



European Union
European Regional
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Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

Freshwater Pearl Mussel Erne & Melvin CSG Oct 2012

IR IVa Reference Number: 003705

Picture courtesy of E Moorkens



**Comhairle Chontae Dhún
na nGall**
Donegal County Council
www.donegal.ie

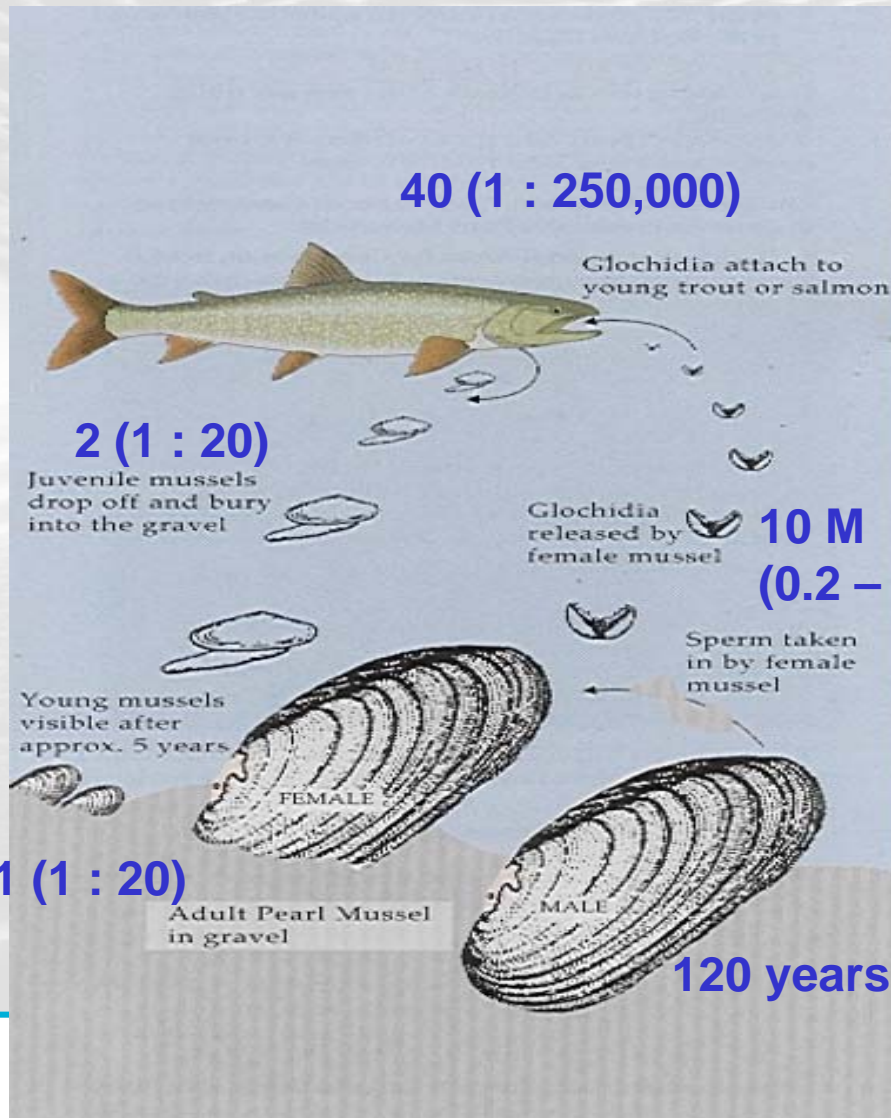




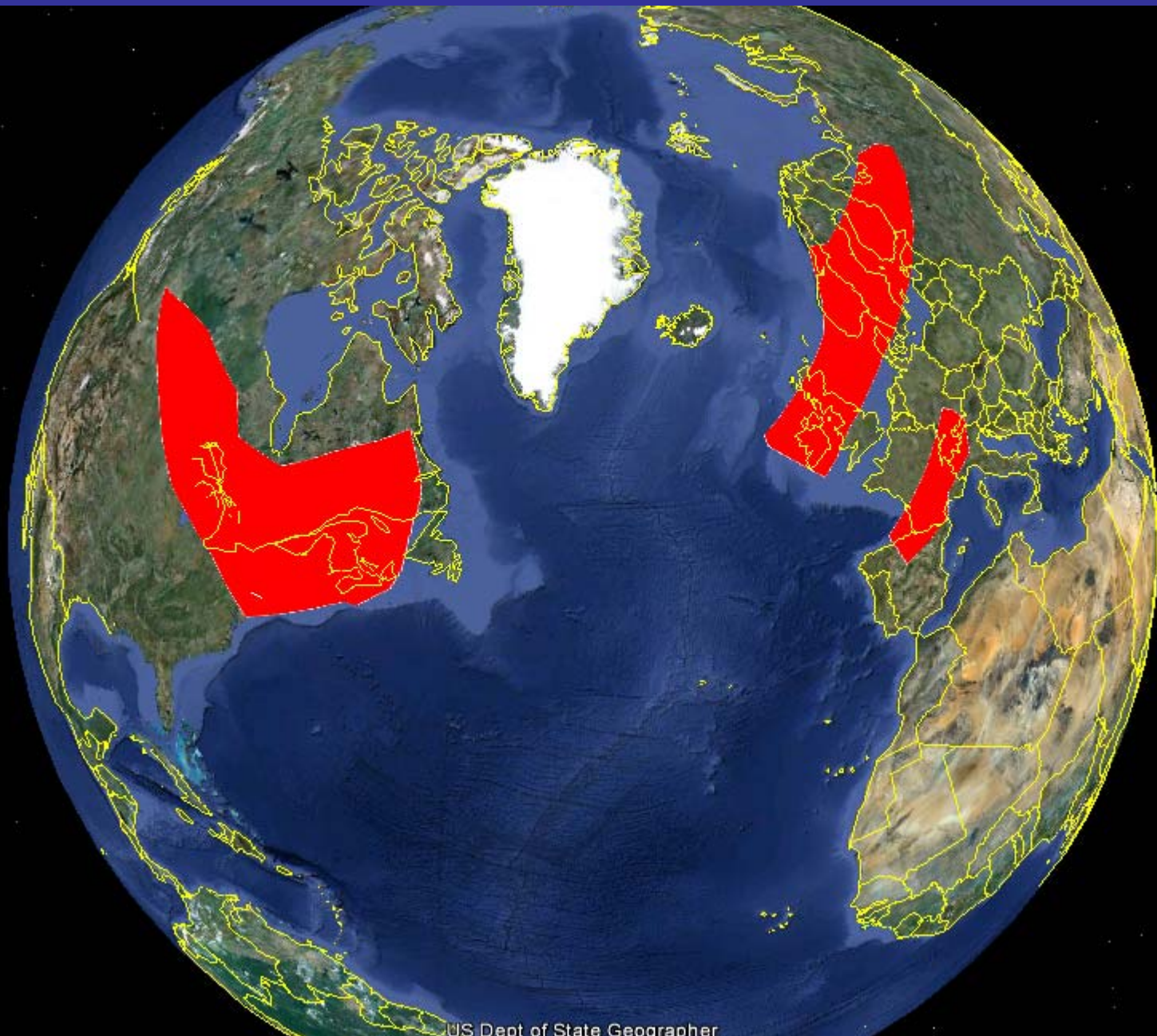
Margaritifera margaritifera

Picture courtesy of E Moorkens

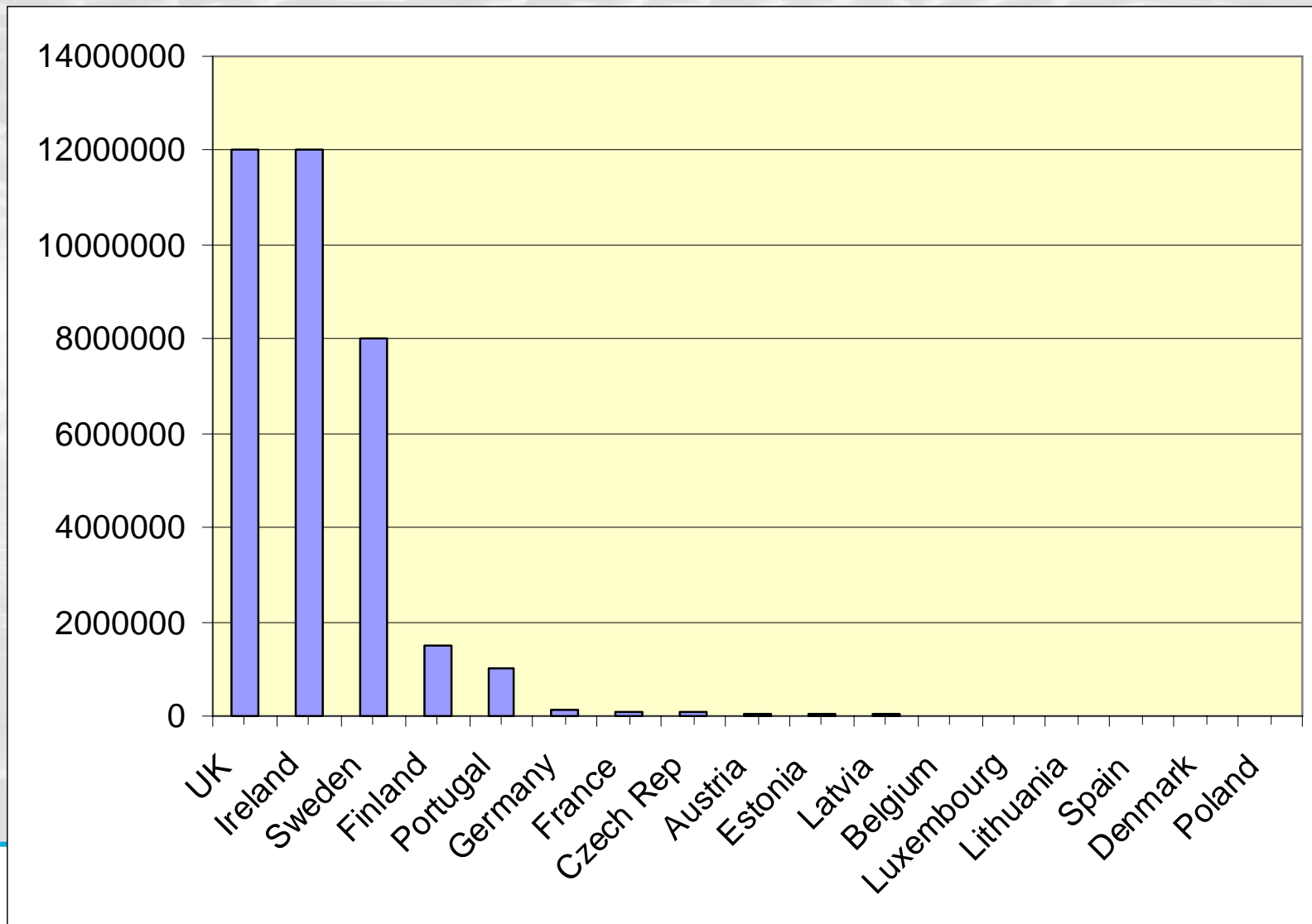
