

Action for Avon

*David Holroyd
Wiltshire Fishery Association*



Why the Avon matters

- One of the UK's major chalk streams – SSSI and SAC
- More different species of indigenous fish than any other river in the UK
- Endangered salmon and sea trout run in significant numbers
- The people's river





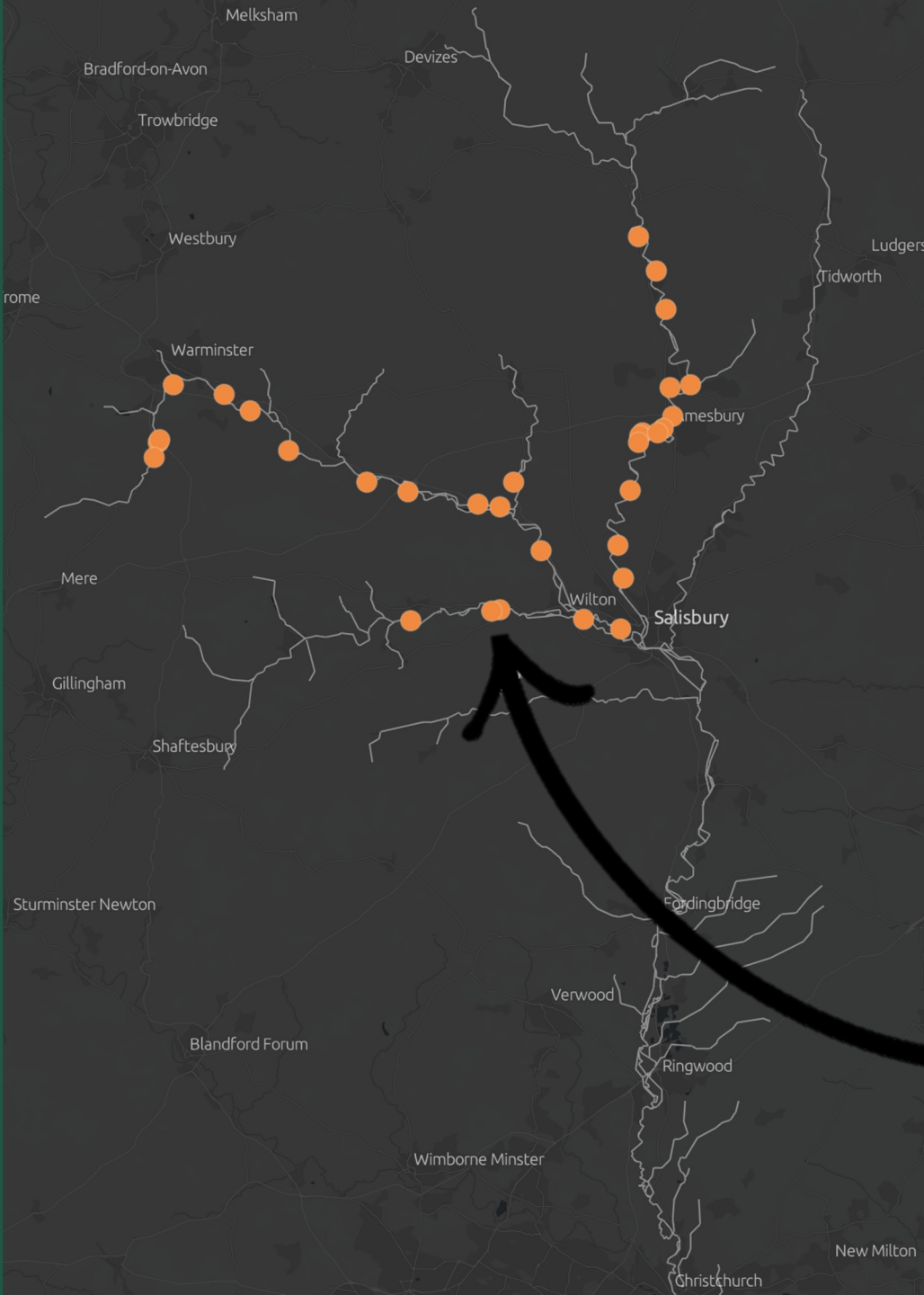
If we can't look after our most protected of rivers, **what hope is there for those that have no designation?**

The problem

According to Water Framework Directive (the Government's national river health check) the River Avon area has a **'moderate'** overall status, meaning it is failing to meet health targets.

