

River Basin Management Plans

Water Framework Directive Reporting Guidance – Marine Surface Waters

Technical Supporting Document

Water Framework Directive implementation in Northern Ireland:
Management of Marine Protected areas under the Water Framework
Directive

December 2015

Management of Marine Protected areas in the Water Framework Directive 2nd cycle River Basin Management Plans.

1. Introduction

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EEC) (WFD) (European Parliament and Council, 2000) specifies that marine water dependant sites requiring special protection under other EC Directives are identified as protected areas. Article 6 of the WFD requires Member States to establish a register of protected areas.

Protected areas have their own objectives and standards specified in the Community legislation under which the area was established. Article 4 of the WFD requires that Member States achieve compliance with the standards and objectives for which the protected areas have been established and that *where more than one objective is set, the most stringent will apply*. Where possible, the WFD objectives set for each water body have to take into account the measures that will be required to achieve protected area objectives.

Some areas may require special protection under more than one EC Directive or may have additional objectives. In these cases, all the objectives and standards must be met. Where WFD water body boundaries overlap with protected areas, the most stringent objective applies – *that is the requirements of one particular EC Directive should not undermine the requirements of another*. Where no deadline is stated in the specific protected area legislation, the deadlines set out in the WFD will be employed where it is appropriate.

This report defines the protected areas in each Northern Ireland river basin district, and describes the objectives (as defined by their originating directive) associated with each protected area. It also explains how we link predicted outcomes and actions through specific responses such as pollution source apportionment studies and pollution reduction programmes to Programmes of Measures.

2. Structure

The types of protected areas which exist wholly or partly in the **marine** environment are listed in Annex IV of the Directive and include the following;

- areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species: Shellfish Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).
- bodies of water identified as Bathing Waters under the revised Bathing Waters Directive (2006/7/EC)
- nutrient-sensitive areas, under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), or areas designated as sensitive under Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC).
- areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection including relevant Natura 2000 sites, designated under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) or the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Objectives for each of the key types of protected area found wholly or partly in the marine environment and descriptions of the individual protected area types are described below (Section 3)

A description of the protected areas and the local approaches to their management including Predicted Outcomes and Protected Area actions linked to WFD Programmes of Measures (POMs) are described for each protected area type in Section 4.

Transitional and coastal (TraC) water bodies and associated protected areas for each River Basin District are presented in Section 5. A list of WFD water bodies and associated protected areas, their current status and 2021 objectives are listed in Annexe 1

Links to published documents.

The DOE web site is undergoing a transition as part of the preparations for the review of UK Government Department web sites and the move to the GOV.UK platform (<https://www.gov.uk/>). In addition, Department Of Environment (DOE) will cease to exist in May 2016, while a new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is to be formed. As a consequence, only links which are guaranteed to be live for 6 years or more have been included in this document. Documents which will be given unique titles can be used to search for relevant documents using search engines of choice. (See References Section)

3. List of Protected Area Objectives

A summary of the objectives is listed below for each of the protected area categories in NI marine surface waters.

Economically Significant Species (Shellfish Waters)

Shellfish Waters Objective 1

All Shellfish Water Protected Areas must be managed to ensure that they meet the objectives assigned to the water body as a whole under WFD.

Shellfish Waters Objective 2

All shellfish waters must meet the faecal indicator standard that ensures that all designated shellfish waters meet at least the Class B criterion as laid down in the EU Hygiene Regulations (854/2004) ((European Parliament and Council, (2004))

Shellfish Waters Objective 3

To endeavour to meet the Guideline microbiological standard for shellfish flesh as set in the Water Framework Directive (Priority Substances and Classification) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (DOE, 2015a)

Bathing Waters

Bathing Waters Objective 1

To manage bathing waters to ensure that their quality meets at least “sufficient” under the revised Bathing Waters Directive from 2015.

Bathing Waters Objective 2

To take such realistic and proportionate measures as appropriate to increase the number of bathing waters classified as excellent or good.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas

Nutrient Sensitive Areas Objective 1

Achieve ‘good’ or better status for WFD nutrient standards and Biological Quality Element classification tools which are known to be sensitive to nutrient enrichment.

Natura 2000 Protected Areas (Water Dependent SACs & SPAs)

Natura 2000 Protected Areas Objective 1: Establish and maintain water related environmental conditions necessary to achieve ‘favourable conservation status’ of all water-dependent features.

4. Description of Protected Areas

Economically Significant Species (Shellfish Waters)

The Shellfish Waters Directive ([Directive 2006/11/EC](#)) (European Parliament and Council, (2006b)) was subsumed into the Water Framework Directive in December 2013 (DOE, 2013).

Since then all shellfish waters are protected under the WFD, and are referred to as Shellfish Water Protected Areas. The location of designated shellfish waters and the associated monitoring network is shown in Section 5.

Comprehensive monitoring programmes are in place to assess the status of Shellfish Water Protected Areas under the WFD and classification under the EU Hygiene Regulations (854/2004). A suite of determinands are assessed to determine ecological status and the overall objective under WFD. The shellfish flesh monitoring programme is operated jointly by Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland and DOE Marine Division. The analyses in shellfish flesh are carried out by Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratories and AFBI for contaminants and results are reported back to both DOE and FSA in NI. These analyses are used to classify the quality of the shellfish production areas.

In addition to being used for the official control monitoring for the microbiological shellfish classification, carried out by the FSA in NI, this information is also used by DOE to determine the status of Shellfish Water Protected Areas against a guideline microbiological standard for shellfish flesh. This standard is set in the Water Framework Directive (Priority Substances and Classification) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (DOE 2015a) and the guideline standard requires that 75% of samples contain ≤ 230 *E. coli* per 100ml of shellfish flesh and intervalvular liquid.

Shellfish Waters Protected Area Actions

Where Shellfish Water Protected Areas are at risk of failing to meet objectives, additional investigative monitoring is undertaken of the protected areas, rivers and any other potential sources of pollution identified.

Formal arrangements are in place between DOE, NI Water and FSA in NI to investigate and respond to incidents relating to water quality at Shellfish Water Protected Areas. Specific information on the measures, objectives and actions for each Shellfish Water Protected Area are captured in pollution reduction programmes for each designated production area in Northern Ireland.

Shellfish Waters Predicted Outcomes

DOE sets the policy for meeting water quality objectives at shellfish water protected areas and is responsible for regulating NI Water and setting the relevant discharge standards in respect of Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW).

Where known problem areas exist and water quality is failing to support the achievement of the stated objectives through the impacts of local Waste Water Treatment Works, the Department will prioritise these WWTW for upgrade as part of the Price Control (PC) Process. This is the mechanism through which NI Water is funded in order to deliver its priorities and plans for the period within the Price Control.

More information on the application of this process is available through the Water Framework Directive – River Basin Plans (North West (DOE, 2015d), North East,(DOE, 2015e) and Neagh Bann,(DOE, 2015f)) and associated Programmes of Measures (DOE, 2015 g).

Bathing Waters

The Bathing Water Directive is concerned with protecting human health and the environment from pollution. Bathing water is defined as '*those fresh or sea waters in which bathing is either explicitly authorised ... or is not prohibited and is traditionally practiced by large numbers of bathers*'.

Originally, the Bathing Water Directive ([76/160/EEC](#)) (European Council, 1976) was based on the monitoring of a number of physical, chemical and microbiological parameters. A revised directive, however, has updated the procedure. It requires Member States to monitor and assess the bathing water for at least two bacteriological indicator parameters (intestinal *enterococci* and *Escherichia coli*) and sets a higher health standard (Table 1). The revised Bathing Water Directive ([Directive 2006/7/EC](#)) (European Council and Parliament 2006a) requires Member States to assess compliance based over four years.

Table 1. Microbial standards for assessment of bathing water quality under the revised Bathing Waters Directive.

	Parameter	Excellent quality	Good quality	Sufficient	Reference methods of analysis
1	Intestinal enterococci (cfu/100 ml)	100	200	185	ISO 7899-1 or ISO 7899-2
2	<i>Escherichia coli</i> (cfu/100 ml)	250	500	500	ISO 9308-3 or ISO 9308-1

The objective for bathing waters identified under the revised Bathing Waters Directive is: ‘To preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment and to protect human health by complementing Directive 2000/60/EC’ (Water Framework Directive). This objective will be achieved by meeting the ‘sufficient’ quality standards of the revised Bathing Waters Directive, and by taking actions considered appropriate with a view to increasing the number of bathing waters classified as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.

Bathing Water Protected Area Actions

DOE sets policy for meeting water quality objectives around identified bathing waters. Following the annual performance assessment of the identified bathing waters, any bathing water which is identified as being at risk of not meeting “sufficient class” is prioritised for further investigation. Generally, this action which includes additional investigative monitoring is undertaken of the protected areas, rivers and any other potential sources of pollution identified.

Specifically:

- Catchment-wide investigations (pollution source apportionment assessments) to assess all pressures within the priority catchments, and:
- Higher prioritisation under the cross compliance inspection regime to specifically assess farm businesses within priority catchments.

Further details of source apportionment studies already performed can be found in the DOE, Marine Division, Better Beaches Report, (DOE, 2015c).

- **Bathing Water Profiles**

The revised Bathing Water Directive requires a profile to be prepared for each bathing water. These documents are designed to help the public make an informed choice before bathing. Each profile gives detailed information on the physical, geographical

and hydrological characteristics of each bathing water while assessing the pollution risk at the site. The intention is that such profiles are reviewed annually. A list of the existing bathing water profiles is contained in Section 6 - References.

Bathing Waters Predicted Outcomes

Where possible, the outcomes of measures associated with bathing waters or point and diffuse pollution implemented during the cycle of one River Basin Management Plan should be included in predictions of the improvements in protected water body status.

The outcomes from pollution source apportionment assessments during the cycle of one River Basin Plan can be used to drive interim programmes and to influence the prioritisation of WWTW upgrades within the Price Control (PC) process through which NI delivers its priorities and plans for the period of the Price Control.

Outcomes feed into wider policy assessments and improvement programmes, for example the Living with Water (Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan) for Belfast and Belfast Lough will seek to improve the overall water quality of the Belfast Lough Water Bodies and the associated protected areas through investment in sewerage and waste water treatment services.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas

There are three European Directives which deal with nutrient discharges to waterways; the Nitrates Directive (ND) (91/676/EEC) (European Council, 1991a), the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) (91/271/EEC) (European Council, 1991b) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC).

The **Nitrates Directive** (ND) aims to prevent and reduce water pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources and to prevent such pollution occurring in the future whereas the **Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive** (UWWTD) is designed to control discharges from waste water treatment work (WWTWs) and collection systems.

