



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

# Role of Local Authorities in the National Biodiversity Action Plan

Andy Bleasdale

Chief Scientific Advisor for Nature and Biodiversity, NPWS

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Department of Housing,  
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# Who am I?

- Clare man, living on Connemara, working in NPWS
- Botanist by training
- Working in NPWS as an ecologist since January 2000, and previously on contract
- One of the 5 Directors in NPWS
- Member of the NPWS Management Board
- Leading the Scientific team in NPWS





Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



# Strategic Action Plan

for the renewal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)

2022 - 2024





# Six new Directorates



*Scientific Advice and Research*

*Nature Conservation*

*Wildlife Enforcement and Nature  
Protection*

*Parks and Nature Reserves*

*Legislation and Licensing*

*Engagement, Corporate and  
Specialist Supports*



# Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC



Requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for the protection of:

Annex I habitats (59 habitats)

Annex II species (25 species)

Required to maintain or restore at favourable conservation status (Annex I habitats & Annex II species)

Undertake surveillance of conservation status





# Birds Directive 79/409/EEC



Conserve all European wild birds

Protection, management & control  
Birds, their eggs, nests & habitats

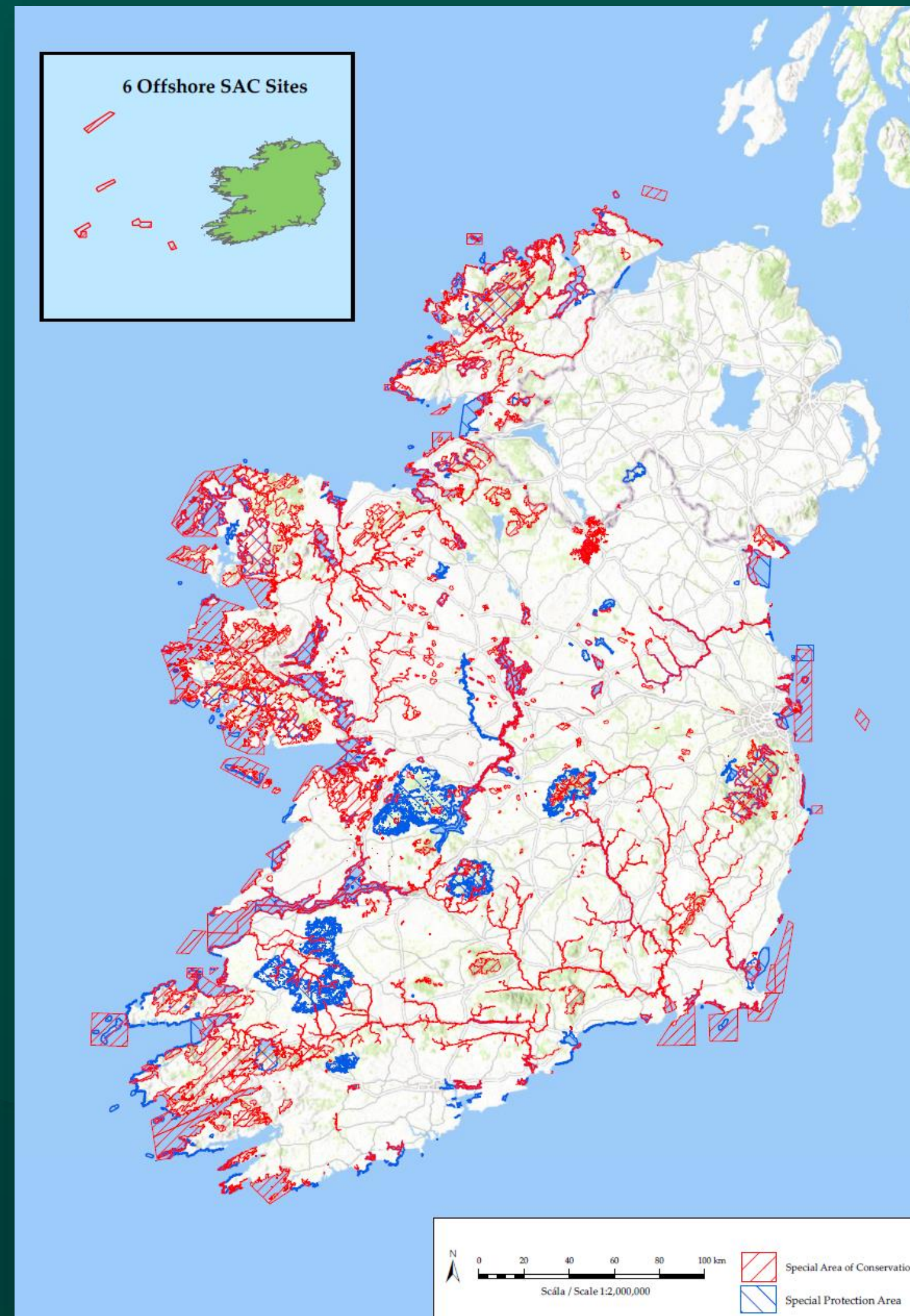
Requires designation of SPAs that contain

- strictly protected species (on Annex I eg Peregrine Falcon)
- internationally important assemblages of birds (eg breeding seabirds, wintering waterbirds)



