LONDONASSEMBLY

London’s rivers and waterways:

Cleanliness, safety, wildlife, transport and recreational use

Research Unit

January 2025

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About this report

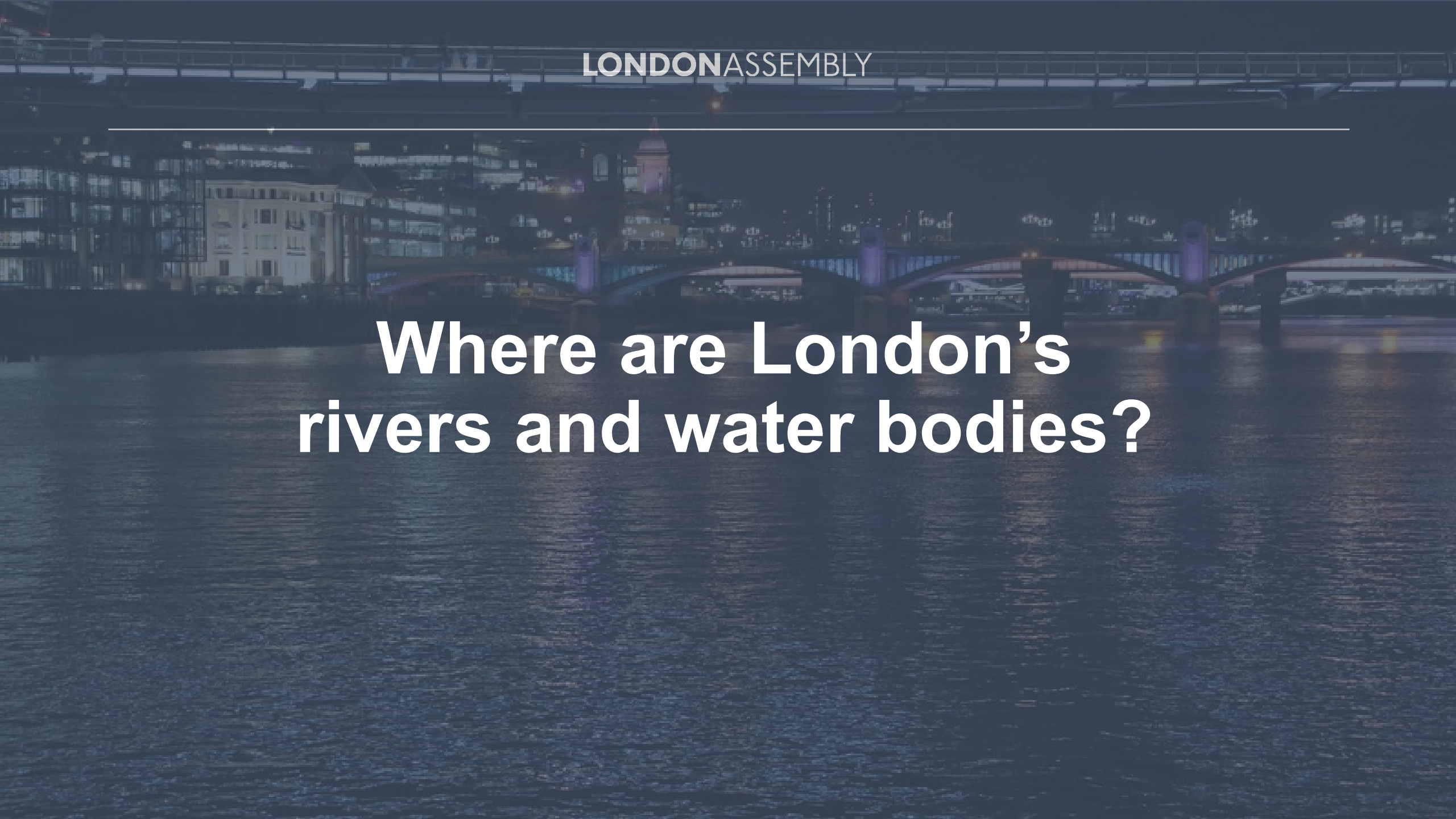
This report is an output of the London Assembly Research Unit. It sets out an overview of London's rivers and waterways, including location, river health information including sewage and littering data, water safety data, and wildlife. It also includes information about swimming and water sports in and on London's waterways and national and London swimming trends.

It sits alongside the London Assembly Environment Committee's investigation into the Mayor of London's commitment for London to have swimmable rivers in the next ten years.

The term 'waterway's is defined in the Mayor's 2018 Environment Strategy as including the River Thames, its tributary rivers and canals, as well as other water spaces including docks, lakes and reservoirs.

The London Assembly Research Unit provides an impartial research and information service. We undertake research and analysis on key issues in London to inform the Assembly's work. To access other publications by the Research Unit please visit: https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-research-unit-publications.

This report was produced by **Kate Firth, Richard Berry, William Weihermüller** and **Yonah Ehrlich** on behalf of the London Assembly Research Unit, with support from Richard Clarke.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Where are London's rivers and water bodies?

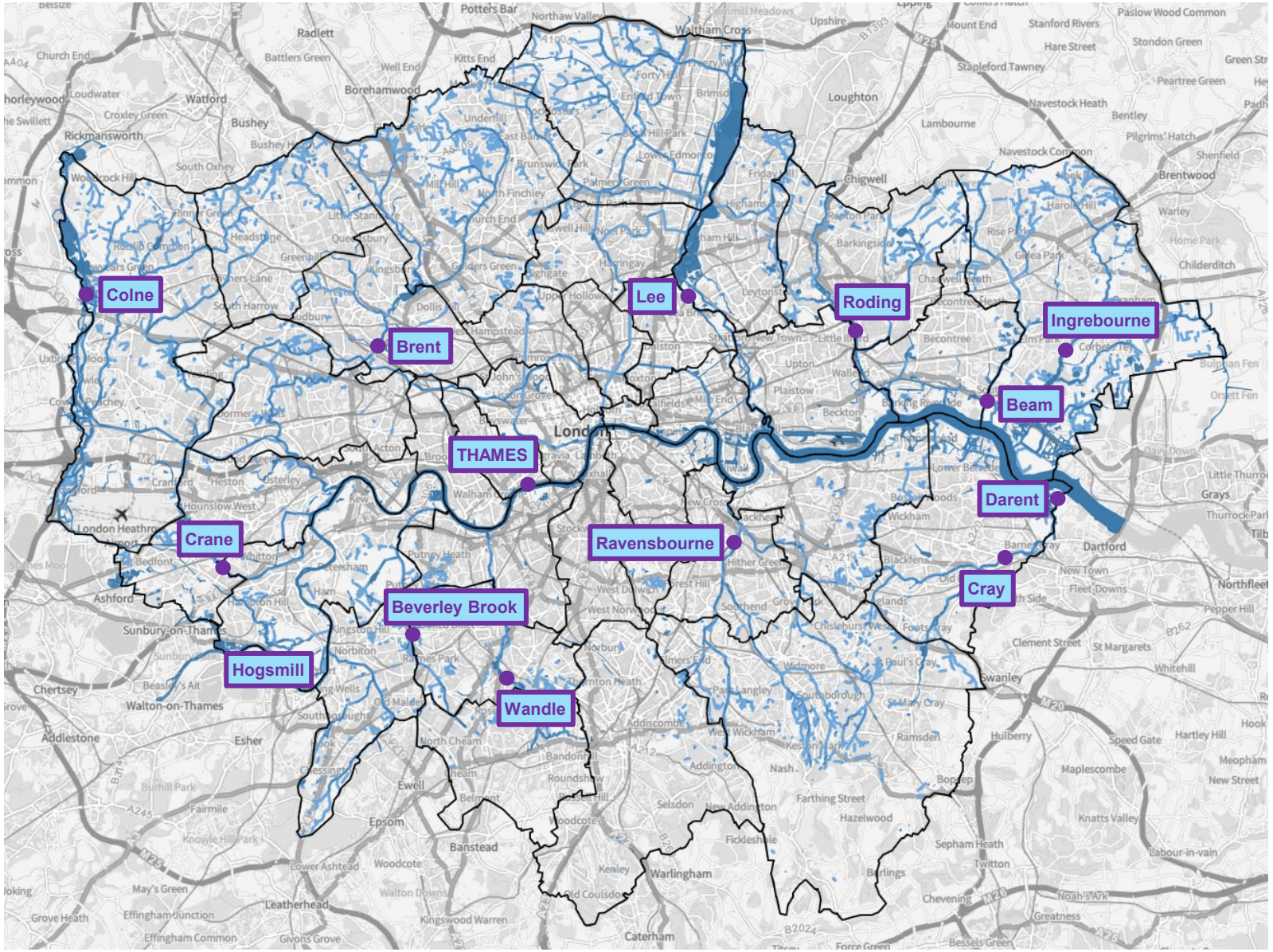
Surface water in London

The chart to the right shows the location of surface water across London.

It includes water bodies that are sufficiently wide enough to be captured as an area and linear bodies of water.

It also indicates the location of the key tributaries of the River Thames in Greater London.

A tributary is a body of water that feeds into a larger stream, river or lake. Over 600 kilometres of rivers and streams in London flow into the Thames.



Source: Map: Mayor of London, River Health Map, accessed 19 November 2024. Tributaries: Thames 21, The River Thames and its tributaries, accessed 25 October 2024. Markers added to map by Research Unit, showing a point along the course of the river.

Thames River Basin monitoring catchments

The Environment Agency has divided the Thames River Basin into twenty management catchments.

Each of the management catchments have been divided into operational catchments. There are 85 operational catchments across the Thames River Basin.

Within each operational catchments, are water bodies.

Environment Agency, management catchments in the Thames River Basin

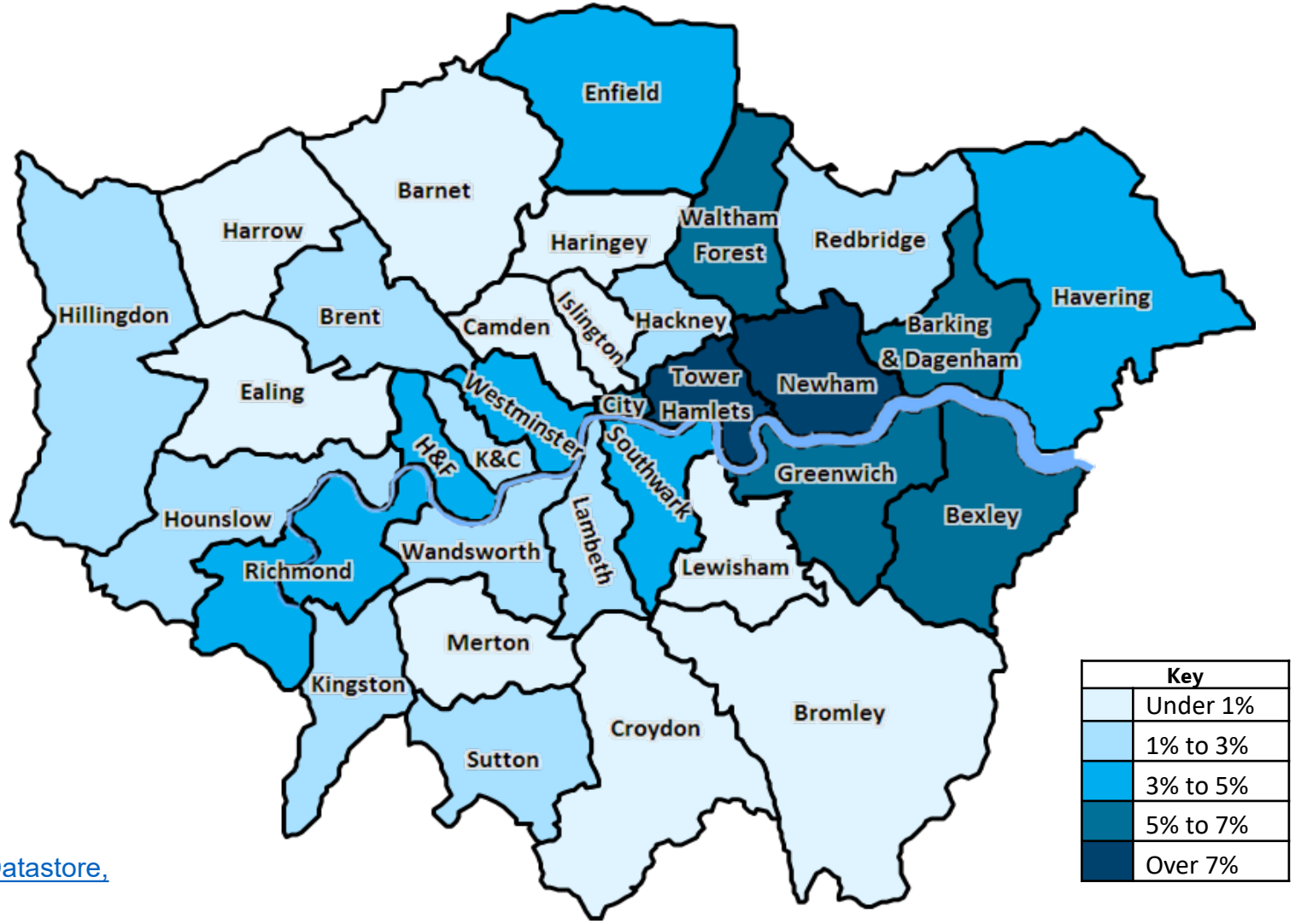
Source: Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer, Thames River Basin District

Proportion of blue space in London

Blue space makes up 2.9 per cent (4646 hectares) of total space in London. In comparison, green space makes up 50.3 per cent (80328) hectares of total space in London.

The boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets have the highest proportion of blue space.

Proportion of blue space in London boroughs, 2018



Source: GLA, London Green and Blue Cover - London Datastore,
Table: Green Cover Borough Summary, 2018

River health

Overview

The Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring the health of rivers and waterways in England. This is done in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

Monitoring is via a combination of fish, invertebrate and plant surveys, testing water quality at the riverbank, and retrieving samples for subsequent analysis at accredited laboratories.

Under the Directive, river health can be measured under two main categories (chemical health and ecological health) which are combined to give 'overall status'.

- **Chemical health** considers the presence (or absence) of a list of chemical pollutants using water sampling.
- **Ecological health** looks more broadly at what's living in the river, and how modified it is. The presence, absence and abundance of species is a good indication of the general health of a river.

A water body can only achieve a 'good' overall status classification if it achieves a good status for both chemical and ecological health.

Monitoring of water bodies in London – overall water status

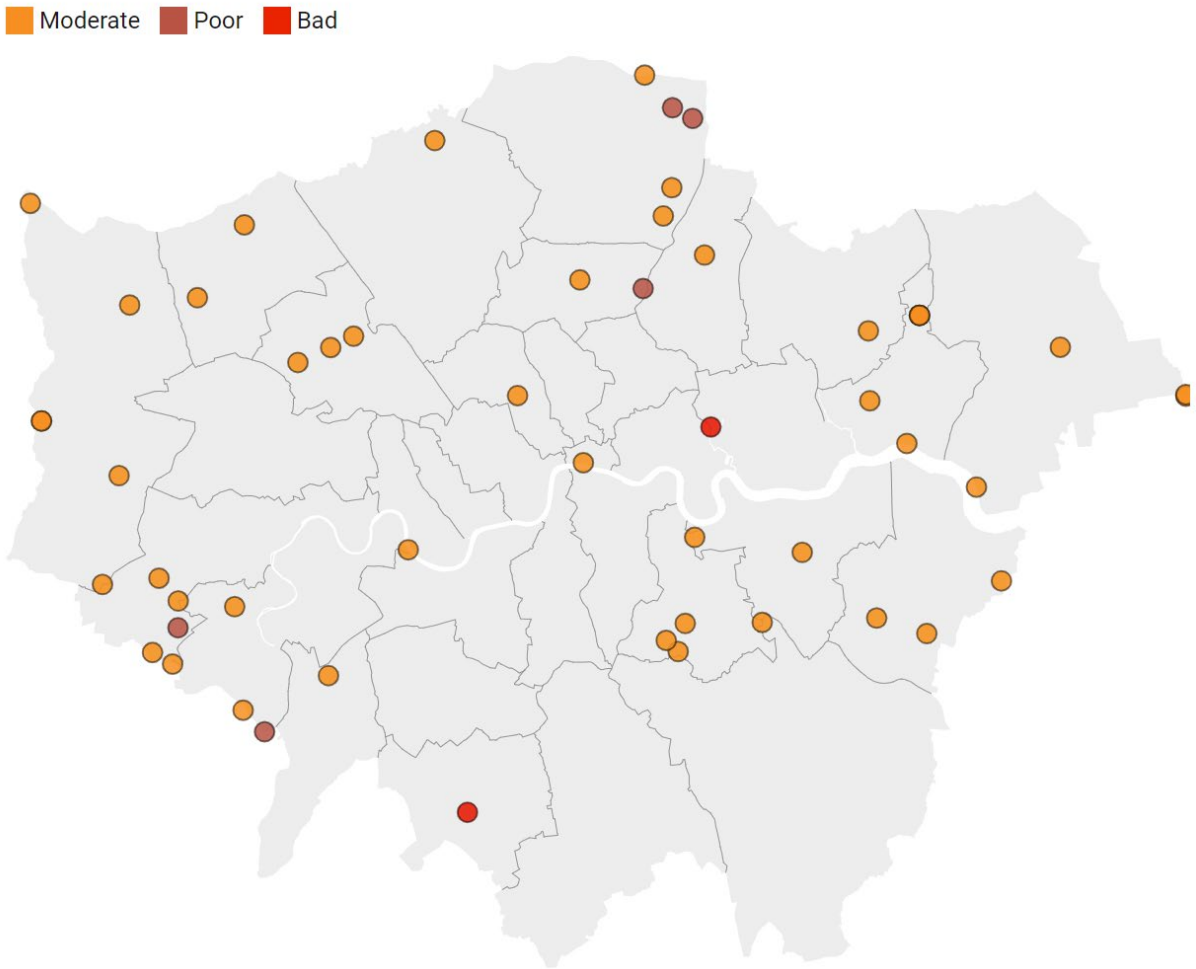
In 2019, the Environment Agency gave the below ‘overall status’ classifications to the 41 river water bodies, 4 canal water bodies, 6 surface water bodies, and 2 transitional water bodies in London.

Good	0
Moderate	46
Poor	5
Bad	2

Source: Environment Agency, Water Quality of London’s Rivers and Other Waterbodies, 2016, via London Datastore. (This shows the river, canal and surface water transfer water bodies that the Environment Agency monitors in the Greater London area)

Environment Agency, WFD Classification Status Cycle 2 - data.gov.uk, 14 June 2024

Location and classification of the river, canal, surface and transitional bodies that are monitored by the Environment Agency, 2019



Classifications of water bodies in London (1)

Management Catchment	Operational Catchment	Water Body Name	Water Body Category	Modified Waters Designation	Overall Water Body Classification	Ecological Classification	Chemical Classification
Essex South	Mardyke	Mardyke (East Tributary)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Essex South	Mardyke	Mardyke (West Tributary)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Southall Sewer and Runningwater Brook	River	Not Designated A/HMWB	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Beam and Ravensbourne	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Rom (Bourne Brook to Ravensbourne)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Ingrebourne	River	Not Designated A/HMWB	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Gores Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Seven Kings Water	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Mayes Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Roding Beam and Ingrebourne	Lower Roding (Loughton to Thames)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Pymmes and Salmon Brooks - Deephams STW to Tottenham Locks	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Moselle Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Ching Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Pymmes Brook upstream Salmon Brook confluence	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Lea Navigation Enfield Lock to Tottenham Locks	River	Heavily Modified	Poor	Poor	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Salmon Brook upstream Deephams STW	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Turkey Brook and Cuffley Brook	River	Not Designated A/HMWB	Poor	Poor	Fail
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Lea Navigation (Fieldes Weir to Enfield Lock)	River	Heavily Modified	Poor	Poor	Fail

Classifications of water bodies in London (2)

Management Catchment	Operational Catchment	Water Body Name	Water Body Category	Modified Waters Designation	Overall water body classification	Ecological classification	Chemical health
London	Lee Lower Rivers and Lakes	Lee (Tottenham Locks to Bow Locks/Three Mills Locks)	River	Heavily Modified	Bad	Bad	Fail
London	Hogsmill	Hogsmill	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Mole	Mole Lower and Rythe	Mole (Hersham to R. Thames conf at East Molesey)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Wandle	Wandle (Carshalton Branch at Carshalton)	River	Heavily Modified	Bad	Bad	Fail
Mole	Mole Lower and Rythe	Rythe	River	Heavily Modified	Poor	Poor	Fail
London	Beverley Brook	Beverley Brook (Motspur Park to Thames) and Pyl Brook at West Barnes	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Brent Rivers and Lakes	Wealdstone Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Brent Rivers and Lakes	Silk Stream and Edgware Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Brent Rivers and Lakes	Dollis Brook and Upper Brent	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Crane Rivers and Lakes	Crane	River	Not Designated A/HMWB	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Crane Rivers and Lakes	Yeading Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Colne	Colne	Pinn	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Maidenhead and Sunbury	Thames Lower	Thames (Egham to Teddington)	River	Heavily Modified	Poor	Poor	Fail
London	Ravensbourne	Pool River	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Ravensbourne	Ravensbourne (Keston to Catford)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Ravensbourne	Ravensbourne (Catford to Deptford)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Ravensbourne	Quaggy	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Crane Rivers and Lakes	Portlane Brook	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail

Classifications of water bodies in London (3)

Management Catchment	Operational catchment	Water body	River	Modified waters designation	Overall water body classification	Ecological classification	Chemical health
London	Marsh Dykes	Marsh Dykes (Woolwich)	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
London	Brent Rivers and Lakes	Lower Brent	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Darent and Cray	Cray and Shuttle	Upper Cray	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Darent and Cray	Cray and Shuttle	Lower Cray	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Darent and Cray	Cray and Shuttle	Shuttle	River	Heavily Modified	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Brent Canals and SWT	Grand Union Canal, Uxbridge to Hanwell Locks, Slough Arm, Paddington Arm	Canal	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Colne Canals and SWT	Grand Union Canal, Berkhamstead to Maple Lodge (RIvers Bulbourne, Gade and Colne)	Canal	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Colne Canals and SWT	Grand Union Canal, Maple Lodge to Uxbridge (Rivers Colne and Chess plus canal)	Canal	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Lee Lower Canals and SWT	Regents Canal, lower section	Canal	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Brent Canals and SWT	Brent Feeder Canal	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Crane SWT	Lower Duke of Northumberland's River	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Colne Canals and SWT	King George VI Reservoir water transfer	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Crane SWT	Upper Duke of Northumberland's River	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Crane SWT	Longford River	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail
Thames AWB	Lee Lower Canals and SWT	New River	Surface Water Transfer	Artificial	Moderate	Moderate	Fail