The **Water Framework Directive** (WFD) requires Member States to achieve at least good status for all bodies of surface water and groundwater by 2015. For the purposes of this document the Nitrates Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive are treated in the same section.

Article 3 of the Nitrates Directive requires Member States to set out action programmes to reduce nitrates from agricultural sources entering the aquatic environment and address both high nitrate levels in surface and groundwaters and eutrophication in surface waters. The

Directive (ND) allows Member States to either designate discrete areas of land as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) or establish an action programme to be applicable to the whole territory.

Northern Ireland has a widespread problem of eutrophication of surface waters and a large proportion of this nutrient enrichment is attributable to agriculture. Following extensive consultation, the **total territory** of Northern Ireland was established as the area to which an action programme would be applied.

Action programmes and controls were introduced across Northern Ireland to reduce nutrient inputs from agriculture that contribute to eutrophication. Details are included in the Nutrient Sensitive Areas Actions and Outcomes sections below.

The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive seeks to protect the freshwater and marine environment from the adverse effects of domestic sewage, industrial waste water and surface water run-off. It sets requirements for the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and also establishes timetables for the achievement of these standards according to the sensitivity of the receiving waters. Annex IIA of the Directive states that: '*A water body must be identified as a sensitive area if it falls into one of the following groups:*

(a) *natural freshwater lakes, other freshwater bodies, estuaries and coastal waters which are found to be eutrophic or which in the near future may become eutrophic if protective action is not taken.'*

Eutrophic waters are identified using WFD nutrient standards and Biological Quality Element classification tools that are known to be sensitive to nutrient enrichment (Table 2). High and good status under WFD correspond with non-eutrophic status under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Nitrates Directive; poor and bad status under WFD correspond with 'eutrophic' under the other two Directives. Moderate status is regarded as broadly equivalent to 'may become eutrophic'.

An important aspect of the UWWTD for marine waters is contained under Annex IIA(c).

(c) *areas where further treatment than that prescribed in Article 4 of this Directive is necessary to fulfil Council Directives.*

In the case of identified sensitive areas under Annex IIA(c), further treatment is required to meet the requirements of the parent Directive e.g. the revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) or for shellfish water protected areas which now fall under the WFD. The Shellfish Water Directive (2006/113/EC) was subsumed by WFD in December 2013 (DOE, 2013)

Table 2: WFD Quality Elements and Parameters Relevant to Eutrophication in Transitional and Coastal waters

Quality Element	Transitional Waters	Coastal Waters
General Conditions	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen Dissolved Oxygen	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen Dissolved oxygen
Phytoplankton	Chlorophyll- α Phytoplankton	Chlorophyll- α Phytoplankton
Macroalgae & Angiosperms	Macroalgae: (Blooming tool) (FSL and RSL) Seagrass	Macroalgae: (Blooming tool) (FSL and RSL) Seagrass

Comprehensive eutrophic parameter monitoring is essential for Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Nitrates Directive reporting as well as the WFD. Sources of nutrients are controlled via standards set under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, action programmes under the Nitrates Directive or by supplementary controls under the WFD. In practice, the measures required by all these Directives are integrated under Programmes of Measures within River Basin Management Plans to ensure appropriate controls over all significant sources of nutrients.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas Actions - Nitrates Directive

Under the Nitrates Directive, action programmes must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least every 4 years. An action programme under the Nitrates Directive applying to all farms across Northern Ireland was first introduced on 1st January 2007. The action programme for the period 2007 to 2010 was reviewed and the Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) Regulations 2010 (DOE & DARD 2010) came into effect for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2014. In accordance with the requirements of the Directive, a review process for the 2010 NAP Regulations was initiated in summer 2013. Consultation on proposals for a new NAP closed on 29 August 2014 and the proposals were agreed by the Commission in December 2014. The revised action programme is effective from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2018.

The Nitrates Directive also requires Member States to monitor surface freshwaters and groundwaters for nitrate pollution against a maximum limit of 50mg of nitrate per litre (NO_3I^{-1}). Secondly, and of more relevance to marine protected areas is that the Member State must assess the trophic status of surface waters including marine. The most recent assessment covered the period 2011-14 (DOE & DARD, 2014).

Nutrient Sensitive Areas Actions – UWWTD

The Water Framework Directive since its adoption in 2000 has introduced additional controls over nutrients. This includes compliance with nutrient standards and ecological standards. Sensitive areas (eutrophic) under the UWWTD are protected areas under WFD and compliance with the UWWTD is a basic measure under the WFD River Basin Management Plans. WFD nutrient and biology standards are now applied to identify eutrophic water bodies. Sources of nutrients can then be controlled via measures under the UWWTD, action programmes under the Nitrates Directive and / or by other measures under the WFD.

A key action under the UWWTD is to perform a 4-yearly review of sensitive areas and deals primarily with the management actions required by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to protect the waterways of Northern Ireland. Under the UWWTD, waters may be identified as sensitive areas if found to be eutrophic or likely to become eutrophic if protective actions is not taken.

The most recent review for the 2008-13 period (2010-13 for Marine Waters) (DOE, 2015b) provides a trophic status assessment of the marine and freshwaters of Northern Ireland using the WFD assessment methods, as agreed by UK Technical Advisory Group in 2008.

Under this review, any waters identified as sensitive if found to be eutrophic or likely to become eutrophic if protective action is not taken, require discharges from qualifying waste water treatment works (WWTWs) (i.e. serving a population equivalent (p.e) >10,000) within a sensitive area to be subject to more stringent treatment. For marine protected areas, discharges from qualifying WWTWs are subject to more stringent treatment as required by the parent Directive.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas Predicted Outcomes - Nitrates Directive

The Water Framework Directive requires Member States to prevent any further deterioration in the status of water bodies and, where technically feasible and where not at disproportionate cost, to restore water bodies to good status. The principal mechanism for managing and delivering improvements to the water environment is the River Basin Management planning process and the first cycle River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) for Northern Ireland were published on 21 December 2009. The draft RBMPs for the second cycle were published in December 2014 and the final plans are due to be published by December 2015 (DOE, 2015,d,e,f)

In addition to the plans, there are a number of key documents describing a range of outcomes applicable to the control of excess nutrients in the marine environment.

During the course of each River Basin Plan cycle, there is an interim overview report produced which sets out the latest assessment of the pressures and impacts on the water environment

and the effectiveness of the actions that have been implemented. This report is the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) report and the most recent series of reports for each River Basin District were produced for consultation in December 2013 (NIEA, 2013). Diffuse and point source pollution from agricultural sources is a key feature in the report and examples are given of how industry best practice, such as preparing and implementing a Farm Nutrient and Waste Management Plan, can manage nutrients carefully to achieve maximum efficiency from the livestock manure produced on their farm and minimise the risk of run-off to waterways. Other measures and predicted outcomes are dealt with through the Programme of Measures and these are reviewed regularly to ensure that issues as they arise and evolve during the course of a RBP cycle are adequately assessed, implemented and reviewed. The Programmes of Measures documents for each RBD were produced as part of the consultation process and will be summarised in each of the River Basin Plans (NIEA, 2015) to be produced by December 2015 (DOE, 2015 d,e,f)

UWWT Directive Outcomes

The outcomes from sensitive area assessments during the cycle of one River Basin Plan can be used to drive interim programmes and to influence the Price Control (PC) process through which NI delivers its priorities and plans for the period of the Price Control.

Waste water treatment works and sewerage networks are prioritised for investment under the Northern Ireland Water Capital Investment Programme known as the Price Control Process. The prioritisation of a WWTW or associated network is based on a number of factors including their current performance. This process is to ensure compliance with the conditions of Water Order Consents and compliance with other Directives. It also helps to identify sewerage assets which are overloaded and discharges which are impacting or have the potential to impact on the status of a water body. The most significant polluting discharges are prioritised and solutions identified and implemented to reduce the polluting effects on the water environment.

Any future requirements for additional treatment will be added to the WWTW and network priority list. The upgrades are funded under PC process which currently is known as PC15 which runs from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2021.

Natura 2000 Protected Areas (water dependent SACs & SPAs)

The protected areas designated under Birds Directive and Habitats Directive together form the Natura 2000 (N2K) network, which aims to bring and maintain key species and habitats at favourable conservation status.

Any N2K site with water-dependent (ground- and/or surface water) Annex I habitat types or Annex II species under the Habitats Directive, or with water-dependent bird species of Annex I or migratory bird species of the Birds Directive (where the presence of these species or habitats has been the reason for the designation of that protected area) must be considered for the register of protected areas under WFD.

The overarching aim for N2K protected areas is to protect, maintain or restore at favourable conservation status, selected species and habitats of Community importance. Conservation status of species and habitats is assessed through the establishment of conservation objectives for each N2K area. The conservation objectives contain a list of attributes and targets for each feature against which its condition is assessed. The ultimate objective of N2K protected areas is to achieve favourable conservation status (FCS) of the features for which it has been designated.

UKTAG (2011) guidance has established a set of criteria for determining whether N2K protected areas (and their features) are meeting the requirements of Article 4 (1c) of the WFD (i.e. achieve compliance with any standards and objectives). Water dependent features shall be judged as meeting their Article 4 (1c) objectives if:

- (i) that feature was reported to the JNCC as meeting the relevant conservation objectives
- (ii) the environmental conditions necessary to achieve conservation objectives have been established and are in place or
- (iii) the feature was assessed as not meeting these criteria but this was due a failure to achieve a target for an attribute that is clearly not water related.

Where a protected area is designated for more than one water-dependent feature, that Protected Area shall be reported as meeting the requirements of Article 4 (1c) when:

- (i) all the water dependent features are assessed as meeting the relevant conservation objectives or
- (ii) the environmental conditions necessary to achieve conservation objectives have been established and are in place or
- (iii) any feature which was assessed as not meeting these criteria was due a failure to achieve a target for an attribute that is clearly not water related.

Natura 2000 Protected Areas - Actions

The overarching aim for N2K protected areas is to protect, maintain or restore at favourable conservation status, selected species and habitats of Community importance.

For Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - Favourable Condition is a defined target which includes “the abundance, distribution and/or quality of that feature within the site”. The standards for favourable condition (Common Standards) have been developed by JNCC and are applied throughout the UK.

For each N2K feature, there are a number of component objectives which are outlined in the conservation objectives document for each designated site published on the DOE web site (e.g. Rathlin Island). These include a series of attributes, measures and targets which form the basis of Condition Assessment. The results of this will determine whether the feature is in favourable condition or not.

