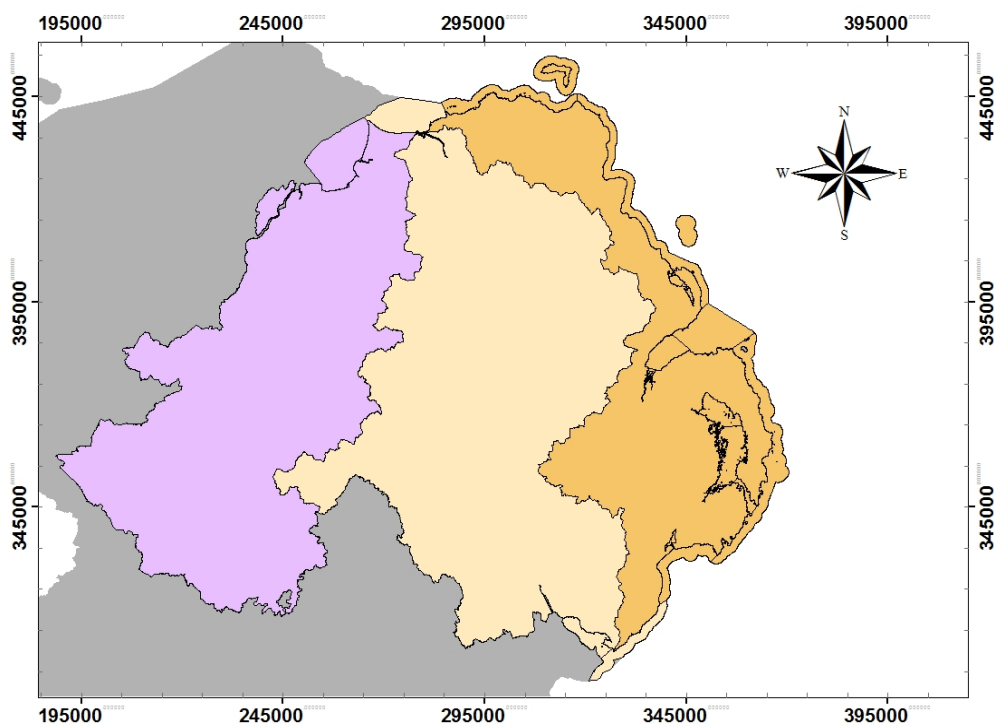


# **Northern Ireland Water Framework Directive Statistics Report September 2018**

The water environment is important to all of us, when managed appropriately it has economic, recreational, social and environmental benefits. Within Northern Ireland, as within the rest of the UK, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the main driver for assessing our water environment and pushing us towards achieving good ecological status for our water environments.

## River Basin Management Plans

The WFD is implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). Northern Ireland has three districts for which separate RBMPs are produced: North Western, Neagh Bann and North Eastern see Figure.1 below



**Figure.1 Northern Ireland's River Basin Districts**

The first cycle RBMPs ran from 2009 to 2015. The second cycle Plans were published in 2015 and are due to run until 2021. At the half way stage of each cycle there is a requirement to report to the European Commission on the implementation of the plan and progress on the measures set out within Northern Ireland's River Basin Districts. This reporting exercise will be undertaken in December 2018.

## **Northern Ireland Statistics - Water Environment**

Each year DAERA release official statistics through the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report. This report is a compendium of 8 key environmental themes and provides updates on associated indicator measures and monitoring programmes linked to Government strategies. Water is one of the 8 key themes and is included each year. However the WFD data included is not updated each year due to the timescales of the monitoring. This report is the first comprehensive WFD water status update since the 2015 assessment which outlined the status of water bodies at the initiation of the second cycle plans.

The data used to determine status for rivers and lakes is based on the latest data collected up to the end of the previous calendar year, in this case, 2014 and 2017 for rivers and lakes. For transitional and coastal waters, data up to February 2018 is included.

### **Classification Units – Water Bodies**

Water bodies are the basic management units for reporting and assessing compliance with the WFD environmental objectives. There are 571 water bodies in Northern Ireland of these 496 are surface water bodies: including 450 rivers, 21 lakes, and 25 transitional and coastal waters (Marine); the remaining 75 are groundwater bodies.

