



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Stiúrthóireacht Iompair agus Soghluaiseachta,
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,
Cé na gCeannaithe,
Luimneach. V94 EH90.

Transportation and Mobility Directorate,
Limerick City and County Council,
Merchants Quay,
Limerick. V94 EH90.

13th March 2025

t: +353 (0) 61 556 000
e: transportationandmobility@limerick.ie

To: The Mayor, Príomh Chomairleoir and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Re: Approval of the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030

Please find attached the *draft Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030* and the Executive summary.

The draft Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan has been prepared in line with Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, a statutory document, which obliges local authorities to have a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The preparation of the *draft Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030* included consultation with internal and external stakeholders and the general public.

The development of this *Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan* signals a new commitment by Limerick City and County Council to look after our Natural Heritage. It represents a change in how we protect, enhance and make space for nature within the future development of Limerick City and County. This will enable progress towards a Limerick where biodiversity thrives and all sectors, stakeholders and people work together to restore, protect and enhance nature for its intrinsic value and its ability to fulfil our needs, enrich our lives and the lives of future generations.

The draft plan has been presented to the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Environment Strategic Policy Committee on April 9th 2024 and again on March 11th 2025 with public consultation taking place on MYPOINT in the intervening period. The committee on March 11th 2025 recommended that the draft be forwarded to the full Council meeting on March 31st for approval.

Is mise le meas,

Kieran Lehane

Director of Service for the Metropolitan District of Limerick

Limerick City & County Council

13/03/2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY DRAFT LIMERICK BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2025-2030

Biodiversity in Limerick

Biodiversity includes the variety of life forms on Earth. It is this diversity of nature, of our habitats, plants, and animals (including us humans) and their interconnections with each other. We are a part of nature and everything in nature is connected. Biodiversity is not restricted to rare or threatened species, but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered. Biodiversity also includes the range of places where plants and animals, including humans live, from our local parks, to our uplands, farmlands, rivers, lakes and estuaries as well the world's deepest seas and oceans. Unfortunately the pattern of biodiversity loss in Limerick mirrors global loss patterns and is considered a global threat of equal size to the climate emergency.

The Draft Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan will provide a framework for biodiversity action for the next five years. A key aim of the plan is to focus the efforts and resources of Limerick City and County Council, public sector bodies, nature conservation groups and others to protect and enhance biodiversity and halt biodiversity loss in Limerick and to further incorporate the free ecosystem services that biodiversity provides.

International, National and Local Policy Drivers

The UN and the EU have developed strategies to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean by 2030. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 provides targets for all member states and has "We need nature in our lives" as its central message. It links the recovery of biodiversity to the recovery from economic recession, health threats and climate disasters.

The 4th Irish National Biodiversity Plan includes many nature conservation actions relevant for local authorities. Ireland's Biodiversity Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the Limerick Climate Action Plan call for nature-based solutions to tackle the drivers and impacts of climate change. The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan translates national and international nature conservation and climate change policy into action on the ground.

Our Vision

"Our vision is for a Limerick where biodiversity thrives and all sectors, stakeholders and people work together to restore, conserve protect and enhance nature for its own sake and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives and the lives of future generations."

The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan puts forward an ambitious programme of a sixty-six actions to reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2030. The actions are based upon recommendations made in ecological studies and on proposals put forward by the Limerick Biodiversity Forum, nature conservation groups, NGO's, members of the public, Strategic Policy Committee members and various Council Departments. The actions in this plan are centred on five objectives which mirror the objectives of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan.

- A. Adopt a Whole of Limerick City and County Council, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
- B. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
- C. Secure Nature's Contribution to Current and Future Generations
- D. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
- E. Strengthen Limerick's Contribution to National and Regional Biodiversity Initiatives

Implementing the Plan

The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan sets out sixty-six actions to maintain and enhance nature and halt the loss of biodiversity in Limerick City and County. The delivery of the Biodiversity will require collaboration across all directorates to ensure the implementation of the sixty-six actions.

The Council will oversee the overall implementation of the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan. Monitoring Progress Reports will be prepared annually by the Biodiversity Officer. The Council will also continue to collaborate with the Limerick Biodiversity Forum to make any amendments to the plan deemed necessary, taking into account any changes in terms of legislation, policies and conservation priorities for the duration of the plan.