Where N2K Protected Areas are at risk of failing to meet Conservation Objectives, additional Type 2 monitoring is undertaken to determine the cause, extent and impact on the protected habitats and species. Measures should be taken to ensure that the impacted or affected features are brought back into Favourable Conservation Status (FCS). For example, a range of specific actions can be initiated and in the case of SPAs these are listed within the SPA conservation objectives document (e.g. Belfast Lough SPA¹). In the case of SACs a range of supporting measures can be introduced and this can be achieved through a variety of local programmes. To assist these changes, local bye-laws and regulations can be introduced to ensure compliance e.g. the introduction of the Strangford Lough (Sea Fishing Exclusion Zones) Regulations (Northern Ireland), DARD (2012).

Natura 2000 Protected Areas - Outcomes

According to Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive, once a site has been included in the Natura 2K network, Member States are required to implement, on each site, the necessary conservation measures which correspond to the ecological requirements of the protected habitat types and species of Community Interest present. They must also prevent any damaging activities that could significantly disturb those species and habitats (Article 6.2) and to protect the site from new potentially damaging plans and projects, likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (Article 6.3, 6.4).

Conservation measures can include both site-specific measures (i.e. management actions and/or management restrictions) and horizontal measures that apply to many Natura 2K sites over a larger area (e.g. measures to reduce nitrate pollution or to regulate fishing/aquaculture or resource use).

¹ <https://www.doeni.gov.uk/publications/special-protection-area-belfast-lough>

A feature of the management of marine protected areas designated under Birds Directive and Habitats Directive is to define them as a European Marine Site (EMS). An EMS is not a statutory site designation but is instead a management unit for those SACs and SPAs which consist of marine areas. In practice, an EMS in Northern Ireland is a descriptive term that refers to those marine areas of both Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which are defined as a 'marine area' within the legal framework of the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.

One of the best examples of the use of a European Marine Site is the management scheme for the Rathlin Island EMS (DOE, 2013b) which provides a contextual framework by which those statutory agencies that will implement the scheme and the local communities which use and have a vested interest in the area. The management scheme highlights a range of activities/issues which are managed partly by surveillance monitoring and condition assessment and through a range of voluntary measures achieved through voluntary cooperation with local stakeholders.

In general terms, the assessment of Favourable Condition Status and the definition of generic site/feature issues within site conservation objectives documents provides a clear linkage to the WFD Programmes of Measures (POMs). The latest set of POMs to support the WFD 2nd cycle is due for final completion by December 2015 (DOE, 2015 g).

5. Location of Protected Areas in Northern Ireland River Basin Districts

North Western River Basin District

Location of Protected Areas

Table 3: Number of protected areas and designation in the North Western RBD

Protected Area Designation	No of sites	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	2	1
Bathing Waters	3	2
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	1	3
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	1	3
Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Eutrophic)	0	n/a

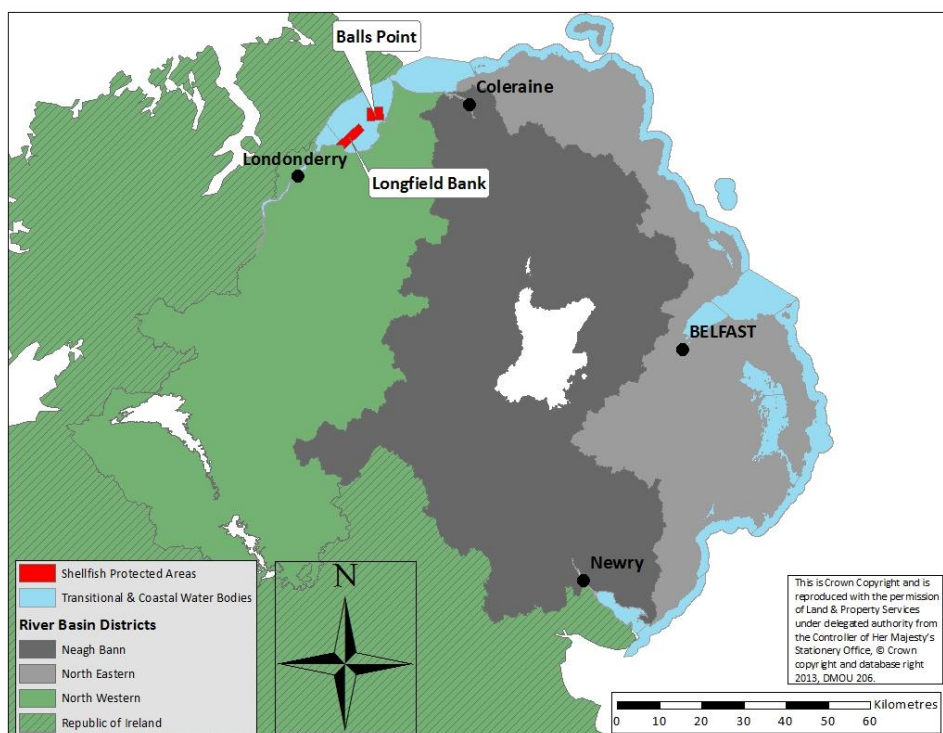


Figure 1. Location of Shellfish Water Protected Areas (North Western RBD)

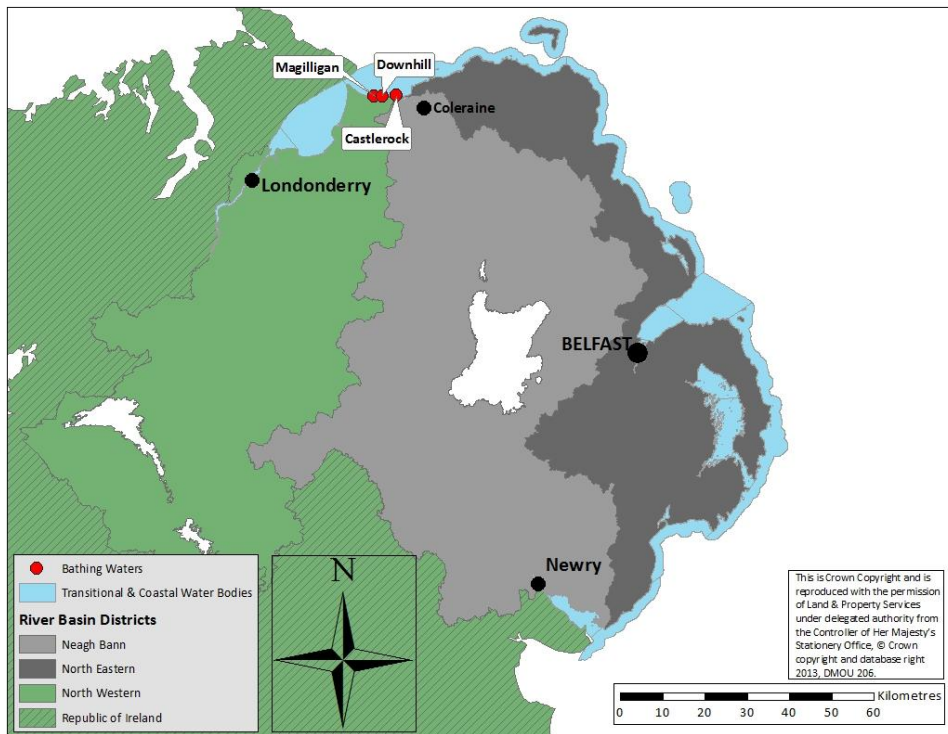


Figure 2. Location of Bathing Waters (North Western RBD)

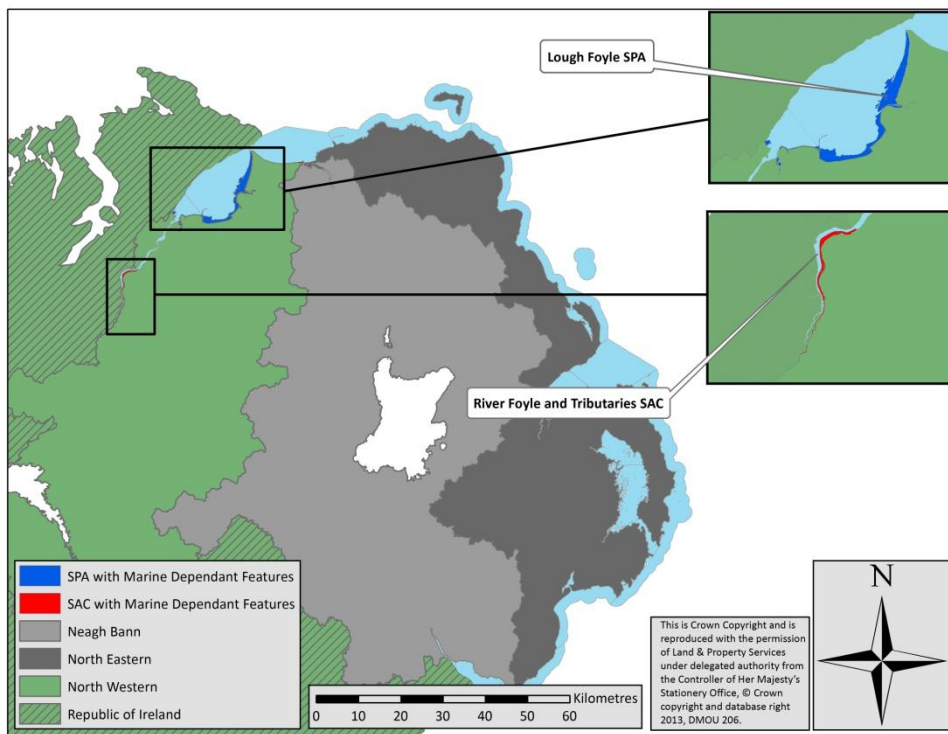


Figure 3. Location of Marine Dependant Natura 2000 Protected Areas (North Western RBD)

Monitoring Network

Monitoring programmes have been established in the North Western River Basin District to assess the status of Protected Areas.

