

Neagh Bann Draft River Basin Management Plan

Lough Neagh

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Environment
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**Neagh Bann River Basin District
Upper Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group
Lough Neagh River Basin Management Area**

The Lough Neagh Management area covers an area of approximately 955 km². Lurgan is the major town in the area with significant smaller towns such as Crumlin, Glenavy and Ballyronan. Antrim is on the shores of Lough Neagh however, the town is located in another management area and so is not included in this report.

Map of Lough Neagh management area



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Protected Areas

A large number of water features within the area have been designated under various European Directives and require special protection. Both the Crumlin and Glenavy Rivers have been classified as Salmonid under the Freshwater Fish Directive and both were compliant with this directive in 2007.

The management area is dominated by Lough Neagh which covers an area of 381 km². The Lough is shallow at its margins, being only 9m deep on average, deepening to 25m in its centre. 43% of Northern Ireland drains into the Lough and five of the six counties in NI surround it. The Lough Neagh management

area is designated under the Birds directive, the Freshwater Fish Directive, and is located within the Neagh Bann river basin District which is designated as sensitive under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in relation to nutrients specifically phosphorus.

The Management Area includes the Sperrin and Lagan Valley Areas of Outstanding natural Beauty.

Lough Neagh is an Area of Special Scientific Interest and the Management area includes a further 15 smaller Areas of Special Scientific Interest. These are; Toome, Lough Beg, Leathemstown, Slievenacloy, Portmore Lough, Montiaghs Moss, Ballynanaghten, Peatlands Park, Derryvore, Selshion, Drumcrow, Aghnadarriagh, Ballypalady and Tardree.

There are Nine National Nature Reserves, One RAMSAR site (Lough Neagh and Lough Beg), Three Special areas of conservation and one Specially Protected Area all within the management area.

Over forty rare or local vascular plants have been recorded in the management area since 1970; the most notable are Eight-stemmed Waterwort, Marsh Pea Irish Lady's Tresses Orchid, Alder Buckthorn, Narrow Small-reed and Holy Grass.

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Further information is available on the **Protected Areas** section of the website.

River Waterbodies

As of 2008, 6% of rivers in the Lough Neagh Management area have been classified at good status or above. However we propose to raise this percentage to 39% by 2015, 89% by 2021 and to 94% by 2027.

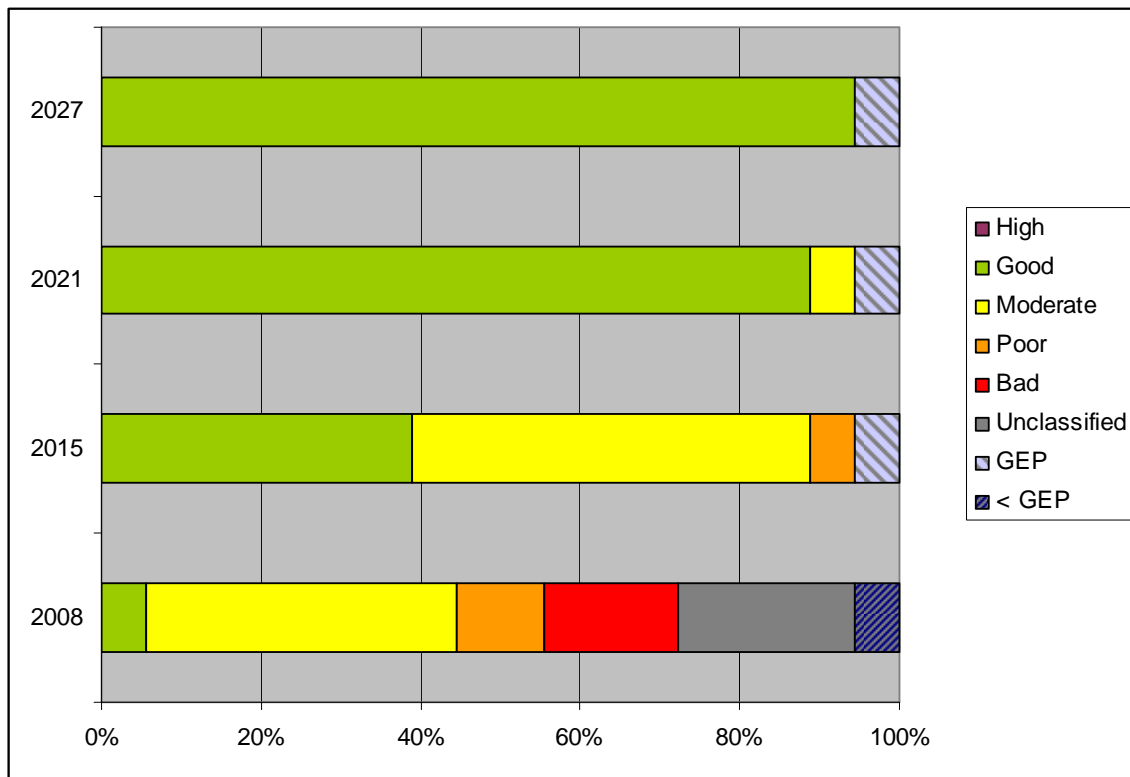
These rivers include the Glenavy River, the Crumlin River, the Dundesert River and the Salterstown River.