Conclusion

Now is the time for those of us living, working, running a business, taking part in the development of or just visiting Limerick to recognise the interdependence between plants, animals, microorganism necessary for healthy ecosystems, ecosystems services and nature based solutions that help mitigate against climate change.

Biodiversity is an important factor in the overall life and development of our city and county. This plan aims to raise awareness of what each individual can do to maintain biodiversity in their local area. The plan outlines how, in partnership with stakeholders and citizens, the Council aims to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity for the benefit of future generations of wildlife and humans.



Draft Limerick
Biodiversity
Action Plan
2025-2030



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Limerick City
& County Council

ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

LIMERICK BIODIVERSITY FORUM



FOREWORD

Mayor of Limerick, John Moran

I am delighted to introduce Limerick's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. This plan builds upon the foundations laid out in the "More for Limerick" Mayoral Programme, which emphasises the importance of biodiversity in creating sustainable and vibrant communities. It envisions a Limerick where biodiversity thrives, and all sectors, stakeholders, and citizens work together to protect our natural heritage for its intrinsic value and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives and the lives of future generations.



The threats posed to our natural world and human well-being by biodiversity loss and climate breakdown may seem overwhelming. However, I believe that when we act, nature can and will respond. By committing to positive actions for biodiversity, we give Limerick's natural heritage its best hope.

It is clear to me that it is time to protect nature. It is our job in local government to guide, support, and enable this. With Limerick City and County Council, individuals, community groups, businesses, and others aiming to protect nature, there is no limit to what can be achieved. Now is the time for us to recognise the interdependence between plants, animals, and microorganisms that are necessary for healthy ecosystems, and nature-based solutions that help mitigate against climate change.

The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan and Biodiversity Forum provide the structure for this to become a reality. I look forward to the implementation of the plan, which will bring significant benefits for our biodiversity resources and for the people of Limerick.

Director General, Dr. Pat Daly

Limerick's rural and urban areas have a rich and varied natural heritage. Our challenge is for Limerick to develop and grow in a way that maintains and enhances biodiversity for future generations. The Draft Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan will play an important role in our efforts to protect biodiversity.



Thank you to everyone who participated in the process of drafting the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. The Heritage Council's National Biodiversity Officer Programme and the National Parks and Wildlife Service's, 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan have been instrumental in this plan coming to fruition.

I would also like to recognise the tremendous commitment of those from education, non-government organisations, the general public and charity sectors involved in the, 'Limerick Biodiversity Forum', who supported the drafting of this plan.

Thank you all for your support of the process. Credit is also due to everyone who took the time to comment and make submissions on the initial discussion paper, which was the first step in drafting the Draft Limerick Biodiversity Plan. This has been an excellent example of cross-sectoral collaboration.

Limerick's Biodiversity Action Plan provides an excellent opportunity for the Council to integrate the protection of biodiversity into both the Council's forward planning process and day-to-day operations. Hopefully, this will encourage others to do so too. I look forward to working with our Mayor John Moran, Limerick's elected representatives, my council colleagues and staff, and everyone across Limerick to ensure this plan is implemented.

HOW DID WE DEVELOP THE DRAFT LBAP

Limerick's BAP began development in February 2024 with the recruitment of the Council's Biodiversity Officer with support from the Heritage Council's National Biodiversity Officer Programme. The key steps in drafting the LBAP were

Quarter 2 2024

Development of a Local Biodiversity Forum

- List of forum member organization Appendix 1
- Terms of reference drafted
- Outline of draft discussion paper discussed
- Advisory Sub Group set up to support the drafting of the LBAP – list Appendix 2

LBAP Discussion Paper drafted

- Public Consultation
- Presentation to Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee
- Presentation of LCCC District Meetings – Cappamore/Kilamallock, Adare/Rathkeale, Newcastle West and Metro North, East and Central
- Online Submissions Invited
- Face to face presentation and information sessions
- Email campaign
- Social media

Quarter 3 2024

- Discussion paper submissions considered and presented to the Limerick Biodiversity Forum
- In-house Drafting of the draft LBAP
- Circulation of draft LBAP with Advisory Sub Group
- Two meetings of the Advisory Sub Group to consider draft actions.
- Environmental Screening of draft LBAP
- Consideration of the draft LBAP at Local Biodiversity Forum

