

Fish in Rivers Factsheet

SWRBD

Glashaboy River Catchment

Factsheet: 2025/13

The Glashaboy River Catchment is located within the South-Western River Basin District and covers an area of approximately 141km² in County Cork. The Glashaboy River is 24km long, the river flows in a southerly direction, through Carrignavar, Co. Cork, before heading south-eastwards towards Glanmire. It reaches the sea at Cork Harbour near Dunkettle. Cork Harbour is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA).

The main tributary of the Glashaboy River is the Butlerstown River. The geology of the catchment is comprised of sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and conglomerate. The primary land use types include agriculture (pasture and tillage), with thin strips of woodland located along the main channel (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 Glashaboy River Catchment in 2025. Seven sites were surveyed by electro-fishing (CEN, 2003) on the Glashaboy River Catchment between the 29th and the 30th of September 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).



Glashaboy River at Ballyvorisheen Bridge (Site 1), Co. Cork.

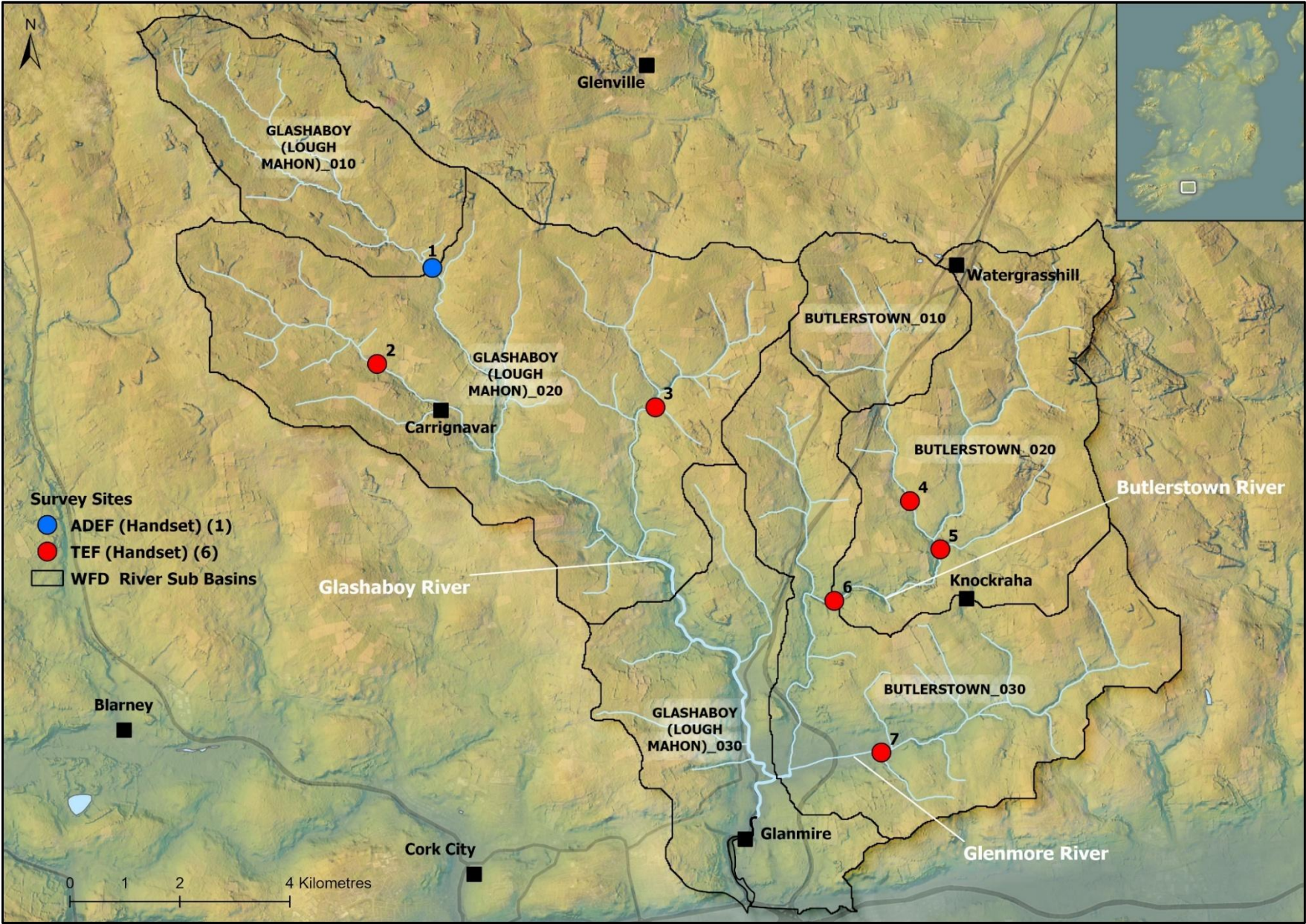


Figure 1. Location of electrofishing survey sites on the Glashaboy River Catchment, September 2025.

Table 1. Site survey details, Glashaboy River Catchment, September 2025.

No.	WFD Sub-basin	River	Site	Method	WFD	Date
Glashaboy River sub-catchment						
1	GLASHABOY (LOUGH MAHON)_010	Glashaboy River	Ballyvorisheen Bridge	ADEF (Handset)	YES	29/09/2025
2	GLASHABOY (LOUGH MAHON)_020	Cloghnagashee River	Laharan Holy Well	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025
3	GLASHABOY (LOUGH MAHON)_020	Ballymadree River	Coolgreen	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025
Butlerstown River sub-catchment						
4	BUTLERSTOWN_020	Watergrasshill River	Coolguerisk Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025