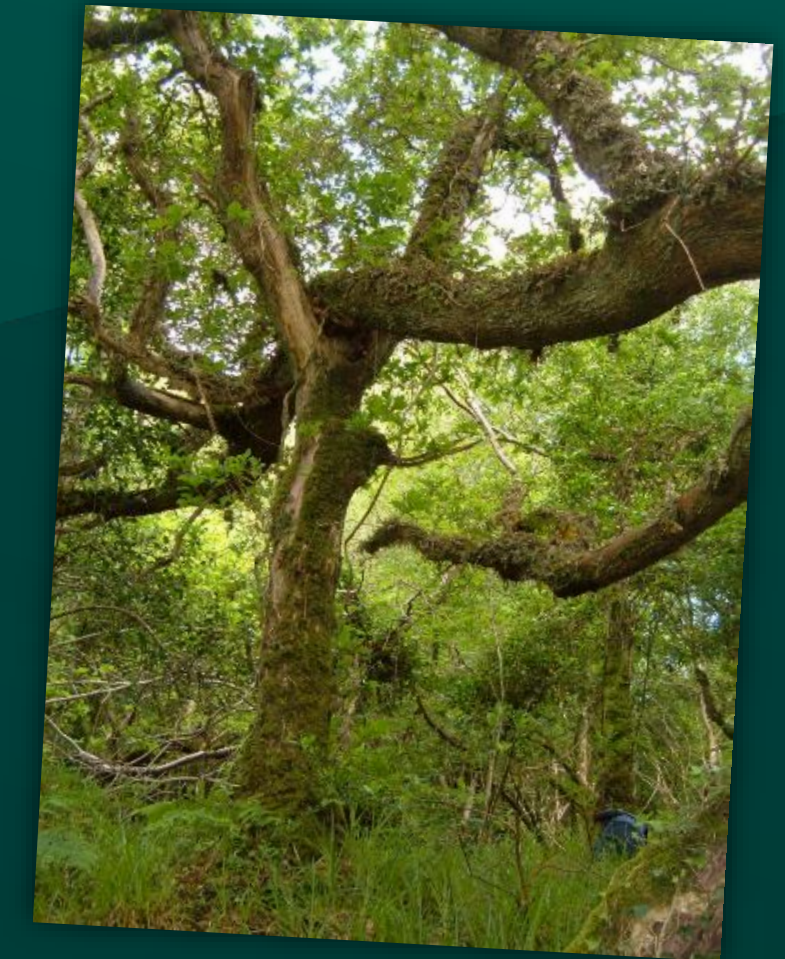


# Natura 2000 network in Ireland



- 439 SACs
- 154 SPAs
- 906,000 ha terrestrial area (including lakes and rivers) (13%)
- 1,042,000 ha marine area
- 1,839 individual qualifying interests for SACs
- 90% of terrestrial area is privately owned
- 59% of terrestrial area is farmed
- Circa 35,000 farmers (26% of all farmers)



