

Investigative Electro-fishing Surveys on the Curraghinalt Burn & Pollanroe Burn

In February 2021 Northern Ireland Environment Agency consulted with Loughs Agency regarding a Fisheries Habitat Assessment which had been carried out in the Owenkillew and Owenreagh East catchments in respect of a planning application by Dalradian. The fisheries habitat report had relied partly on a desktop assessment which had come to the conclusion that the Curraghinalt Burn and Pollanroe Burn were both of low ecological value. Furthermore it was later asserted that the confluence of both these tributaries (where they joined the main Owenkillew and Owenreagh East respectively) were perched in nature and therefore complete barriers to fish.

Staff members from NIEA and Loughs Agency jointly carried out a preliminary site visit to both of these tributaries on Thursday 11th February to take an initial look at the availability of potential fisheries habitat. Subsequent to the initial site walkover Loughs Agency staff were of the opinion that both of these streams were capable of sustaining juvenile Salmonid populations.

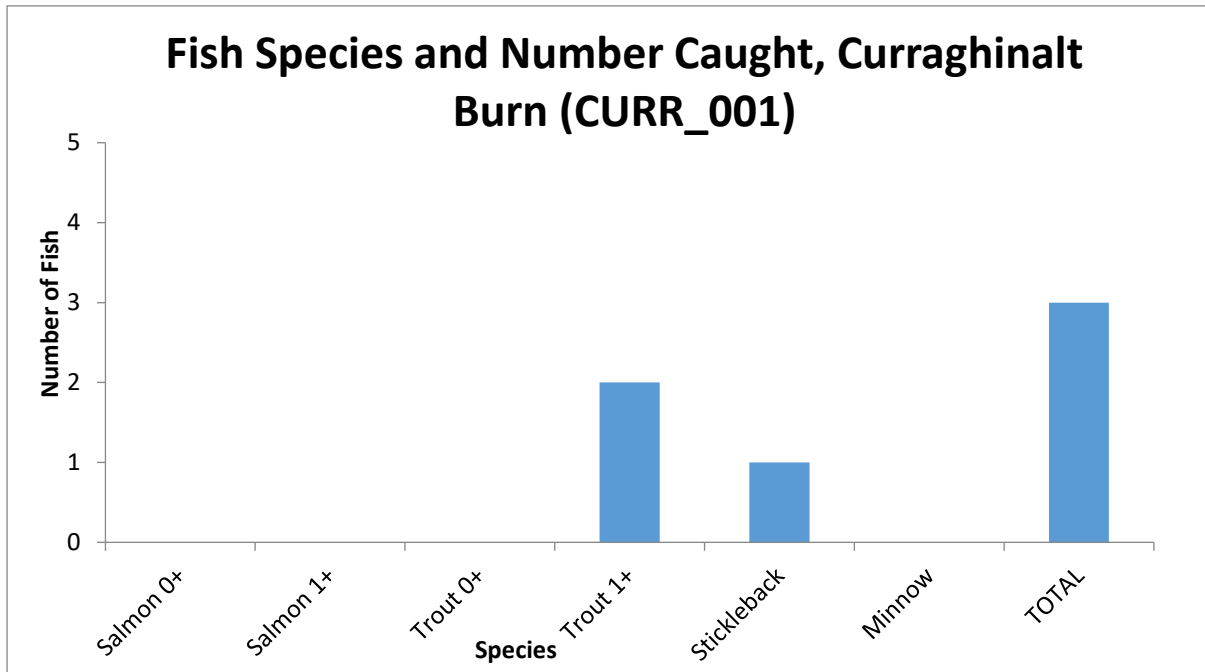
In the case of the Curraghinalt Burn the range of habitat which was accessible to fish was small, but nevertheless it was felt that it would at the very least provide a refuge for juvenile salmonids in times of spate in the main Owenkillew River. The Pollanroe Burn was deemed to have a greater expanse of suitable habitat capable of providing spawning, nursery and pockets of holding. Therefore all three habitat types required for Salmonids to complete their life cycle were judged to be present in the lower section of the Pollanroe Burn.

Loughs Agency staff advised that it would be best to carry out investigative electro-fishing surveys at a later, more suitable date. The purpose of the surveys was to collect data and provide any evidence of juvenile salmonid populations in both the Curraghinalt Burn (tributary of the Owenkillew) and Pollanroe Burn (tributary of the Owenreagh East).

These surveys were carried out on Thursday 10th June, 2021. Two staff members from the Natural Environment Directorate (CDP) were also present on the day to independently observe the surveys and to help inform their own decision making process. The results of the investigative electro-fishing monitoring are presented below.