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Sewage and litter

Combined and separate sewer systems

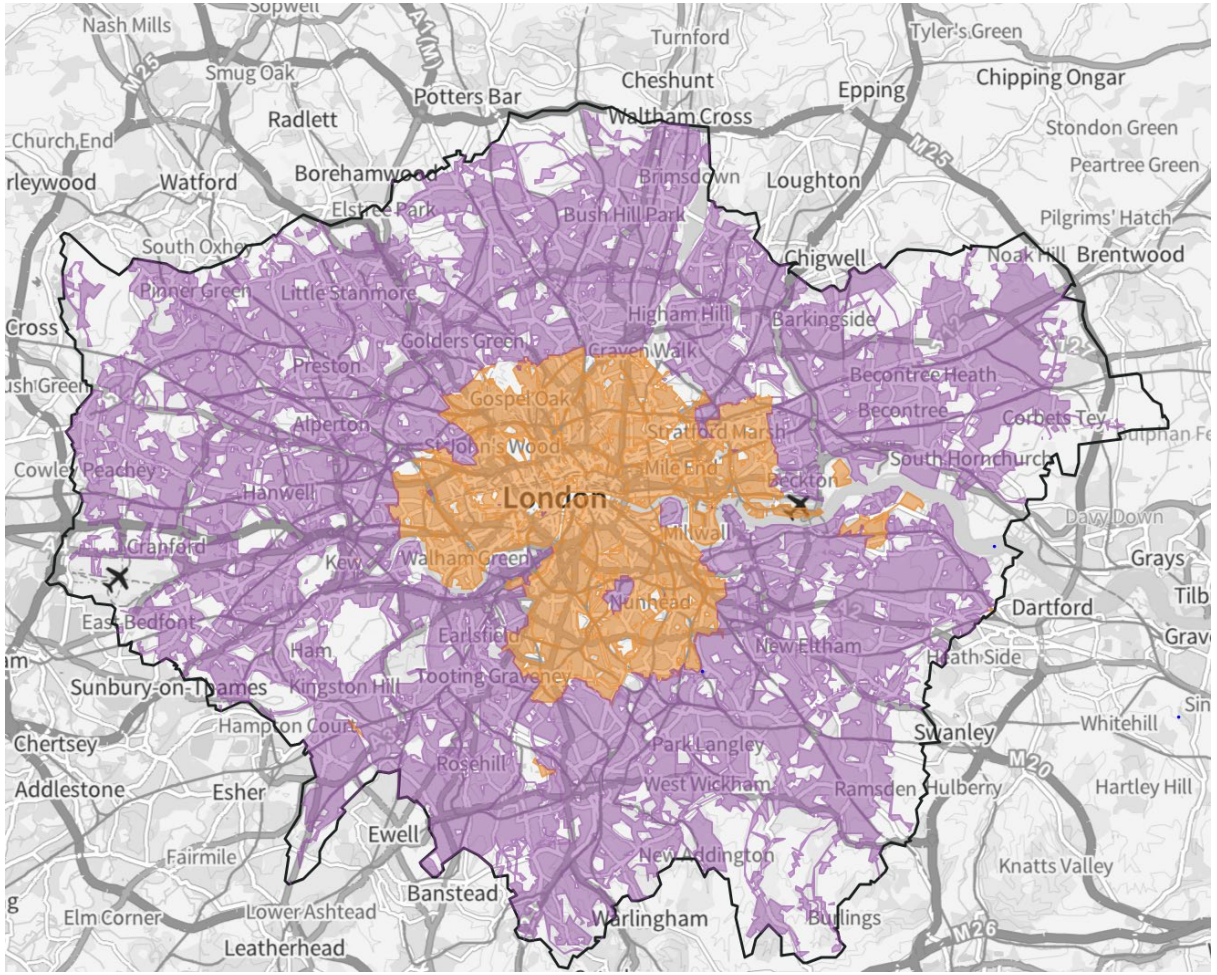
In areas with a combined sewer system, all waste water and rainwater goes into one pipe and is taken to a sewage treatment works for processing.

In areas with a separated sewer system there is a greater risk that waste water pipes from individual homes could be connected to a rain waterpipe.

A misconnected pipe could mean that waste water is draining into nearby rivers and causing pollution.

The map to the right shows that inner London predominantly has combined sewer systems and outer London predominantly has separate sewer systems.

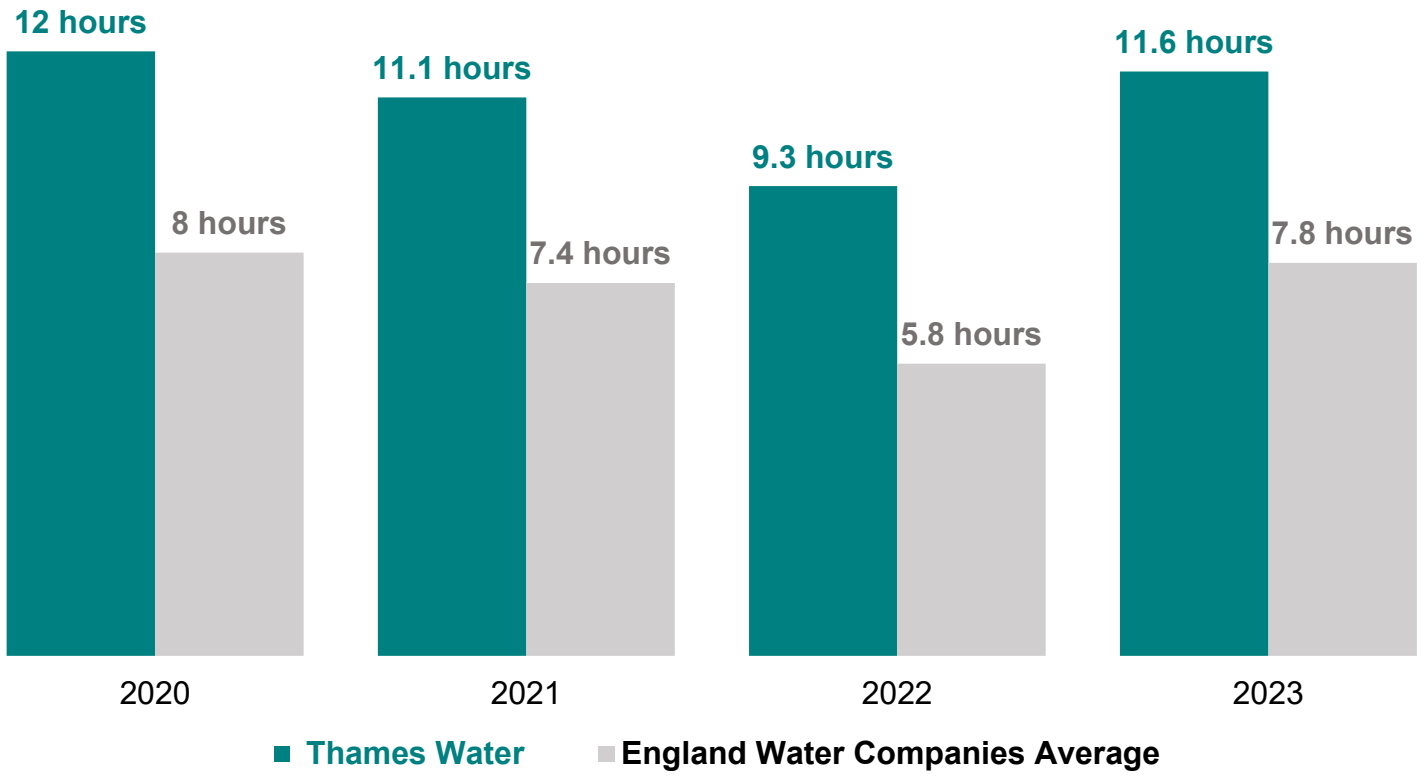
Areas in London with combined sewer and separate sewer systems



Source: GLA River Health Map, based on Thames Water sewer system data, accessed 21 November 2024

Sewage overflow incidents

Average duration in hours of monitored spill events (2020-2023)



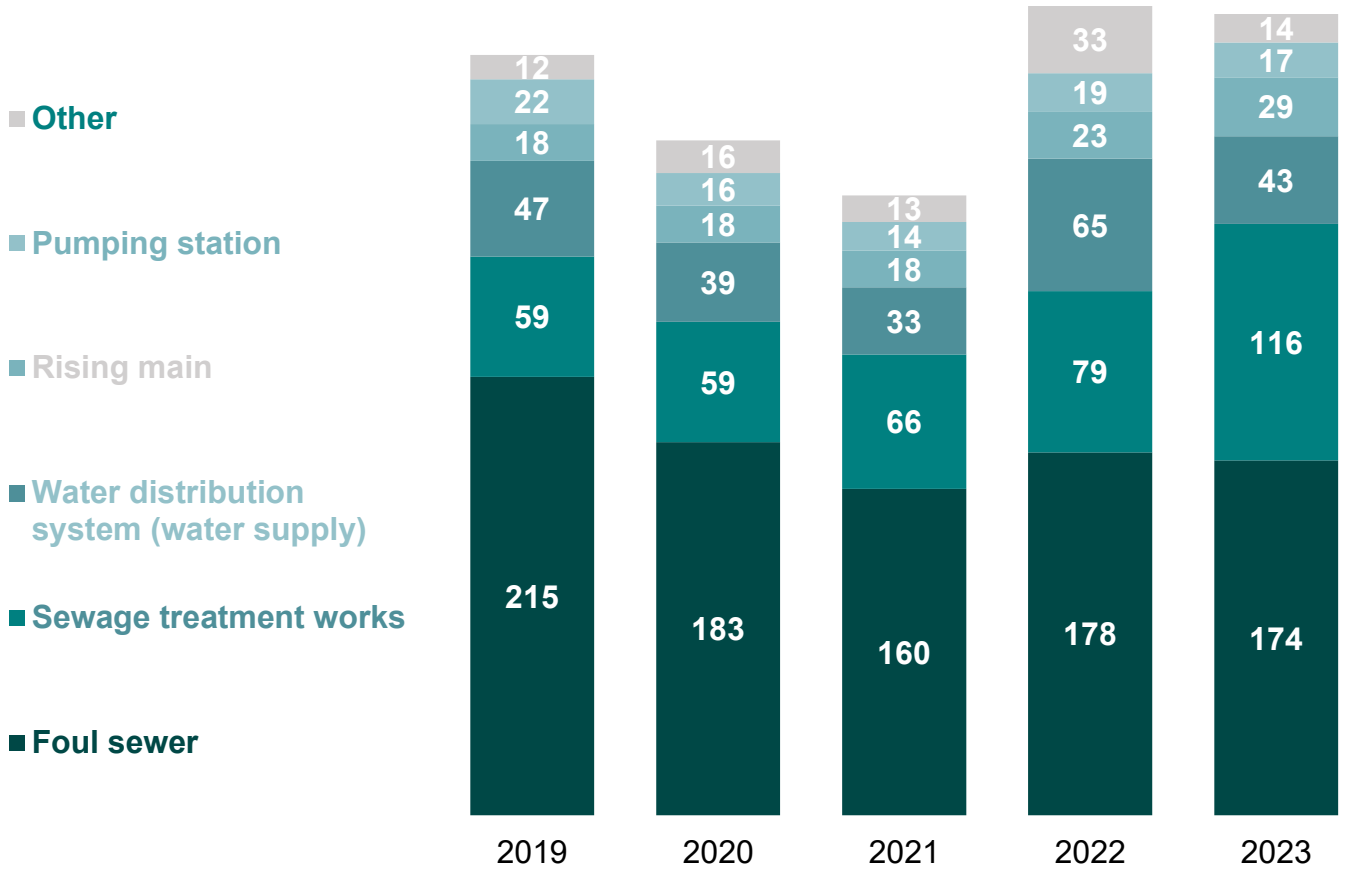
Water and Sewerage Companies are required to provide data on storm event duration to the Environment Agency as part of their Annual Return.

This data shows the average duration of monitored spill events for Thames Water compared to English Water Companies. It shows that, on average, Thames Water spill events last longer than the average.

Source: Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, Event Duration Monitoring – Storm Overflows – Annual Returns, Long Term Trends data, accessed 21 November 2024

Pollution incidents

Pollution incidents from Thames Water Assets (2019-2023)



This data shows the source of Thames Water pollution incidents (categories 1 to 3) from 2019 to 2023. Category 1 is defined as an incident which has "serious, extensive or persistent impact on the environment, people or property". Categories 2 and 3 are less serious. Most incidents in 2023 were classed as category 3, which is defined as having a "minor or minimal impact on the environment, people or property with only a limited or localised effect on water quality."

The greatest sources of pollution incidents between 2019 and 2023 were foul sewer, sewage treatment works and water distribution systems.

