

Fish in Rivers Factsheet

WRBD

Grange River Catchment

Factsheet: 2025/09

The Grange River Catchment is located within the Western River Basin District and covers an area of approximately 35km² in County Sligo. The Grange River originates on the eastern side of Benbulbin Mountain. The Grange River flows in a north-westerly direction, before draining into the Atlantic Ocean at Dernish Island, north of Grange Village.

The geology of the catchment is predominantly limestone, with some areas of shale and sandstone also present (EPA 2021)

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 Grange River Catchment in 2025. Seven sites were surveyed by electro-fishing (CEN, 2003) on the Grange River Catchment on the 21st of August 2025.

10-minute timed Electro-Fishing (TEF₁₀) was the method used to conduct this study. All TEF₁₀ fish count results were converted to minimum population estimates according to Matson *et al.* (2018).



Grange River at North Sligo Playground, Co. Sligo (Site 3).



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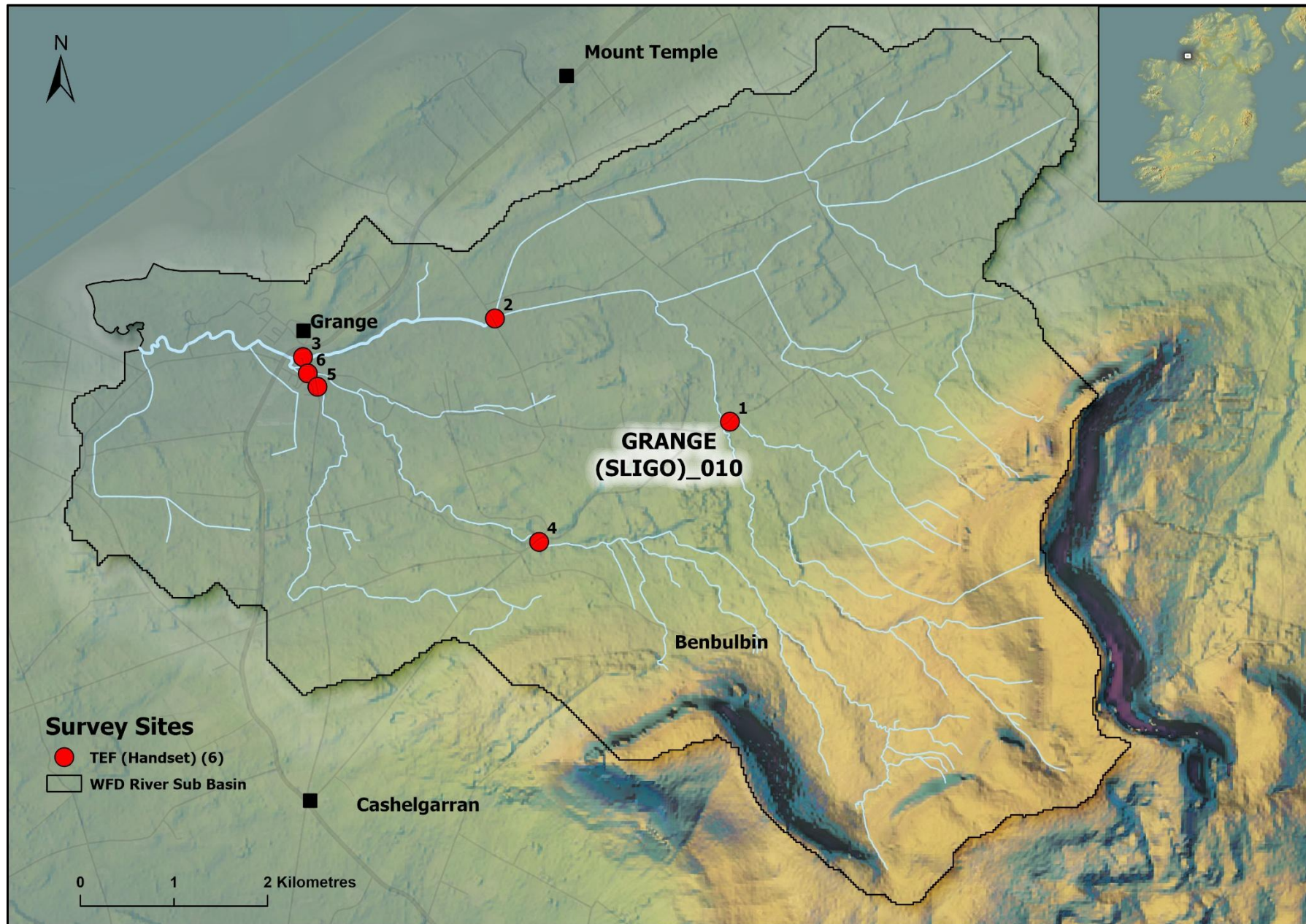


