

NEWS RELEASE



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THAMES WATER RESERVOIR PROPOSALS WILL CAUSE ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) has highlighted studies which show that Thames Water's proposals for a new Abingdon reservoir would create great environmental damage and habitat destruction on and around the reservoir site.

A report by Dr Clive Spinage, who has studied in close detail the area of the proposed reservoir, highlights the scale of destruction of wildlife habitats over this huge area. Protected species displaced would include water voles, bats and hedgehogs and, in addition, 94 per cent of bird species presently found there would go, leading to a further decline in some of the rare birds which nest there, including Lapwing and Golden Plover.

Nick Thompson, Chairman of GARD, said:

"Thames Water's plan for a massive reservoir would destroy vital habitat for some of our best-loved wildlife. The area is particularly well-suited to water voles and Steventon is one of the surviving areas where they continue to flourish. In addition to being 70 per cent very high quality productive farmland which is protected by national planning policy, the site is home to wildlife which should also be protected from the threat of development for the benefit of future generations.

"The site is about four square miles with a footprint similar in size to that of Heathrow Airport. This massive expanse of water contained by very high embankments would have a huge impact on the existing wildlife and their corridors of movement, and on the surrounding villages both during and after construction.

"The proposal for the reservoir is based on artificially inflated demand projections, and it is not necessary. GARD intends to demonstrate this at the forthcoming Public Inquiry."

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For more information, please contact Peter Jones on 07917 312 749 or to arrange an interview with Nick Thompson.

Notes to editors:

1. The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) is a group of local residents campaigning against plans by Thames Water to build a **huge** and **unnecessary** reservoir in the countryside, south west of Abingdon. Thames Water has ignored or dismissed more sustainable and viable long term alternatives.
2. Local residents can sign up to our campaign via our website and make your voice heard. Campaign updates are available via Facebook, Twitter and the website. Go to **www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk**
3. A public inquiry on Thames Water's plan is due to start on 15 June this year and GARD will be challenging the plans at the inquiry. If Thames Water's plan is approved in the face of strong local opposition, work could start as early as 2016.