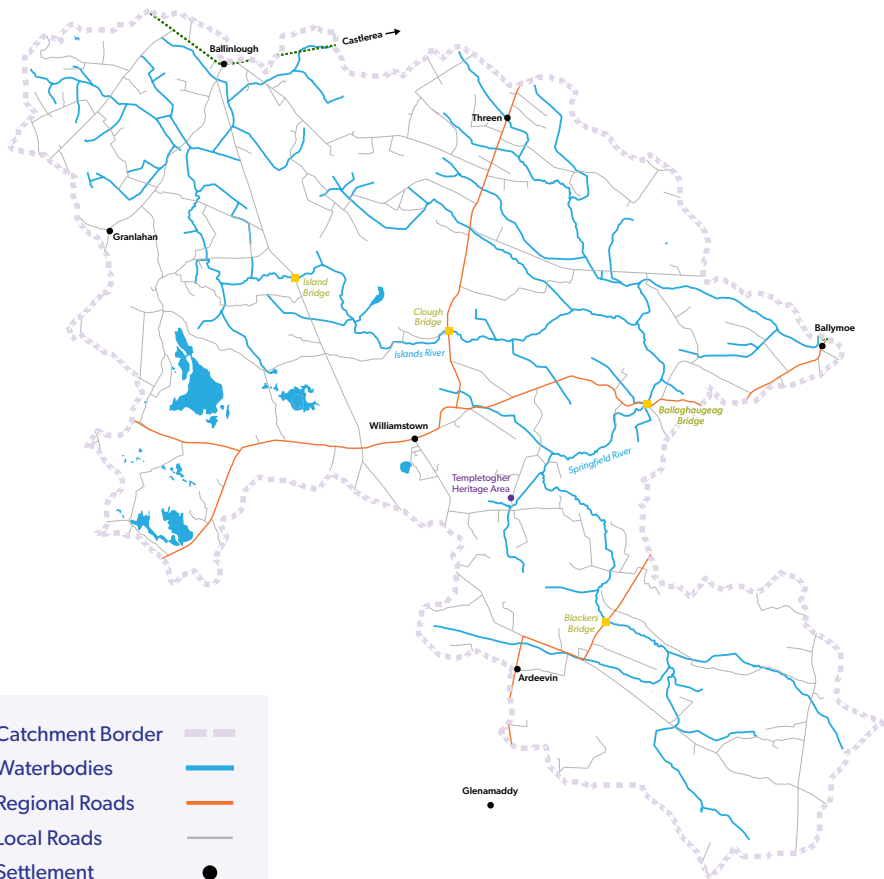


How's the water quality in your local river?



Islands

Demonstration Sub-catchment



Catchment Border	— — — —
Waterbodies	—
Regional Roads	—
Local Roads	—
Settlement	●
Point of Interest	●
Bridge	■



About this summary

The map on page one shows the Islands demonstration sub-catchment. This is the local area where Waters of LIFE are working with landowners to improve water quality. This summary provides an overview of the issues and pressures facing local water quality. The information is taken from assessments and investigations carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO).

About the area

The Islands sub-catchment covers 145km² across north east Galway and west Roscommon. Its waters feed into the River Suck and the upper Shannon catchment. We estimate about 2,600 people live here based on the 2022 census.

The catchment is in a low-lying area with mainly limestone bedrock. Soil type is mainly peat and poorly drained with some well drained areas. There are 534 farms within the catchment, some bogs and pockets of forestry throughout.

The sub-catchment is divided into six water bodies:

- Islands River (three sections)
- Springfield River (two sections)
- Pollynoon

Summary of EPA status

EPA data shows that water quality in the Islands sub-catchment is mixed. The upper section of the Islands river only has moderate water quality and we need to restore it.

We will be working to restore the lower section of the Islands river (where it enters the river Suck) from good to high status.

The other sections have good water quality and we need to protect them.

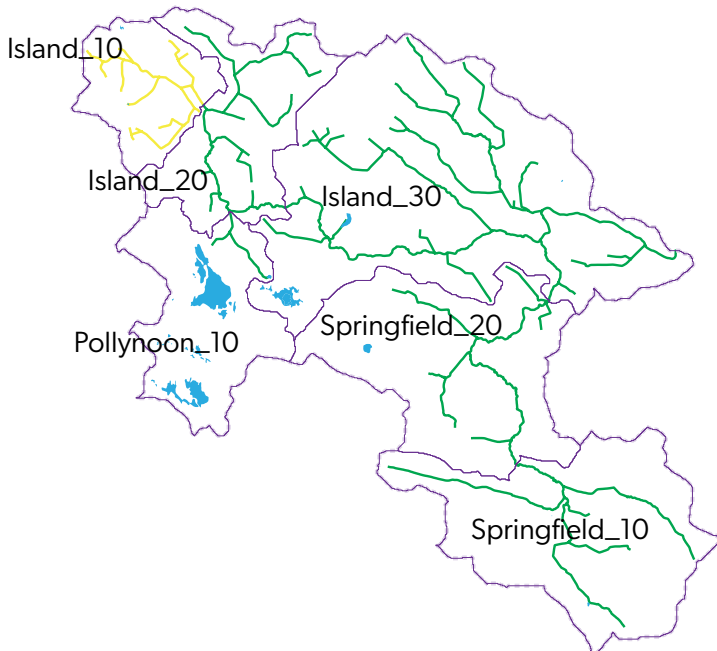
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assigns each water body an ecological status for water quality. They are then given an objective to have good or high status by 2027.

