

North Highland Area Management Plan Catchment Summaries

There is a catchment summary for each catchment in the North Highland advisory group area. These give information on the current situation (classification and pressures) and action. A guide to these catchment summaries and a glossary of terms is available. Further information on individual water bodies within each catchment can be found on the river basin management planning interactive map – www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx

The North Highland catchment summaries are contained with 5 documents:

- Caithness and Sutherland
- Moray Firth – Dornoch to Inverness
- Ness
- Moray Firth – Nairn to Lossiemouth
- Ground Water Bodies

This document includes catchment summaries for **Caithness and Sutherland**:-

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Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>North coast water bodies - Cape Wrath to Duncansby Head</p>	<p>There are eight coastal water bodies along the North coast, from Cape Wrath to Duncansby Head</p> <p>Four of these water bodies are high ecological status; Strathy Point to Dunnet Head, Thurso Bay, Dunnet Bay, Dunnet Head to Duncansby Head</p> <p>Four of these coastal water bodies are good ecological status; Cape Wrath to Strathy Point, Kyle of Durness, Loch Eriboll, Kyle of Tongue</p> <p>Protected Areas</p> <p>The waters along the north coast include the following protected areas, all of which are achieving their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape Wrath Special Protection Area (for breeding seabirds) • Cape Wrath Special Area of conservation (for vegetated sea cliffs) • Kyle of Tongue and Loch Eriboll shellfish waters • Dunnet Bay and Thurso Bathing Waters 	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>Tongue coastal</p>	<p>There are nineteen natural water bodies in the Tongue coastal catchment.</p> <p>Sixteen of these water bodies are at good ecological status; Grudie River, River Dionard, Strath Beag River, Allt an t-Srathain, Strath Melness Burn, Achuvoldrach Burn, Kinloch River – downstream Loch an Dheurue, Kinloch River – upstream Loch an Dheurue, Rhian Burn, Altan Dearg, Clachan Burn, Swordly Burn – downstream Loch Meadie, Swordly Burn – upstream Loch Meadie, Armdale Burn, Kearvaig River, Daill River.</p> <p>Three water bodies are at high ecological status; Loch an Dheurue, Allt Ach an t Srathain and Loch Meadie.</p> <p>Protected Areas</p> <p>The Tongue coastal catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durness and Invernaver Special Areas of Conservation (both designated for range of coastal habitat features) • Loch Crasig, Loch Borralie, Loch na h-Uamhachd, Allt an Lagain Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Dionard Freshwater Fish designated area 	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Hope	<p>There are five natural water bodies in the River Hope catchment.</p> <p>Four of the five water bodies are at good ecological status; An Garbh-allt, Glen Golly River/Abhainn Srath Coir an Easaidh, Loch Hope and River Hope.</p> <p>The Strathmore River is poor ecological status due to barriers preventing fish passage, including road culverts.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Hope catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foinaven Special Area of Conservation (designated for features including clear-water lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels, fresh water pearl mussels) • Durness Eriboll and Tongue Drinking Water Protection Zone • River Hope Freshwater Fish designated area 	<p>Discussions are required with The Highland Council to explore options to make improvements to the road culvert on the Strathmore river. Due to the time required to fix this pressure without incurring disproportionate cost, a longer term objective has been set for the Strathmore River to reach good ecological status by 2027.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Borgie	<p>There are seven natural water bodies in the River Borgie catchment. Three are high ecological status; Loch Loyal, Loch Craggie and the River Borgie between Loch Craggie and Loch Loyal.</p> <p>Four of the seven water bodies are good status; Allt Ach nan Tot, Allt Coir an Achaidh Mhoir, River Borgie – upstream of Loch Loyal and the River Borgie - downstream of Loch Craggie.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Borgie catchment includes the following protected area, and all are reaching their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Borgie Special Area of Conservation (for Atlantic salmon, fresh water pearl mussels and otters) • River Borgie Freshwater Fish designated area. 	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Strathy	<p>All four natural water bodies in the River Strathy catchment are at good ecological status; River Strathy – The Uair to sea, Allt nan Clach/River Strathy – The Uair to upstream Strathy Forest, River Strathy – upstream Strathy forest, River Strathy – The Uair.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Strathy catchment includes the River Strathy freshwater fish designated area which is meeting its required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive.</p>	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