Table 4: Protected Areas monitoring network in the North Western RBD

Protected Area Designation	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	4
Bathing Waters	5
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	6
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	6

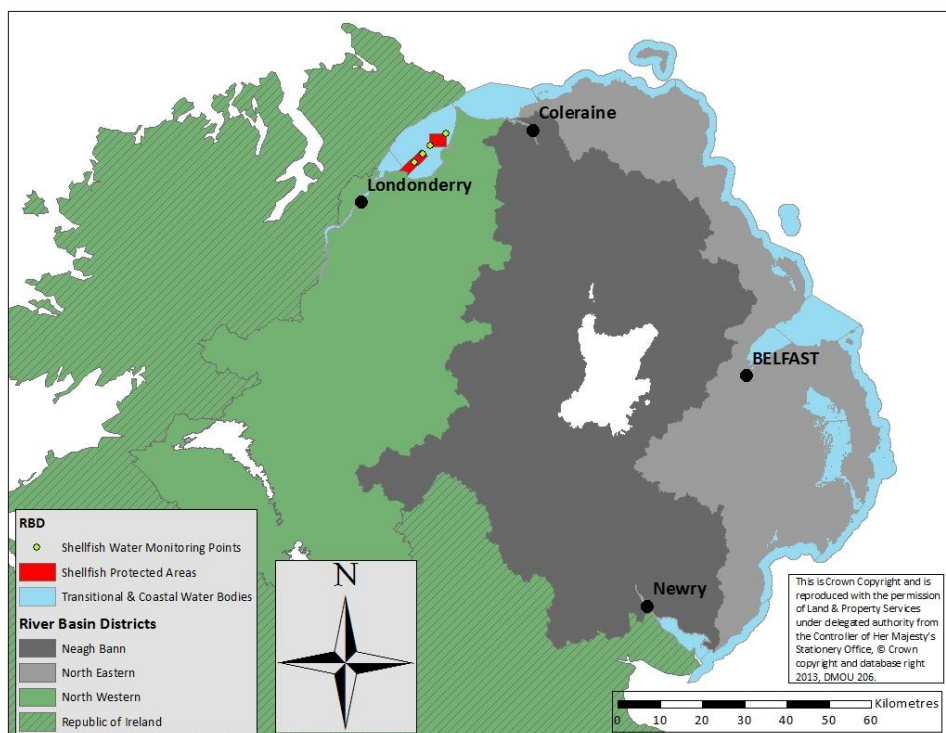


Figure 4. Monitoring Network for Shellfish Waters Protected Areas (North Western RBD).

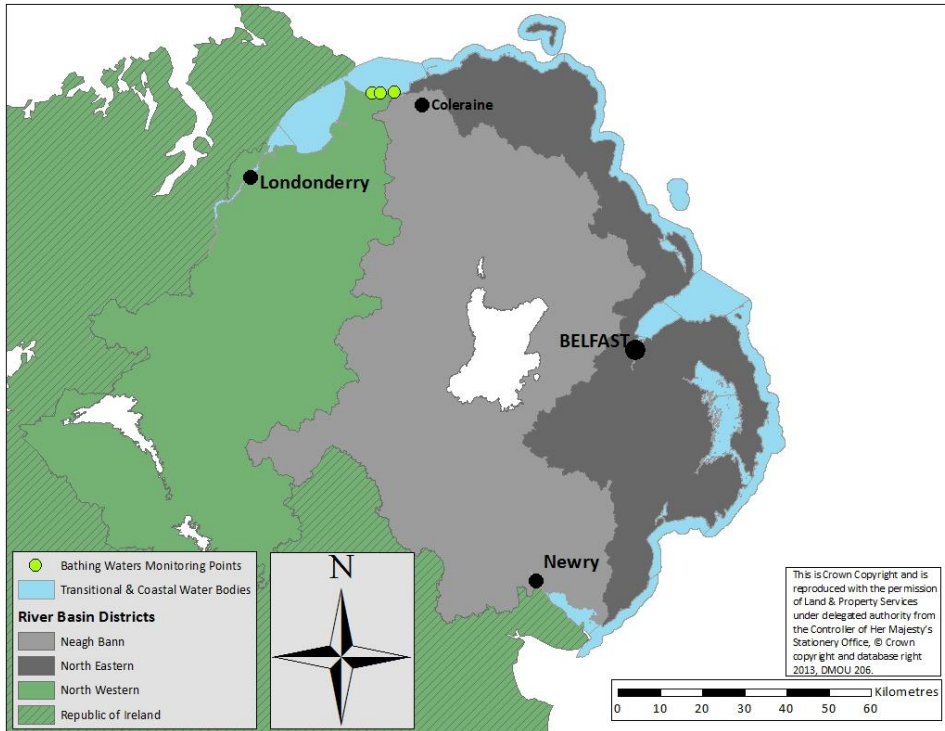


Figure 5. Monitoring network for Bathing Waters (North Western RBD)

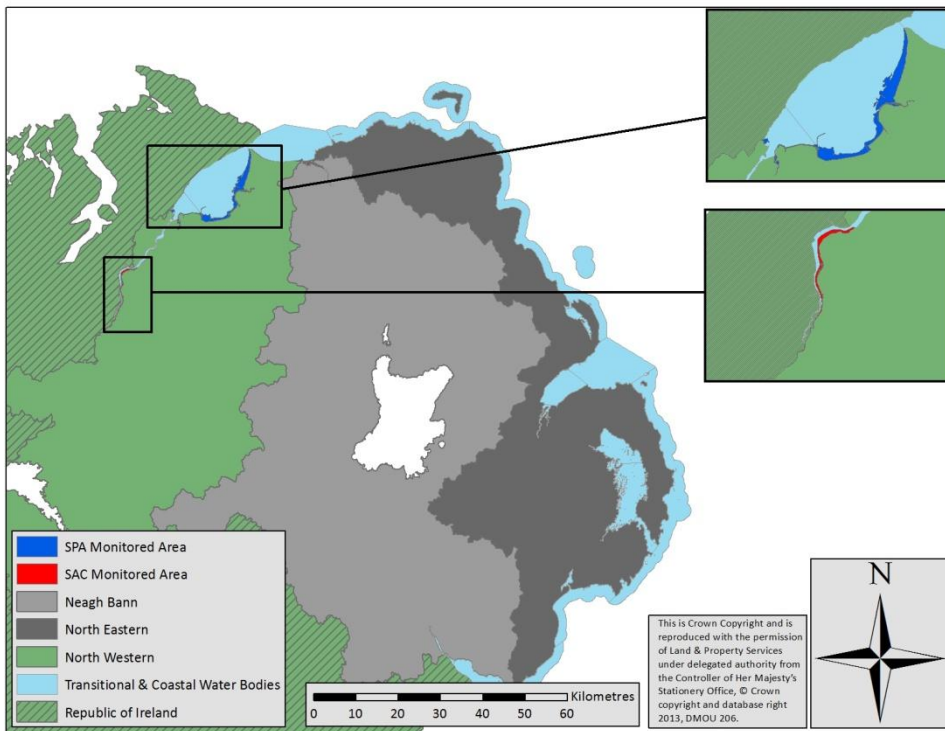


Figure 6. Location of Natura 2000 monitored areas (North Western RBD)

Neagh Bann River Basin District

Location of Protected Areas

Table 5: Number of protected areas and designation in the Neagh Bann RBD

Protected Area Designation	No of sites	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	1	7
Bathing Waters	1	8
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	1	9
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	1	9
Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Eutrophic)	1	10

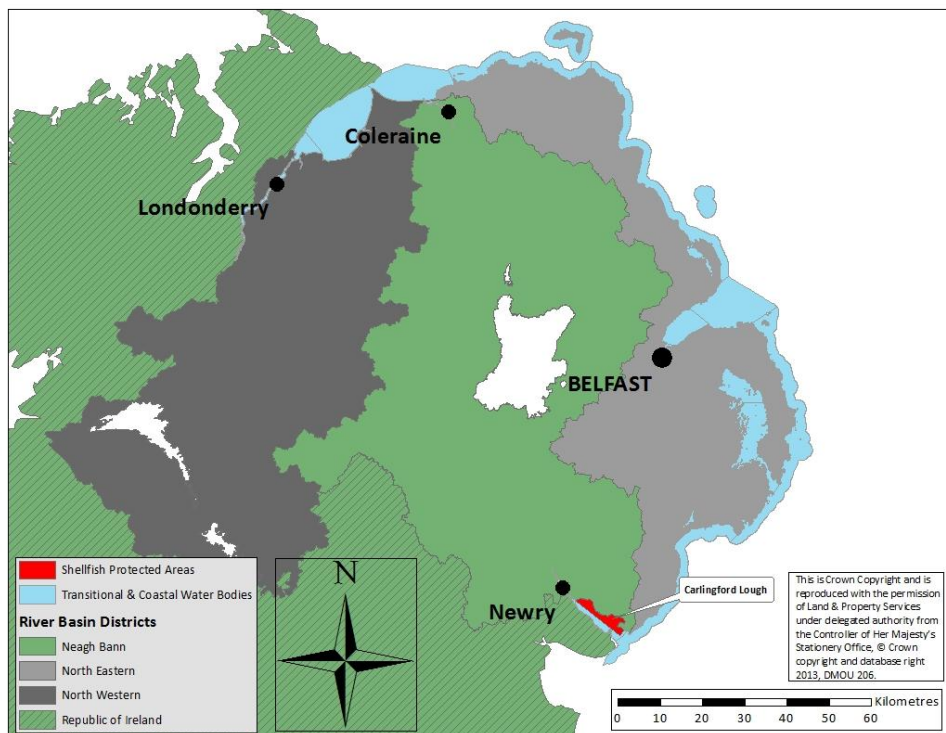


Figure 7. Location of Shellfish Water Protected Areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

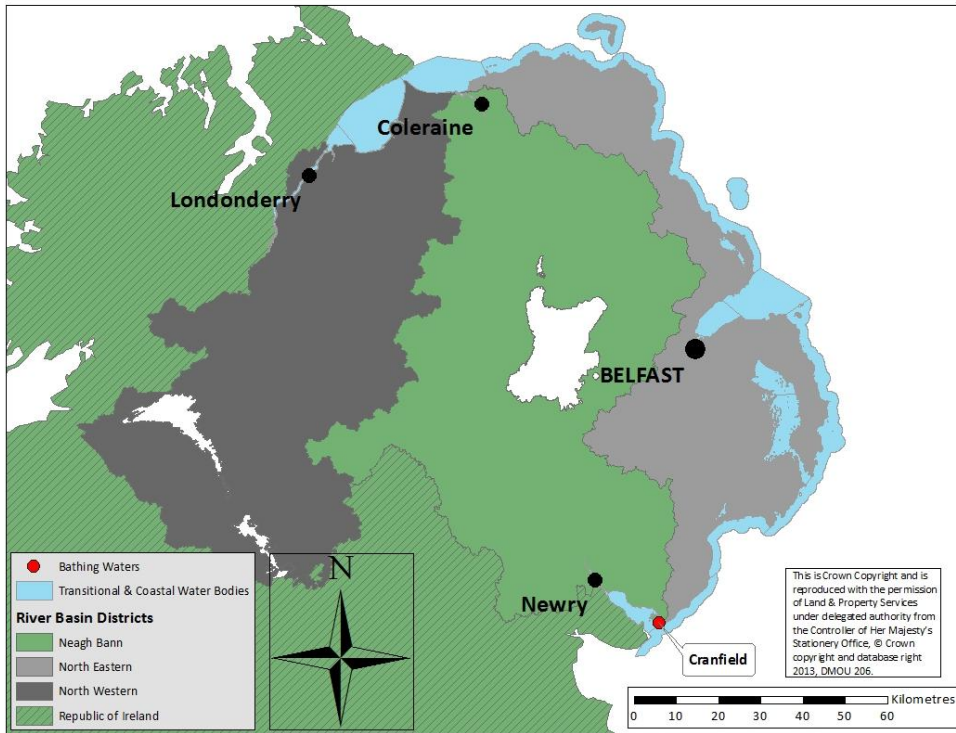


Figure 8. Location of Bathing Waters (Neagh Bann RBD)

