

Fish in Rivers Factsheet

ShRBD

Graney River Catchment

Factsheet: 2025/01

The River Graney Catchment is located within the Shannon River Basin District and covers an area of approximately 255km² in County Clare and southeast Galway. The Graney River originates from the outflow of Lough Graney. The Caher River and the Corra River join the Graney River further downstream.

Within the River Graney Catchment there are three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and one Special Protection Area (SPA), the Slieve Aughty Mountains. These SACs include the Lough Atorick South Bog, the Glendree Bog and the Pollagoona Bog which are all examples of active Blanket Bogs. The geology of the catchment is mainly comprised of sedimentary sandstone and limestone overlain by poorly draining peaty gley soil Bogs (Waters of Life 2022).

The Graney catchment is one of six catchments being studied by the Waters of Life and RESTORE programmes. The work aims to help reverse the

deterioration of Ireland's most pristine waters through the implementation of catchment-scale measures to protect and enhance High-Status Waters and thus to support the work of the Blue Dot Catchments Programme Bogs (Waters of Life 2022).

Inland Fisheries Ireland conducts annual nation-wide fish sampling surveys to assess and report the status of stocks in Ireland's rivers, lakes and transitional waters. This report presents the results of a catchment-wide electro-fishing (CEN 2003) survey, carried out in the Graney Catchment over the 2025 survey season. Twenty-one sites were surveyed between the 1st to 3rd of July 2025.

The survey methods included 10-minute timed Electro-Fishing (TEF₁₀), and Area Delineated Electro-Fishing (ADEF handset). All TEF₁₀ fish count results were converted to minimum population estimates according to Matson *et al.* 2018.



Bleach River at Knockaunalougha (Site 3), Co. Galway.