Figure 1. Location of electrofishing survey sites on the Grange River Catchment, August 2025.

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

No.	WFD Sub-basin	River	Site	Method	WFD	Date
Grange River Catchment						
1	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange (Kilcat) River	Carrownamadda	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
2	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange (Kiltykere) River	Kiltykere	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
3	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange (Kiltykere) River	North Sligo playground	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
4	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange River	Grogagh	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
5	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange (Barnaderg) River	Pine Grove	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025
6	GRANGE (SLIGO)_010	Grange River	Aghagad	TEF (Handset)	NO	21/08/2025

Table 2. Minimum density estimates of fish (no. fish/m²), Grange River Catchment, August 2025.

Grange River Catchment						
Site no.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Species	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Brown trout	0.510	0.537	0.437	0.385	0.468	0.575
0+ brown trout	0.322	0.350	0.045	0.246	0.026	0.308
1+ & older brown trout	0.188	0.186	0.392	0.139	0.442	0.268
Salmon	0.089	0.030	0.128	0.033	0.052	0.496
0+ salmon	-	-	-	0.016	-	0.357
1+ & older salmon	0.089	0.030	0.128	0.016	0.052	0.139
European eel	0.027	-	-	0.049	-	0.060
All fish	0.626	0.567	0.565	0.467	0.519	1.131

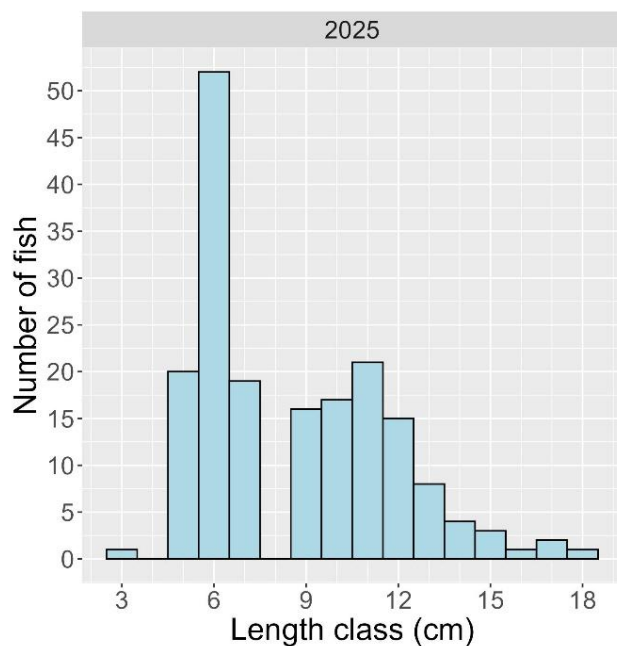


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution for brown trout (n=180), Grange River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites =6).