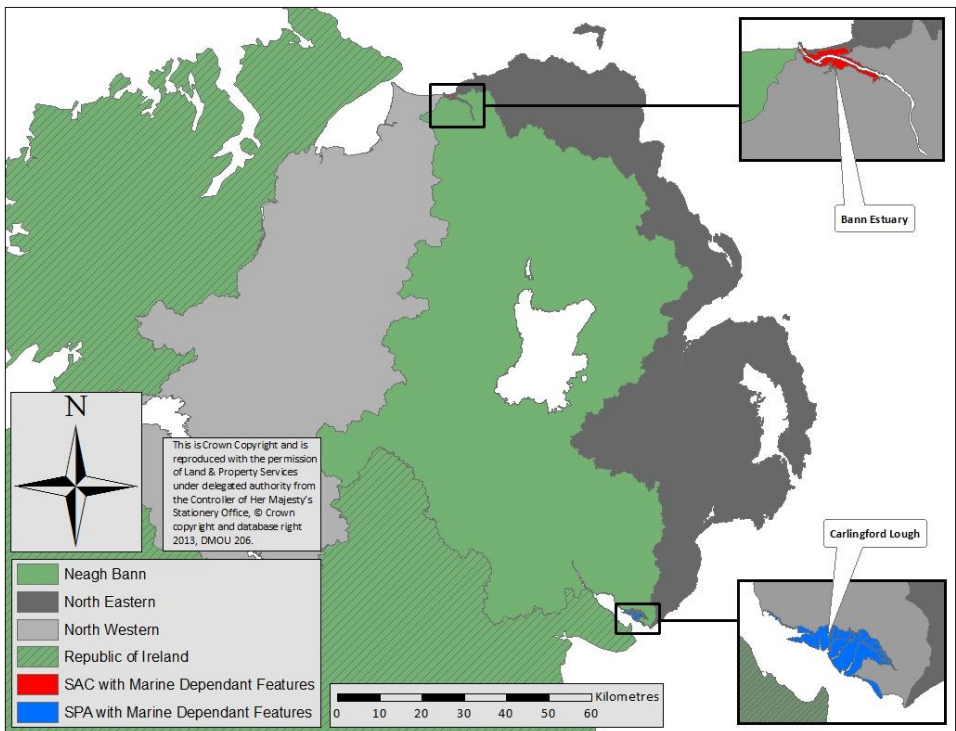


Figure 9. Location of Marine Dependant Natura 2000 Protected Areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

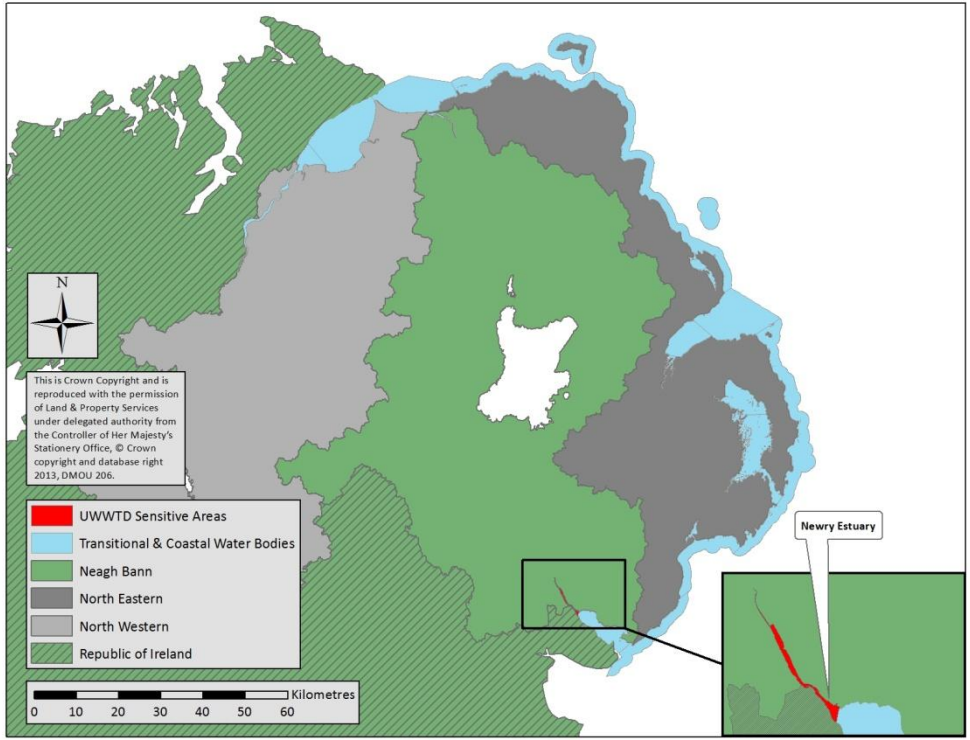


Figure 10. Location of UWWTD Sensitive Areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

Monitoring Network

Monitoring programmes have been established in the Neagh Bann River Basin District to assess the status of Protected Areas.

Table 6: Protected Areas monitoring network in the Neagh Bann RBD

Protected Area Designation	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	11
Bathing Waters	12
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	13
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	13
Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) Monitoring Network	14

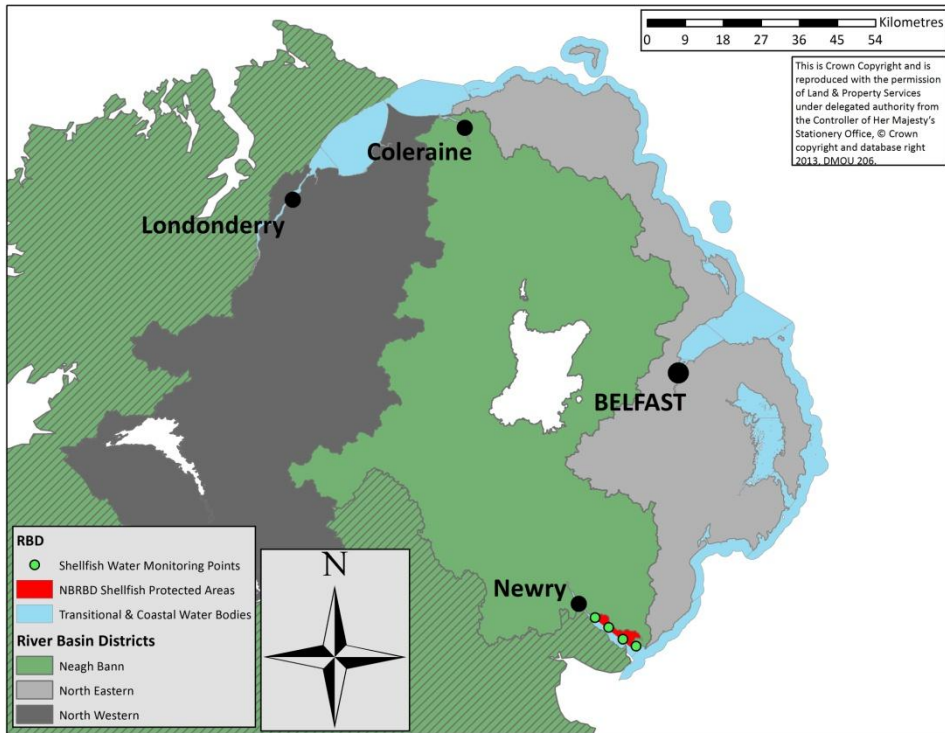


Figure 11. Monitoring Network for Shellfish Waters Protected Areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

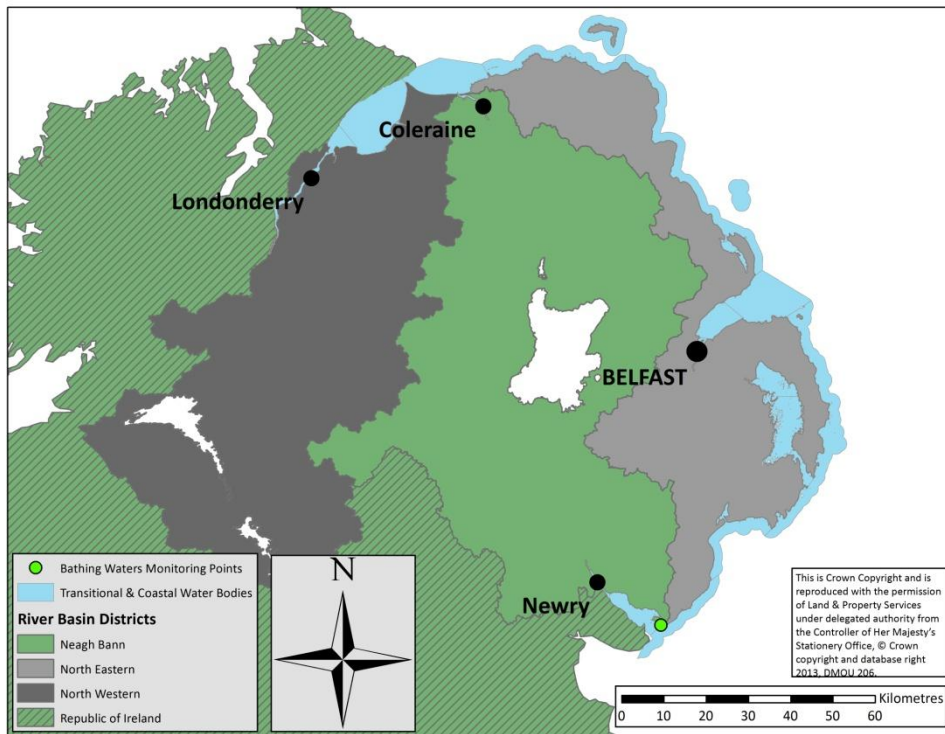


Figure 12. Monitoring network for Bathing Waters (Neagh Bann RBD)