Life Cycle

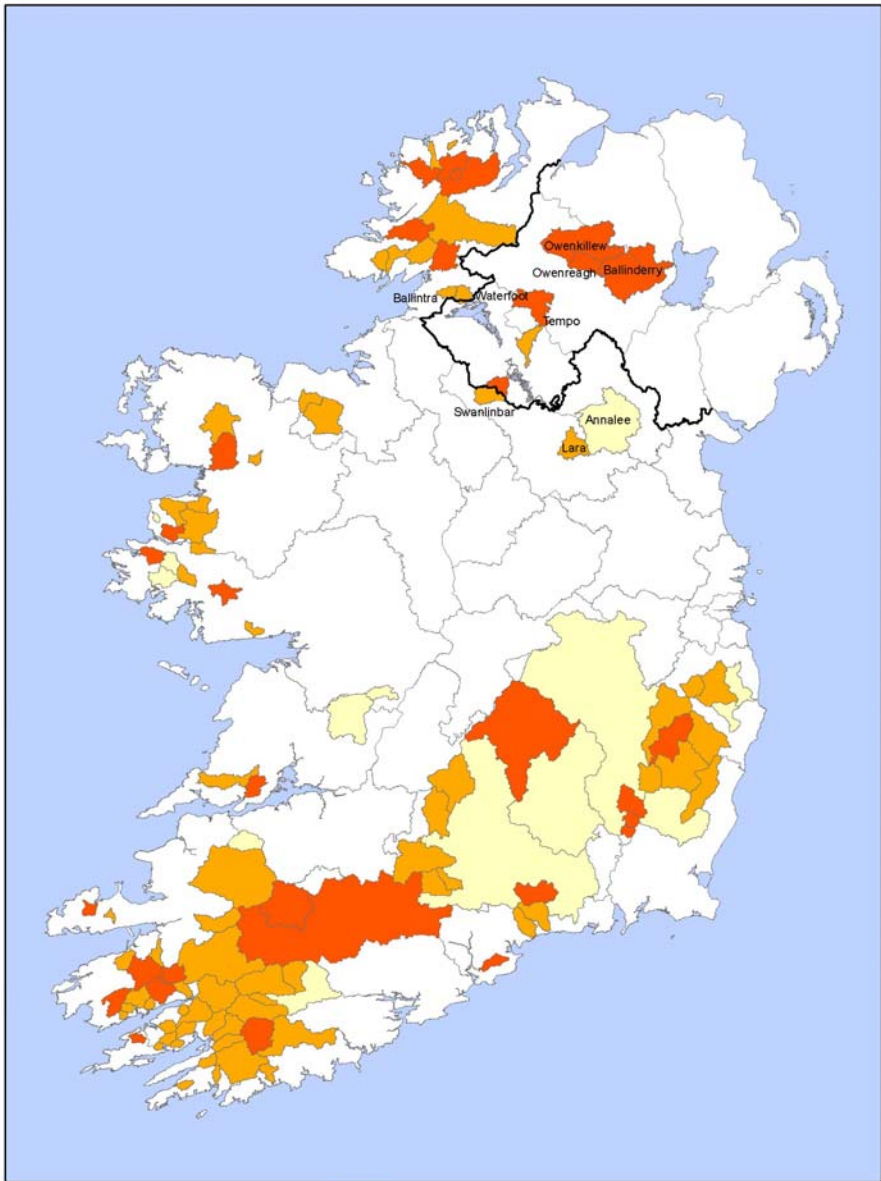


Global Distribution



European Abundance

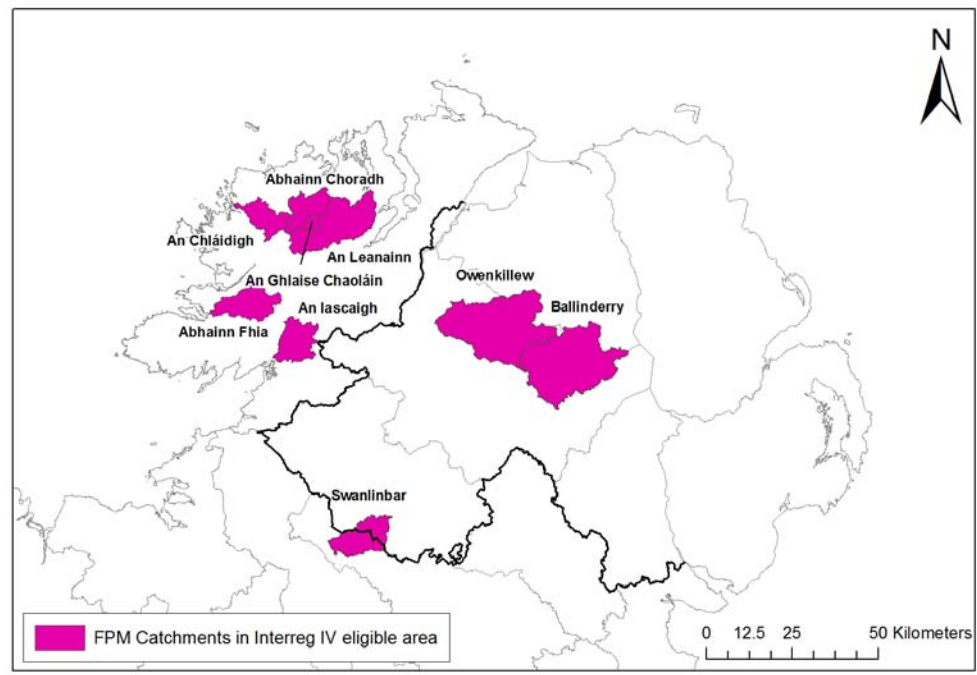
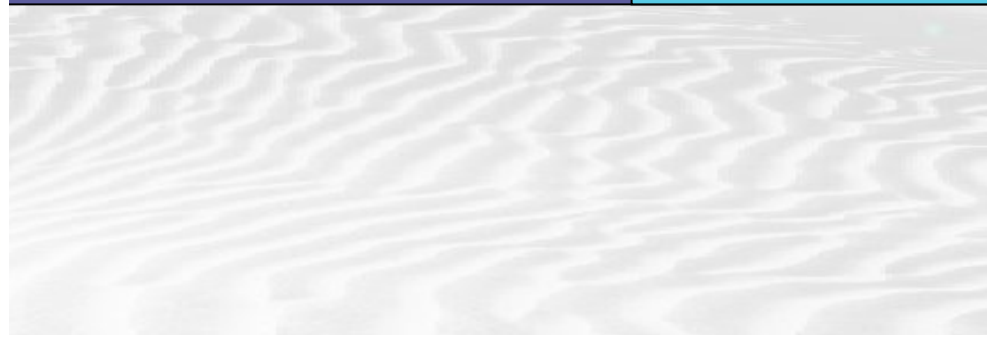




0 15 30 60
Kilometers

- Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009
- Catchments of other extant populations
- Catchments with pre-1970 live records

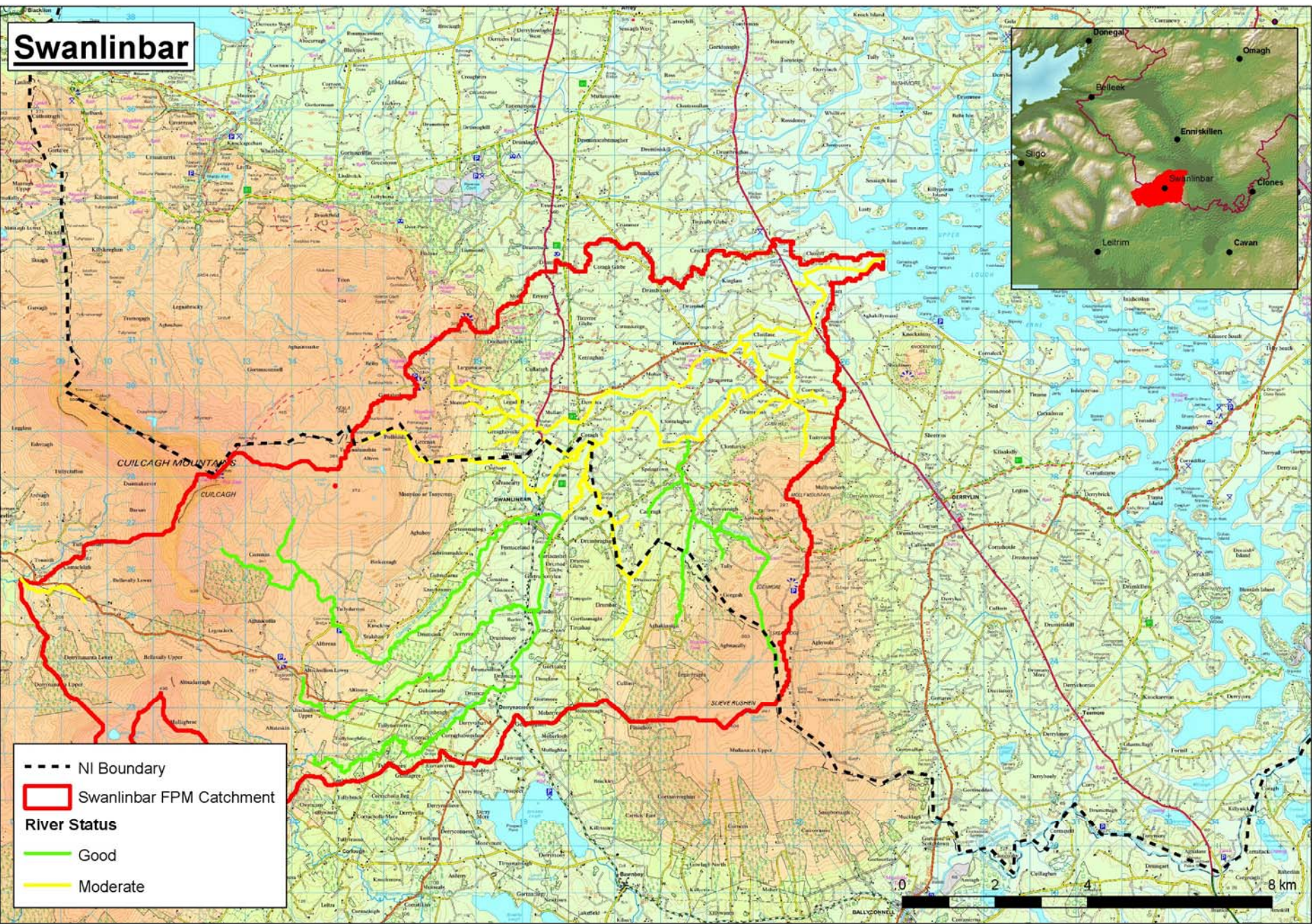
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■ FPM Catchments in Interreg IV eligible area

