

Neagh Bann Draft River Basin Management Plan

Braid and Main

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An Agency within the Department of the
Environment
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**Neagh Bann River Basin District
Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group
Braid and Main River Basin Management Area**

The Braid and Main management area covers an area of approximately 714 km². Ballymena is the largest town with several small towns; Broughshane, Ahoghill and Portglenone also serving the area.

The Braid and Main area follows the general pattern of diffuse rural settlement that characterises many areas of Northern Ireland. The main Landuse in the management area is improved grassland with areas of arable farming.

Map of Braid Main 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 Braid and the Main are designated as Salmonid under the Freshwater Fish Directive and

both were compliant in 2007.

The management area has the southern most tip of the Antrim plateau in its northern region. This region is known as the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are eight Areas of Special Scientific Interest including Caldanagh, Dunloy, Frosses Bog, Ballymacaldrick, Rathsherry, Garron, Cleggan and Glen Burn.

In the lower reaches of the management area where it joins Lough Neagh, there is Randalstown Forest nature Reserve containing ash, hawthorn, blackthorn, alder and willow trees. Rare plants such as large bitter cress, lanceolate water plantain and elongated sedge also grow where the wood is wettest.

Garron plateau is a RAMSAR site, Special Area of Conservation and ASSI which is located in the north east of the management area on the Antrim plateau. Garron Plateau is listed under the habitats directive and is the only extant locality for marsh saxifrage in Northern Ireland.

The Main valley Bogs Special Area of Conservation comprises three separate bog areas; Caldanagh bog, Dunloy bog and Frosses bog. Hummock-forming bog-mosses occur on each of the bogs. One of the most significant features of the central bog is that it is one of the most extensive and least-disturbed in Northern Ireland.

The Braid and Main management area falls within the Lough Neagh Catchment that has been designated as a sensitive area under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in relation to nutrients, specifically phosphorous.

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

River Water Bodies

40% of the river water bodies in the management area have been classified as less than good status. However, it is proposed that 94% of waterbodies would be classified at good status by 2015 and that this figure should reach 100% by 2021.

The Braid and Main management area is part Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group area. Analysis of the status for this area has shown a large percentage of water bodies are failing to achieve good status due to benthic invertebrates (76%). This is generally 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.

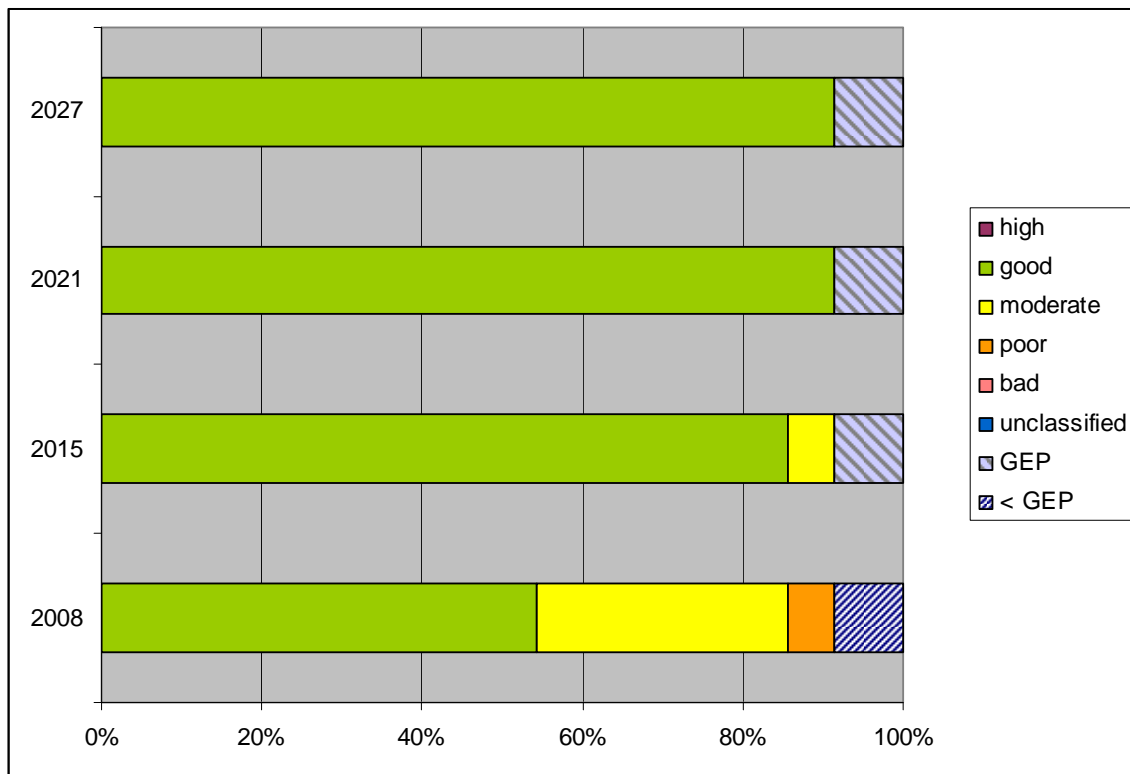
Morphology also has a large influence on quality in the catchment with 21% of

river water bodies affected by morphological changes. There was a minor influence by pH affecting 4 % of water bodies.

Four of the rivers in the management area are designated as heavily modified, including Glenravel water, Artoges river, Glenwhirry river and Braid river. All should achieve good ecological potential by 2015.

The Braid is modified due to flood risk management.

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



Lakes

There are no monitored lakes within the Braid and Main management area except at the southern most part where it drains into Lough Neagh (this is dealt with in the Lough Neagh management area document).

Groundwater Bodies

The Braid and Main management area is dominated by the Ballymena groundwater body which has been classified as Poor for both quantitative and chemical status.

The Ballymena Groundwater body is proposed to classify as good for both chemical and quantitative analysis by 2021.

i	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 .
Local Initiatives	
<p>The improvements in water quality proposed above will be delivered through a programme of measures coordinated by the Department of the Environment, some of which are already being carried out in the Braid Main management area.</p> <p>There 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 Braid and Main management area are provided below.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Bann advisory Committee • Lough Neagh Advisory Committee • Main Enhancement Partnership 	
<p>Lough Neagh Partnership Project</p> <p>The Lough Neagh Partnership Project has responsibility for the delivery of a £3.2 million strategic fund, under the European Union Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity, to support work and provide additional resources to help achieve implementation of parts of the Lough Neagh Management Strategy. This funding is available to support organisations to help develop the Lough in an economic, environmental and socially sustainable way. The Strategic Fund is currently supporting over 130 environmental, economic and social projects. For example, the Moyola Angling Association in conjunction with landowners on the Moyola River worked with Lough Neagh Partnership to enhance the habitat of the river for spawning and growth of game fish.</p>	
i	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 .