Quarter 4 2024

- Further consideration of draft LBAP by Forum
- Environmental Screening of draft LBAP continues
- Draft LBAP produced
- Presentation to LCCC Senior Forum and Management Team
- Consideration by Elected Representatives at a dedicated workshop
- Public Consultation of the Draft Plan

Quarter 1 2025

- Limerick Biodiversity Forum consider submissions received from public consultation
- Finalising the plan in parallel along with the necessary environmental screening.
- Publication of the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan

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INTRODUCTION

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity includes the variety of life forms on Earth. It is this diversity of nature, of our habitats, plants, and animals (including us humans) and their interconnections with each other. We are a part of nature and everything in nature is connected. Biodiversity is not restricted to rare or threatened species, but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered. Biodiversity also includes the range of places where plants and animals live, from the local park just around the corner to the world's deepest seas and oceans.

Why is Biodiversity Important?

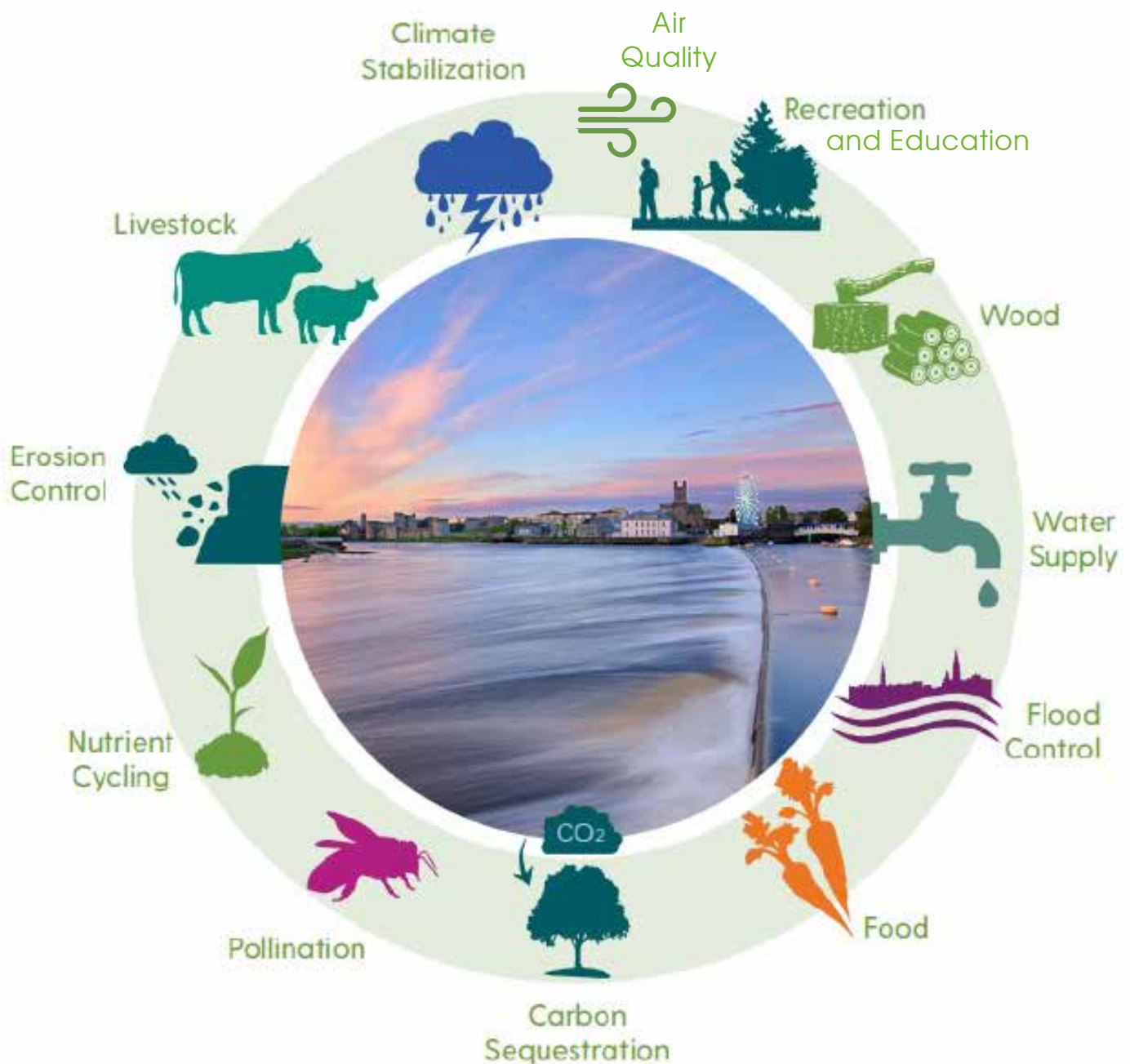
Our Biodiversity in Limerick is the result of millions of years of evolution. Although we may not realise it, biodiversity, provides us with many of the essentials that sustain our lives. Oxygen, clean water, food, clothing and places to live and relax in. A rich biodiversity underpins economic development and prosperity and it makes our environment more resilient to the impacts of climate change. There is a serious concern for biodiversity in Ireland and throughout the world. Recent reports have

