

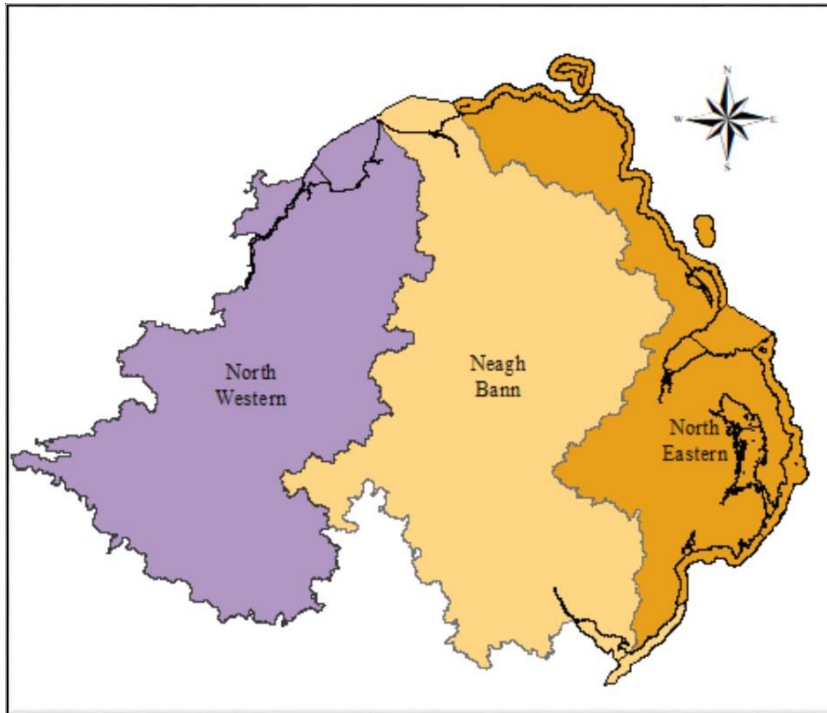
# **Northern Ireland Water Framework Directive Groundwater Status Update 2020**

## **Statistics Report January 2021**

## River Basin Management Plans

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). Northern Ireland has three districts for which separate RBMPs have been produced: North Western, Neagh Bann and North Eastern as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Northern Ireland River Basin Districts (RBD)**



The first cycle RBMPs ran from 2009 to 2015. The second cycle Plans were published in 2015 and are due to run until 2021. This report is being published as a precursor to the publication of third cycle River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) for all water bodies. The draft plans are currently in preparation and final plans will be published in 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the WFD.

## Northern Ireland Statistics - Water Environment

Each year DAERA release official statistics through the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report. This report is a compendium of 7 key environmental themes and provides updates on associated indicator measures and monitoring programmes linked to Government strategies. Water is one of the 7 key themes and is included each year. However, the WFD data included is not updated each year due to the timescales of the monitoring programme. Groundwater status statistics are only updated each cycle, i.e. every six years, due to the timescales of monitoring and responsiveness of groundwater.

The 2015 assessment outlined the status of water bodies at the initiation of the second cycle plans and this report provides an update in 2020 based on available data up to the end of 2019. This is the most recent assessment that provides valuable evidence to assess progress towards objectives set for groundwater in 2021.

Classification of all surface water bodies and groundwater bodies will be updated in 2021 for the final RBMPs.

## Classification Units – Groundwater Bodies

Groundwater bodies are the basic management units for reporting and assessing compliance with the WFD environmental objectives. In Northern Ireland, there are a total of 75 groundwater bodies, 66 bedrock groundwater bodies and 9 superficial.

