

Fish in Rivers Factsheet

The Nenagh River Catchment is located within the Shannon River Basin District. The Nenagh River is approximately 45km in length, and the catchment covers an area of approximately 320km². The Nenagh River originates from the Silvermine Mountains in Co. Tipperary. The Nenagh River flows in a northerly direction through the village of Templederry and carries on downstream towards Nenagh town. The Ollatrim River joins the Nenagh River near Nenagh Town, from here the river flows onwards to Dromineer Bay in Co. Tipperary, where the river empties into Lough Derg. The Ballintotty River is another important tributary of the Nenagh. This spring-fed river flows in a westerly direction from Toomyvara Co. Tipperary, joining the Ollatrim River near Nenagh Town.

An arterial drainage scheme was completed across the Nenagh River catchment by the Office of Public Works (OPW) between 1955 and 1960. The geology of the Nenagh River Catchment is mainly flat limestone plains. Land use in the catchment is dominated by agriculture (EPA 2018).

The Nenagh River is predominantly a brown trout fishery, although a small number of salmon grilse run up the system in the autumn. The Nenagh catchment holds two distinct types of brown trout: the indigenous river-resident fish and a migratory brown trout that migrate from Lough Derg to spawn, known locally as Croneen.

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 Nenagh River Catchment in 2025. Nineteen sites were surveyed by electro-fishing (CEN, 2003) across the Catchment between the 26th and the 27th of August 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).



Nenagh River at Cloghinch Bridge (Site 2), Co.Tipperary.

