Loughs Agency Water Framework Directive Fish in Rivers Classification Report
Loughs Agency Fish in Rivers Water Framework Directive Fish Classification Report 2010

For Northern Ireland Environment Agency 2011

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The Loughs Agency sponsoring departments and staff are gratefully acknowledged for the assistance provided to conduct Water Framework Directive fish monitoring in the Foyle and Carlingford areas.
Executive Summary

Eight Water Framework Directive fish surveillance monitoring stations were surveyed within the Loughs Agency jurisdiction in 2010. Five of these were in Northern Ireland and three were in the Republic of Ireland. This report presents the results for the monitoring stations within Northern Ireland. 0% were classified as high status, 100% classified as good status, 0% as moderate status 0% as poor status and 0% as bad status.

An overview of the classification system utilised is provided and a synopsis of the biological and habitat data presented. Additional data and information has been presented in a series of excel spreadsheets submitted to Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), this includes data from other sites not included in the WFD surveillance monitoring programme. WFD fish classifications have been applied to these additional sites using the same methodology. All data reported is stored within the Loughs Agency Geographical Information System (GIS) and is available upon request.

Photographs of each site have been included where available and outline recommendations made for consideration as part of any programmes of measures.

LA fish classification 2010 based on five sites surveyed within the Foyle and Carlingford areas
1.0 Introduction

This report is submitted to Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) by way of part fulfilment of the Loughs Agency agreement to survey and provide classifications for Water Framework Directive river fish monitoring. The report provides classifications for monitoring stations within the Loughs Agency jurisdictions of the Foyle and Carlingford areas for 2010. Additional information has been provided in electronic format.

A synopsis of targeted Water Framework Directive river fish sampling within the Foyle and Carlingford areas has been provided below for fieldwork conducted in 2010.

Other sites outside of the Foyle and Carlingford areas have been monitored by the Agri Food and Bioscience Institute (AFBI) under contract to NIEA.

2.0 Basis for Water Framework Directive Fish Classification

In the absence of a finalised fish in rivers classification tool (currently under development) professional judgement has been used to classify selected river sites for fish. These have then been incorporated into final ecological status classifications.

Data collection was conducted in the field during June, July, August and September 2010 and involved the use of a quantitative electrofishing methodology commonly used for wadable rivers. This technique requires the netting off of a small section of river approximately 100m² using stop nets.

Removal sampling is then conducted utilising electrofishing equipment with the numbers, age class and species of each fish being recorded for each pass. After an appropriate depletion has been achieved, which facilitates a density estimation to be made all fish are returned alive to the river.
Additional habitat variables were recorded and the exact location of upstream and downstream stop nets were recorded using a Trimble Geo HX hand held GPS unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>All age classes of salmon (not adult salmon) and trout present in reasonable abundance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Salmon and trout present in reasonable abundance but disruption of one age class of either species</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Moderate       | All age classes of salmon (not adult salmon) and trout present but in low abundance  

\[
\text{OR}
\]

|                    | Salmon and trout present in but one age class absent from both species  

\[
\text{OR}
\]

|                    | No salmon present but two or more age classes of trout present in reasonable abundance |
| Poor              | No salmon present; trout present but two age classes absent  

\[
\text{OR}
\]

|                    | Salmon and trout both present but only one age class of each species |
| Bad               | No salmonids present |

Table 1. Professional judgement criteria after O’Connor 2009, AFBI
### NURSERY AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Grade 1 | - 50 -80mm water depth  
            - 0.5 – 8% gradient  
            - Stable cobble/boulder substrate > or = 70% bed cover  
            - Providing adequate cover |
| Grade 2 | Marginally outside grade 1 on one count only                                 |
| Grade 3 | Well outside grade 1 on one or more counts                                  |
| Grade 4 | Absent, deep, channelized, silty etc.                                       |

### SPAWNING AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Grade 1 | - Flow 300 – 600mm/sec  
            - Water depth 150 – 700mm  
            - 70% substrate 30-80mm diameter  
            - Gravel depth:  
                Trout = 50-150mm  
                Salmon = 200-500mm |
| Grades 2-4 | Failing as for nursery habitat above                                         |

