



## Conference 2025

# Mirrors of Change: Reflections on Irish Lakes Past, Present and Future.

Killarney  
14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025



Day 1 - Conference		
Opening Session		
9:00-9:30	Registration & Tea/Coffee	
9:30-9:45	Conference Opening	TBC
9:45-10:00	United by Lakes: connecting voices, shaping change	Dr Dan Hoare, UK & Ireland Lakes Network, Chairperson
10:00-10:30	Plenary: Lakes in Ireland – mirrors of change	Professor Catherine Dalton, University of Limerick
10:30-11:00	Tea/Coffee	
Session 1: Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes		Chair: Dr Jim Bowman
11:00-11:15	Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - the deep past	Dr Ken Whelan, Consultant & Dr Áine Ní Shúilleabháin, Killarney National Park
11:15-11:30	Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - road to the present	Mr Michael Boyce, Kerry County Council
11:30-11:45	Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - view to the future	Ms Niamh Rogan, Local Authority Waters Programme
11:45-12:00	Killarney National Park: Combining conservation needs with visitor requirements and outside of KNP practices	Mr Eamonn Meskell, National Parks & Wildlife Service
12:00-12:15	What Lough Leane means to the people	Mr Mike Fleming, Ross Castle Boat Tours
12:15-12:30	Questions and Answers	
12:30-12:45	Your Lake, Your Network, Your Voice	Dr Anna Griffin, UK & Ireland Lakes Network, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere Partnership
12:45-13:45	Lunch	
Session 2: Lake Restoration		Chair: Mr Pat Duggan
13:45-14:00	Lessons Learned from Loch Leven and other Scottish lochs	Dr Linda May, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
14:00-14:15	Restoring our Drinking Water Lakes	Mr Mark Farrelly, National Federation of Group Water Schemes
14:15-14:30	Lough Neagh - the story so far	Dr Stephen Prentice, Northern Ireland Environment Agency
14:30-14:45	Lough Muckno – A road to recovery	Mr Patrick McCabe, Office of Public Works
14:45–15:00	Lough Feeagh Past, Present and Future	Dr Elvira de Eyto, Marine Institute
15:00-15:15	Questions and Answers	
15:15-15:30	Tea/Coffee	
Session 3: Citizen Science		Chair: Mr Tony Dean, Trustee, UK & Ireland Lakes Network
15:30-15:45	Freshwater Biodiversity Citizen Science: mapping the past, present, and future of life in Irish lakes	Mr Dave Wall, National Biodiversity Data Centre
15:45 -16:00	Changing Waterfowl Use of Lough Leane, Killarney National Park 1977 to 2024	Dr Áine Ní Shúilleabháin, Killarney National Park
Session 4: Reflections		Chair: Dr Deirdre Tierney
16:00-16:15	Introduction to Reflections Session	
16:15-16:45	Fireside Chat	Dr Jim Bowman, Mr Pat Duggan, Dr Linda May
16.45-17.00	Reflecting Your Voices	Dr Katie Harper, Secretary, UK & Ireland Lakes Network
19.30	Conference Dinner	

Day 2 – Conference Field trip	
9.30 am	Leave Killarney Plaza Hotel
	Killarney National Park
15.15 pm	Return to Hotel

## Speakers and Talks

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### **Dr Dan Hoare, Chair, UKILN**

United by Lakes: Connecting Voices, Shaping Change

Introducing UKILN's role as a convener of communities, professionals, and institutions who care for still waters. This introduction outlines the event programme and sets the tone for collaboration, invites participants to help refine the network's evolving mission, and launches a shared process for building UKILN's future direction together.

As Chair of the UKILN, Dan Hoare is committed to bridging the gap between the communities who live and work around lakes and the statutory bodies, local groups, and specialists who often hold the most influence. Since joining the network in 2010, he has been inspired by the collaboration and knowledge-sharing that drive effective lake management. Beyond UKILN, Dan leads an integrated programme of waterways and conservation work in the Broads National Park, the UK's largest protected wetland, where he focuses on balancing environmental protection with the needs of local communities and visitors.

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### **Prof. Catherine Dalton, Environmental Geography, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick**

Plenary: Lakes in Ireland – mirrors of change

This talk describes the journey that led to the publication of the 2024 book 'Lakes in Ireland – Mirrors of Change'. Conceptual development began in 2022 with the aim of producing a scientific, yet accessible volume enhanced by attractive images and rich colour illustrations. Together with the co-editors, chapter titles and chapter outlines spanning geography, science and history were created. To ensure maximum accessibility and international reach, an open access e-book model was adopted. Key aspects of the book's journey will be presented, together with some of the detours that shaped its development.