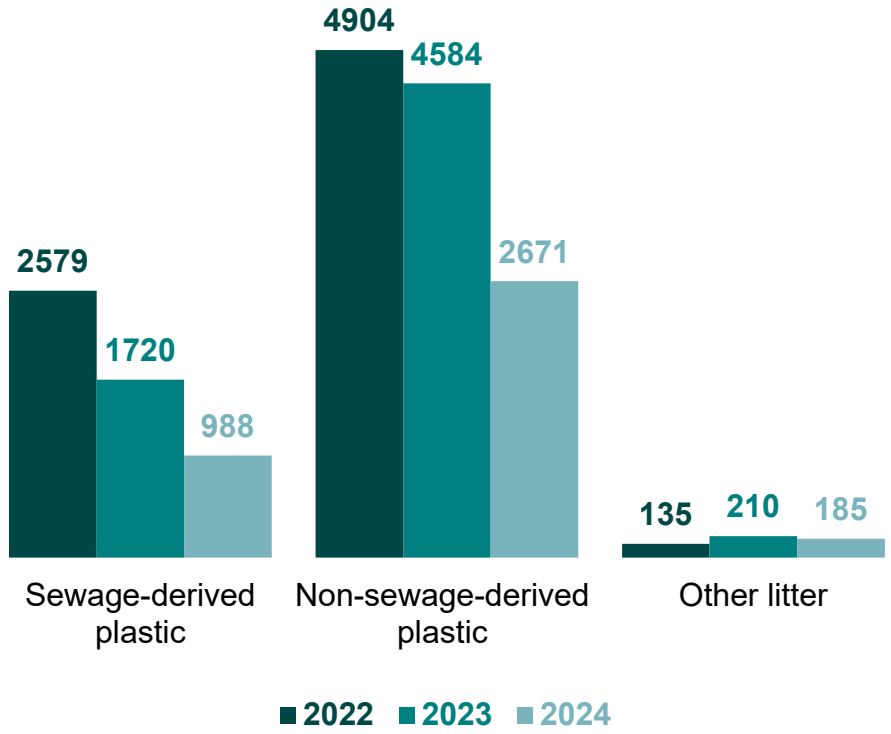
Source: Environment Agency, Thames Water EPA data report 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023

Litter collected in the River Thames

The organisation Thames21 has reported that it, alongside the Port of London Authority, remove at least 200 tonnes of litter from the Thames each year.

Thames 21 launched its Thames River Watch Science programme in 2014 to try to understand and track litter in the Thames.

Total number of litter items by source collected by the Thames River Watch Science programme (2022-2024)

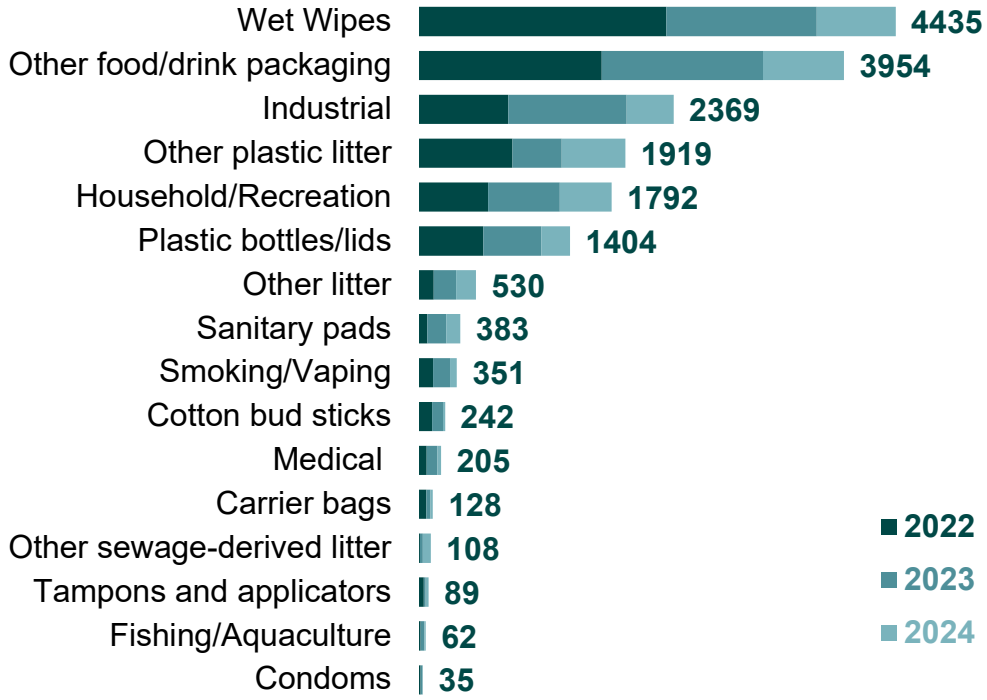


Source: Thames River Watch Science programme, Monitoring Dashboard, accessed 5 December 2024. Data is collected from their eight sampling sites in London.

Types of litter items collected in the River Thames

In 2022, 2023 and 2024, wet wipes were the litter item most collected in the Thames River Watch science programme.

Total number of litter items by type collected by the Thames River Watch Science programme (2022-2024)



Source: Thames River Watch Science programme, Monitoring Dashboard, accessed 5 December 2024. Data is collected from their 8 sampling sites in London. The following categories have been combined; plastic bottles with plastic bottle lids, tampons with tampon applicators, toilet fresheners with other sewage, agriculture with other plastic litter, and rubber, paper/card, metal and textiles were combined into other litter.

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Wildlife

Wildlife in the Thames

The River Thames is a Metropolitan-grade Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Greenspace Information for Greater London states:

> "The mud-flats, shingle beach, inter-tidal vegetation, islands and river channel itself support many species from freshwater, estuarine and marine communities which are rare in London. The site is of particular importance for wildfowl and wading birds... The Thames is extremely important for fish, with over 100 species now present. Many of the tidal creeks are important fish nurseries, including for several nationally uncommon species such as smelt. Barking Creek supports extensive reed beds.
>
> Further downstream are small areas of saltmarsh, a very rare habitat in London...where there is a small population of the nationally scarce marsh sow-thistle...Wetlands beside the river in Kew support the only London population of the nationally rare and specially-protected cut-grass...The numerous small islands in the upper reaches support important invertebrate communities, including several nationally rare snails, as well as a number of heronries..."

The Zoological Society of London conducts studies and monitoring of species in the Thames. It states there are over 125 species of fish, seals, sharks, and seahorses in the Thames and oysters in the outer Thames estuary.

Source: Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, River Thames and tidal tributaries.

Wildlife restoration projects in London

European Eel Conservation

Zoological Society of London

Since the 1980s, the number of European eels has dropped by 90-95% and the species is now classified as ‘Critically Endangered’ . ZSL’s work on European eels ranges from informing international conservation policy and leading UK research on eel behaviour to regional-scale best practice conservation delivery in the Thames Catchment.

WET Hogsmill

South East Rivers Trust

A project launched in September 2023 on the Hogsmill River in south west London, will see the reintroduction of water voles on the river, while creating new habitats for both European eel and native (brown/sea) trout. Water voles became locally extinct in 2017 but SERT will be working with Citizen Zoo, a conservation charity, to release 200 water voles across two sites.

Transforming the Thames

Zoological Society of London

ZSL have partnered with 17 organisations to undertake a major restoration project in the Greater Thames Estuary based on a more joined up seascape approach to restoration in the Thames. The Greater Thames Estuary is a hub of wildlife, with a complex of inter-tidal and freshwater wetlands hosting important populations of birds, rare invertebrates, and essential fish habitats including fish nurseries.

The Ealing Beaver Project

Ealing Wildlife Group

EWG are reintroducing Eurasian beavers to Ealing in a controlled enclosure trial at Paradise Fields in North Greenford. The Ealing Beaver Project aims to show the biodiversity benefits brought by beavers, alongside the flood mitigation benefits of their dam building. The project is committed to being a fully publicly-accessible site. This is a joint project between EWG, Ealing Council, Citizen Zoo and Friends of Horsenden Hill and supported by experts at the Beaver Trust.

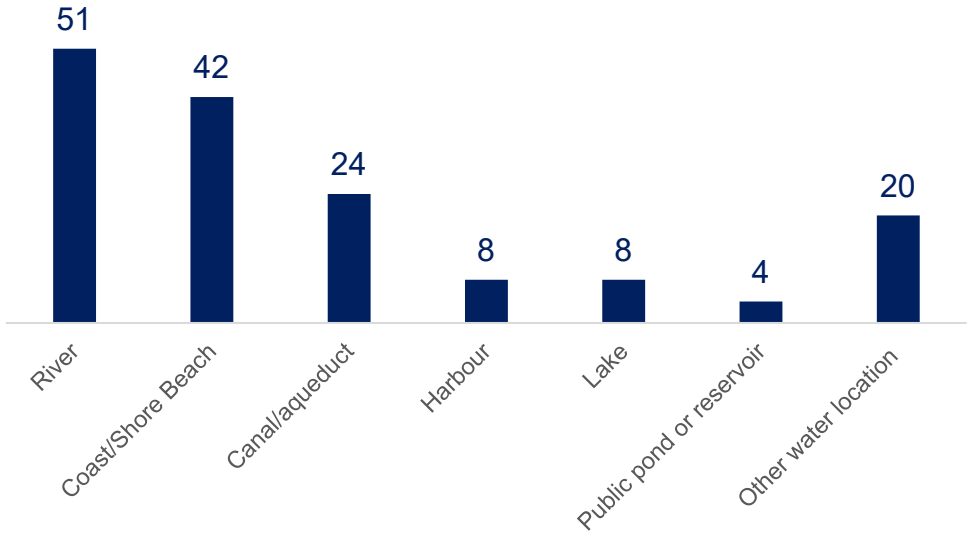
Water safety

Water-related fatalities in England and London

In 2023, there were 490 water-related deaths recorded in England on the Water Incident Database.

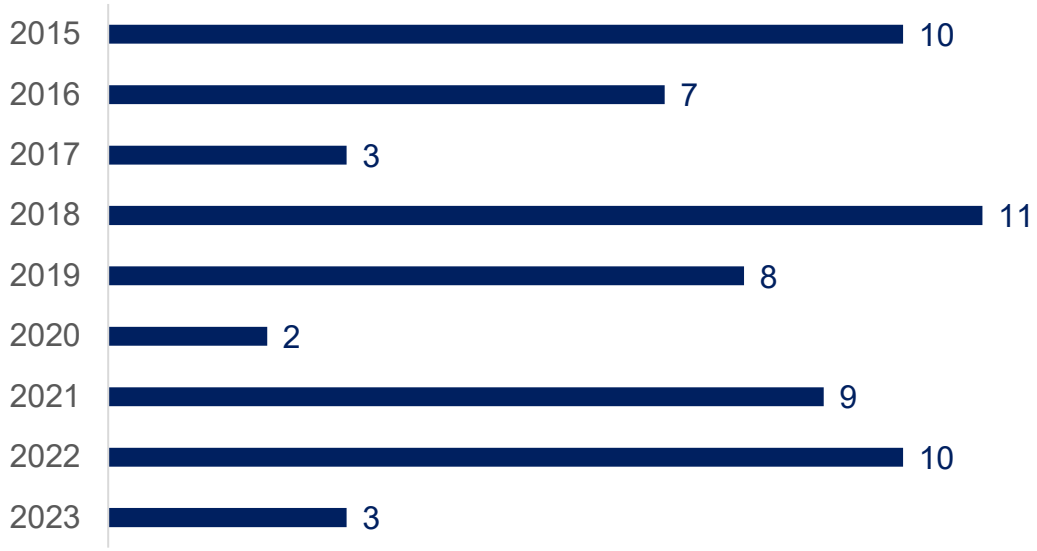
Of these, 147 deaths were recorded as being accidental and ten deaths were recorded as having natural causes. 51 of these 157 deaths, occurred in rivers.

Accidental or natural causes water-related deaths in England, 2023, by location



Numbers of accidental or natural cause water-related deaths in London have fluctuated between 2015-2023 with the highest number (11) in 2018.

