

River Basin Management Planning

River Deveron catchment summary

1 Introduction

The River Deveron catchment (shown on Map 1) includes the major tributaries of the River Bogie, River Isla and Turriff Water. The Deveron rises in west Aberdeenshire and then flows through Huntly and Turriff before joining the North Sea at Banff.

Map 1: River Deveron catchment



The catchment includes areas of moorland, farmland and forestry, and also has a number of distilleries including Chivas Regal, Glendronach and Knock. The Deveron and its tributaries are important salmon, sea trout and brown trout fisheries.

Further information on the River Deveron catchment can be found on SEPA's interactive map at www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx

2 Classification summary of the catchment

SEPA monitors the water environment on an ongoing basis and uses the resulting data to produce annual classifications. The summarised results for 2008 show that the catchment contains:

- 8 water bodies at good ecological status.
- 18 water bodies at moderate ecological status, 5 water bodies at poor ecological status and 5 water bodies at bad ecological status. Table 1 gives further details of these water bodies.
- There are no Heavily Modified Water Bodies in the catchment.

The catchment is underlain by a number of groundwater bodies. The majority of these are classified as being at good status for both water quality and quantity, but the eastern catchment around Turriff has issues relating to over abstraction and diffuse pollution. These are discussed further in Table 1.

The Deveron catchment joins the sea at the Banff and Macduff coastal water body which is classified as being at good ecological status.

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3 Details of pressures affecting the catchment

The Deveron catchment is affected by a range of pressures, with alterations to beds and banks, diffuse source pollution and pressures from abstraction contributing to downgrading of ecological status. The alterations to beds and banks relate largely to agriculture, but some issues with forestry, urban development and road culverting have also been noted. Similarly, while much of the diffuse pollution is linked to agriculture, some forestry and sewage pollution also contribute. The abstraction pressures in the Deveron are largely linked to whisky production or drinking water supply.

In addition, a smaller number of water bodies are affected by point source pollution from sewage treatment and other discharges.

These pressures are discussed in more detail below for surface waters, groundwater and protected areas, and are summarised in Table 1.

Point source pollution

Many point source pressures listed against Deveron catchment water bodies will be addressed through Scottish Water investment measures, with some improvements already made to reduce sewage discharges.

Cowie Burn is expected to improve by 2015, as measures are already in place to reduce pressures from distillery discharges. However, other pressures mean that this water body will not improve to good status overall until 2027.

Priority catchment work (diffuse pollution, water resources and alterations to beds and banks)

The Deveron is a cycle 1 priority catchment, meaning that SEPA will focus survey, awareness raising and advisory efforts on the catchment between 2010 and 2015.


There are 14 water bodies in the Deveron catchment which have diffuse rural land use pollution pressures, and we anticipate that 10 will improve to good status by 2015 through the priority catchment work. The remaining four are also affected by sewage pollution, and will not improve to good status until 2021.

Nine water bodies have altered beds and banks related to agriculture (mostly straightening). Seven of these are expected to be improved to good morphological status by 2015, with a further two improving by 2021.

Other diffuse pollution

Septic tanks are thought to be contributing to the phosphorus downgrade in Idoch Water and have been proposed for future sewerage improvements. Further study will be needed in order to take this forward.

Cowie Burn is at moderate status for dissolved oxygen, but it is hoped that measures already in place should enable the achievement of good status by 2015.



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Alterations to beds and banks

Two burns are at moderate morphological status due to changes to the natural riparian vegetation as a result of forestry. Forestry restocking will secure improvements, but this is unlikely to happen until after 2021.

The Burn of Turriff is at bad status due to straightening and embankments but again, no improvements are anticipated before 2015. It is hoped that two fish barriers can be made passable before 2015, with other barriers addressed in later cycles.

Other water resource pressures

Eight water bodies are at less than good status due to drinking water and distillery abstractions. Currently, no improvements up to good status are predicted before 2027, although it is expected that work will be required before 2015 to confirm pressures and identify the specific improvements required regarding abstractions.

Protected Areas

Freshwater Fish

The Deveron Freshwater Fish area is compliant with imperative standards and so meets WFD objectives.

Drinking Water Protected Areas

The River Deveron (Huntly to Turriff) has been identified as being at risk of deterioration due to pesticides, cryptosporidium and metaldehydes. This will be tackled through work to reduce diffuse pollution, and specific controls on metaldehyde.

Special Areas of Conservation/ Special Protection Areas

No Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas in the Deveron catchment have been reported by SNH as being at unfavourable status.

4 Partnership working

The action plan for the Deveron will require licensed operators and landowners to deliver improvements, with support and advice from the north east area advisory group.

