



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Nature and Water: Status of protected habitats and species in Ireland

Rebecca Jeffrey

National Parks and Wildlife Service

May 29 2019

Outline



- Nature Directives
- National Conservation Assessment process
- Draft 2019 results
- Wider context and the way forward

Birds Directive 2009/147/EC



Requires designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for:

Annex I species

Migratory species

Aggregations of 20,000 waterbirds/10,000 pairs of seabirds

Wetlands are a vital component

Conserve populations of all European wild birds



Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC



Requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for the protection of:

Annex I habitats (60 habitats)- 44 are water-dependent
Annex II species (25 species)- 21 are water-dependent

To maintain at, or restore to, **favourable conservation status**



Habitats Directive:

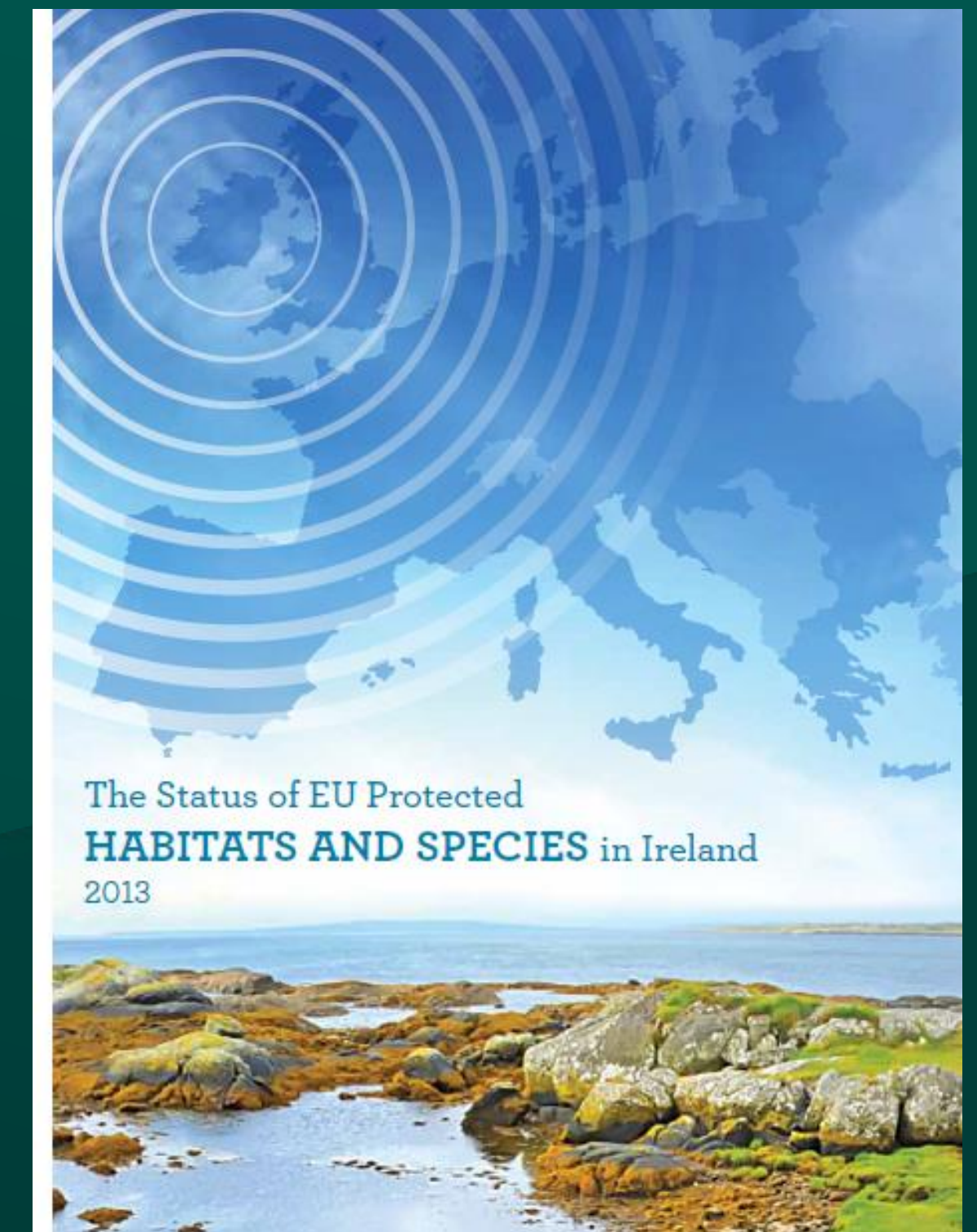


Article 11:

Member States shall undertake surveillance of the conservation status of the natural habitats and species referred to in Article 2.....