0 12.5 25 50 Kilometers

Swanlinbar



-  NI Boundary
-  Swanlinbar FPM Catchment
- River Status**
-  Good
-  Moderate

What are the causes of the decline?



Illegal Pearl Fishing



**1 in 10,000 might
contain something
resembling a pearl !**



Gold Brooch with Eske Pearl
presented to Queen Victoria on
her visit to Ireland in 1849

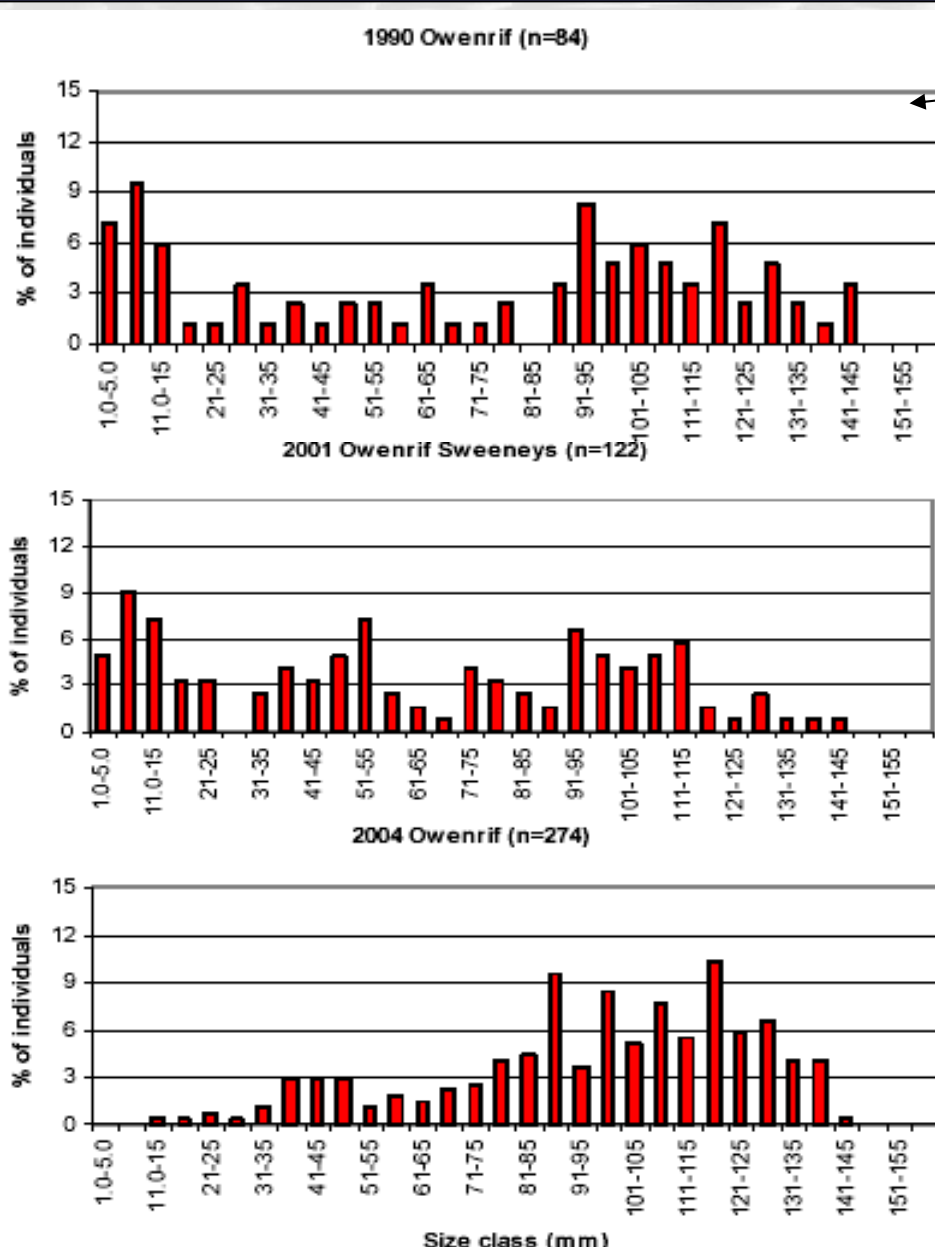
LEGAL PRODUCTION

Cultured Freshwater Pearls – China produces 1,500 tonnes per annum