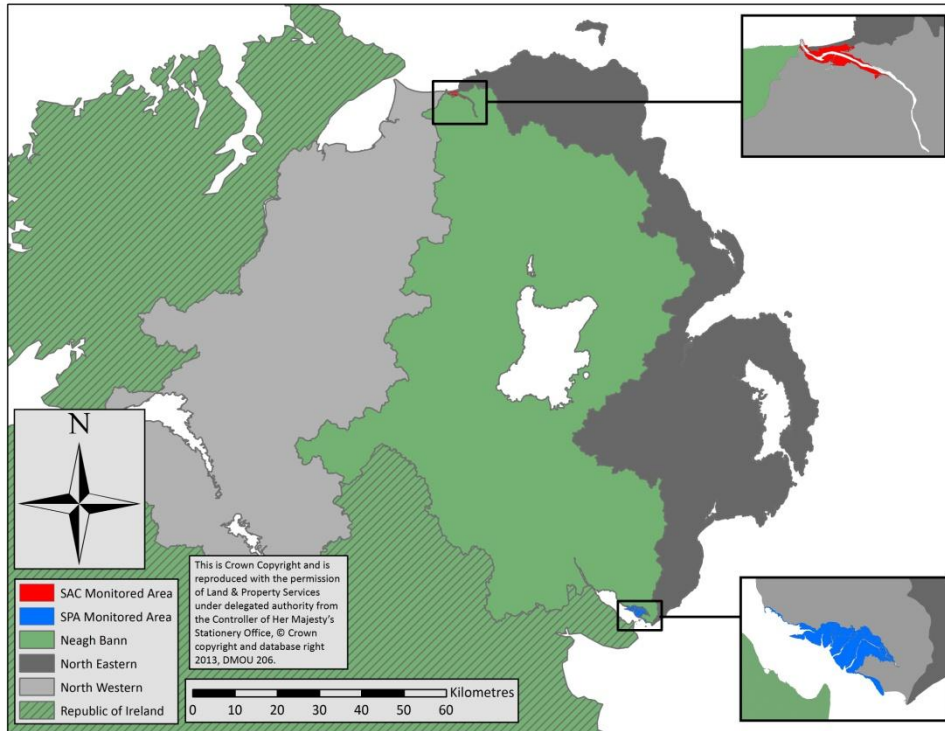


Figure 13. Location of Natura 2000 monitored areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

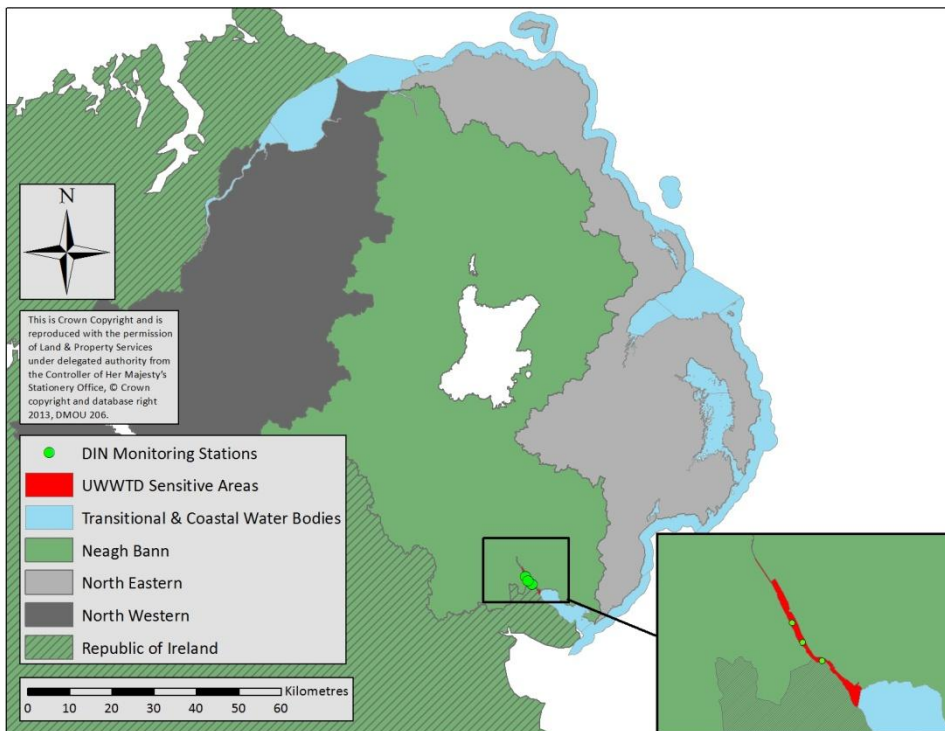


Figure 14. DIN monitoring network in UWWTD Sensitive Areas (Neagh Bann RBD)

North Eastern River Basin District

Location of Protected Areas

Table 7: Number of protected areas and designation in the North Eastern RBD

Protected Area Designation	No of sites	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	7	15
Bathing Waters	19	16
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	7	17
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	7	17
Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Eutrophic)	7	18

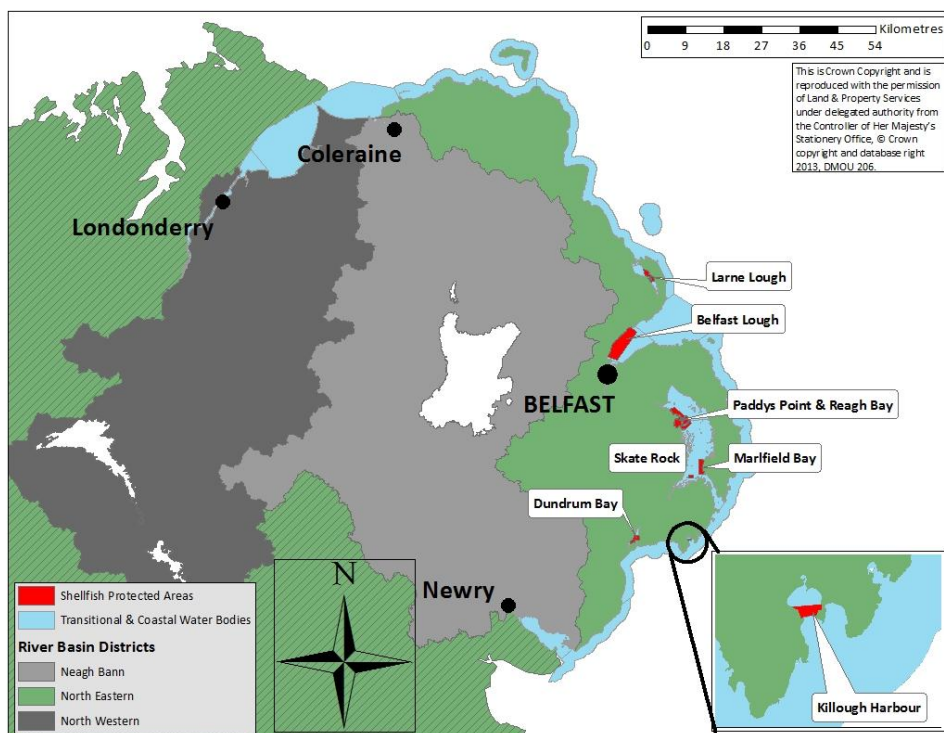


Figure 15. Location of Shellfish Water Protected Areas (North Eastern RBD)

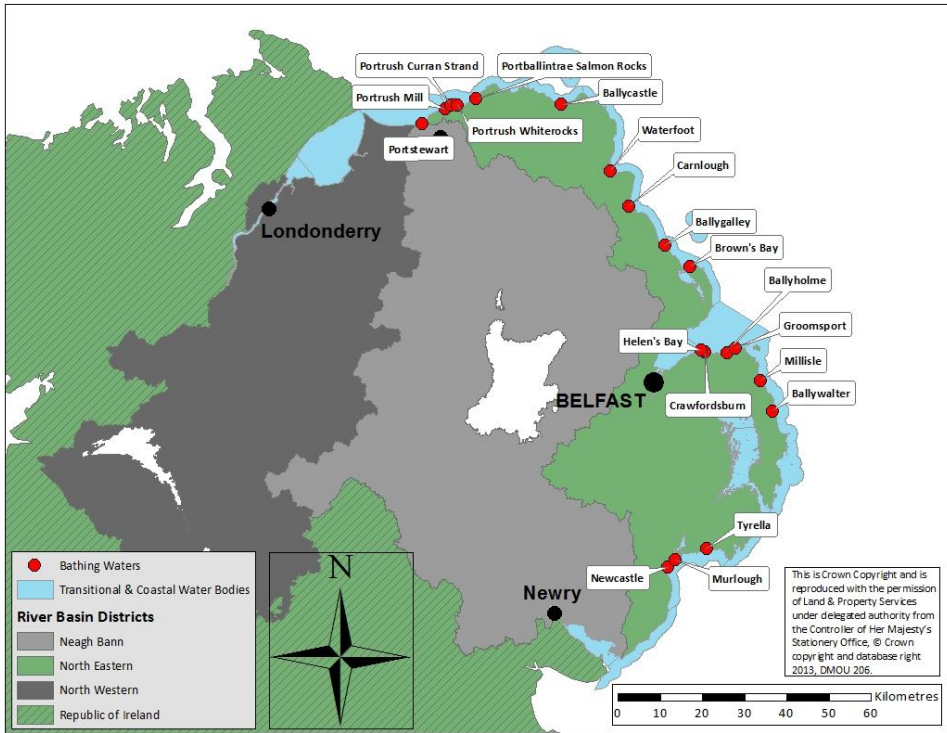


Figure 16. Location of Bathing Waters (North Eastern RBD)

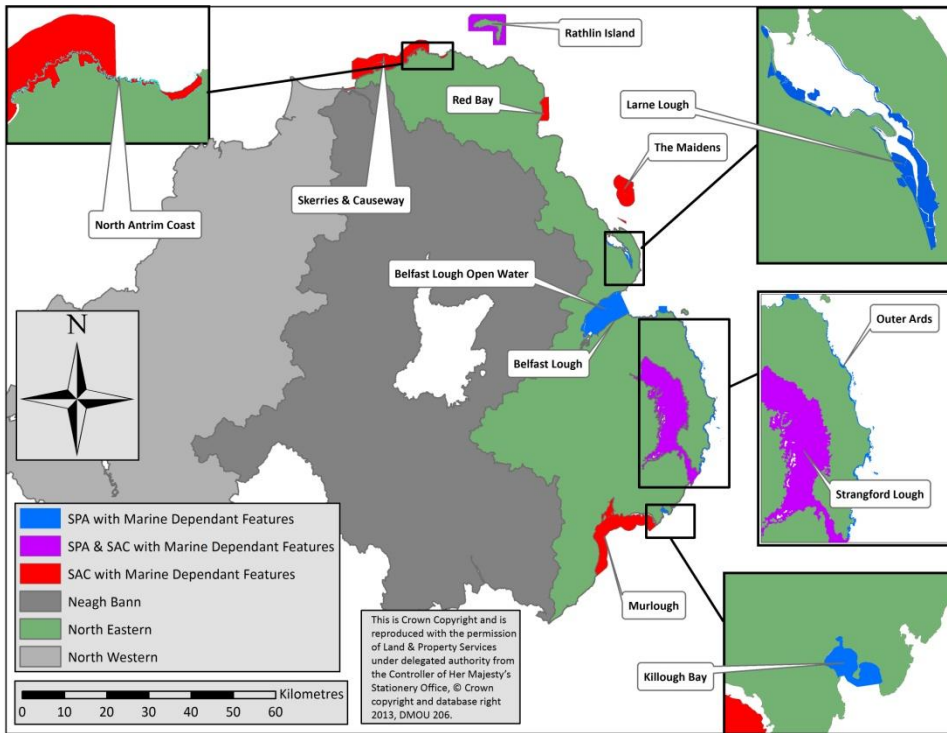


Figure 17. Location of Natura 2000 protected areas (North Eastern RBD)