Catherine Dalton is Professor of Environmental Geography at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. Her research focuses on aquatic systems, sediments archives, catchments, islands and environmental stewardship. She is Co-Chair of the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Network and Chair of the Mague Rivers Trust. She is a former President of the Irish Quaternary Association and has served on multiple RIA Geography and Geoscience committees.

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### **Dr Ken Whelan, Consultant, Killarney National Park**

**Dr Áine Ní Shúilleabháin, Freshwater Ecologist, Killarney National Park**

Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - the deep past

Following the retreat of the ice, the Killarney Lakes were populated by an assemblage of very special migratory fish species. Manmade pressures on the lakes were clearly evident by the late 60' and effective action was taken to reduce the nutrient loadings spilling into the lakes. Following a period of recovery new dangers are now clearly on the horizon.

Ken has over 40 years' experience in the fields of fisheries science, recreational fisheries, climate change impacts, stock dynamics of Atlantic salmon and sea trout, and aquaculture. He worked for several research organisations in Ireland and currently supports community groups in identifying the important role they can play in protecting Ireland's unique water resources. Ken served as President of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) from 2004 to 2008. As President he helped co-ordinate and manage the major SALSEA or Salmon at Sea Programme (2008 to 2011). Ken was Chairman of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB) from 2007 to 2011. He is a Vice President of the Atlantic Salmon Trust and served as Research Director with the AST from 2009 to 2023. He is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Biology and Environmental Science, University College Dublin. Ken is a regular contributor to the Mooney Goes Wild programme on RTE Radio.

Dr Áine Ní Shúilleabháin is a zoologist & freshwater ecologist having graduated from University College Dublin, (UCD) in 1975. Áine was employed by the Killarney Valley Project (phase 2) 1975 and 1976 to 1982 monitoring Lough Leane's water quality using both chemical and biological parameters and assessing the impact of phosphorus inputs on the lake's water quality. Áine has been monitoring the lake's waterfowl populations for both temporal and seasonal changes (1977 to date), including breeding ecology and dispersion patterns from 1979 to 1982. Áine was a senior fisheries environmental officer with Inland Fisheries Ireland 1982 to 2008.

### **Mr Michael Boyce, Senior Executive Engineer, Kerry County Council**

#### **Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - road to the present**

This talk intends to provide a summary of the water quality challenges that arose in the late 1990s within the Lough Leane Catchment and the management measures subsequently put in place.

Michael Boyce has worked with the Environment Department in Kerry County Council for over 20 years in a variety of areas including water quality, waste management, air & noise quality.

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### **Ms Niamh Rogan, Catchment Manager, LAWPRO south-west region, Local Authority Waters Programme**

#### **Lough Leane and Kerry Lakes - view to the future**

Niamh Rogan is the Catchment Manager for the south-western region of the Local Authority Waters Programme. LAWPRO is a local authority shared service coordinating efforts to protect and restore water quality, engaging with communities, and increasing understanding of our catchments to support implementation of the right measure in the right place. Niamh has an MSc in Hydrogeology and prior to LAWPRO worked in the EPA. She is part of the catchment management team responsible for managing catchment science team in the region as they complete local catchment assessments in priority areas for action (PAAs). She supports the work of the inter-agency Regional Operational Committees and associated groups which promotes incorporation of Integrated Catchment Management into national, regional and local plans.

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### **Mr Eamonn Meskell, NPWS Divisional Manager Killarney National Park, National Parks & Wildlife Service**

#### **Killarney National Park: Combining conservation needs with visitor requirements and outside of KNP practices**

Killarney National Park Combining Conservation needs with visitor requirement and outside of KNP practices.

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### **Mr Mike Fleming, Traditional Boatman, Ross Castle Boat Tours**

#### **What Lough Leane means to the people**

This talk will explore the significance of Lough Leane and Killarney National Park to the town of Killarney and its community, emphasising their central role in the region's tourism success. His presentation will examine the area through five key lenses—Tourism, Business, Environment, History, and Health & Wellbeing.

Together with my brother, Tony, I own and operate Ross Castle Boat Tours. My family have offered Boat Tours on the Lakes of Killarney since 1896, something we are incredibly proud of. I have worked on the Lakes of Killarney for over thirty years and feel I have an in depth understanding of what the lakes mean for locals and visitors alike.

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### **Dr Anna Griffin, Nature Recovery Manager, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere Partnership**

#### **Your Lake, Your Network, Your Voice**

This will be a guided reflection piece, between the main items of the day, to bring together the outcomes of the conference for you and your organisation, the new UKILN Strategy and looking into the future for lakes across the UK and Ireland.