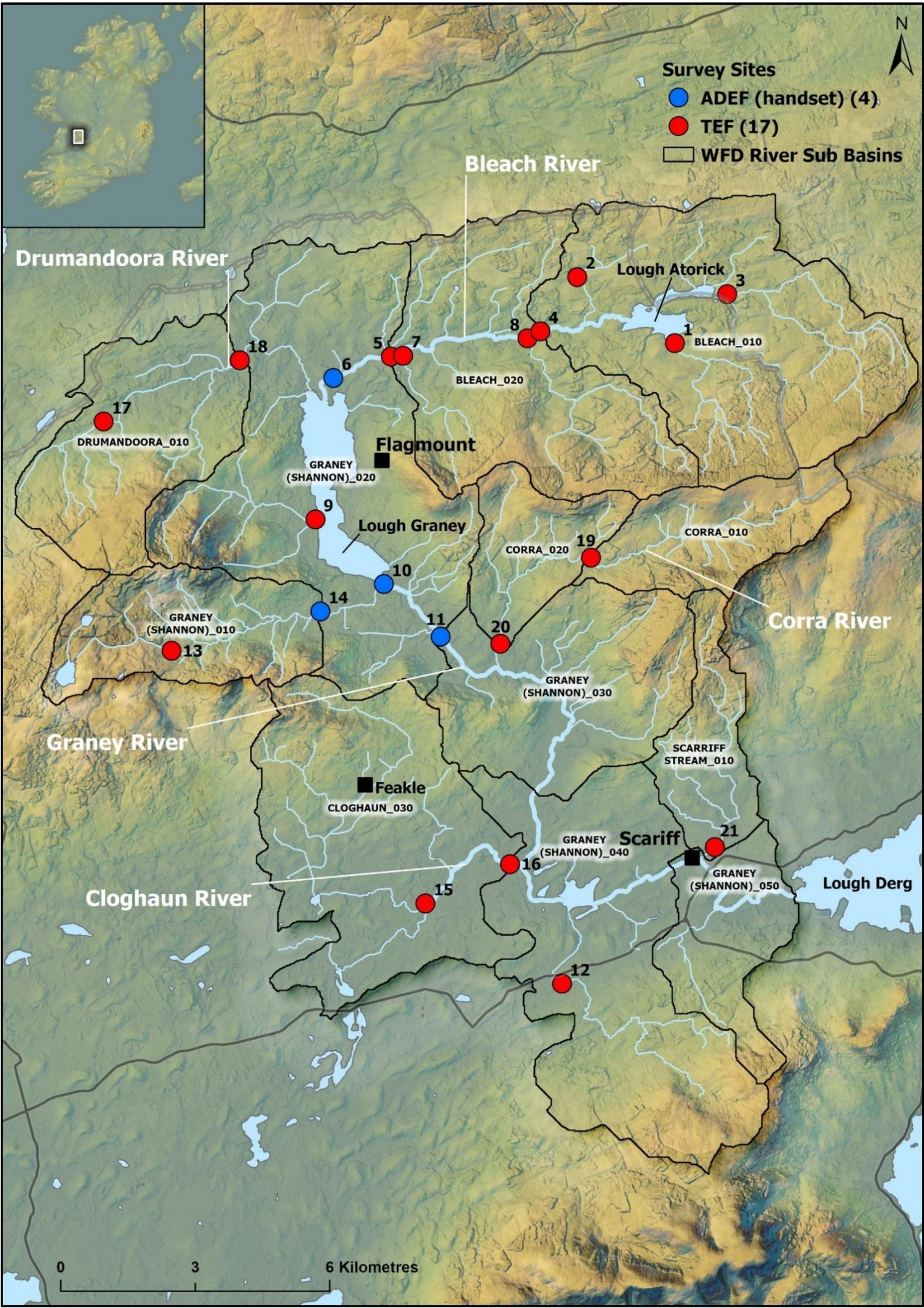
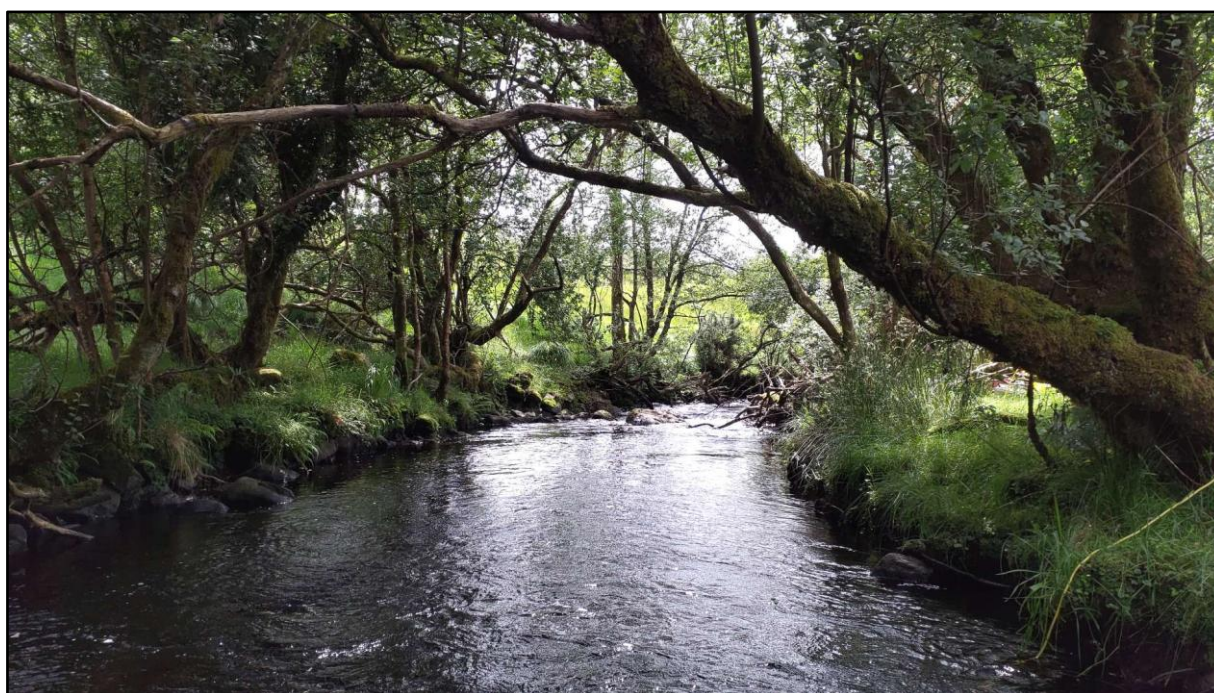


Figure 1. Location of electrofishing survey sites on the Graney River catchment, 2025. Sub-catchments and WFD sub-basins are also highlighted.