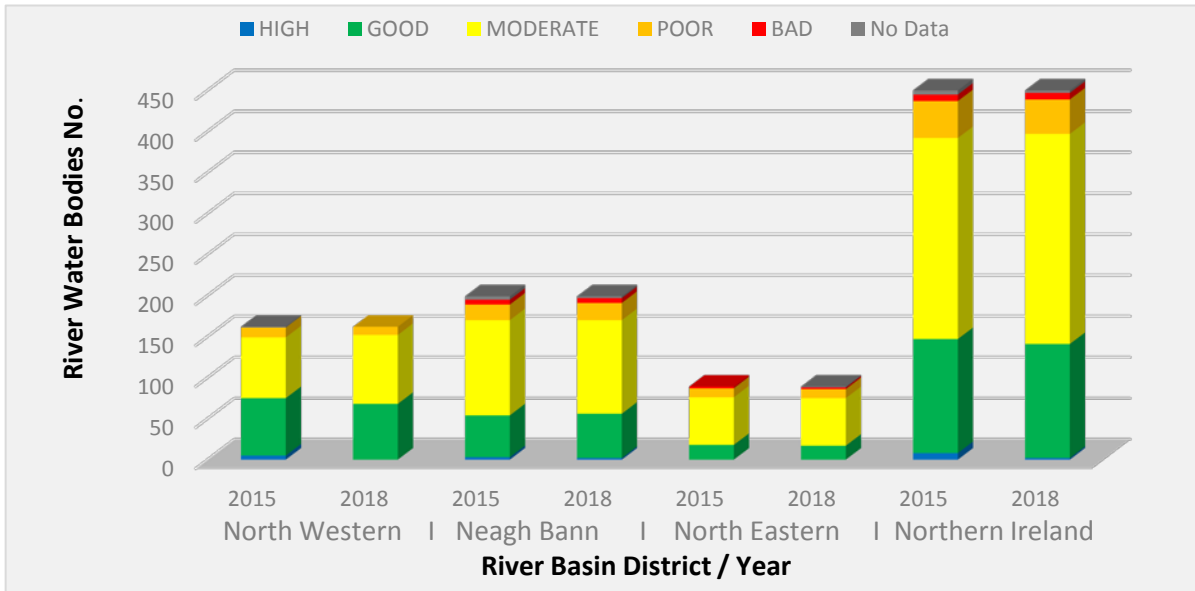
The delineation of water bodies, classification tools and standards used for the second cycle WFD classifications were changed from the first cycle. As a result pre 2014 data is not shown for comparison.

The WFD requires NIEA to classify water bodies' status and protect that status from deterioration and, where necessary and practicable, to restore water bodies to good status. When assessing water quality, we consider both ecological and chemical quality, as well as the pressures that can affect them. The ecological and chemical classification results for surface waters are combined to give an overall status in one of five classes: bad; poor; moderate; good; and high. Groundwater is assigned to either good or poor status for chemical quality and water quantity.