5	BUTLERSTOWN_020	Watergrasshill River	Ballingohig Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025
6	BUTLERSTOWN_030	Butlerstown River	Butlerstown Bridge	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025
7	BUTLERSTOWN_030	Glenmore River	Droghedaneirk	TEF (Handset)	NO	30/09/2025

Table 2. Minimum density estimates of fish (no. fish/m²), for the Glashaboy and Butlerstown River sub-catchments, Glashaboy River Catchment, September 2025.

Glashaboy River sub-catchment							
Site no.	1			2		3	
Species	2014	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025
Brown trout	0.275	0.492	0.744	0.216	0.799	0.875	0.801
0+ brown trout	0.167	0.194	0.393	0.016	0.080	0.533	0.235
1+ & older brown trout	0.109	0.298	0.350	0.200	0.719	0.341	0.566
Salmon	0.006	0.009	0.080	-	-	0.074	0.092
0+ salmon	0.006	-	0.037	-	-	-	0.011
1+ & older salmon	-	0.009	0.043	-	-	0.074	0.080
European eel	0.006	-	0.025	-	0.022	-	-
Lamprey sp.	-	-	-	0.008	0.022	-	-
Stone loach	0.006	-	0.012	-	-	-	-
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	-	0.048	0.044	-	-
All fish	0.295	0.501	0.860	0.271	0.887	0.949	0.892
Butlerstown River sub-catchment							
Site no.	4		5		6		7
Species	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018	2025	2018
Brown trout	0.401	0.671	0.116	0.090	0.215	0.230	0.133
0+ brown trout	0.250	0.128	0.050	0.028	0.101	0.064	0.052
1+ & older brown trout	0.152	0.543	0.065	0.062	0.113	0.167	0.081
Salmon	-	0.039	0.010	0.038	0.048	0.069	-
0+ salmon	-	-	-	0.038	0.048	0.059	-
1+ & older salmon	-	0.039	0.010	-	-	0.010	-
European eel	-	-	-	0.014	0.036	-	-
Lamprey sp.	0.009	-	-	-	-	-	0.007
Three-spined stickleback	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.022
All fish	0.410	0.711	0.126	0.142	0.298	0.299	0.163

Table 3. Brown trout % age class structure (where recorded), Glashaboy River Catchment (Sites 1-7).