Some parts of the Rivers Nadder and Wylde, which are tributaries of the River Avon, have been classified with **'poor'** overall status.





On all three rivers, **biodiversity is declining** and poor water quality from **chemical, phosphorus** and **sediment pollution** is evident.

The Wiltshire Fisheries Association and WildFish have a **SmartRivers hub** monitoring the Rivers Avon, Wylde and Nadder.

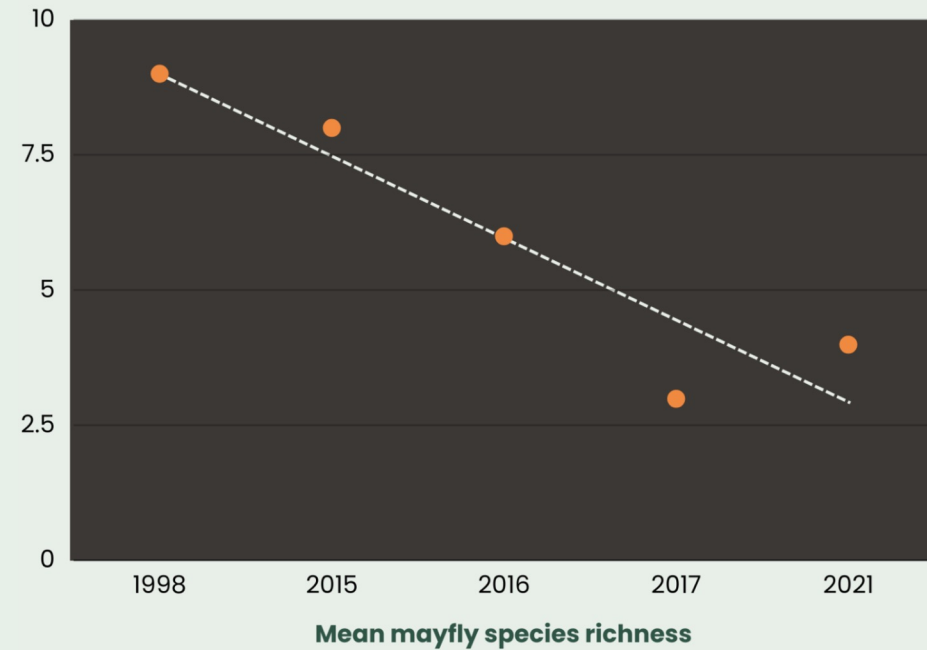
Sampling at these sites gives us an indication of the type and degree of pressure the rivers are enduring.