highlighted a decline in biodiversity. Ireland's Sixth National Report to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity reported that 91% of protected habitats in Ireland are in poor or inadequate condition and more than 50% are declining, while 14% of species assessed were considered as endangered. Dáil Éireann declared a biodiversity crisis in May 2019, while the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) described the loss of biodiversity as a threat of equal size to the climate emergency.

Limerick contains a wide diversity of habitats and species, but the pattern of loss of Limerick's natural heritage mirrors the global pattern. Local habitats are being lost and/or subject to degradation and species numbers have declined. The challenge for Limerick is to develop and grow in a way which protects and enhances biodiversity for future generations. Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2024 – 30 and Limerick's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 play a key role in our efforts to protect our natural environment for future generations.

How Biodiversity is Helping Us

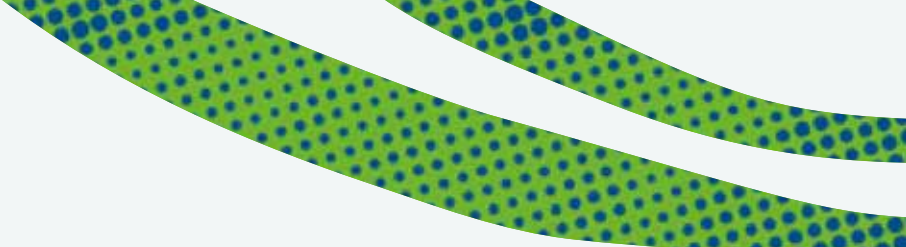
- Ecosystem Services





OUR VISION

Is for a Limerick where biodiversity thrives and all sectors, stakeholders and people work together to restore, protect and enhance nature for its intrinsic value and its ability to fulfil our needs, enrich our lives and the lives of future generations.



ROLE OF THE LIMERICK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)