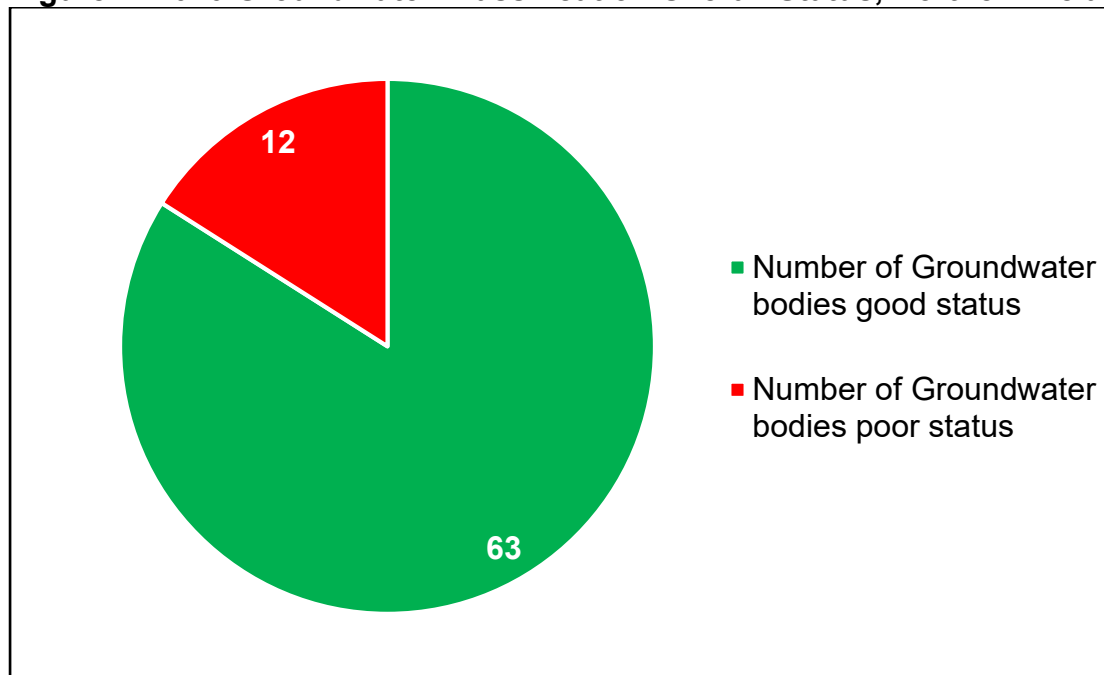
The WFD requires NIEA to classify groundwater body status, to protect that status from deterioration and, where necessary and practicable, to restore groundwater bodies to good status. When assessing the status both the quantitative and qualitative status are considered.

There are a number of tests which are used to determine the quantitative and qualitative status. These tests result in classification of either good or poor, and the overall status is determined by the lower of the status', using the one out - all out rule.

## Northern Ireland's Groundwater Classification Overall Status 2020

In 2020, the latest classification overall status for Northern Ireland's groundwater bodies showed that 63 out of 75 groundwater bodies were of good status (figure 2). This compares to 49 out of 75 groundwater bodies with a good overall status in 2015 (table 1).

**Figure 2: 2020 Groundwater Classification Overall Status, Northern Ireland**



The number of groundwater bodies with a poor overall status has decreased from 26 in 2015 to 12 in 2020. Groundwater body poor status in 2020 is due to a number of groundwater body specific reasons. This includes failure in the following tests used to derive status: Drinking Water Protected Area Test, General Chemistry Test and Saline Intrusion Test. The classification methodology operates on a basis of 'one out – all out' rule, i.e. if one test fails, the groundwater body overall status is classified as poor.

Of the 26 groundwater bodies classified with poor status in 2015, 8 remain classified as poor in 2020. Reasons for changes in status are a result of localised groundwater body specific issues, changes in monitoring data and/or changes in monitoring stations within the groundwater bodies.

### Groundwater Classification by River Basin District (RBD)

The data in figures 3, 4 and 5 show the 2020 groundwater body overall status for each River Basin District.

Figure 3 shows that 12 out of 16 groundwater bodies were classified as good overall status for the Neagh Bann River Basin District in 2020.

