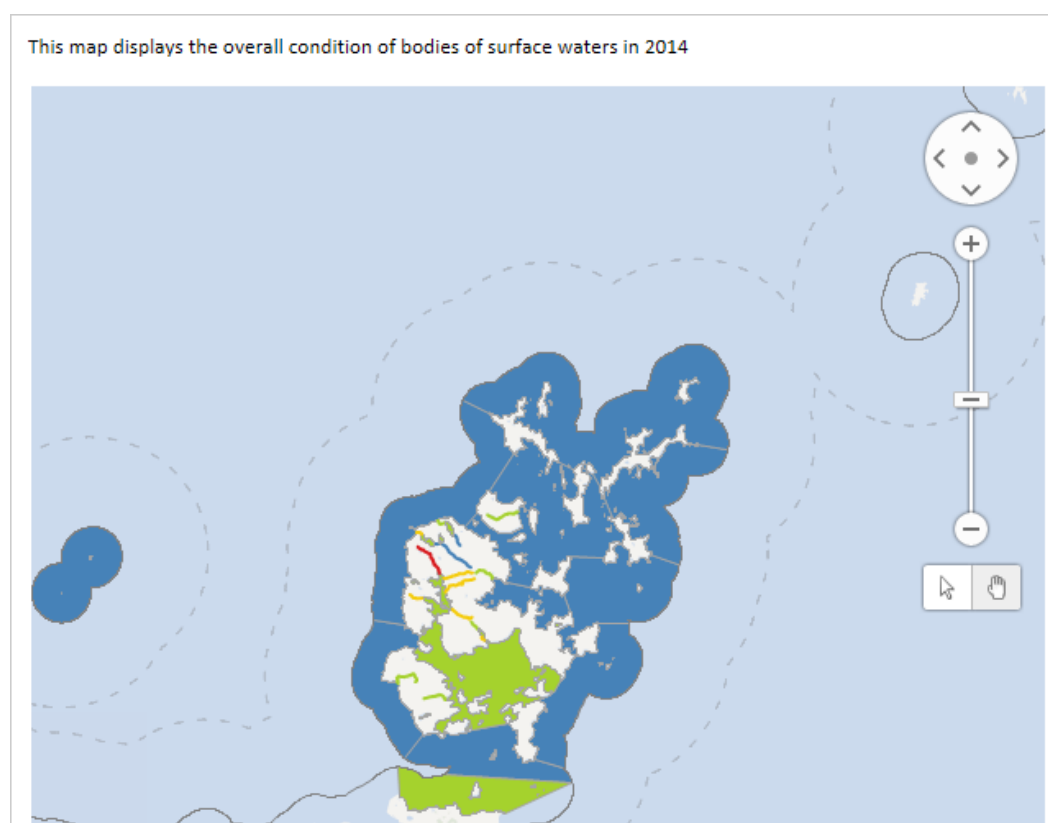


### The river basin management plan – what does it say about Orkney?

The river basin management plan (RBMP) for the Scotland river basin district was published on 21 December 2015. It is made up of the [plan document](#), [technical appendices](#) and an online data tool, the [Water environment hub](#), which provides information on current condition and future targets for rivers, lochs, coastal waters and groundwaters. The tool has easy filtering options and the ability to export data, maps and charts.

The RBMP data shows that 49 of Orkney's 56 surface water bodies are at good or high ecological status. For the remaining waterbodies, six are at moderate status and one at bad status. Five of these water bodies are affected by modifications to physical condition, two by rural diffuse pollution, one by water quality problems, and one by water abstraction. The map below gives information on the current condition of surface water bodies, and there is more information on these waterbodies, and protected areas, on the [Water environment hub](#).



Please contact us if you have any questions or queries about how to use the application, or to arrange a training session, via [rbmp@sepa.org.uk](mailto:rbmp@sepa.org.uk).

## Engagement to support delivery of the river basin management plans

The publication of the RBMPs provides the opportunity to review the role of the Area Advisory Groups and refocus them on delivery. Our engagement will focus on:

- Raising awareness of the second river basin management plan – how to find information and where to take action to improve the water environment.
- Supporting the delivery of actions through partnership working – either by creating new structures with delivery partners or working with existing partnerships.
- Coordinating with other strategic planning processes and funding mechanisms – for example, flood risk management, land use planning, marine planning and the land use strategy.

To achieve this we intend to create a wider communication network through the area advisory group. We will also move away from large formal meetings to having smaller meetings that are focused on projects to improve the water environment.

Please contact [OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk](mailto:OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk) for further information about how this approach could work most effectively in Orkney.

## Delivery of objectives for river basin management planning

SEPA and responsible authorities are currently assessing the objectives set within the plans to create a properly managed, effective plan to deliver measures. Lessons learned from the first cycle have informed the approach, and will help us to expand and achieve the “step change” in delivery needed to meet the ambition objectives set in the RBMP.

Some theme specific updates relevant to Orkney are included below. Further information about the delivery mechanisms are available on the SEPA web pages;

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/actions-to-deliver-rbmp/>

### Rural Diffuse Pollution

The strategy to address rural diffuse pollution is co-ordinated nationally by a multi-agency advisory group, [DPMAG](#).

Work on diffuse pollution will involve a national awareness raising campaign, including land manager workshops, promotion of [‘Farming and Water Scotland’](#) messages; training courses, best practice guides, and engagement and inspection by partner organisations on land outwith our targeted areas.

We will also expand upon the first cycle targeted catchment approach for [Priority catchments](#), using awareness raising and farm visits. Finally, in smaller areas affected by diffuse pollution, we will use a ‘focus area’ approach, involving evidence gathering and monitoring, local awareness raising and land manager visits.

In Orkney we will be undertaking focus area work on burns and lochs affected by diffuse pollution. During 2015- 2021, we will investigate the source of diffuse pollution, and where necessary identify the need for further monitoring. Once the source of the diffuse pollution pressures have been identified the most appropriate package of measures will be implemented.

The [water environment hub](#) provides more details on these targeted catchments.

## **Water Environment Fund**

The [WEF](#) is the main delivery mechanism for non-regulatory work to improve fish passage and the physical condition of Scotland's water environment. SEPA administer the Fund on behalf of Scottish Government who make an annual grant for restoration projects that deliver prioritised environmental improvements.

In the financial year 2015/16 WEF has used third party grants to improve 16 km of river for morphology and fish access with one water body improved to good status. Control and eradication of Invasive non Native Species has also been funded along 281 km of rivers, in 43 water bodies. Restoration plans and designs have been produced that will achieve good status in 40 water bodies in future years and improving over 1000km of river for fish or morphology. The Scottish Government has awarded SEPA a grant of £3.7 million for the financial year 2016/17 for restoration projects to improve the water environment.

## **Funding opportunities**

### **The Environmental Co-operation Action Fund (ECAF)**

The [Environmental Co-operation Action Fund \(ECAF\)](#) is a new Scottish Government Scheme set up to fund the delivery of landscape-scale environmental projects by groups of farmer, foresters and other land managers, including Local Authorities and Fishery Trusts. ECAF supports the costs of planning, facilitating and overseeing cooperative projects, principally by the funding the activities of a facilitator.

There are eight environmental priorities that applicants can apply for; the most relevant for RBMP being control of INNS, catchment management for water quality and physical restoration of water bodies.

The next application round has still to be specified and your RBMP co-ordinator will notify you when the date is known. Full details of the scheme can be found [here](#).

## **Next update**

The next update paper will be out in the summer. If you would like to see a specific topic covered or add a feature please contact [OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk](mailto:OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk) with the details.

