



# Ballymote-Tobercurry MD- Community Information Meeting

St Brigid's Hall, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo,  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2026

*Templehouse Br.*

# Meeting structure

- Presentation
  - 20 - 25 minutes
- Questions and Answers
- Tea and Coffee

We have a **sign-up** sheet at the LAWPRO table if you want to be kept up to date with our work e.g. newsletter

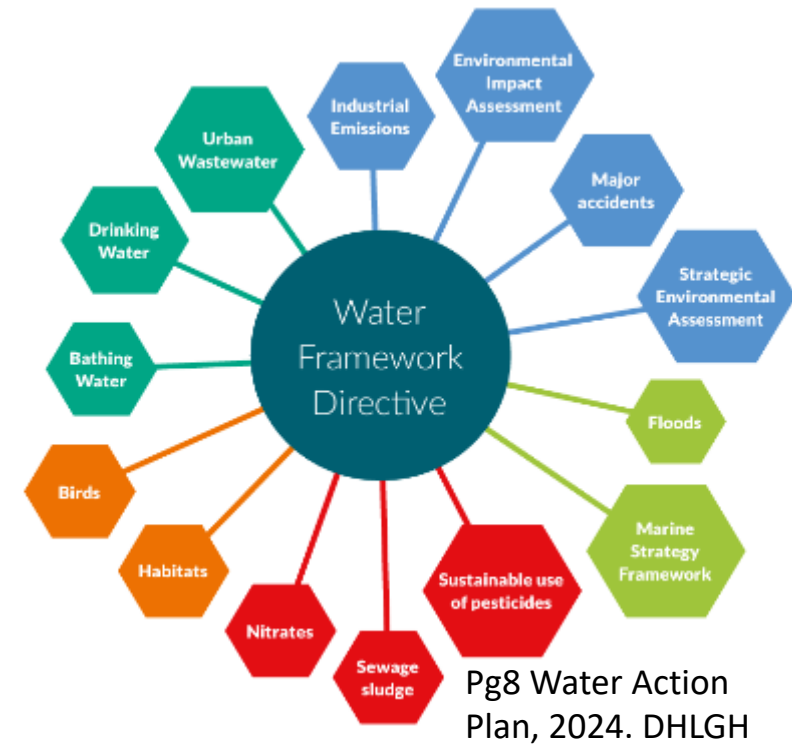




# About LAWPRO

## LAWPRO's three core functions:

- 1. Coordination** on behalf of local authorities and public bodies.
  - *Regional Committees (incl. cross-border representation).*
  - *Nationwide Catchment Management Plan Template*
- 2. Catchment science and management** to inform decision making:
  - *Working in Priority Areas for Action (PAA)*
  - *Building capacity within Local Authority sector through knowledge sharing and training.*
- 3. Community engagement** at a local level and nationwide.  
*Advocating for a healthy water environment to deliver multiple benefits for health and wellbeing, biodiversity, climate, and local communities.*



*“Water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such”*  
WFD, 2000/60/EC

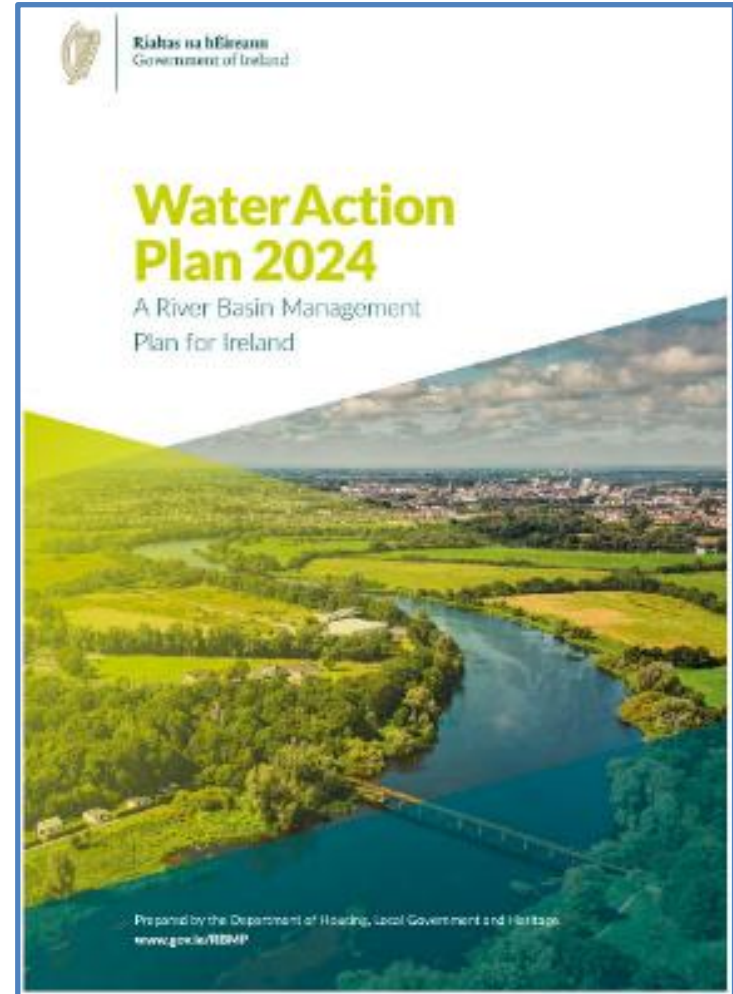
# Water Action Plan 2024

## Launched September 2024

- Government commitment to protecting & restoring Ireland's natural waters by complying with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive
- Accelerate the identification and implementation of the **right measures in the right places** to both restore and protect all water bodies



*“Water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such” WFD, 2000/60/EC*



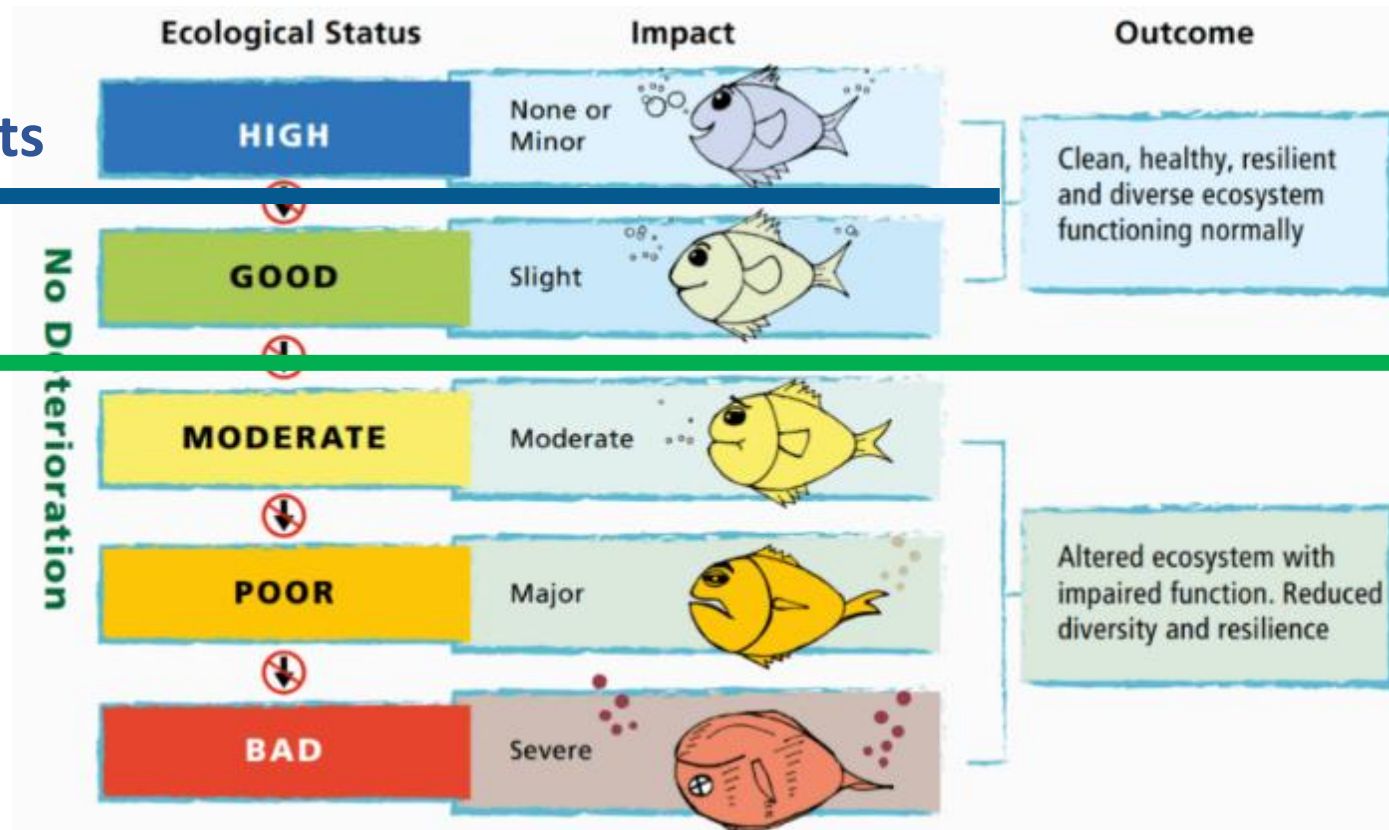
[gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027

