



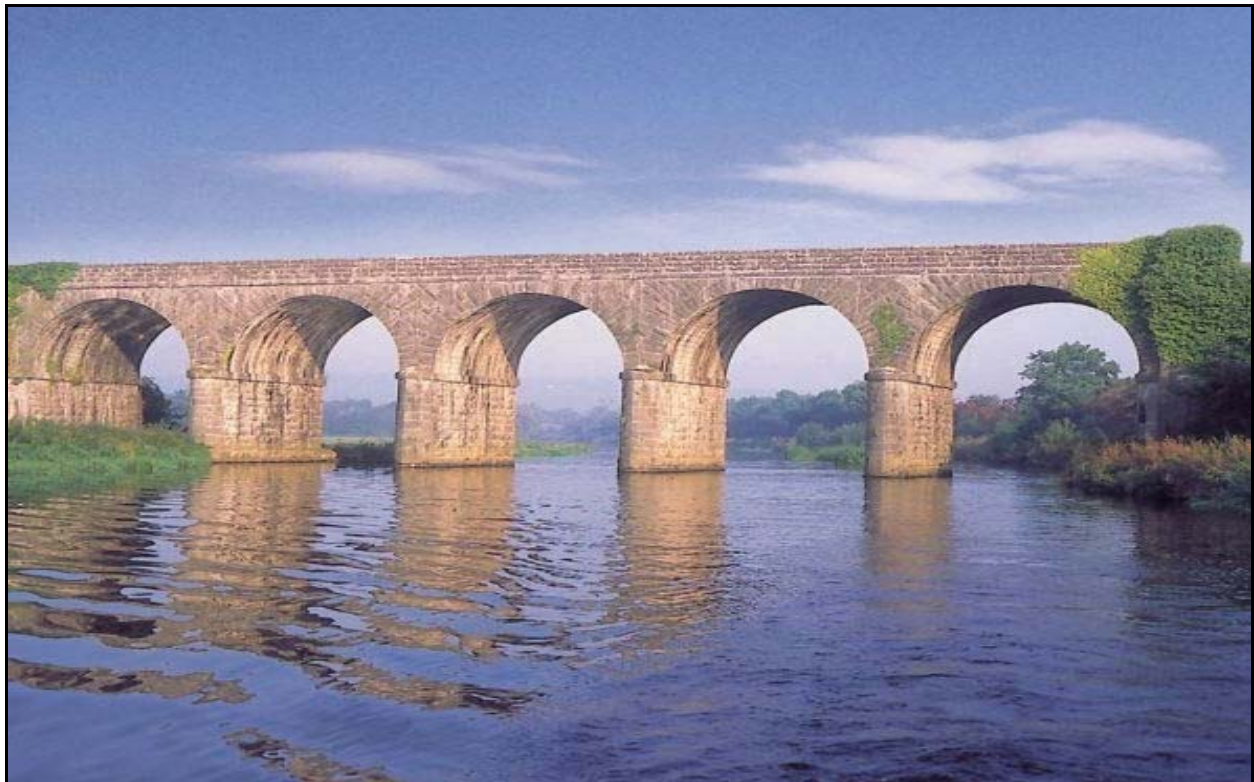
Welcome to the seventh year of the Barrow Catchment Management initiative. The Barrow steering group continued its quarterly yearly meetings and welcomed some new members to the group. The Barrow Catchment Management initiative continues to operate very successfully with a simple motto of including all interested stakeholders.

A variety of presentations throughout the year informed the group and stimulated some interesting debate on topics including; conservation species in the Barrow Catchment, the N9

Carlow Bypass, Remediation and Restoration works at Irish Sugars Carlow site, The Chinese Mitten Crab and the River Basin District Small Stream Risk Assessment.

#### **Inside this Issue**

Work by Steering Group Partners including Waterways Ireland, Kildare County Council, Carlow County Council, Southern Regional Fisheries Board, South Eastern R.B.D.



*Viaduct on River Barrow at Bagenalstown (Photograph courtesy of Karen Roche, SERBD)*

*Catchment Management Related Work by the Steering Group Partners  
on the Barrow*

**WATERWAYS IRELAND**

Waterways Ireland is the cross-border body responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of some of Ireland's inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes. The mission statement of the body is to provide a high quality recreational environment, centred on the inland waterways in our care, for the benefit of our customers. It is Waterways Ireland's policy that the term 'customer' includes everybody who uses or enjoys the amenity whether they are boaters, canoeists, walkers, anglers, local residents or visitors.