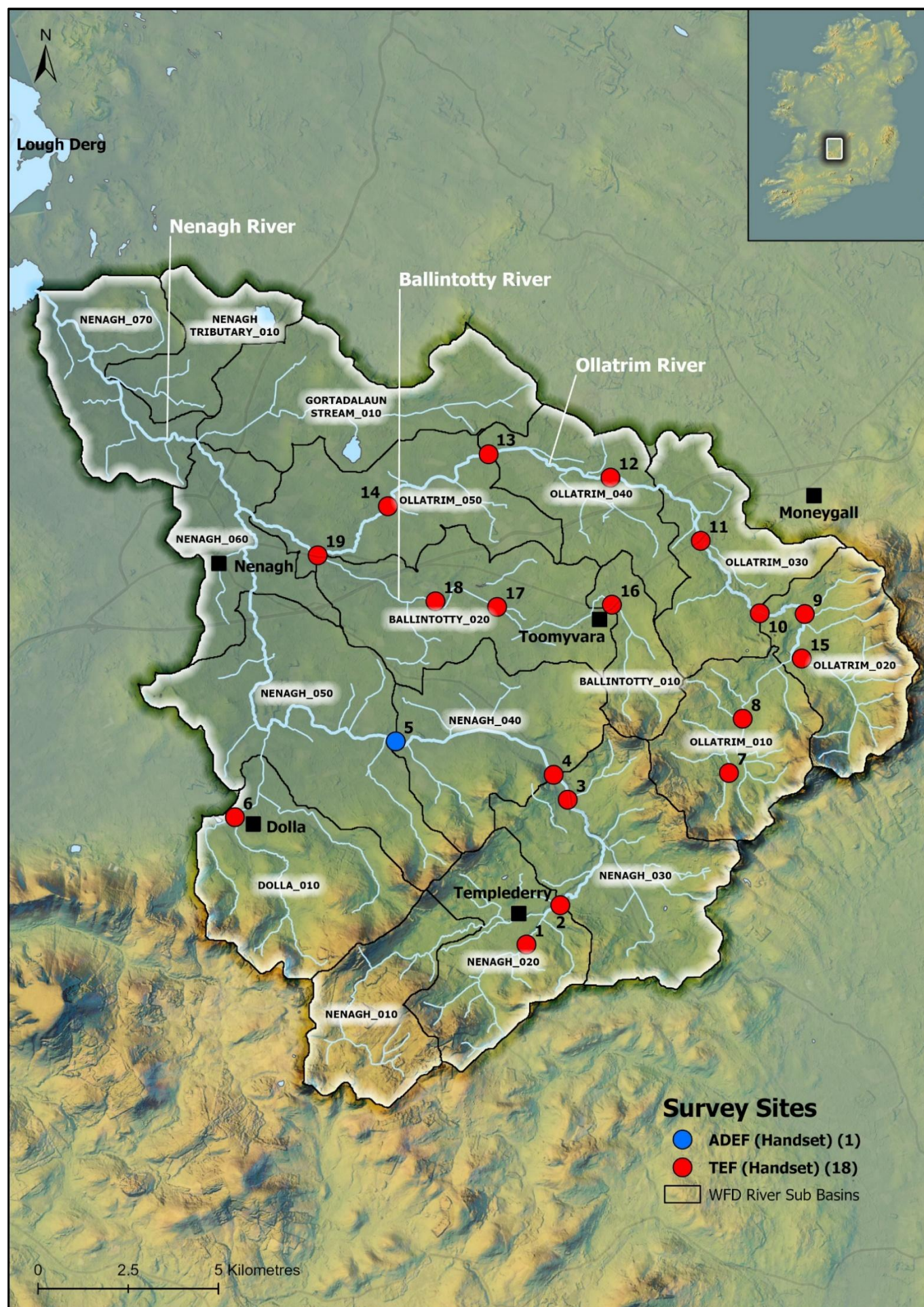


Figure 1. Location of electrofishing survey sites on the Nenagh River Catchment, August 2025.

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

No.	WFD Sub-basin	River	Site	Method	WFD	Date
Nenagh River sub-catchment						
1	NENAGH_020	Nenagh (Gortnagowna) River	Moanaha Glen	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
2	NENAGH_020	Nenagh River	Cloghinch bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
3	NENAGH_030	Nenagh River	Latteragh	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
4	NENAGH_040	Nenagh River	Lackeen Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
5	NENAGH_040	Nenagh River	Ballysoilshaun Bridge	ADEF (Handset)	YES	26/08/2025
6	DOLLA_010	Nenagh (Dolla) River	Dolla	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
Ollatrim River sub-catchment						
7	OLLATRIM_010	Ollatrim River	Knocknabrogue	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
8	OLLATRIM_010	Ollatrim River	Blakefield	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
9	OLLATRIM_020	Ollatrim River	Aghmore Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
10	OLLATRIM_030	Ollatrim River	Aghnameadle	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
11	OLLATRIM_030	Ollatrim River	Ollatrim Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
12	OLLATRIM_040	Ollatrim River	Ballyknockane	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
13	OLLATRIM_050	Ollatrim River	Ballinahemery	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
14	OLLATRIM_050	Ollatrim River	Raththurles	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
15	OLLATRIM_020	Ollatrim (Borrisnafarney) River	Coologe Northeast	TEF (Handset)	NO	26/08/2025
Ballintotty River sub-catchment						
16	BALLINTOTTY_010	Ballintotty River	Toomyvara	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
17	BALLINTOTTY_020	Ballintotty River	Coolderry	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
18	BALLINTOTTY_020	Ballintotty River	Knockahunna	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025
19	OLLATRIM_050	Ballintotty River	Considine Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	27/08/2025



Releasing a brown trout captured on the Dolla River at Dolla (Site 6), Co. Tipperary.

Table 2. Minimum density estimates of fish (no. fish/m²), Nenagh River Catchment, August 2025 (previous results shown where applicable).