SmartRivers
5 years of data
30+ sites

Loss of biodiversity

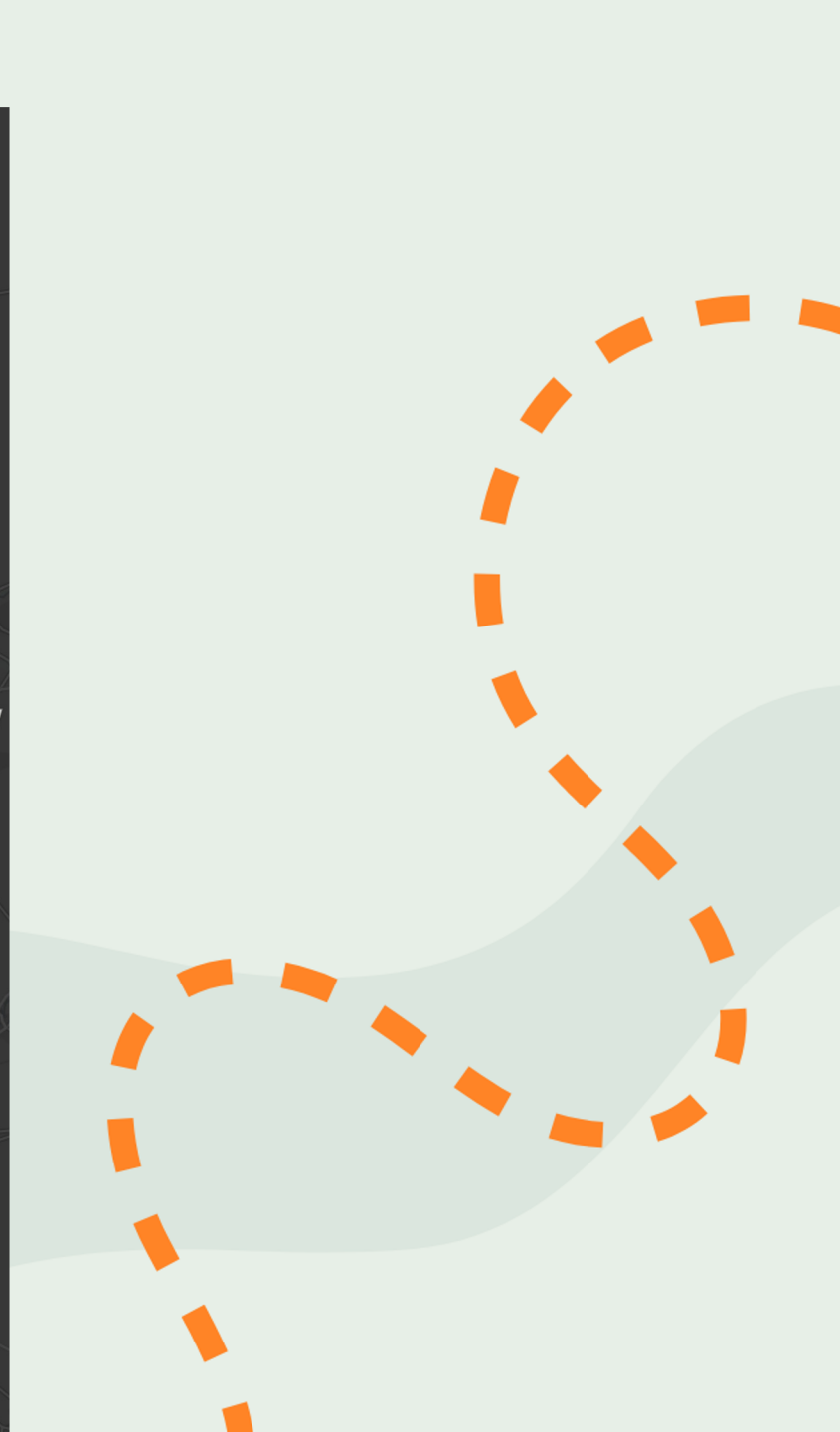