**Figure 3: 2020 Groundwater Classification Overall Status for Neagh Bann RBD**

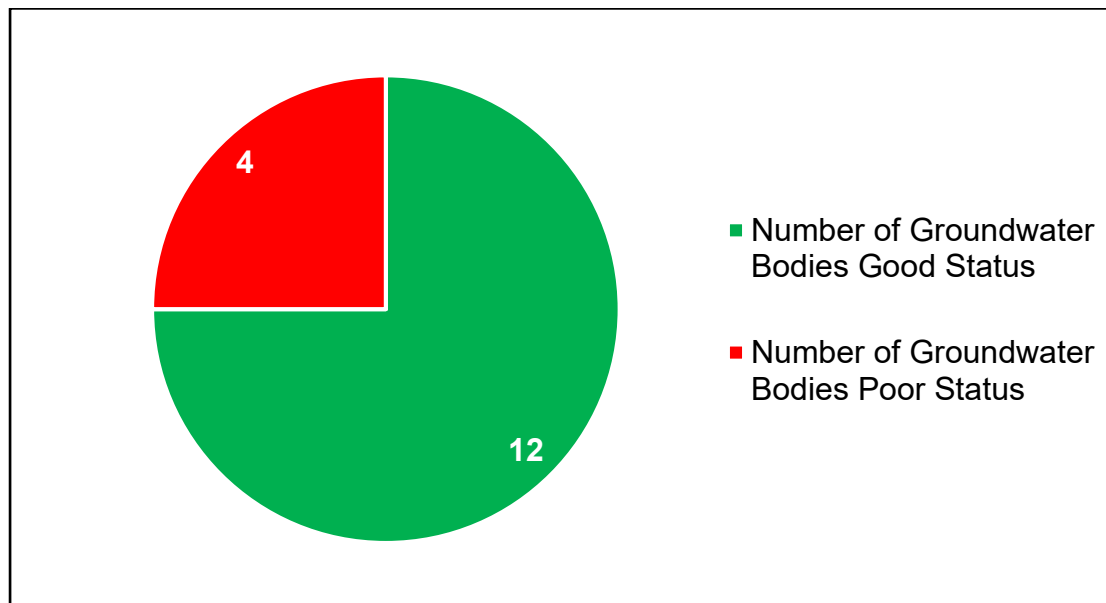


Figure 4 shows that 10 out of 14 groundwater bodies were classified as good overall status for the North Eastern River Basin District in 2020.