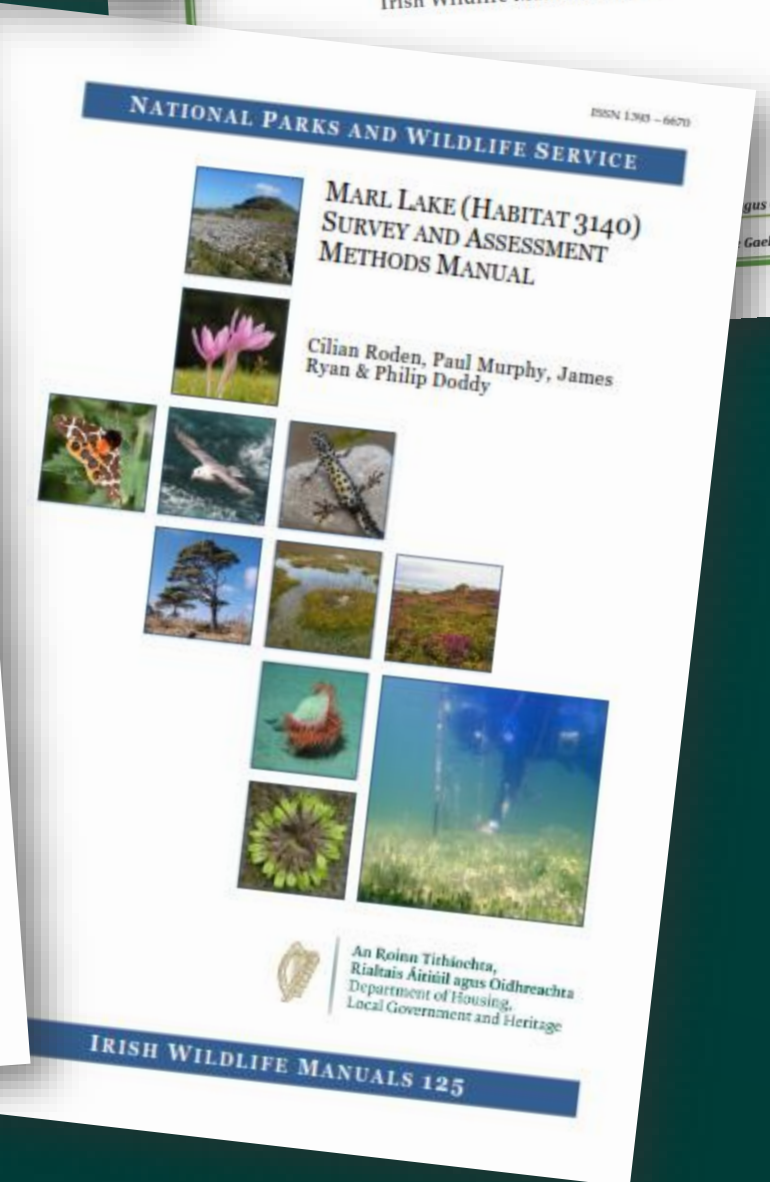
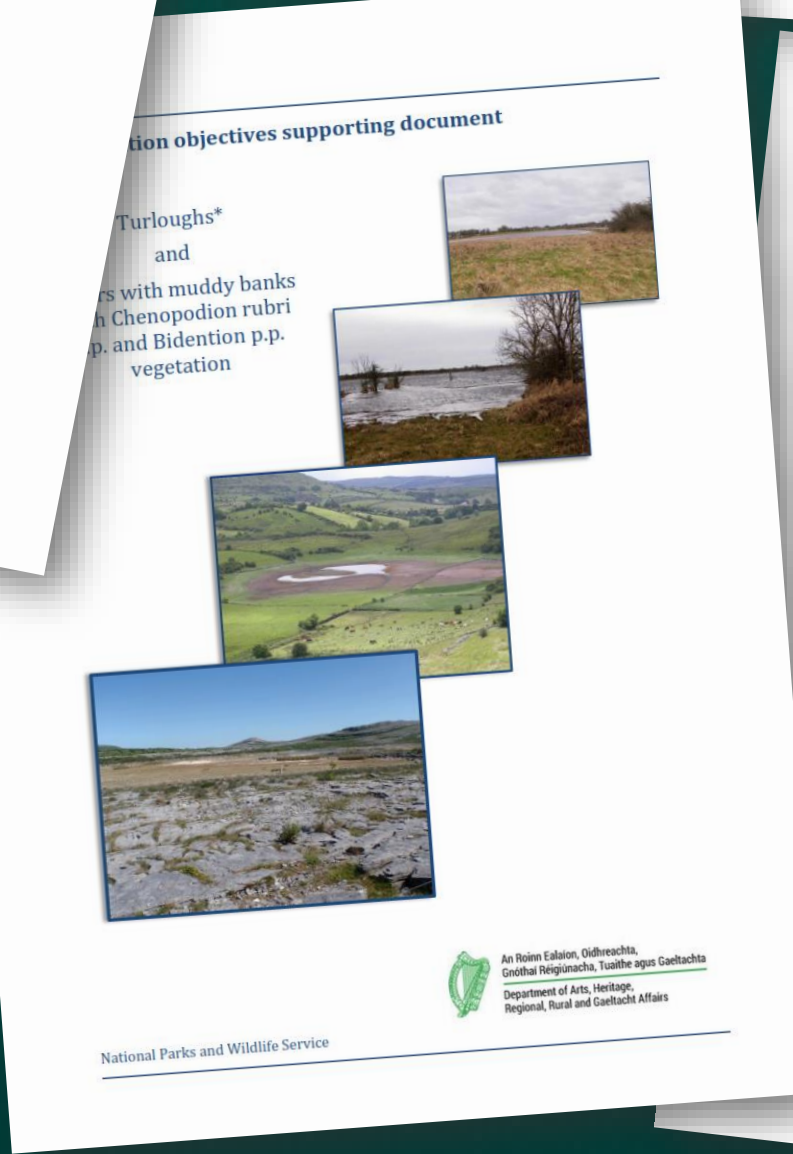
