Fish in Rivers Factsheet

ShRBD **Owenur River Catchment** **Factsheet: 2025/08**

The Owenur River Catchment is located within the Shannon River Basin District and covers an area of approximately 129km^2 in Co. Roscommon. The outflow from Lough Clooncullan is the main source of the Owenur River, with smaller lakes including Lough Nahincha and Lough O'Moran flowing into the Owenur River. The Owenur River joins the Upper River Shannon around Strokestown, Tulsk, and Elphin in Co. Roscommon.

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 survey of the Owenur River Catchment in 2025. Seven sites were surveyed by electro-fishing (CEN, 2003) on the Owenur River Catchment between the 19th and the 21st of August 2025.

The survey methods included 10-minute timed Electro-Fishing (TEF_{10}), and Area Delineated Electro-Fishing (ADEF Boat). The TEF_{10} method is primarily used in tributaries and shallow, narrow sections of the main channel, while the ADEF boat sites method is predominantly used in wider, deeper sections of the main channel. All TEF_{10} fish count results were converted to minimum population estimates according to Matson *et al.* (2018)

Owenur River at Drummullin (Site 5), Co. Roscommon.

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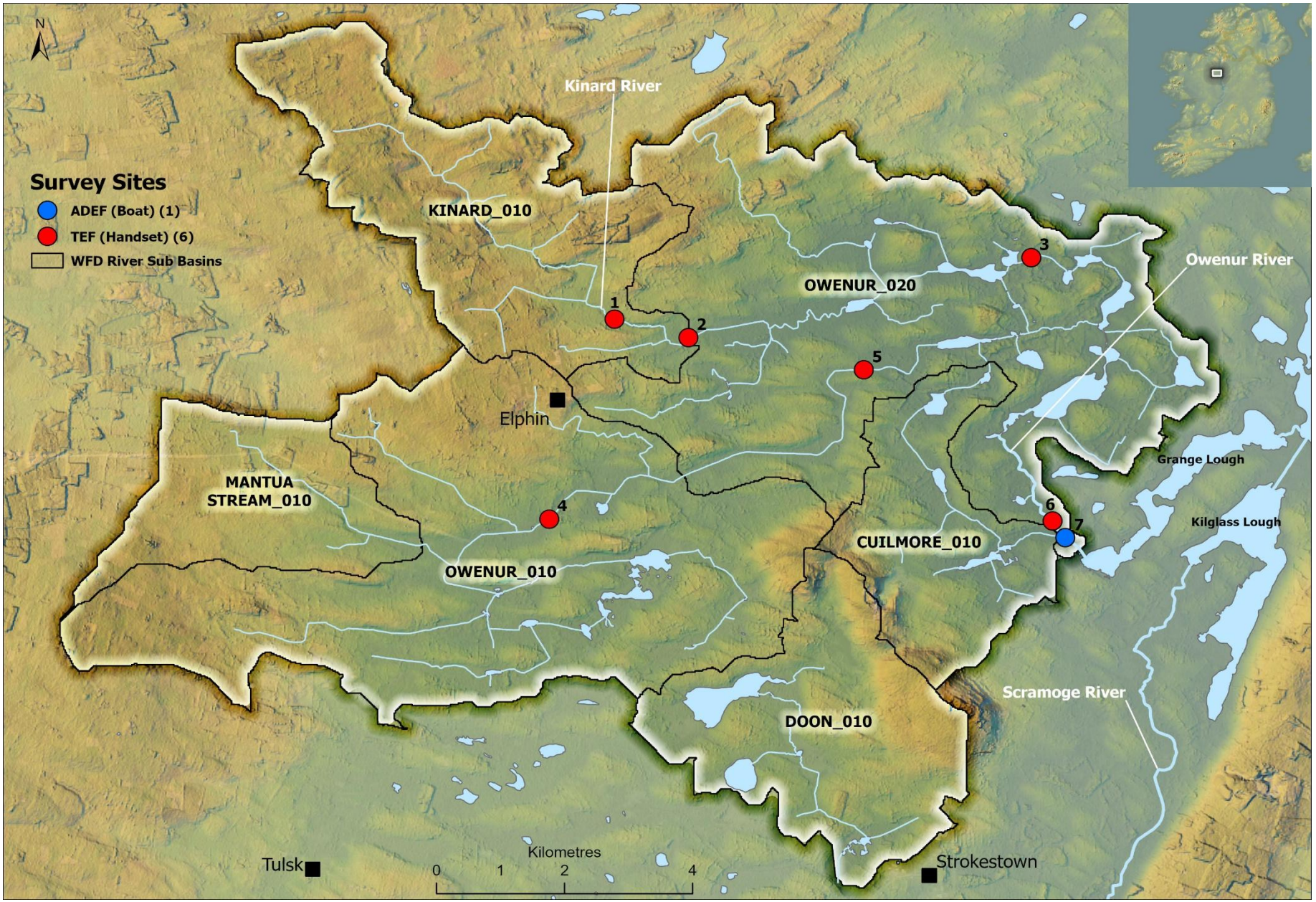