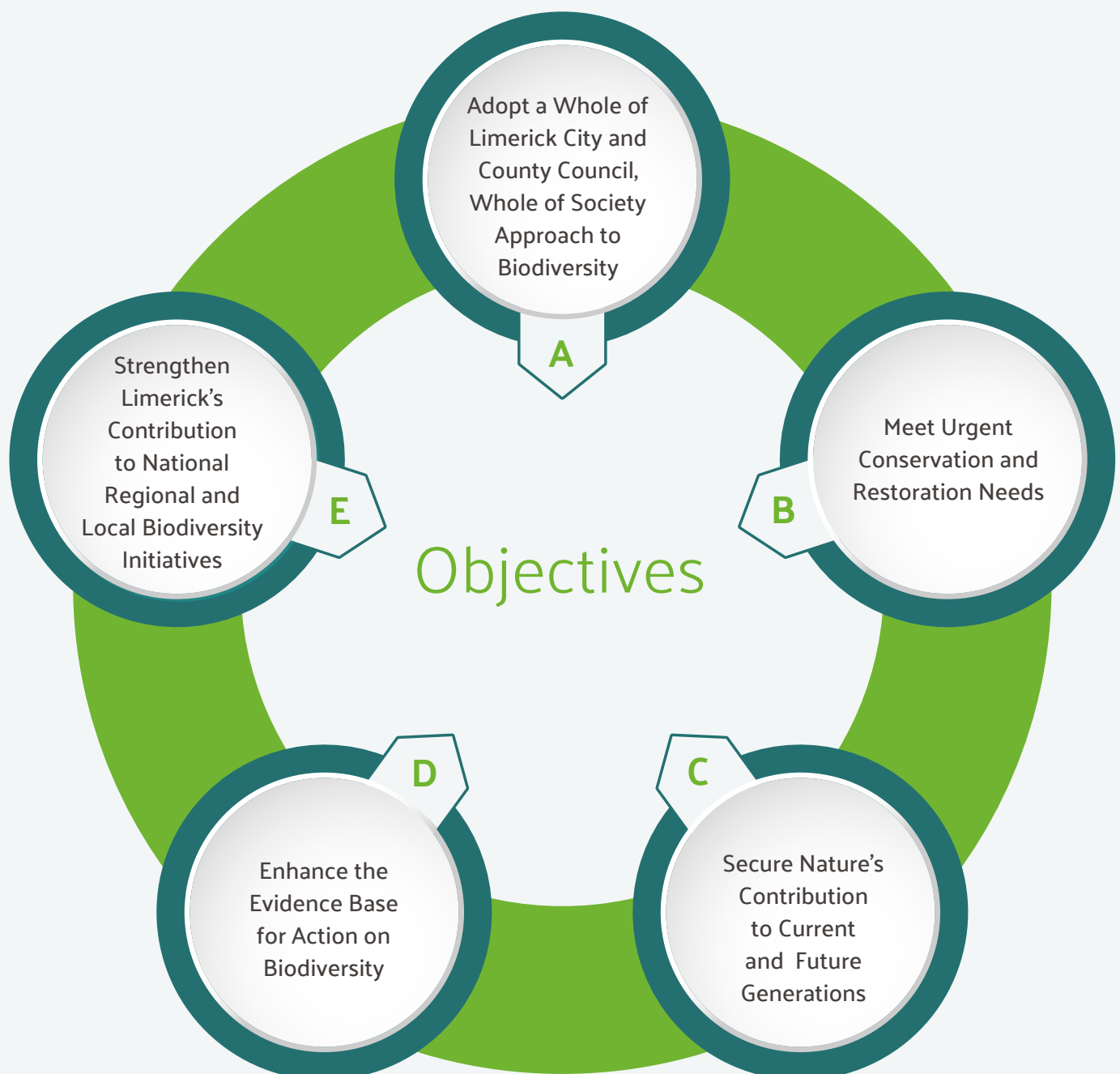
The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan will provide a framework to guide the work of everyone involved in the conservation of the natural environment in Limerick City and County. Limerick City and County Council has a diverse range of functions that impact on biodiversity. A whole of Council approach is essential to foster a culture of environmental stewardship across all Council departments. The primary purpose of the LBAP is to focus the efforts and resources of Limerick City and County Council, other organisations, nature conservation groups and individuals to respond to the escalating ecological crisis and climate emergency. This Biodiversity Plan also translates the actions in the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and the Limerick Climate Change Action Plan into nature conservation action on the ground.

We are all responsible for the health and wellbeing of our natural environment. This Action Plan challenges everybody; planners, architects, landscape architects, scientists, engineers, politicians, developers, business owners, local communities and individuals to get involved in protecting and restoring nature in whatever way they can. The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan, supported by Limerick citizens, will help us to protect our natural heritage and develop Limerick City and County in a progressive and sustainable manner, enabling us to hand over a rich natural environment to the next generation.



LIMERICK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

The LBAP objectives are in keeping with the objectives of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan





NATURE IN LIMERICK

Limerick has a diversity of plants, insects, mammals, birds, amphibians, fish and soil life. To maintain this diversity and in some cases to restore species that are now lost to Limerick we need to continue to work to maintain the range of places where plants and animals live, (habitats), from the local park or green area to our woodlands and from the smallest pond, a back garden to our rivers and estuaries.