Nenagh River sub-catchment						
Site no.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Species	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Brown trout	0.944	0.115	0.281	0.278	0.070	0.649
0+ brown trout	0.917	0.075	0.209	0.199	0.004	0.508
1+ & older brown trout	0.027	0.041	0.072	0.079	0.066	0.141
Salmon	0.270	0.037	-	-	0.004	0.117
0+ salmon	0.270	0.037	-	-	0.004	0.117
1+ & older salmon	-	-	-	-	-	-
European eel	0.081	-	-	-	-	-
Lamprey sp.	0.027	-	-	-	0.004	-
Minnow	-	0.011	-	0.010	0.004	0.042
Stone loach	0.202	0.007	-	-	-	-
All fish	1.523	0.171	0.281	0.288	0.083	0.807
Ollatrim River sub-catchment						
Site no.	7		8		9	
Species	2017	2025	2017	2025	2017	2025
Brown trout	0.277	0.840	0.520	0.420	0.350	0.662
0+ brown trout	0.277	0.817	0.433	0.386	0.189	0.373
1+ & older brown trout	-	0.023	0.087	0.034	0.162	0.288
Lamprey sp.	-	0.035	-	0.017	0.016	-
Minnow	-	-	-	0.026	0.210	0.433
Stone loach	-	-	-	0.017	0.113	0.051
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	0.060	0.077	0.151	-
All fish	0.277	0.875	0.580	0.558	0.841	1.145
Ollatrim River sub-catchment						
Site no.	10	11		12		13
Species	2025	2017	2025	2017	2025	2017
Brown trout	0.468	0.231	0.625	0.055	0.238	0.208
0+ brown trout	0.048	0.115	0.357	0.007	0.098	0.040
1+ & older brown trout	0.420	0.115	0.268	0.048	0.140	0.168
Salmon	-	-	-	0.029	-	0.007
0+ salmon	-	-	-	0.029	-	0.007
1+ & older salmon	-	-	-	-	-	-
European eel	-	-	-	-	-	0.021
Lamprey sp.	-	0.038	-	-	0.021	-
Minnow	0.018	0.044	0.464	0.114	0.114	0.029
Stone loach	0.070	0.126	0.152	0.029	0.052	0.106
Three-spined stickleback	-	0.049	-	-	-	-
All fish	0.557	0.489	1.240	0.227	0.424	0.351
Ollatrim River sub-catchment				Ballintotty River sub-catchment		
Site no.	14		15		16	
Species	2017	2025	2017	2025	2017	2025
Brown trout	0.140	0.147	0.320	0.307	0.188	0.351
0+ brown trout	0.022	0.047	0.302	0.307	0.188	0.351
1+ & older brown trout	0.118	0.100	0.018	-	-	-
Salmon	0.022	0.023	-	-	-	-
0+ salmon	0.011	0.012	-	-	-	-
1+ & older salmon	0.011	0.012	-	-	-	-
Lamprey sp.	-	-	0.027	-	-	-
Minnow	0.028	0.047	0.142	0.348	-	-
Stone loach	0.062	0.076	0.178	0.120	-	-
Three-spined stickleback	0.017	-	0.053	0.080	0.027	0.092
All fish	0.269	0.294	0.720	0.855	0.215	0.443
Ballintotty River sub-catchment						
Site no.	17		18		19	
Species	2025		2017	2025	2017	2025
Brown trout	0.102		0.152	0.185	0.202	0.110
0+ brown trout	0.102		0.008	0.102	0.170	0.044
1+ & older brown trout	-		0.145	0.083	0.032	0.066
Salmon	-		-	-	0.032	-
0+ salmon	-		-	-	0.032	-
1+ & older salmon	-		-	-	-	-
Lamprey sp.	-		-	-	0.049	0.009
Minnow	0.014		0.008	-	0.542	0.062
Stone loach	0.027		0.008	-	0.032	0.079
Three-spined stickleback	0.020		0.046	-	0.073	0.013
All fish	0.163		0.213	0.185	0.931	0.273

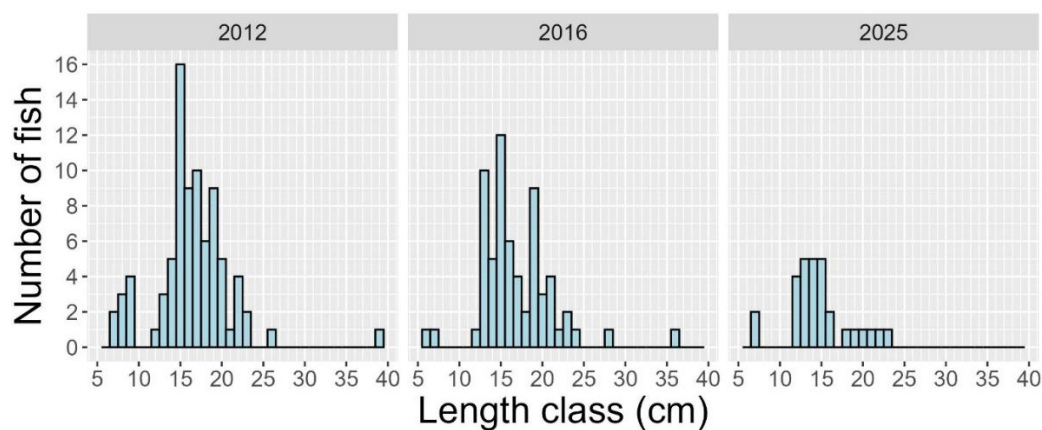


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution of brown trout (2012 n=82, 2016 n=64, 2025 n=29) at Ballysoilshaun Bridge (Site 5), a WFD surveillance monitoring site, on the Nenagh River Catchment.