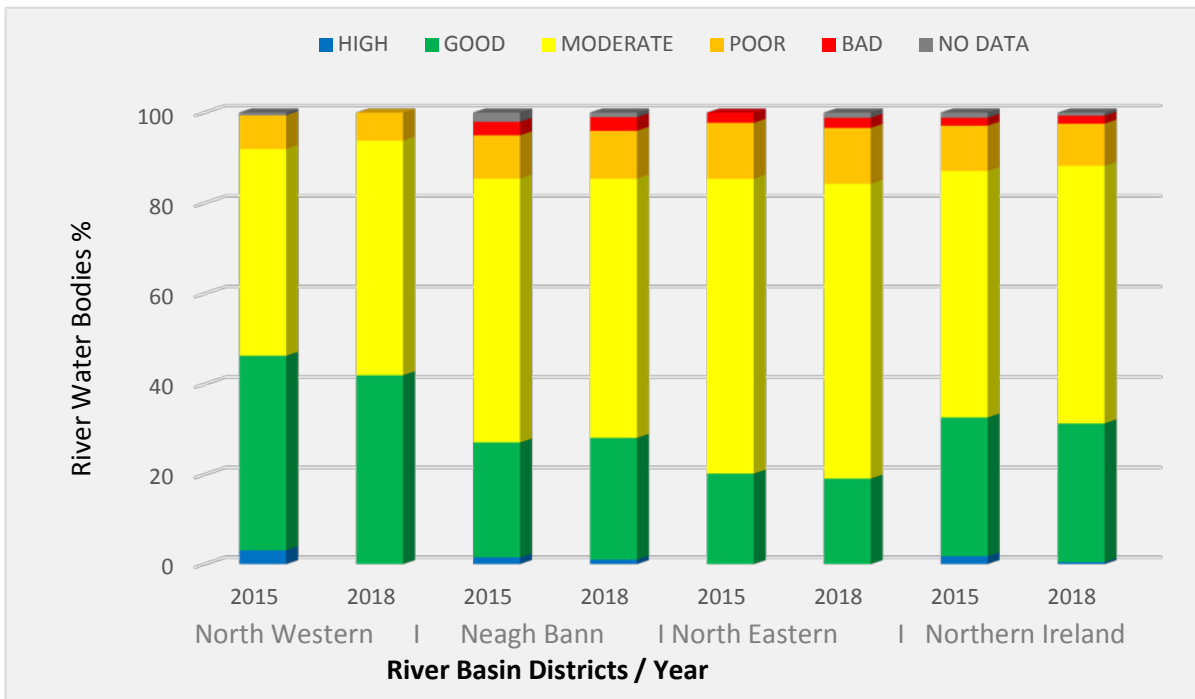
Overall status of a water body is determined by the lower of its 'ecological status' and its 'chemical status', the one out all out rule.

## Northern Ireland's River Classification Status

The data in Figure.2a & 2b refer to Northern Ireland's 450 river water bodies. In 2018, 31.3% of NI river water bodies were classified as 'good' or better. This compares with 32.7% classified as 'good' or better in 2015.



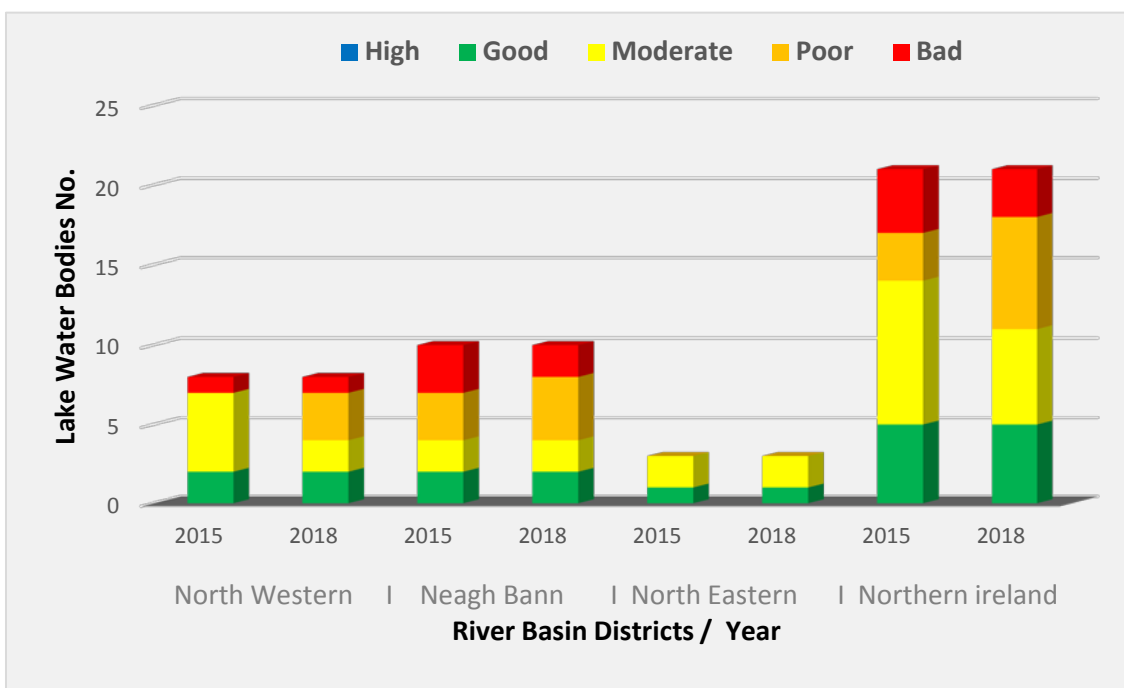
**Figure.2a Water Framework Directive (WFD) overall classification 2015 - 2018 – Second cycle river water body sets and standards. (No. river water bodies)**