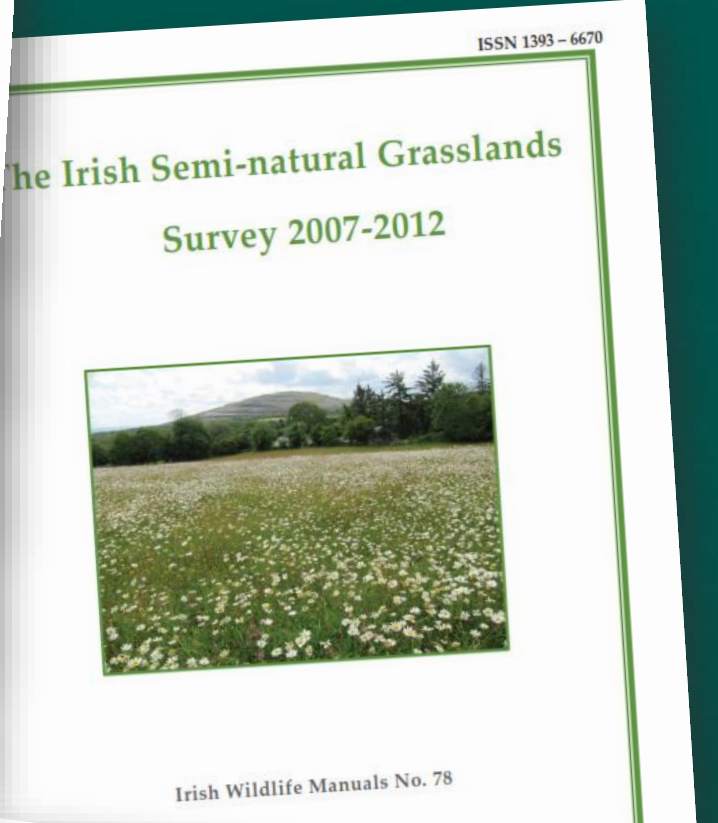
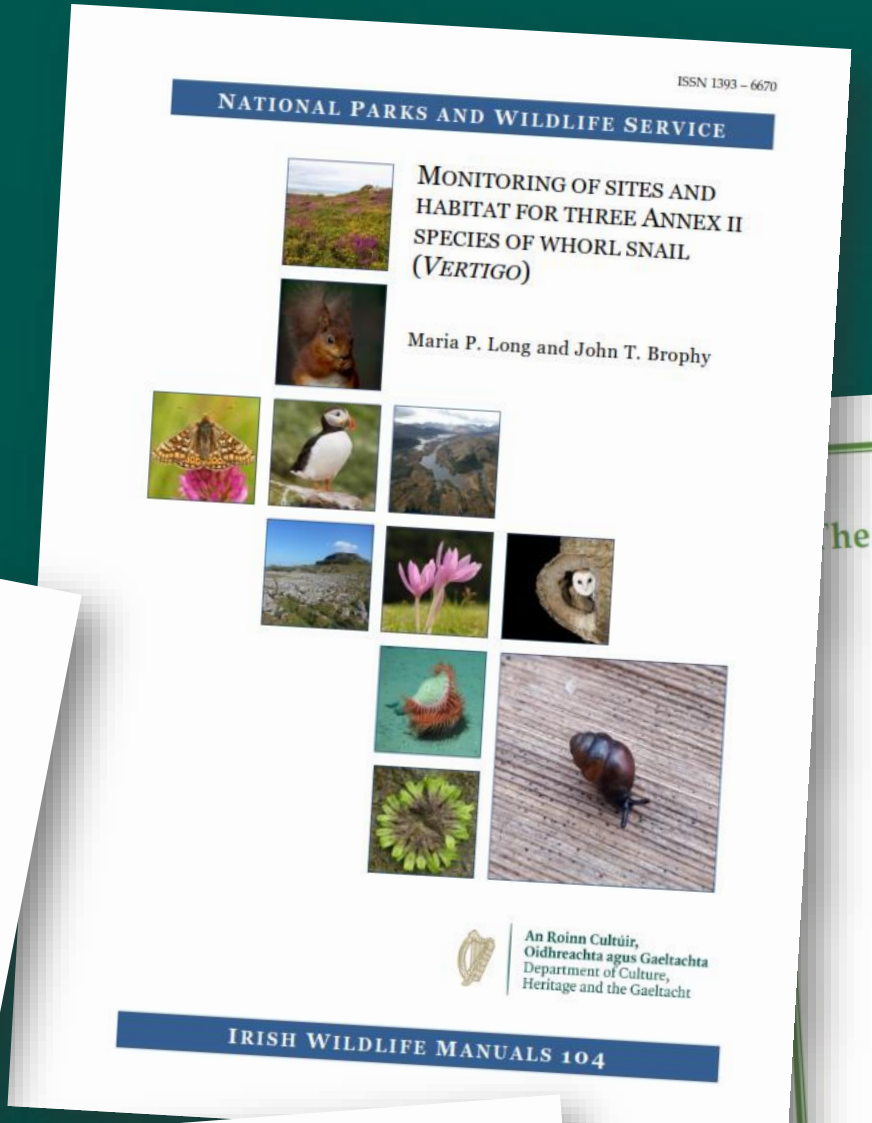