### HOLDING AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Grade 1 | - Depth minimum m ideally > or = 2m  
            - Suitable cover  
            - Bankside/substrate stability |
| Grades 2-4 | Failing as for nursery habitat above                                         |

Table 2. Habitat classification based on Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland (Fisheries Division) advisory leaflet on the evaluation of habitat for salmon and trout
3.0 Classifications

3.1 F10022 Burndennet R at Burndennet Br  GBN1NW010101070
Burndennett  WFD Fish Classification 2010

GOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISHING</th>
<th>Salmon 0+</th>
<th>Salmon 1+</th>
<th>Trout 0+</th>
<th>Trout 1+</th>
<th>Eel</th>
<th>*SB</th>
<th>*SL</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Removal sampling results *Note SB = Stickle Back and SL = Stone Loach

Total Number of Fish Caught, Burndennet 2010

![Graph showing total number of fish caught by species in Burndennet 2010](image)

Fig 1. Total catch

Density Estimate of Fish Species, Burndennet

![Graph showing density estimate of fish species in Burndennet](image)

Fig 2. Density/100m²
Fig 3. Length weight relationship of all age classes of salmon (this can be used to visually assess the presence of different age classes/cohorts)

Fig 4. Length weight relationship of all age classes of trout
Fig 5. Length frequency distribution for all juvenile salmon caught (this can also be used to assess the presence of different age classes/cohorts)

Fig 6. Length frequency distribution for all trout caught
This site is composed predominantly of grade 2 nursery habitat (50%) with grade 1 spawning habitat (40%) and grade 2 holding habitat (10%).

Additional biological information is available in the spreadsheets provided.

This site had swift flows even during low water/drought conditions as experienced during survey. Stop nets were not utilised due to prevailing flow conditions which prevented successful deployment. The limits of the site were delineated using a natural feature in the form of the start and end of a riffle. Some immigration or emigration to/from the site was possible but it is the opinion of the author that this was negligible and that the data obtained is suitable for inclusion in the classification. In future years this site may have to be treated as a large site and surveyed using the multi method approach.

![Image of a river with a bridge and trees]

**Fig 7. F10022**

Erosion is occurring on the left hand bank but is not severe and is providing a source of suitable substrate. Japanese Knotweed is present on the right hand bank.

Potential programmes of measures could include treatment/removal of invasive species at the site, the introduction of some large woody debris (LWD) and the introduction of more nursery and spawning substrate. The site is immediately downstream of a main road bridge where sporadic littering is a problem.
3.2 F10049 Glendergan River at Sraghcumber GBN1NW010102067 Derg WFD Fish Classification 2010

**GOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISHING</th>
<th>Salmon 0+</th>
<th>Salmon 1+</th>
<th>Trout 0+</th>
<th>Trout 1+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Removal sampling results

**Fig 8. Total catch**

**Fig 9. Density/100m²**
Length Weight Relationship of Salmon 0+ and 1+ Glendergan (N=73)

\[ y = 5E-05x^{2.6518} \]
\[ R^2 = 0.9312 \]

Fig 10. Length weight relationship of all salmon

Length Weight Relationship of Trout 0+ and 1+ Glendergan (N=6)

\[ y = 2E-05x^{2.9084} \]
\[ R^2 = 0.9951 \]

Fig 11. Length weight relationship of all trout caught
Fig 12. Length frequency of all salmon caught

Length Frequency of Salmon 0+ and 1+
Glendergan (N=73)

Fig 12. Length frequency of all trout caught

Length Frequency of Trout 0+ and 1+
Glendergan (N=6)
This site is composed predominantly of grade 2 nursery habitat (50%) with grade 2 spawning habitat (35%) and grade 3 holding habitat (15%).

Additional biological information is available in the spreadsheets provided.

This site has a natural channel form with no obvious signs of drainage. In-channel habitat is diverse. Riparian habitat is dominated by native deciduous tree species.

