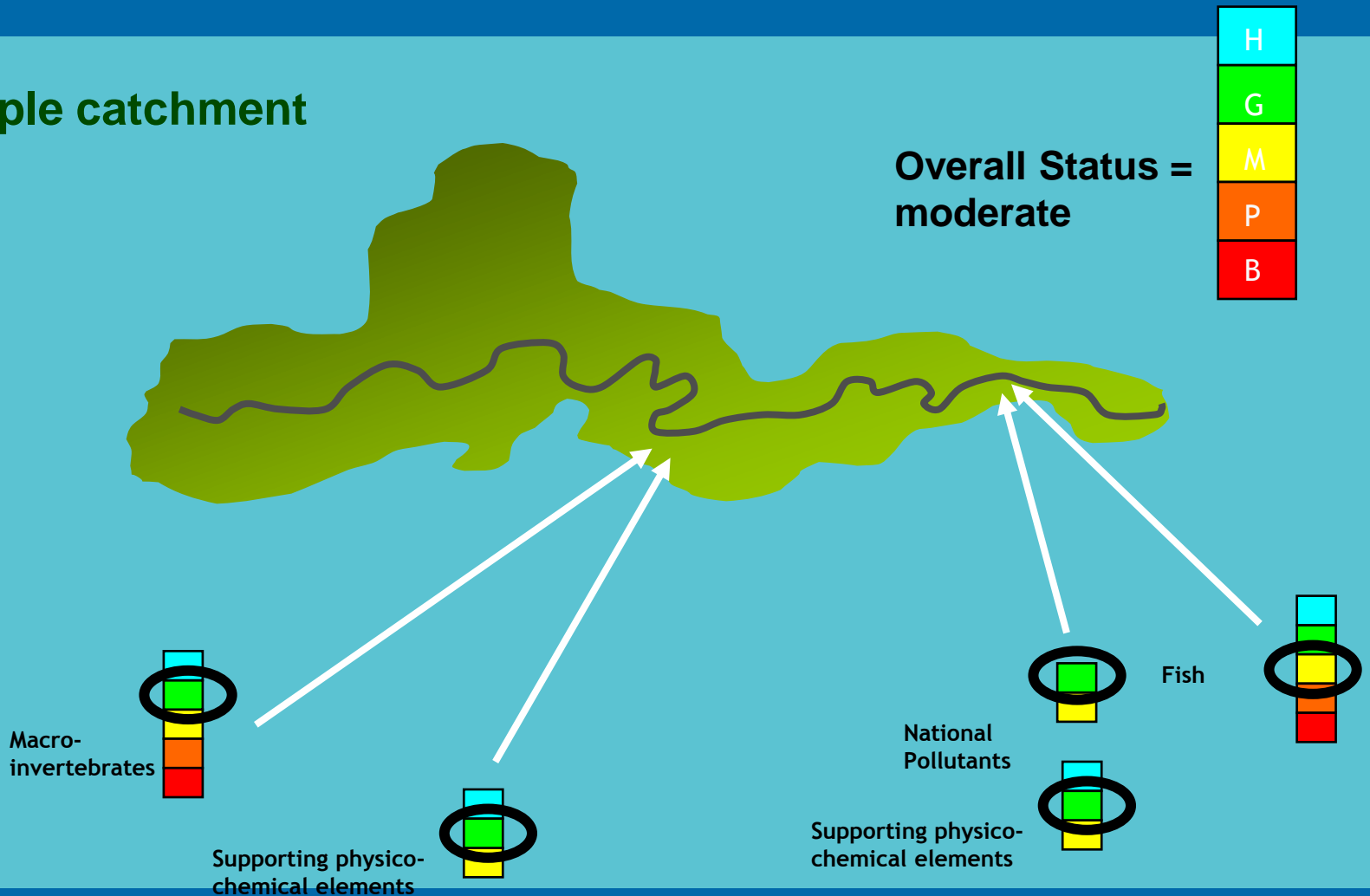
# The remarkable recovery

- ➔ Good water quality increased from 53% (1990) to 80% (2008)
- ➔ 125 species of fish
- ➔ Healthy breeding Otter population
- ➔ Over 1000 habitat enhancement schemes since 1990
- ➔ Over 100 km of river restored since 1990



