



# Invasive Alien Species on the Glen River at Carrick, Co. Donegal

Coiste Forbartha na Carraige Environmental Group, June 2026

## Background

Carrick Development Committee, Coiste Forbartha na Carraige, have an ambitious programme of development for the village, which seeks to improve the amenities open to people, both local and visitors. One particularly successful initiative, as testified by the large number of users and very positive feedback to the committee, has been the walkway along the banks of the Glen River. Recently, the impact of invasive alien species along the walkway has become a concern, due to the visible weakening of the river banks with associated loss of material into the river due to erosion, and consequential deterioration in water quality and the overall river channel integrity. These IAPS include Montbretia, Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron (see photos).



Figure 1: Stands/corms of Montbretia becoming detached from the riverbank.



Figure 2: Montbretia forming extensive large clumps/corms and channels on the near (1) and far (2) banks of the river



Figure 3: Damage to the riverbank with weakening of a large section of bank adjacent to the river (1) and loss of integrity of the higher bank (2) leading to exposure and weakening of the tree roots (3) caused by Montbretia. Stands of Montbretia are clearly visible also on the far side of the river (4).



Figure 4: Withered stems of Japanese Knotweed along the riverban



Figure 5: More Japanese knotweed alongside the river. This is spreading below the walkway into adjacent meadows.



Figure 6: Rhododendron growing on the river bank.



Figure 7: Further growth of Rhododendron at the right foreground (1) and background (2).

## Project Summary

This project will be the first step in a multi-year action by the development committee to reverse the damage being done to the banks of the Glen River due to IAPS. The objective of this project is to survey the extent of IAPS along the Glen River, focusing in this instance on the area adjacent to Carrick town, and extending to the North to Meenaneary and along the main channel of the Ownteskiny tributary. The completed survey will provide the basis of a multi-year action to remove the IAPS, stabilise the river banks where needed, and replace with native species to create a riparian buffer zone which will provide long-term integrity for the banks.

The area encompassed by the project survey is outlined by the red box in figure 8 and shown in more detail in figure 9. We propose to focus on this sub-catchment area for a number of reasons;

1. The area (see Figure 8) encompasses the stretch of river and tributaries passing through Carrick village from the junction with the Owenwee River (1), north to Meenaneary (Glen\_010), and further along the main Glen River channel (2, Glen\_020) to the junction of the Ownteskiny near Strafin (3), and along the main channel of the Ownteskiny tributary (4, Ownteskiny) towards the Ardara-Carrick Road (R230).<sup>1</sup>
2. Parts of the river is known to be heavily contaminated by IAPS which are causing damage to the bank integrity.
3. This catchment has never been surveyed for IAPS.
4. It provides a basis for defining initial remediation actions for this part of the catchment and a workflow model for subsequent actions along the upper parts of the catchment (Glen\_010 and Crow\_010) and tributaries.
5. It is of a scale that is manageable in terms of budget and the capacity of the committee to undertake.

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<sup>1</sup>The Ownteskiny tributary has been prioritised because of its 'blue dot' (pristine) status.