Arguably the most attractive of the waterways in our care is the Barrow

Navigation which is largely a river navigation with twenty-three lateral canal sections stretching from Athy in Co. Kildare to the tidal limit of the River Barrow at St. Mullins in Co. Carlow. The Barrow Valley is part of a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) with many protected species and indeed on any trip along the Barrow whether on foot or in a boat it is possible to see otters, kingfishers and many other species. Waterways Ireland works in close co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and with the Southern and Central Fisheries Boards to ensure that work undertaken to improve or maintain the navigation is not in conflict with the management of the cSAC or with fisheries interests.



*A Barge carrying children with one of the last bags of sugar from Irish Sugars' Carlow site (Photo courtesy of Rosanna Nolan, Waterways Ireland)*

The maintenance of the Barrow Navigation necessitates some dredging to maintain the navigable depth and the provision of jetties for mooring and lock access. In addition considerable works are undertaken for our non-boating customers. For anglers we have provided disabled fishing stands at a number of locations and carried out improvements at Bagenalstown which it is hoped will help with the movement of fish past Bagenalstown Lock. The Barrow trackway, which was used by horses towing the boats up the river before the advent of the motorised boats, is maintained as a National Way-Marked Way allowing walkers to start at St. Mullins and walk all the way to Athy beside the River Barrow and indeed from there can continue along the Grand Canal to the Shannon. During the past year Waterways Ireland have started an 'Access for All' programme and we are at present assessing areas which, with a little extra effort, could be made accessible to people with a wide variety of disabilities.

For the heritage enthusiast the Barrow is a rich source of architectural heritage with many of the locks and bridges included in the list of protected structures. In 200 the Heritage Boat Association held a rally on the Barrow and for the first time in many years some of the old canal boats which traded on the Barrow made a nostalgic return to their old haunts. On a historic note the photograph shows a barge carrying one of the last bags of sugar collected from the sugar factory in Carlow shortly before it closed down.

The boats made a very colourful spectacle at the rowing club in Carlow (an old canal storehouse) where they held many well-attended events the most popular of which was probably the opening of some of the boats to the public as many families in Carlow have a long history with the trading boats. From Carlow the heritage

boats continued down the river stopping at Bagenalstown, Leighlinbridge, Goresbridge, Graiguenamanagh and St. Mullins on their way to view the start of the Tall Ships race at Waterford. So successful was their trip that 2007 has been designated the 'Year of the Barrow' and they plan to hold an even bigger rally in May 2007 to mark the occasion. Waterways Ireland is pulling out all the stops to ensure that the 2007 Rally is even more successful than 200 and hope as many people as possible will come out to welcome these old boats and to take part in the festivities.



*Heritage Boats at Carlow (Courtesy of Rosanna Nolan, Waterways Ireland)*

## **SOUTHERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD**

### **Ballyellin Weir**

Fish passage for salmon on the River Barrow has been greatly improved by the construction of a new fish pass facility at Ballyellin Weir.

The weir is one of the many navigation weirs on the River Barrow and in the past also supplied energy for the local mill. A fish pass was constructed in the weir which

## WORKING TOWARDS A FISH FRIENDLY SUSTAINABLE BARROW CATCHMENT ECOSYSTEM

worked well for many years. However, in recent year's changes in the bed material down stream of the weir and the volume of water passing through the fish pass particularly during low flow conditions meant that salmon could only pass this weir during high water levels. The Southern Regional Fisheries Board in conjunction with the local land owners and Waterways Ireland completed a new fish pass and work on the River down stream of the weir that will direct fish to the fish pass. This will mean that fish approaching the weir will be directed towards the new fish pass.

The fish pass itself is a rock pool pass which means that salmon will be able to swim directly through the pass. The crest of the weir in the pass was lowered by approximately 0.3 metres. This will guarantee a minimum flow through the pass at all times. Work was completed in early September at a cost of €20,000.

### **CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

#### **New policy on Discharges to Waters**

Carlow County Council has recently adapted a new policy in relation to the granting of licenses to domestic dwelling discharges under Section 4 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977 as amended 1990. The option of discharging to waters for single domestic dwellings is no longer acceptable and licenses for same will no longer be granted by Carlow County Council bar in exceptional circumstances (e.g. upgrading of existing dwellings with poor effluent treatment systems). The revised policy was decided upon based on the requirements of the Water Framework Directive which came into force on the 22 Dec 2000. The fundamental objective of the Water Framework Directive aims at maintaining "high status" of waters where it exists, preventing any deterioration in the existing status of waters and achieving at least "good status" in relation to all waters by 201 .