Table 1. Site survey details, Graney River Catchment, July 2025.

No.	WFD Sub-basin	River	Site	Method	WFD	Date
Bleach sub-catchment						
1	BLEACH_010	Graney (Pollagoona Mountain) River	Brockagh Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
2	BLEACH_010	Graney (Corleacommons North) River	Corleacommons North	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
3	BLEACH_010	Graney (Bleach) River	Knockaunalougha	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
4	BLEACH_010	Graney (Bleach) River	Corlea Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
5	BLEACH_020	Graney (Bleach) River	Bleach Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
6	GRANEY (SHANNON)_020	Graney (Bleach)	Pollaghanumera	ADEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
7	BLEACH_020	Graney (Flagmount) River	Drummin	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
8	BLEACH_020	Graney (Corlea) River	Pollaharan	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
Graney sub-catchment						
9	GRANEY (SHANNON)_020	Graney (Green Island) River	100m u/s L. Graney	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
10	GRANEY (SHANNON)_020	Graney River	Knockbeha Bridge	ADEF (Handset)	NO	01/07/2025
11	GRANEY (SHANNON)_030	Graney River	Aughaderreen Bridge	ADEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
12	GRANEY (SHANNON)_040	Graney Shannon (Coolreagh Beg) River	Anamullaghaun Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
13	GRANEY (SHANNON)_010	Graney (Loughea) River	Maghera	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
14	GRANEY (SHANNON)_010	Graney Shannon River	Caher Br. S of L.Graney	ADEF (Handset)	YES	01/07/2025
Cloghaun sub-catchment						
15	CLOGHAUN_030	Graney Shannon (Cloghaun) River	Derrynahelia	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
16	CLOGHAUN_030	Graney Shannon (Cloghaun) River	Core Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
Drumandoora sub-catchment						
17	DRUMANDOORA_010	Graney (Drumandoora) River	Drumandoora	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
18	DRUMANDOORA_010	Graney (Drumandoora) River	Derryfadda	TEF (Handset)	NO	03/07/2025
Corra sub-catchment						
19	CORRA_010	Graney (Corra) River	Corra	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
20	CORRA_020	Graney Shannon (Corra) River	Gortavrulla	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025
Scariff sub-catchment						
21	SCARRIFF STREAM_010	Graney Shannon (Scariff) River	Little Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	02/07/2025



Bleach River at Corlea Bridge (Site 4), Co. Clare.

Table 2. Minimum density estimates of fish (no. fish/m³), for the Bleach, Graney, Cloghaun, Drumandoora, Corra and Scariff sub-catchments (Graney River Catchment), July 2025 (previous results are shown where applicable).