# Site-specific conservation objective setting process



- Standard template with suitable attributes and targets that define favourable conservation condition developed for each habitat and species
- Based on ecological requirements of the habitat/species, often using condition assessment criteria

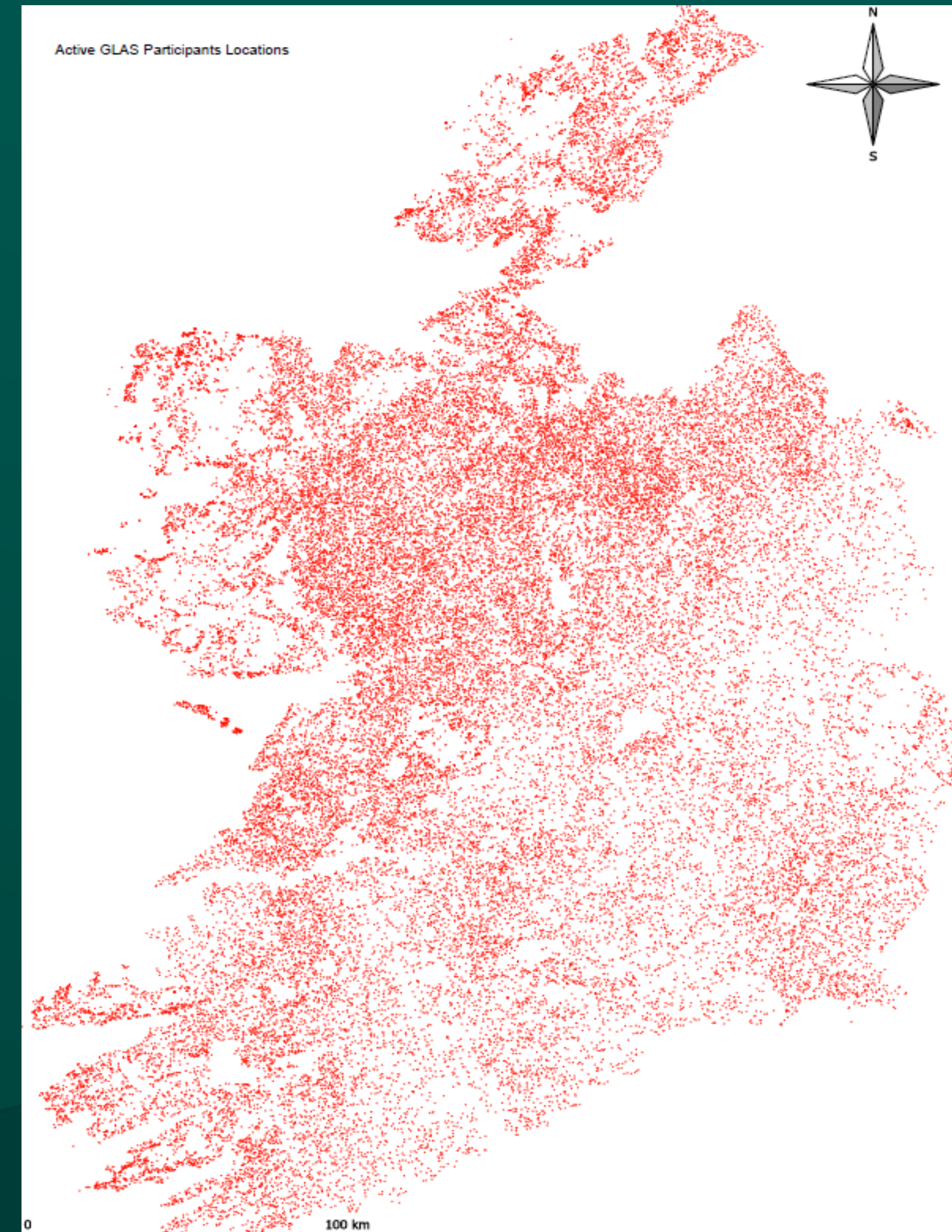




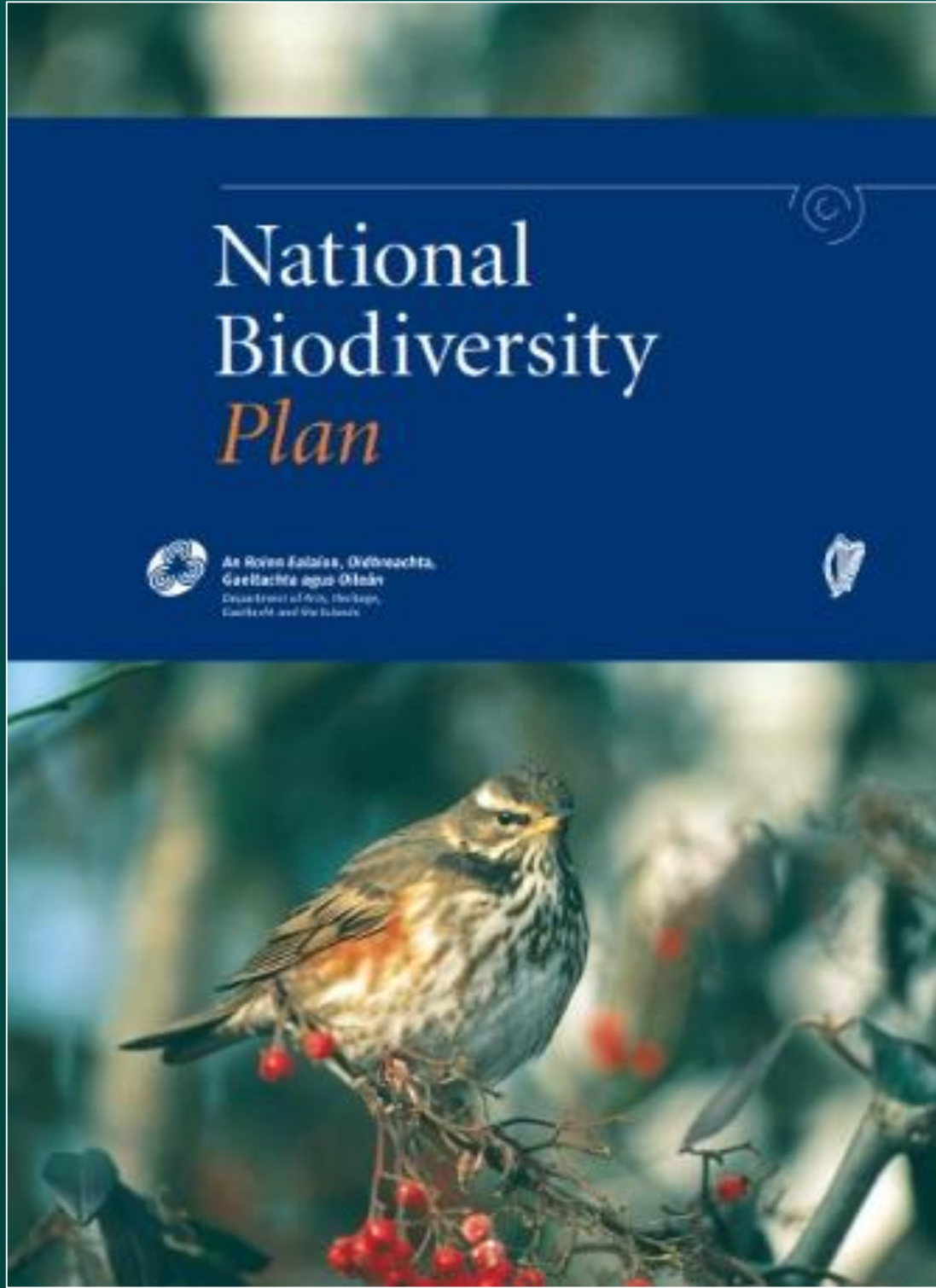
# Initiatives delivering action locally



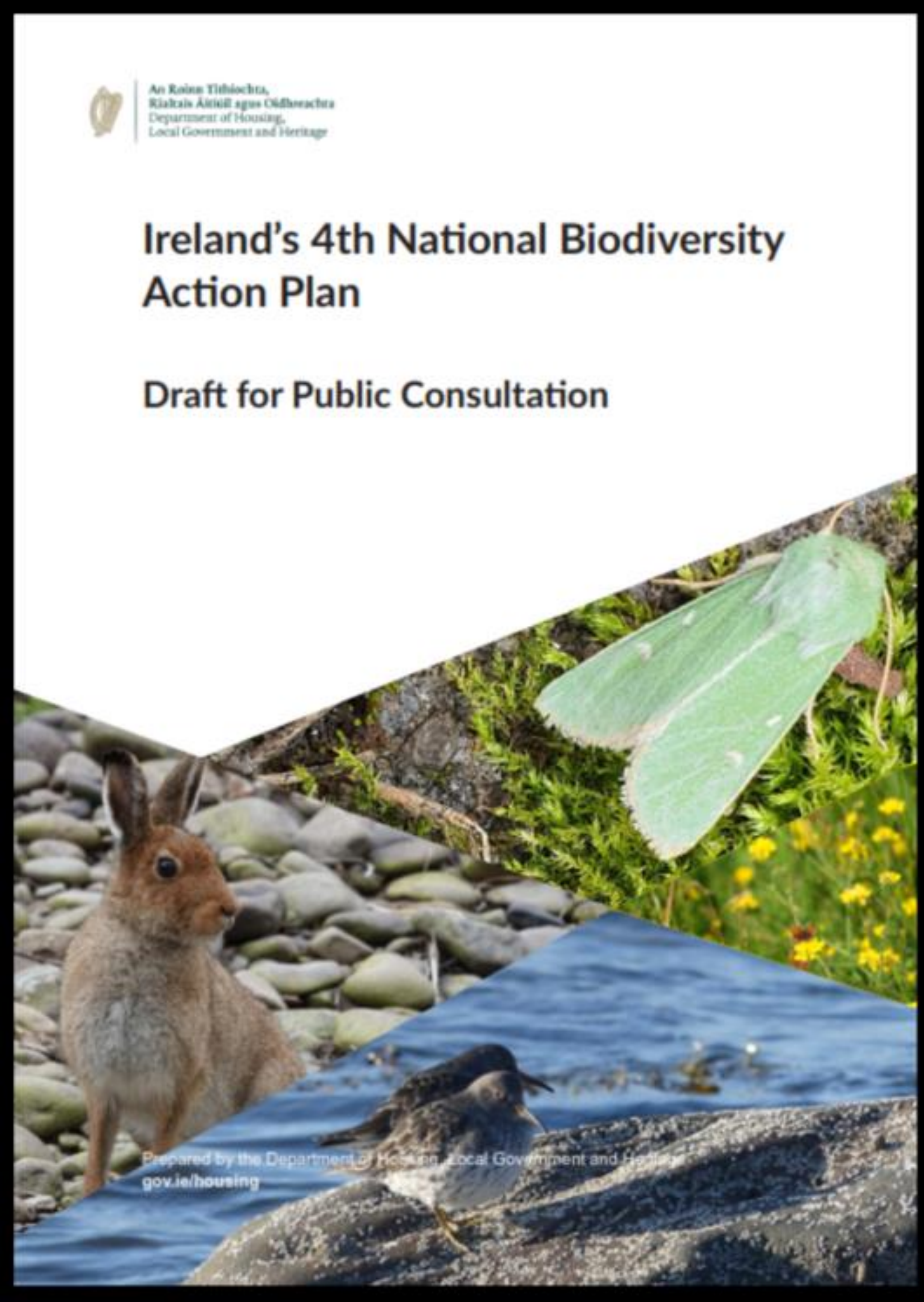
- DAFM agri-environment programmes
- NPWS Conservation Measures
- Burren Programme
- LIFE projects
- INTERREG/PEACE+ projects
- Raised bog restoration programme
- River Basin Management Plans (LAWPRO/ASSAP)
- Local Biodiversity Action Fund
- Heritage Officers and Biodiversity Officers 😊







First Biodiversity Action Plan (April 2002)



Biodiversity Action Plan







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# The Challenge

- Deliver at LA level for biodiversity?
- Support inventory and conservation locally?
- Build partnerships?
- Support the delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030.....?
