



Water Quality in Ireland

Environment Ireland

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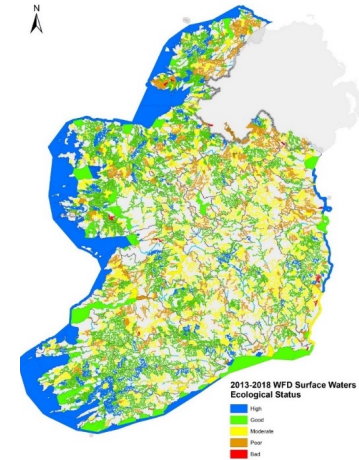
Introduction

- Water quality in Ireland
- Pressures on water quality
 - wastewater
 - agriculture
- Impacts on water quality
- Key messages

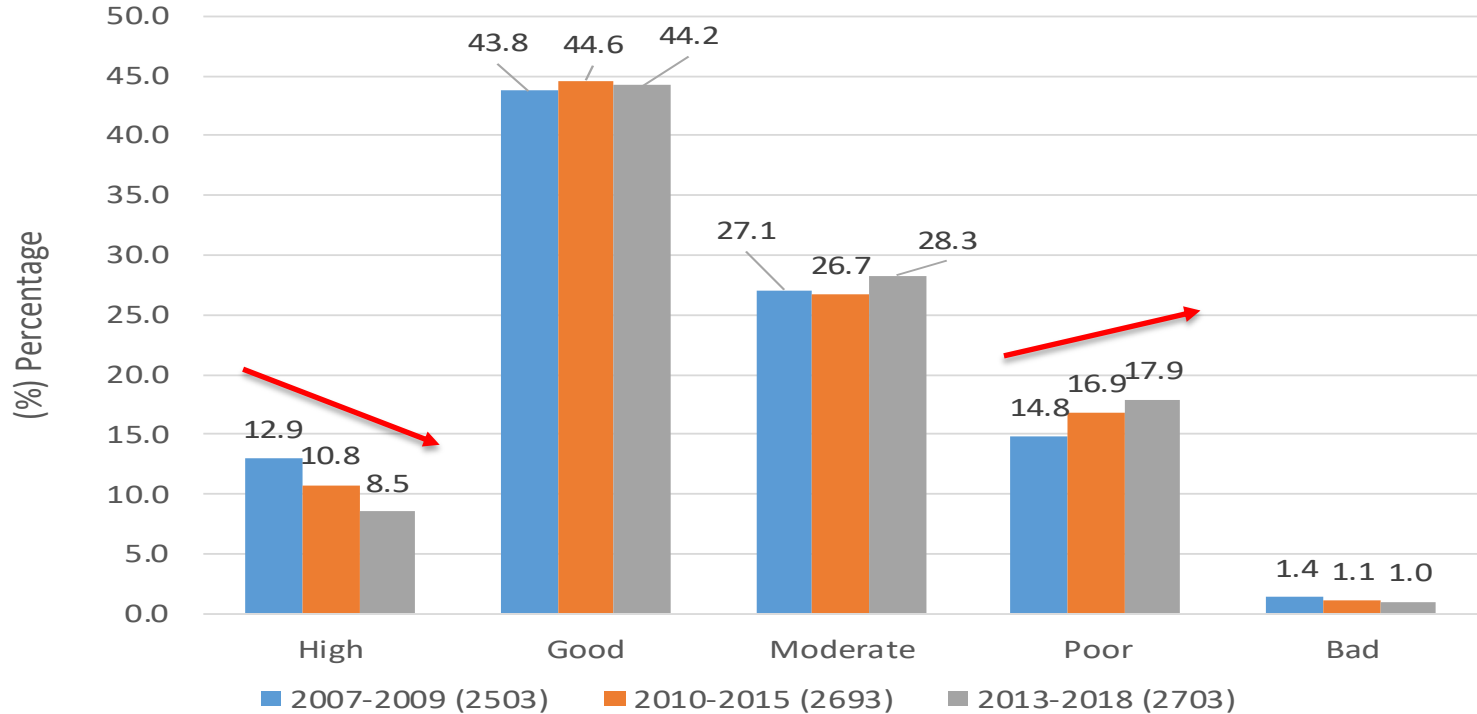


Water quality in Ireland 2013-2018

Water body type	% Satisfactory (high or good)	Change since 2015
Rivers	53%	5.5% decline
Lakes	50%	4.3% improvement
Estuaries	38%	Stable
Coastal	80%	Stable
Groundwater	92%	1% improvement
Canals	87%	Stable