**Figure.2b Water Framework Directive (WFD) overall classification 2015 - 2018 – Second cycle river water body sets and standards. (% river water bodies)**

## Northern Ireland's lakes Classification Status

The data in Figure.3 refer to the 21 lake water bodies within Northern Ireland, that is lakes with an area greater than 50 hectares. In 2018, 5 of the 21 lake water bodies in Northern Ireland were classified as 'good' or better and 16 lake water bodies were classified as 'moderate' or worse. This was the same overall numerical split as at the start of the second cycle in 2015, however there has been a decrease of two lakes from 'moderate' to 'poor' and an increase of one from 'bad' to 'poor'.

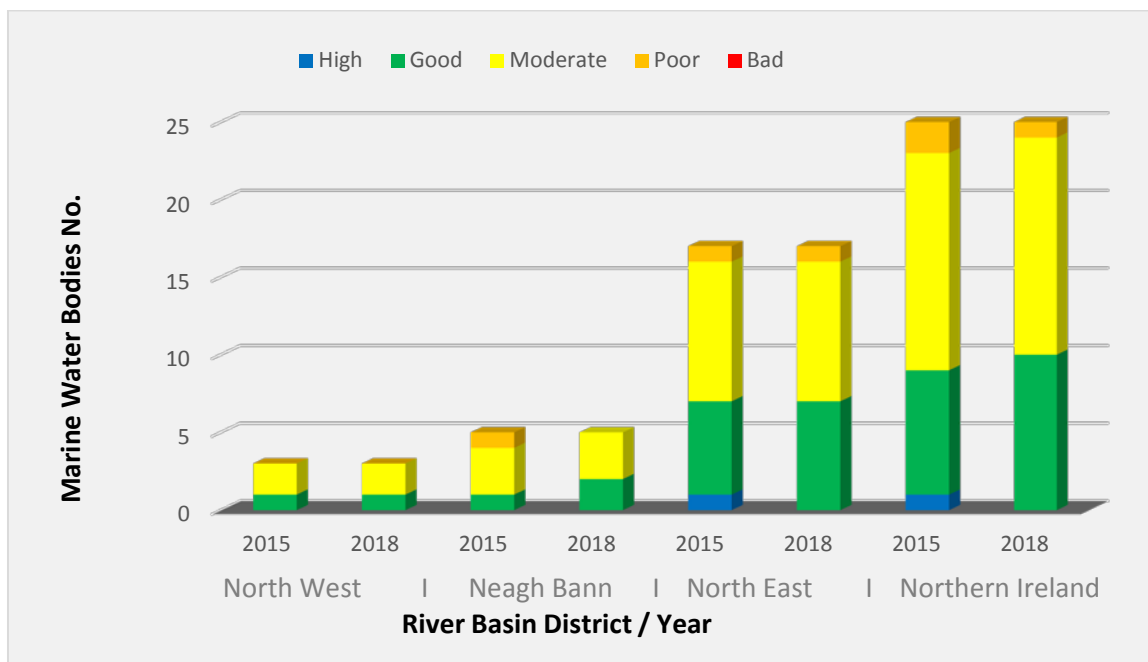


**Figure.3 Lake Water Framework Directive (WFD) status 2015 – 2018 Second cycle lake water body sets and standards. (No. of water bodies)**

## Northern Ireland's Transitional and Coastal Waters Classification Status

The data in Figure.4 refer to the 25 transitional and coastal water bodies as listed within the 2015 WFD second cycle water body data set.

In 2018, 10 transitional and coastal water bodies were classified at 'good' or better status with the remaining 15 being at 'moderate' or worse status. This compares to 9 transitional and coastal water bodies classified at 'good' or better and 16 being at 'moderate' or worse in 2015.



**Figure.4 Marine Water Framework Directive (WFD) status 2015 – 2018 Second cycle Transitional and Coastal water body sets and standards. (No. of water bodies)**

## **Northern Ireland's Groundwater Classification Status**

Due to a long lag time, groundwater body classifications are not carried out on the same timescale as surface waters. The next date for groundwater status update will be in 2021 for the end of the second cycle RBMP.