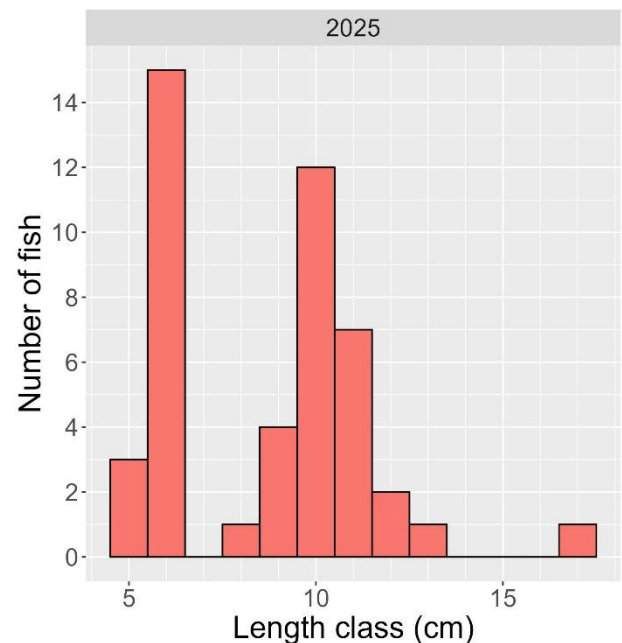


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution for salmon (n=46), Grange River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites=6).

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

Site No.	% of catch		
	0+	1+	2+
Grange River catchment			
1	69	31	-
2	69	31	-
3	12	61	27
4	70	30	-
5	6	88	6
6	59	38	3

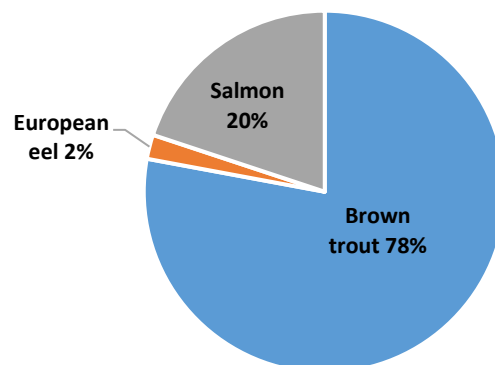


Figure 4. Fish species composition (%), Grange River Catchment, 2025.

Table 4. Salmon % age class structure (where recorded), Grange River Catchment, August 2025.

Site No.	% of catch		
	0+	1+	2+
Grange River catchment			
1	-	100	-
2	-	100	-
3	-	90	10
4	50	50	-
5	-	100	-
6	72	28	-

Table 5. Fish ecological status, Grange River Catchment, August 2025.

Site No.	2025
Grange River catchment	
1	G
2	G
3	M
4	G
5	M
6	H



Grange River at Grogagh (Site 4), Co. Sligo.



Barnaderg River at Pine Grove (Site 5), Co. Sligo.