Halladale River	<p>There are six natural water bodies in the Halladale River catchment.</p> <p>Six of the water bodies are at good ecological status; Halladale River upstream of Forsinain Burn, Smigel Burn, Allt a Mhuilinn, Trantlebeg Burn, River Dyke, Forsinain Burn.</p> <p>One water body, Loch na Seilge, is at high ecological status.</p> <p>Two water bodies, the Halladale River downstream of Forsinain Burn and the Allt na n Eaglaise are both at moderate ecological status due to morphological alterations; extensive channel realignments at the confluence between the two water bodies.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Halladale River catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caithness and Sutherland peatlands Special Area of Conservation (for open water and bog habitats) • Caithness and Sutherland peatlands Special Protection Area (for breeding water birds) • Loch na Caorach Drinking Water Protection Zone • River Halladale Freshwater Fish designated area 	Options to restore the Halladale River downstream of Forsinain Burn and the Allt na n Eaglaise need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment. A longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>Forss Water</p>	<p>The Forss Water contains six water bodies, five natural and one heavily modified.</p> <p>Of the five natural water bodies, Loch Caluim is at high ecological status and two water bodies are at good ecological status, the Forss Water - source to Loch Shurrery and Allt Forsiescye.</p> <p>The Forss Water - Loch Shurrery to Allt Forsiescye and the Allt Forsiescye to the sea are at poor ecological status due to abstraction and flow regulation pressures from their use in the provision of water supply. However, the classification of these water bodies needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Loch Shurrery itself is a heavily modified water body because it is used for drinking water supply. It was assessed at Maximum Ecological Potential in 2008. However, this assessment needs to be reviewed and then whether there is appropriate mitigation is in place.</p> <p>Protected Areas</p> <p>The Forss Water catchment includes the following protected areas. Both are reaching their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Broubster Leans Special Area of Conservation (for very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface)</p> <p>Forss Water Freshwater Fish designated area which is meeting the required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive</p>	<p>The Forss Water - Loch Shurrery to Allt Forsiescye and the Allt Forsiescye to the sea are predicted to be moderate ecological status by 2021 and good ecological status by 2027 respectively. However, the classification of these water bodies and Loch Shurrery need to be reviewed, alongside any necessary improvement measures.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>Wick coastal</p>	<p>There are 11 natural water bodies in the Wick coastal catchment.</p> <p>Seven of the water bodies are at good ecological status; Ousdale Burn, Reisgill Burn, Burn of Latheronwheel, Gill Burn, Thrumster Burn – downstream Thrumster sewage treatment works to Loch Hempriggs, Clyth Burn, Milton Burn – downstream Loch Hempriggs.</p> <p>Two water bodies, the Kirk Burn and Thrumster Burn (upstream of Thrumster Sewage Treatment Works) are at moderate ecological status. The Bower Burn / Burn of Lyth is bad ecological status due to morphological alterations and a barrier to fish passage from livestock farming.</p> <p>Loch Hempriggs is at poor ecological status due to diffuse pollution from livestock farming.