

Northern Ireland  
Environment Agency

River Basin Management Plans (2015 - 2021)

# Programme of Measures

**Key Sectors:** Fisheries  
**Pressure Type:** All



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Northern Ireland  
**Environment**  
Agency

*Pressure Type – All Pressures*

## **Fisheries**

### **Why is this a significant issue?**

A range of inter-related factors that affect fish spawning grounds, rearing areas, food supplies and migration routes often combine to prevent fishery populations from maintaining their productive capacity. Poor water quality, inadequate or modified flows and morphological impacts that impede fish movements and degrade physical in-river habitats are particularly damaging, whilst predation and competition from invasive species can be locally significant. In sea loughs, poor water quality and other factors such as invasive species can affect the productive capacity of transitional fish and shellfish.

### **What are we already doing about this?**

Fish and fisheries habitat are protected through the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1965. DCAL and Loughs Agency are responsible for the protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon which is achieved through compliance with NASCO<sup>1</sup> principles for salmon management, and local projects are carried out to improve habitat quality, carrying capacity for native fish species, and to reintroduce salmon stock. A Management Strategy for Northern Ireland, Salmon Management Plans and National Eel Management Plans have been developed and implementation is on-going.

Following pollution incidents, waters are reinstated under The Fisheries (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

New conservation measures were announced by the DCAL Minister in December 2012 introducing:

- legislation to impose a mandatory cessation of all commercial wild salmon fisheries to take effect from the 2014 season;
- legislation to impose mandatory catch and release in relation to recreational fishing for wild salmon across the DCAL jurisdiction with effect from the 2014 season; and
- a limit of one salmon carcass tag per angler in the 2013 season.

Loughs Agency introduced carcass tagging and a logbook scheme in 2001 to improve adherence to regulations. A real time fishery management regime deals with the control of commercial and recreational fishing. Management Action can include the suspension or extension of fishing and the introduction of catch and release angling.

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (on behalf of DCAL) and Loughs Agency conduct a fish monitoring programme; NIEA uses this to inform classification of fish under Water Framework Directive. A Trout Stock Status report has been completed and DCAL have considered the recommendations to address issues related to trout status. Draft Fisheries Management Plans for both the L Erne and L Neagh catchments have been completed and

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<sup>1</sup> North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation

public consultation undertaken. Long term monitoring programmes in estuaries are being used to observe spatial and temporal trends in local marine fish populations and to assess impacts of climate change on fish distribution.

DCAL and Loughs Agency offer advice to stakeholders on fishery matters and provide education and guidance through visitor centres, outreach programmes and school based learning. Rivers Agency, advised by DCAL, carry out work to alleviate the impacts of drainage maintenance works/flood alleviation measures and look for mitigatory measures and enhancement opportunities such as fishery rehabilitation where possible.

Shellfish waters are protected under the Water Framework Directive and are referred to as Shellfish Water Protected Areas (SWPAs). Pollution Reduction Programmes to protect the quality of shellfish growing waters, were established under Article 5 of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113EC), and will be reviewed in 2018, in line with the second River Basin Cycle under the Water Framework Directive.

For a full list of measures already in place in the first cycle please see our website.

### **What further actions will deliver environmental improvements?**

#### RBMP 1 (2009-2015)

Table 1 summarises the progress we have made against the existing and planned measures.

#### RBMP 2 (2015-2021)

The measures which we will take forward in the second cycle are summarised in Table 2.

These are measures which will improve our understanding of the pressures, enable us to improve the evidence base to target actions, and build on actions already complete.

In the current economic climate there is no certainty at this stage around future funding and budgets that will be available throughout the lifetime of this plan. However DOE will in collaboration with other departments and agencies continue to make a strong case for additional funding through the standard government bidding processes.

**Key Sector: Fisheries**

**Pressure Type:** All Pressures

**Table 1 Summary of existing and planned measures 2009-2015**

Improvement Required	Actions	Delivery mechanism	Lead Department / Agency	Support Provider	Deadline for delivery of action (year end)
Establish measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel	Implement eel management plans	European Fisheries Funding	DCAL/ LA		In Place
Improved Fishery management	Prohibit sale of rod caught salmon	Salmon Management Strategy	DCAL/ Loughs Agency		In Place
		Commercial Fishing Regulations			
	Promote catch and release, quotas, use of barbless hooks, early closures and shortened season	Angling Regulations	DCAL/ LA		In Place

**Table 2 Summary of supplementary measures for 2015 to 2021.**

Improvement Required	Actions	Delivery mechanism	Lead Department / Agency	Support Provider	Deadline for delivery of action (year end)
Protection and restoration of fish populations	Develop a coordinated rolling monitoring programme for large and small lakes prioritised according to protected area designations and local issues	WMU Monitoring Review. AFBI SLAs with WMU and DCAL via Fish Monitoring Group	DCAL	NIEA	2018
	Further integration of river assessments and planned fishery habitat improvements, including targeted river restoration projects	Inter-agency Catchment Oversight Group and Fish Group	NIEA		2020

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Improvement Required	Actions	Delivery mechanism	Lead Department / Agency	Support Provider	Deadline for delivery of action (year end)
Restoration of fish populations	NIEA to work with DCAL Inland Fisheries Group in order to quantify, and seek through the courts, the costs in relation to fish kills.	Memorandum of Understanding between NIEA and DCAL Inland Fisheries Group	NIEA/ DCAL/LA		2015
Improved management of habitats	Develop and monitor a demonstration project based on adapted channel maintenance, and through a partnership approach	Inter-agency Catchment Oversight Group and Fish Group	DARD RA/ NIEA/ DCAL/ LA		2020
Improved Fishery Management	Develop and implement Fisheries Management Plans for Lough Neagh and Lough Erne	DCAL Fisheries strategic plan	DCAL	NIEA	2021
Improved fish stock and species monitoring	Continue to carry out large scale fish stock monitoring when the DOLMANT survey has been completed to inform Fisheries Management Plans	AFBI SLAs with WMU and DCAL via Fish Monitoring Group	DCAL	NI Fish Monitoring Group; NIEA: LA; AFBI;NED	2015
	Instigate a rolling programme of surveys for lamprey, European smelt, Sea trout and Brown trout	Loughs Agency business plan	LA	NIEA	Ongoing
Improved Fishery Management	Consider regulatory options to protect stock of the European Eel	Introduction of Eel passage regulations	LA		2015
	Consider regulatory options for the conservation of Juvenile Coarse Fish	Introduction of Protection of Juvenile Coarse Fish regulations	LA		2015
	Consider regulatory options for the protection of prescribed species	Introduction of regulations to protect prescribed species	LA		2015

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Improvement Required	Actions	Delivery mechanism	Lead Department / Agency	Support Provider	Deadline for delivery of action (year end)
Improved Fishery Management	Increase awareness of fish passability issues for bridges and culverts to facilitate improved design and remediation.	Environmental Liaison Group	NIEA	DCAL/ LA/ DRD Transport NI	2017
	Introduction of a fishery management tool through the Fisheries Habitat Improvement Strategy.	Fisheries Habitat Improvement Strategy 2014	LA		<b>2021</b>
	Management of fisheries through DARD Inshore Fisheries Partnership	Improved partnership working	DARD		Ongoing



## Create prosperity and well being through environment and heritage excellence

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