Bleach sub-catchment								
Site no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Species	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Brown trout	0.034	0.186	0.039	0.134	0.056	0.012	0.337	0.099
0+ brown trout	-	0.186	-	0.028	0.056	0.012	-	0.046
1+ & older brown trout	0.034	-	0.039	0.106	-	-	0.337	0.053
European eel	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.040	0.020
Minnow	-	-	0.013	-	-	-	-	-
Perch	0.017	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roach	-	-	-	-	-	0.008	-	-
Stone loach	-	-	-	-	0.011	0.016	-	0.027
All fish	0.051	0.186	0.051	0.134	0.067	0.036	0.377	0.146
Graney sub-catchment								
Site no.	9	10	11	12		13	14	
Species	2025	2025	2025	2016	2025	2025	2020	
Brown trout	0.156	0.007	0.048	0.478	0.481	0.558	0.169	
0+ brown trout	0.039	0.002	0.039	0.018	0.171	0.118	0.100	
1+ & older brown trout	0.117	0.005	0.010	0.460	0.311	0.441	0.069	
Salmon	-	-	0.053	-	-	-	-	
0+ salmon	-	-	0.043	-	-	-	-	
1+ & older salmon	-	-	0.010	-	-	-	-	
European eel	-	0.005	-	0.027	-	-	-	
Gudgeon	-	-	0.002	-	-	-	-	
Lamprey sp.	-	-	-	-	0.016	-	-	
Minnow	-	-	0.022	-	-	-	-	
Roach	-	0.032	0.024	-	-	-	-	
Stone loach	-	-	0.022	0.018	0.031	-	-	
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	-	0.027	-	-	-	
All fish	0.156	0.044	0.171	0.550	0.528	0.558	0.169	
Graney sub-catchment			Cloghaun sub-catchment					
Site no.	14		15		16			
Species	2022	2025	2016	2025	2016	2024	2025	
Brown trout	0.308	0.120	-	-	0.207	0.150	0.073	
0+ brown trout	0.215	0.110	-	-	0.131	0.048	0.073	
1+ & older brown trout	0.093	0.010	-	-	0.076	0.101	-	
Salmon	-	0.021	-	-	-	-	-	
0+ salmon	-	0.016	-	-	-	-	-	
1+ & older salmon	-	0.005	-	-	-	-	-	
European eel	0.005	-	-	0.077	-	-	-	
Gudgeon	-	-	0.008	0.046	0.028	-	0.049	
Perch	-	-	0.023	-	-	-	-	
Roach	-	-	0.085	0.115	0.034	0.010	-	
Stone loach	0.009	-	0.031	0.046	0.014	0.010	-	
All fish	0.322	0.141	0.147	0.283	0.282	0.169	0.122	
Drummandoora sub-catchment			Corra sub-catchment				Scarriff sub-catchment	
Site no.	17	18	19	20			21	
Species	2025	2025	2025	2016	2024	2025	2016	2025
Brown trout	0.794	0.160	0.128	0.079	0.228	0.211	0.481	0.183
0+ brown trout	0.343	0.139	0.015	0.046	0.168	0.031	0.033	-
1+ & older brown trout	0.451	0.021	0.113	0.033	0.060	0.180	0.448	0.183
European eel	-	-	-	-	0.040	-	-	-
Gudgeon	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.041	-
Lamprey sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.061
Roach	-	-	-	-	0.020	0.004	0.098	0.098
Stone loach	-	-	-	0.008	0.008	-	-	0.281
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.232
All fish	0.794	0.160	0.128	0.087	0.296	0.215	0.620	0.854

Table 3. Brown trout % age class (where recorded), Graney River Catchment (Sites 1-21).

Site No.	% of catch			
	0+	1+	2+	3+
Bleach sub-catchment				
1	-	-	100	-
2	100	-	-	-
3	-	34	33	33
4	25	33	42	-
5	100	-	-	-
6	100	-	-	-
7	-	91	9	-
8	50	50	-	-
Graney sub-catchment				
9	30	40	30	-
10	33	67	-	-
11	80	5	10	5
12	42	49	9	-
13	26	63	11	-
14	83	17	-	-
Cloghaun sub-catchment				
16	100	-	-	-
Drumandoora sub-catchment				
17	50	46	4	-
18	89	11	-	-
Corra sub-catchment				
19	13	75	12	-
20	19	62	19	-
Scariff sub-catchment				
21	-	14	86	-

Table 4. Salmon % age class structure (where recorded), Graney River Catchment (Sites 1-21).

Site No.	% of catch	
	0+	1+
Graney sub-catchment		
11	82	18
14	80	20

Table 5. Fish ecological status, Graney River Catchment, July 2025.

Site No.	2013	2016	2020	2022	2024	2025
Bleach sub-catchment						
1	-	-	-	-	-	P
2	-	-	-	-	-	M
3	-	-	-	-	-	P
4	-	-	-	-	-	M
5	-	-	-	-	-	P
6	-	-	-	-	-	P
7	-	-	-	-	-	M
8	-	-	-	-	-	M
Graney sub-catchment						
9	-	-	-	-	-	M
10	-	-	-	-	-	M
11	-	-	-	-	-	G
12	-	G	-	-	-	G
13	-	-	-	-	-	G
14	M	-	M	M	-	M
Cloghaun sub-catchment						
15	-	P	-	-	-	P
16	-	G	-	-	M	P
Drumandoora sub-catchment						
17	-	-	-	-	-	G
18	-	-	-	-	-	M
Corra sub-catchment						
19	-	-	-	-	-	P
20	-	M	-	-	M	M
Scariff sub-catchment						
21	-	G	-	-	-	M



Graney River at Aughaderreen Bridge (Site 11), Co. Clare.