Accidental or natural causes water-related deaths in London, 2015-2023



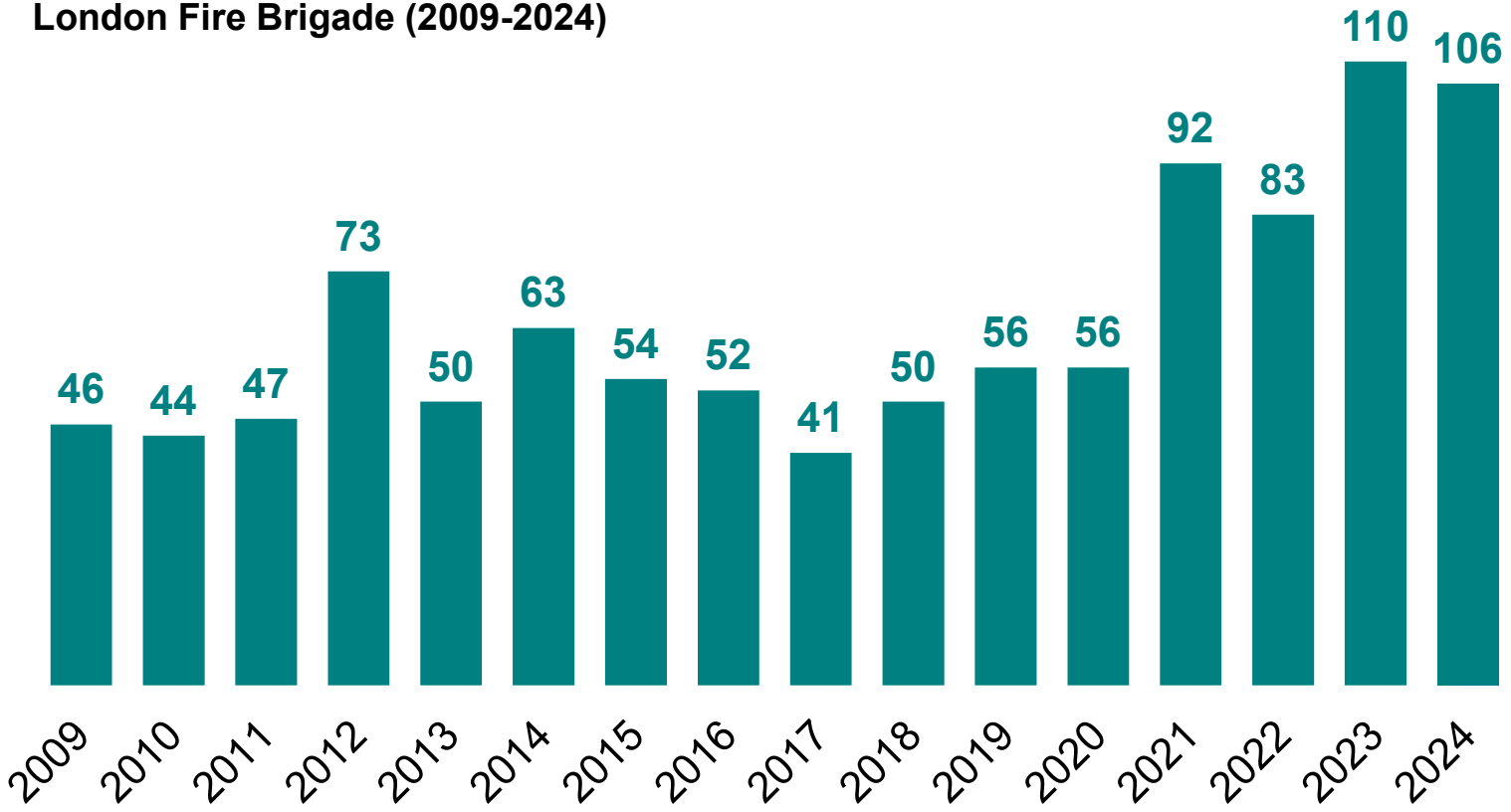
Source: National Water Safety Forum, Water Incident Database, 2023 Annual Fatal Incident Report

Number of drowning and rescue incidents

This chart summarises London Fire Brigade data on incidents attended where a person required rescue or evacuation from London's waterways.

According to the Tidal Thames Water Safety Forum's 2019 Drowning Prevention Strategy, suicide is the most frequent cause of drowning in the Thames, accounting for 90 per cent of all deaths.

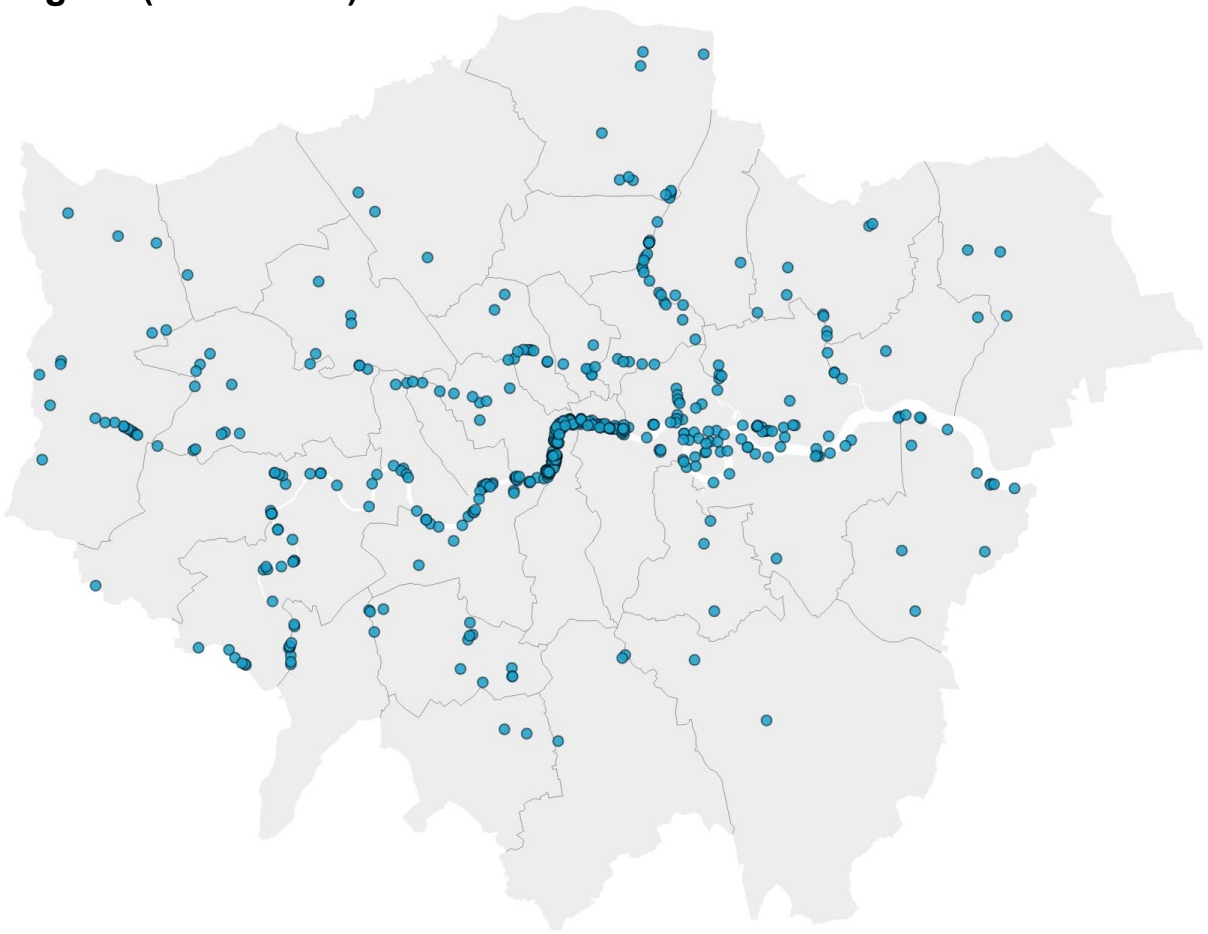
Number of drowning and rescue incidents attended by the London Fire Brigade (2009-2024)



Source: London Fire Brigade, London Fire Brigade Incident Records, accessed 30 January 2025. Data was generated using the following filters, IncidentGroup: Special Service, SpecialServiceType; Rescue or Evacuation from Water and Suicide/Attempts, PropertyType: Lake/Pond/Reservoir and River/Canal.

Location of drownings and rescue incidents

Location of drowning and rescue incidents attended by the London Fire Brigade (2018-2024*)



This map shows the location of drowning and rescue incidents attended by the London Fire Brigade from 2018 to 2024. It shows that many incidents were by the River Thames.

There were also a significant number of incidents around the reservoirs in Haringey and Waltham Forest, and the docks around Canary Wharf.

Source: London Fire Brigade, London Fire Brigade Incident Records, accessed 8 November 2024. Data was generated using the following filters, IncidentGroup: Special Service, SpecialServiceType; Rescue or Evacuation from Water and Suicide/Attempts, PropertyType: Lake/Pond/Reservoir and River/Canal *Data for 2024 runs up to the 8 November.

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Participation in swimming and water sports

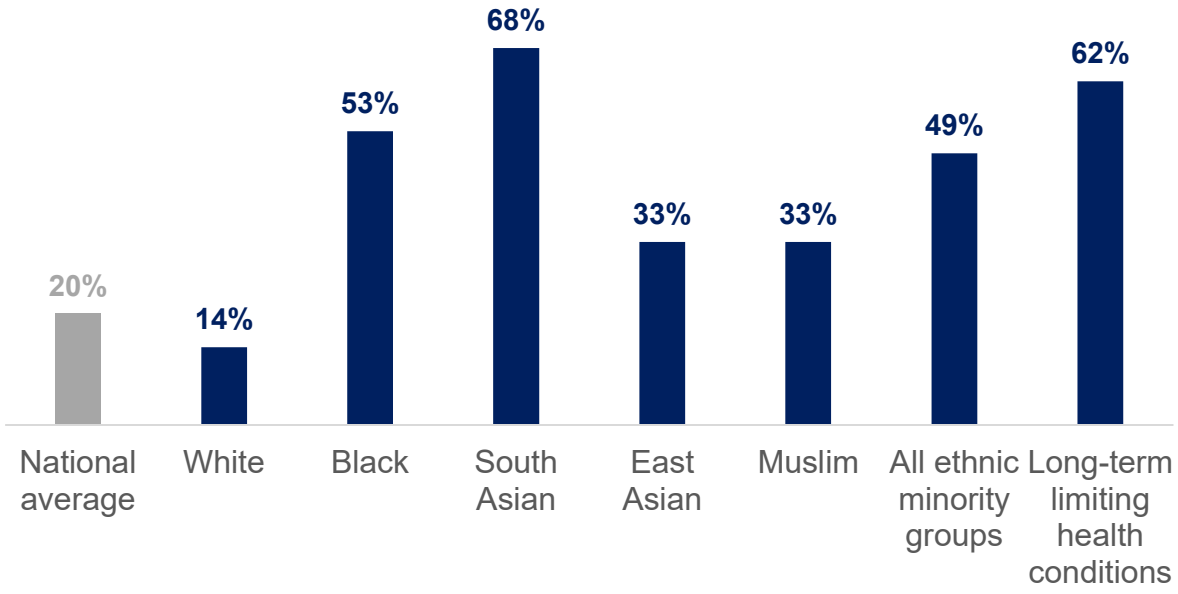
Ability to swim – adults in England

A 2022 survey by Swim England found that 20 per cent of adults in England cannot swim 25 metres unaided.

Swimming ability also differed by ethnicity, with adults from South Asian backgrounds having the highest rates (68 per cent) of not being able to swim, and adults from White backgrounds (14 per cent) having the lowest rates.

There is no London data on swimming ability available.

Proportion of adults who cannot swim 25 metres unaided, by group, in England, 2022



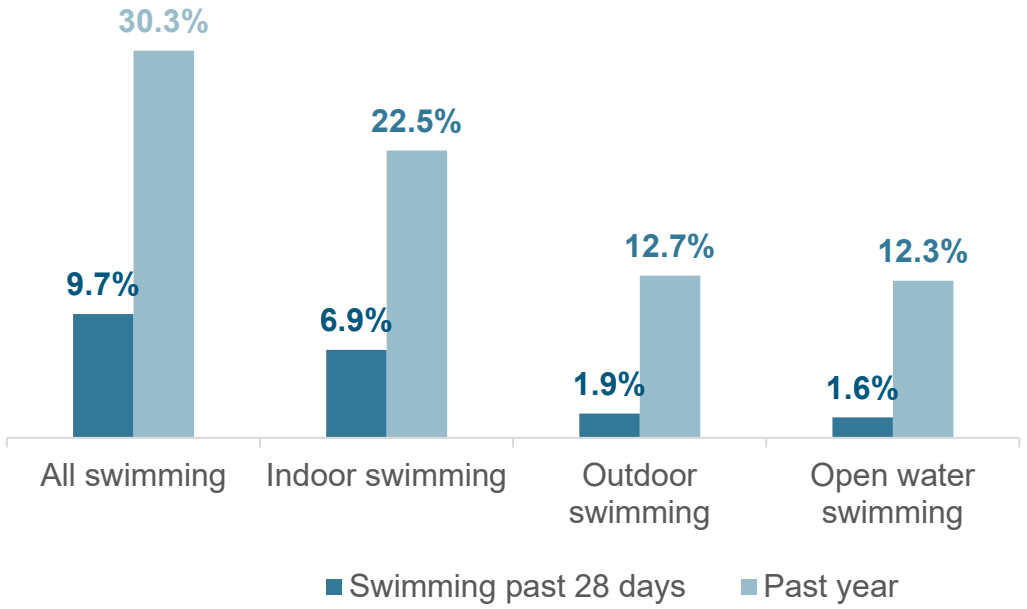
Source: Swim England, England Swims Survey 2022 Headline Findings Report, 2022

Londoners' participation in swimming – adults

One in ten adult Londoners (aged 16+) reported having swum at least twice in the previous 28 days in 2022-23. Nearly a third reported having swum at least once in the past year.