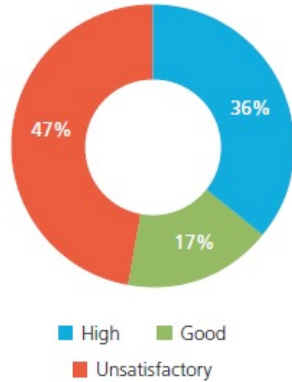


Trends in water quality status

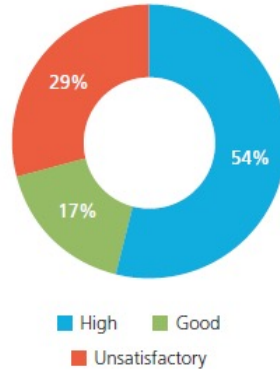


Nutrient trends

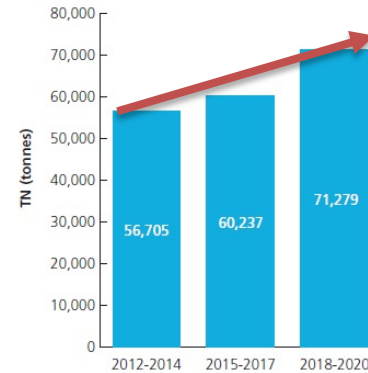
River Nitrate Quality



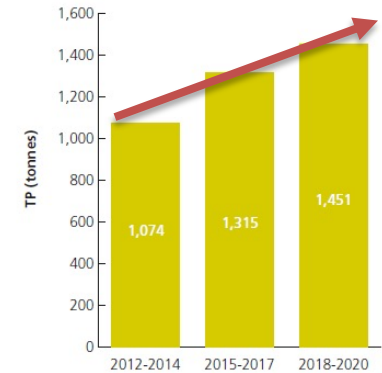
River Phosphate Quality



Total Nitrogen Loads



Total Phosphorus Loads



- Nitrate concentrations too high in almost half of rivers
- Phosphate concentrations too high in more than one quarter of rivers
- Nutrient loads to the marine environment up 26% (N) and 35% (P)

Pesticides

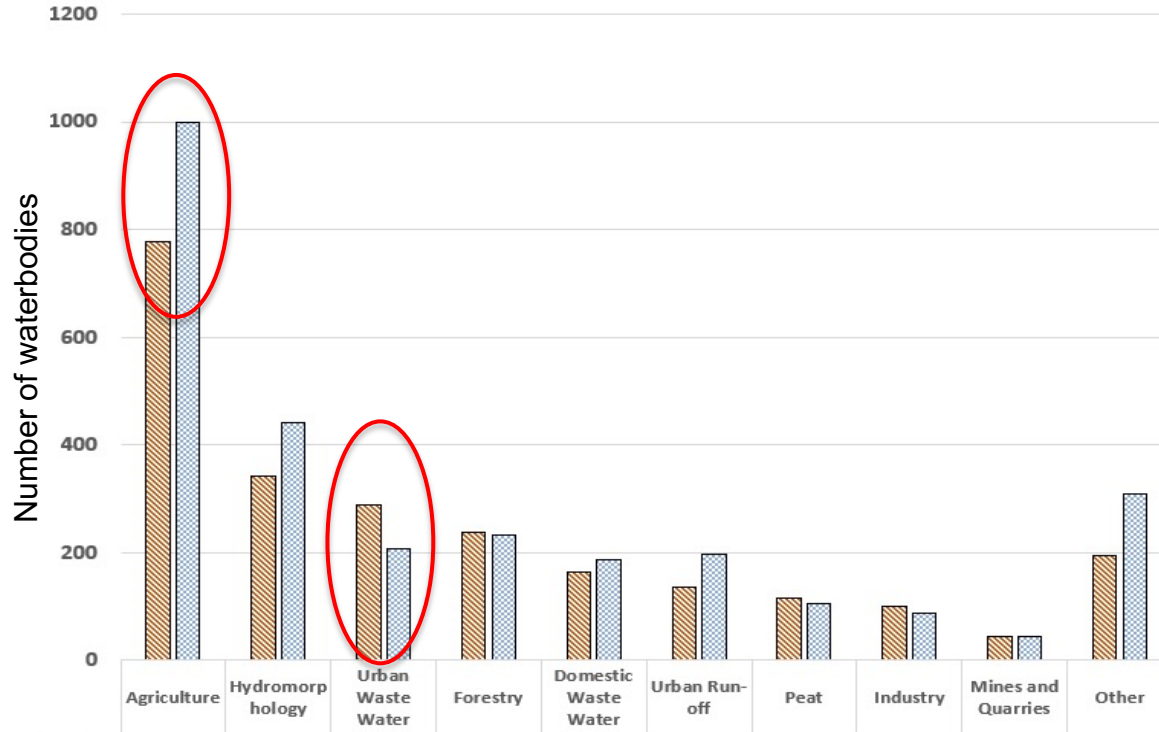


Table 5.1: Summary of positive detections for pesticides in rivers 2013-2018

Pesticide	No. of samples	No. of rivers	No. of detects (%)	No. (%) of rivers affected
MCPA	1292	144	277 (21.4%)	80(55.6%)
Mecoprop*	1158	141	102(8.8%)	53(37.6%)
2 6-Dichlorobenzamide	1093	117	87(8.0%)	60(51.3%)
2 4-D	1158	141	60(5.2%)	41(29.1%)
Isoproturon*	1468	141	34(2.3%)	19(13.5%)

* has an EQS (no breaches of EQS detected)

Pressures impacting water quality



Change from 2nd cycle to 3rd cycle

Agriculture: 777 to 1000

Wastewater: 289 to 208

Urban Wastewater



- 97 priority areas in 2021 - down from 148 in 2017

But in 2020...