Site No.	% of catch			
	0+	1+	2+	3+
Glashaboy River sub-catchment				
1	53	33	14	-
2	11	53	32	4
3	32	48	20	-
Butlerstown River sub-catchment				
4	19	38	34	9
5	33	56	11	-
6	34	33	33	-
7	17	74	9	-

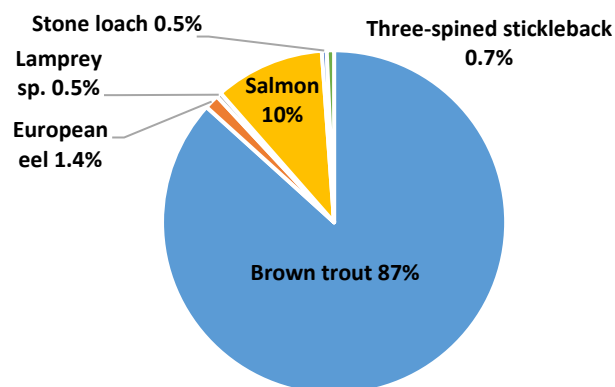


Figure 2. Fish species composition (%), Glashaboy River Catchment, 2025.

Table 4. Salmon % age class structure (where recorded), Glashaboy River Catchment (Sites 1-7).

Site No.	% of catch		
	0+	1+	2+
Glashaboy River sub-catchment			
1	46	54	-
3	13	75	12
Butlerstown River sub-catchment			
4	-	100	-
5	100	-	-
6	86	14	-
7	100	-	-

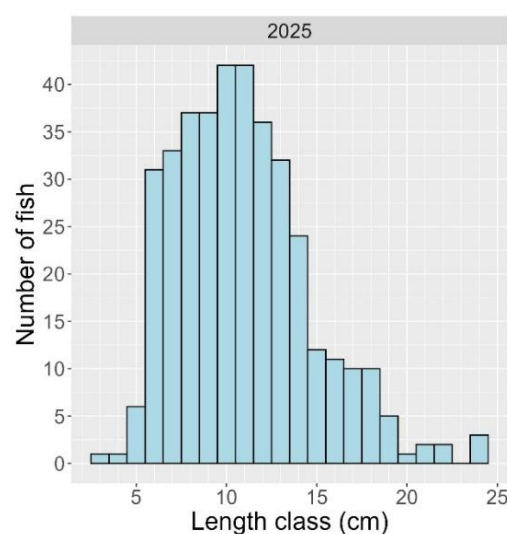


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution for brown trout (n = 378), Glashaboy River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites = 7).

Table 5. Fish ecological status, Glashaboy River Catchment, September 2025.

Site No.	2011	2014	2018	2025
Glashaboy River sub-catchment				
1	G	G	G	G
2	-	-	M	G
3	-	-	G	G
Butlerstown River sub-catchment				
4	-	-	M	M
5	-	-	M	M
6	-	-	M	G
7	-	-	M	G

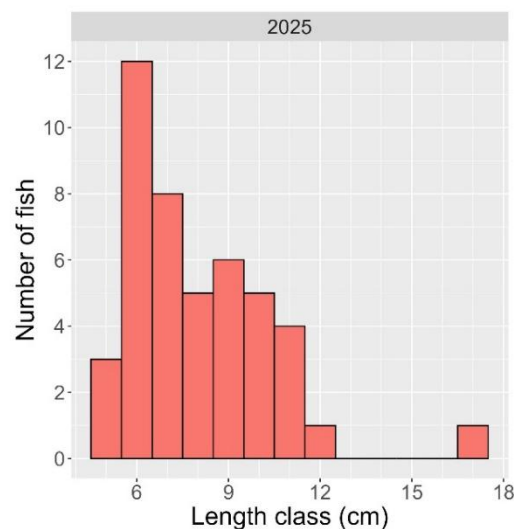


Figure 4. Length frequency distribution for salmon (n = 45), Glashaboy River Catchment, 2025 (No. sites = 6).

