



NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS REPORT

29 January 2009

The first Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report contains information on a range of environmental indicators.

The report follows on from 'Our Environment, Our Heritage, Our Future: State of the Environment Report for Northern Ireland'. This was published by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), formally the Environment & Heritage Service (EHS), in April 2008.

Key points from the report:

1. Demographics & public opinion

- Northern Ireland's population and number of households continue to grow, and are projected to continue this trend over the next 20 – 25 years.
- Air travel has almost doubled in the last 10 years, and car travel accounts for 70% of the journeys we make.
- The level of public concern about climate change has increased dramatically over the last 5 years and is the biggest environmental concern for the Northern Ireland public.

2. Air & climate

- Northern Ireland's air quality has shown some improvement in recent years, and most measures are well within national air quality objectives.
- In 2006, greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 6% on 1990 levels.
- Climate records for Northern Ireland up until 2002 suggest that the average temperature in Northern Ireland has increased since the start of the 20th century. There is also evidence that the proportion of winter rainfall is increasing, while summer rainfall is decreasing.

3. Water

- The majority of monitored river length is of at least a good standard, both chemically (75% in 2005-07) and biologically (59% in 2007).
- Compliance levels for trade effluent discharges have increased from 69% in 2000 to 88% in 2007. Compliance levels have also increased in water utility discharges since 2001.
- Drinking water quality remains high.

4. Marine

- Two beaches (out of 23 monitored) failed to meet the mandatory standards for bathing water quality.

5. Land

- Soil quality in Northern Ireland has increased in recent years.

6. Biodiversity

- Two-thirds of areas of special scientific interest in Northern Ireland are in a favourable condition.
- Northern Ireland's wild bird population has increased over the last ten years.

7. Built Heritage

- Since 2003, there has been a modest increase in the number of listed buildings, with a total of 8,248 buildings recorded in 2007/08. In 2007/08, there were 417 listed buildings and structures classified as being at risk.

8. Waste

- The amount of municipal waste has remained fairly constant since 2004/05, with a significant increase in the proportion of that waste which is recycled or composted.

Notes for Editors

1. This is the first Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report, and will be updated annually.
2. There are eight main topic areas, within each a number of key indicators have been identified and the most recently available data for each indicator are given. Most indicators provide data on trends over time and, where applicable, performance against quantified targets.
3. Hard and electronic copies of the 'Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report' are available free of charge from:

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