- 12 large towns and cities not meeting standard required
- 34 towns and villages releasing raw sewage
- 206 areas where urban wastewater is a significant pressure on waters at risk of pollution.
- 12 areas where urban wastewater discharges must improve to protect endangered freshwater pearl mussels
- 7 non-compliant sewerage systems that must be upgraded to meet EU standards



Agriculture

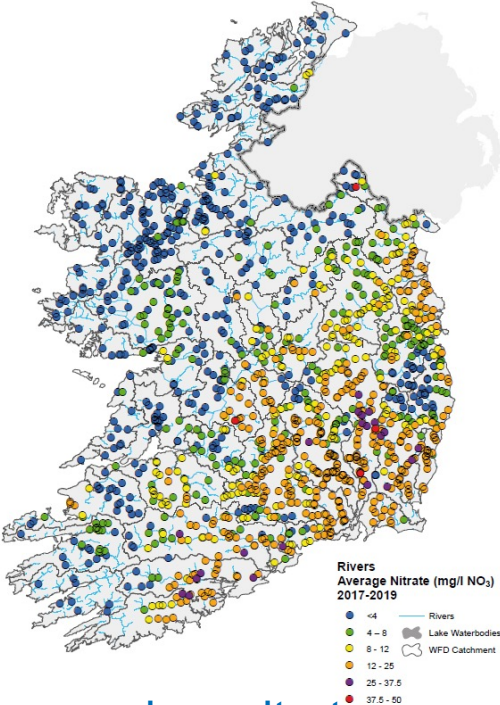


Main issues for water quality

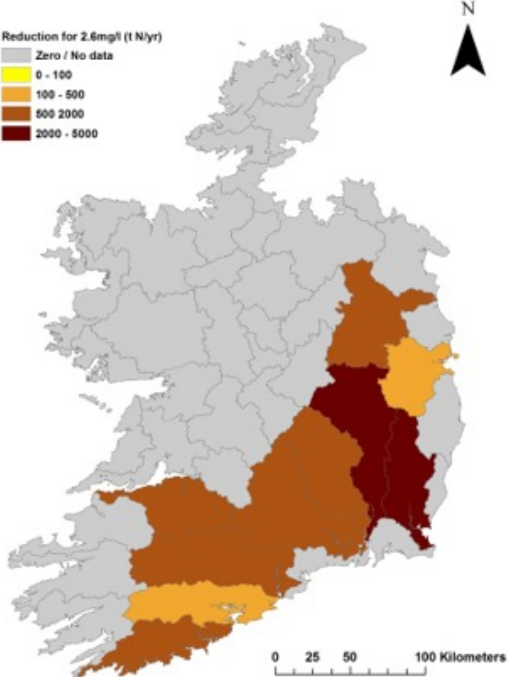
- Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus)
- Sediment
- Pesticides
- Microbial contamination



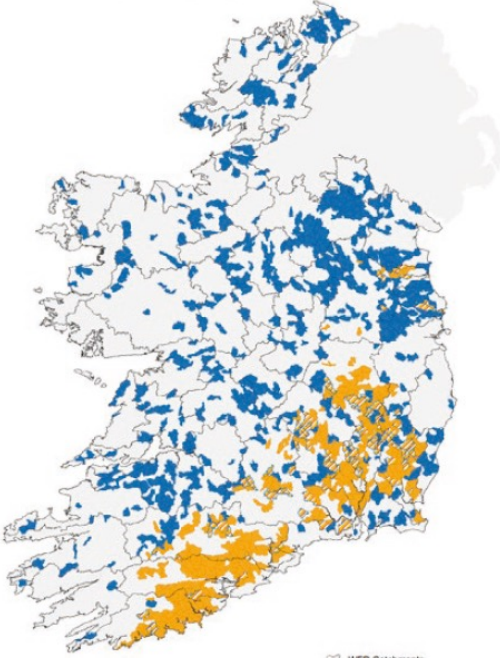
Right measures in the right place



Average river nitrate conc.



Nitrogen reductions required



N and P measures

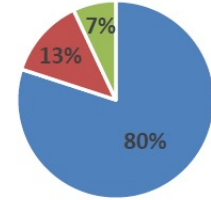
Impacts of poor water quality

Drinking water

- 74,955 consumers were on **boil notices** in 2020
(two-thirds for greater than 30 days)
- 33 supplies had **pesticides** exceedances in 2020
- 24 supplies with **nitrate** exceedances

Bathing water

- 2 beaches have lost their designation
- 4 beaches classified as 'poor' quality in 2020
- 57 pollution incidents in 2020 – beach closures



■ Surface Water ■ Groundwater ■ Spring



Dublin beaches closed to swimmers following wastewater overflow

24 Shares    



ALAN LOUGHNANE

Conclusions



- Water quality needs to improve; significant challenge to achieve our goals
- Some progress on wastewater...a lot more to do
- Need continued and sustained investment
- Urgent action needed in agriculture to reverse trends
- Need to target measures in the right place
- Opportunities for multiple environmental benefits

Thank you for listening

