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## Helping members with abstraction licences in the Norfolk Broads



We are supporting members with irrigation licences in the Ant, Bure and Thurne sub-catchment part of the Broadland Rivers catchment, whose access to water is under review by the Environment Agency.

We have created a working group in partnership with the local abstractor group BAWAG, and we have made funding available to commission external professional experts in representing members on the technical aspects of the licensing review.

The immediate impact of the review on farm businesses is uncertainty about future access to water and the implications for local food production. Licences face the risk of future constraint, primarily but not solely, in terms of annual abstracted volumes.

For licences that expired in March 2018, the Agency has indicated that it will not be in a position to take firm decisions until the end of September 2018; rules permit that abstractions can continue as usual until decisions are taken.

The Agency's review is designed to ensure that licences comply with two separate regulations.

Firstly, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 'no deterioration' licensing policy is being applied across East Anglia. It has the effect of constraining some Time Limited groundwater irrigation licences at renewal to annual volumes based on peak use during the period 2000-2015

Secondly, ongoing assessment of all licences (both time limited licences and licences of right) as part of Habitats Regulations requirements – the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This programme is assessing the impact, or risk of future potential impact, of abstraction on specially designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and – for the purposes of this exercise - is specific to licences in the Ant, Bure and Thurne catchment.

Members can learn more about this issue by downloading a PDF [HERE](#)

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