Dr Anna Griffin is an ecologist with over 25 years of experience driving strategic and operational environmental planning, regulation, and restoration across Scotland. As the new Nature Recovery Manager for the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere, Anna leads landscape-scale nature recovery efforts, overseeing initiatives such as the Borderlands OPIN farm audits, and South Ayrshire tree planting programmes. Her expertise spans stakeholder engagement, policy development, and the integration of natural capital investment into water and land use objectives. Anna has pioneered catchment-scale planning, spearheaded natural capital investment strategies, and co-developed Scotland's environmental monitoring frameworks. She is a trusted component in multi-agency collaboration and passionate about delivering nature-based solutions that deliver for biodiversity, climate resilience, and local communities.



## **Dr Linda May, Deputy Head of Group - Aquatic Ecosystems, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology**

### **Lessons Learned from Loch Leven and other Scottish lochs**

Loch Leven, Scotland, is an internationally important long term monitoring site with almost 50 years of chemical, physical and biological records. In the 1990s, external phosphorus inputs were reduced which improved water quality. However, more recently, algal blooms have returned due to climate change. Lessons learned will be shared.

Dr Linda May has almost 50 years' experience as a freshwater ecologist. Initially, she studied the population dynamics of zooplankton and their role as indicators of environmental quality. More recently, she has been focusing on the causes and effects of water quality problems in lakes. The results of this research are being used to provide the scientific evidence required to underpin the successful restoration of lakes and to support their sustainable management.

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## **Mr Mark Farrelly, Chief Executive Officer, National Federation of Group Water Schemes**

### **Restoring our Drinking Water Lakes**

Group water schemes deliver safe drinking water to 200,000 rural Irish residents. Mark Farrelly, CEO of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes, shares how these community-led organisations engage members to enhance untreated water quality while delivering co-benefits for biodiversity and climate resilience.

Mark Farrelly is the chief executive officer of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS). Mark has been working with the NFGWS since 2020, having previously held the position of education, information and research officer, before assuming the CEO role in August 2024. Mark has a background in journalism and a strong interest in all aspects of drinking water delivery and the co-operative community ethos of the group water scheme sector. He has a particular interest in the social impacts garnered through enhanced community participation in the protection and management of our water resources.

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## **Dr Stephen Prentice, Senior Scientific Officer - Lake Monitoring & Evidence, Northern Ireland Environment Agency**

### **Lough Neagh - the story so far**

This presentation summarizes monitoring data from Lough Neagh to evaluate recent ecological changes, with particular focus on the emergence and intensification of cyanobacterial blooms. It highlights ongoing mitigation strategies and targeted monitoring efforts aimed at further understanding bloom drivers, ecosystem responses, and implications for lake management.

Stephen Prentice is a Freshwater Ecologist at Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (NIEA), leading the newly established Lake Monitoring & Evidence team formed in September 2024 as part of the Lough Neagh Action Plan in response to the blue-green algae crisis. His team coordinates the Lough Neagh Priority Catchment Monitoring Programme, designed to collect multi-parameter data to advance understanding of cyanobacteria bloom dynamics. He oversees the verification and analysis of blue-green algae blooms across Northern Ireland, including public submissions via the 'Bloomin' Algae' app and taxonomic identification of cyanobacteria in bloom samples. In addition to this work, he contributes to the routine monitoring of Northern Ireland's 21 WFD surveillance lakes and has a background in lake ecology. His role combines ecological research with environmental protection, helping to address the current challenges facing Lough Neagh and other lakes impacted by cyanobacteria.



Muckross Lake, Co. Kerry

### **Mr Patrick McCabe, Office of Public Works**

#### **Lough Muckno – A road to recovery**

The presentation reports on a paleolimnological investigation of the sediment of Lough Muckno, Co. Monaghan and a water quality assessment of the tributaries within its catchment. The project was commissioned by Monaghan County Council to better understand the sources of nutrient loading within the catchment and potential lake recovery timelines following mitigation.

Patrick McCabe is an ecologist (Grade II) with the Office of Public Works where he is involved in the delivery and review of environmental assessments relating to arterial drainage maintenance and the design of flood relief schemes. Patrick has previously worked in the area of drinking water source protection and within the private sector as an environmental consultant.

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### **Dr Elvira de Eyto, Scientific Technical Officer, Marine Institute**

#### **Lough Feeagh Past, Present and Future**

Lough Feeagh is a dystrophic lake in the west of Ireland that has been the focus of a long-term ecological monitoring program for many decades, focused on populations of migratory fish. Here, we describe some of the decadal trends, present conditions and projections of the future in a warmer world.