- Capture the local imagination?



## Vision to 2050

Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people

### OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
2. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
3. Secure Nature's Contribution to People
4. Embed Biodiversity at the Heart of Climate Action
5. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
6. Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

162 ACTIONS in the draft plan



# A localised contribution to the national vision?

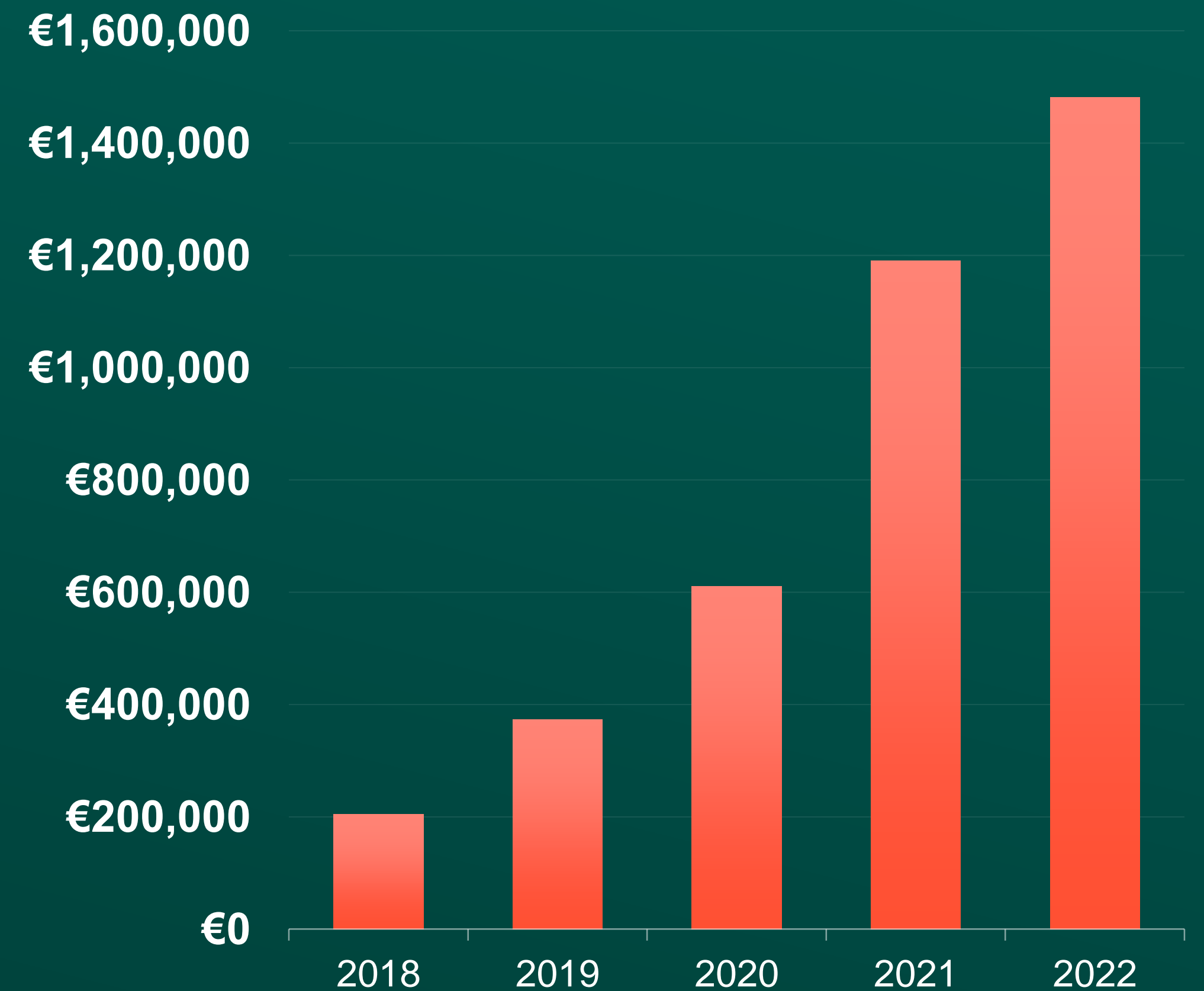
## OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity from the bottom up (arising from objectives 2-6)
2. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs locally
3. Secure Nature's Contribution to People at local level
4. Embed Biodiversity at the Heart of Climate Action in your authority
5. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity in your area
6. Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives by dint of local action