# What do we mean by water quality?

## EU Water Framework Directive

No Decline – Blue Dots

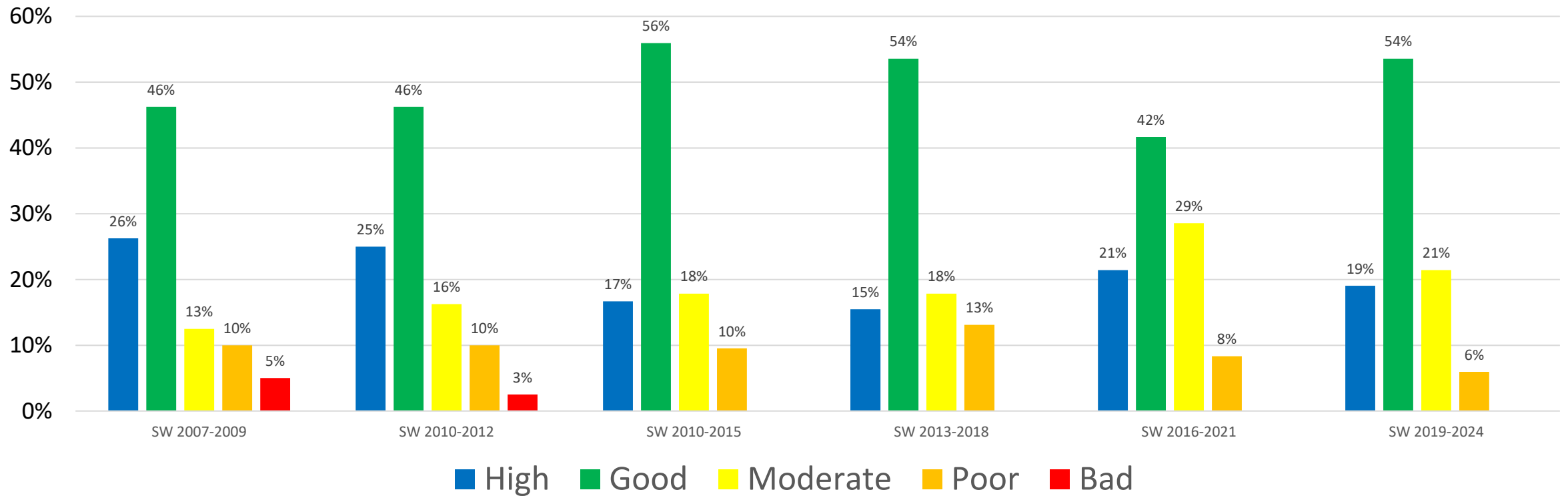
At least Good



All surface waters must achieve at least Good Ecological Status by 2027

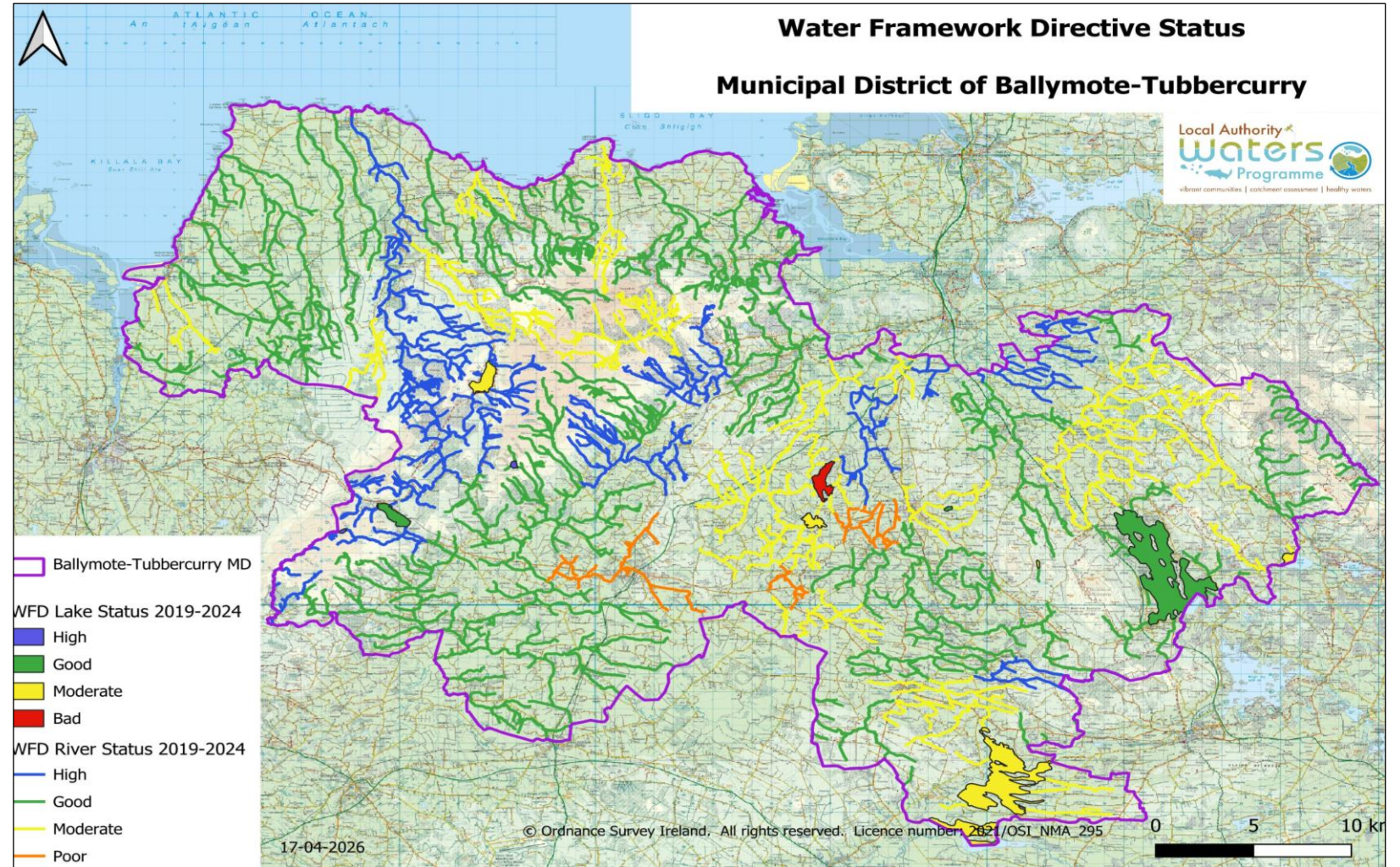
# Water quality in Ballymote-Tobercurry MD

WFD Status (%) of Rivers in Municipal District of Ballymote-Tobercurry - Monitored only



# Water Quality in the Ballymote-Tubbercurry Municipal District (MD)

- **High** – 16 rivers, 0 lakes
- **Good** – 45 rivers, 2 lakes
- **Moderate** – 18 rivers, 2 lakes
- **Poor** - 5 rivers, 0 lakes
- **Bad** – 0 rivers, 1 lake