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Wick coastal catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch of Wester Special Area of Conservation (for naturally nutrient-rich lochs which are often dominated by pondweed) • Special Protection Areas - North Caithness Cliffs (for breeding seabirds), Caithness Lochs (for overwintering geese and swans) and Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands (for breeding Black-throated diver, Common Scoter, Dunlin, Golden Eagle, Golden Plover, Greenshank, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Red-throated diver, Short-eared owl, Wigeon, Wood sandpiper) • Bower Valley Sand and Gravel Drinking Waters 	<p>The Wick Coastal catchment is a cycle 3 priority catchment; actions to improve diffuse pollution and morphological alterations are scheduled to take place between 2022-2027 and will improve the Kirk Burn, Thrumster Burn and Loch Hempriggs to good ecological status.</p> <p>Options to restore the Kirk Burn and Thrumster Burn need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment. A longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.</p> <p>The classification of Thrumster Burn (upstream of Thrumster sewage works) will be reviewed following information on fish barriers on Loch of Yarrow and Loch Brickigoe.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>East coast water bodies – Duncansby Head to Whiteness Head</p>	<p>There are ten coastal coastal water bodies along the east coast of North Highland from Duncansby Head to Whiteness Head.</p> <p>Seven of these water bodies are at high ecological status; Duncansby Head to Noss Head, Noss Head to Halberry Head, Halberry Head to Achnacraig, Achnacraig to Helmsdale, Helmsdale to Brora, Hilton of Cadboll to Whiteness Head, Moray Firth-offshore.</p> <p>The water bodies - Brora to Hilton of Cadboll and Wick Bay - are both good ecological status. These two water bodies are good rather than high ecological status because a slight impact from TBT antifoulant has been detected.</p> <p>This part of the coast includes Loch Fleet which is a heavily modified water body due to the presence of The Mound plus sluices. It is at good ecological potential.</p> <p>Protected Areas</p> <p>This part of the coast has a number of protected areas, which are all currently achieving required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Protection Areas; Inner Moray Firth (for overwintering water birds) and East Caithness cliffs (for breeding seabirds) • Special Areas of Conservation; Moray Firth (for bottlenose dolphins and subtidal sandbanks) and East Caithness cliffs (vegetated sea cliffs) 	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
Wick River	<p>The Wick River - Loch Watten Burn to the tidal limit is moderate due to morphological alterations from livestock framing. The Loch of Toftingall is moderate due to diffuse pollution from forestry and sewage.</p> <p>The Quoynee Burn upstream of Loch Scarmclate is poor status due to channel realignment. The Quoynee Burn downstream of Loch Scarmclate is poor status due to morphological alterations.</p> <p>The Burn of Winless is bad status due to straightening for mixed farming activities.</p> <p>Protected Areas There are ten natural water bodies in the Wick catchment.</p> <p>Three of these water bodies are currently reaching good ecological status; Wick River – source to Loch Watten Burn, Achairn Burn and Loch Watten Outflow Burn.</p> <p>Loch Scarmclate and Loch Watten are at moderate ecological status due to high phosphorus levels from diffuse pollution from mixed farming. Loch Watten is also an important roosting site for birds (and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest for Greylag geese) which are also having some impact on levels of nutrients in the water due to high level of bird faeces from the roosting birds.</p> <p>The Wick River catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Watten Special Area of Conservation (for naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed) • Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (for non-breeding Greenland white fronted goose, Greylag goose and whooper swan). • Wick Valley Sand and Gravel, Wick bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers, Achairn Valley sand and gravels Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Wick designated area for Freshwater Fish • Achairn Burn Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive sensitive area 	<p>The Wick River is a cycle 3 priority catchments; focused actions to address diffuse pollution, morphological alterations, and subsequent improvements, are scheduled to take place in this catchment between 2022 – 2027, with all the water bodies in the Wick River catchment reaching good ecological status by 2027. Awareness raising of the general binding rules for diffuse pollution will also assist by ensuring land managers are aware of good practice and what is required to comply with these regulations.