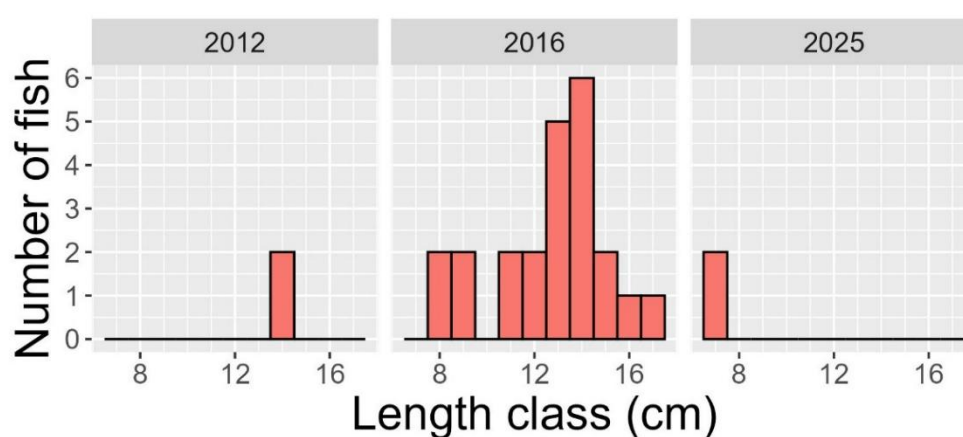


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution of salmon (2012 n=2, 2016 n=23, 2025 n=2) at Ballysoilshaun Bridge (Site 5), a WFD surveillance monitoring site, on the Nenagh River Catchment.

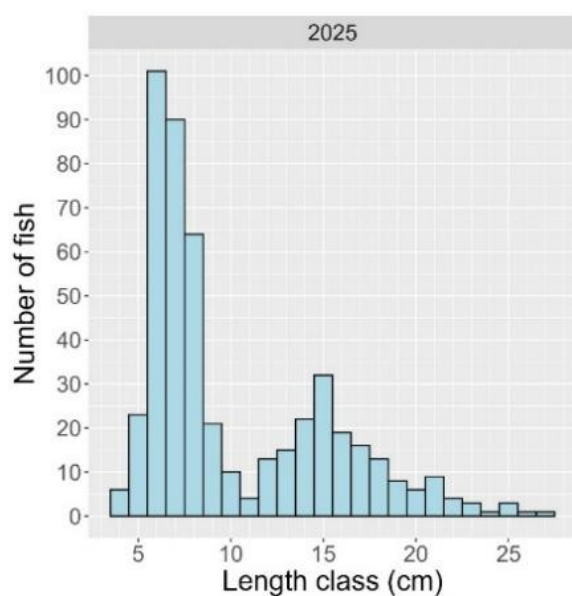


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution for brown trout (n = 485), Nenagh River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites = 19).

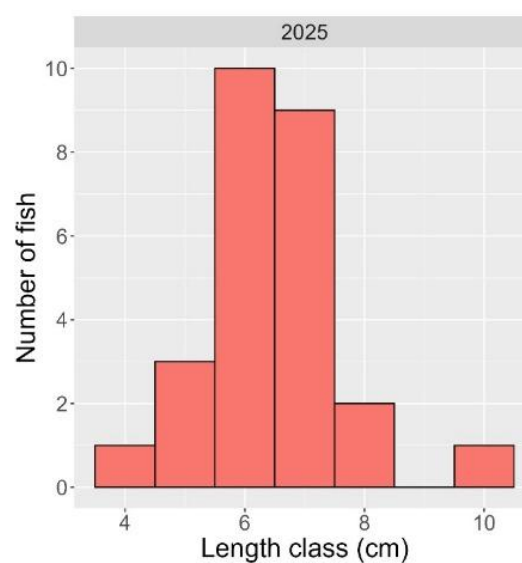


Figure 5. Length frequency distribution for salmon (n = 26), Nenagh River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites = 5).

Table 3. Brown trout % age class structure (where recorded), Nenagh River Catchment (Sites 1-19), August 2025.