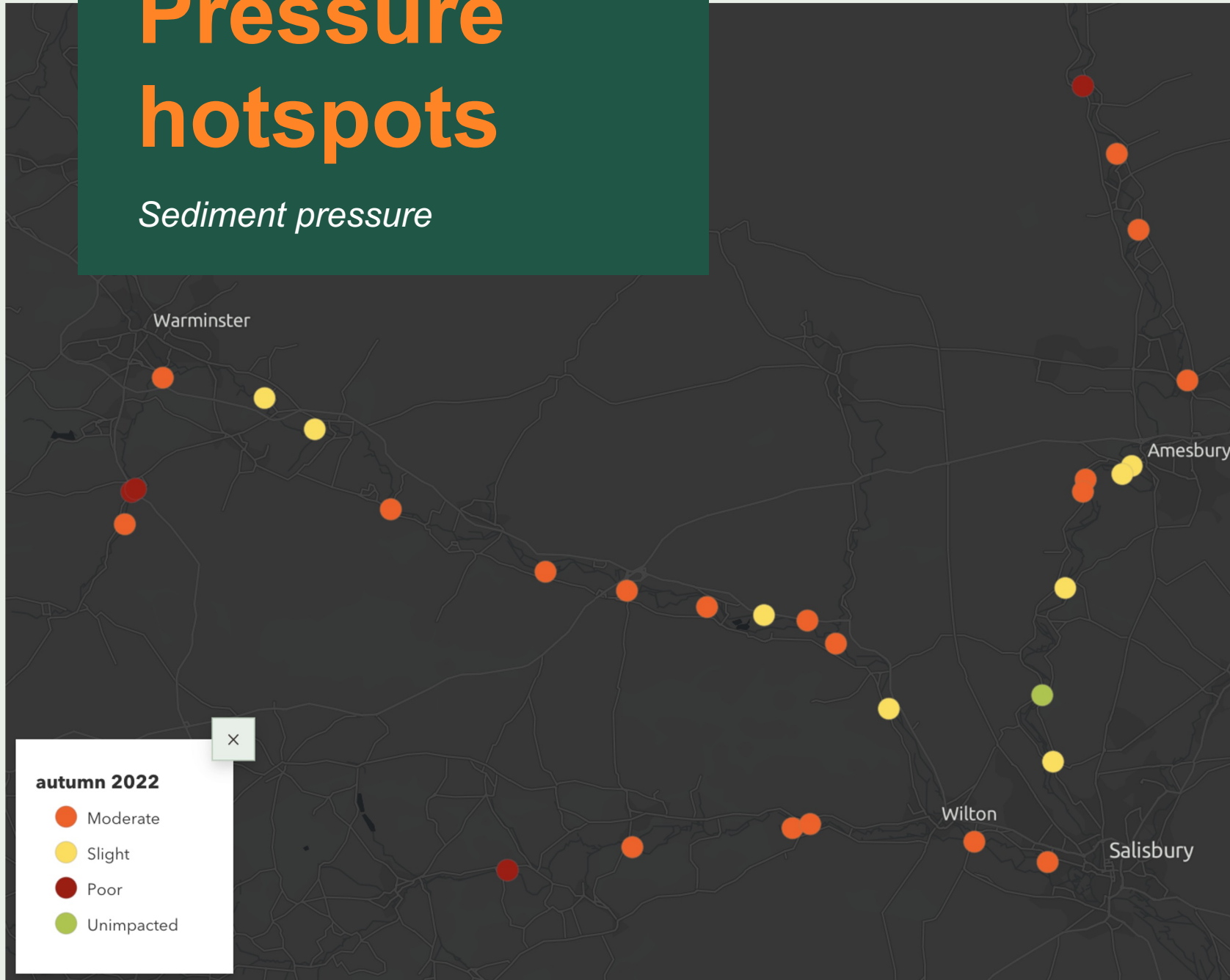
Invertebrate species are being lost, with our data identifying steep declines.