# The European Water Framework Directive - classification principle – one out - all out

## Example catchment



# Catchment restoration through sustainable land management



Washing topsoil down the drain



Buffer strip fencing



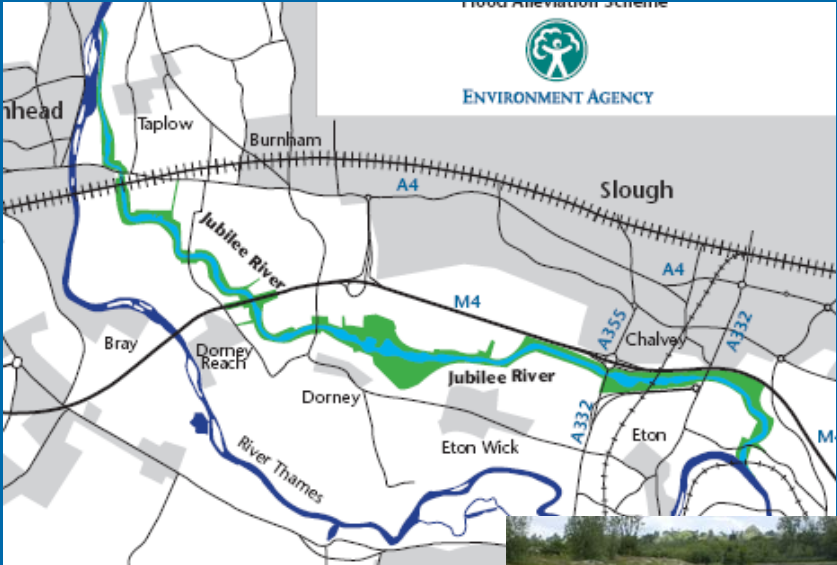
# Catchment restoration through sustainable flood risk management

- ➡ 11 km of new river
- ➡ 5,500 homes and businesses protected
- ➡ 17 years in development !



# Catchment restoration through sustainable flood risk management

## Jubilee River



# Catchment restoration through urban river restoration

R. Quaggy at Sutcliffe Park, Lewisham



*“London is a concrete jungle and places like this are like your lungs of London... it’s your own little countryside.”*