</p> <p>Options to restore the Quoynee Burn both downstream and upstream of Loch Scarmclate and Winless burn need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment. A longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>River Thurso</p>	<p>The River Thurso catchment contains 15 water bodies, 13 natural and 2 heavily modified. Of the 13 natural water bodies, nine are at good ecological status; River Thurso – Loch More to sea, River Thurso – source to Loch More, Calder Water – upstream Loch Calder, Burn of Olgrinbeg, Achlachan Burn, Little River/Loop Burn, Loop Burn – upstream Loch Ruard, Allt Chaiteag, Allt Backlass.</p> <p>Loch Ruard is at high ecological status.</p> <p>Three water bodies are at moderate ecological status. The Halkirk Burn is impacted by multiple morphological pressures, the main pressure being low impact channel realignment. Loch More has increased phosphorus levels from diffuse pollution from forestry. The Sleach Water is moderate ecological status due to diffuse nutrient inputs from forestry. It is also affected by acidification as a result of pollution from acid deposition.</p> <p>Loch Calder and the Calder Water downstream of Loch Calder are both heavily modified due to their use as a drinking water supply and are bad and poor ecological potential respectively, as there are insufficient compensation flows. However, following recent discussions, it has been agreed there is no requirement to increase compensation flow in order to deliver environment improvements.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Thurso catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (for Atlantic salmon) • River Thurso freshwater fish designated area, • Loch Calder and Thurso bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers Drinking Water Protection Zones • Loch More Urban Waste Water treatment Directive sensitive area. 	<p>The River Thurso is a cycle 2 priority catchment (2021); some actions to improve diffuse pollution and morphology issues are scheduled to take place in these catchments 2016- 2021.</p> <p>Options to restore the Halkirk Burn need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment. A longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.</p> <p>Loch More is expected to be good by good status by 2027 with reduced diffuse source inputs from forestry by the Forestry Commission Scotland.</p> <p>Loch Calder is predicted to achieve Good Ecological Potential by 2015. However, the classification of this water body needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Calder Water downstream of Loch Calder should also achieve Good ecological potential for flows by 2015 and is predicted to reach good ecological potential overall in 2027. Options for this need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment and a longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.</p> <p>The Sleach Water is not expected to reach good status by 2027. Less stringent objectives have been set because the time needed for water bodies affected by acid deposition to recover is difficult to predict, and because of natural conditions, the natural recovery time is likely to be beyond 2027.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Helmsdale	<p>The River Helmsdale catchment has 28 water bodies. Twenty one are good ecological status; River Helmsdale – Kinbrace Burn to sea, Caen Burn, Allt Cille Pheadair, Torrish Burn, Craggie Water, Kildonan Burn, Abhainn na Frithe, River Hlemsdale – Loch Badanloch to Kinbrace Burn, Bannock Burn – downstream Claggan Burn, Bannock Burn – Allt an Muic to Claggan Burn, Bannock Burn - Allt an Muic, Bannock Burn – Loch an Rhuthair to Allt an Muic, Bannock Burn – upstream Loch an Rhuathair, Claggan Burn – downstream Loch Druim a Chliabhain, Allt na Caibhe Mor, Rimsdale Burn, Allt Lon a Chuil, Oidh Loch na Gaineimh, Allt an Loin Tharsuin – downstream Loch Truderscraig, Allt an Loin Tharsuin – upstream Loch Truderscraig,, Kinbrace Burn</p> <p>Six water bodies are high ecological status; Loch Druim a Chliabhain, Loch an Ruathair, Loch an Alltan Fhearna, Loch Truderscraig, Suisgill Burn, Claggan Burn – upstream Loch Druim a Chlabhain</p> <p>One water body, Loch Badanloch / nan Clar / Rimsdale is at moderate ecological status due to a dam with a sluice in it, which is used to regulate the flow from the loch, and due to coniferous planting down to the bankside.