Article 17:

Every six years....Member States shall draw up a report on the implementation of the measures taken under this Directive.....and the main results of the surveillance referred to in Article 11.....



Conservation Status Assessments



All habitats and species listed in Annexes (I, II, IV and V) of the Habitats Directive are assessed using a standardised approach

Parameters assessed:

Habitat	Species
Range	Range
Area	Population
Structure and functions	Habitat for the species
Future prospects	Future prospects

Evaluation matrix



Status of parameters	All 'favourable', or three 'favourable' and one 'unknown'	One or more 'inadequate', but no 'bad'	One or more 'bad'	Two or more 'unknown' combined with 'favourable' or all 'unknown'
Overall assessment of CS	Favourable	Unfavourable- inadequate	Unfavourable- bad	Unknown

Draft 2019 results- freshwater habitats



Habitat code	Habitat name	Conservation status	Trend
3110	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)	Bad	=
3130	Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoëto-Nanojuncetea	Inadequate	↓
3140	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.	Bad	↓
3150	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation	Inadequate	=
3160	Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	Inadequate	=
3180	Turloughs	Inadequate	=
3260	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation	Inadequate	↓
3270	Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation	Favourable	=

Draft 2019 results- coastal/transitional



Habitat code	Habitat name	Conservation status	Trend
1130	Estuaries	Inadequate	↓
1150	Coastal lagoons	Bad	↓
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays	Bad	↓



