

New publication highlights Irish species at risk of extinction

A new Red List of Irish Amphibians, Reptiles & Freshwater Fish has been published. While most species were considered to be of least concern, six of our 15 native fish species (40%) and one of our three amphibians (33%) have been classified as Threatened. Welcoming the launch of the Red List, Dr Cathal Gallagher of the IFI said “The new Red List of Irish Amphibians, Reptiles & Freshwater Fish gives us a ‘health-check’ on the status of the species listed. For us who work closely with fish this document catalogues the status, distribution and threats facing both our native and non native fish species, it points to outstanding issues that need to be addressed and gives us a time frame for actions. This document provides scientist, managers and stakeholders with an analysis which can be used to support our fish populations for the next 10 years. Thanks must go to all who contributed to the development of this updated Red List.”

The Red List was compiled by scientists from organisations across the island including Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the National Biodiversity Data Centre. It provides a full and objective assessment of Ireland’s amphibians, reptiles and freshwater fish, identifying those species most in need of conservation interventions. It also identifies the major threats to these species so that mitigating measures can be implemented. For the first time an objective assessment of the status of non-native fish which have become naturalised in Ireland is also provided.

Of our 15 native fish species, one was found to be Critically Endangered (European eel) and five were deemed to be Vulnerable - pollan, Arctic char, twaite shad, Killarney shad and Atlantic salmon. One further species (sea lamprey) was found to be Near Threatened. Of the five amphibians and reptiles assessed, one was

found to be Endangered, the natterjack toad.

Two of the established non-native fish were identified as invasive species in need of management (dace and chub).

Donna Cassidy of the NIEA highlighted the value of Red Lists in identifying species that are most at risk and drawing attention to the threats that they face in order to target conservation.

The Red Data List identifies a number of widespread threats such as water pollution, the spread of invasive species, over-fishing, unsympathetic river management and climate change. Barriers to upstream migration, such as weirs, were highlighted as being of particular importance to the lampreys and shads.

“This is the 6th all-Ireland Red Data List to be published in recent years” said Dr Ferdia Marnell of NPWS, “and with the input from our colleagues in NIEA, the National Biodiversity Data Centre and other agencies across the island, further Red Data Lists for Moths, Lichens, Bryophytes and Seaweeds are also underway.”

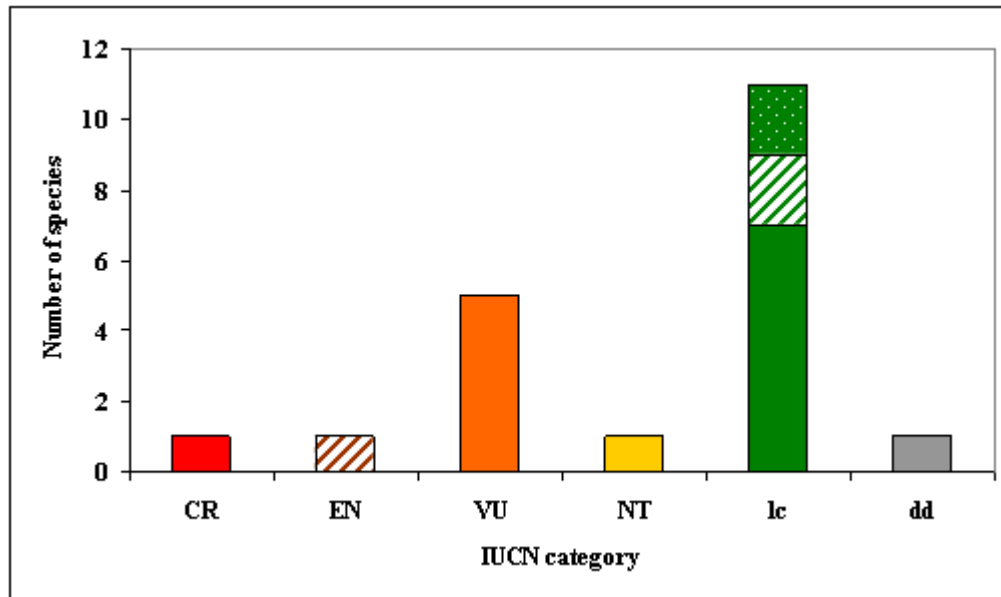
Notes for editors:

The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) co-ordinates the production of Red Lists using standardised categories and criteria for classifying species at high risk of global or regional extinction. See more here:<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

The Red List of Amphibians, Reptiles & Freshwater Fish is the latest in a new series of Irish Red Lists published by the National Parks & Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It follows on from previous assessments of Water Beetles (2009), Molluscs (2009), Mammals (2009), Butterflies (2010), and Dragonflies (2011). All of these Red Lists are available to download from the NPWS website at:<http://www.npws.ie/publications/redlists/>

The Red Lists are developed on an all-Ireland basis by staff in the

Scientific Unit of NPWS together with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and other agencies as appropriate e.g. Inland Fisheries Ireland.



The number of native species assigned to each IUCN category. CR: Critically Endangered; EN: Endangered; VU: Vulnerable; NT: Near Threatened; lc: least concern; dd: data deficient. Solid fill – Fish; Diagonal lines – Amphibians; Dots – Reptiles.

Inland Fisheries Ireland is a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and was established under the Fisheries Act on 1st July 2010. Its principal function is the protection and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. IFI will promote, support, facilitate and advise the Minister on, the conservation, protection, management, development and improvement of inland fisheries, including sea angling and develop and advise the Minister on policy and national strategies relating to inland fisheries and sea angling.

The **National Parks & Wildlife Service** is part of the Department of Art, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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