

Neagh Bann Draft River Basin Management Plan

Six Mile Water

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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
Six Mile Water River Basin Management Area**

The Six Mile Water management area covers an area of approximately 302 km². It stretches from the southern most part of the Antrim Plateau to Lough Neagh in the west. Antrim, Ballyclare, Ballynure and Templepatrick are among the largest towns but there are numerous smaller towns and villages scattered throughout the area.

The main land use is improved grassland, with 50% of land used for this purpose. Arable Horticulture and Calcareous Grassland are also significant uses of land with 10% and 8% coverage respectively.

Map of Six Mile Water 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. The Six Mile Water and Four Mile Burn are designated as Salmonid under the Freshwater Fish Directive and both were compliant with the directive in 2007.

The Antrim plateau, whose southern most points cross the management area, is designated under the Birds Directive.

The Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located partially within the management area.

There are seven Areas of Special Scientific Interest within the management area which includes; North Woodburn Glen, Outer Belfast Lough, Inner Belfast Lough, Lough Neagh, Ballypalady, Tardree Quarry and Sandy Braes.

Ballypaladay Plant Bed ASSI is one of the most important Tertiary age fossil plant localities in Britain or Ireland. Since 1869 its fossilised flora has been widely studied and documented. The fossils discovered at Ballypalady would indicate that the Plant Bed dates back to the Palaeocene Age, some 60 million years ago.

Two Nature Reserves occupy the area; Rea's Wood and Lough Neagh Islands. Rea's Wood (Farr's Bay) is situated along the shores of Lough Neagh and is one of the best examples of alluvial forests in Northern Ireland. The site contains a complete successional sequence from open water through reedswamp to alder woodland. These habitats occur on permanently inundated and ponded areas that have developed as a result of successive lowerings of the Lough.

Three Specially Protected Areas, a single Special area of Conservation and two RAMSAR sites are also present in the Six Mile Water management area.

The Six Mile Water area falls within the Neagh Bann catchment that has been designated as sensitive under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in relation to eutrophication from phosphorous.

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

River Waterbodies

42% of the river water bodies in the Six Mile Water management area are currently at good status. This is proposed to rise to 92% by 2015, and reach 100% by 2021. These waterways include the Ballymartin Water, Doagh River, Rathmore Burn and Plaskets feeder.

The Six Mile Water management Area fall within 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

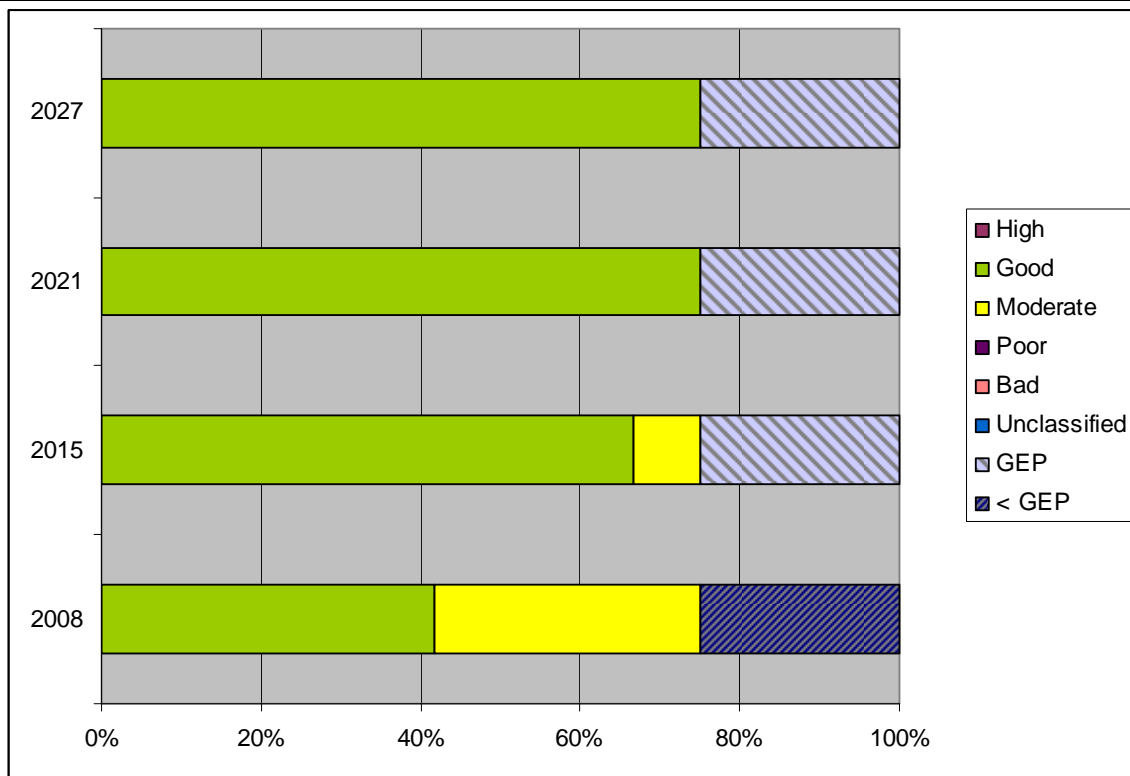
pressures influencing water quality in this catchment.

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 six mile water and Plaskets burn have been characterised as heavily modified. Both the Six mile water and Plaskets Burn are heavily modified due to flood risk management.

All three are proposed to reach Good Ecological Status by 2015.

Current status and proposed objectives for river water bodies in the Six Mile Water management area 2008-2027



Groundwater Bodies

The Six Mile Water management area contains only one groundwater body (Antrim) which has its current status classified as good for both quantitative and chemical analysis.

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 .
<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 Six Mile Water 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 Six Mile Water management area are provided below.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six Mile Water Targeted Action Plan • Six Mile Water Wetland Project Group • Six Mile Water Guardians 	
<p>Six Mile Water Guardians</p> <p>This is an Antrim Borough Council initiative funded by the big lottery fund. The Six Mile Water Guardians are a local group which act as the eyes and ears for the river, reporting issues as they arise. A programme of environmental training has been completed by volunteers from this organisation. This project demonstrates the development of local stakeholder ownership and interest in a local river.</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 .