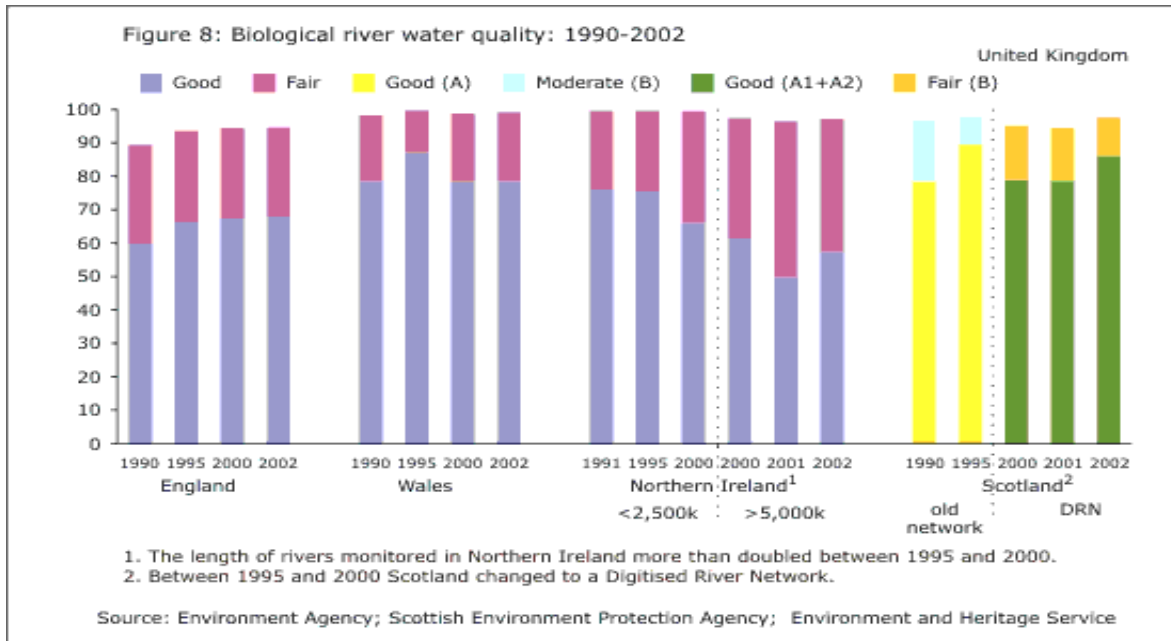


Homepage > Environmental Protection > e-Digest Statistics > A-Z index > Inland Water

Key Facts about: Inland Water Quality and Use

Biological river water quality: 1990-2003

United Kingdom



2003	Percentage			Total river lengths classified (km)
	Good	Fair	Poor/Bad	
England	69	26	5	33,460
Wales	79	20	1	4,570
Northern Ireland	57	41	3	5,190
Scotland	89	7	2	17,550

* This is a headline indicator of sustainable development for the UK *

Biological grading is based on the monitoring of small animals (invertebrates) which live in, or on the bed of, rivers and canals.

In 2003, approximately 96 per cent of the UK's river network was classified as being of good or fair quality. Between 1990 and 2003, biological quality improved in England. In Wales almost all rivers are of good or fair quality. In Northern Ireland there was a fall in good quality rivers between 2000 and 2001 followed by a rise in 2002 and in 2003 97 per cent of rivers were of good or fair quality. In Scotland the percentage of rivers classified as good increased from 79 per cent in 2000 to 89 in 2003.

Note: In Scotland definitions and criteria for rivers included are different from the rest of the UK.

In Detail:

[Biological river quality surveys](#)

[River Water Quality Database](#) providing data on chemical and biological river water quality and nutrient concentrations for each Government Office Region and Local Authority in England and Wales.

Further Information:

Source:

Environment Agency, SEPA, Environment and Heritage Service

Press Release:

[River Water Quality Headline Indicator for Sustainable Development: 2003](#), 5 October 2004 (386/04)

Key Facts:

[Chemical river water quality](#)

[Nitrate concentrations in rivers](#)

[Phosphate concentrations in rivers](#)

[Water pollution incidents](#)

[Drinking water quality](#)

Sustainable Development Indicators:

Headline Indicators: [H12 River water quality](#)

[Latest Headline indicator information](#)

[Explanation of Headline indicators](#)

Data Tables:

[Download Chart Data: Microsoft Excel](#)

Defra is not responsible for the contents or reliability of the linked web sites and does not necessarily endorse the views expressed within them. Listing should not be taken as endorsement of any kind. We cannot guarantee that these links will work all of the time and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

Your questions and comments are welcome. [Contact information](#) and email:
enviro.statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Page last modified: 4 October 2004

Page published: 4 October 2004