Site No.	% of catch				
	0+	1+	2+	3+	4+
Nenagh River sub-catchment					
1	97	3	-	-	-
2	67	13	13	7	-
3	77	18	5	-	-
4	74	19	5	2	-
5	7	69	14	10	-
6	82	16	-	-	2
Ollatrim River sub-catchment					
7	97	3	-	-	-
8	93	7	-	-	-
9	57	24	19	-	-
10	10	20	63	5	2
11	58	24	15	3	-
12	41	14	41	-	4
13	-	20	80	-	-
14	34	8	42	8	8
15	100	-	-	-	-
Ballintotty River sub-catchment					
16	100	-	-	-	-
17	100	-	-	-	-
18	60	33	7	-	-
19	46	23	31	-	-

Table 4. Salmon % age class structure (where recorded), Nenagh River Catchment (Sites 1-19), August 2025.

Site No.	% of catch	
	0+	1+
Nenagh River sub-catchment		
1	100	-
2	100	-
5	100	-
6	100	-
Ollatrim River sub-catchment		
14	50	50

Table 5. Fish ecological status, Nenagh Catchment, August 2025.

Site No.	2012	2016	2017	2025
Nenagh River sub-catchment				
1	-	-	-	G
2	-	-	-	G
3	-	-	-	M
4	-	-	-	M
5	G	G	-	G
6	-	-	-	G
Ollatrim River sub-catchment				
7	-	-	M	G
8	-	-	G	G
9	-	-	G	G
10	-	-	M	M
11	-	-	M	M
12	-	-	P	M
13	-	-	M	M
14	-	-	M	M
15	-	-	M	M
Ballintotty River sub-catchment				
16	-	-	M	G
17	-	-	M	P
18	-	-	M	M
19	-	-	M	M

