

NCDWQ Biological Assessment Unit – Benthos Macroinvertebrate Data

For further information on how bioclassifications are derived and the various metrics reported within this dataset, please refer to [NCDWQ Biological Assessment Unit Benthos Macroinvertebrate Standard Operating Procedures](#).

- 1) Sites rated as “Not Rated” indicate that the sample was taken under one or more of the following conditions:
 - The site was sampled under environmental conditions atypical for the stream. For example, the sample was taken during severe drought. This can also occur in sites that have pH values below 4.0 or for streams sampled in the Triassic Level-IV ecoregions. We currently do not have biocriteria to rate these streams and therefore samples collected in these situations were assigned “Not Rated” bioclassifications.
 - The site was sampled using a collection method where biocriteria were never developed (e.g., the Qual-5 method was an experimental collection methodology that was abandoned for the Qual-4).
 - The site was sampled before the biocriteria methodology was subsequently developed and adopted. For example, several swamp samples taken in the early and mid 1990’s were garnered before Swamp Biocriteria were developed. Hence, these sites were typically recognized as “Not Rated”. Similarly, most Qual-4 samples taken prior to 2009 were also collected before the Small Streams Biocriteria were adopted and so remain as “Not Rated”.
 - The site was collected using the Qual-4 collection before biocriteria were adopted and the sample would have rated Fair or worse using EPT biocriteria. This designation is used in this instance to indicate that the stream is possibly impaired.
- 2) Sites listed as “Not Impaired” are equivalent to an EPT sample that would have rated Good-Fair or better using EPT biocriteria. These samples are typically associated with the Qual-4 collection method and were taken before Small Streams Biocriteria were adopted. The “Not Impaired” designation is designed to indicate that the water body is likely unimpaired.
- 3) Prior to approximately 1995, in situ water chemistry parameters were not collected, hence this data is not reported here.