Site 1: CURR_001

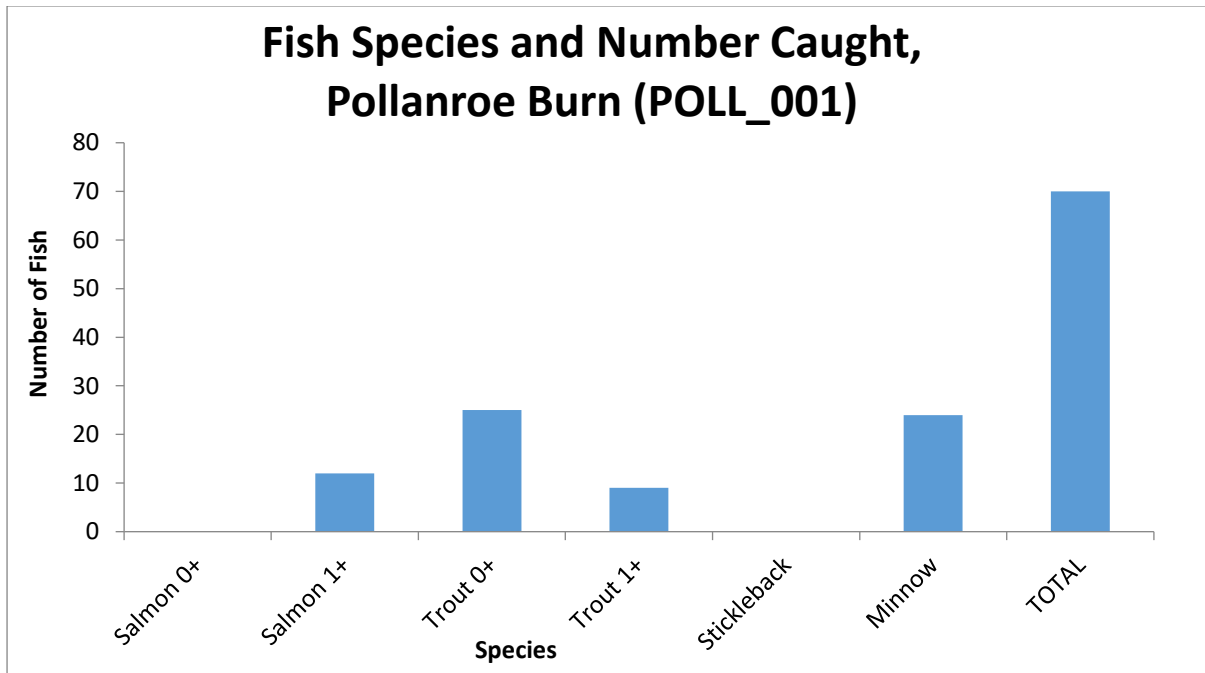
Date	River Name	Catchment	Site Code	Location Downstream Co-ordinates		Distance Electro-fished	
10/06/2021	Curraghinalt Burn	Owenkillew	CURR_001	X_CO_ORD	Y_CO_ORD	40 metres upstream	
				257129	387095		
Fishing	Salmon 0+	Salmon 1+	Trout 0+	Trout 1+	Stickleback	Minnow	TOTAL
5 Min Timed				2	1		3
Semi-Q							
TOTAL	0	0	0	2	1	0	3



Trout 1+ captured on the Curraghinalt Burn_10_06_2021

Site 2: POLL_001

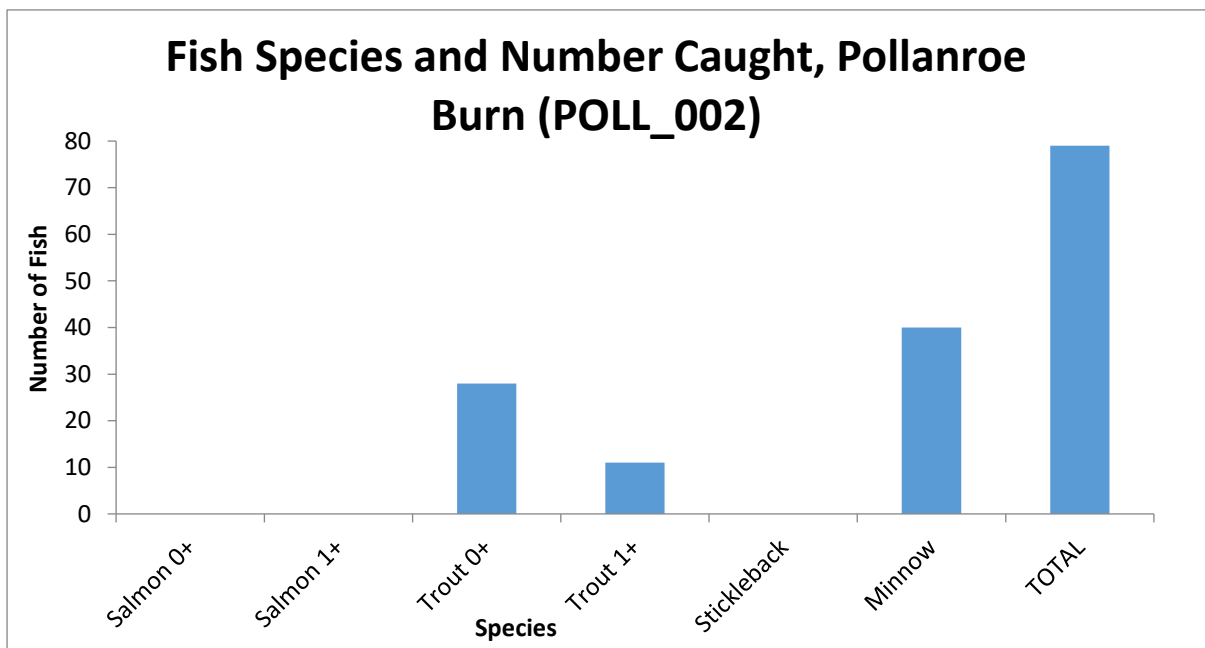
Date	River Name	Catchment	Site Code	Location Downstream Co-ordinates		Distance Electro-fished	
10/06/2021	Pollanroe Burn	Owenreagh East	POLL_001	X_CO_ORD	Y_CO_ORD	100 metres upstream	
				257479	382549		
Fishing	Salmon 0+	Salmon 1+	Trout 0+	Trout 1+	Stickleback	Minnow	TOTAL
10 Min Timed		12	25	9		24	70
Semi-Q							
TOTAL	0	12	25	9	0	24	70



