

2nd Meeting of the Irish Freshwater Sciences Association, Friday March 6th 2020,
Trinity College, Dublin.

Submission for Oral Presentation

Assessing Trends in Lamprey Abundance for EU Status Reporting

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Abstract (145 words)

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) monitors the conservation status of Annex II fish species listed in the Habitats Directive, reporting to the EU (‘Article 17’) on a six-year cycle. Full Article 17 reporting requires comment on population trends and changes in geographic range. Larval surveying is a highly efficient method of assessing presence/absence and population densities of river/brook lamprey across catchments. A network of individual reference catchments, including lamprey-designated SACs, were selected for the 2013-2018 reporting cycle, each comprising 5-9 sites to be surveyed annually or during alternate years, and chosen to provide a broad geographic representation nationwide. A variety of statistical analysis techniques were employed to ascertain temporal trends in abundance at local and national level. Findings from these analyses will be presented and discussed in the context of surveying constraints. The applicability of other methodologies such as species distribution modelling (SDM) will be explored.