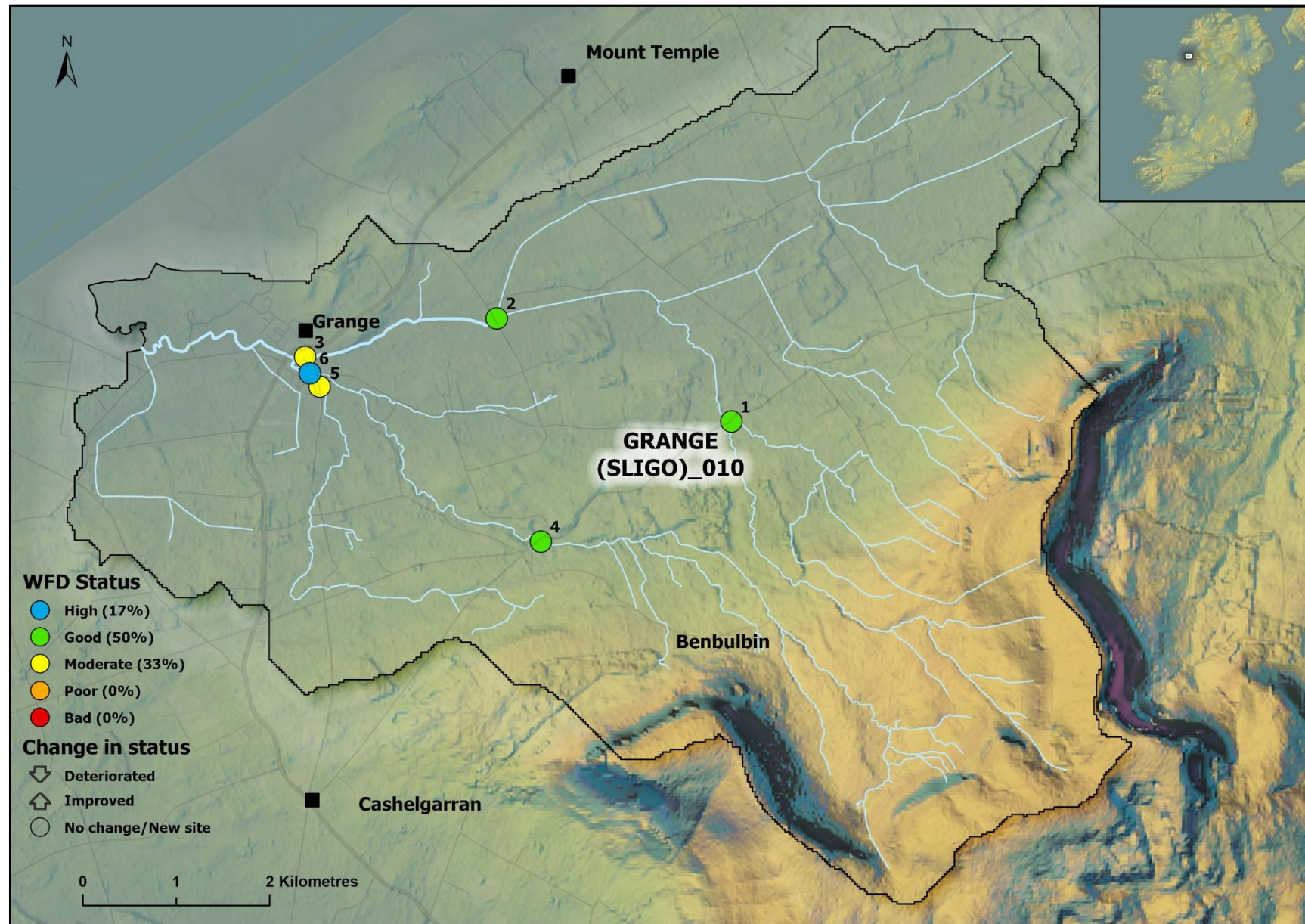


Figure 5. Fish ecological status in the Grange River Catchment, 2025. Arrows indicate a change in status since previous surveys (where applicable).

Summary

Three fish species were recorded at six sites electro-fished on the Grange River Catchment in 2025.

Salmon and brown trout was the most common species present (6 sites, 100%), followed by European eel (3 sites, 50%).

Brown trout were the most abundant species recorded, followed by salmon, and European eel (Figure 4).

Brown trout ranged in length from 3.9 to 18.6cm (Figure 2). Three age classes of brown trout were present (0+, 1+ and 2+), with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of brown trout (all ages combined) (0.575 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 6 (Aghagad) on the Grange River. The highest density of 0+ brown trout (0.350 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 2 (Kiltykere) on the Kiltykere River. The highest density of 1+ and older brown trout (0.442 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 5 (Pinegrove) on the Barnaderg River.

Salmon ranged in length from 5.6 to 17.9cm (Figure 3). Three age classes of salmon were present (0+, 1+, 2+) with 1+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of salmon (all ages combined) (0.496 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 6 (Aghagad) on the Grange River. The highest density of 0+ salmon (0.357 fish/m²) and 1+ and older salmon (0.138 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 6 (Aghagad).

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 six sites surveyed in the Grange River Catchment during 2025 (Table 5 and Figure 5). One site was assigned High status, with three sites assigned Good status and two sites Moderate. No sites were surveyed previously on this catchment (Table 5 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.
- EPA (2021) <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/WaterCatchments.ie> Accessed in December 2025.
- Inland Fisheries Ireland: 3044 Lake Drive, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin, D24 Y265, Ireland**
- CITATION: Flynn, E., Corcoran, W., Gordon, P., McCarthy, E., Piaskowy, J., O' Brien, M., Robson, S.,

Fildes, D., Chamberlain, C. and Kelly, F.L., (2026)
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