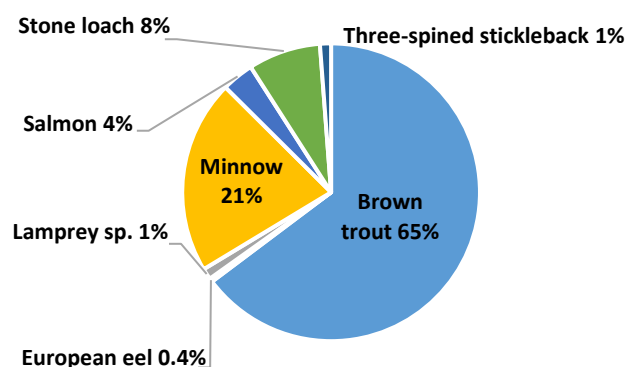


Figure 6. Fish species composition (%), Nenagh River Catchment, 2025

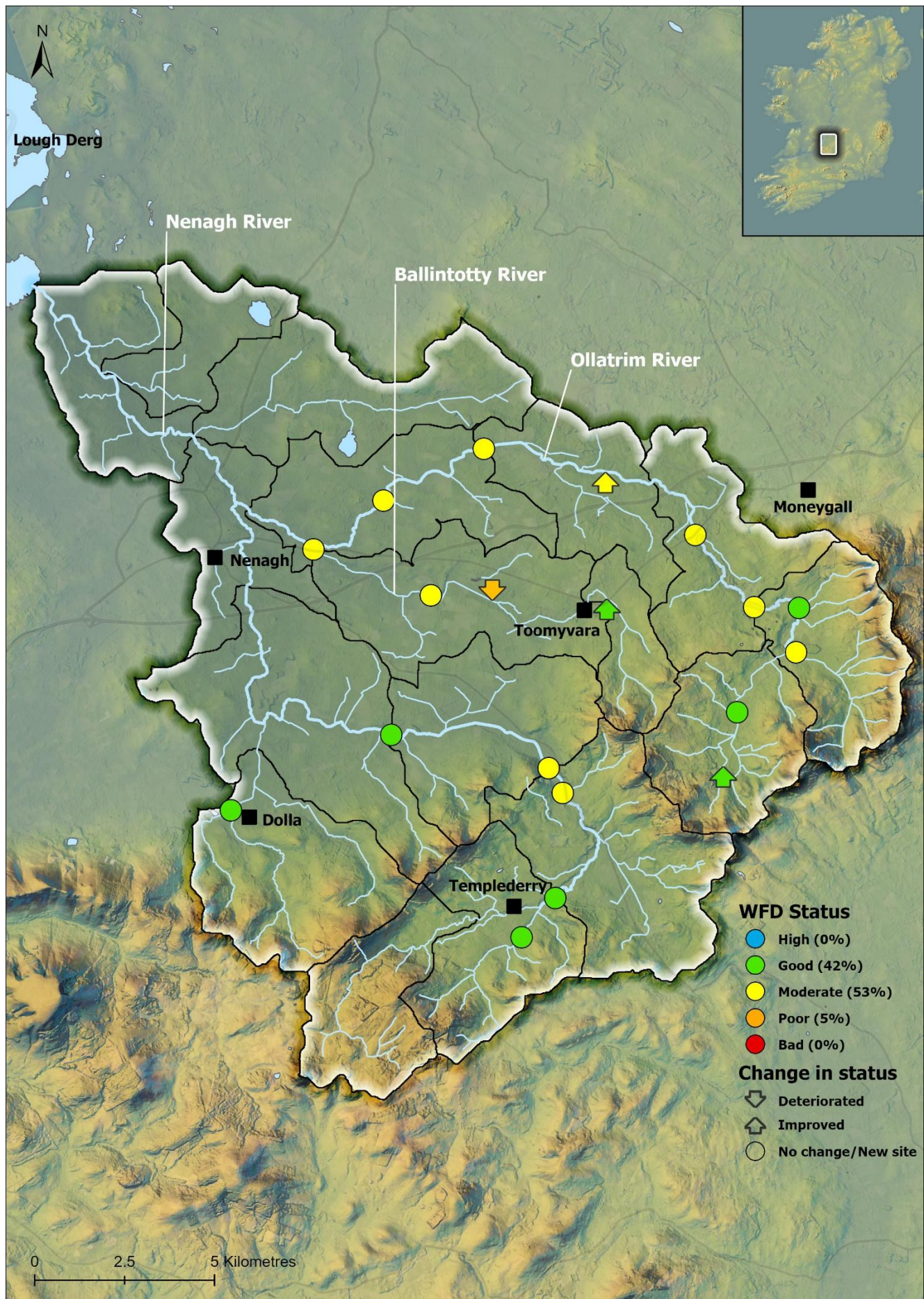


Figure 7. Fish ecological status in the Nenagh River Catchment, 2025. Arrows indicate a change in status since previous surveys (where applicable).

Summary

Seven fish species were recorded at nineteen sites electro-fished on the Nenagh River Catchment in 2025.

Brown trout was the most common species present (19 sites, 100%), followed by minnow (14 sites, 74%), stone loach (12 sites each, 63%), lamprey sp. (6 sites, 32%), salmon and three-spined stickleback (5 sites, 26%) and European eel (2 sites, 11%).

Brown trout were the most abundant species recorded, followed by minnow, stone loach, salmon, lamprey, three-spined stickleback and European eel (Figure 6).

Brown trout ranged in length from 4.1 to 27cm (Figure 4). Five age classes of brown trout were present (0+, 1+, 2+, 3+ and 4+), with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of brown trout (all ages combined) (0.944 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 1 (Moanaha Glen) on the Gortnagowna River. The highest density of 0+ brown trout (0.916 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 1 (Moanaha Glen). The highest density of 1+ and older brown trout (0.420 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 10 (Aghnameadle) on the Ollatrim River.

Salmon were present in five sites and ranged in size from 4.5 to 10cm (Figure 5). Two age classes for salmon were present (0+ and 1+) with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of salmon (all ages combined) (0.270 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 1 (Moanaha Glen) on the Nenagh (Gortnagowna) River. The highest density of 0+ salmon (0.270 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 1 (Moanaha Glen). The highest density of 1+ and older salmon (0.012 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 14 (Raththurles) on the Ollatrim 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 nineteen sites surveyed in the Nenagh River Catchment during 2025 (Table 5 and Figure 7). Eight sites were assigned Good status, with ten sites assigned Moderate status and one site Poor. Fourteen sites were surveyed previously on this catchment and assigned fish ecological status. Three sites (Sites 7, 12 and 16) improved, one site (Site 17) deteriorated, and the remainder were left unchanged.

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. (2018) 25C Lower Shannon Catchment Summary
WFD Cycle 2.pdf

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

CITATION: Gordon, P., Corcoran, W., Flynn, E.,
McCarthy, E., Piaskowy, J., O' Brien, M., Robson, S.,
Fildes, D., Chamberlain, C. and Kelly, F.L., (2026)
Sampling Fish in Rivers 2025 – Nenagh River
Catchment, Factsheet No. 10. National Research
Survey Programme. Inland Fisheries Ireland.

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