In particular, work to reduce diffuse pollution will require good partnership working with land managers, while work with distilleries will also be an important issue up until 2015 and into the future.

Much of this work will have to continue beyond 2015. In addition, there will be a need to maintain good status for all water bodies, and to identify and address new and emerging pressures.

The Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust works to raise awareness of the Deveron and its tributaries. It has published the Deveron Fisheries District Management Plan 2008 – 2012 and Deveron District Biosecurity Plan – see www.deveron.org for more information.



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Table 1 – Summary of pressures and objectives for water bodies at less than good status in the River Deveron catchment (2008 classification)

Water body	Current status	Pressures	Target	Action
River Deveron (Turriff-tidal limit)	Moderate	Abstraction Diffuse source pollution Point source pollution	Good by 2027	Control abstraction (Scottish Water) Reduce diffuse pollution (Land managers) Reduce point source pollution (Scottish Water)
Burn of Brydock	Poor	Alterations to beds / banks	Good by 2021	Remove / mitigate fish barrier (Land owner)
Rosy Burn	Poor	Alterations to beds/ banks	Good by 2015	Remove / mitigate fish barrier (Landowner) Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Cunning Burn	Poor	Alteration to beds/ banks	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Burn of Fortrie	Bad	Alteration to beds/ banks	Good by 2021	Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Burn of King Edward	Moderate	Alteration to beds/ banks Abstraction	Good by 2027	Control abstractions (Scottish Water) Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Idoch Water	Bad	Abstraction Alteration to beds/banks Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2027	Control abstractions (Scottish Water) Improve modified habitat (Land managers) Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers and Scottish Water)
Burn of Turriff	Bad	Alteration to beds/ banks Abstraction	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Land managers) Control abstraction (Scottish Water)
Burn of Tollo	Moderate			
River Deveron – Huntly-Turriff	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks	Good by 2021	Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Burn of Auchintoul	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution Point source pollution	Good by 2021	Reduce point and diffuse source pollution (Scottish Water and Land managers)
Keithny / Fergie Burn	Poor	Abstraction Diffuse source pollution Alterations to beds / banks	Good by 2021	Control abstraction (Operators) Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers) Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
R. Isla (d/s Shiel Burn)	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution	Good	Reduce diffuse source

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			by 2015	pollution (Land managers)
Cairnie Burn	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks	Good by 2015	Improve modified habitat (Land managers)
Shiel Burn	Bad	Alteration to beds/banks Diffuse source pollution Abstraction	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat, reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers) Control abstraction (Operators)
Burn of Braco	Moderate			
Burn of Paithnick	Moderate			
Burn of Aultmore	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2015	Reduce diffuse source pollution (Forestry Commission Scotland, Land managers)
Burn of Drum	Moderate	Abstraction	Good by 2015	Control abstraction (Scottish Water)
R.Isla – Keith to Shiel Burn	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks Diffuse source pollution Point source pollution	Good by 2015	Improve modified habitat (Land managers) Reduce point source pollution (Scottish Water) Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers)
Crooksmill Burn / Haugh Burn	Bad	Abstraction Diffuse source pollution Alterations to beds/banks	Good by 2027	Control abstraction (Operators) Reduce diffuse source pollution and improve modified habitat (Land managers)
R. Deveron – Black Water to Huntly	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Aberdeenshire Council,)
R. Bogie – Culdrain to Huntly	Poor	Alteration to beds/banks Point source pollution Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Aberdeenshire Council) Reduce point source pollution (Scottish Water) Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers)
Backburn (tributary of R. Bogie)	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2015	Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers)
Priests Water / Lag Burn	Moderate	Alterations to beds/banks	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Forestry Commission Scotland, Land Managers)
Kirkney Water	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks	Good by 2027	Improve modified habitat (Forestry Commission Scotland)
R. Bogie, source to Culdrain	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2015	Reduce diffuse source pollution (Land managers)
Cowie Burn	Moderate	Alteration to beds/banks	Good	Improve modified habitat,

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		Diffuse source pollution Abstraction Point source pollution	by 2027	remove / mitigate fish barriers (Land managers, owners) Reduce diffuse pollution (Operator, Land manager) Control abstraction (Operators) Reduce point source pollution (Operator)
Turriff bedrock (groundwater)	Quantity – poor Chemistry - poor	Abstraction Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2027	Control abstraction (Scottish Water) Reduce diffuse pollution (Land managers)
Idoch Valley Sand & gravel	Quantity – good Chemistry - poor	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2015	Reduce diffuse pollution (land managers)