**Roy Palmer, local resident**



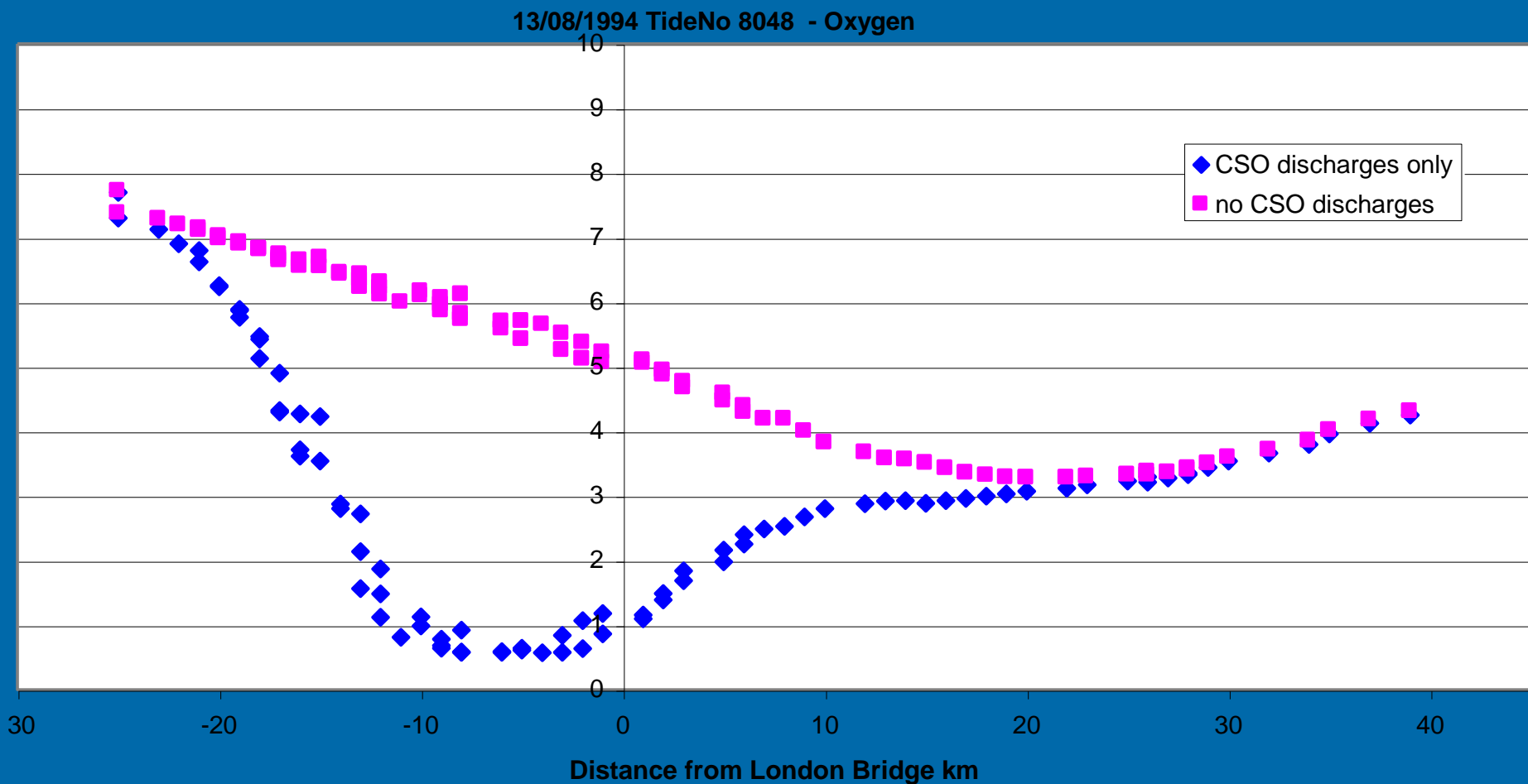
# Catchment restoration through urban river restoration