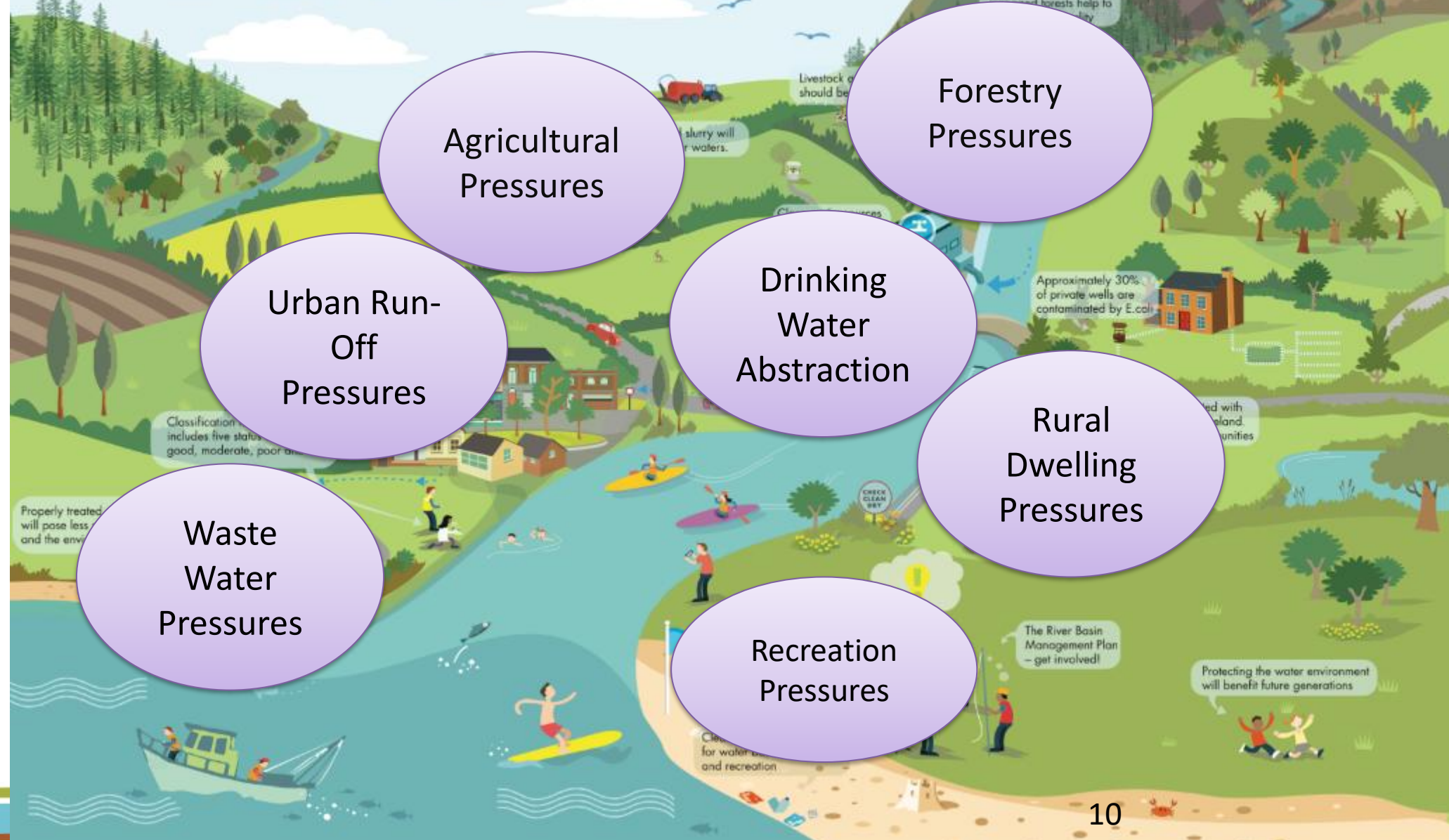


What impacts our water?



# Water Catchments

WHERE WE LIVE, WORK & PLAY



Agricultural Pressures

Forestry Pressures

Urban Run-Off Pressures

Drinking Water Abstraction

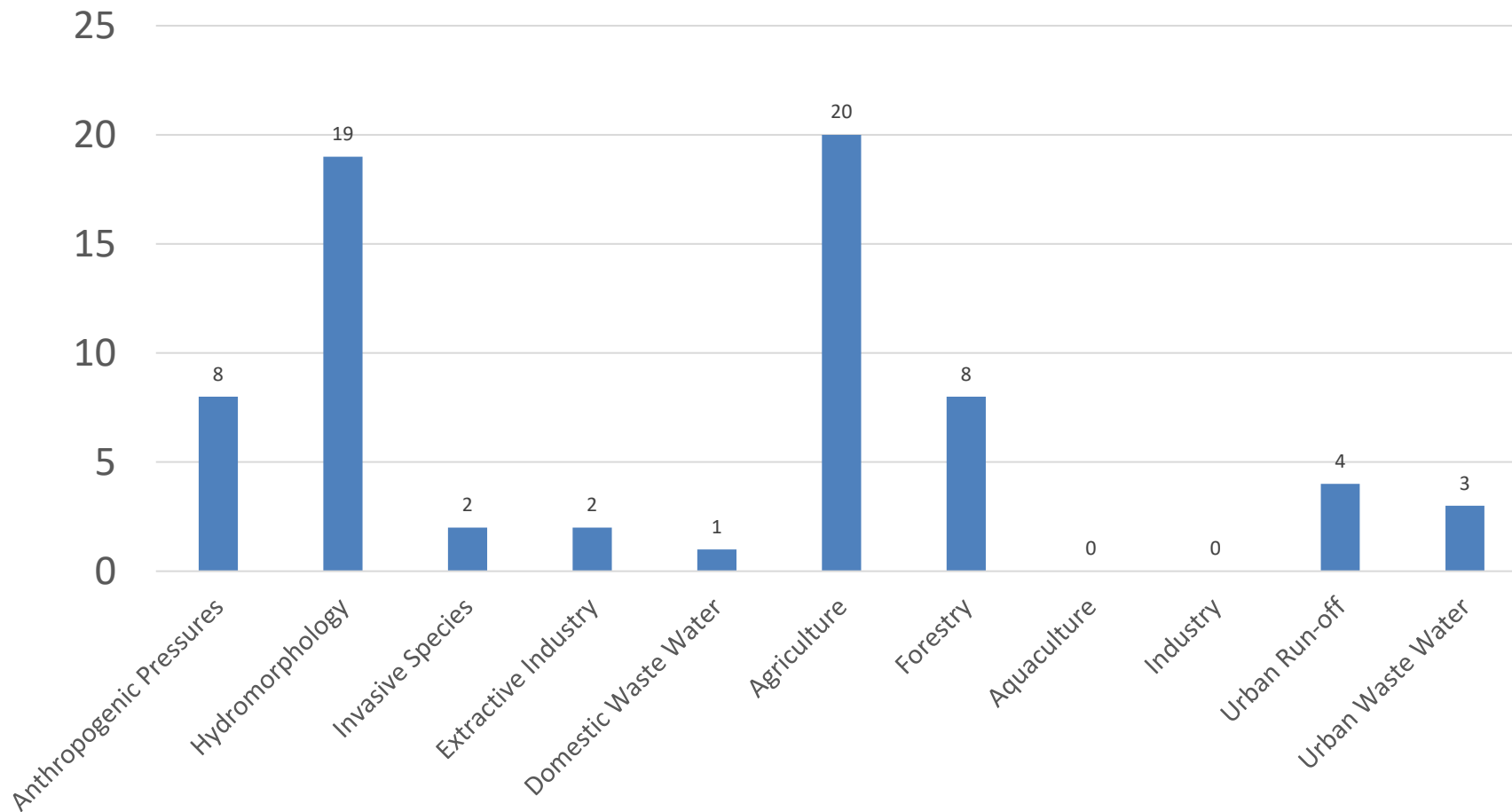
Rural Dwelling Pressures

Waste Water Pressures

Recreation Pressures

# EPA Preliminary Assessment of likely Pressures in *At Risk* waterbodies in the Ballymote–Tobercurry MD

Significant Pressure in At risk waters in Municipal District of Ballymote-Tobercurry



- Agriculture
  - *Most common land use*
- Hydro-morphology
  - *Shape and flow of river.*
- Anthropogenic Pressures
  - *Unknown in most cases*

LAWPRO will assess for all pressures

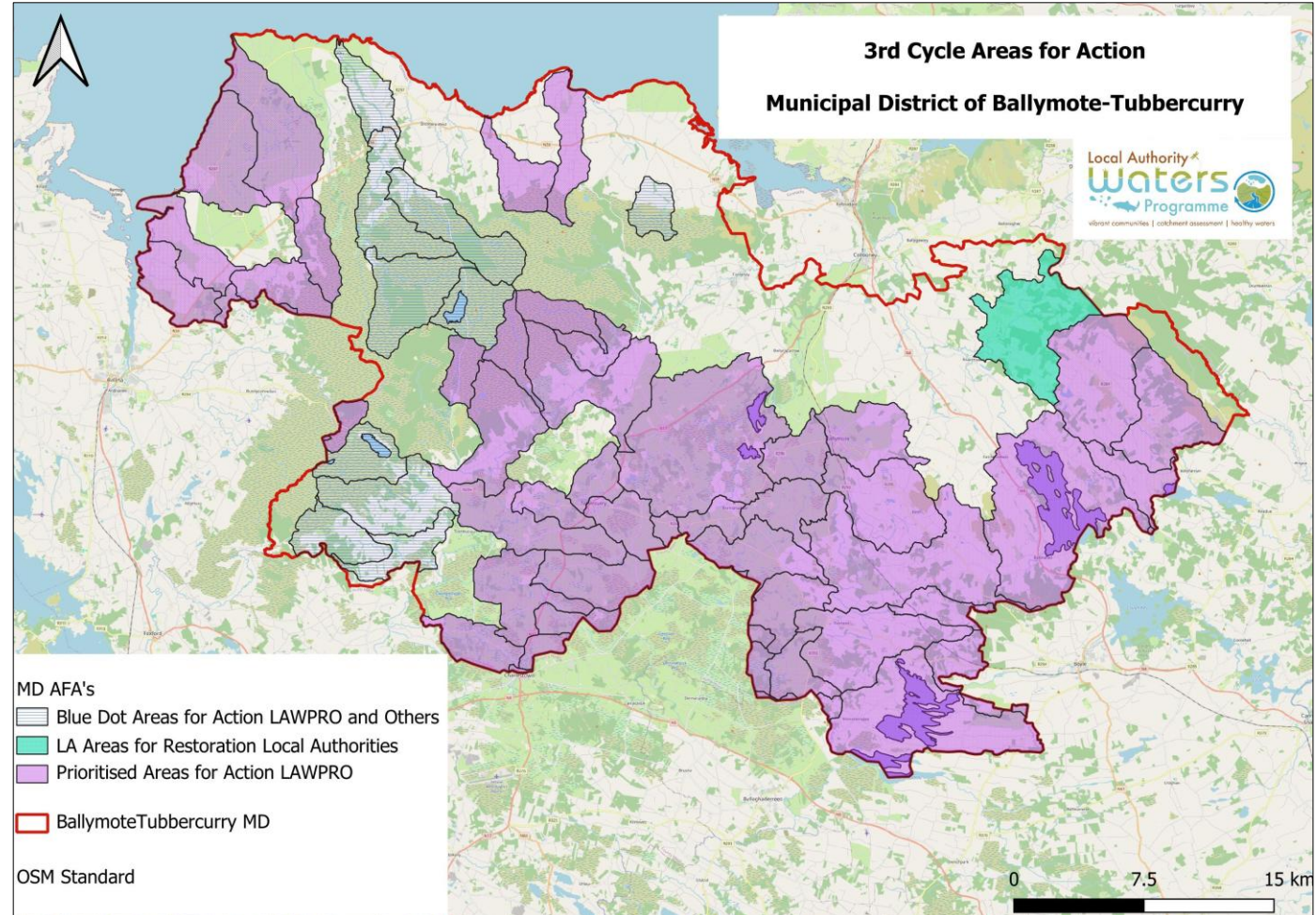
What are we are doing?



