

BIODIVERSITY CASE STUDY

Company: Acheson & Glover Group

Country: Pomeroy, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland

Title Crayfish sanctuary in a working sandpit

Context The White-clawed Crayfish is on the list of globally threatened species due to pollution, damage to habitat and the introduction of non-native crayfish species. The project forms part of a wider European initiative to protect the white-clawed crayfish which live in the Ballinderry River and Lough Neagh Wetlands.

Solution A long history of sand and gravel extraction and washings in the catchment has created, in certain reaches of the Ballinderry River, the substrate and water chemistry conditions suitable for White-clawed Crayfish.

Near the source of the River a number of small manmade and natural lakes form a series of settling ponds at the Gravel Pit. Gravel washing in the pit has created alkaline water chemistry in the ponds; conditions ideal for White-clawed Crayfish. In the last of these ponds, Acheson & Glover have used 1500 tonnes of hollow core concrete slabs to build a innovative shelved bay. The bay forms a protected breeding area for White-clawed Crayfish, which will feed naturally and rear their young in a natural but safe environment. The hollow core concrete gives the crayfish available nooks and crannies to conceal themselves in and will vary the chemistry of the water for the crayfish's requirements.

Fisheries experts will be introducing 150 native Ballinderry White-clawed Crayfish to the 'habitat bay'. Each year, juvenile crayfish will be collected from the lake and reintroduced to newly restored habitat.

Result The partnership has made possible a unique White-clawed Crayfish conservation breeding project. Biodiversity partnerships are a positive step towards demonstrating how both industry and the environmental sector can work together to achieve huge environmental improvements, far beyond what would be realised if resources and expertise weren't pooled.

Partners In partnership with a local river conservation group.

