

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Regulation and Enforcement Division



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: **DAERA/25-440**

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Water Management Unit
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

Email: WMU.FOI@daera-ni.gov.uk

26 August 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 20 August 2025 which sought the following information:

Questions re phosphorus and nitrates levels in Lough Neagh.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested.

For the Water Framework Directive assessment of water quality in Lough Neagh, nutrients are sampled monthly at the lake outflow at Lower Bann at Toome. Phosphorus is assessed as Total Phosphorus in mg/l and Nitrates are assessed as Total Nitrogen mg/l. The results from 2020 to date are attached as Annex A.

The highest values of each parameter in each year are provided in the table below. It should be noted however that the assessment of both nutrients is based on a rolling three year average as nutrient levels will vary naturally throughout the year.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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Year	Date	Phosphorus, Total (TP) mg/l	Date	Total Oxidised Nitrogen (TON) mg/l
2020	14/01/2020	0.17	12/02/2020	1.05
2021	04/10/2021	0.16	10/03/2021	1.16
	25/10/2021	0.16		
2022	02/11/2022	0.17	02/03/2022	1.18
			29/03/2022	1.18
2023	04/09/2023	0.339	05/04/2023	1.4
2024	07/08/2024	0.14	04/03/2024	1.17

The most recently published water quality statistics can be found in the Northern Ireland Water Classification Statistics Report 2024 for surface waters (including rivers and lakes, but also coastal & transitional water bodies). The report, and supporting information including frequently asked questions are available to the public on the DAERA website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/water-classification-statistics-northern-ireland-2024-report>.

The detailed information for an individual water body is not yet available on a public platform but any requests for the data can be made through Water Quality info WaterInfo@daera-ni.gov.uk

Lough Neagh was assessed as Poor Ecological quality in 2024. The details of this assessment are shown in the table below

LAKE NAME	Lough Neagh
EU_CD	UKGBNI3NB0032
Phytoplankton	Moderate
Diatoms	Poor
Macrophytes	Poor
Fish	High
Biological Quality elements	Poor
Total Phosphorus	Bad
Salinity	High
Dissolved Oxygen	Good
Physico-chemistry	Moderate
Hydromorphology	Less than Good
Hydrology	Good
Morphology	Less than Good
Specific pollutants	High
Ecological Status	Poor

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If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department.

If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]

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