

Our Reference: DAERA/26-675

Water Pollution Response &
Enforcement Team
NIEA Lisburn
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

██████████ via
Reply via email ██████████

Telephone: 0800 80 70 60

E-mail: WMU.FOI@daera-ni.gov.uk

25 September 2026

██████████,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Thank you for your request for information received by the Department on 01 September 2026 which sought the following information:

Statistical data held by the Department and NIEA, from 1 January 2024 to present, regarding

- 1. The total number of farmers and agricultural businesses prosecuted in relation to the pollution of waterways, slurry/effluent discharges, and incidents resulting in fish kills.**
- 2. The total number of anglers or recreational fishers who have been taken to court (prosecuted) by DAERA for exceeding their legal bag limits or illegally killing/retaining fish.**

For both datasets, please provide the year-by-year breakdown (e.g. 2024, 2025, and 2026 to date) and, if possible, the number of successful convictions and the resulting fines or penalties.

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

The total number of farmers and agricultural businesses prosecuted in relation to the pollution of waterways, slurry/effluent discharges, and incidents resulting in fish kills.

Annex A provides a summary of the twenty agricultural related water pollution incidents that resulted in a prosecution that occurred between 1 January 2024 and present, there being twelve incidents in 2024, four incidents in 2025 and four incidents in 2026. The fine amount is also included within this data where the case has already been heard in court. Additional Prosecution cases will have been heard in court since 1 January 2024, where the incident occurred prior to the time period that you have defined and, as such, are not presented in Annex A. The prosecution totals provided relate to water

pollution incidents that were categorised as Source = Farm on NIEAs Pollution Incident Management System (PIMS).

Please also note that the 2026 figures are only currently available up to and including 31 July 2026. NIEA update these statistics on an annual basis as they form part of the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report which is next scheduled for publication in May 2027. It is, therefore, possible that these figures could be subject to some change during the auditing process prior to becoming 'Official Statistics'.

Most cases of water pollution reported to NIEA are, following investigation, found to be unsubstantiated or of Low Severity which would not reach the threshold for formal enforcement action. In the case of Low Severity incidents, NIEA ensures that the pollution is stopped and provides advice to minimise the risk of recurrence. Note, breaches of the Nutrient Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, with subsequent financial penalty, may be applied for High, Medium and Low Severity incidents, of agricultural source, where a polluter has been identified. Some High and Medium Severity incidents will have been subject to both Prosecution and Breach.

NIEA seeks to undertake enforcement action that is proportionate to the significance of the offence. This includes consideration of the level of environmental harm, the impact on communities, the level of financial benefit arising from the offence(s) or the regulatory costs avoided.

Formal enforcement action is normally considered for incidents having a Medium or High Severity environmental impact where a polluter has been identified. In such cases where it is suspected that a criminal offence has occurred; there is sufficient evidence and it is warranted in line with DAERA's Enforcement Policy, a file may be submitted to the Public Prosecution Service, who review the file and decide whether to direct a prosecution. Other enforcement actions available to the Department include the issuing of Warning Letters, Notices and Breaches of Cross-Compliance for agricultural incidents.

The total number of anglers or recreational fishers who have been taken to court (prosecuted) by DAERA for exceeding their legal bag limits or illegally killing/retaining fish.

No anglers or recreational fishers were prosecuted by DAERA for these specific offences between 1 January 2024 and 31 July 2026.

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



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

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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,



Water Pollution Response & Enforcement Team



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