# Areas for Action in the Ballymote – Tobercurry Municipal District (MD)

There are 22 Areas for Action

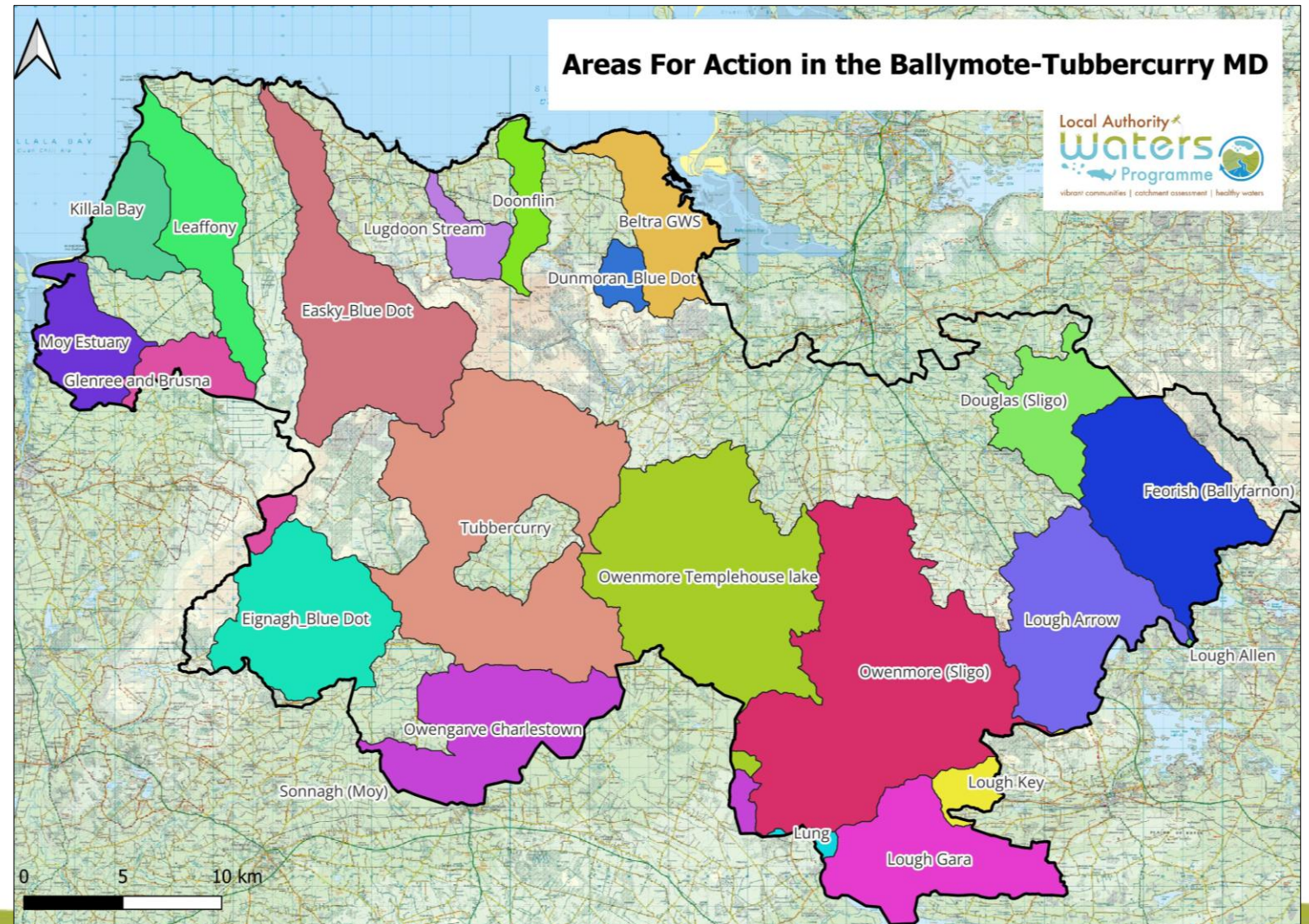
- LAWPRO lead - 20 PAA's
- Sligo CoCo lead organisation - Douglas (Sligo) AFA
- National Federation of Group Water Schemes – Lead organisation - Beltra GWS AFA



# Priority Areas for Action in the Municipal District of Ballymote - Tobercurry

2026 - LAWPRO working in the following PAA's:

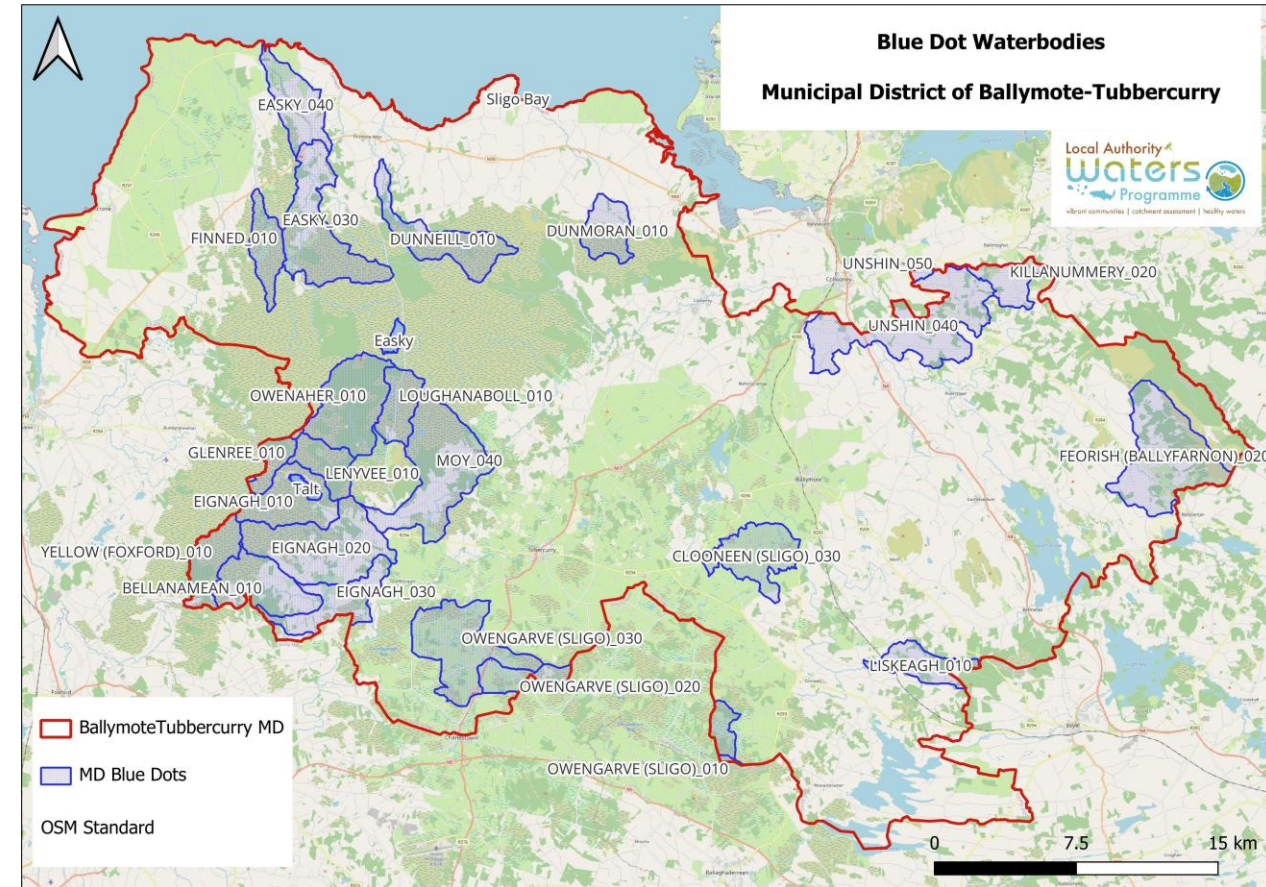
- Owenmore Templehouse Lake PAA– 8 waterbodies
- Owenmore (Sligo) PAA- 7 waterbodies
- Tubbercurry PAA– 10 waterbodies