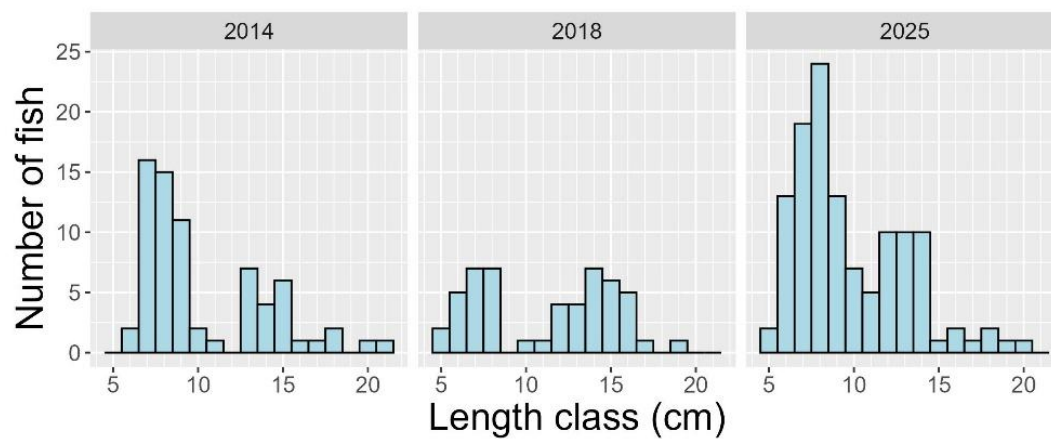


Figure 5. Length frequency distribution of brown trout (2014 n=70, 2018 n=51, 2025 n=121) at Site 1 (Ballyvorisheen Bridge), a WFD Surveillance Monitoring Site in the Glashaboy River Catchment.

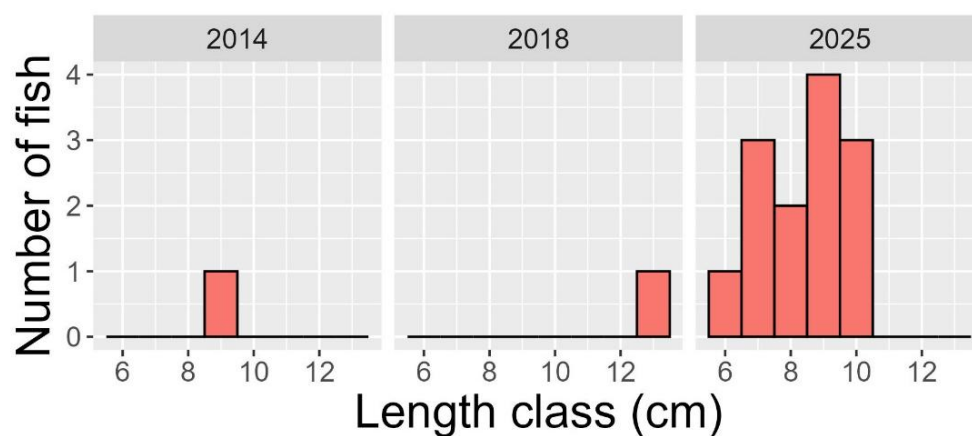


Figure 6. Length frequency distribution of salmon (2014 n=1, 2018 n=1, 2025 n=13) at Site 1 (Ballyvorisheen Bridge), a WFD Surveillance Monitoring Site in the Glashaboy River Catchment.



Butlerstown River at Butlerstown Bridge (Site 6), Co Cork.