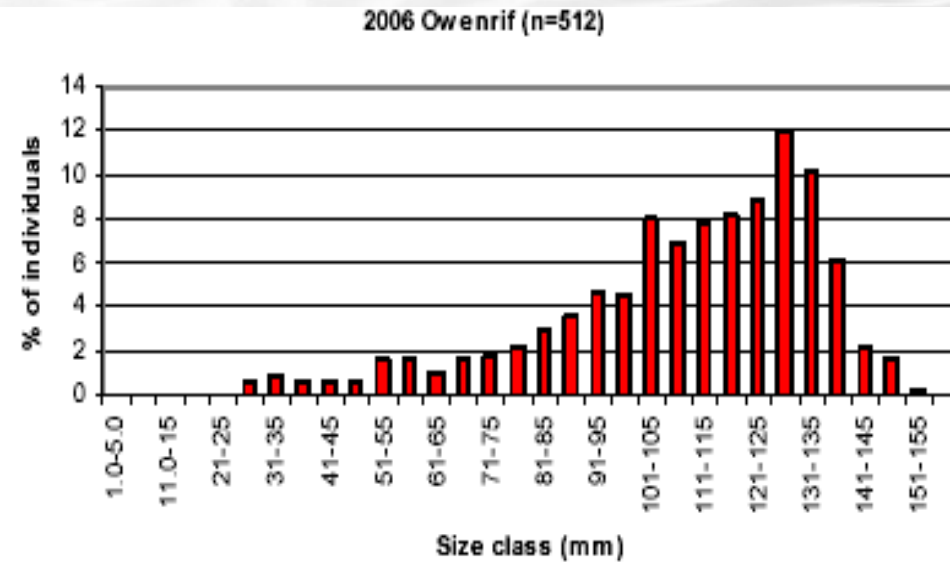
A Thing of the Past !



Where have all the young ones gone ?



This is what shell length profiles should look like



(Courtesy: Áine O'Connor, NPWS)

Climate Change?

The Monarch
Climate Change
project found that
Ireland is well
within climate
space survival
parameters over
the next 80 years

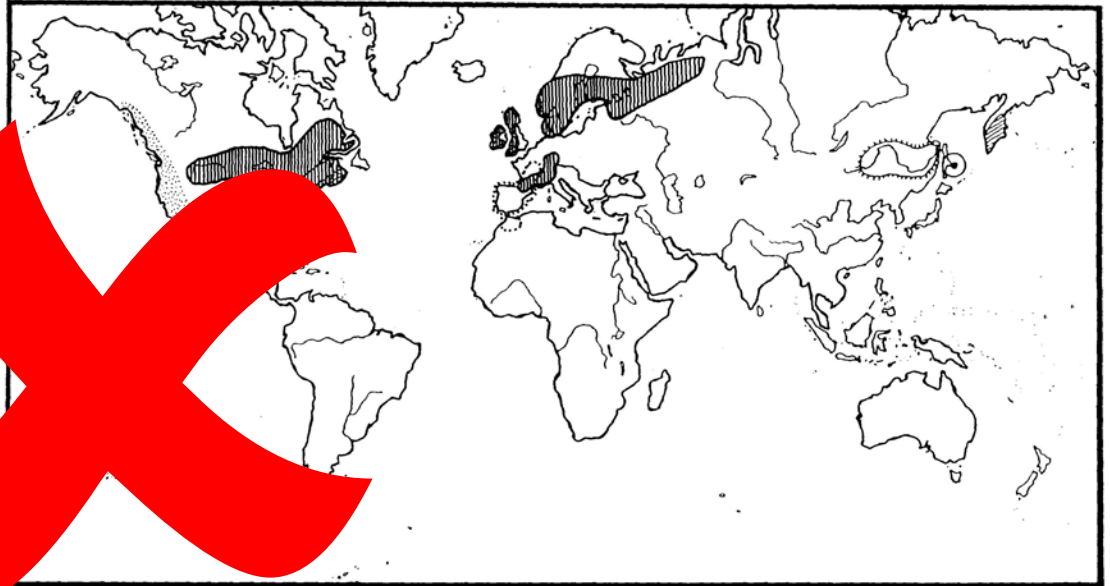
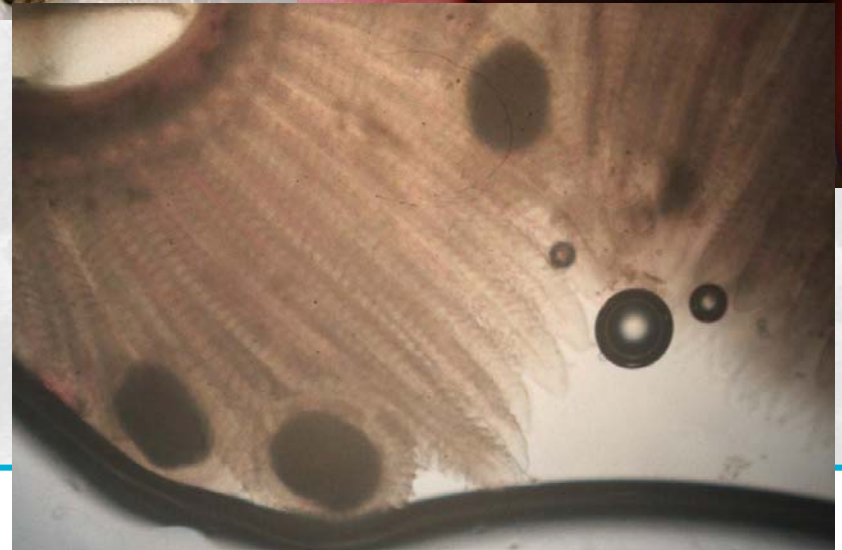
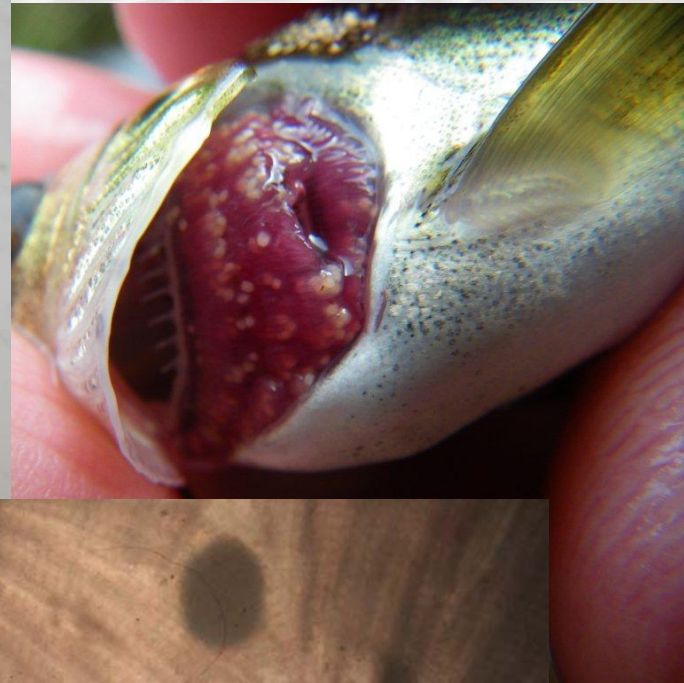