Draft 2019 results- freshwater species



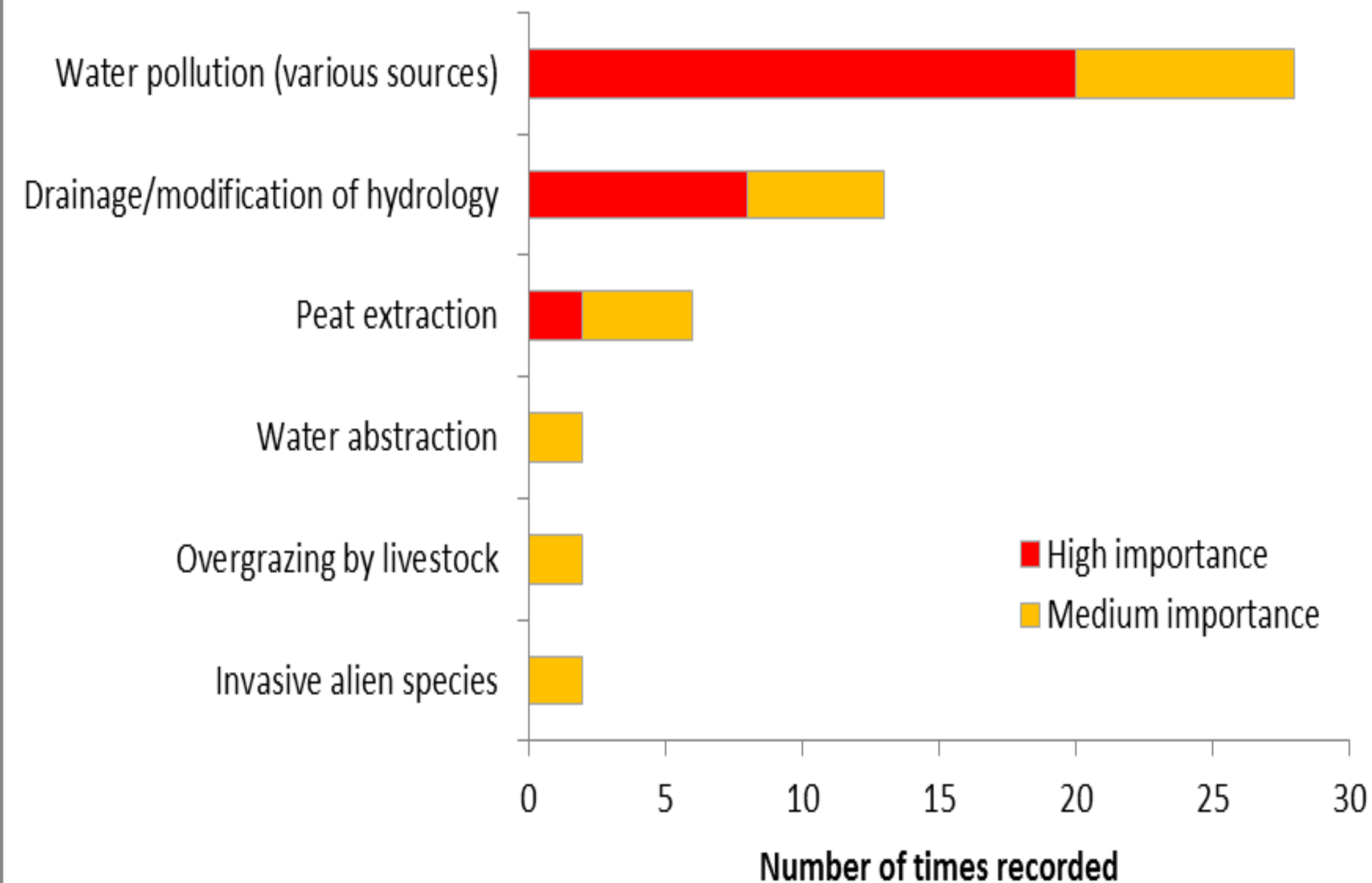
Code	Scientific name	Common Name	Conservation status	Trend
1029	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Bad	↓
1092	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	White-clawed Crayfish	Bad	↓
1095	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	Sea Lamprey	Bad	=
1096	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>	Brook Lamprey	Favourable	=
1099	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	River Lamprey	Unknown	
1103	<i>Alosa fallax</i>	Twaite Shad	Bad	=
1106	<i>Salmo salar</i>	Atlantic Salmon	Inadequate	=
1355	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Otter	Favourable	=
1833	<i>Najas flexilis</i>	Slender Naiad	Inadequate	↓
5046	<i>Alosa killarnensis</i>	Killarney Shad	Favourable	=