Figure 1. Location of electrofishing survey sites on the Owenur River Catchment, August 2025.

Table 1. Site survey details, Owenur River Catchment, August 2025.

No.	WFD Sub-basin	River	Site	Method	WFD	Date
Kinard River sub-catchment						
1	KINARD_010	Owenur (Kinard) River	Kinard Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	19/08/2025
2	KINARD_010	Owenur (Kinard) River	Carrowkeel Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	19/08/2025
3	OWENUR_020	Owenur (Kinard) River	Carrigeenduff	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
Owenur River sub-catchment						
4	OWENUR_010	Owenur River	Ballyoughter Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	19/08/2025
5	OWENUR_020	Owenur River	Drummullin	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
6	OWENUR_020	Owenur (Clooncraff) River	Bellavahan_Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
7	OWENUR_020	Owenur (Finlough) River	u/s Lough Grange	ADEF (Boat)	NO	20/08/2025

Table 2. Minimum density estimates of fish (no. fish/m^2), Kinard and Owenur River sub-catchments, in the Owenur River Catchment, August 2025.

Kinard River sub-catchment				Owenur River sub-catchment			
Site no.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Species	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**	**2025**
Brown trout	0.153	0.263	-	-	0.154	-	-
0+ brown trout	0.020	0.059	-	-	0.057	-	-
1+ & older brown trout	0.133	0.205	-	-	0.097	-	-
Gudgeon	-	-	0.004	0.007	-	-	0.001
Perch	-	-	0.004	0.007	-	-	0.014
Pike	-	-	-	-	0.006	-	0.004
Roach	-	-	-	-	-	0.009	0.107
Stone loach	-	-	-	0.028	0.074	-	-
All fish	**0.153**	**0.263**	**0.008**	**0.043**	**0.234**	**0.009**	**0.125**

Kinard River at Carrigeenduff (Site 3), Co. Roscommon.

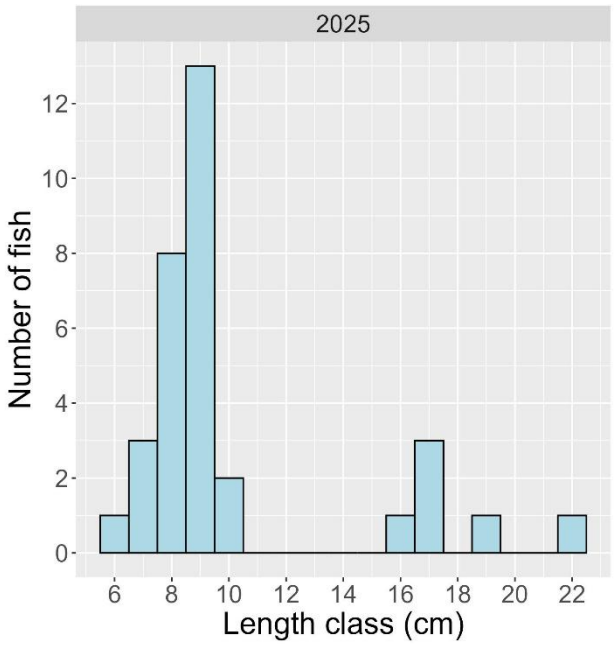

Figure 2. Length frequency distribution for brown trout (n = 33), Owenur River Catchment, 2025 (No.sites =3).