Figure 1.1 Distribution of species of the family *Margaritiferidae* throughout the world (Map adapted from Baranescu, 1990).

1. *Margaritifera margaritifera*; 2. *M. auricularia*; 3. *M. dahurica*; 4. *M. middendorffi*; 5. *M. sachalinensis*; 6. *M. hembeli*; 7. *M. falcata*.

Are the Mussels Reproducing ?



**Clady catchment, Co Donegal
(Spring 2009)**

Silt damage



Some Sources

- Agriculture
 - Over Grazing
 - Tillage
 - Drainage
 - Livestock Poaching
- Forestry
 - Felling
 - Afforestation
 - Roads
 - Drainage
- UWWT
- House Construction
- Quarrying
- Peat Harvesting

Excessive Fine Silt Impacts on Mussels and Fish





17/10/2011























Nutrient Enrichment

Some Sources

- Agriculture
 - Fertilisers
 - Slurry
 - Livestock Access
- Forestry
 - Fertilisation
 - Felling / Brash
- UWWT
- Septic Tanks



Excessive Aquatic Plant and Algal Growth

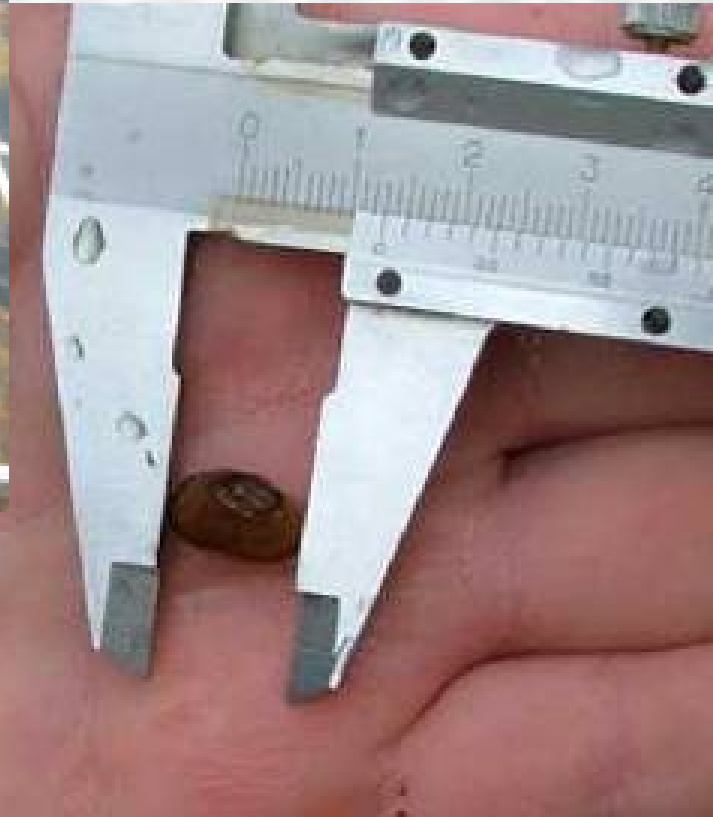


FPM Project Basics

- **European Union INTERREG IVA Environment strand, Priority 2.2.**
- **Partners: Donegal CC, NIEA**
- **Funding €2.3M**
- **Project duration:**
October 2010 to March 2014
- **Overall Aim:** To support the practical implementation of measures that will restore the FPM to favourable conservation status at designated sites

So what are we doing about it?