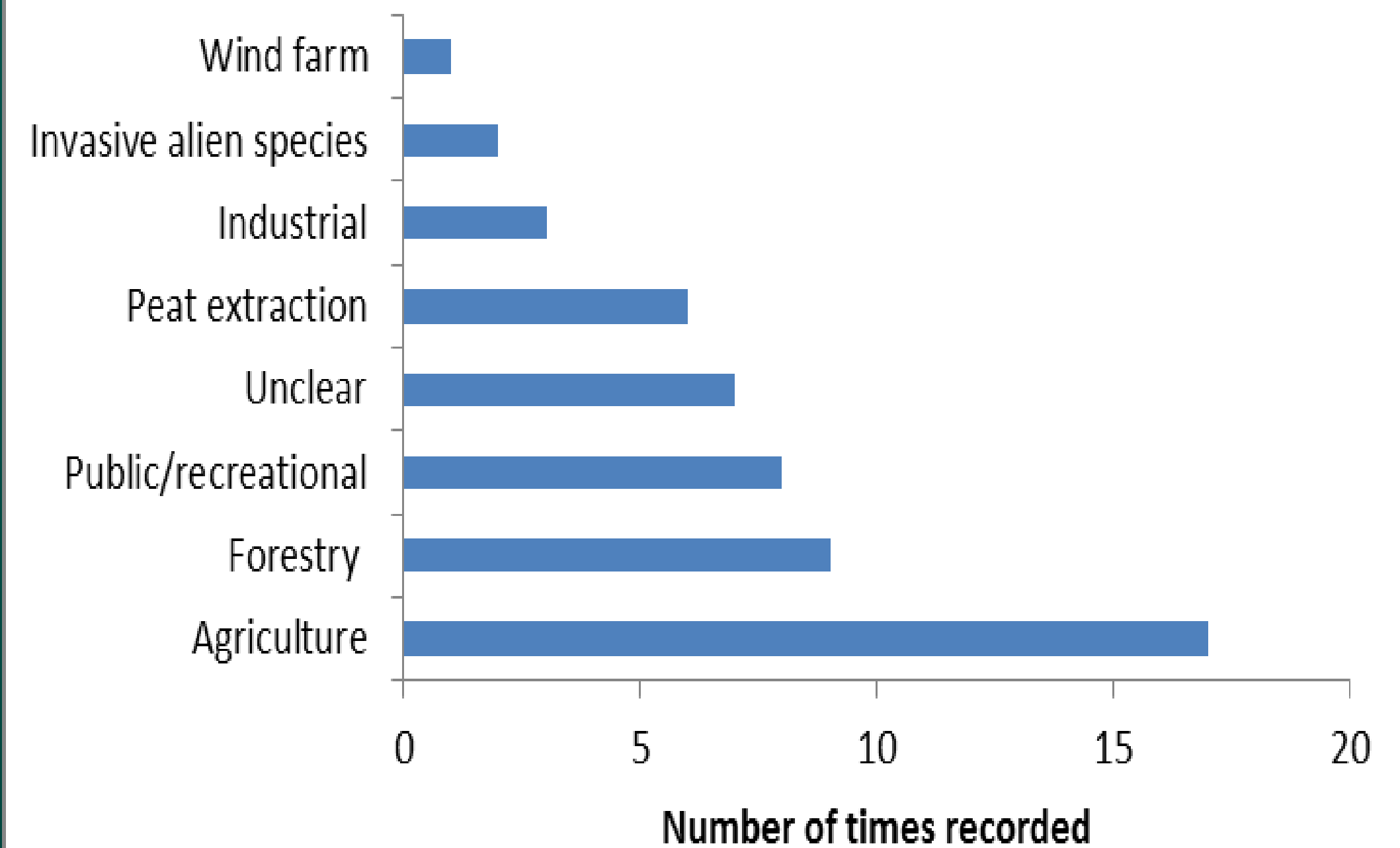
Why?



