



**BRANCHOUT**  
ESSEX&SUFFOLK WATER

# **BRANCH OUT FUND**

## WHAT IS THE BRANCH OUT FUND?

A healthy natural environment is essential for supplying top quality drinking water. Essex & Suffolk Water set up the Branch Out fund in response to the need to build resilience in the region's natural environment.

It aims to help adaptation to the effects of a changing climate whilst bringing benefits to water, wildlife and communities.

The purpose of the fund is to enable local communities, land managers, other organisations and individuals to make a difference to the natural environment within Essex & Suffolk Water's operating area.

## WHY BRANCH OUT?

The natural environment is at the heart of our business. The 1.8 million customers in our region who receive high quality drinking water all benefit from us helping to maintain the natural environment in a healthy state.

The link between health and the countryside is well known and many of the Branch Out projects will encourage people to be outside, visiting sites and learning more about their local countryside.

Increasing the resilience of our ecosystems is at the heart of this initiative. Enhancing, buffering and linking habitats will help the flora and fauna using them to be better placed to deal with whatever changes in the climate occur.

The effects of improving water quality will not only benefit the natural environment but will also help reduce the cost of water treatment.

## APPROACH TO PROJECTS

Branch Out projects will be delivered through partnership working. This can be building on existing partnerships or creating new ones. Working in partnership means benefits can be maximised by different groups of people all working towards the same aims.

Branch Out encompasses projects ranging from a landscape scale with many partners to smaller community and farm based projects.



Essex Wildlife Trust.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

The fund is open to organisations, community groups or individuals from the public, private, voluntary and education sectors who have projects that can make a difference to the wildlife and communities in the area that Essex & Suffolk Water operates in.

## CASE STUDY

### ESSEX RIVER WARDEN SCHEME

Branch Out supported Essex Wildlife Trust in setting up the Essex River Warden's scheme. The aim was to develop and train a group of local, dedicated volunteers to become custodians of their local Essex river. By having regular monitoring, the health of rivers can be improved due to timely reporting of issues or pollution events to the appropriate authority. A year later and the scheme has had fantastic success! It was recently recognised as an exemplar project and named a finalist in the national Living Waterways Awards run by the Canal & River Trust. Since Branch Out's financial contribution the number of volunteers has more than doubled to 180, totting up around 2500 hours of volunteer effort a year! This means more than a quarter of the waterways in the Essex River Catchment are regularly monitored. Furthermore, 60 of the volunteers have gone on to have more specialist training in Riverfly monitoring. The Essex River Warden's scheme is now well established and aims to continue into the future.

[www.essexwtrecords.org.uk/survey/river-wardens](http://www.essexwtrecords.org.uk/survey/river-wardens)

### SUFFOLK BROADS LIVING LANDSCAPE

Suffolk Wildlife Trust is leading on a project to create a rich landscape of wetland habitat from Lowestoft to Beccles. Essex & Suffolk Water has been able to help support this work through Branch Out. Other key partners are the Broads Authority, Environment Agency, Natural England and local landowners. Reconnecting, expanding and buffering wildlife rich sites will make them less vulnerable to water level changes and will benefit the unique Broadland species associated with the dykes and wet marshes. [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org).



Whittaker, Terry. 2020 Vision.



### **BTO – TRACKING CUCKOOS INTO AFRICA**

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is running a ground breaking project aiming to cover the journey that cuckoos make after leaving their breeding grounds here in the UK. This information is critical to help understand and hopefully help prevent the drastic decline that there has been in cuckoo numbers in recent years. The project is supported by the BTO raffle 2010, BBC Wildlife Fund and Essex & Suffolk Water's Branch Out initiative. Lyster, one of the five cuckoos being tracked using a 5g satellite tag is named after one of Essex & Suffolk Water's non-executive directors. [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org).

### **HOW TO APPLY?**

Complete an application form and send it in to us. Application forms can be found at: [www.branchout-esw.co.uk](http://www.branchout-esw.co.uk)

Completed forms can be sent to: [branchout@nwl.co.uk](mailto:branchout@nwl.co.uk)

Conservation  
Essex & Suffolk Water  
Sandon Valley House Canon Barns Road  
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Essex CM3 8BD

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further background information, case studies, and guidance notes can be found on the website.

[www.branchout-esw.co.uk](http://www.branchout-esw.co.uk)



*James, Charlie Hamiton. 2020 Vision.*