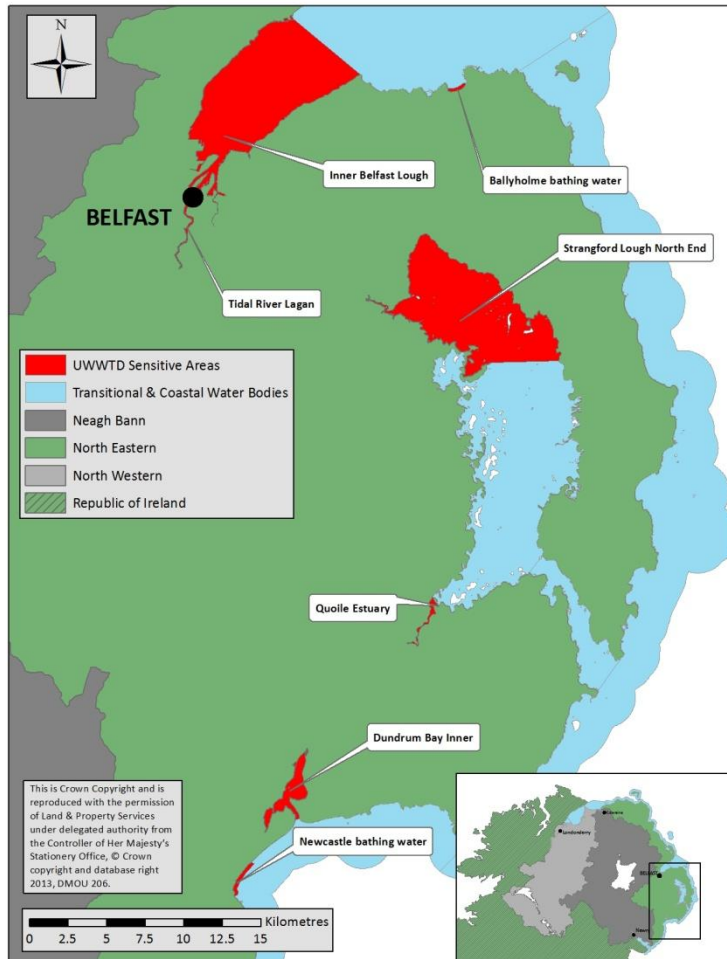


Figure 18. Location of UWWTD Sensitive Areas (North Eastern RBD)

Monitoring Network

Monitoring programmes have been established in the North Eastern River Basin District to assess the status of Protected Areas.

Table 8: Protected Areas monitoring network in the Neagh Bann RBD

Protected Area Designation	Figure number
Economically significant species – Shellfish Water Protected Areas	19
Bathing Waters	20
Marine Dependant Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	21
Marine Dependant Special Protection Areas (SPA)	21
DIN Monitoring Network	22

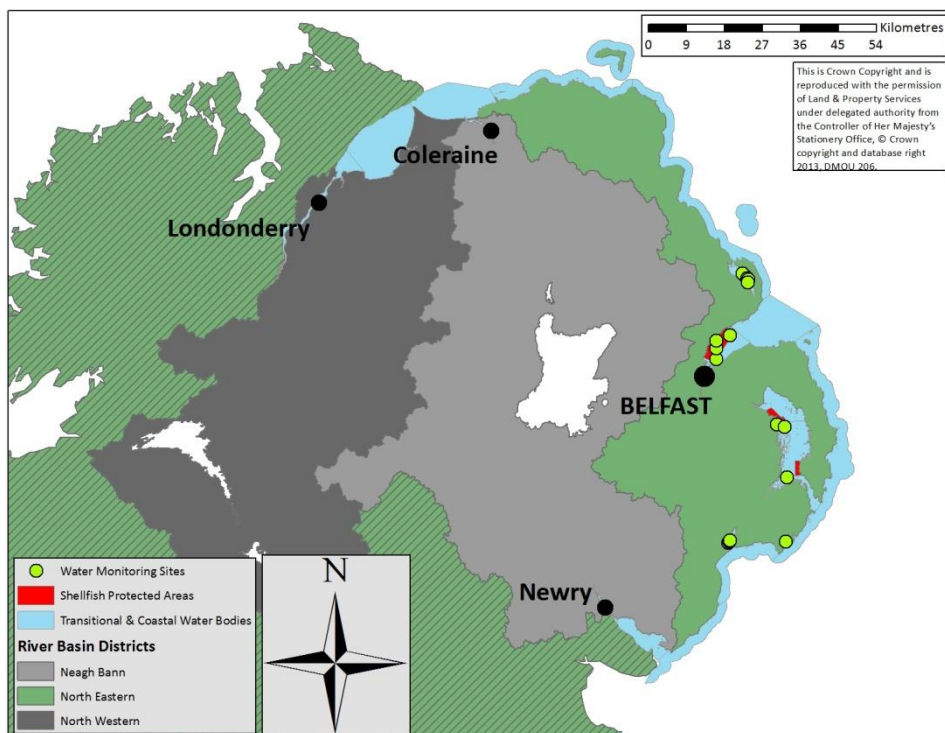


Figure 19. Monitoring Network for Shellfish Waters Protected Areas (North Eastern RBD)

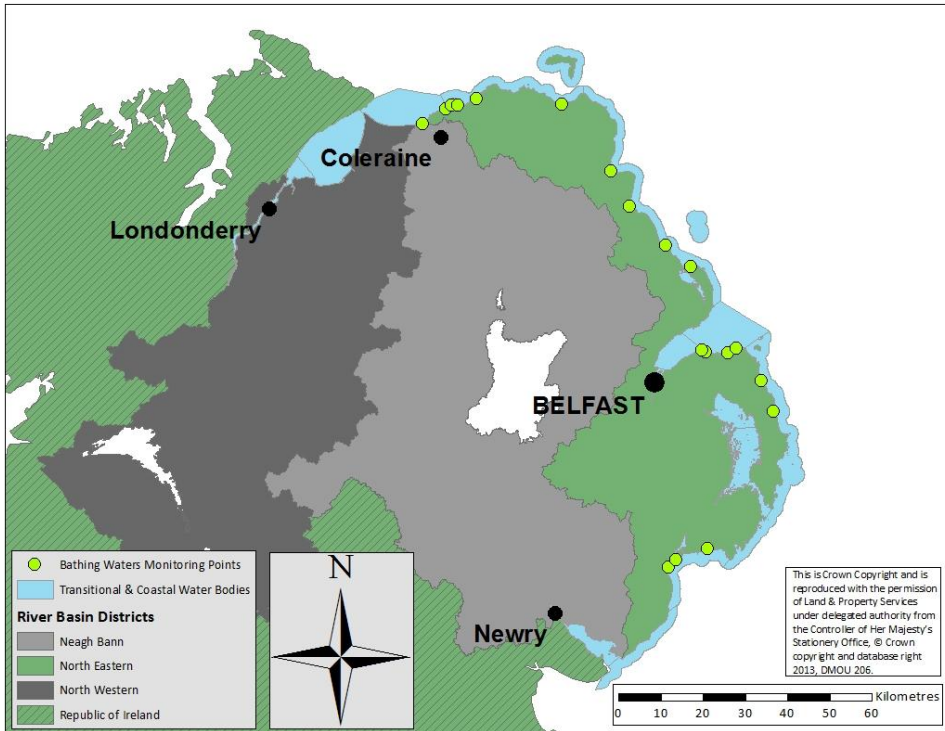


Figure 20. Monitoring network for Bathing Waters (North Eastern RBD)

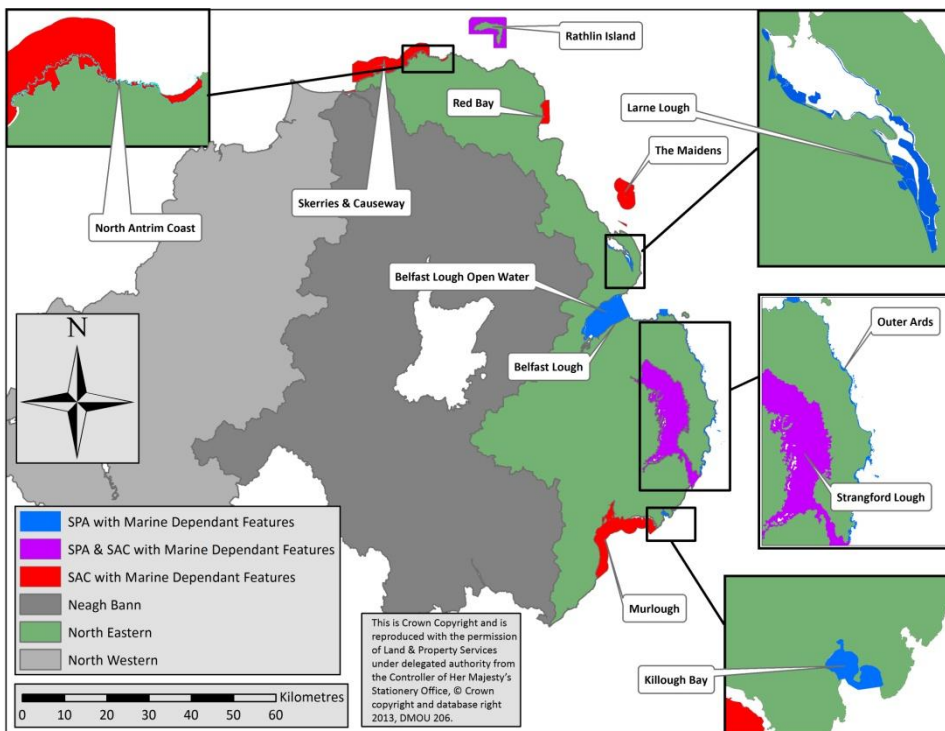


Figure 21. Location of Natura 2000 monitored areas (North Eastern RBD)