Pressures recorded in Aquatic habitats



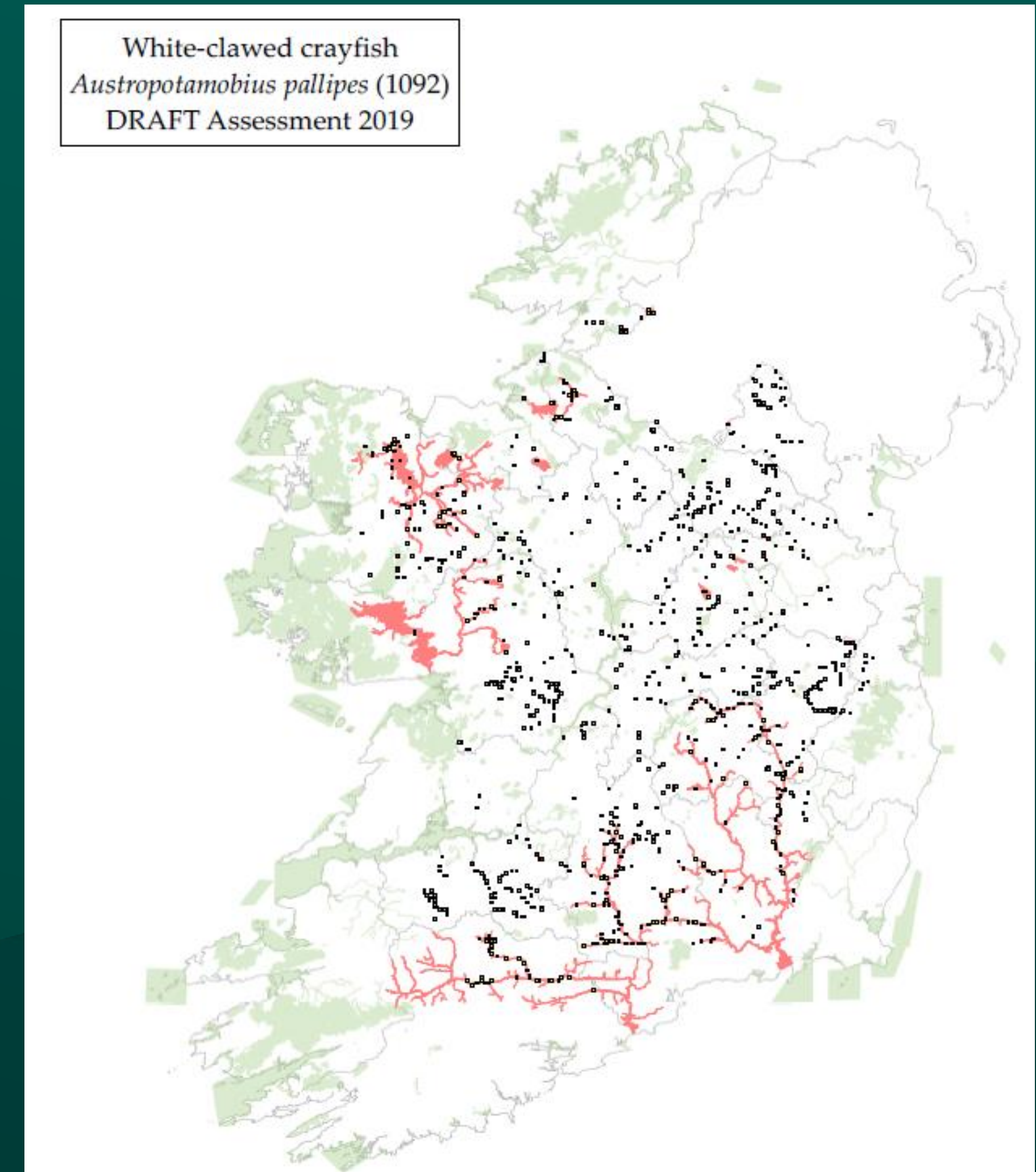
Sources of pressure



White clawed crayfish



- Listed on Annexes II and V
- 15 SACs
- Widespread distribution in Ireland
- In decline across Europe- alien species and plague



-
- An underwater photograph showing two crayfish in a stream bed. The crayfish are positioned on a rocky, algae-covered substrate. One crayfish is on the left, and the other is on the right. The water is clear, and green vegetation is visible in the background.



Crayfish- alien species



- First record of non-native crayfish in the wild in Ireland in 2019
- Yabby- *Cherax destructor*
- Australian species
- Does not carry plague



The wider context and the way forward



Clearly need better management and implementation of focused conservation measures, for multiple benefits- often at the catchment scale
e.g. restoration of peatlands

- reduces DOC and nutrient export
- improves water quality and hydrological processes of receiving water courses
- considerable savings in water treatment from catchments