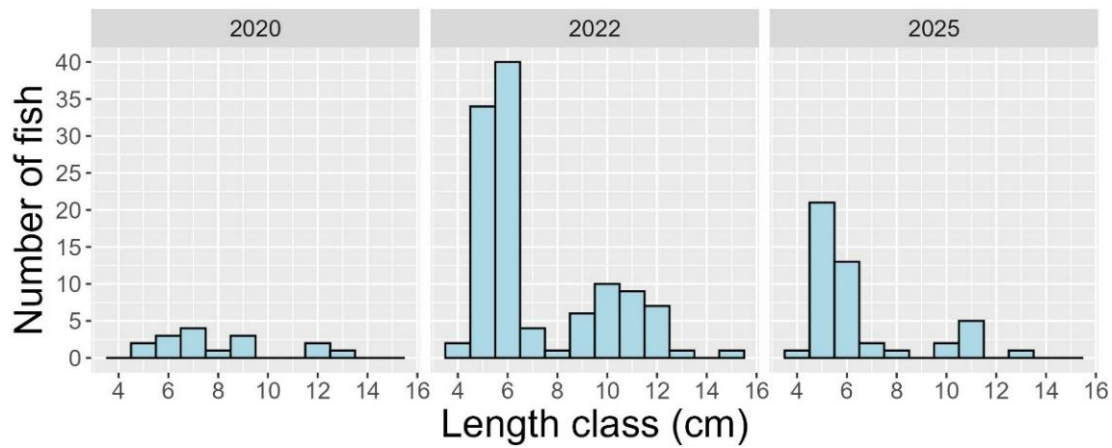


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution of brown trout (2020 n= 16, 2022 n= 115, 2025 n= 46) at Site 14 (Caher Bridge South of Lough Graney), a WFD surveillance monitoring site in the Graney River Catchment.

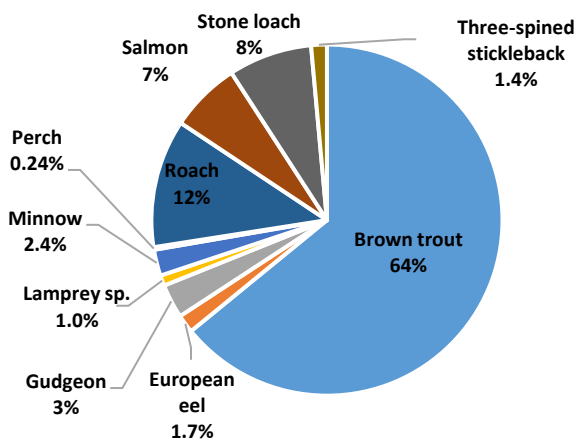


Figure 3. Fish species composition (%), Graney Catchment, 2025.

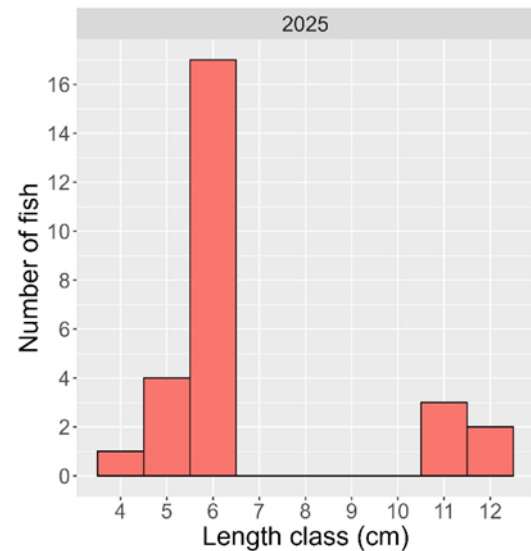


Figure 5. Length frequency distribution for salmon (n =27), Graney River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites =2).