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Helmsdale catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helmsdale bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers, Helmsdale Sand and Gravel, Caen Burn Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Helmsdale Freshwater Fish designated area 	<p>SEPA will work with local fishery trusts and boards to identify potential remediation measures, timescales and funding streams to make improvements to the morphology of Loch Badanloch / nan Clar / Rimsdale by 2027.</p> <p>Felling and replanting with native planting on Loch Badanloch / nan Clar / Rimsdale is scheduled to take place by 2026 by Forestry Commission Scotland.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>River Naver</p>	<p>The River Naver catchment contains 20 water bodies, of which 19 are natural and one heavily modified.</p> <p>Of the 19 natural water bodies, two are high ecological status, Loch Meadie and Loch a Bhealaich Seventeen are good ecological status; Loch Naver, Loch Choire, Mallart River – upstream Loch a Bhealaich, Allt Lon Coire nam Feuran, Allt Coire na Fearnna, Allt Fruama Beag, Kilbreck Burn, Mallart River – Loch a Bhealaich to Loch Chiore, River Naver – sea to Loch Naver, River Mugdale – lower catchment, River Mudales – upper catchment, Meadie Burn, Skelpick Burn, Langdale Burn, Allt Dalharrold, Mallart River – downstream Allt Lon Coire nam Feuran, Mallart River – Loch Chiore to Allt Lon Coire nam Feuran.</p> <p>The River Vagastie, is heavily modified; water from the River Vagastie, is transferred to the River Shin catchment for the Shin hydro power scheme operated by Scottish and Southern Energy. The River Vagastie is currently at moderate ecological potential as the impacts on flows and fish passage have not yet been adequately mitigated.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Naver catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altnaharra Special Area of Conservation (for very wet mires often identified by an unstable quaking surface) • Naver Valley sand and gravels, Loch Buidhe, North coast bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Naver Freshwater Fish designated area <p>The River Naver Special Area of Conservation, designated for Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussels, is currently in unfavourable status for fresh water pearl mussels. The reasons for this are not yet certain, but could be due to alterations made to river beds for fisheries management purposes.</p>	<p>Improvements to the flows and fish passage at the Shin hydropower scheme are scheduled to take place in the third planning cycle (2022-2027) and the River Naver is therefore predicted to reach good ecological potential by 2027.</p> <p>SNH are investigating the reasons for poor freshwater pearl mussel numbers in the River Naver. It is hoped that, as reasons are identified and actions can be implemented to address issues, the SAC will become 'favourable recovering' by 2015.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
Dunbeath Water	<p>The Dunbeath Water catchment contains five water bodies. The Dunbeath Water – Burn of Houstry to sea is at high ecological status. The remaining four are at good status; Dunbeath Water – Raffin Burn to Burn of Houstry, Dunbeath Water – source to Raffin Burn, Raffin Burn and Burn of Houstry.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Dunbeath Water catchment includes the Dunbeath Water Freshwater Fish designated area which is meeting the required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive.</p>	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
Berriedale Water	<p>The Berriedale Water catchment contains three water bodies.</p> <p>The Berriedale Water (downstream of the A9) is at high ecological status and the Langwell water is at good ecological status.</p> <p>However, the Berriedale Water (upstream of the A9), is at moderate status for fish ecology. This has initially been attributed to diffuse pollution but further investigation is required to confirm both the fish classification and cause of any downgrade in ecological status.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Berriedale catchment includes the following protected areas, both of which are reaching their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berriedale and Langwell Waters Special Area of Conservation (for Atlantic salmon) • Berriedale and Langwell Water freshwater fish designated area 	Improvements to the Berriedale Water are scheduled by 2027 but further investigation is required to confirm both the fish classification, the cause of any downgrade in ecological status and required measures.

