

# Fish in Rivers Factsheet

WRBD

Corrib Catchment

Factsheet: 2020/2

The Corrib catchment occupies an area of approximately 4,000km<sup>2</sup> in the west of Ireland spanning counties Galway and Mayo. The catchment includes Loughs Corrib, Mask and Carra and all the rivers draining these lakes. Many other smaller lakes are also present in the catchment. Lough Corrib is the second largest lake (16,562 Ha) in Ireland after Lough Neagh. The main urban centres in the catchment are Galway City, Tuam, Ballinrobe, Claremorris and Ballyhaunis.

The catchment is characterised by a relatively flat limestone plain occupying the eastern two thirds of the catchment, which terminates in the lakes of Corrib and Mask, and where it meets the granites of West Galway and the metamorphic uplands of southwest Mayo (EPA 2018).

There are 25 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) in the catchment, including Lough Corrib SAC (000297), Lough Carra Mask Complex SAC (001774) and the Connemara Bog Complex (EPA, 2018). There are also three special protection areas in the catchment (Lough Carra SPA, Lough Corrib SPA and Lough Mask SPA). The lakes and rivers support numerous protected habitats and species (including salmon, freshwater pearl mussel, white-clawed crayfish, sea lamprey and otter).

Loughs Corrib, Mask and Carra are three of the best brown trout fisheries in Ireland and Lough Corrib and its river are also renowned for salmon angling.

A total of fifty-two sites were surveyed to assess the status of their fish stocks in the Corrib Catchment from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July to the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2020. This work complements the survey carried out during 2019 (109 sites surveyed in the Carra, Mask and Clare catchments - O' Briain, 2020a and b). These surveys provide a comprehensive overview of fish status across the Corrib catchment.

Electro-fishing was the method used (CEN 2003), specifically the 10-minute timed electro-fishing (TEF) technique. All fish count results were converted to Area Delineated Electro Fishing (ADEF) according to Matson *et al.* (2018).

This report summarises the results of the fish stock survey in selected sub-catchments of the Lough Corrib Catchment in 2020. Fish ecological status is also reported for each site for Water Framework Directive purposes.



The Failmore (Teernakill) River at Teernakill South (site 43).

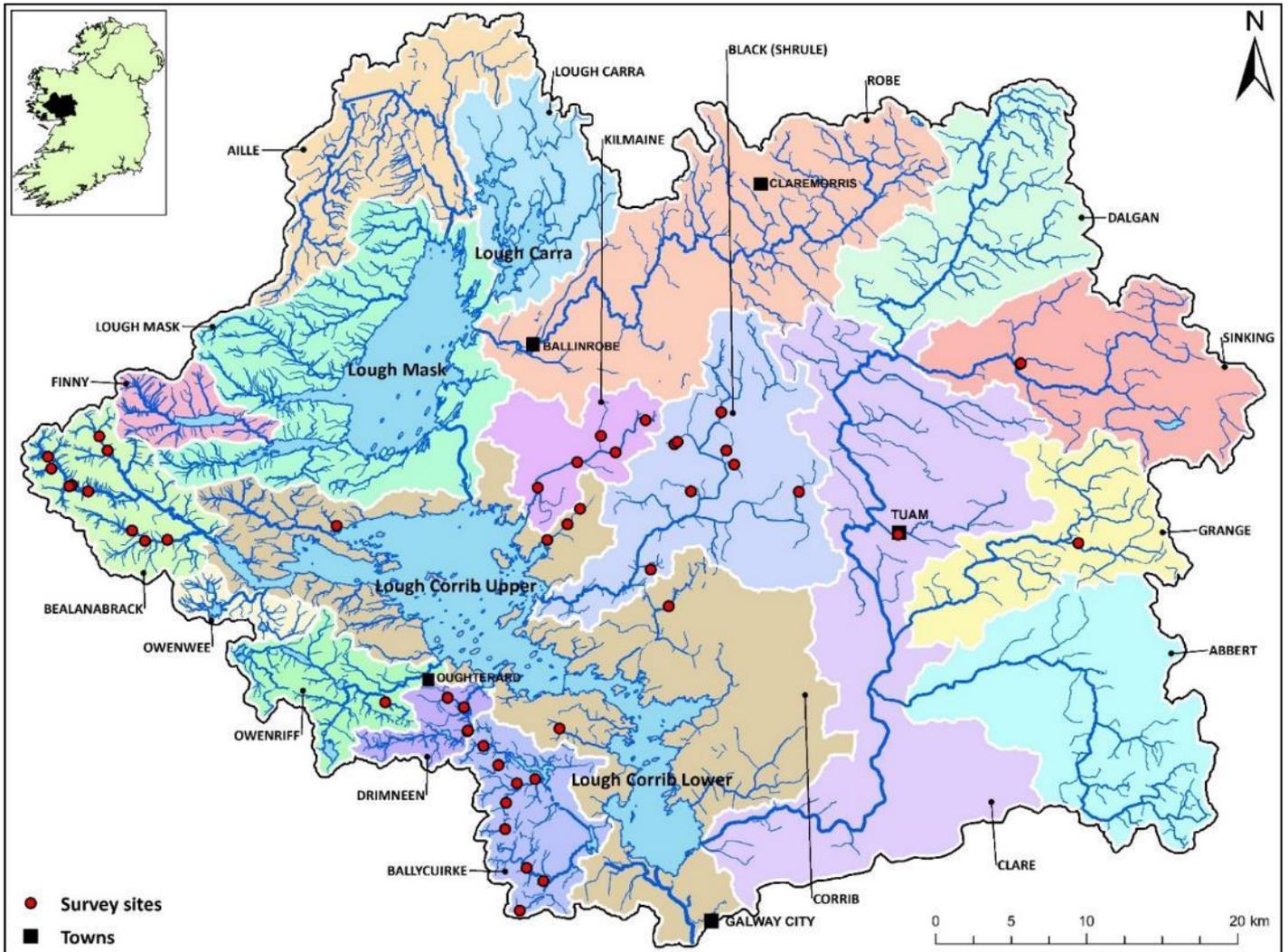
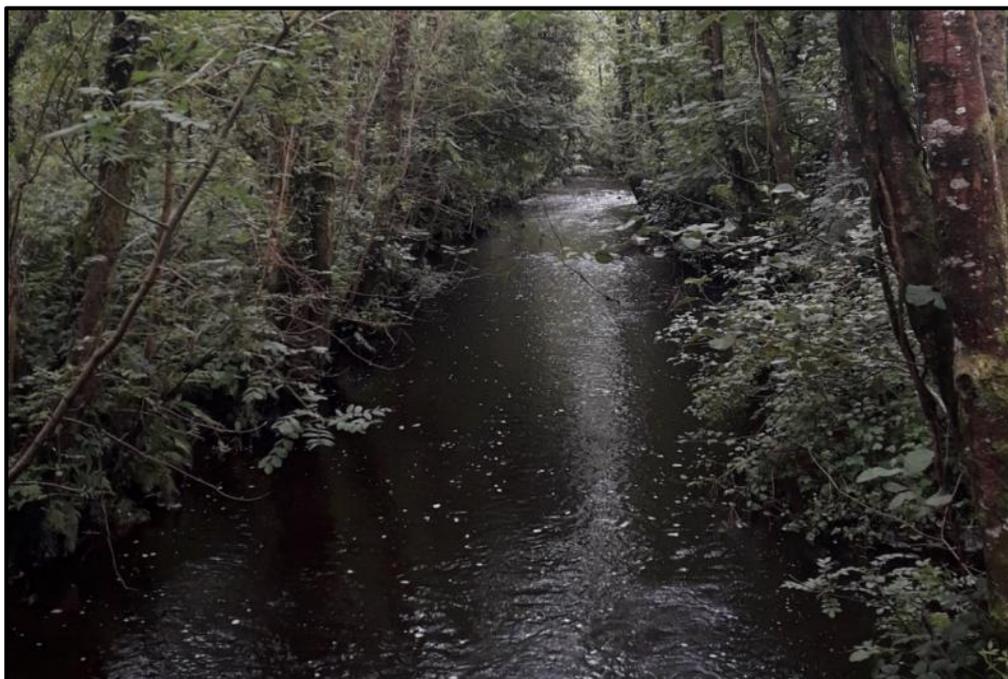


Fig. 1. Corrib sub-catchments and electrofishing survey sites, 2020.