*A photograph of the new fish pass at Ballyellen Weir (Photo courtesy of Alan Cullagh, SRFB)*

### **Management of Grease in County Carlow**

Carlow County Council undertook a programme in 2006 to improve the management of grease, fats and oil discharges from commercial premises into the public sewers. The programme involved inspections of all food outlets, the installation of grease traps where required and the licensing of all trade effluent discharges into the public sewer in accordance with Section 16 of the Local Government (Water Pollution Act), 1977-1990. The programme has proved very successful to date with significant cooperation from the business community in the County of Carlow. It is intended to continue the programme into 2007 with on going monitoring of all trade effluent discharges into the public sewer. It will result in the management of effluent at source, a reduction of blockages in the public sewer and increased capacity in

our effluent treatment facilities.

### **KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL**

In 2006 Farm Surveys were carried out within the Kildare area in the tributaries of the Barrow. Re-inspection of these farms is being prioritized in areas where water quality monitoring stations are not meeting the requirements of the Phosphorous Regulations. Farm Surveys in the Lerr and Athy Stream (Moneen) catchment are being undertaken this winter as part of the ongoing farm inspection programme.

Extensions to the sewer network in Castledermot has provided for the removal of problematic discharges to the Lerr. Monasterevin Wastewater Treatment Works was also upgraded providing capacity far in excess of the current loadings and also includes phosphorous removal to further improve water quality.



*A photograph of the River Barrow at Graiguenamanagh (Photo courtesy of David Mc Inerney, SRFB)*

**Water Framework Directive  
South Eastern River Basin District**

The South Eastern River Basin District Project has been granted an extension until 2008 to further support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the district. This extension will allow the SERBD to align with the projects in other RBDs and to achieve delivery of the River Basin Management Plans RBMP due in 2009.

**Characterisation & Programme of Measures & Standards**

The Characterisation report was submitted to the European Commission in March 2005. From the results of the Article 5 Characterisation, the National Programme of Measures & Standards POMS Co-ordination Group decided on specific significant pressures or groups of pressures that require dedicated studies towards the development of measures.

Environmental Quality Standards EQS is December 2006, this coincides with the establishment of the WFD monitoring programme.

These POMS studies deliverables will feed into the Significant Water Management Issues Report SWMI due to be published in 2007 after consultation and all studies will eventually deliver to the draft RBMP in 2008.



River Barrow at Fenniscourt (Photograph courtesy of Karen Roche, SERBD)

**Programme of Measures and Standards Studies and Lead River Basin Districts**

Leading RBD	Measures	Standards Study Name
WRBD	1. On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems	
	2. Forest and Water	
ShRBD	3. Freshwater Morphology	
SERBD	4. Setting Chemical Water Quality Standards	
SWRBD	5. Industrial & Municipal Regulation	
	6. Dangerous Substances	
	7. Marine Morphology	
	8. Heavily Modified Water Bodies & Artificial Water Bodies	
	9. Water Balance Model for Setting Chemical Water Quality Standards	
ERBD	10. Abstraction Pressures	
	11. Groundwater Risk from Diffuse Mobile Organics	
	12. Urban Pressures in rivers, transitional and ground waters	
	13. Further Economic Characterisation	

Under the **Dangerous Substances** study the screening programme is still a ‘work in progress’ but is soon coming to a conclusion. Two of the sites for the Dangerous Substances Screening Programme were on the River Barrow at Maganey Bridge upstream of Carlow and Graiguenamanagh. The screening programme analysed water, sediment and biota for over 200 substances. The purpose of the screening monitoring programme was to help inform the design of the WFD Chemical Monitoring Programme. The Dangerous Substances Expert Group are currently considering the results available from the programme to refine the candidate lists and to identify the WFD dangerous substances monitoring programme for the first River Basin Management Plan 2007 – 2008 .

There are currently 13 POMS studies running. The responsibility for these studies was divided among the RBDs. Each POMs study will be carried out on a National level. These studies are currently underway. The SERBD has responsibility for the Setting Chemical Water Quality Standards study. The deadline for the

**Monitoring**

Under the Regulations the development of a Monitoring Programme to implement the WFD was required by June 2006. The Monitoring Programme has been developed and sent to the Minister. This Monitoring Programme is currently at public

consultation stage. The monitoring programme commenced in December 2006. There are three parts of this monitoring programme. The three parts are Surveillance, Operational and Investigative. The **Surveillance** programme main priorities are to establish long term trends within a range of conditions. All quality elements have to be recorded under surveillance monitoring. The priorities of **Operational** monitoring are to record improvements due to measures implemented under the WFD. Operational monitoring will therefore be carried out at risk sites. **Investigative** monitoring will be carried out for unpredicted water quality problems or pollution events.