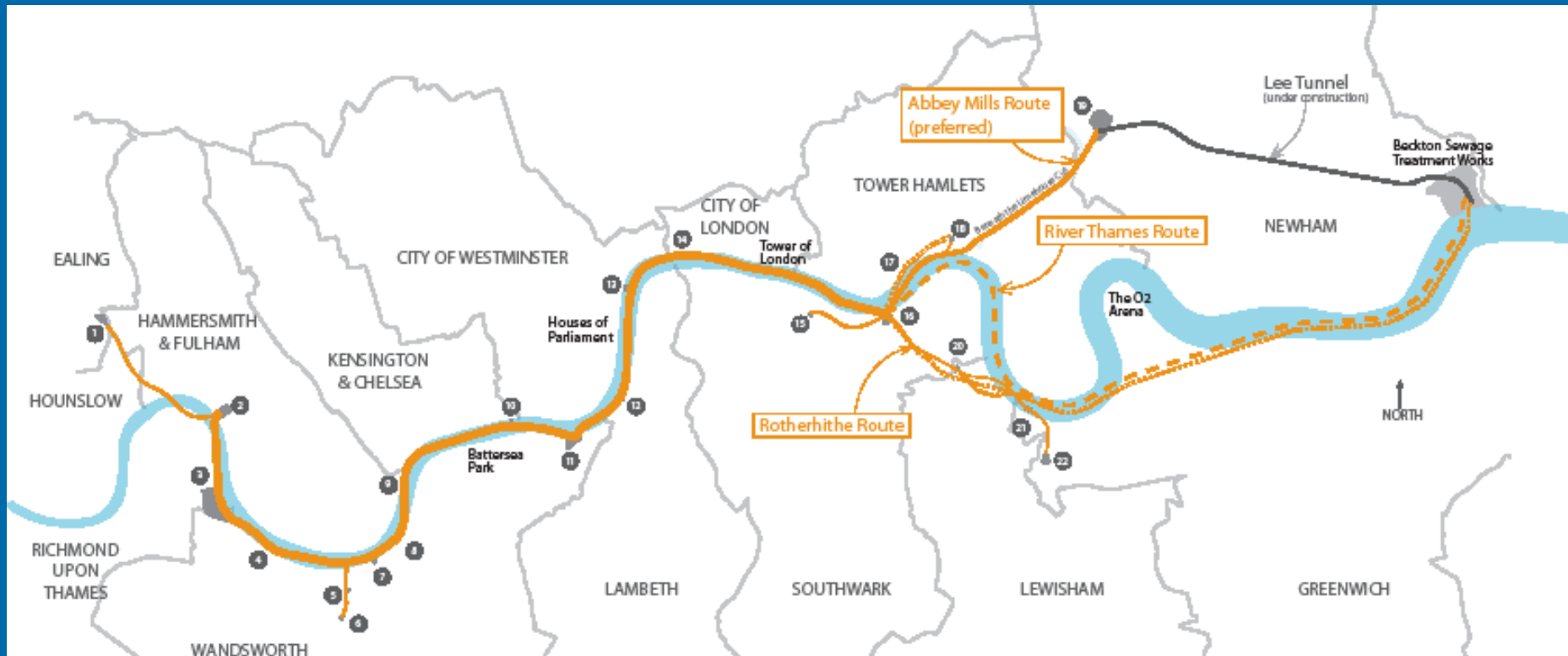
**River Ravensbourne at  
Cornmill Gardens, South  
London – restored as part of  
housing development**



# Catchment restoration through reducing Combined Sewer Overflows



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**Beckton STW, East London**