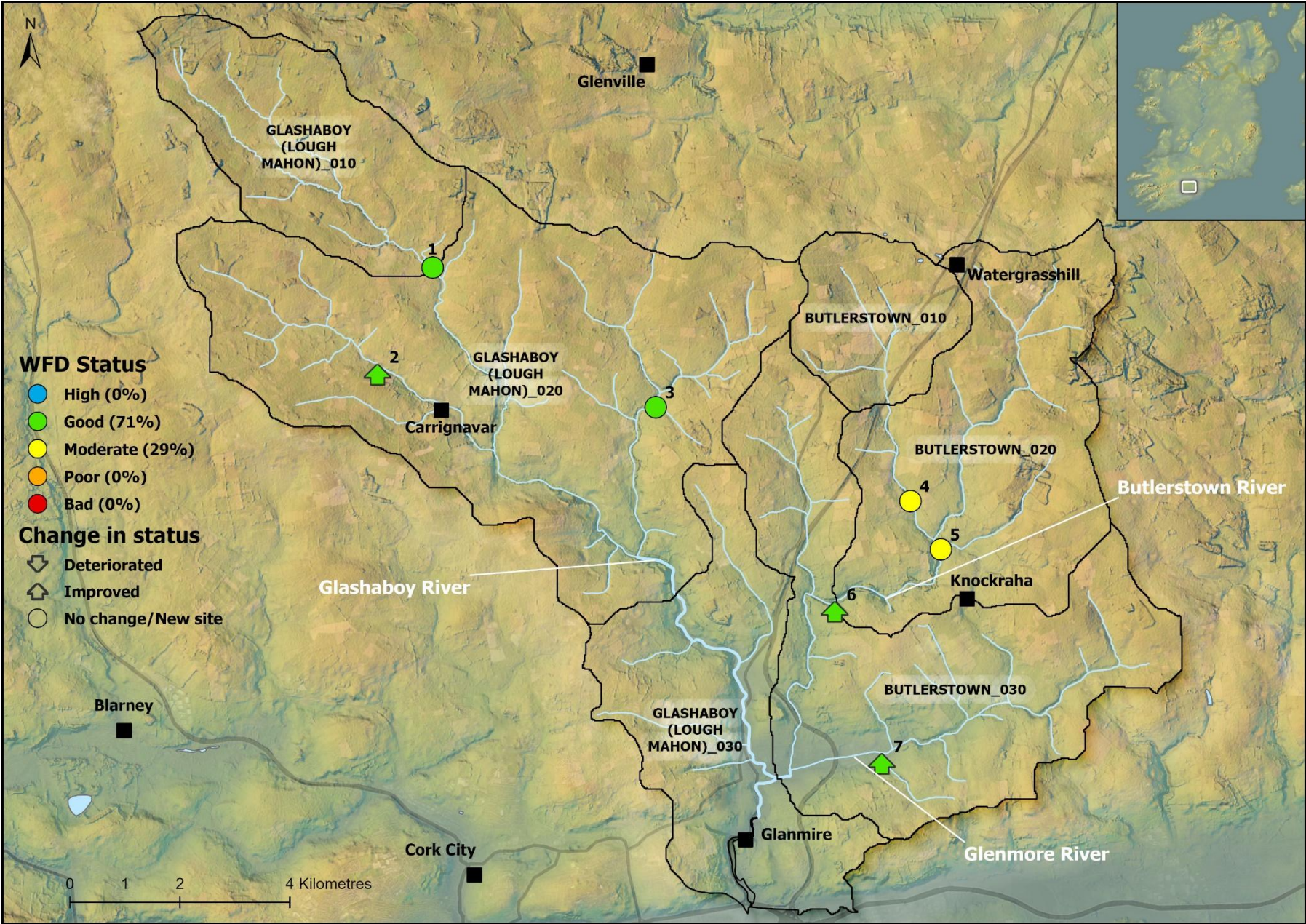


Figure 7. Fish ecological status in the Glashaboy River Catchment, September 2025. Arrows indicate a change in status since previous surveys (where applicable).

Summary

Six fish species were recorded at seven sites electro-fished on the Glashaboy River Catchment in 2025.

Brown trout was the most common species present (7 sites, 100%), followed by salmon (6 sites, 86%), European eel (3 sites, 43%), three-spined stickleback (2 sites, 29%), stone loach and lamprey sp. (1 site each, 14%)

Brown trout were the most abundant species recorded, followed by salmon, European eel, three-spined stickleback, lamprey sp. and stone loach (Figure 2).

Brown trout ranged in length from 3.5 to 24.8cm (Figure 3). 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) (1.079 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 7 (Droghedaneirk) on the Glashaboy (Glenmore) River. The highest density of 0+ brown trout (0.393 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 1 (Ballyvorisheen) on the Glashaboy River. The highest density of 1+ and older brown trout (0.901 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 7 (Droghedaneirk).

Salmon ranged in length from 5 to 17cm (Figure 4). Three age classes of salmon were present (0+, 1+, 2+) with 0+ being the most abundant cohort. The highest density of salmon (all ages combined) (0.163 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 7 (Droghedaneirk) on the Glashaboy (Glenmore) River. The highest density of 0+ salmon (0.163 fish/m²) was also recorded at Site 7 (Droghedaneirk). The highest density of 1+ and older salmon (0.080 fish/m²) was recorded at Site 3 (Coolgreen) on the Glashaboy (Ballymadree) 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 Glashaboy River Catchment during 2025 (Table 5 and Figure 7). Five sites were assigned Good status, with two sites assigned Moderate status. All Seven sites were surveyed previously on this catchment and assigned fish ecological status. Three sites (Sites 2, 6 and 7) improved in status, the remaining four sites showed no change.

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.

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