# Blue Dot Catchment Programme

- Blue Dot waters are our best quality waters
- Blue Dots = High Ecological Status Objective
- Currently there are 402 Blue Dots nationally
  - Majority along the Western seaboard, Wicklow and upland areas of the Midlands and South
  - **There are 26 Blue Dot waterbodies in the Ballymote-Tobercurry MD (24 rivers and 2 lakes - L.Easky & L.Talt).**
- Why Should we Protect Blue Dots?
  - Protect some of our most iconic and threatened species Salmon, Arctic Char, Freshwater Pearl Mussels among many others
  - Act as an ark, sensitive species can recolonise other waterbodies as we improve water quality
  - Societal wellbeing, ecosystem services like clean water or vital natural sites for recreation



<https://lawaters.ie/blue-dot-programme/>

# Local Catchment Assessment finding issues on the ground



Field chemistry and field observations



Biological sampling - invertebrates



River walks



Urban assessments



Chemistry sampling



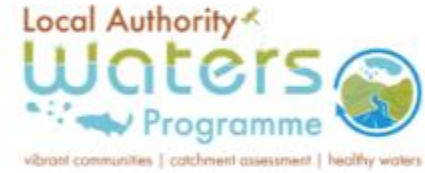
Biological sampling - vegetation

# Referrals Process

- When we identify significant issues, we refer these on to the relevant stakeholder e.g.
  - Agriculture, we refer to ASSAP
  - Forestry, we refer to Forest Service
  - Licensed discharges, we refer to Local Authority or Environmental Protection Agency etc.
- Measures can be used then to address the impact

# What is The ASSAP?

- Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme
- Focus is on improving water quality in Priority Areas for Action (PAA)
- Provides free & confidential farm advice and acceptance is voluntary
- Industry, government, farm orgs collaboration
- 44 Advisors - 20 Teagasc, 24 from Dairy Co-ops
- Work in collaboration with Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- LAWPRO – scientific investigation; LCA, desk study, chemical, biological, hydro morphology etc., assess streams
- Provide referrals to advisors to focus farm visits



CARBERY



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



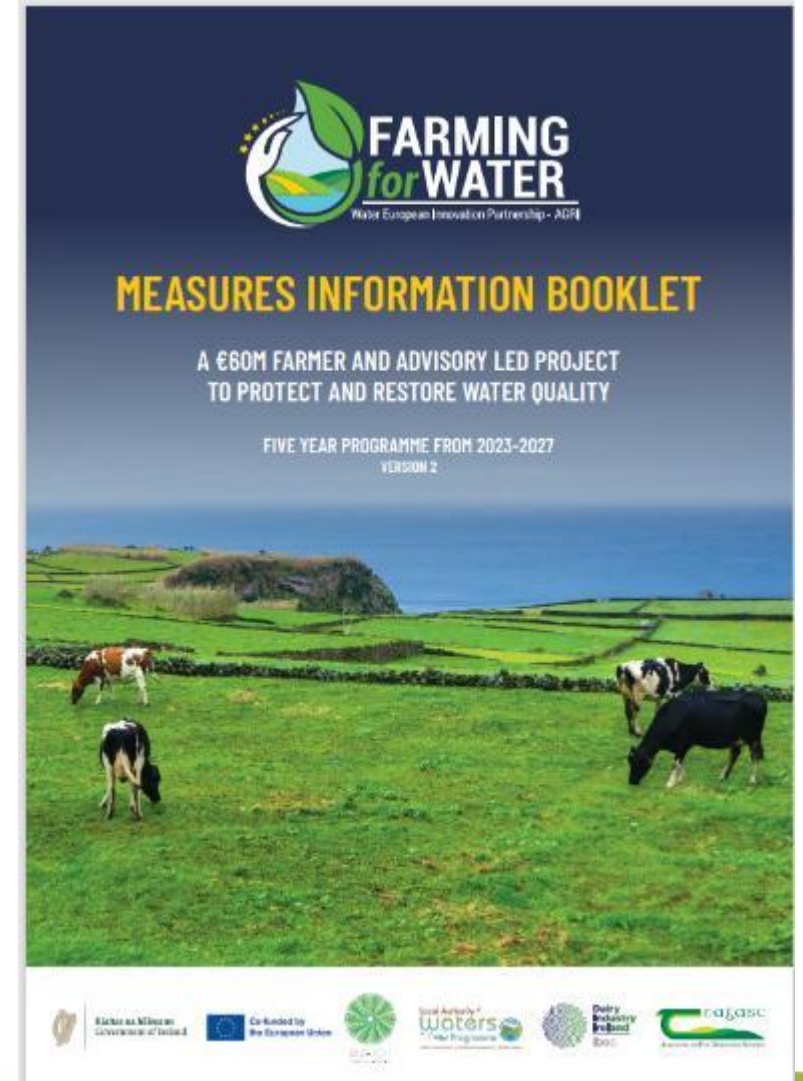
An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



# What is the Farming for Water EIP?

**The Farming for Water project**, aims to tackle water quality issues while promoting sustainable agricultural practices and delivering environmental benefits.

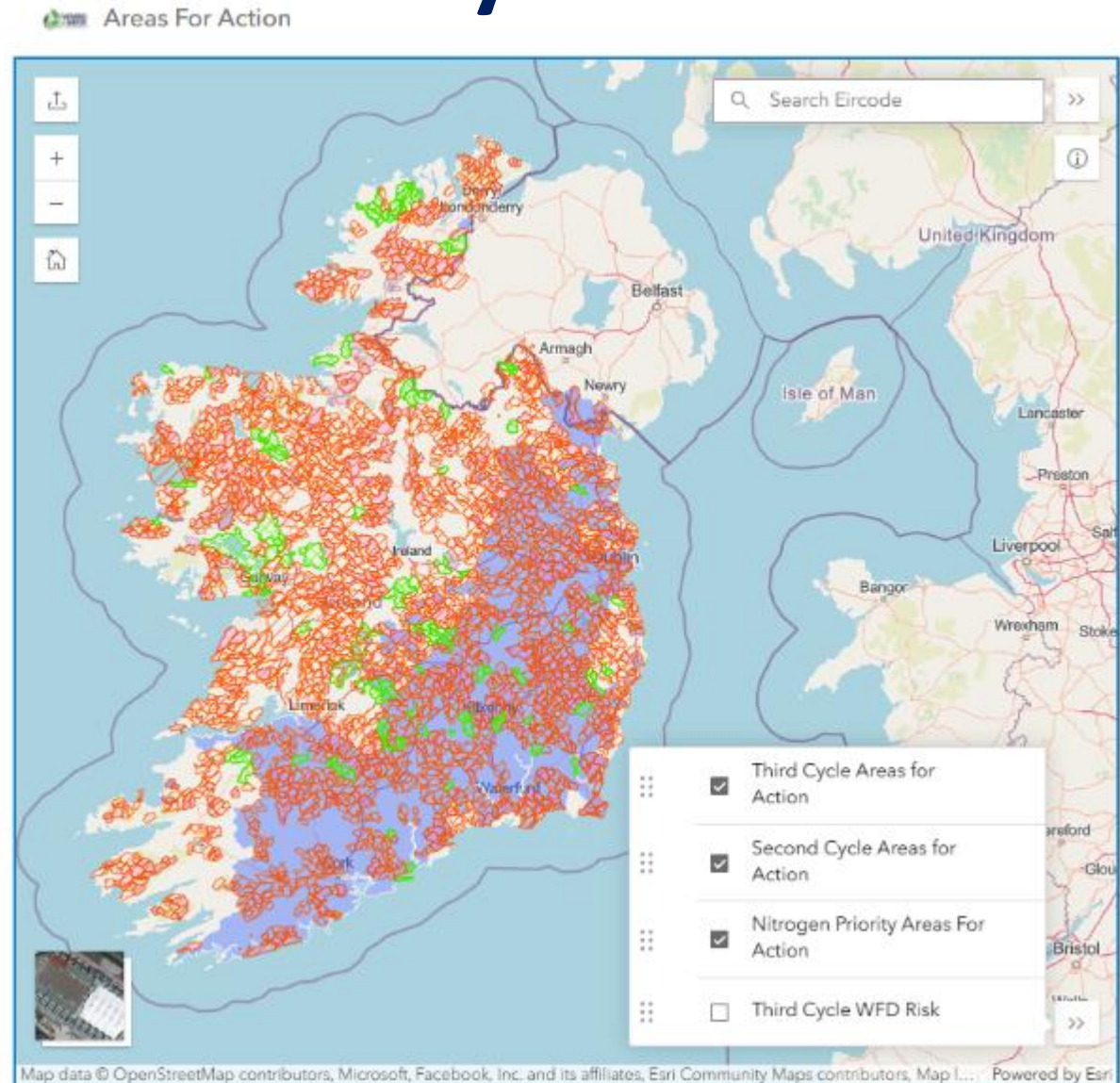
- **Collaboration & Innovation:** The project brings together farmers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to co-develop practical, scalable solutions that go beyond regulatory requirements.
- **Funding & Support:** With €50 million from DAFM and the European Commission for farmer payments and €10 million in administrative support from DHLGH, the initiative is well-funded to support on-the-ground actions.
- **Leadership & Timeline:** Led by the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) in partnership with Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland, the programme launched in March 2024 and will run until 2027, engaging a wide network of collaborators including other supporting stakeholders.