**“Busy Lizzie” – the 7m diameter tunnelling machine**



**Drilling rig carrying out exploratory work on the Thames**

# Catchment restoration through adaptation to climate change



**The Thames Barrier - protecting 1.25m people and £80bn+ of property value**



# Catchment restoration through adaptation to climate change



- **Thames Estuary 2100 project**



**Freshwater habitat creation at Great Bells Farm, Sheppey**

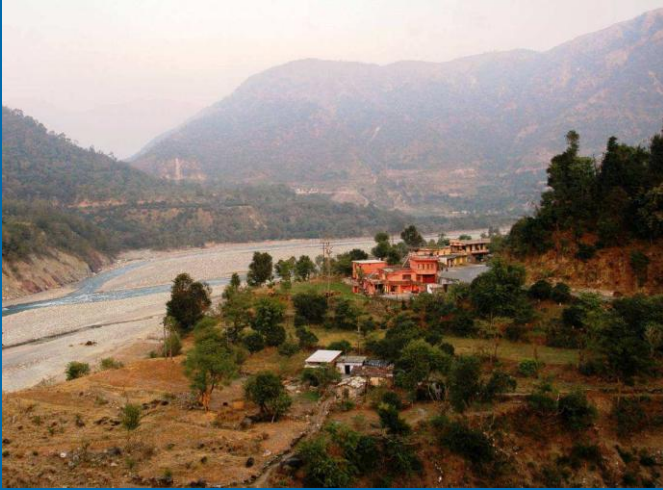
# Winning the World Cup for Rivers



Celebrating with representatives from a few of our many partner organisations



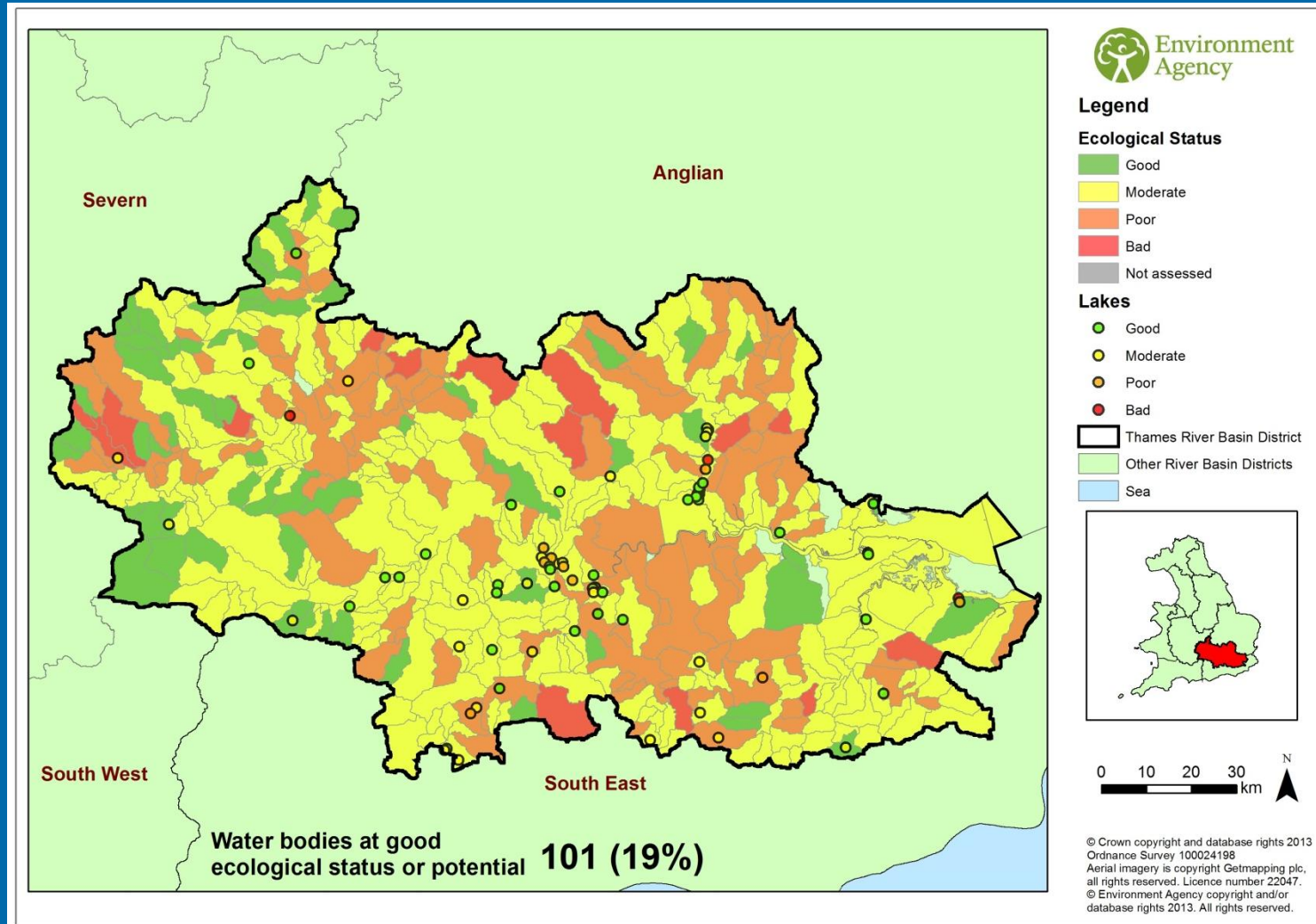
# So what happened to all that prize money?!!



## Twinning Project -Yamuna River, India



# The huge challenge ahead



# Thankyou for your attention