Potential programmes of measures could include the introduction of some large woody debris (LWD). The site is potentially used as a fording point with localised littering a problem.
3.3 F10079 Glenelly River at Clogherny Br
Glenelly
WFD Fish Classification 2010

Table 5. Removal sampling results *Note La = Lamprey and Mi = Minnow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISHING</th>
<th>Salmon 0+</th>
<th>Salmon 1+</th>
<th>Trout 0+</th>
<th>Trout 1+</th>
<th>Eel</th>
<th>*La</th>
<th>*Mi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 14. Total catch

Fig 15. Density/100m²
Length Weight Relationship of Salmon 0+ and Salmon 1+ Glenelly River (N=115)

\[ y = 1E-05x^{3.042} \]
\[ R^2 = 0.9744 \]

Fig 16. Length weight relationship of all salmon

Length Weight Relationship of Trout 0+ and Trout 1+ Glenelly River (N=7)

\[ y = 1E-05x^{2.9921} \]
\[ R^2 = 0.9958 \]

Fig 17. Length weight relationship of all trout caught
Fig 18. Length frequency of all salmon caught

Fig 19. Length frequency of all trout caught
This site is composed predominantly of grade 2 nursery habitat (50%) and grade 1 spawning habitat (50%). There was no holding habitat present within the site.

Additional biological information is available in the spreadsheets provided.

This site has a natural channel form with no obvious signs of drainage. In-channel habitat is diverse. Riparian habitat is dominated by native deciduous tree species. There is some non permitted gravel/substrate removal immediately below Clogherny Bridge. Banks on both sides are unfenced with regular access by cattle. This has lead to bankside trampling and direct in-channel effects. The site is also a fly tipping location with household, mechanical and farm waste present throughout. Numerous sheep pour on bottles were found in the river and removed at the time of sampling. Boxes with warning labels for the herbicide MCPA were also found in the river. MCPA has been recorded at high concentrations at a number of investigative monitoring stations and inappropriate use or disposal of containers may be having a significant impact on the aquatic environment.
Potential programmes of measures could include appropriate bankside fencing with access points for limited grazing and riparian zone maintenance. A community litter pick and local environmental education programmes should be developed to tackle the fly tipping problem. Targeted information should be provided to the agricultural community on appropriate stock management adjacent to watercourses, unpermitted gravel extraction and waste management.
### Table 6. Removal sampling results

*Note La = Lamprey, Mi = Minnow & SB = Stickleback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISHING</th>
<th>Salmon 0+</th>
<th>Salmon 1+</th>
<th>Trout 0+</th>
<th>Trout 1+</th>
<th>Eel</th>
<th>*La</th>
<th>*Mi</th>
<th>*SB</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>189</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Number of Fish Caught, Cloghfin 2010

![Number of Fish Caught](image)

*Fig 20. Total catch*

#### Density Estimate of Fish Species, Cloghfin

![Density Estimate](image)

*Fig 21. Density/100m²*
**Length Weight Relationship of Salmon 0+ & 1+ Cloghfin (N=111)**

\[ y = 2E^{-0.05}x^{2.9149} \]

\[ R^2 = 0.9117 \]

**Length Weight Relationship of Trout 0+ and 1+ Cloghfin (N=3)**

\[ y = 2E^{-0.05}x^{2.9037} \]

\[ R^2 = 0.9915 \]

---

Fig 22. Length weight relationship of all salmon

Fig 23. Length weight relationship of all trout caught
**Fig 24.** Length frequency of all salmon caught

**Fig 25.** Length frequency of all trout caught
This site is composed predominantly of grade 3 nursery habitat (60%) with grade 2 spawning habitat (30%) and grade 4 holding habitat (10%).

Additional biological information is available in the spreadsheets provided. Significant numbers of stoneloach >1000 were observed within the site.

This site shows evidence of being heavily drained and has a low level of in-channel diversity as a result.