The graph shows the decline in annual mean mayfly species richness at Stratford Bridge on the River Avon*.



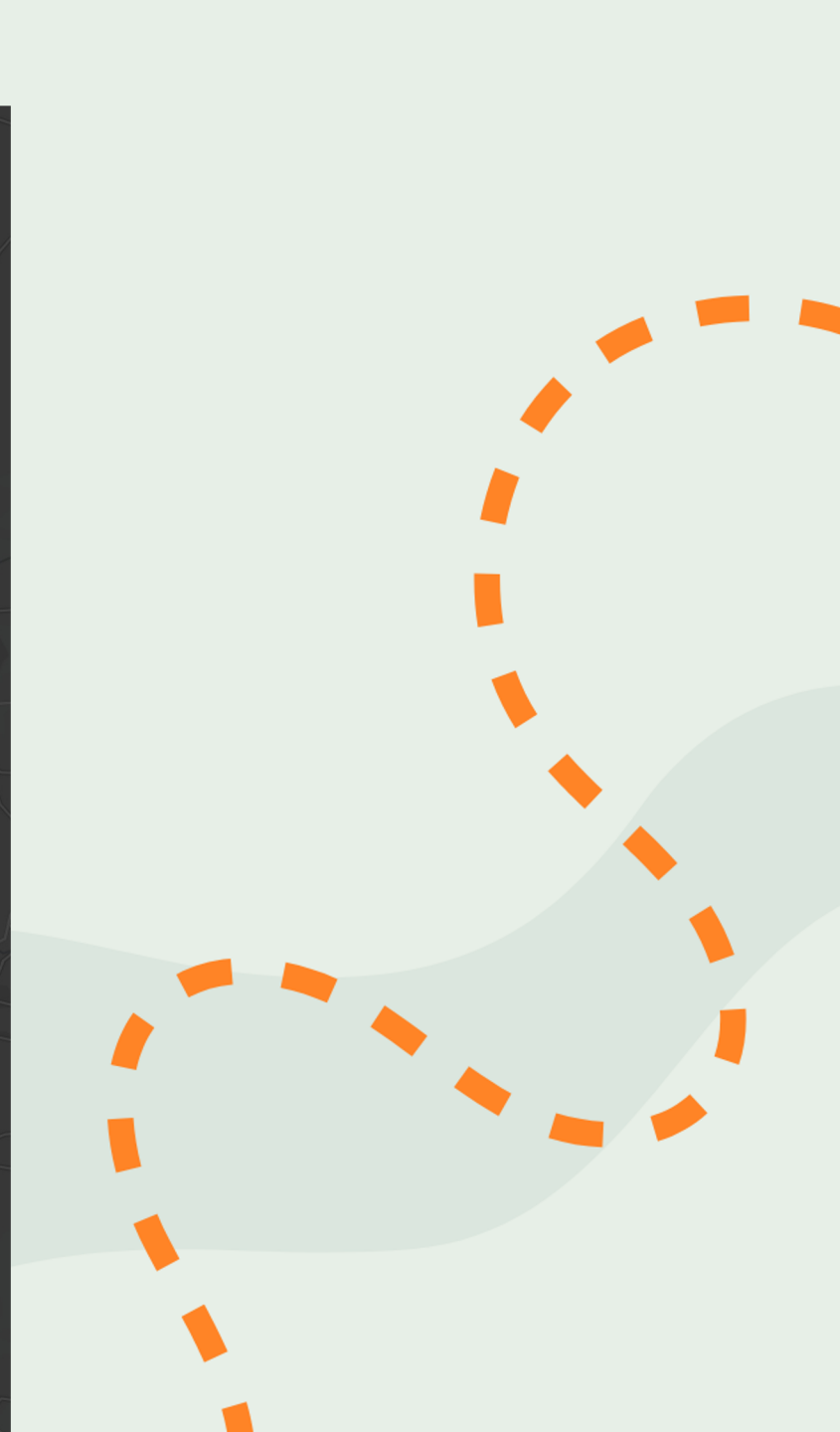
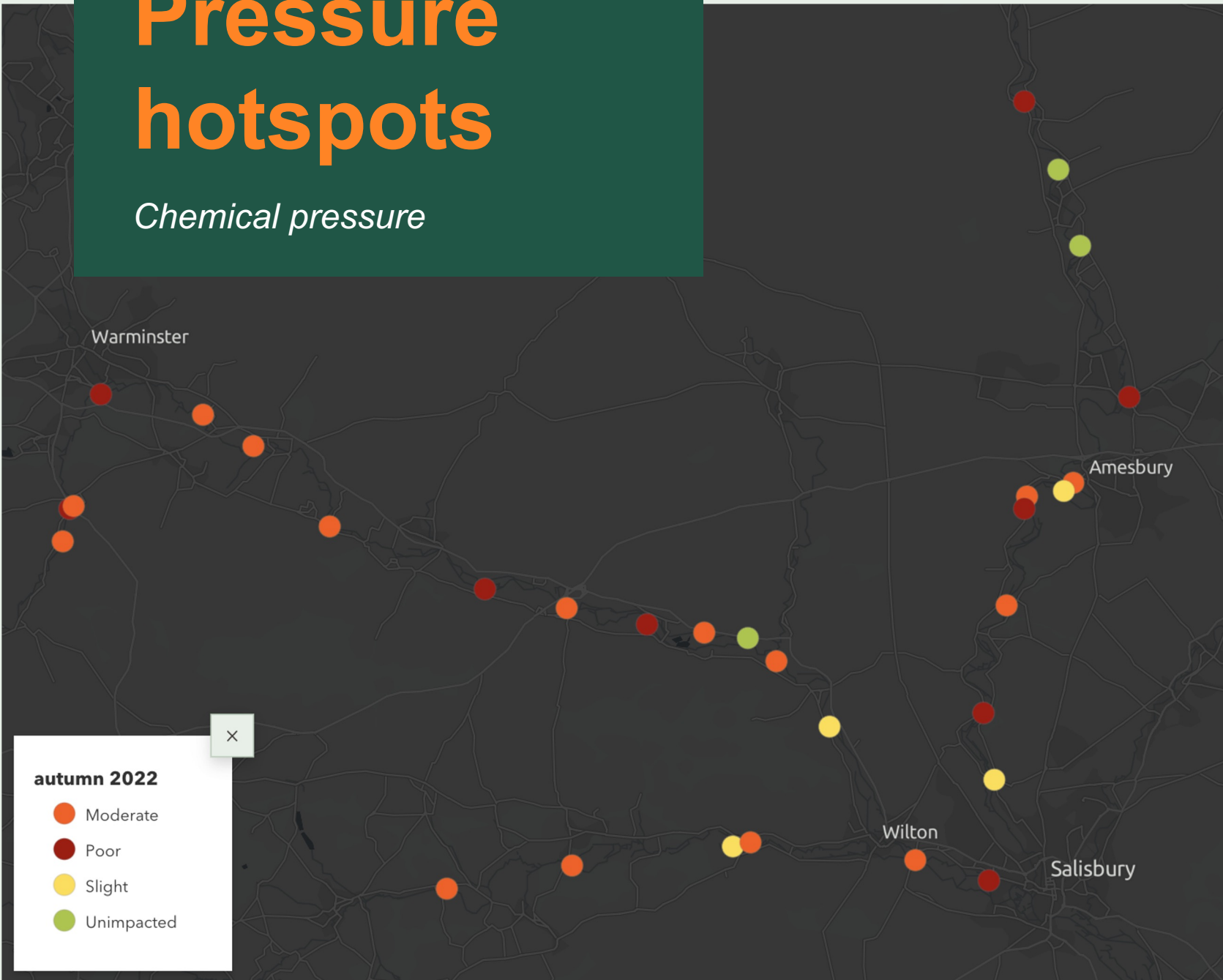
Pressure hotspots

Sediment pressure



Pressure hotspots

Chemical pressure





Where are the problems coming from?

Complex issues – EA say:

43.3% Agriculture

25.4% Sewage

- Increase in new housing development + MoD coming out of Germany 7000 families
- Dairy farming
- MoD sewage treatment works as well as Wessex Water
- Lots of septic tanks in small villages
- Fish farms

Death by a million cuts for our rivers!

Environment Agency have constrained resources and struggle to respond.

Have very few farm inspectors.

Cannot effectively **monitor**, **analyse** or **enforce** standards.

Data from our SmartRivers hub is the same/better currency as the EA. **Long term data drives EA to action!**





What we're doing to help

- Partnership and high levels of collaboration
- Building PR campaign to engage stakeholders
- Messages and dialogue with local MP's
- Growing the SmartRivers monitoring network
- Regular engagement with EA and Wessex Water – adding value in terms of data/analysis and influencing their plans
- Developing road shows to take to the local population, councils, local interest groups