Under the Water Policy Regulations timescales the monitoring programme report which is available on [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie) was published in June 2006. The monitoring programme is operational from December 2006. The WFD monitoring programme is not all-embracing and it will not replace monitoring for the Phosphorus Regulations, Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations, Drinking Water Regulations and Bathing Water Regulations.

### **Public participation**

Public participation remains one of the cornerstones of the implementation of the WFD in the SERBD. The South Eastern River Basin District Advisory Council was established in March 2006 under the Water Policy Regulations. The Advisory Councils consist of 26 Local Authorities representatives, 6 Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland AMAI representatives and 13 co-opted members from the six pillars of Agriculture, Business/Economic, Recreational/Angling, Social/Community, Professional/academic and Environmental Group Water Quality or Aquatic. The role of the Advisory Council is to consider matters relating to the preparation of river basin management plans RBMP and other matters relevant to the protection and use of the aquatic environment and water resources in the district and to advise and make recommendations on these matters to the

relevant public authorities. The SERBD Advisory Council has been established and met 4 times in 2006.

As part of the Public Participation for the WFD a technical and a non-technical summary report of the Article 5 Characterisation has been published by the SERBD an Irish version of the non-technical report will soon be available on the SERBD website, [www.serbd.com](http://www.serbd.com). The RBDs have published a **DVD** "Flowing to the Future" on the WFD. The DVD contains interviews on the WFD implementation, information on the different projects taking place under the remit of the WFD, the Characterisation Reports and Expert Interviews.

Under the regulations a **Timetable & Work Programme for RBMP** has been published. This document informs on the work programme for the production of the RBMP. A clear public notice was produced to make stakeholders aware of the river basin management process. This Timetable and Work programme was published in June 2006, the consultation period ran until December 2006. Available on SERBD website or from the SERBD Project Coordinator, Carlow County Council, Athy Road, Carlow

### **Small Streams Risk Score Monitoring**

The Small Streams Risk Score SSRS is a rapid assessment technique Simple Biological Metric that is based solely on macro-invertebrates and their well understood response to pollution. The scoring system developed by the WRBD and the EPA was carried out in the SERBD and nationally this spring. The role of the SSRS is to study the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order streams and to reduce the number of waterbodies in the intermediate/ambiguous risk categories in the Characterisation report and move them into the "At Risk" or "Not at Risk" categories. Of the 122 waterbodies sampled in the SERBD 104 were transferred from the probably at risk to the at risk category.

### Chinese Mitten Crab

In recent months reports have been received of a strange crab in the Waterford Estuary. Fishermen have been catching this crab in their nets, during the summer. While crabs in the estuary are a common feature of the ecosystem this strange crab raised interest amongst fishermen and scientists. This species was identified as the Chinese Mitten Crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) that originated in China and the West Coast of Korea. It has been found in Europe and Great Britain since 1912 but has only now appeared in Ireland.

The Chinese Mitten Crab is easily identified by being dark brown in colour with dense hairy claws that appear like mittens, hence the name. The Crab will spawn at sea and then move upstream into estuaries and can travel inland up fresh water to the source of rivers. Their diet includes shrimp, macro invertebrate and salmon eggs. They also have the ability to burrow into muddy banks. This in extreme cases can cause erosion or bank collapse. They have the capacity to survive out of water for long periods of time. This enables them to ascend weirs and other obstacles freely. The latest sample found was just down stream of New Ross on the River Barrow.

### Membership

The Barrow Steering Group includes representatives of the following organisations:

- An Taisce (National Trust for Ireland)
- Barrow Catchment Management Committee, representing angling clubs and Snapnet Fishermens' Association
- Barrow Drainage Board
- Barrow Nore Suir Rural Developments
- Bord na Móna
- Carlow County Council
- Carlow Institute of Technology
- Carlow LEADER
- EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
- Inland Waterways Association, Barrow Branch
- Irish Farmers Association (IFA)
- Irish Sugar PLC
- Kildare County Council
- Kilkenny County Council
- Laois County Council
- National Salmon Commission
- Offaly County Council
- South East Regional Tourism (SERTA)
- South East Regional Authority
- Southern Regional Fisheries Board
- Teagasc
- Waterways Ireland
- Wexford County Council

BARROW NEWS is published by the Southern Regional Fisheries Board on behalf of the Barrow Steering Group. You can contact us in Clonmel at Phone: 052-80055 or Fax: 052-23971 or [www.srfb.ie](http://www.srfb.ie) Email: [barrowcatchment@srfb.ie](mailto:barrowcatchment@srfb.ie)



*Photograph of Chinese Mitten crab (Courtesy of Alan Cullagh, SRFB)*