# Local Biodiversity Action Fund

- Recognition of role LAs have in NBAP delivery
- Helps Heritage and Biodiversity Officers implement actions in the NBAP
- Fund has grown each year – 128 projects financed in 2022 across all 31 LAs
- Projects financed include:
  - Biodiversity Awareness
  - Pollinator projects
  - Surveys – habitats and species
  - Conservation Management Plans
  - IAS control
  - Wetland restoration





# What have we funded?

## Wexford County Marine Biosecurity Report

### Baseline Assessment of Marine Invasive Species

2020



Comhairle Contae  
Loch Garman  
Wexford  
County Council

An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

## Marine Invasive Species - What to look out for



<p><b>Crepidula fornicata (Slipper limpet)</b></p> <p><b>Didemnum vexillum (Carpet seasquirt)</b></p>	<p><b>Eriocheir sinensis (Chinese mitten crab)</b></p> <p><b>Caprelli mutica (Japanese skeleton shrimp)</b></p>
<p><b>Rapana venosa (Asian rapa whelk)</b></p> <p><b>Sargassum muticum (Japanese knotweed)</b></p>	<p><b>Ulva fenestrifida (Nokame)</b></p> <p><b>Laminaria ochroleuca (Golden kelp)</b></p>

### YOU CAN HELP!

Reporting sightings of **marine invasive species** will allow a better understanding of their economic and ecological impacts along the Wexford coastline.

**To report a sighting:**

- Where possible, do not move or disturb the species – doing so could help it spread further
- Take a clear picture
- Note the location (with GPS coordinates if possible)
- Record the date and time
- Submit to [insert@email.com](mailto:insert@email.com)