Potential programmes of measures could include reinstatement of a diverse in-channel habitat including the introduction of spawning gravel and nursery stone to create repeated units of spawning holding and nursery habitat. The introduction of large woody debris could also be beneficial throughout this waterbody.
Site F10170 has been classified as a large river site, it is both wide and deep and as a result quantitative electrofishing is not possible. The Northern Ireland Water Framework Directive Fish Group has outlined that in such cases a multi method sampling approach should be taken. This should include seine netting, fyke netting and electrofishing without stop nets. This approach should best cover all possible habitats and water depths.

The multi method approach was adopted at this site with successful seine netting and fyke netting operations conducted. Electrofishing was not possible at or near this site due to prevailing high water conditions.
throughout the remainder of the field season. There was one possible location which may be suitable in low water conditions.

**Length Weight Relationship of Salmon 1+ Roe (N=5)**

\[ y = 3 \times 10^{-6} x^{3.2768} \]

\[ R^2 = 0.9879 \]

![Graph showing the length-weight relationship of Salmon 1+ Roe with the equation and R² value.](image)

*Fig 28. Salmon 1+ length weight relationship. *This does not include the adult Atlantic salmon caught*

**Length Frequency of Salmon 1+ Roe (N=4)**

![Graph showing the length frequency of Salmon 1+ Roe with bars indicating frequency.](image)

*Fig 29. Length frequency of all salmon caught. *This does include the adult Atlantic salmon caught*
This site is influenced by the tide and as a result is not ideal nursery and spawning habitat for juvenile salmonids. The river substrate is composed primarily of silt, sand and fine gravel which provides a greatly reduced potential for carrying high numbers of juvenile salmonids and other fish species. This stretch of the river is dominated by large holding pools greater than 2m in depth.

Additional biological information is available in the spreadsheets provided.

This site shows evidence of being heavily drained and has a low level of in-channel diversity as a result. Significant bank erosion is occurring in places and Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and Giant hogweed are present along the bank.

![Fig 30. F10170](image)

Potential programmes of measures could include removal and treatment of invasive species, introduction of large woody debris and some bank
protection. Reconnection of the river to the flood plain would also be beneficial from a hydro geomorphological perspective.
4.0 Conclusion

In 2010 within the Loughs Agency jurisdiction in addition to the five WFD fish surveillance sites surveyed in Northern Ireland three WFD fish surveillance sites were surveyed in the Republic of Ireland. Twelve other sites were surveyed within the Loughs Agency jurisdiction using similar methods. This data has also been made available in electronic format as part of the WFD fish reporting procedure.

The majority of sites to be surveyed in 2011 are large river sites where a multi method approach will need to be utilised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Year Surveyed</th>
<th>Catchment</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F10086</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Strule</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10089</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Strule</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10076</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Owenkillew</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10020</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Burndennet</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10014</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Glenmornan</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10626</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Newry</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10644</td>
<td>2009 (AFBI)</td>
<td>Killbroney (NI)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10077</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Owenkillew</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10763</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Skeoge</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10022</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Burndennet</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10049</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Derg</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10079</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Glenelly</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10115</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Camowen</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10170</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Roe</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. WFD fish surveillance stations surveyed by the Loughs Agency 2008-2010

In addition to the thirteen WFD fish monitoring stations quantitatively surveyed from 2008-2010 as outlined in the table above the Loughs Agency has conducted similar quantitative surveys at an additional 65 stations throughout the Foyle and Carlingford areas between 2005 and 2010. The potential use of semi quantitative data collected in the Foyle and Carlingford areas at approximately 500 stations annually is currently being investigated by the Northern Ireland Water Framework Directive Fish Group for use in operational monitoring classification.
Fig 32. WFD Fish surveillance river and lake sites within the Foyle area, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland
Fig 33. WFD Fish surveillance river and lake sites within the Carlingford area, Northern Ireland. There are no sites within ROI in the Carlingford area.
Fig 34. WFD fish surveillance river classifications within the Foyle area, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland 2010.
Fig 35. WFD fish surveillance classifications within the Carlingford area, Northern Ireland 2009-2010. There are no sites within Carlingford area lying within ROI.
Fig 36. WFD fish surveillance classifications within the Foyle area 2008-2010.