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Brora	<p>The River Brora catchment has 14 water bodies, 13 of which are natural and one heavily modified.</p> <p>Of the 13 natural water bodies, 12 are at good ecological status; Loch Brora, Loch Brora, River Brora – sea to Loch Brora, River Brora – mid Loch Brora, Carrol Burn, Allt Smeorail, Allt a Mhuilinn/Allt ach a Bhathaich, Black Water – Balnacoil to Amat, River Skinsdale/Garvary Burn, Black Water – Amat to source, Allt a Mhuilinn Duibh, Coirefrois</p> <p>The River Brora (from Loch Brora to Balnacoil) is moderate ecological status due to abstraction further upstream at Dalnessie to supply the Shin hydropower scheme operated by Scottish and Southern Energy.</p> <p>The River Brora (from Balnacoil to source) is heavily modified as it is impounded and abstracted at Dalnessie, also to supply the Shin hydropower scheme. Despite there being no fish pass in place at the Dalnessie impoundment, this water body is deemed to be at good ecological potential because there is very little suitable habitat for migratory fish upstream of the impoundment.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Brora catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lairg and Strathbrora Lochs Special Protection Areas (for breeding black-throated divers), • Upper Brora Valley Sand and Gravel and Brora bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers Drinking Water Protection Zone • River Brora Freshwater Fish designated area 	<p>The River Brora (from Loch Brora to Balnacoil) will be assessed at the earliest opportunity to determine if it is also a heavily modified water body and, if so, whether it is at good ecological potential or in need of further mitigation.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>Brora Coastal</p>	<p>The two natural water bodies in the Brora coastal catchment, the Golspie Burn and the Loth Burn. Both are both at good ecological status.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Brora Coastal catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Horn, Loch Lunndaidh, Lower Brora Valley Sand and Gravel, Culgower Burn Drinking Water Protection Zones 	

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>River Shin</p>	<p>The River Shin catchment contains 23 water bodies, 20 of which are natural and three heavily modified.</p> <p>Sixteen of the natural water bodies are at good ecological status; Loch Merkland, Loch Flag, Loch a Ghriama, River Shin – Loch Shin to Loch a Ghriama, Allt nan Albannach, Allt na Fearna Mor, River Tirry – whole of catchment above Rhian, Allt Chaiseagail, Feith Osdail, Allt a Bhunn, Allt Car Beag, Allt Car, River Fiag, Allt an Tireidh, Allt na Claise Moire, Abhainn a Chiore. Two water bodies are high ecological status; Loch Beannach and Loch Craggie.</p> <p>Two water bodies, the Merkland River – Loch a Ghriama to Loch Merkland and the River Tirry – Loch Shin to Rhian, are at moderate ecological status. This may be due to the fish pass at the Shin dam not operating properly but more research is needed to confirm this. The Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board have undertaken research, in conjunction with Scottish and Southern Energy, to try and determine the cause of the problems and possible measures to address it.</p> <p>A large proportion of the Shin catchment is used by the Shin hydro power scheme operated by Scottish and Southern Energy Loch Shin is the main reservoir for the scheme which also makes use of the headwaters of the Rivers Naver, Cassley and Brora.</p> <p>Three water bodies, Loch Shin, the River Shin (from Dornoch Firth to Loch Shin) and the Grudie Burn are heavily modified due to their use in the scheme.</p> <p>The River Shin (Dornoch Firth to Loch Shin) are at good ecological potential because appropriate flows are provided and the pattern of abstraction is controlled. The Grudie Burn is at good ecological potential; mitigation for abstraction and flow regulation is not required because the stretch of river affected is less than 1.5km and any changes would have a significant impact on use.</p> <p>The Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board are not in agreement with the good ecological potential assessment of the River Shin (Dornoch Firth to Loch Shin) and the Grudie Burn. However, Loch Shin itself is at bad ecological potential due to problems with the passage of migratory fish.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Shin catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Beannach and Kyle of Sutherland North Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Shin Freshwater Fish designated area 	<p>The fish passage issue on Loch Shin and the Merkland and Tirry rivers that run into it are scheduled to be fixed by 2027. The Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board have expressed a desire to see this date brought forward.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Cassley	<p>The River Cassley catchment contains eight water bodies, of which seven are natural and one heavily modified.</p> <p>One of the natural water bodies, Fionn Loch Mor to Gorm Loch Mor, is at high ecological status.