Knockbane River at An Cnoc Ban (site 7) (Ballycurke sub-catchment).

Ballycuirke sub-catchment

Ten sites (1-10) were surveyed in the Ballycuirke sub-catchment during August 2020 (Fig. 2 and Table 1).

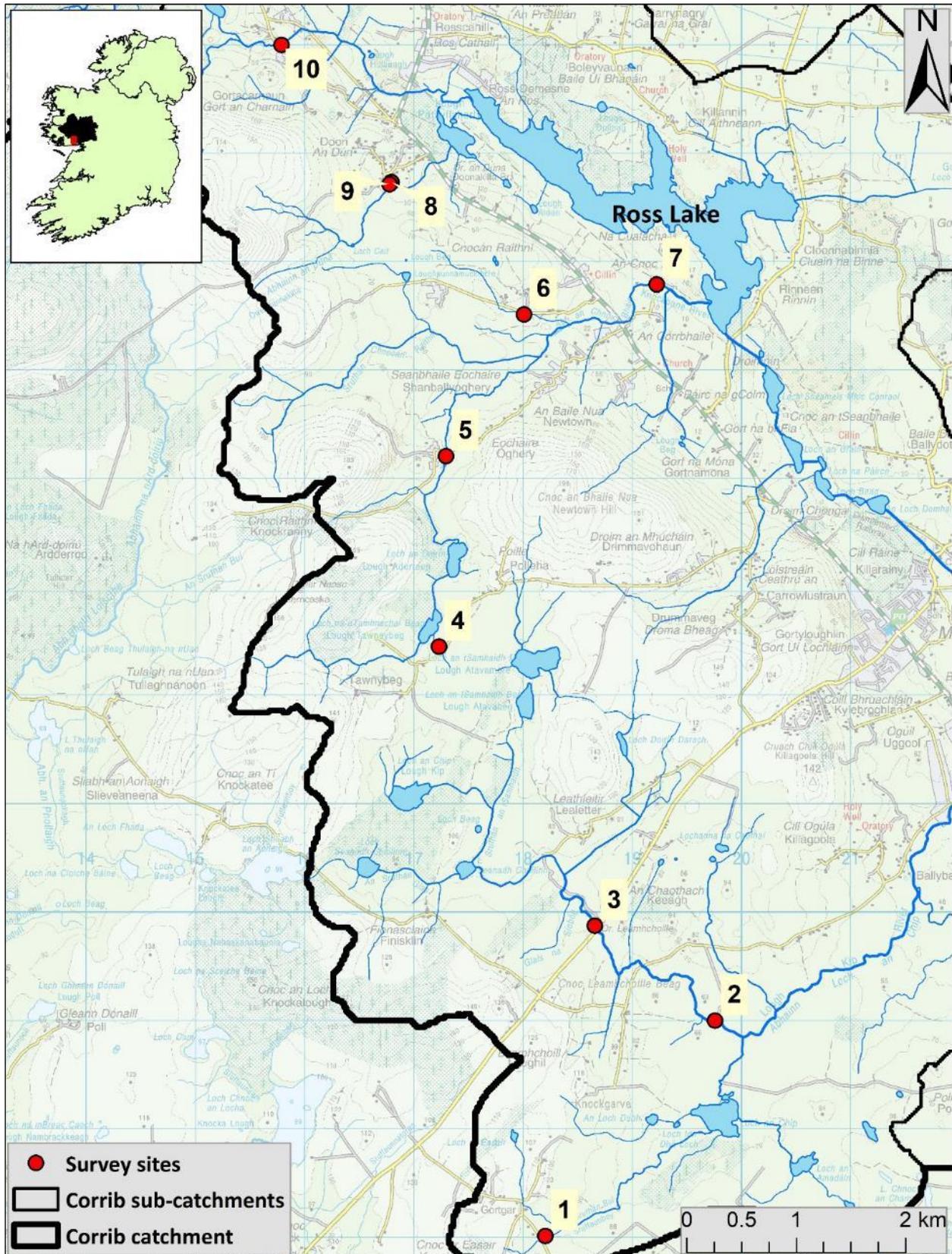


Fig. 2. Ballycuirke sub-catchment and electrofishing survey sites (sites 1-10), 2020.

Table 1. Site survey details for the Ballycurke sub-catchment, 2020.

No.	River	Site	WFD SM	Date
<b>Ballycurke sub-catchment</b>				
1	Sruffaunboy River	Gortgar Southeast	–	18/08/2020
2	Lough Kip River	Knockgarve Northeast	–	18/08/2020
3	Lough Kip River	Dr. Leamhchoille	–	17/08/2020
4	Atavamore stream	u/s Tawneybeg Lough	–	18/08/2020
5	Knockbane River	Oghery	–	19/08/2020
6	Knockaunranny River	Knockaunranny	–	18/08/2020
7	Knockbane River	An Cnoc Ban	–	13/08/2020
8	Owendunnakilla River	Doon A	–	13/08/2020
9	Owendunnakilla River	Doon B	–	17/08/2020
10	Killaguile River	Ballycurke	–	13/08/2020

Table 2. Minimum density estimates (no. fish/m<sup>2</sup>) for the Ballycurke sub-catchment, 2020. Previous results are shown where applicable.

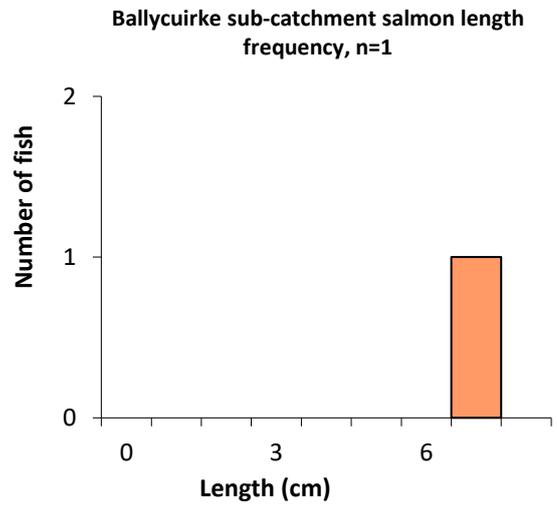
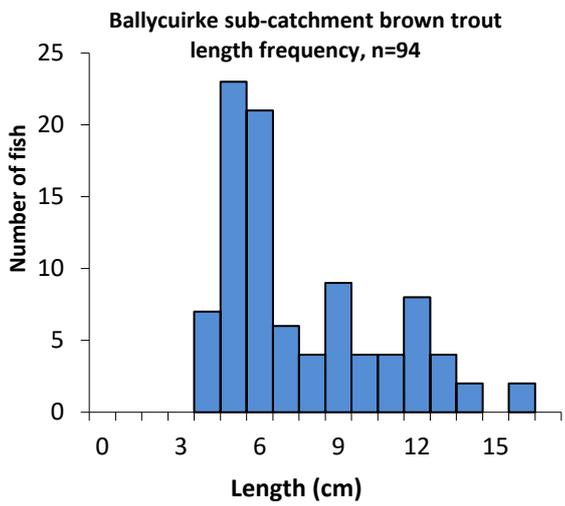
<b>Ballycurke sub-catchment</b>											
Site no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	–	0.480	0.252	0.046	0.161	0.128	0.011	0.321	0.241	0.428	
0+ brown trout	–	0.480	0.148	0.046	0.075	0.128	0.011	0.281	0.190	0.185	
1+ & older brown trout	–	–	0.105	–	0.086	–	–	0.040	0.051	0.243	
Salmon	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.023	
0+ salmon	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.023	
1+ & older salmon	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
Lamprey sp.	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.011	–	–	–	
Perch	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.005	–	–	–	
Roach	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.016	–	–	–	
Stone loach	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.033	–	–	–	
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>No fish</b>	<b>0.480</b>	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.046</b>	<b>0.161</b>	<b>0.128</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>0.321</b>	<b>0.241</b>	<b>0.451</b>	

Table 3. Salmonid % age class structure (where recorded) for the Ballycurke sub-catchment, 2020

<b>Ballycurke</b>			
Site No.	% of catch		
	0+	1+	2+
<b>Brown trout</b>			
2	100	–	–
3	61	35	4
4	100	–	–
5	50	50	–
6	100	–	–
7	100	–	–
8	89	11	–
9	82	18	–
10	45	33	22
<b>Salmon</b>			
10	100	–	–

Table 4. Fish ecological status for the Ballycurke sub-catchment, 2020. Previous results are shown where recorded.

Site No.	2020
<b>Ballycurke</b>	
1	N/A
2	Poor
3	Good
4	Poor
5	Moderate
6	Moderate
7	Poor
8	Good
9	Moderate
10	Good



Owendunnakilla River at Doon (B) (site 9)



Attamore stream, u/s Tawneybeg Lough (site 4)

### Drimneen, Owenriff, Kilmaine (Cross) sub-catchments and small Corrib tributaries

Nineteen sites were surveyed in the Drimneen (sites 11-16), Owenriff (site 17), small Corrib tributaries (site 18 - Larragan River), site 19 - Annacurta River, Ballynalty River (sites 20-23), site 24 – Carrick River) and Kilmaine (Cross) (sites 25-29) sub-catchments during August and September 2020 (Fig. 3 and Table 5).

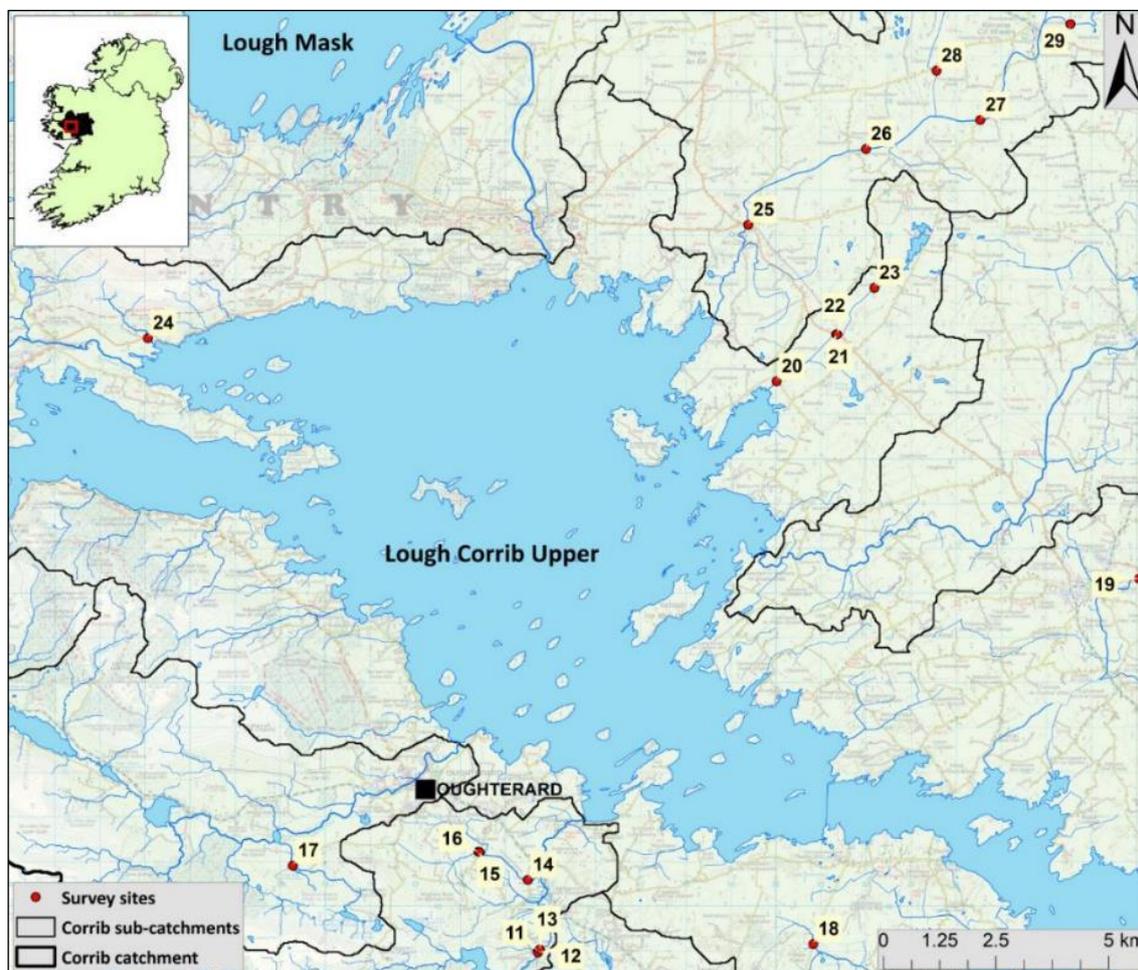


Figure 3. Drimneen (sites 11-16), Owenriff (site 17), Corrib (sites 18-24), and Kilmaine (sites 25-29) sub-catchments, 2020.



Cross River at Frenchbrook South (site 28).

Table 5. Site survey details for the Drimneen, Owenriff, Corrib and Kilmaine sub-catchments, 2020.

No.	River	Site	WFD SM	Date
<b>Drimneen sub-catchment</b>				
11	Drimneen River	d/s of Carrowdulla Lough	-	12/08/2020
12	Raha River	u/s Drimneen Br.	-	12/08/2020
13	Drimneen River	Drimneen	-	14/08/2020
14	Railway River	d/s of Railway line	-	12/08/2020
15	Railway River	Rushveala A	-	12/08/2020
16	Railway River	Rushveala B	-	13/08/2020
<b>Owenriff sub-catchment</b>				
17	Rusheeny River	d/s of L. Beg	-	14/08/2020
<b>Corrib tributaries</b>				
18	Larragan River	Pollagh	-	19/08/2020
19	Annacurta River	Br. d/s of Lodge	-	23/07/2020
20	Ballynalty River	u/s of Ballynalty Bay	-	15/09/2020
21	Ballynalty River	Funshinaugh	-	23/07/2020
22	Ballynalty River	Fushinaugh Northeast	-	15/09/2020
23	Ballynalty	Houndswood South	-	15/09/2020
24	Carrick River	Carrick East	-	27/07/2020
<b>Kilmaine (Cross) sub-catchment</b>				
25	Cross River	Cross Village	-	14/09/2020
26	Cross River	Curraghbaun	-	14/09/2020
27	Cross River	Carrownturly	-	14/08/2020
28	Cross River	Frenchbrook South	-	28/07/2020
29	Cross River	Gortnastang	-	17/08/2020

Table 6. Minimum density estimates (no. fish/m<sup>2</sup>) for the Drimneen, Owenriff, Corrib and Kilmaine sub-catchments, 2020. Previous results are shown where applicable.

Site no.	Drimneen sub-catchment						Owenriff	Corrib tributaries		
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	0.082	0.112	0.065	0.593	0.604	0.156	0.022	0.167	0.415	0.141
0+ brown trout	0.052	0.012	0.016	0.278	0.525	0.125	0.022	0.026	0.148	0.033
1+ & older brown trout	0.030	0.100	0.049	0.315	0.079	0.031	-	0.141	0.267	0.108
Salmon	-	-	-	0.445	0.224	-	0.221	-	0.020	0.083
0+ salmon	-	-	-	0.371	0.224	-	0.154	-	-	0.017
1+ & older salmon	-	-	-	0.074	-	-	0.066	-	0.020	0.066
European eel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.090	-	0.025
Minnnow	-	-	-	-	-	0.031	-	-	-	-
Pike	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.011	-	-	0.017
Roach	-	-	-	-	-	0.031	-	-	-	-
Stone loach	-	-	-	0.167	-	-	-	0.026	-	-
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	-	-	0.039	-	-	-	-	-
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>0.082</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>0.065</b>	<b>1.205</b>	<b>0.867</b>	<b>0.219</b>	<b>0.254</b>	<b>0.282</b>	<b>0.435</b>	<b>0.265</b>

Corrib tributaries					Kilmaine sub-catchment				
Site no.	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	1.429	0.317	-	0.583	0.144	0.104	-	0.132	-
0+ brown trout	1.216	0.301	-	0.460	0.107	0.088	-	0.116	-
1+ & older brown trout	0.212	0.017	-	0.123	0.037	0.016	-	0.017	-
Salmon	-	-	-	0.291	0.181	0.335	-	-	-
0+ salmon	-	-	-	0.291	0.147	0.240	-	-	-
1+ & older salmon	-	-	-	-	0.034	0.096	-	-	-
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	1.393	-	-	-	0.181	0.074	1.315
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>1.429</b>	<b>0.317</b>	<b>1.393</b>	<b>0.874</b>	<b>0.325</b>	<b>0.439</b>	<b>0.181</b>	<b>0.207</b>	<b>1.315</b>

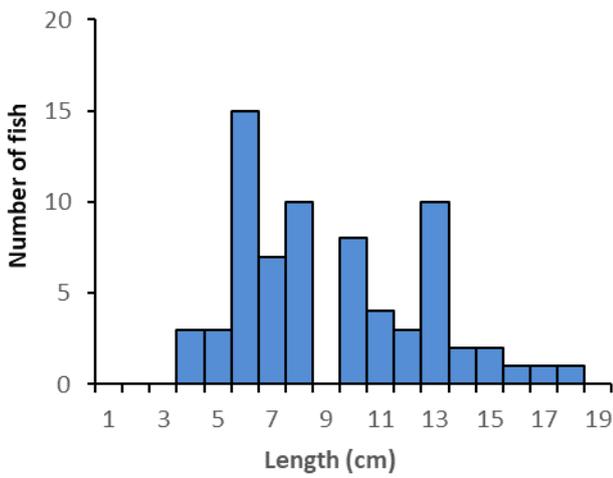
Table 7. Salmonid % age class structure (where recorded) for the Drimneen, Owenriff, Corrib and Kilmaine sub-catchments, 2020.

Site No.	Brown trout		
	% of catch		
	0+	1+	2+
<b>Drimneen</b>			
11	67	33	-
12	11	67	22
13	25	63	12
14	47	53	-
15	89	11	-
16	80	20	-
<b>Owenriff</b>			
17	100	-	-
<b>Corrib tributaries</b>			
18	100	-	-
19	41	50	9
20	25	63	13
21	91	9	-
22	95	5	-
24	83	17	-
<b>Kilmaine (Cross)</b>			
25	91	5	5
26	86	14	-
28	90	10	-
<b>Salmon</b>			
Site No.	% of catch		
	0+	1+	
<b>Drimneen</b>			
14	83	17	
15	100	-	
<b>Owenriff</b>			
17	70	30	
19	-	100	
<b>Corrib tributaries</b>			
20	20	80	
24	100	-	
<b>Kilmaine (Cross)</b>			
25	81	19	
26	71	29	

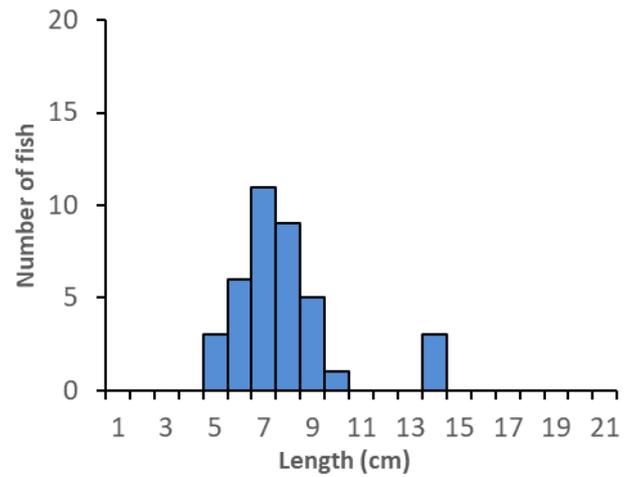
Table 8. Fish ecological status for the Drimneen, Owenriff, Corrib and Kilmaine sub-catchments, 2020. Previous results are shown where recorded.

Site No.	2016	2020
<b>Drimneen</b>		
11	-	Moderate
12	-	Moderate
13	-	Moderate
14	-	High
15	-	Good
16	-	High
<b>Owenriff</b>		
17	-	Good
<b>Corrib tributaries</b>		
18	Good	Good
19	-	Good
20	-	Good
21	-	High
22	-	Moderate
23	-	Poor
24	-	High
<b>Kilmaine (Cross)</b>		
25	-	Good
26	-	Good
27	-	Poor
28	-	Moderate
29	-	Poor

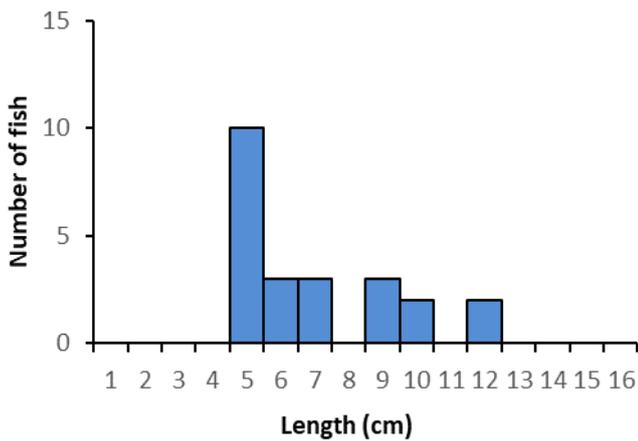
Drimneen sub-catchment brown trout length frequency, n=70



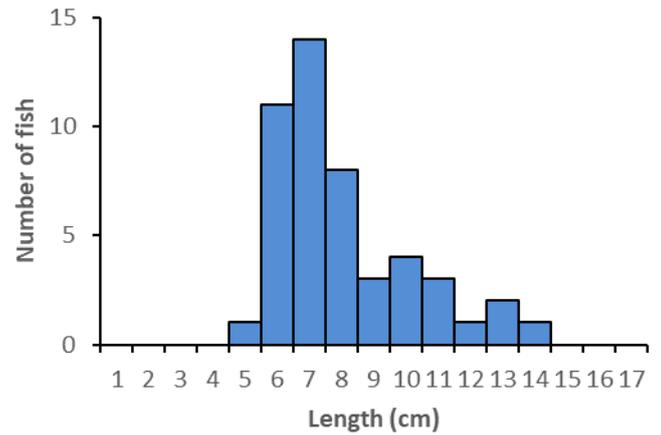
Kilmaine (Cross) sub-catchment brown trout length frequency, n=39



Drimneen sub-catchment salmon length frequency, n=23



Kilmaine (Cross) sub-catchment salmon length frequency, n=48



Railway River at Rushveala (site 16)



Ballynalty River at Funshinaugh Northeast (Site 22)

### Black (Shrule) and Clare (including Grange and Sinking) sub-catchments

Twelve sites were surveyed on the Black (Shrule) (sites 30-37), Clare (site 38), Grange (site 39), and Sinking (sites 40-41) sub-catchments in July and August 2020 (Fig. 4 and Table 9).

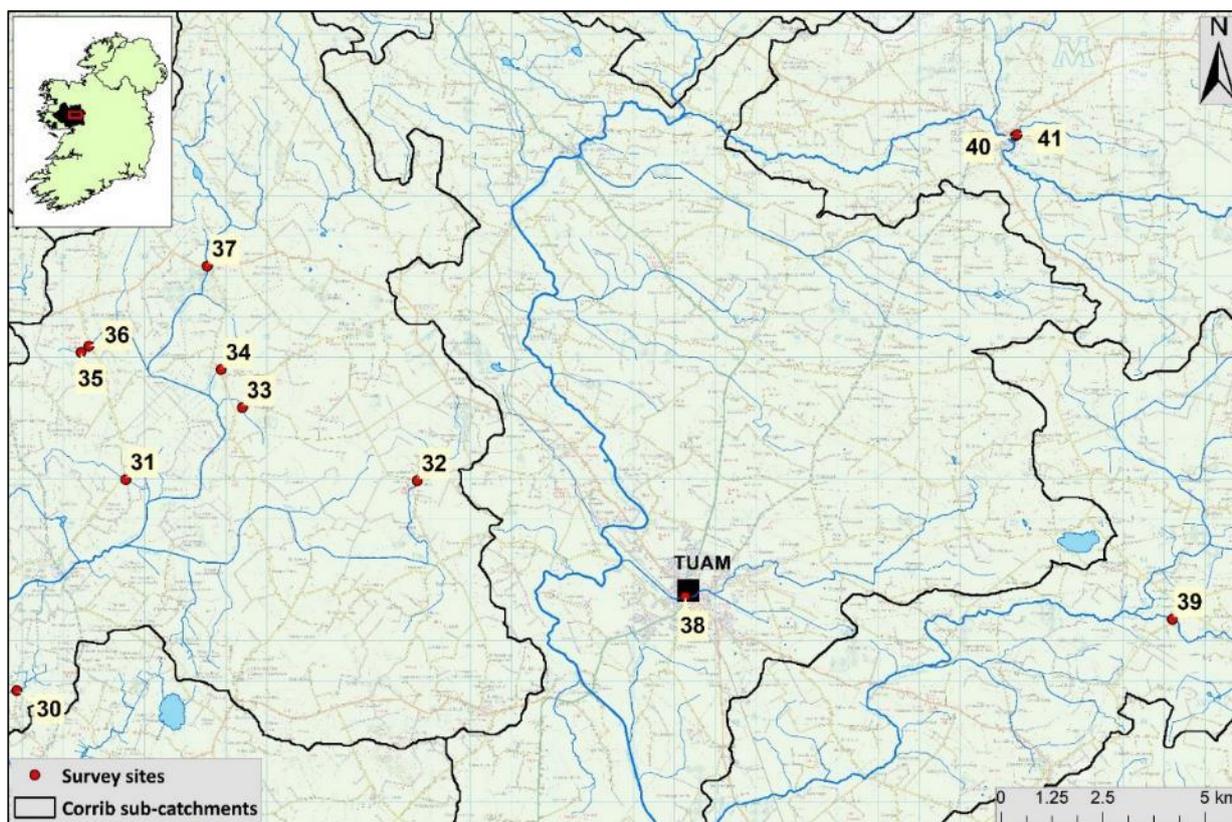


Fig. 4. Black (Shrule) (sites 30-37), Clare (site 38), Grange (site 39), and Sinking (sites 40-41) sub-catchments and electrofishing survey sties, 2020.

Table 9. Site survey details for the Black, Clare, Grange and Sinking sub-catchments, 2020.

No.	River	Site	WFD SM	Date
<b>Black (Shrule) sub-catchment</b>				
30	Cullagh River	Tonroe North	–	23/07/2020
31	Carrowmore River	Dalgan Demesne	–	28/07/2020
32	Togher River	Cloonnaglasha	–	13/08/2020
33	Toberroe River	Toberroe	–	24/07/2020
34	Black River	Br. at Kilshanvy	YES	29/07/2020
35	Kilshanvy River	Ballinully	–	12/08/2020
36	Ballinulty stream	Ballinulty	–	28/07/2020
37	Carras River	Outlawns	–	23/07/2020
<b>Clare sub-catchment</b>				
38	Tuam River	Tuam Garda Stn.	–	22/07/2020
<b>Grange sub-catchment</b>				
39	Grange River	Cloondahamper	–	29/07/2020
<b>Sinking sub-catchment</b>				
40	Sinking River	Baunoges A	–	22/07/2020
41	Sinking River	Baunoges B	–	22/07/2020



Grange River at Cloondahamper (site 39).

Table 10. Minimum density estimates (no. fish/m<sup>2</sup>) for the Black, Clare, Grange and Sinking sub-catchments, 2020. Previous results are shown where applicable.

Black (Shrulle) sub-catchment								
Site no.	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	0.986	0.165	0.035	0.193	0.094	0.019	-	0.211
0+ brown trout	0.986	0.035	0.018	0.134	0.011	0.019	-	0.211
1+ & older brown trout	-	0.129	0.018	0.059	0.083	-	-	-
Salmon	-	-	-	-	0.089	-	-	0.158
0+ salmon	-	-	-	-	0.067	-	-	0.141
1+ & older salmon	-	-	-	-	0.022	-	-	0.018
European eel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lamprey sp.	0.067	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.009
Stone loach	-	-	0.035	-	-	-	-	-
Three-spined stickleback	0.045	-	0.053	0.089	-	0.029	0.058	-
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>1.098</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>0.123</b>	<b>0.282</b>	<b>0.183</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>0.058</b>	<b>0.378</b>

	Clare	Grange	Sinking	
Site no.	38	39	40	41
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	0.151	0.161	0.194	0.657
0+ brown trout	0.076	0.15	0.103	0.657
1+ & older brown trout	0.076	0.011	0.091	-
Salmon	0.060	0.032	0.114	-
0+ salmon	-	-	0.068	-
1+ & older salmon	0.060	0.032	0.046	-
European eel	-	-	-	-
Lamprey sp.	0.015	-	-	-
Stone loach	-	0.321	0.023	-
Three-spined stickleback	0.030	-	-	-
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>0.257</b>	<b>0.514</b>	<b>0.331</b>	<b>0.657</b>

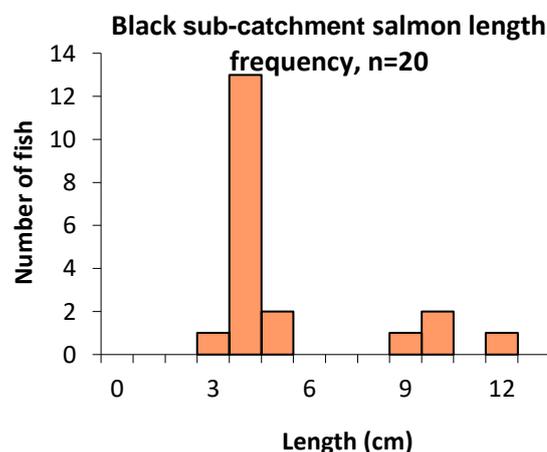
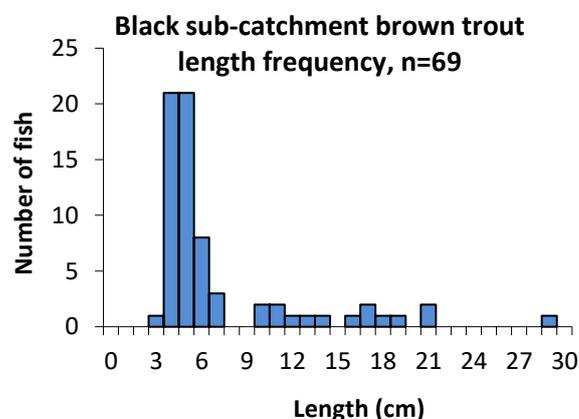
Table 11. Salmonid % age class structure (where recorded) for the Black, Clare, Grange and Sinking sub-catchments, 2020.

Brown trout				
Site No.	% of catch			
	0+	1+	2+	3+
<b>Black (Shrule)</b>				
30	100	-	-	-
31	29	57	14	-
32	50	50	-	-
33	75	25	-	-
34	13	63	12	12
35	100	-	-	-
37	100	-	-	-
<b>Clare</b>				
38	56	38	6	-
<b>Grange</b>				
39	93	7	-	-
<b>Sinking</b>				
40	56	44	-	-
41	100	-	-	-

Salmon		
Site No.	% of catch	
	0+	1+
<b>Black (Shrule)</b>		
34	78	22
37	82	18
<b>Clare</b>		
38	-	100
<b>Grange</b>		
39	-	100
<b>Sinking</b>		
40	60	40

Table 12. Fish ecological status for the Black, Clare, Grange and Sinking sub-catchments, 2020. Previous results are shown where recorded.

Site No.	2009	2012	2020
<b>Black (Shrule)</b>			
30	-	-	Good
31	-	-	Moderate
32	-	-	Moderate
33	-	-	Good
34	Good	Good	Good
35	-	-	Moderate
36	-	-	Poor
37	-	-	Good
<b>Clare</b>			
38	-	-	Moderate
<b>Grange</b>			
39	-	-	Moderate
<b>Sinking</b>			
40	-	-	Good
41	-	-	Moderate



### Bealanabrack sub-catchment

Eleven sites were surveyed across the Bealanabrack sub-catchment (sites 42-52) during August and September 2020 (Fig. 4 and table 4).

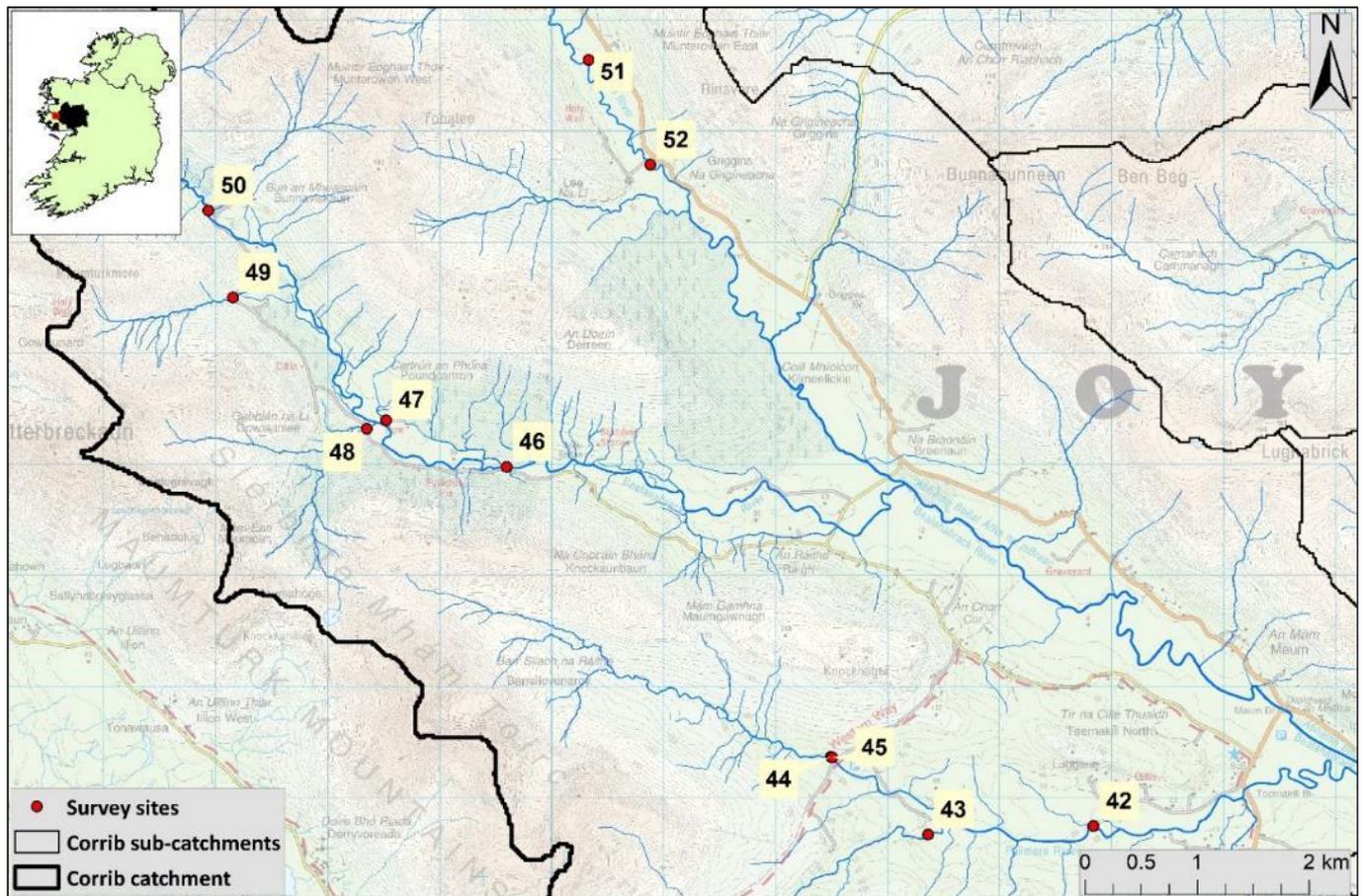


Fig. 5. Bealanabrack sub-catchment (sites 42-52), 2020.

Table 13. Site survey details for the Bealanabrack sub-catchment, 2020.

No.	River	Site	WFD	Date
<b>Bealanabrack sub-catchment</b>				
42	Failmore River	Luggaun South	–	16/09/2020
43	Teernakill River	Teernakill South	–	19/08/2020
44	Failmore River	Knocknagur_A	–	20/08/2020
45	Failmore River	Knocknagur_B	–	16/09/2020
46	Bealanabrack River	d/s of Fulachtai Fia	–	13/08/2020
47	Bealanabrack River tributary	Stone Row	–	18/08/2020
48	Bealanabrack River tributary	Gowlaunlee East	–	18/08/2020
49	Glenglosh River tributary	Gowlaunard East	–	18/08/2020
50	Glenglosh River	Bunnaviskaun	–	18/08/2020
51	Joyce's River	Munterowen East	–	16/09/2020
52	Joyce's River	Griggins	–	16/09/2020



Joyce's River at Munterowen East (site 51).

Table 14 Minimum density estimates (no. fish/m<sup>2</sup>) for the Bealanabrack sub-catchment, 2020. Previous results are shown where applicable.

Bealanabrack sub-catchment											
Site no.	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
Species	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Brown trout	0.005	0.204	–	0.025	0.010	1.04	0.009	0.113	0.039	0.257	0.113
0+ brown trout	0.005	0.11	–	0.008	–	0.71	0.009	0.098	0.013	0.134	0.082
1+ & older brown trout	–	0.095	–	0.016	0.010	0.33	–	0.015	0.026	0.124	0.031
Salmon	0.112	0.276	0.018	0.115	0.043	–	0.316	0.015	0.085	–	–
0+ salmon	0.075	0.223	0.006	0.041	0.033	–	0.231	0.015	0.059	–	–
1+ & older salmon	0.037	0.053	0.012	0.074	0.010	–	0.085	–	0.026	–	–
European eel	–	–	–	0.012	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>All Fish</b>	<b>0.118</b>	<b>0.481</b>	<b>0.018</b>	<b>0.152</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.325</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>0.124</b>	<b>0.257</b>	<b>0.113</b>

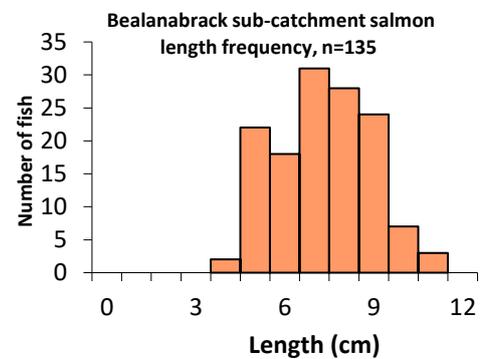
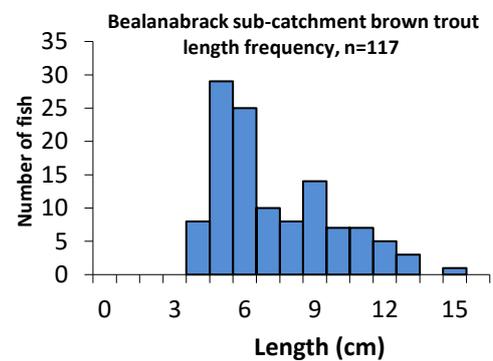
Table 15. Salmonid % age class structure (where recorded) for the Bealanabrack sub-catchment, 2020.

Brown trout		
Site No.	% of catch	
	0+	1+
Bealanabrack		
42	100	-
43	63	37
45	67	33
46	-	100
47	75	25
48	100	-
49	86	14
50	33	67
51	59	41
52	75	25

Salmon		
Site No.	% of catch	
	0+	1+
Bealanabrack		
42	67	33
43	78	22
44	33	67
45	43	57
46	78	22
48	73	27
49	100	-
50	69	31

Table 16. Fish ecological status for the Bealanabrack sub-catchment, 2020. Previous results are shown where recorded.

Site No.	2020
Bealanabrack	
42	Moderate
43	Good
44	Poor
45	Moderate
46	Poor
47	High
48	Moderate
49	Good
50	Moderate
51	Good
52	Moderate



Teernakill River (site 43)

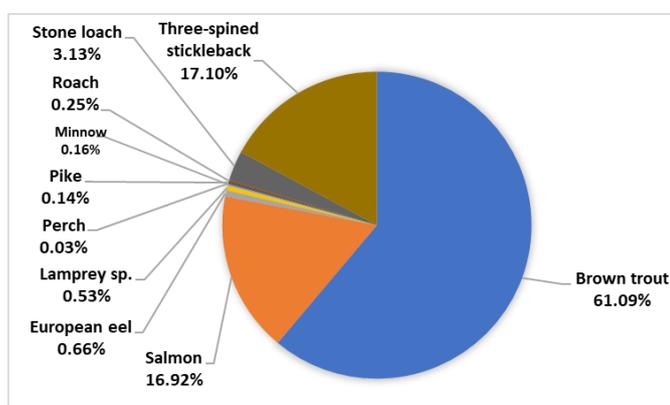


Bealanabrack River tributary at Stone Row (site 47)

**Summary**

Ten fish species were recorded at 52 sites surveyed within the Corrib catchment in 2020. Brown trout was the most common fish species recorded at 46 survey sites (88%) followed by salmon at 22 sites (42%). This was followed by three-spined stickleback at 11 sites (21%), lamprey at four sites (8%) and European eel at three sites (6%). Roach and pike were recorded at two sites (4%) each and perch at one site (2%).

Brown trout and salmon were also the most abundant species representing 78% of the total fish density calculated for all sites surveyed during 2020.



**Fish species composition (% total density), Corrib catchment, 2020**

The highest brown trout 0+ density (1.216 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) was recorded at site 21 on the Ballynalty River at Funshinaugh. This was followed by site 30 (0.986 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Cullagh River (Black sub-catchment) and site 47 (0.710 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Bealnabrack River at Stonerow. While the highest densities of 1+ and older brown trout were recorded at site 47 (0.330 fish/m<sup>2</sup>), site 14 on the Railway River (Drimneen sub-catchment) (0.315 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) and site 19 on the Annacurta River (0.267 fish/m<sup>2</sup>).

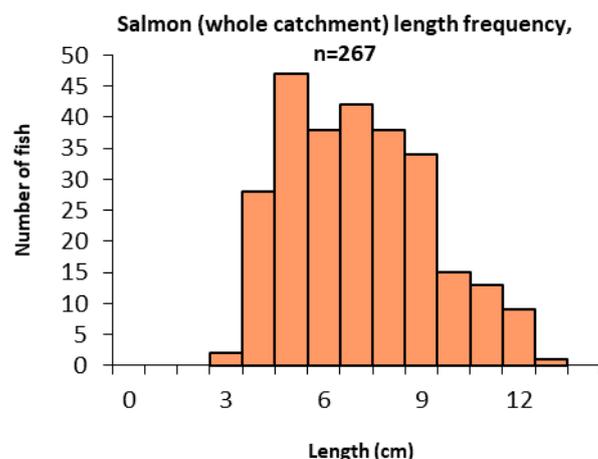
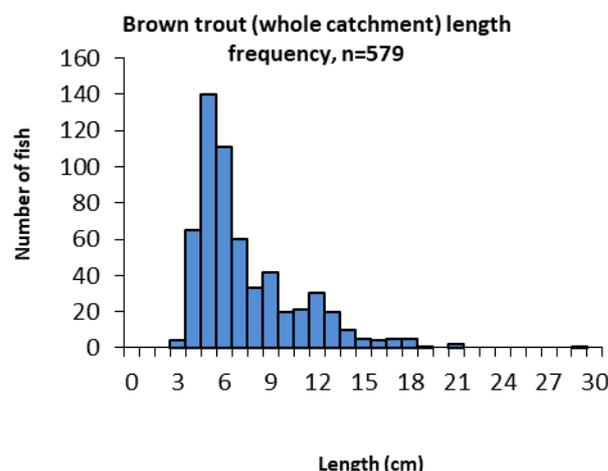
The highest total density of salmon was recorded at site 14 (0.445 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Railway River (Drimneen sub-catchment) followed by site 26 (0.335 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Cross River at Curraghbaun and site 48 (0.316 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Bealanabrack River at Gowlaunlee east. The highest density of 0+ salmon was also observed at site 14 followed by site 24 (0.291 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Carrick River and site 26 on the Cross River at Curraghbaun (0.240 fish/m<sup>2</sup>). The highest densities of 1+ & older salmon were observed at sites 26 (0.096

fish/m<sup>2</sup>), 48 (site 0.085 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) and 14 (site 0.074 fish/m<sup>2</sup>).

The highest density of three-spined stickleback was recorded at sites 23 (1.393 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Ballynalty River at Houndstooth South and site 29 (1.315 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Cross River at Gortnastang. While the highest density of stone loach was observed at site 39 (0.321 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Grange River at Cloondahamper followed by site 14 (0.167 fish/m<sup>2</sup>) on the Railway River.

Brown trout ranged in length from 3.6cm to 29cm. Four age classes were present with 0+ and 1+ the most abundance age cohorts. The largest brown trout was recorded at site 34 on the Black river at Kilshanvy.

Salmon ranged in length from 3.5 to 13.5cm. Two age classes were present (0+ and 1+).



A Water Framework Directive fish classification tool (FCS2) was developed for Irish rivers in 2011 (SNIFFER, 2011). The tool works by comparing various fish community metric values within a site to those predicted for a site under un-impacted conditions. In general, a site will achieve High status if all expected type specific indicator species (e.g. both salmonid cohorts 0+ and 1+ and older) are present and have reached the expected abundance. Fish ecological status will normally deteriorate if such cohorts are missing, reach lower than expected abundance or if more tolerant fish species proliferate.

Fish ecological status was assigned to 51 sites surveyed in the catchment during 2020 (Fig. 6). Five (10%) sites achieved High status and 18 (35%) sites achieved Good fish status. The remaining sites (55%) were assigned a status of Moderate (19) and Poor (9). Two sites (18 and 34) were surveyed previously and both have remained at Good fish status.

The reasons for the fish status failures (i.e. less than good) were due to lower than expected type specific indicator species (e.g. salmon and trout), absence of

certain age cohorts (e.g. 0+) which is indicative of a recruitment failure or the presence of tolerant fish species. All age cohorts of trout and salmon were absent from four sites; site 23 (Ballynalty at Houndswood south, sites 27 and 29 on the Cross River (Carrownturly and Gortnastang respectively and site 36 on the Ballinulty stream (Black sub-catchment) while three-spined stickleback were the only species recorded. Three-spined stickleback are more tolerant to pollution than salmon and trout and therefore when dominant or present in relatively high densities at a site can be an indicator of poor water quality or poor habitat. The relatively high density of stone loach observed at site 39 on the Grange River at Cloondahamper may be an indicator of the presence of organic pollution.

Failures in fish status across the catchment were likely caused by pressures such as nutrient enrichment, fish passage issues and habitat modification.

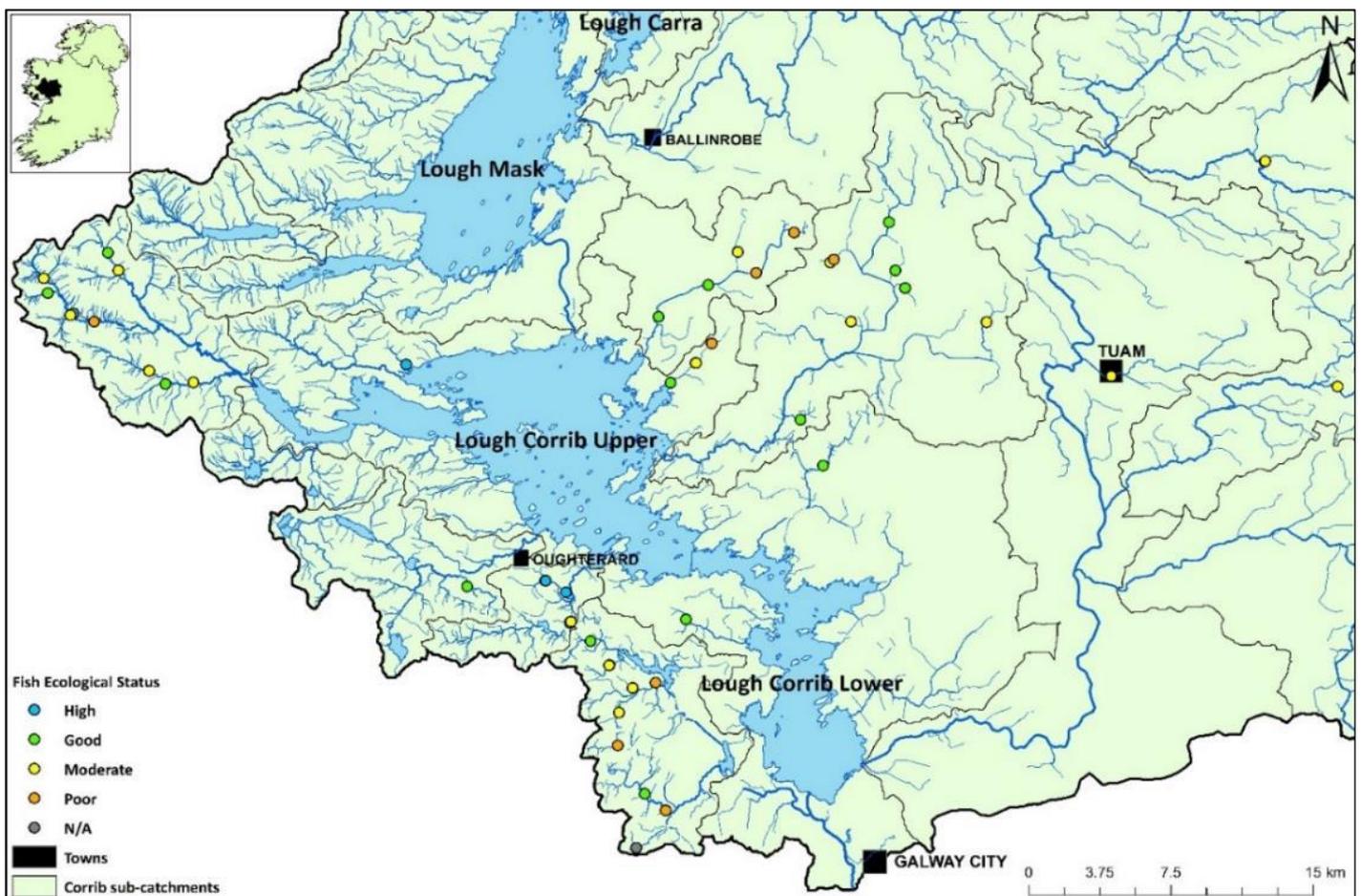


Fig. 6. Fish ecological status map of the Corrib catchment.

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**Inland Fisheries Ireland: 3044 Lake Drive, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin, D24 Y265, Ireland**

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