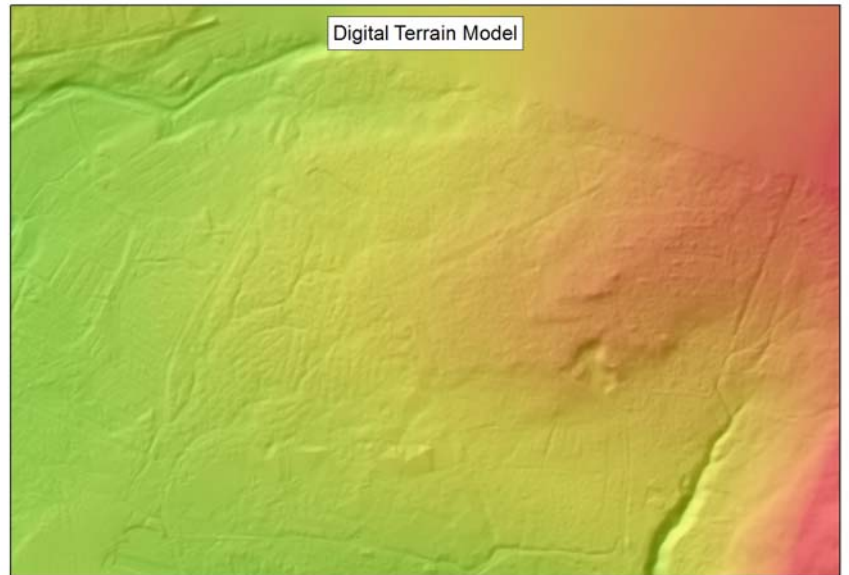
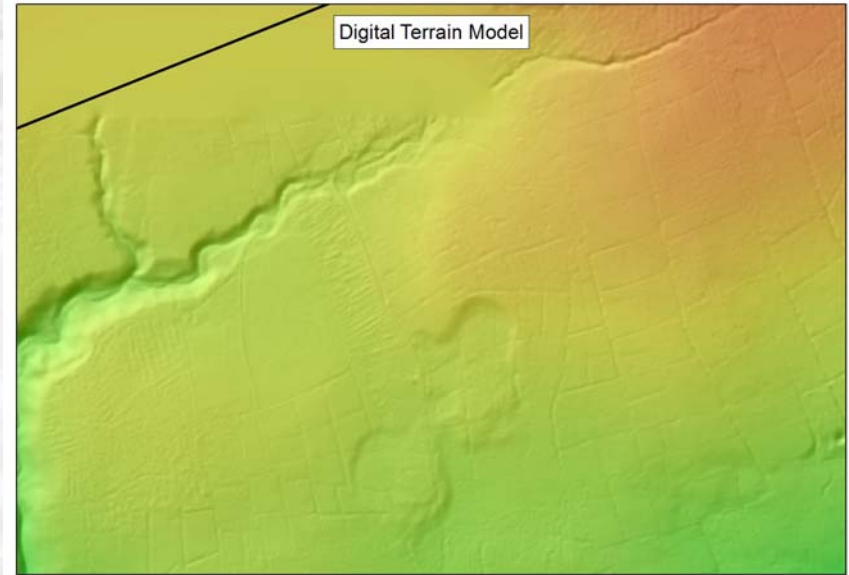
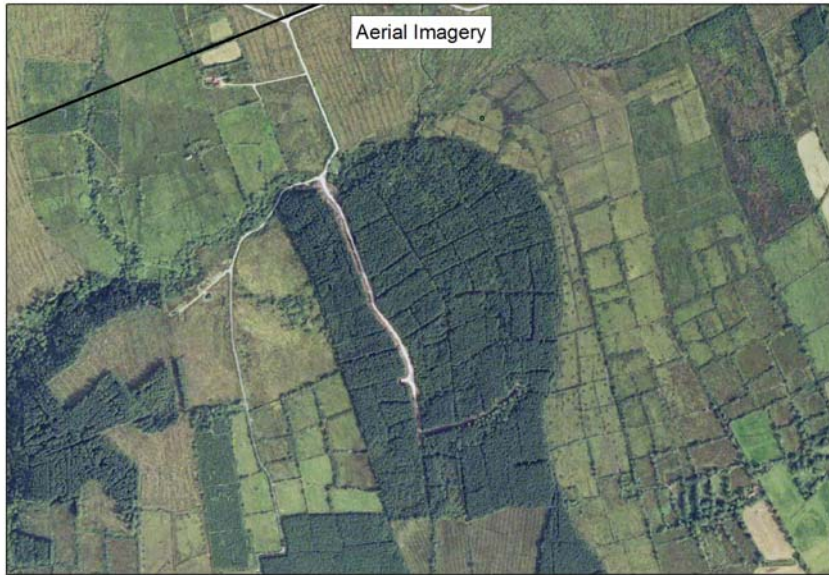


















<http://freshwaterpearlmussel.com/>

▶ HOME ▶ PROJECT INFORMATION ▶ FPM ▶ GALLERY ▶ NEWS ▶ LINKS ▶ LOGIN

Freshwater Pearl Mussel a Flagship Species

We take great pride in our beautiful unspoilt countryside with its pristine rivers and lakes. The image of a green and unblemished land brings many tourists and helps to sell our produce abroad. It is our heritage and we should guard it jealously. Crystal clear rivers with unspoilt animal and plant communities are part of that heritage, and one animal in particular (the freshwater pearl mussel) tells us that the rivers in which it lives are of the very highest quality.

"the island of Ireland supports a major proportion of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations remaining in Europe"

Freshwater Pearl Mussel Project

Donegal County Council, in partnership with Northern Ireland Environment Agency, has been awarded funding under the European Union's European Regional Development Fund for a project aimed at helping to secure the conservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The project is grant aided under the European Union's INTERREG IVA Programme, as part of the Environment strand, under Priority 2.2



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Thanks