</p> <p>Five water bodies are good ecological status; Gorm Loch Mor, Fionn Loch Mor, Garbh Allt, Allt an Dubh Loch Bhig and Abhainn Gleann na Muic.</p> <p>Part of the Cassley catchment is diverted into the Shin catchment for use in the Shin hydro power scheme. The River Cassley from Dornoch Firth to Glenmuick is at moderate ecological status due to abstraction of water for the Duchally Power station, part of the Shin scheme.</p> <p>The River Cassley, from Glenmuick to Fionn Loch Beag is heavily modified, also providing water to the Duchally power station. It is at good ecological potential as the pattern and timing of abstraction is controlled and appropriate flows are provided.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Cassley catchment includes the River Cassley freshwater fish designated area which is meeting the required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive.</p>	<p>The River Cassley from Dornoch Firth to Glenmuick should be subject to the test of whether it is exempt from the objective of preventing deterioration in status and also whether it should be classified as a heavily modified water body.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Oykel	<p>The River Oykel catchment contains 16 natural water bodies.</p> <p>Twelve of these water bodies are at good status; Loch an Daimh, Loch Ailsh, River Oykel – Dornoch Firth to Loch Craggie, River Oykel – Loch Craggie to Loch Ailsh, River Oykel – Loch Ailsh to source, Tutim Burn, Corriemulzie River, Abhainn Coire an t-seillich, Garbh Allt, Allt Rugaidh Bheag, Allt Rugaidh Mhor, Allt Eileag.</p> <p>Three water bodies are at high ecological status; Allt a Bhraigh, Rappoch Water and Abhainn Poiblidh.</p> <p>One water body, the River Einig, is moderate ecological status due to coniferous trees planted to the bankside.</p> <p>Protected Areas The Oykel catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Oykel Special Area of Conservation (for fresh water pearl mussels and Atlantic salmon) • River Oykel Freshwater Fish 	<p>The area on the River Einig planted down to the bankside with coniferous trees will be felled and replanted with native trees by 2021 by FCS.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
River Carron (Sutherland)	<p>The River Carron catchment includes eight water bodies of which seven are natural and one heavily modified.</p> <p>One natural water body, the Allt Feur-lochain is at high ecological status.</p> <p>Five of the seven natural water bodies are good ecological status; Allt Feur-lochain, Alladal River, Allt a Ghlinne, Black Water, Garbh Allt/Salachie Burn and Water of Glencalvie.</p> <p>The River Carron from the sea to Alladale lodge is moderate ecological status due to structures preventing adequate fish passage.</p> <p>Abhainn a Glinne Mhoir/Bhig and Allt Crom loch (locally called Glen Beag) is heavily modified as it provides water to the Conon hydro scheme via Loch Vaich. This water body is currently at moderate ecological potential because one of the hydro scheme abstraction points presents a barrier to fish migration.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Carron catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beinn Dearg Special Area of Conservation (for clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels) • Kyle of Sutherland South bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers Drinking Water Protection Zones • River Carron (North East) Freshwater Fish designated area 	<p>The River Carron from the sea to Alladale lodge is predicted to reach good ecological status by 2027 with the removal of, or provision of mitigation to, the barrier to fish migration.</p> <p>The fish barrier in Abhainn a Glinne Mhoir/Bhig and Allt Crom loch are currently scheduled to be addressed by 2027. Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board and Scottish and Southern Energy have been undertaking research to further understanding about this issue. The Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board have expressed a desire to see the objectives for this water body brought forward, based on this research.</p>

Catchment	Current situation	Actions for improvement
<p>River Fleet</p>	<p>The River Fleet catchment contains nine natural water bodies.</p> <p>Eight of these water bodies are at good ecological status; Loch Buidhe, River Fleet – Rogart to source, Morvich Burn, Abhainn an t-sratha Charnaig, Allt Garbh-airigh, Garbh Allt, Torbreck Burn, Abhainn Leataidh</p> <p>The River Fleet - Loch Fleet to Rogart is moderate ecological status due to straightening of the river for land drainage for mixed farming.</p> <p>Protected Areas The River Fleet catchment includes the following protected areas, which are all meeting their required standards with respect to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mound Alderwoods Special Area of Conservation (for alder woodland on floodplains) • Strathfleet bedrock and localised sand and gravel aquifers Drinking Water Protection Zone. 	<p>Options to restore the River Fleet - Loch Fleet to Rogart need to be explored, balancing the needs of land managers and the water environment. A longer term objective of 2027 has been set for them to reach good ecological status.</p>