Atlantic salmon Parr captured on the Pollanroe Burn_10_06_2021

Site 3: POLL_002

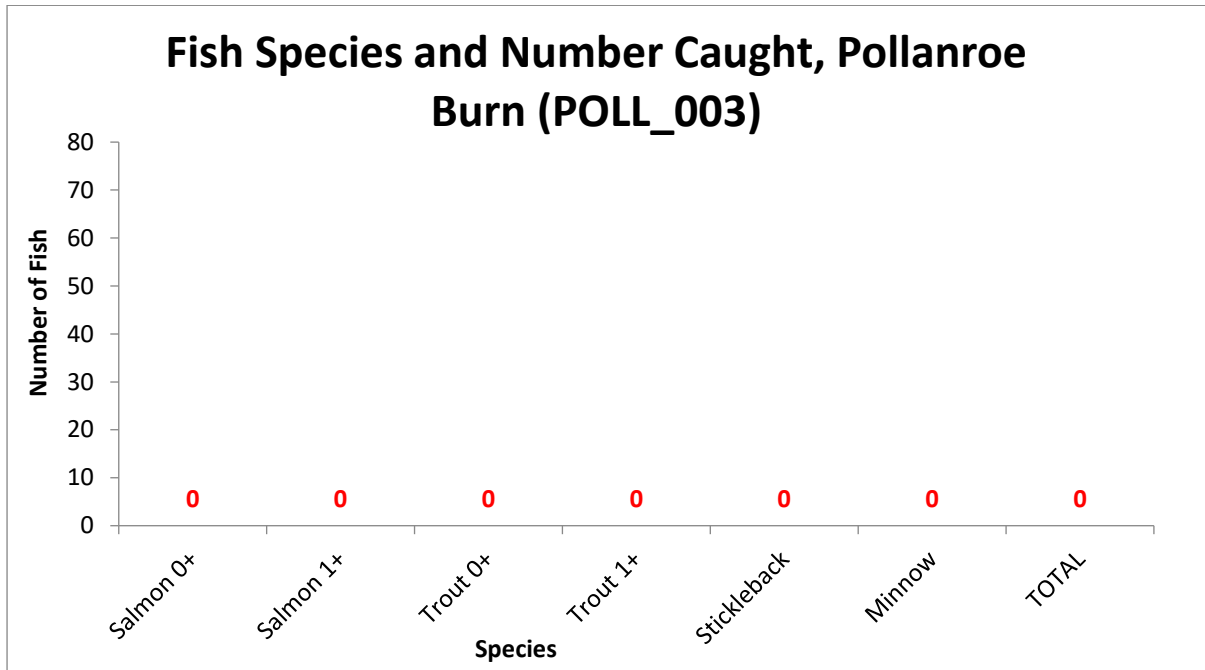
Date	River Name	Catchment	Site Code	Location Downstream Co-ordinates		Distance Electro-fished	
10/06/2021	Pollanroe Burn	Owenreagh East	POLL_002	X_CO_ORD	Y_CO_ORD	60 metres upstream	
				257673	382972		
Fishing	Salmon 0+	Salmon 1+	Trout 0+	Trout 1+	Stickleback	Minnow	TOTAL
10 Min Timed			28	11		40	79
Semi-Q							
TOTAL	0	0	28	11	0	40	79



Environment Agency colleagues observing electro-fishing surveys to investigate the presence of juvenile salmonids in the Pollanroe Burn_10_06_2021

Site 4: POLL_003

Date	River Name	Catchment	Site Code	Location Downstream Co-ordinates		Distance Electro-fished	
10/06/2021	Pollanroe Burn	Owenreagh East	POLL_003	X_CO_ORD	Y_CO_ORD	50 metres upstream	
				258261	383350		
Fishing	Salmon 0+	Salmon 1+	Trout 0+	Trout 1+	Stickleback	Minnow	TOTAL
5 Min Timed Semi-Q							
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Electro-fishing survey on the Pollanroe Burn. No fish encountered, signs of enrichment. Large numbers of Gammarus & Baetid mayfly present_10_06_2021