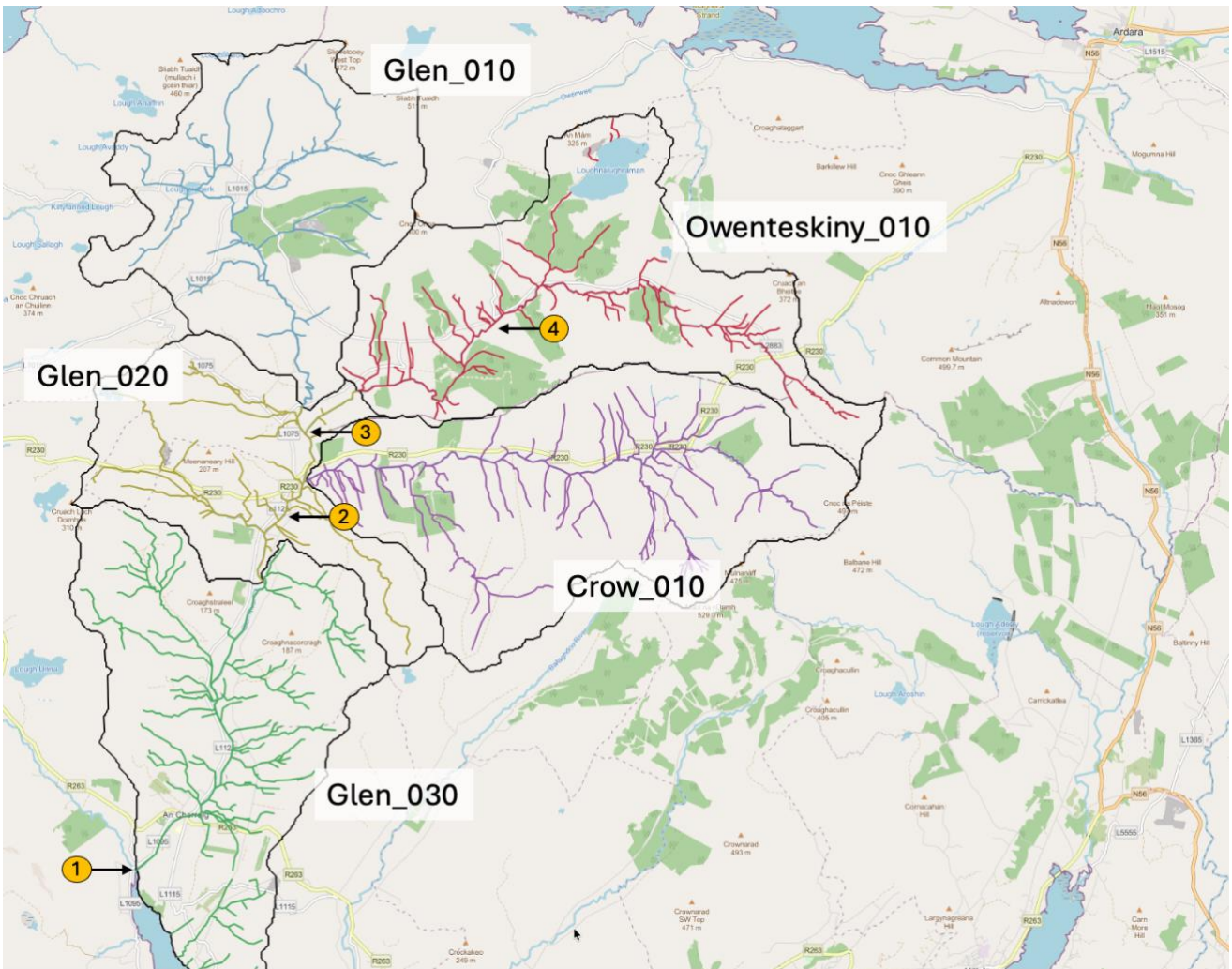


Figure 8: Glen River Catchment has 5 sub-catchments

- 'CROW\_010' River = 55.3 km
- 'OWENTESKINY\_010' River = 38.7 km
- 'GLEN(CARRICK)\_010' River = 31.2 km
- 'GLEN(CARRICK)\_020' River = 29 km
- 'GLEN(CARRICK)\_030' River = 60.8 km

**Total Length: 215 km**

The survey will encompass the stretch of river and tributaries passing through Carrick village from the junction with the Owenwee River (1), north to Meenaneary (Glen\_030), and further along the main Glen River channel (2, Glen\_020) to the junction of the Ownteskiny near Strafin (3), and along the main channel of the Ownteskiny tributary (4, Ownteskiny\_010) towards the Ardara-Carrick Road (R230).

**The total length of the river to be surveyed as described is estimated to be in the region of 60 km**