- **Prioritisation of Entry into the Project**
  - focus on specific areas based on risk levels.
- **Mapped Areas for Action:** Selected areas [Farming for Water website](https://farmingforwater.ie/).
- **Risk-Based Selection:** Entry into the project is guided by the ASSAP Advisor and is based scientific assessments of agricultural pressures on water bodies.
- **Research projects** being developed which will validate the measures being tested as part of the Farming for Water EIP.

<https://farmingforwater.ie/>

# Key Points



# Community Engagement

- Luke Kenny – Community Water Officer  
Sligo and Leitrim
- Our work with Communities
  - Funding Community Water Development Fund
  - Catchment Support Fund
  - Small Grants
  - Capacity Building
  - Project Delivery
  - Citizen Science Stream Index
  - Talk to Luke for more info
  - [lkenny@lawaters.ie](mailto:lkenny@lawaters.ie) / 085-8085495



Heritage Week collaboration with Sligo Biodiversity Officer  
Biodiversity Walk & Water Quality Sampling - River Duff  
(Sligo/Leitrim border)

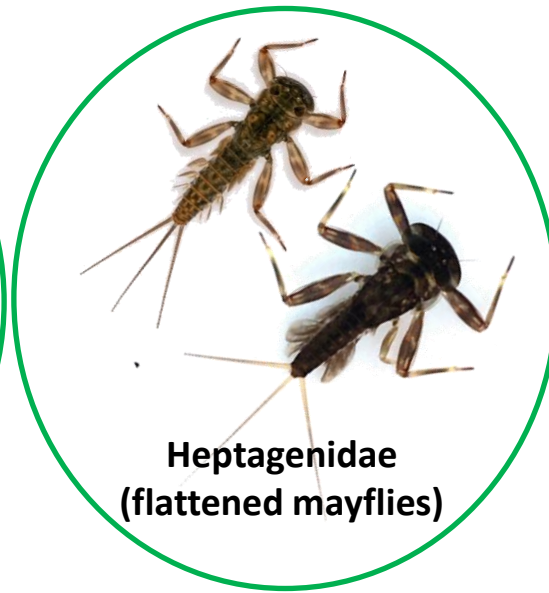
Species that indicate good water quality

## Citizen Science Stream Index

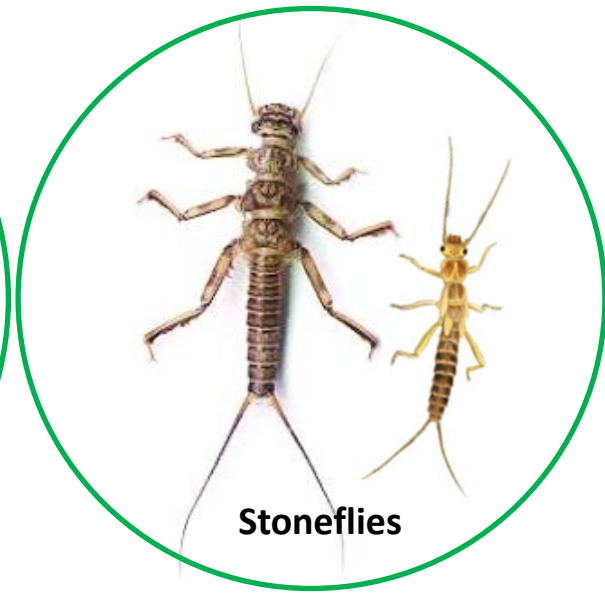
Species that indicate bad water quality



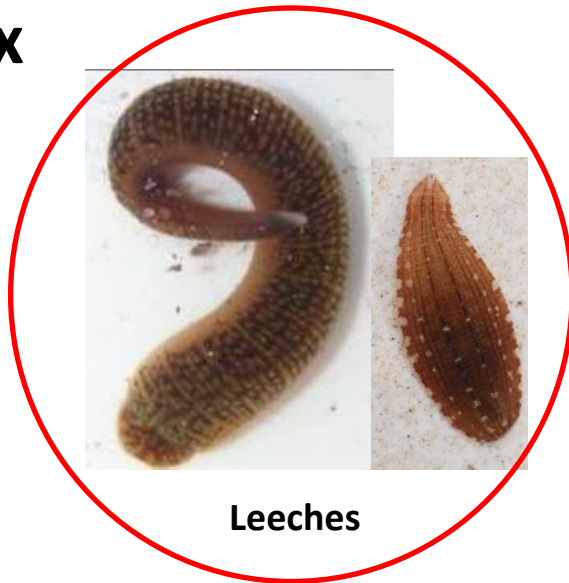
*Rhyacophila*  
(green caddisfly)



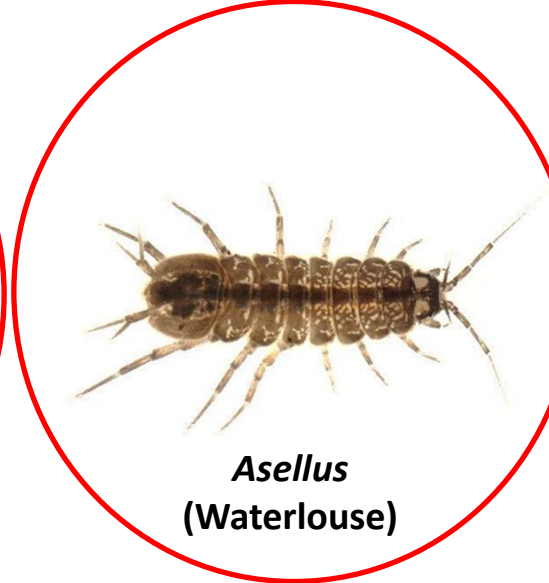
Heptagenidae  
(flattened mayflies)