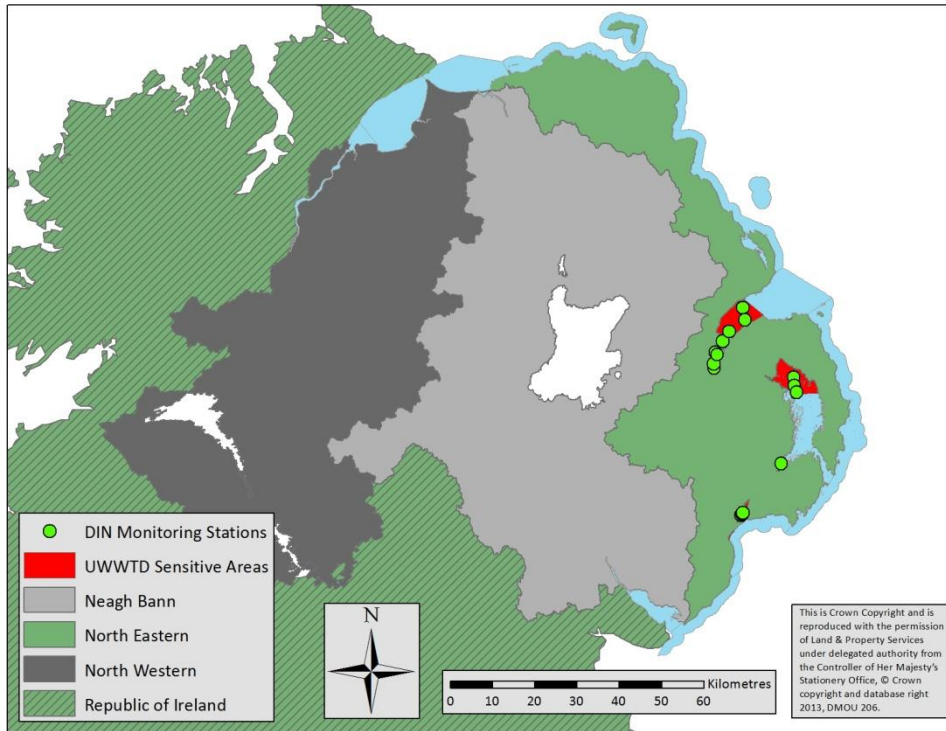


Figure 22. Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) monitoring network in UWWTD Sensitive Areas (North Eastern RBD)

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7. Annex 1

Surface water and protected area status, and objectives for Northern Ireland TraC water bodies.

WFD Water Body	Protected Area	Status (WFD 2015)	Reason	Action	WFD 2021 Objective
Upper Foyle		Moderate	DIN	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Moderate
	River Foyle and Tributaries SAC	Unfavourable	Water course <i>Ranunculon fluitanis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i>	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
Foyle Harbour and Faughan (HMWB)		Moderate (EP)	DIN, Annex VIII (Cypermethrin), Annex X (HCH)	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Lough Foyle SPA	Unfavourable	Bewick's Swan	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Longfield Bank SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.

Lough Foyle		Good		Maintain	Good
	Lough Foyle SPA	Unfavourable	Bewick's Swan	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Magilligan SAC	Unfavourable	Grey dunes, humid dune slacks, white dunes	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Balls Point SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.
	Longfield Bank SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.

Portstewart Bay		Good		Maintain	Good
	Magilligan SAC	Unfavourable	Grey dunes, humid dune slacks, white dunes	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Skerries and Causeway SAC	Unfavourable	Subtidal sandbanks	Voluntary no-fishing agreement in place. DARD/DOE to consider need for fisheries management measures.	Favourable
	Magilligan BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Downhill BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Castlerock BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Portstewart BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Portrush Mill BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent

North Coast		Moderate	Benthos	Improve IQI confidence	Good
	Sheep Island SPA	Unfavourable	Great Cormorant	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Skerries and Causeway SAC	Unfavourable	Subtidal sandbanks	Voluntary no fishing agreement in place. DARD/DOE to consider need for fisheries management measures.	Favourable
	North Antrim Coast SAC	Unfavourable	Grey dunes, vegetated sea cliffs	N/A - not marine water related measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Portrush Curran BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
	Portrush Whiterocks BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Portballintrae Salmon Rocks BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Ballycastle BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
Bann Estuary (HMWB)		Poor (EP)	Phytoplankton, Fish, DIN, Annex VIII, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Bann Estuary SAC	Unfavourable	Grey dunes, embryonic shifitung dunes, white dunes	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
Rathlin		Good		Maintain	Good
	Rathlin Island SPA	Unfavourable	Peregrine	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Rathlin Island SAC	Unfavourable	Reefs, subtidal sandbanks	Voluntary no-fishing agreement in place. DARD are in the process of developing fisheries regulations.	Favourable

North Channel		Good		Maintain	Good
	Red Bay SAC	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Waterfoot BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
	Carnlough BW	Sufficient		Make progress towards Good. Source apportionment investigation within catchment to determine point and diffuse pollution sources.	Good
	Ballygally BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
	Brown's Bay BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent

Maiden Islands		High		Maintain	High
	The Maidens SAC	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable

Larne Lough North (HMWB)		Moderate (EP)	Annex VIII, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	GEP
	Larne Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable

Larne Lough Mid		Moderate	Annex VIII, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Good
	Larne Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Swan Island SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Larne Lough SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.

Larne Lough South		Good		Maintain	Good
	Larne Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Larne Lough SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.

Lagan Estuary (HMWB)		Poor (EP)	Phytoplankton, Fish, DO, DIN, Annex VIII (Cypermethrin), Annex X (HCH, Endosulphan)	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Tidal Lagan Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic	DIN, phytoplankton	Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Belfast Harbour (HWMB)		Moderate (EP)	Phytoplankton, Macroalgae, Benthos (IQI), DIN, Annex VIII (Cypermethrin)	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Belfast Lough SPA	Unfavourable	Redshank	N/A - not marine water related measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Inner Belfast Lough Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic	DIN, phytoplankton, macroalgae	Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Belfast Lough Inner		Moderate	DIN, Annex VIII (Cypermethrin), Annex X (HCH)	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Moderate
	Belfast Lough SPA	Unfavourable	Redshank	N/A - not marine water related measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Belfast Lough SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.
	Inner Belfast Lough Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic	DIN	Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Belfast Lough Outer		Good		Maintain	Good
	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Outer Ards SPA	Unfavourable	Ringed Plover	N/A - not marine water related measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Helen's Bay BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Crawfordsburn BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Ballyholme BW (Sensitive Area)	Sufficient		Make progress towards Good. NI Water implementation of measures for waste water treatment	Good
	Groomsport BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Inner Belfast Lough Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic		Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Ards Peninsula		Good		Maintain	Good
	Outer Ards SPA	Unfavourable	Ringed Plover	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Copeland Islands SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Millisle BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
	Ballywalter BW	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent

Strangford Lough South		Moderate	Annex VIII, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Moderate
	Strangford Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Strangford Lough SAC	Unfavourable	Reefs, coastal lagoons, large shallow inlets and bays, Atlantic salt meadows, Salicornia colonizing mud and sand, perennial vegetation of stony banks	<i>Modiolus</i> restoration plan, Dorn lagoon monitoring. Measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Skate Rock SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet shellfish guideline standard.
	Marlfield Bay SWPA	No Data		Implement monitoring	Meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.
	Paddy's Point/Reagh Bay SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet shellfish guideline standard.
	Strangford North & Paddy's Point/Reagh Bay (Armillan) SWPA Nutrient Sensitive Area	Good WFD nutrient status		Maintain	Good WFD nutrient status

Strangford Lough North		Moderate	Benthos (IQI), Aliens, Annex VIII, Annex X	Improve IQI confidence, point & diffuse pollution reduction, alien eradication	Good
	Strangford Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Strangford Lough SAC	Unfavourable	Reefs, coastal lagoons, large shallow inlets and bays, Atlantic salt meadows, Salicornia colonizing mud and sand, perennial vegetation of stony banks	<i>Spartina</i> control group. Measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Paddy's Point/Reagh Bay SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet the shellfish guideline standard.
	Strangford North & Paddy's Point/Reagh Bay (Armillan) SWPA Nutrient Sensitive Area	Good WFD nutrient status		Maintain	Good WFD nutrient status

Quoile Pondage (HMWB)		Moderate (EP)	DO	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Strangford Lough SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Quoile Pondage Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic		Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Dundrum Bay Outer		Good		Maintain	Good
	Murlough SAC	Unfavourable	Intertidal mudflats and sandflats, Atlantic salt meadows, grey dunes, Atlantic decalcified dunes, white dunes, dunes with Salix	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Favourable
	Killough Harbour SPA	Favourable		Maintain	Favourable
	Tyrella BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Murlough BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent
	Newcastle BW (Sensitive Area)	Good		At least maintain	Good or Excellent
	Killough Harbour SWPA	Objectives met		Pollution Reduction Programmes	Continue to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.

Dundrum Bay Inner		Moderate	Macroalgae, Angiosperms, Annex VIII, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Moderate
	Murlough SAC	Unfavourable	Intertidal mudflats and sandflats, Atlantic salt meadows, grey dunes, Atlantic decalcified dunes, white dunes, dunes with Salix	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	Favourable
	Inner Dundrum Bay SWPA (Annex II(a)c sensitive area)	Objectives not met	FSA in NI Classification downgraded from B to C; did not meet microbiological guideline standard.	NI Water implementation of measures for waste water treatment. Investigation into pollution sources.	Endeavour to meet SWPA objectives and make progress towards shellfish guideline standard.
	Dundrum Bay Inner Nutrient Sensitive Area	Eutrophic	Macroalgae, Angiosperms,	Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status

Mourne Coast		Moderate	Benthos (IQI)	Improve IQI confidence	Good
	Carlingford Lough SPA	Unfavourable	Common Tern, Sandwich Tern	N/A - not marine water related	Favourable
	Cranfield BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent

Carlingford Lough		Moderate	Benthos (IQI), DIN, Annex VIII, Annex X	Improve IQI confidence, point & diffuse pollution reduction	Moderate
	Carlingford Lough SPA	Unfavourable	Common Tern, Sandwich Tern	N/A - not marine water related; measures implemented under Conservation Objectives for the site	Favourable
	Carlingford Lough SWPA	Objectives met			Continue to meet the shellfish guideline standard.
	Cranfield BW	Excellent		Maintain	Excellent

Newry River Estuary (HMWB)		Moderate (EP)	DIN, Annex X	Point & diffuse pollution reduction	MEP
	Newry River Sensitive Area	Eutrophic	DIN	Nutrient reduction	Good WFD nutrient status