**Figure 4: 2020 Groundwater Classification Overall Status for North Eastern RBD**

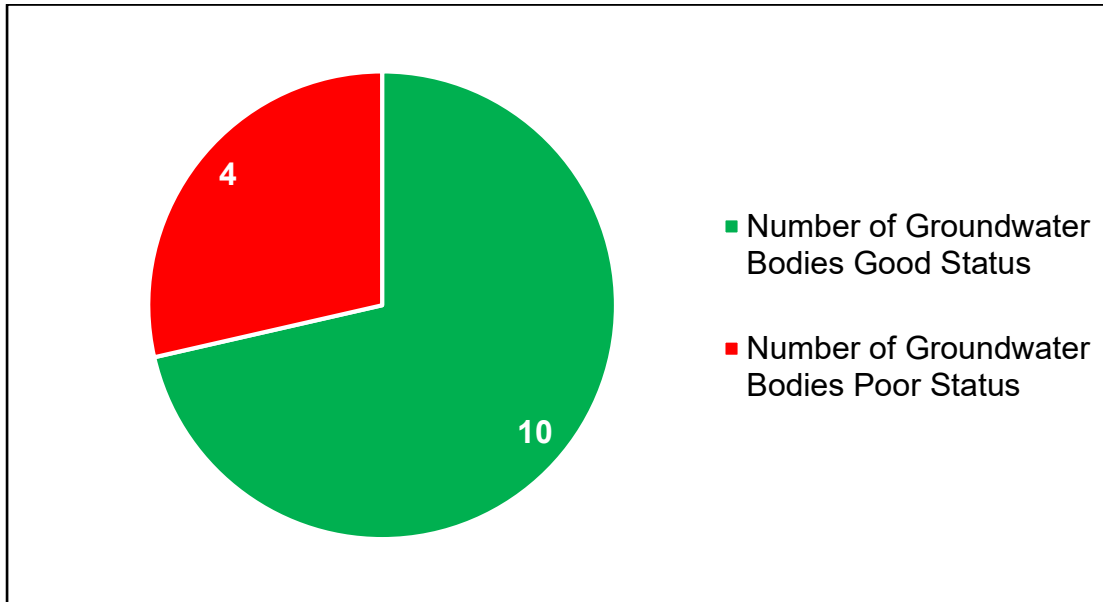
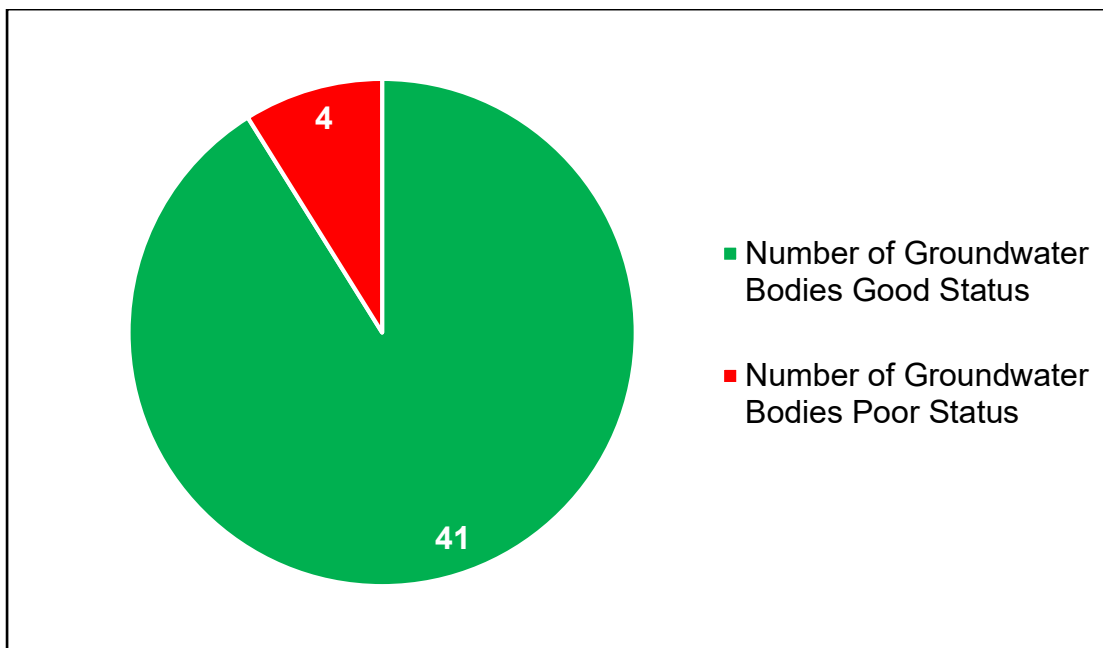
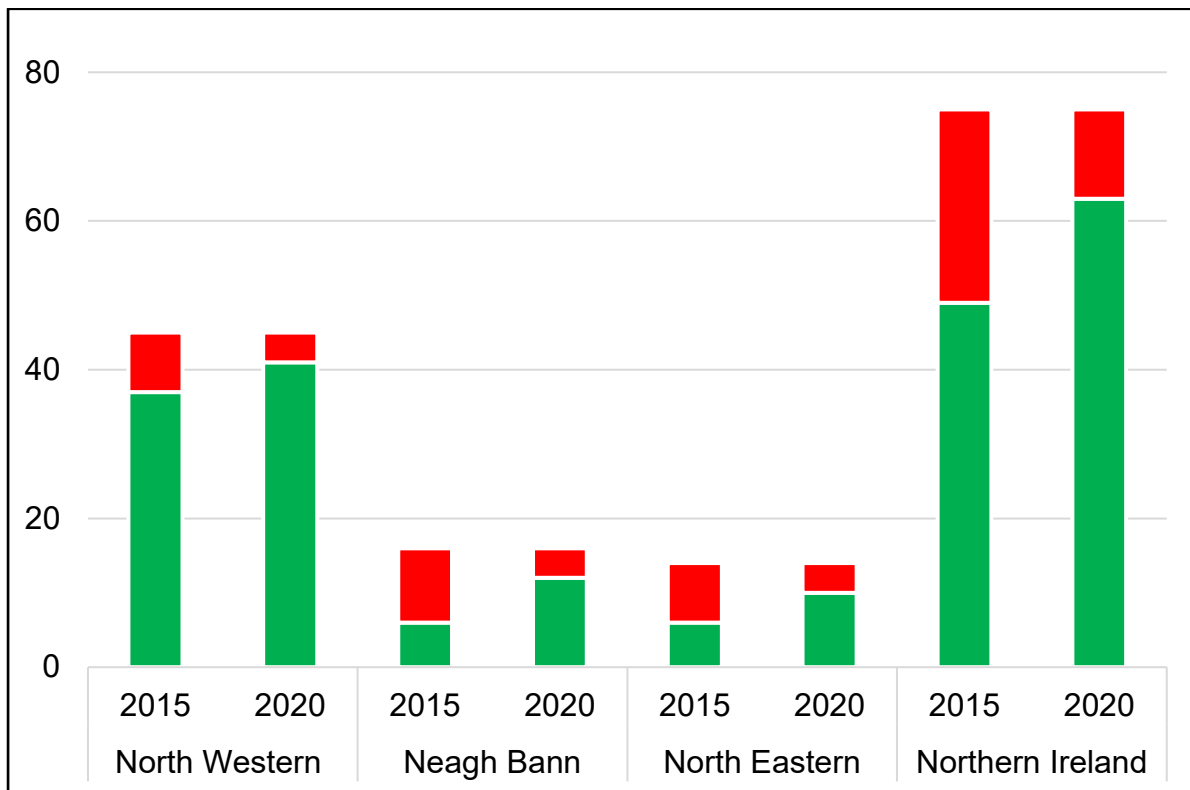


Figure 5 shows that 41 out of 45 groundwater bodies were classified as good overall status for the North Western River Basin District in 2020.

**Figure 5: 2020 Groundwater Classification Overall Status for North Western RBD**



**Figure 6: Groundwater Classification Overall Status NI and RBD, 2015 - 2020**



**Table 1: Groundwater Classification Overall Status NI and RBD, 2015 - 2020**

Unit: Groundwater bodies

	2015	2020
<b>North Western</b>		
Good	37	41
Poor	8	4
<b>Neagh Bann</b>		
Good	6	12
Poor	10	4
<b>North Eastern</b>		
Good	6	10
Poor	8	4
<b>Northern Ireland</b>		
Good	49	63
Poor	26	12