This is based on our Water Framework Directive legal requirements. A risk assessment works out how likely it is for a water body to meet its objective.

Some of these rivers are at risk of not meeting their objectives for water quality.

Status

Status 2016-2021		EPA status, objective and risk	
Water body	Ecological status of water quality	Water quality objective	Is it at risk of not meeting its objective?
Island_10	Moderate	Restore to good	At risk
Island_20	Good	Protect	Not at risk
Island_30	Good	Restore to high	At risk
Springfield_10	Good	Protect	Not at risk
Springfield_20	Good	Protect	More assessment needed
Pollynoon_10	Good	Protect	More assessment needed



Issues

LAWPRO's local catchment assessment found the following issues

Where?	What?	How?
All water bodies	Poor habitat quality	<p>The habitat of a river provides the living space for fish, other animals and plants.</p> <p>Vegetation on river banks is also an important part of the river's habitat.</p> <p>The variety and quality of these habitats, such as clean gravels, pools, trees and logs influences what can live in the river.</p> <p>Certain activities and pollutants can reduce the quality of these habitats and cause habitat loss.</p>

Pressures

LAWPRO's local catchment assessment found the following pressures.

Where?	What?	How?
All water bodies	Channelisation	<p>Channelisation is the digging out and straightening of rivers. It makes naturally formed rivers look and behave more like man-made channels.</p> <p>This takes away the habitat that fish and animals depend on for food and reproduction.</p>



Pressures

LAWPRO's local catchment assessment found the following pressures

Where?	What?	How?
Island_10 Island_20 Island_30 Springfield_10	Land drainage	<p>Drainage channels take water from the land and increase the volume of water and fine sediment flowing into local rivers.</p> <p>Increased volume can change the flow and form of rivers.</p> <p>This can erode river banks and clog riverbeds with fine sediment, making the habitat unsuitable for fish and other animals.</p>
Island_10 Island_30 Springfield_10 Springfield_20 Pollynoon_10	Agriculture	<p>Agriculture refers to a broad range of farming activities and land use. Certain activities can pose a higher risk to river water quality.</p> <p>These include inappropriate use of fertiliser, drainage works, land clearance, overgrazing and access of livestock to rivers.</p>
Island_20 Island_30	Forestry	<p>Forestry works, such as planting or felling, can increase soil erosion and the amount of fine sediment and nutrients entering rivers.</p> <p>Water channels running directly into rivers from commercially forested areas can carry excess fine sediment and nutrients.</p> <p>Water channels from peaty areas can also cause higher acidity levels.</p>
Island_30	Urban waste water	<p>Poorly treated human waste in rivers adds nutrients and organic matter. They can cause a reduction in oxygen levels, making it hard for fish or other animals to survive.</p>

We want to hear from you

We want to hear from people who live in the area and know its rivers. Your local expertise helps us review and update our approach.

Tell us about the changes and pressures you've seen, and how we can support you to look after your local river.

Residents and landowners: Come talk to us or email us in confidence.

Community Groups: Let us come and meet with your members.

Everyone: Attend our regular engagement events.

Contact us: info@watersoflife.ie

Further information:

The information in this document is taken from investigations and assessments carried out by the EPA and the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO).

LAWPRO completed a 2022 desk study and a 2024 field work report of the Islands Sub-Catchment. More information is available at www.watersoflife.ie/islands



The EPA has created a fact sheet with more information on how water is monitored and assessed. You can read the EPA's Plain English summary at www.epa.ie



The EPA has created a map to help understand the role of agriculture in protecting and restoring water quality. You can view it at gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/agriculture



How we work

With public land and utilities

Our project partners include: Local Authorities Water Programme; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Coillte; EPA; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Teagasc; Office of Public Works (OPW) and Forest Service.

Where land and facilities are managed publicly, we work directly with our project partners and other public bodies on measures and referrals.

With local landowners

Our project features an environmental scheme to support farmers and foresters.

This includes results-based payments for water quality measures. The scheme is voluntary and advice is private and confidential.

We also provide free advice and guidance to non-farming landowners.

With local communities

We reach out to local communities to share how and why we work to improve water quality. This includes public meetings and information.

We also connect with local schools to help with learning about water and the local environment.



Waters of LIFE IP – about the project

We trial water quality solutions that work for local landowners and feed into future influence policy at national and EU level. We are an integrated project co-funded by the European Union.

We support LAWPRO's Blue Dot Programme to look after Ireland's best quality waters. These are water bodies with a high-status objective for water quality. Blue Dots represent about 10% of all water bodies in Ireland.



How do we find solutions for water quality?

1. Support landowners with measures that work both for water quality and their land-use.
2. Help communities understand the importance of water quality.
3. Inform future policy for long-term impact.

Why is water quality important?

Humans and animals need clean water to survive. Ireland's nature is unique, and it needs healthy rivers to survive. Improving water quality is a challenge, but the solutions are there if we work together. That is our project's purpose.

Where else does Waters of LIFE work?

We work in five sub-catchments (with a control catchment) to find water quality solutions for a variety of land uses.

Waters of



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