Elvira de Eyto studied Zoology at TCD and carried out a PhD and postdoctoral work on the ecological quality of Irish and European lakes, and the immunogenetics of salmonids. Since 2003, she has worked in the Marine Institute in Newport, Co. Mayo, primarily on the long-term aquatic monitoring of the Burrishoole catchment. These monitoring data have supported global, European and national research projects in the areas of diadromous fish stock assessment, long term ecological monitoring, high frequency monitoring of aquatic ecosystems using sensors, and the impact of climate and land use change on peatland catchments. Elvira has represented the Marine Institute at GLEON (the Global Lake Ecological Observatory Network) since 2006. Elvira has co-authored more than 100 peer reviewed papers and several book chapters including Chapter 12 (Sentinel Lakes in Ireland) of the 2024 book, *Lakes in Ireland – Mirrors of change*, which she also co-edited.

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### **Mr Dave Wall, Marine Biodiversity Programme Manager, National Biodiversity Data Centre**

#### **Freshwater Biodiversity Citizen Science: mapping the past, present, and future of life in Irish lakes**

This talk examines how volunteer Citizen Scientists have helped monitor freshwater species in Ireland, combining historical records with current surveys to track biodiversity change. It emphasises the growing importance of citizen science in understanding freshwater ecosystem health, and the impacts of invasive species, global warming and water quality, helping to guide the future management of Irish lakes, while improving public engagement in protecting Ireland's aquatic life.

Dave is Marine Biodiversity Programme Manager at the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Prior to his current role he was the Centre's Citizen Science Officer and managed 'Dragonfly Ireland 2019-2024', an all-Ireland EPA funded Citizen Science survey of Dragonflies and Damselflies, conducted in partnership with the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording in Northern Ireland.

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### **Dr Áine Ní Shúilleabháin, Freshwater Ecologist, Killarney National Park**

#### **Changing Waterfowl Use of Lough Leane, Killarney National Park 1977 to 2024**

Waterfowl counts by boat on Lough Leane, Killarney National Park (1977 to date), highlight decreasing wintering numbers and loss of a breeding population of some species (Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Coot *Fulica atra*) and record new species (Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*). Possible causes are discussed.

Refer to bio in above section.

### **Mr Pat Duggan, Principal Adviser (Retired),**

Pat Duggan is a Chartered Engineer and retired civil servant. Most of his professional career has been spent in the areas of water policy development and water quality management. He was Principal Adviser at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government where he was responsible for leading on Ireland's Water Framework Directive planning process and for overseeing preparation of river basin management plans and programmes of measures. He was also responsible for the strategic oversight of the Uisce Éireann capital works programmes and for managing EU infringements. Prior to joining the Department in January 2000, Pat spent three years as Project Manager implementing a regional water quality monitoring and management programme for the Lough Derg and Lough Ree catchment on behalf of nine local authorities. Pat worked for Cavan County Council between 1987 and 1997 where he was responsible for implementing water quality legislation including measures to protect Lough Sheelin.

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### **Dr Jim Bowman, Freshwater Biologist, Environmental Protection Agency (retired)**

Jim joined the newly formed Water Resources Division of An Foras Forbartha in 1970 and commenced working, under Dr Paul Toner, on assessing water quality in rivers based on the substrate macro-invertebrate communities. In 1972, he commenced working on assessing lake water quality. In the 1980s Jim was the principal researcher in two EEC funded projects on Surface Water Acidification and a research partner on an international project, funded by the EU Copernicus Programme, on Fly Ash and metals arising from industrial burning of oil and coal. At this time he was appointed as the national contact person on the EC DGXII COST 612 project dealing with "Effects of Air Pollution on Terrestrial and aquatic Ecosystems" and on UNESCO ECE Executive Body for the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution. Working Group on Effects. In the late 1990s Jim served on and chaired several National and EU Committees dealing with the development and implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

In 2005 Jim was appointed Programme Manager in charge of the EPA's role in assessing the quantity and quality of the aquatic environment and overseeing the EPA's role in implementing the Water Framework Directive.

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### **Dr Katie Harper, Secretary, United Kingdom & Ireland Lakes Network**

#### **Reflecting Your Voices**

This will be a guided reflection piece, between the main items of the day, to bring together the outcomes of the conference for you and your organisation, the new UKILN Strategy and looking into the future for lakes across the UK and Ireland.

As a trustee of the UK and Ireland Lakes Network, Katie has been involved in supporting annual events around the UK and Ireland, partnership working, and strategic development. Her role with the Rivers Trust is Regional Development Manager for the North West of England.



Lake Caragh, Co. Kerry