The Lough Neagh management Area is part of the Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholders Group area. Analysis of the status for this area has shown a large percentage of water bodies failing to achieve good status due to benthic invertebrates 76% and this is accompanied by a significant level of downgrading due to other elements that may be indicative of a high level of enrichment within the catchment. These are DO 21%, BOD 15%, Macrophytes 26% and phosphorus 9%. The range of elements emphasises the numerous pressures influencing water quality in this catchment.

Morphology also has a large influence on quality in the catchment with 21% of river water bodies affected by morphological changes. There was a minor influence by pH affecting 4 % of water bodies.

The Stoneyford River has been designated as Heavily Modified and should reach Good Ecological Potential by 2015. Stoneyford is classified as heavily modified due to its use as a drinking water storage facility.

Current status and proposed objectives for river water bodies in the Lough Neagh management area 2008-2027



Lakes

There are three lake water bodies in the Lough Neagh Management area. They are; Lough Neagh, Portmore Lough and Stoneyford reservoir. All are heavily modified. Lough Neagh and Portmore Lough are modified for the purposes of water storage for flow regulation.

Stoneyford reservoir is classified as poor status due to phosphorus and moderate in relation to macrophytes but we propose to reach moderate Ecological potential by 2015 and Good ecological potential by 2021.

Both Lough Neagh and Portmore Lough are classified at Bad status due to Macrophytes and both are affected by high phosphorus levels. This is also demonstrated in high levels of phytoplankton. Both Loughs are highly enriched currently but we plan to reach Good Ecological potential by 2015 for Portmore Lough and 2021 for Lough Neagh.

Groundwater Bodies	
<p>There are six Groundwater Bodies that are partially within the Lough Neagh management area. They are Aughnacloy, Neagh, Ballymena, Cookstown, Antrim and Moygashel. All except Ballymena are currently at Good status for both quantitative and chemical status. Ballymena groundwater body has should be at good status by 2021.</p>	
i	<p>Further information on how water bodies were classified can be read in the Assessing the Quality of Our Water Environment section of the website. The quality of individual water bodies and their objectives can be viewed on the interactive web map.</p>
<p>The improvements in water quality proposed above will be delivered through a programme of measures, coordinated by the department of the Environment. A number of these measures are already being carried out in the Lough Neagh management area.</p> <p>Supporting the programme of measures are a number of projects and initiatives run, for example, by local communities, angling groups and voluntary environmental organisations that will contribute to achieving the objectives we have set for our waters. Some of those happening in the Lough Neagh management area are provided below.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lough Neagh Partnership Project • Ballysaggart Lough Environmental Group • Lough Neagh Advisory Committee • Upper Bann River Enhancement partnership project 	
<p>Upper Bann River Enhancement Partnership project</p> <p>The Upper Bann River Enhancement Partnership project, managed by Rathfriland Angling Club in partnership with Banbridge and Clonduff Angling Clubs has completed river enhancement work on the Upper Bann River such as introducing stone groynes and spawning gravel. Kilrea Angling Club and the Maine Angling Club are a number of other clubs that carry out river improvement works in their respective rivers; whether it is through fish stocking, removing litter from the banks or protection of river banks from erosion.</p>	
i	<p>Further information is available in the Programme of Measures section of the website. The key pressures and associated sectors impacting on water bodies can be viewed on the interactive web map.</p>