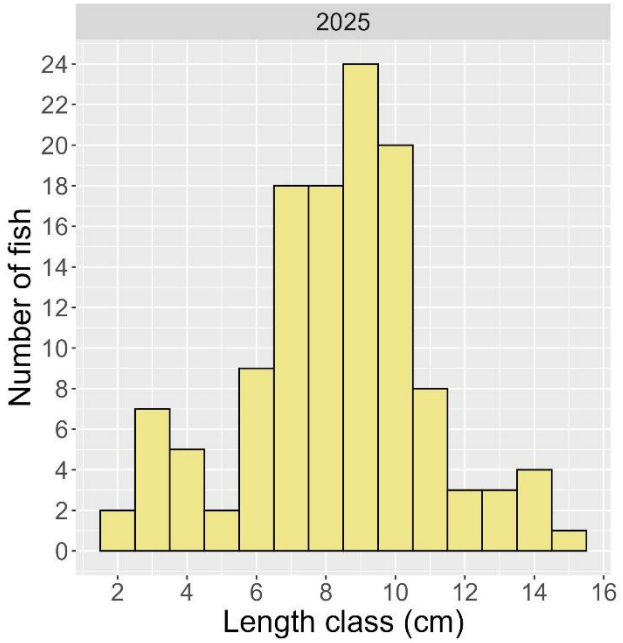

Figure 3. Length frequency distribution for roach (n=124), Owenur River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites=2).

Table 3. Brown trout % age class structure (where recorded), Owenur River Catchment, August 2025.

Site No.	% of catch			
	0+	1+	2+	3+
Kinard River sub-catchment				
1	14	43	43	-
2	23	77	-	-
Owenur River sub-catchment				
5	39	38	15	8

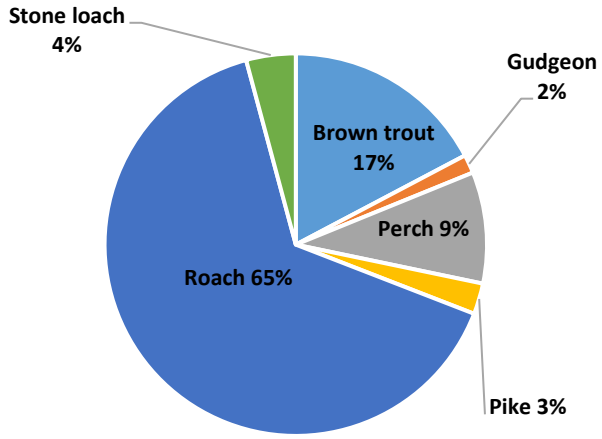

Figure 4. Fish species composition (%), Owenur River Catchment, 2025.

Table 4. Fish ecological status, Owenur Catchment, August 2025.

