

National Fishery Classification Scheme (NFCS)

Since 1997, all fishery data collected by the Environment Agency across England and Wales has been classified using the National Fisheries Classification Scheme (NFCS), which superseded all previous classification schemes. The national data set used to devise the system was split into 'quintiles' such that the top 20% of sites from any given data set could be given a grade A, irrespective of fishery type or data collection method. The next 20% could then be given a band B, and so on allowing class boundaries to be defined for all data and fishery types as shown in table 4a and figure 4a. Bullhead and lamprey are not normally surveyed by EA fishery surveys and NFCS grades are therefore not available for these species.

This national system allows comparison of the abundance of different species over a wider geographical area. The data is primarily used to compare data collected by population estimates produced by quantitative electrofishing methods. However, it is possible to convert minimum estimates (semi-quantitative data) using the methodology described by Strange *et al* (1989), so that NFCS classes can be calculated for the use in spatial abundance figures.

National Fishery Classification Scheme Grades.

Grade	Class	Description
A	Excellent	In the top 20% for a fishery of this type
B	Good	In the top 40% for a fishery of this type
C	Fair	In the middle 20% of fisheries
D	Fair	In the bottom 40% for a fishery of this type
E	Poor	In the bottom 20% for a fishery of this type
F	Fishless	No fish of this type present

NFCS Class boundaries with percentage of sites shown in relation to grade.



Increasing Fishery Performance (Density, Biomass or CPUE)