This includes swimming in any location (indoor or outdoor), and could be outside London.

Proportion of adult Londoners aged 16+ who reported swimming at least twice in the previous 28 days, and at least once in the past year, 2022-23



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Survey, November 2022 to November 2022, via Active Lives Data Explorer tool

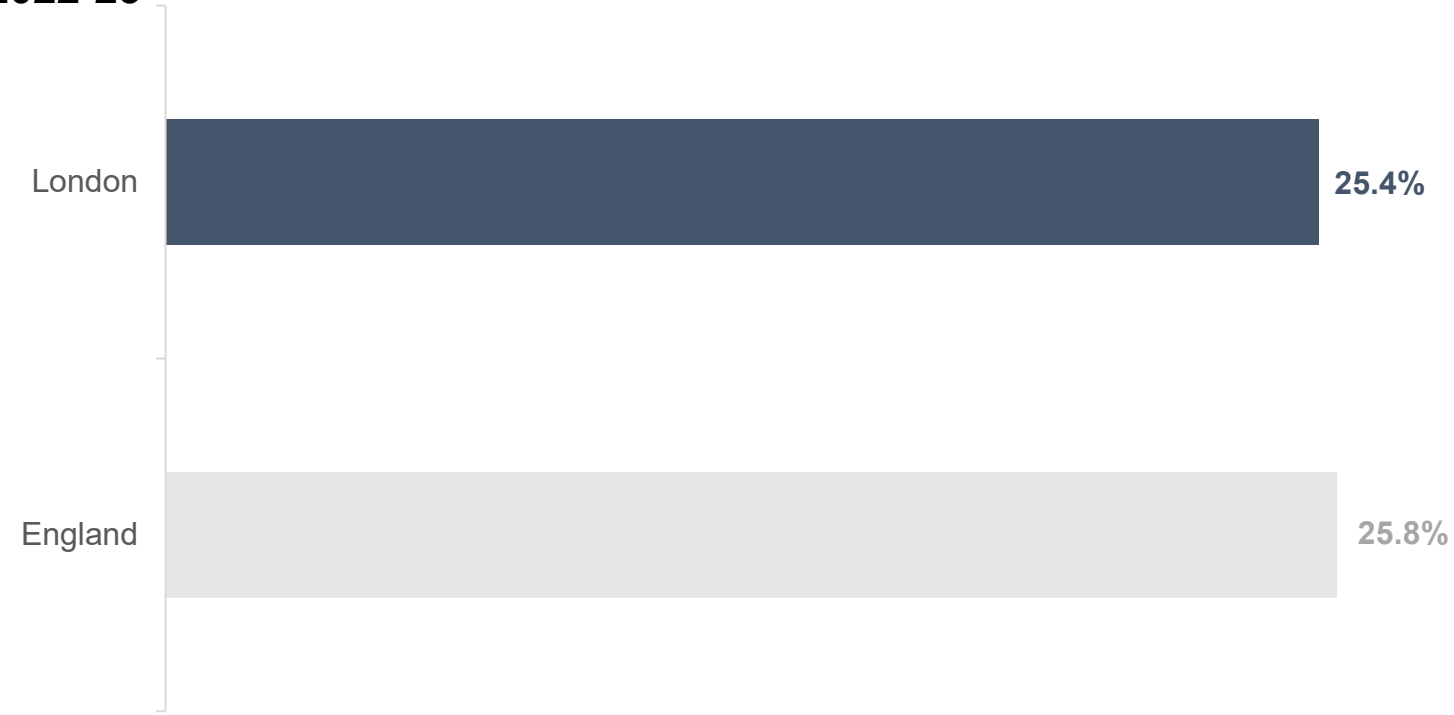
Children and young people swimming trends

A quarter of children and young people (aged 5-16) in London reported swimming at least once in the past week in 2022-23, which is on par with the national average.

Swimming data for children and young people cannot be broken down by swimming type (ie indoor, outdoor, open water). There is also no data on swimming in the past year.

This includes swimming in any location and could be outside London.

Proportion of children and young people in Londoners and England who reported swimming at least once in the past week, 2022-23



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, November 2022 to November 2022, via Active Lives Data Explorer tool

Londoners' participation in water sports

Canoeing, kayaking and rafting are the most popular subset of water sports for Londoners, with four per cent of adult Londoners reported having taken part in these activities in 2022-23.

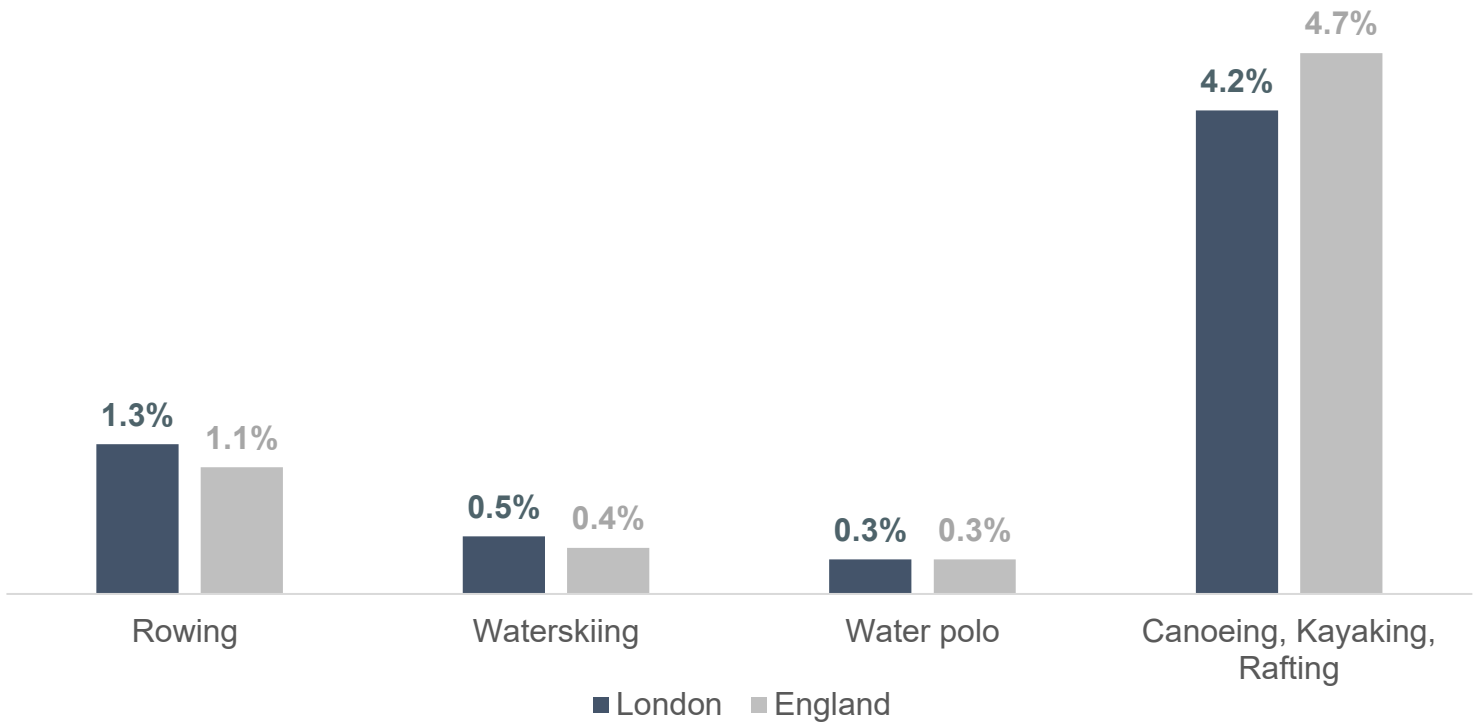
This includes participating in water-sports in any location and could be outside London.

Water sports clubs in London

According to Canoe London, there are more than 50 kayak, stand-up paddleboard or canoe clubs in the London area.

A map with locations and contact details is available here.

Proportion of adults in London and England who reported participating in water sports in 2022-23, by type



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Survey, November 2022 to November 2023, via Active Lives Data Explorer tool

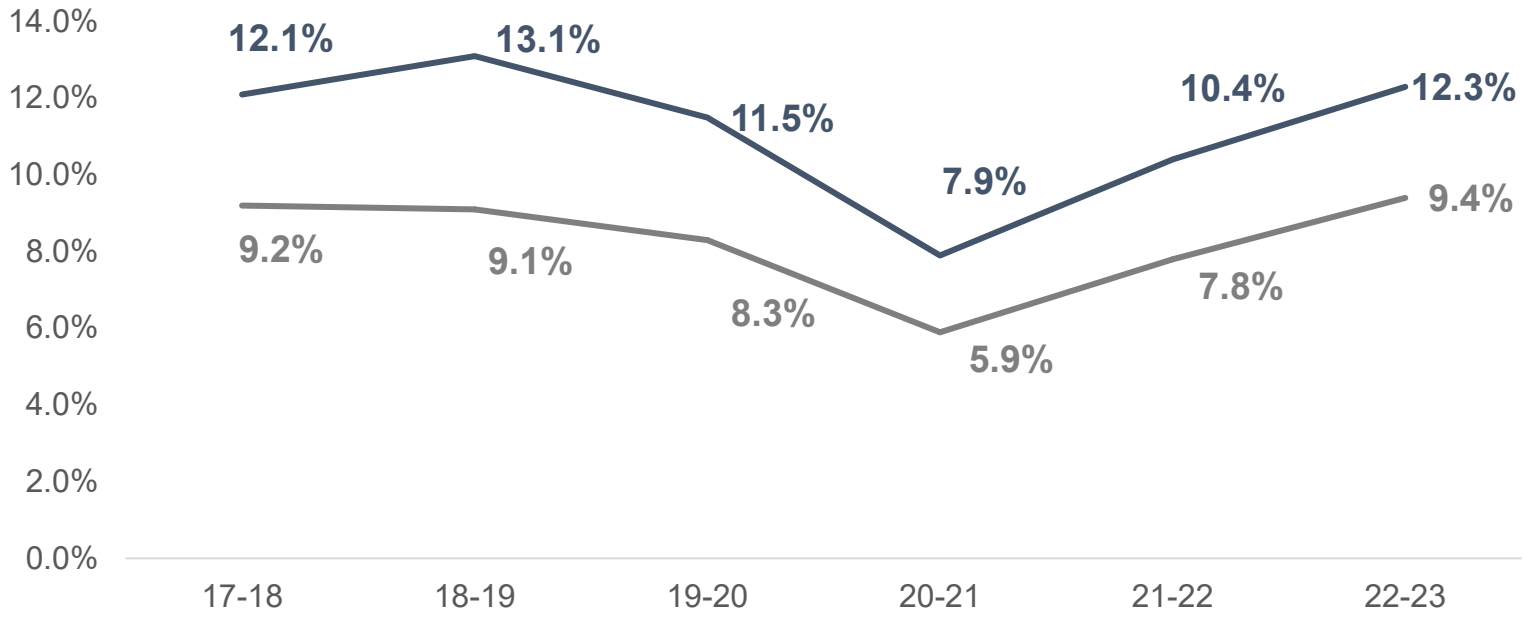
London open water swimming trends

Active Lives Survey data shows that the proportion of adult Londoners who reported having been open water swimming in the past year has not substantially changed since 2017-18.

Adults in London were more likely to have reported having been open water swimming in the past year (12.3%)than the past month (1.6%) in 2022-23.

Adults in inner London (2.6 per cent) were more likely than adults in outer London (0.9) to have reported having been open water swimming in the past year in 2023.