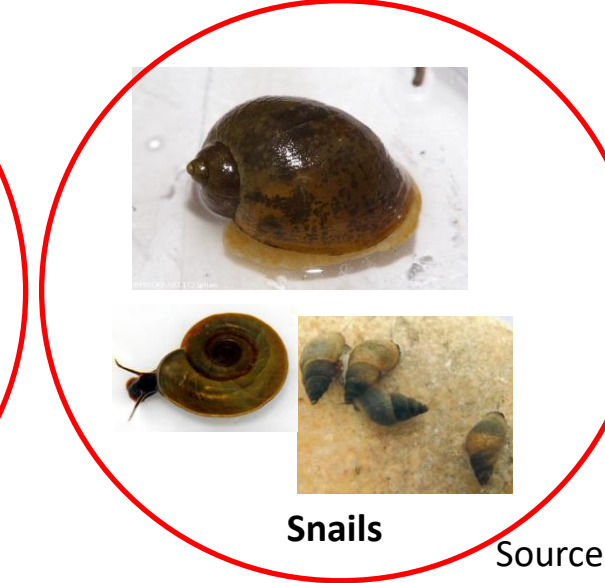
Stoneflies



Leeches

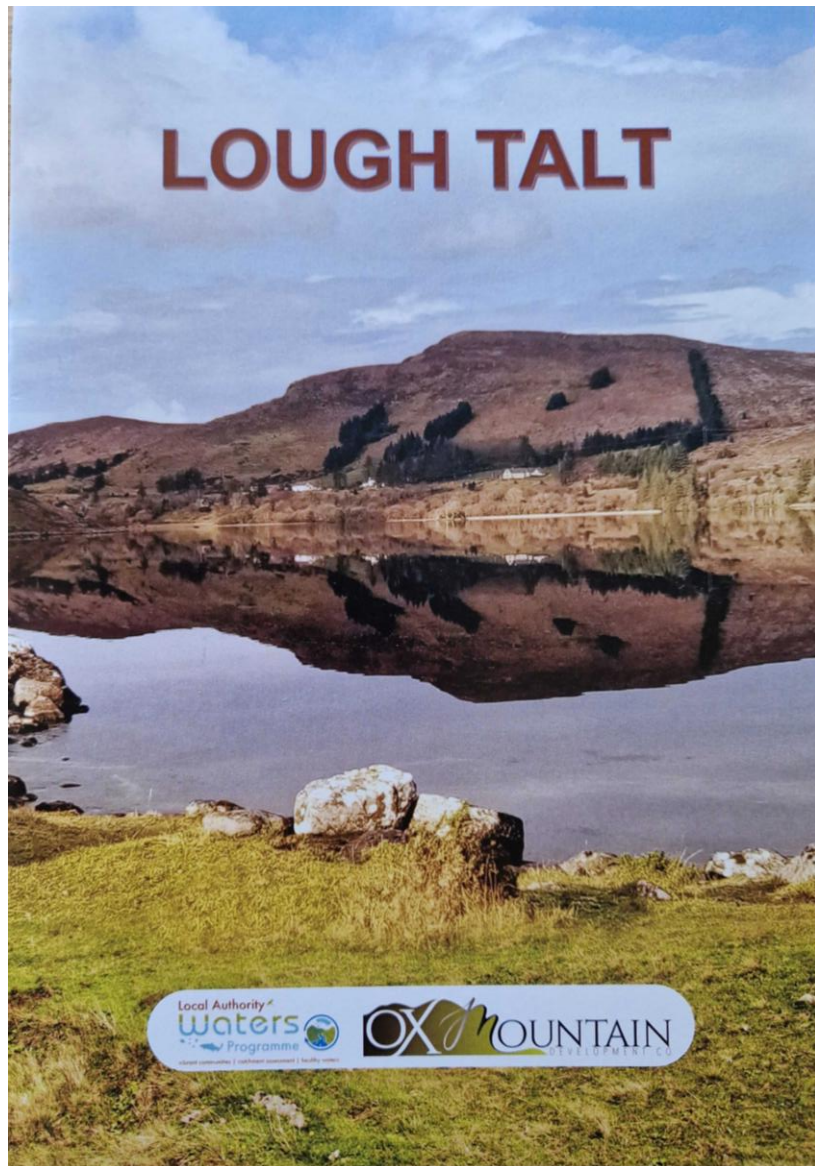


*Asellus*  
(Waterlouse)



Snails

Source: Simon Harrison, UCC



Ox Mountain Development Company – Lough Talt “Flow of Life” - Heritage Week 2025



Sligo Bay Catchment  
Rivers Trust  
Water Heritage Day 2025  
– Boat trip on Lough Gill

# Rainwater harvesting – conservation



Sligo Children's Community Garden, Cleveragh



Riverstown Tidy Towns

# Lough Arrow Fish Preservation Association & District Anglers CWDF 2025 project



Collaborative approach

IFI - screening/assessment  
(Lough Arrow SAC & SPA)  
- labour/machines

Lough Arrow Anglers – landowner  
permissions

LAWPRO - materials

Unfenced banks



Fenced banks



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**GERRY MERRICK, CHAIR**

**BALLISODARE FISHING CLUB**

**29<sup>th</sup> April 2026**



**BALLISODARE**  
FISHING CLUB

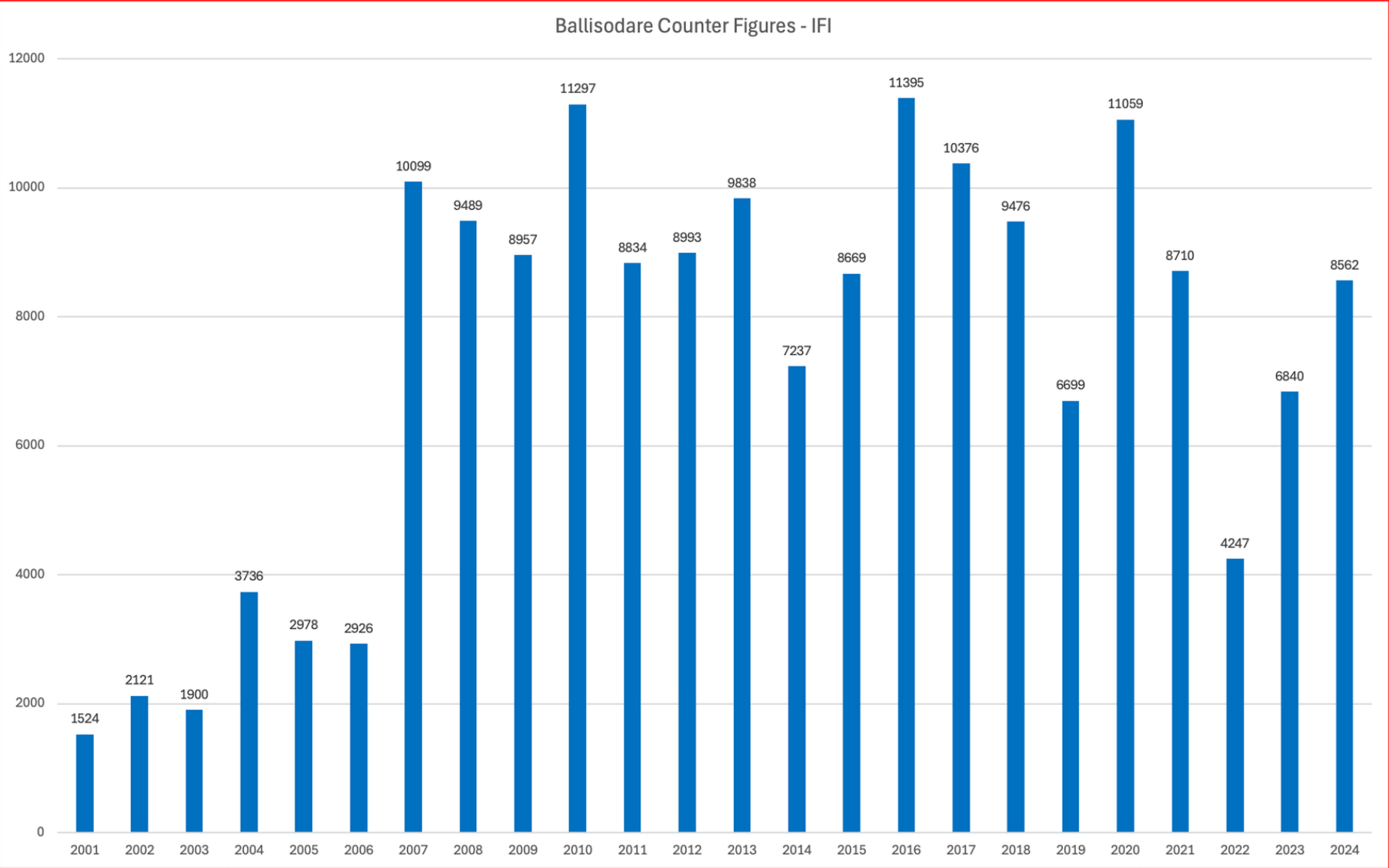
# Our Mission and Vision

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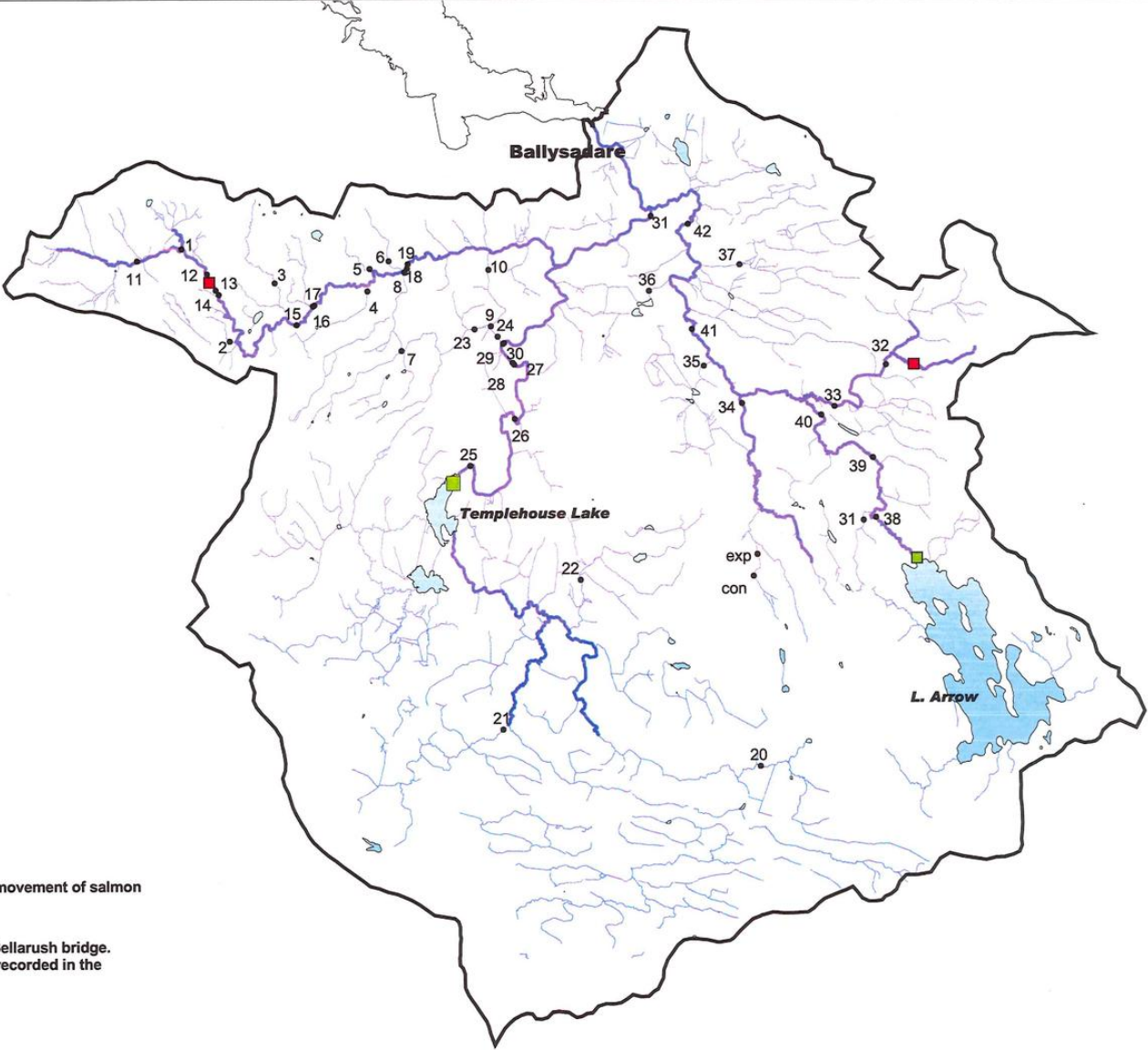