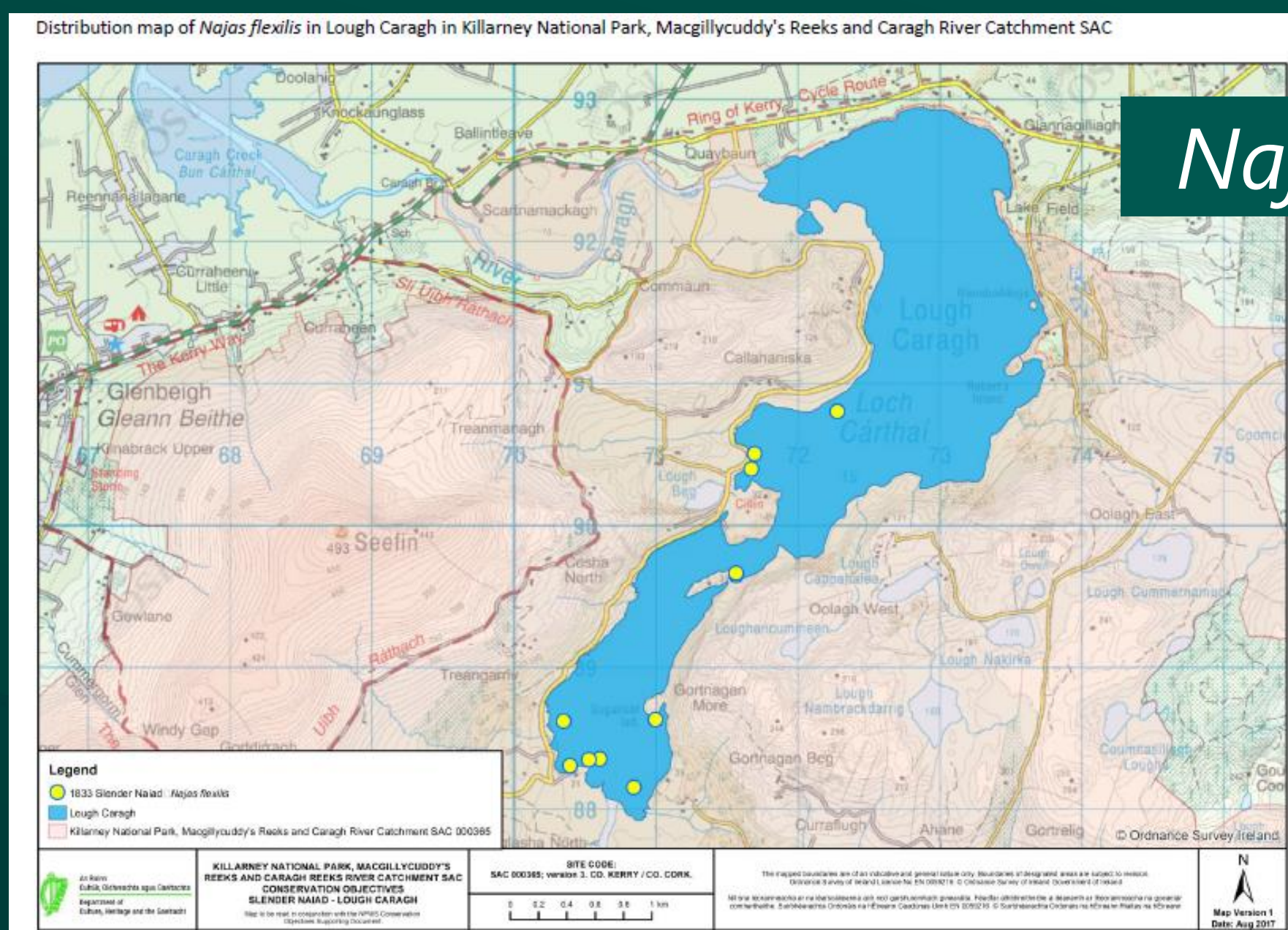


The wider context and the way forward



Look beyond water quality and consider all ecological requirements

- Detailed site-specific conservation objectives published for 307 SACs
- List attributes with targets for maintaining/restoring habitats/species favourable condition at site-level



Najas flexilis

4. Habitat for the species.....
- 4.1 Habitat extent.....
- 4.2 Hydrological regime.....
- 4.3 Lake substratum quality.....
- 4.4 Water quality.....
 - 4.4.1 Water quality: nutrients.....
 - 4.4.2 Water quality: phytoplankton biomass.....
 - 4.4.3 Water quality: phytoplankton composition.....
 - 4.4.4 Water quality: attached algal biomass.....
 - 4.4.5 Water quality: macrophyte status.....
- 4.5 Acidification status.....
- 4.6 Water quality: colour.....
- 4.7 Associated species.....
- 4.8 Fringing habitat.....

The wider context and the way forward



Additional Reasoned Opinion

- Need to identify necessary conservation measures on a site-by-site basis (for 439 SACs) and mechanisms for their implementation

Prioritised Action Framework (2021-2027)

- Outlines priorities for Natura 2000 management, including costs
- Strategic multi-annual planning tool
- About to commence inter-departmental and agency consultation
- Wider consultation later in the summer

Thanks to:

Andy Bleasdale
Deirdre Lynn
Brian Nelson
Aine O Connor
Ciaran O'Keeffe
Fionnuala O'Neill
Shane Regan