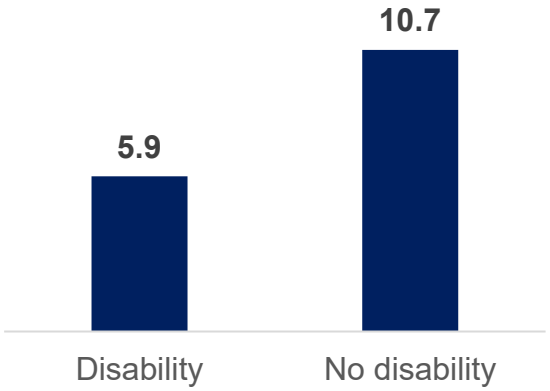
Proportion of adults in London and England who reported having been open water swimming in the past year, 2017-18 to 2022-23



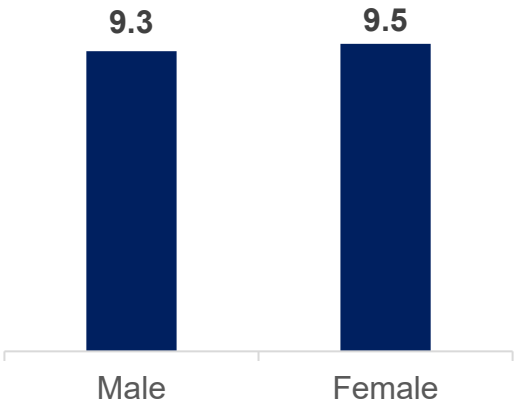
Source: Sport England, Active Lives Survey, November 2022 to November 2022, via Active Lives Data Explorer tool

National open water swimming trends – by characteristics

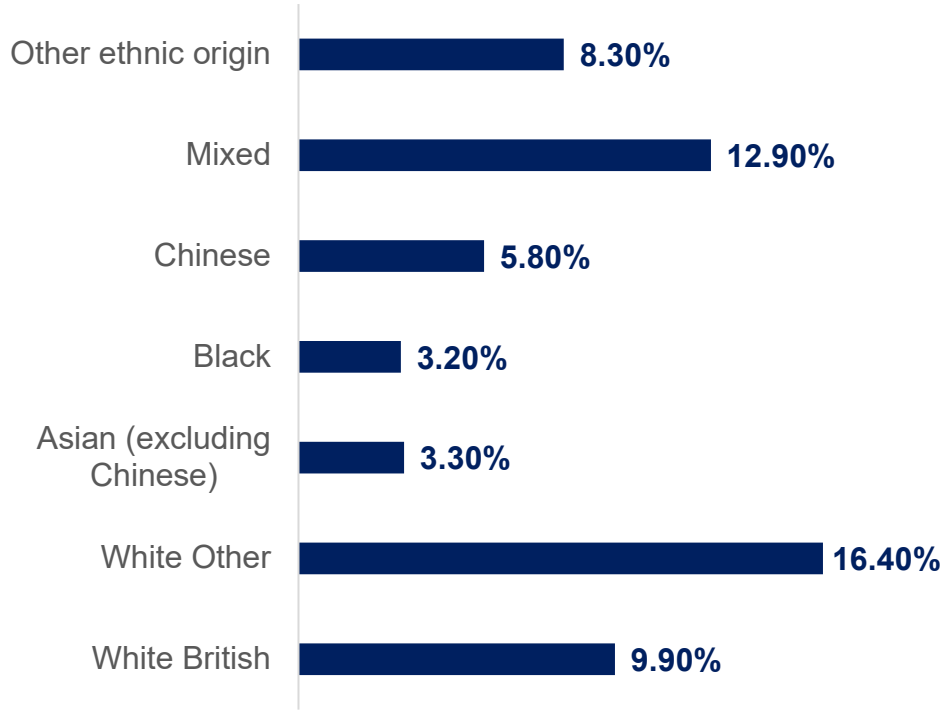
Proportion of adults in England who reported open water swimming in the past year, by disability status, 2022-23



Proportion of adults in England who reported open water swimming in the past year, by gender, 2022-23



Proportion of adults in England who reported open water swimming in the past year, by ethnicity, 2022-23



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Survey, November 2022 to November 2022, via Active Lives Data Explorer tool

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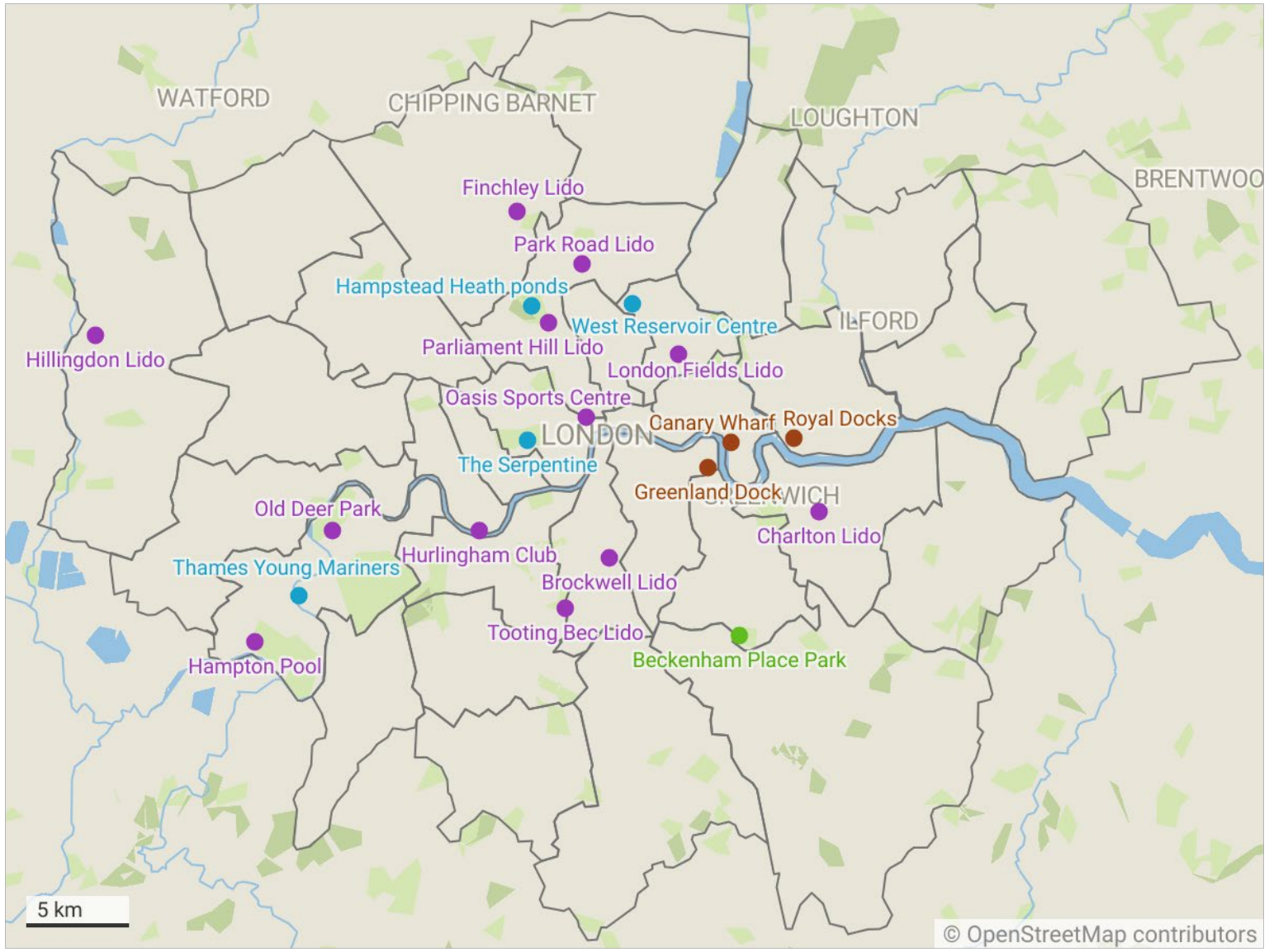
Outdoor swimming locations

Outdoor swimming spots in London



Map created with Datawrapper and Cartography Vectors.

- Artificial outdoor pool
- Natural swimming location (managed)
- Dock swimming location (managed)
- Artificial swimming lake

This map shows known outdoor swimming locations in London.

Information on locations is from the GLA's River Health map, Wild Open Water and Love Open Water, as of December 2024. Some locations listed on the GLA map where swimming is forbidden or not recommended, were excluded from this map.

There may be other outdoor swimming locations available that are not included on this map; it is also possible some sites shown may no longer be operational.

Wild or open water swimming should only be undertaken in line with strict safety precautions and never in locations where it is not allowed. Safety advice on outdoor swimming is available via the London Fire Brigade, Port of London Authority and The Rivers Trust.

The Mayor's guide to open water swimming

In 2024, the Mayor published A Guide to Open Water Swimming in London. It identifies nine existing outdoor swimming sites. These are all managed swimming sites.

The guide also identifies four possible future outdoor swimming sites:

- Hackney Marshes
- Teddington
- Roding
- Albany Reach

The guide states that the four potential future sites are "currently too polluted and unsupervised to be safe."

Water quality data on four outdoor swimming sites in London

The Environment Agency collects water quality data each year on designated bathing sites.

In London, water quality data is collected for four sites: Hampstead Heath's Ladies', Men's and Mixed Ponds, and the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

The Environment Agency's four classifications are excellent, good, sufficient, and poor.

Of the four sites, the Serpentine has consistently performed the worst. The Environment Agency has stated that one of the main sources of pollution to the Serpentine is suspected to be from animal (mainly birds) faecal pollution.

The other five managed outdoor swimming sites in London contract private companies to provide water quality swim sampling.

Environment Agency's water quality classifications for the four London bathing sites it collects data on, 2019 to 2024

	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hampstead Heath Men's Pond	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Good
Hampstead Heath Mixed Pond	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Serpentine	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient

Source: Environment Agency, 2024 Bathing Water Profiles for the: Men's Pond, Ladies Pond, Mixed Pond, Serpentine

Pollution data on four outdoor swimming sites in London

The Environment Agency collects also collects pollution data on designated bathing sites.

In London, pollution data is collected for four sites: Hampstead Heath's Ladies', Men's and Mixed Ponds, and the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

Environment Agency's pollution data for the four sites in London it collects data on, assessment period 2020 to 2023

	Sewage debris	Tarry residue	Litter observed	Overall litter assessment
Hampstead Heath Men's Pond	Not noted	Not noted	Present on 25% of visits	Not sufficient to be objectionable
Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond	Not noted	Not sufficient to be objectionable	Present on 18% of visits	Not sufficient to be objectionable
Hampstead Heath Mixed Pond	Not noted	Not noted	Present on 29% of visits	Not sufficient to be objectionable
Serpentine	Not noted	Not noted	Present on 52% of visits	Sufficient to be objectionable for 1% of visits

Source: Environment Agency, 2024 Bathing Water Profiles for the: Men's Pond, Ladies Pond, Mixed Pond, Serpentine

Cost of visiting managed outdoor swimming sites in London

As of January 2025, the cost of visiting selected outdoor swimming sites in London was:

Hampstead Ponds (Ladies, Mixed, Mens):	Adult £4.70, concession £2.80, juniors free. A 12-month season ticket costs £146.50 for adults, £87.80 for concessions.
Parliament Hill Lido:	Daytime costs in the summer are adults £8.20, concessions £4.90, juniors £2.50. A 12-month season ticket costs £234.30 for adults, £141.00 for concessions
Canary Wharf:	£9 per session, only available to NOWCA (National Open Water Coaches Association) members, with a £15 annual membership fee.
Royal Docks:	£9.50 per session, only available to NOWCA members, with a £15 annual membership fee.
Beckenham Place Park:	Lewisham resident £6.50, non-resident £7, concession £4.30. Unlimited swimming plans are available for monthly fees of £45-58 for adults, and £32-£43 for concessions.
The Serpentine:	Adult £7.50, child £3.75, concession £4.30.
West Reservoir Centre:	Non-member £12.30, members with Pay As You Go plans are £7.90 or £5.90 for concessions. Unlimited swimming available to full members with plans from around £41 per month for adults or £31 for concessions.
Greenland Dock:	£9 per session.

Prices are from venues' websites – please check these for further details. Other options may be available for discounts, memberships, and so on.