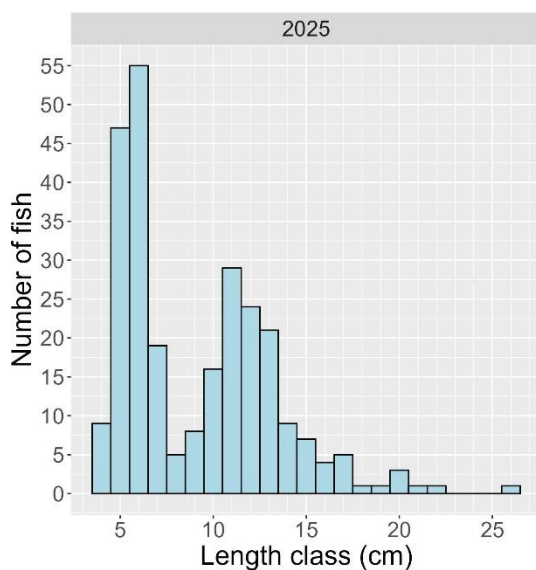


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution for brown trout (n = 266), Graney River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites = 20).



River Graney at Little Bridge (Site 21), Co. Clare.

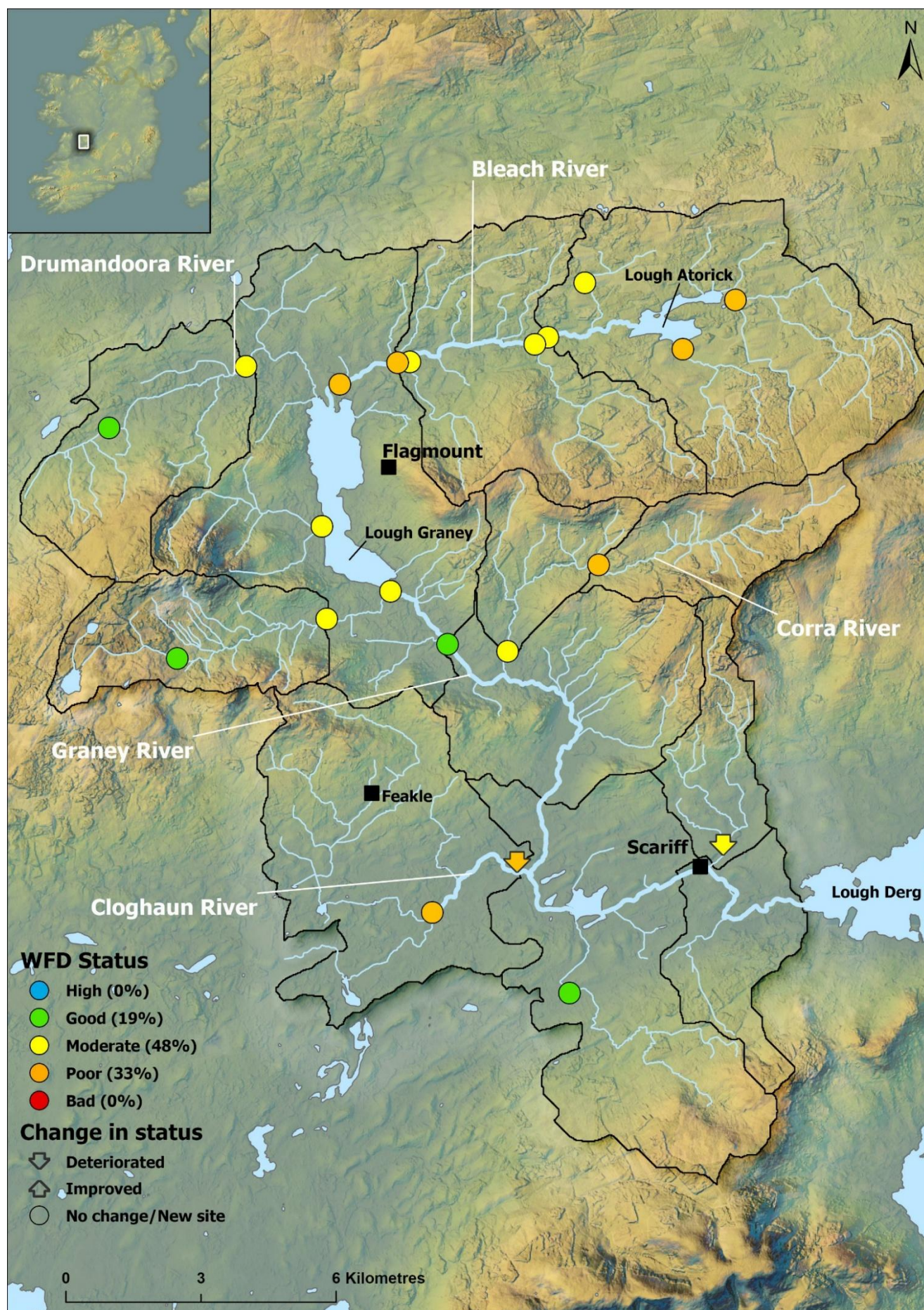


Figure 6. Fish ecological status in the Graney River Catchment, 2025. Arrows indicate a change in status since previous surveys (where applicable).

Summary

A total of ten fish species were recorded across 21 sites surveyed on the Graney River Catchment in 2025.

Brown trout was the most common species present (20 sites, 95%), followed by stone loach (7 sites, 33%), roach (6 sites, 29%), European eel (4 sites, 19%), gudgeon (3 sites, 14%), lamprey sp., minnow and salmon (2 sites each, 9.5%), and three-spined stickleback and perch (one site each, 4.7%).

Brown trout was also the most abundant species recorded, followed by roach, stone loach, salmon, gudgeon, minnow, European eel, three-spined stickleback, lamprey sp. and perch (Figure 3).

Brown trout ranged in length from 4 to 26.4cm (Figure 4). Four age classes were present (0+, 1+, 2+ and 3+) with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of brown trout (all ages combined) (0.794 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 17 (Drumandoora) in the Drumandoora River sub-catchment. The highest density of 0+ brown trout (0.343 fish/m²) and 1+ & older brown trout (0.451 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 17.

Salmon ranged in length from 3.4 to 15.2cm (Figure 5). Two age classes were present (0+ and 1+), with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of salmon (all ages combined) (0.053 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 11 (Aughaderreen Bridge) in the Graney River sub-catchment. The highest density of 0+ salmon (0.043 fish/m²) and 1+ & older salmon (0.010 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 11.

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 indicator species (e.g. both salmonid cohorts 0+ and 1+ and older) are present and in expected numbers. Status will decline if such cohorts are missing, are in poor abundance, or if more tolerant species proliferate.