- Enhance Fishery for betterment of members and salmon stocks.
- Provide optimal environmental conditions by enhancing habitat and water quality.

# STATISTICS - IFI YEARLY COUNTER FIGURES



# CATCHMENT MAP



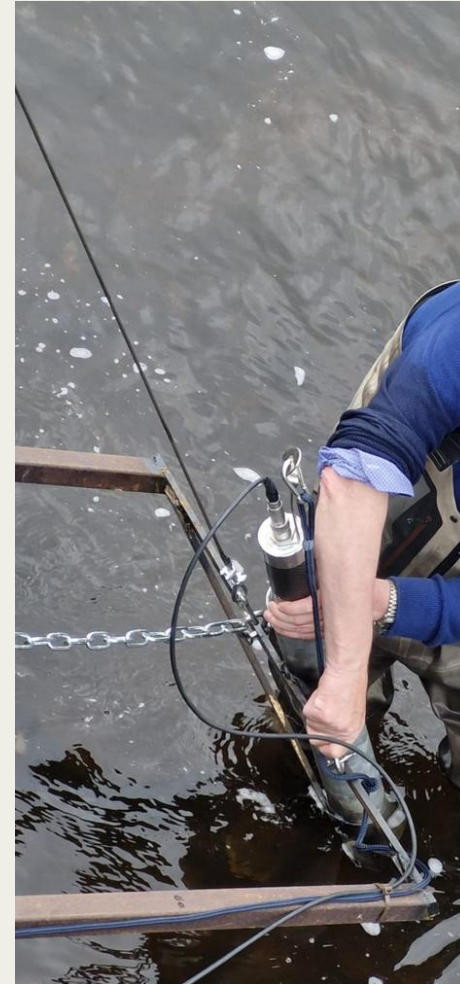
- Electrofishing Sites
- Physical barriers to the upstream movement of salmon
- Salmon rarely travel upstream of Bellarush bridge. Juvenile salmon have never been recorded in the L. Arrow sub-catchment.

# SPAWNING BEDS AND REJUVENATION



# WATER QUALITY

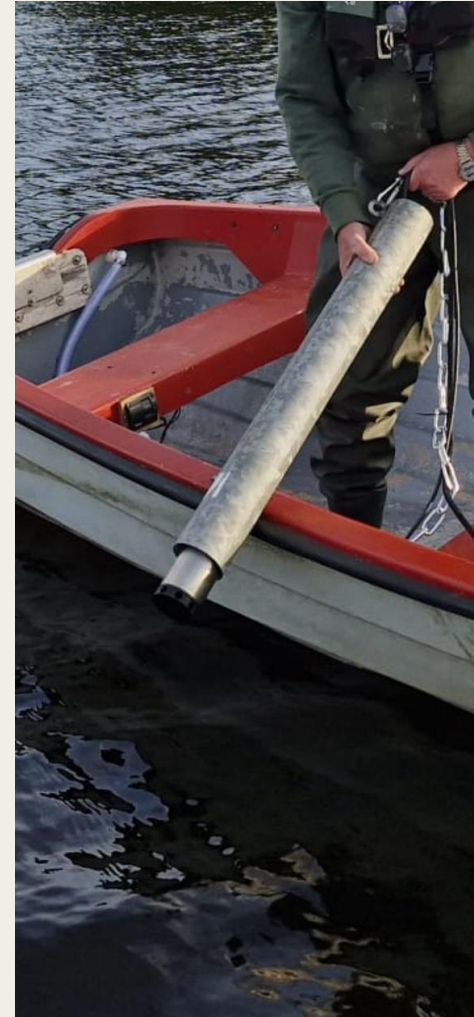
- Good water quality essential for salmon
- Unshin - Quality Good
- Owenmore - Quality Moderate
- Owenbeg - Quality Good
- Twelve waste-water treatment plants in catchment
- Breaches in three of these in recent years
- Ballisodare WWTP high concern !



# WATER QUALITY - COLLABORATION



- LAWPRO
- ATU Sligo
- Sligo Bay Catchment Rivers Trust
- Two Water Quality Sondes Installed
- Location
  - Ballisodare Estuary
  - Mill Pool



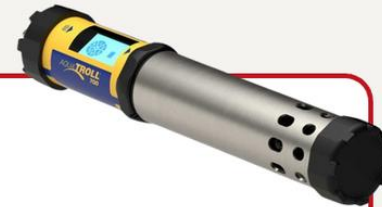
## Water Quality Sondes



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

Working closely with Sligo  
Atlantic Technical University



Two sondes installed at  
present - Millpool and  
Estuary

15

Every minutes

Sondes provides data on  
Dissolved Oxygen, ph,  
Amonmia (NH<sub>3</sub> & NH<sub>4</sub>),  
etc.

In 2026

Portable sondes will be utilised  
to record water quality  
readings at 35+ locations in  
catchment

# OTHER MANAGEMENT ATTENTION AREAS



## INVASIVE WEED SPECIES

BFC is working closely with the environmental section of Sligo County Council to identify and combat invasive plant species throughout the catchment. The most problematic species identified to date include:

- Giant Hogweed — widespread along sections of the Unshin and Ballisodare River
- Japanese Knotweed — present in several areas
- Himalayan Balsam — identified near Lough Arrow

Some invasive species require specialist intervention for safe removal and long-term management. BFC has also been in contact with the National Biodiversity Data Centre for expert guidance.



Himalayan Balsam



Japanese Knotweed

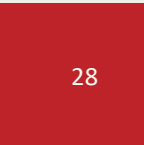


Giant Hogweed

# OTHER MANAGEMENT ATTENTION AREAS



## BIODIVERSITY OPEN DAYS



# Ballisodare Fishing Club – Community Reach-out

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## Ballisodare Catchment Cluster Project Overview – ATU Sligo (Beth Brown)

- Catchment Community Groups – Approx. 7 in Total – collaborative network
- Communication platform (e.g. WhatsApp) to facilitate information sharing, including both positive updates e.g. wildlife sightings, conservation work & concerns e.g. pollution.
- Learning from local experience and expertise.
- Promote work of BFC e.g., water monitoring, habitat enhancement
- Actively engage communities to protecting water quality through awareness raising, citizen science and practical management action.



**BALLISODARE**  
FISHING CLUB

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Thank you!



**SLIGO BAY**  
**CATCHMENT**  
**RIVER TRUST CLG**

## FUTURE PROJECTS

MARTIN COLLING  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

# OVERVIEW



# INITIAL MONTHS



Funding applications  
initiated immediately



Building project pipeline



Engaging landowners &  
partners

LAWPRO:  
COMMUNITY  
WATER  
DEVELOPMENT  
FUND



Natural flood  
management  
(Owenmore)



Nature-based solutions



Community & landowner  
engagement

# PROJECT PIPELINE



Catchment mapping (May–Oct 2026)



Flood mitigation feasibility study (June 2026)



Invasives programme (Ongoing)

# WHAT WE NEED



Support for  
funding



Partnerships



Capacity

# June 2026 National NbS Conference

The 2-day Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Conference will take place in **Dundalk Institute of Technology** on the **10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**.

More details to follow shortly, including registration.

All information will be available on our website <http://lawaters.ie> shortly

## NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

TO PROTECT AND RESTORE URBAN, RURAL, COASTAL AND RIVERINE



10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> of  
June 2026



**Dundalk Institute of Technology**

# Collaborative multi-agency approach to improve Water Quality



**“Water is the driving force of all nature”**

*Leonardo da Vinci*



Collaboration is key to success!!



Q and A