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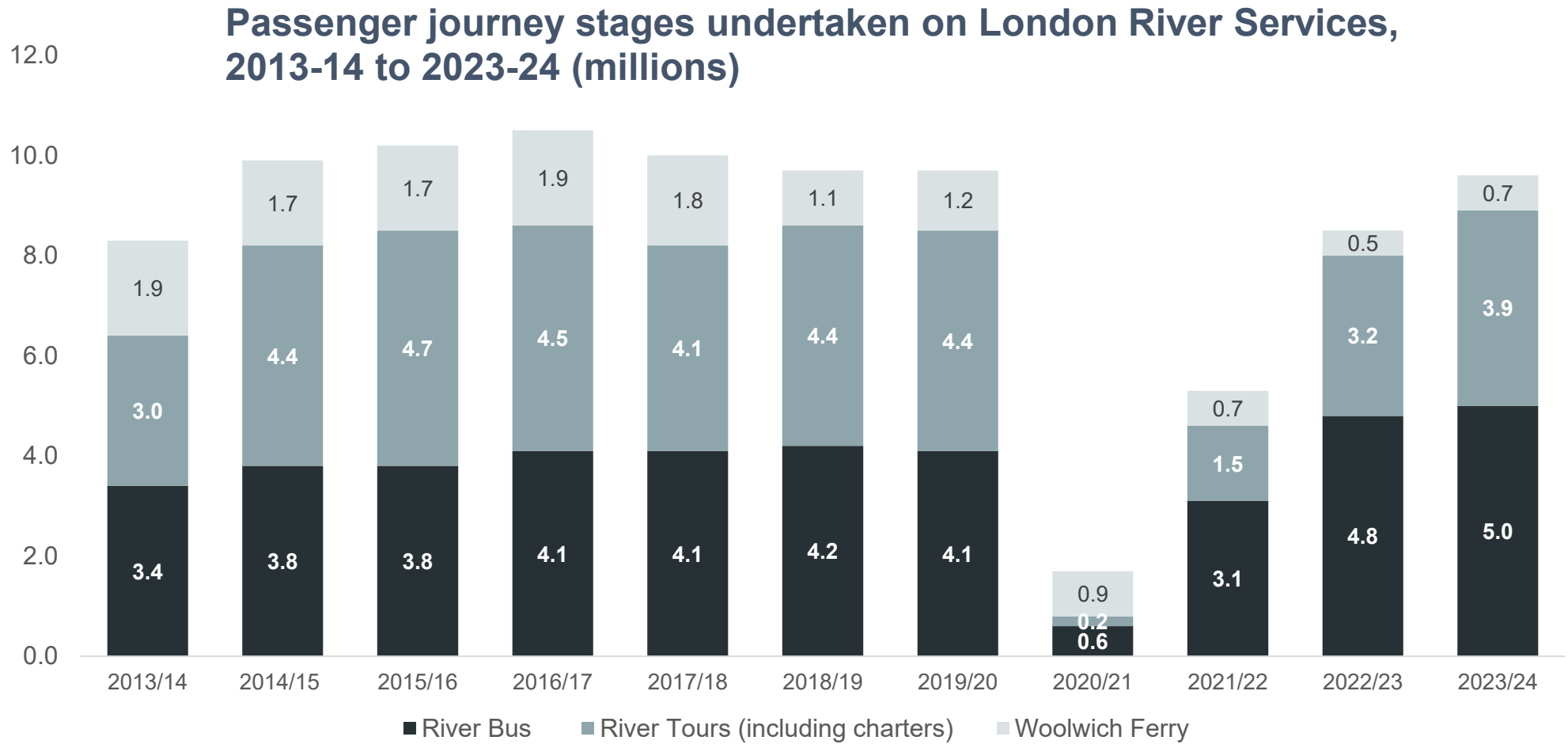
Passenger and freight transport

Passenger journeys on river services

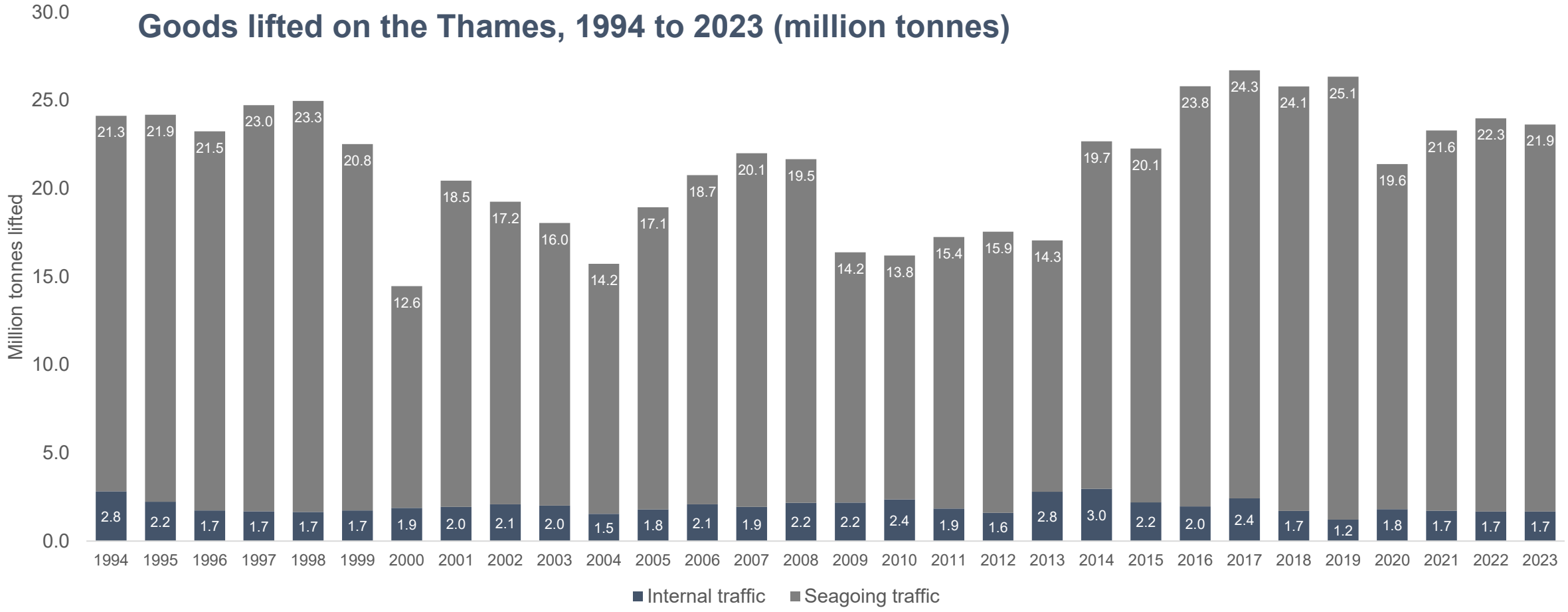
A number of passenger services are available on the Thames, overseen by Transport for London, the Port of London Authority and other stakeholders. This chart shows how many journeys were overtaken on different services in the past decade.



Source: Transport for London, Travel in London 2024, December 2024. Data is from the spreadsheet 'The travel behaviour of London residents based on the London Travel Demand Survey (data)'. On river services, each boarding (even within the same trip) is counted as a new 'journey stage'.

Freight traffic on the Thames over the past 20 years

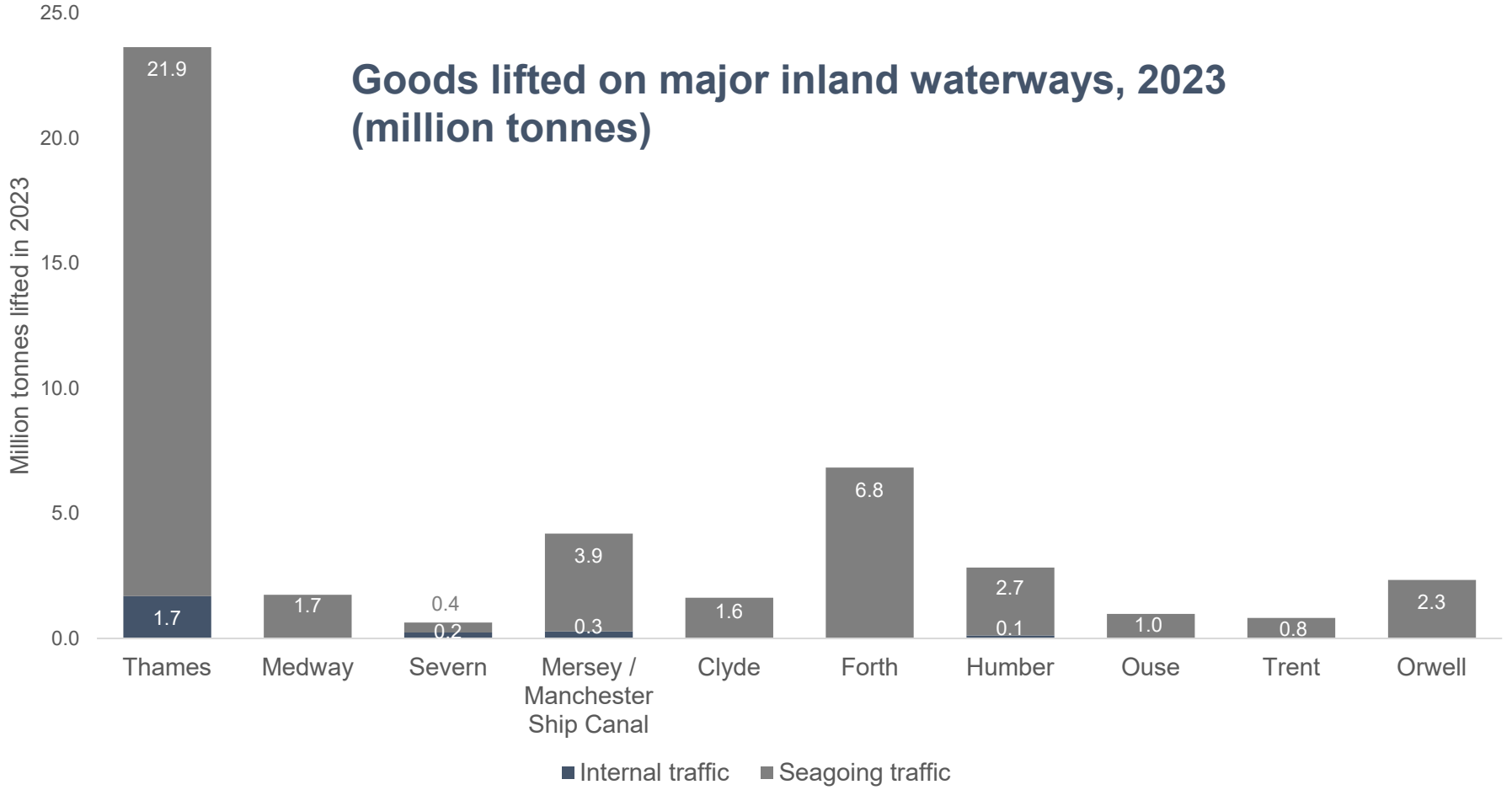
The Department for Transport collects data on the level of freight traffic on major inland waterways, including the Thames. This chart shows how the level of river freight on the Thames has changed in the past two decades, based on the weight of goods lifted (transported) on the river.



Source: Department for Transport, Port and domestic waterborne freight statistics, December 2024 – Table PORT0704, 'Major inland waterways routes, goods lifted'. Figures are rounded to the nearest 0.1 million tonnes.

Freight traffic on the Thames compared to other major rivers

The Department for Transport collects data on the level of freight traffic on major inland waterways, including the Thames. This chart shows how the level of river freight on the Thames compared to other major rivers in 2023, indicating much greater use of the Thames for freight.



Source: Department for Transport, Port and domestic waterborne freight statistics, December 2024 – Table PORT0704, 'Major inland waterways routes, goods lifted'. Figures are rounded to the nearest 0.1 million tonnes. Where no data label is given above, this indicates a value of zero (after rounding).

OTHER FORMATS AND LANGUAGES

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

如您需要这份文件的简介的翻译本，
请电话联系我们或按上面所提供的邮寄地址或
Email 与我们联系。

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में
चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये
गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang
tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện
thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান,
তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা
ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Greek

Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں
درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں
یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل
پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini
okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon
numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta
adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند باللغة،
فرجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريد
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ
ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ
ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં
જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો
અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઈ-મેઈલ સરનામા
પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

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