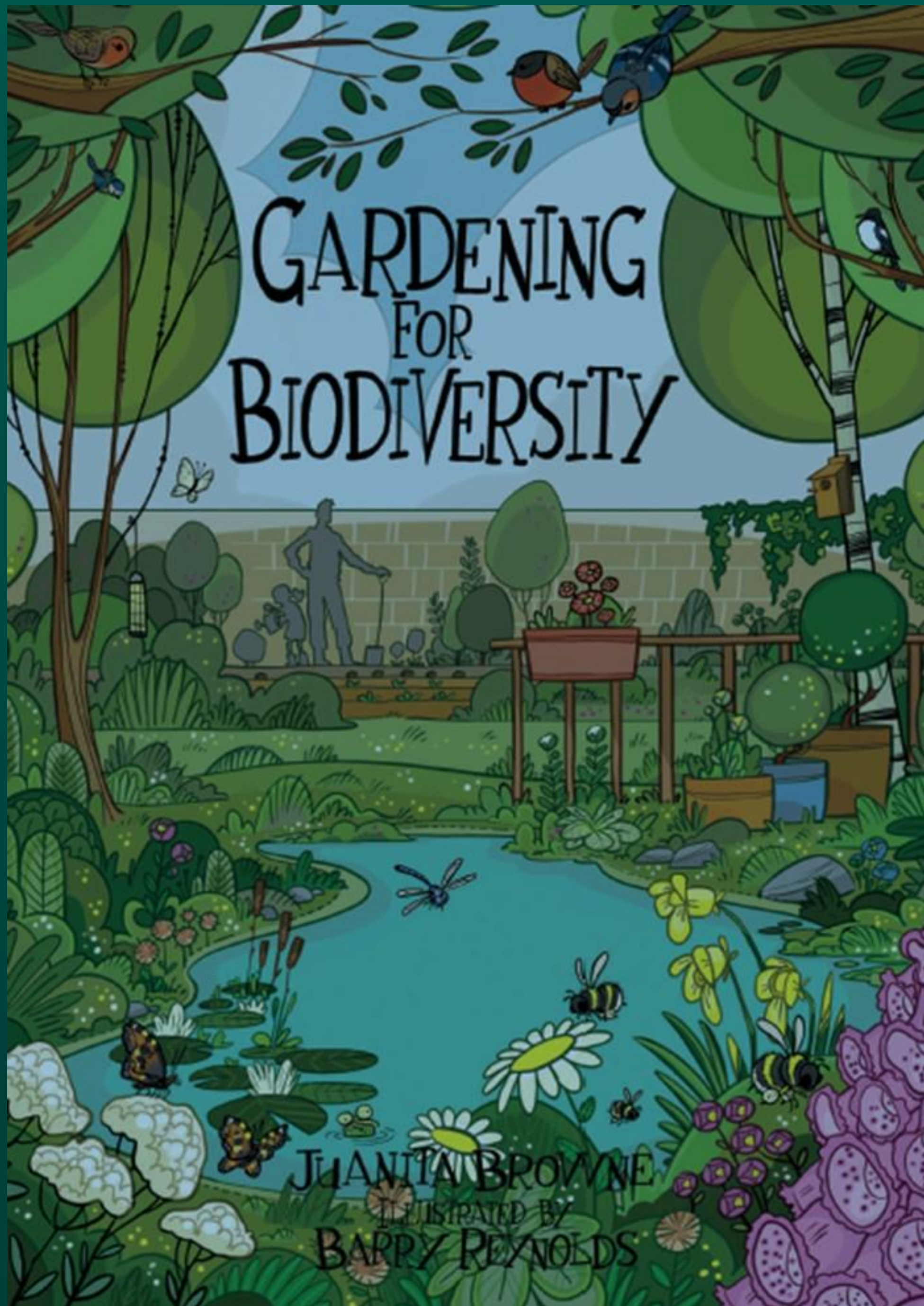


# Cork County Council Barn Owl Project



Photos: Sharon  
Casey, Cork County  
Council





# Laois Co.Co. Biodiversity Awareness Project

- Six short films
- Radio ads
- Design and Commissioning of 'Gardening for Biodiversity' book
- Distributed through Heritage Officer network
- 40,000 copies mini format distributed by Irish Examiner – reach of over 100,000 copies

<https://laois.ie/gardening-for-biodiversity/>

<https://laois.ie/gardening-for-biodiversity-videos/>





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# Things you can do?

- You are in a strategic role to deliver biodiversity action locally

Biodiversity Action = Added Value

- Community Engagement
- Provision of Green Infrastructure
- Develop Climate Resilience
- Outreach and Education
- Fostering local pride

“I loves me county”

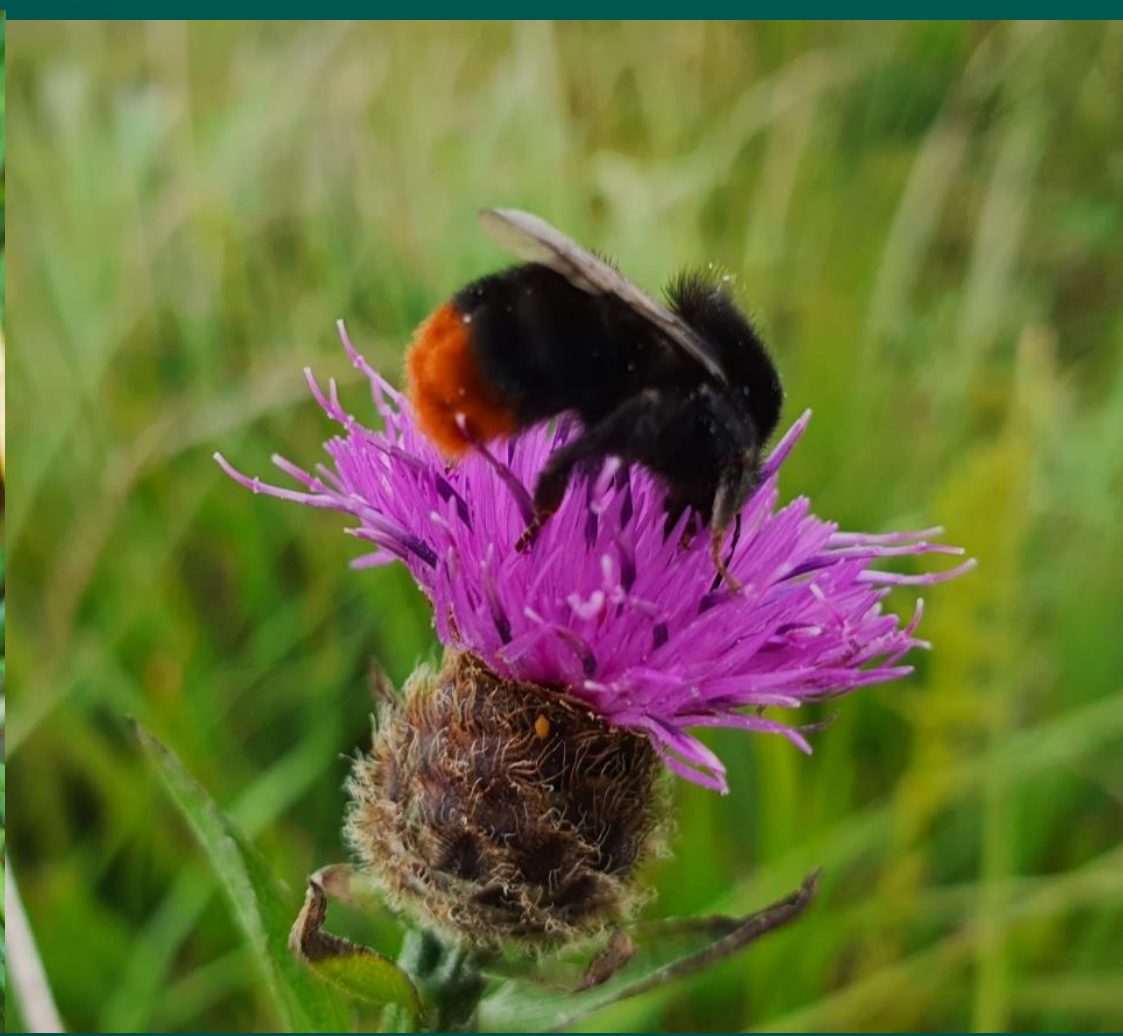


Dr Julie Fossitt  
Divisional Ecologist NPWS

Esteemed colleague  
& dear friend







# Míle buíochas