Site No.	2025
1	M
2	M
3	P
4	P
5	M
6	P
7	P

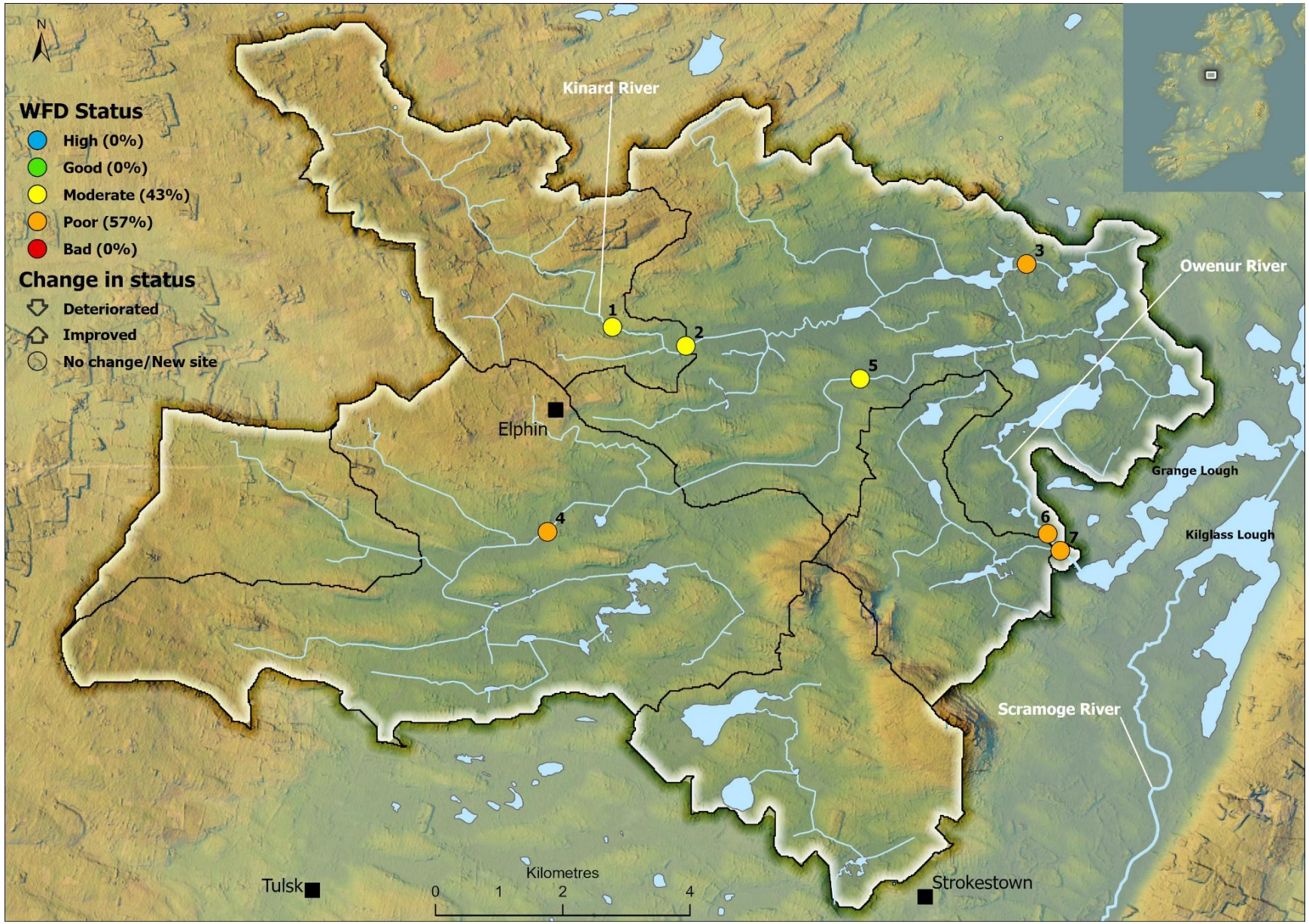

Figure 5. Fish ecological status in the Owenur River Catchment, August 2025. Arrows indicate a change in status since previous surveys (where applicable).

Summary

Six fish species were recorded at seven sites electrofished on the Owenur River Catchment in 2025.

Brown trout, gudgeon and perch were the most common species present (3 sites each, 43%), followed by pike, roach and stone loach (2 sites each, 29%).

Roach were the most abundant species recorded, followed by brown trout, perch, stone loach, pike and gudgeon, (Figure 4).

Brown trout ranged in length from 6.5 to 22.2cm (Figure 2). Four age classes of brown trout were present (0+, 1+, 2+ and 3+), with 1+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of brown trout (all ages combined) (0.263 fish/m^2) was recorded at Site 2 (Carrowkeel Bridge) on the Kinard River. The highest density of 0+ brown trout (0.058 fish/m^2) and 1+ and older brown trout (0.204 fish/m^2) was also recorded at Site 2 (Carrowkeel Bridge).

Roach ranged in length from 2.5 to 15.2cm (Figure 3). The highest density of roach (all ages combined) (0.107 fish/m^2) was recorded at Site 7 (upstream of Lough Grange) on the Finlough River.

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 seven sites surveyed in the Owenur River Catchment during 2025 (Table 4 and Figure 5). Three sites were assigned Moderate status (Sites 1, 2 and 5) and four sites assigned Poor status (Sites 3, 4, 6 and 7). No sites were surveyed previously on this catchment (Table 4 and Figure 5).

The reasons for the failures (i.e. moderate status) in fish ecological status were due to lower-than-expected abundance of type specific indicator species (e.g., salmon and trout), 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.

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

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