Fish ecological status was assigned to twenty-one sites surveyed in the Graney Catchment during 2025. Four sites were assigned Good status, with ten sites Moderate and seven sites' Poor. Six sites were surveyed previously on this catchment and assigned fish ecological status. When compared with their most recent previous surveys, no sites improved, two sites (Sites 16 and 21) deteriorated, and four sites remained unchanged (Tables 5 and Figure 6).

The reasons for the failures (i.e. moderate or lower status) in fish ecological status were due to lower-than-expected abundance of type specific indicator species (e.g. salmon and trout) and absence of certain age cohorts indicating recruitment failures. Failures and deteriorations in fish ecological status can be caused by pressures such as nutrient enrichment, habitat modification and fish passage issues.

References

CEN (2003) Water Quality Sampling of Fish with Electricity. CEN EN 14011:2000. Brussels. European Committee for Standardization.

Matson, R., Delanty, K., Shephard, S., Coghlan, B. and Kelly, F. (2018). *Moving from multiple pass depletion to single pass timed electrofishing for fish community assessment in wadeable streams*. Fisheries Research, 198, 99-108.

SNIFFER (2011) River Fish Classification Tool: Science Work. WFD68c, Phase 2. Final Report. Version 6. Edinburgh. Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research.

Waters of Life (2022) https://watersoflife.ie/app/uploads/2023/05/Deskstudy_Graney_F01-1.pdf. Accessed December 2025.

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

CITATION: Gordon, P., Corcoran, W., Flynn, E., McCarthy, E., Drohan, E., Piaskowy, J., O' Brien, M., Robson, S., Fildes, D., Chamberlain, C. and Kelly, F.L., (2026) Sampling Fish in Rivers 2025 – Graney River Catchment, Factsheet No. 01. National Research Survey Programme. Inland Fisheries Ireland.

The report includes Tailte Éireann data reproduced under Tailte Éireann Copyright Permit: CYAL50512825 © Tailte Éireann.



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland