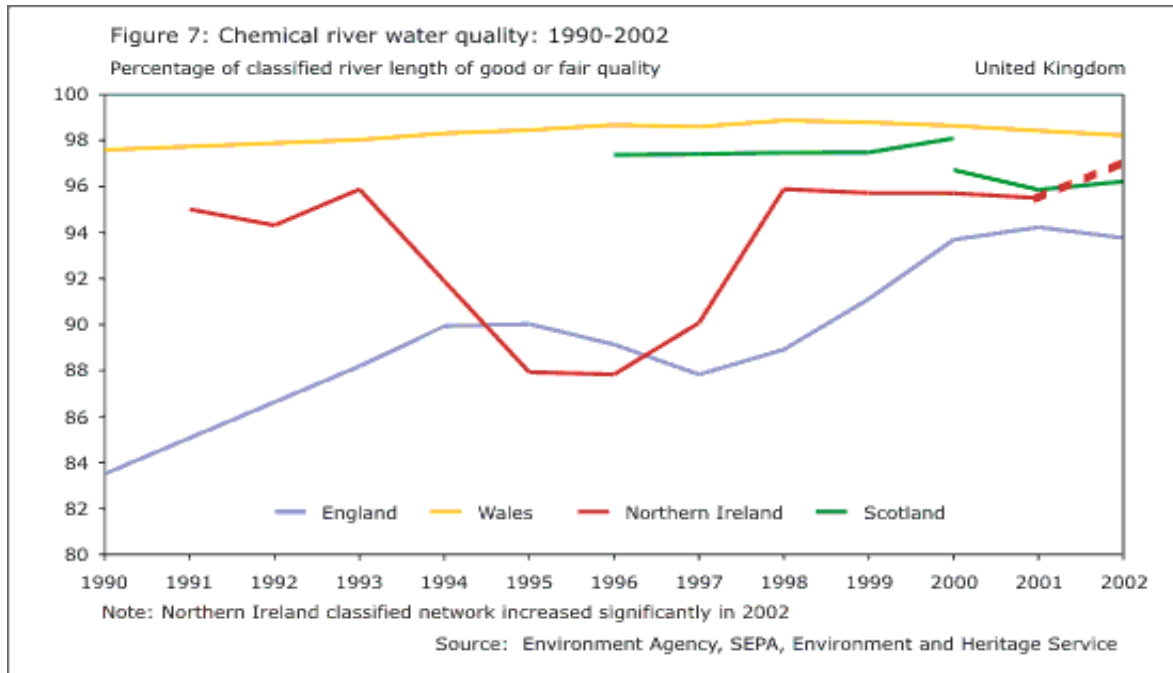


Homepage > Environmental Protection > e-Digest Statistics > A-Z index > Inland Water

Key Facts about: Inland Water Quality and Use

Chemical river water quality: 1990-2003

United Kingdom



Data for Year: 2003

	Percentage			Total river lengths classified (km)
	Good	Fair	Poor/Bad	
England	62	31	7	35860
Wales	93	6	2	4780
Northern Ireland [2]	58	35	7	4320
Scotland [1]	88	9	3	25440

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

Rivers are a major source of water used for drinking and by industry, they also support a wide variety of wildlife and are used extensively for recreation.

It is estimated that in 2003, about 95 per cent of the river network in the UK was of good or fair chemical quality. In England 93 per cent of rivers were of good/fair quality in 2003 compared with 84 per cent in 1990. In Northern Ireland quality fell in the mid-1990s and then recovered, before falling slightly in 2003. In Wales and Scotland quality remained high.

Note: 1. Scottish river classification network changed in 2000.

Note: 2. Northern Ireland classified network significantly increased in 2002.

In Detail:

[Chemical river quality surveys](#)

[River Water Quality Database](#) for regional and local authority areas in England and Wales

First published in July 2002, the database provides chemical and biological river water quality data on monitored rivers for each Government Office Region and Local Authority.

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:

[Biological 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: 5 October 2004

Page published: 5 October 2004