There are a number of internationally protected sites within the City and County. Sites designated of EU importance include 12 Special Areas of conservation (SACs), 3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs); collectively known as Sites of Conservation Importance (SCIs). These sites carry priority habitats and species and are referred to as the Natura 2000 Network and they are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive. In addition to EU designations, we also have 4 nationally important Natural Heritage Area (NHAs), and thirty-seven proposed NHA's as places where plants and animals exist in a relatively natural state. County development plans do provide a level of protection via the planning system for pNHA's, along with NHAs

Other wildlife habitats in Limerick that are not designated sites provide corridors and steppingstones to the wider ecological network

which enhances the richness and diversity of nature within the county. These include;

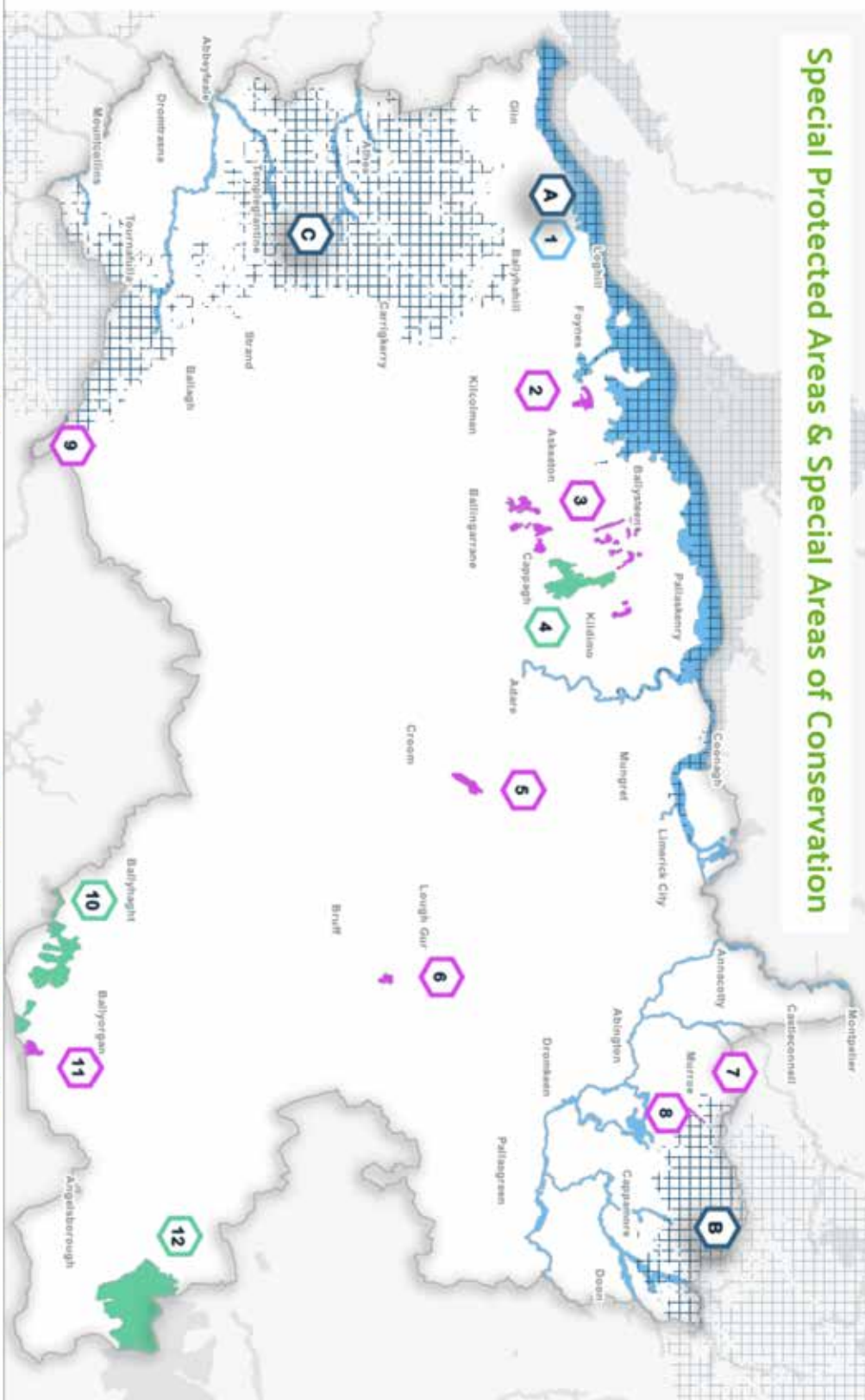
- Wetlands, Water Corridors, Transitional Waters, Rivers, Stream & Ponds
- Woodlands, Hedgerows Scrub & Trees
- Upland Areas
- Urban Green Spaces & Parks

Hedgerows are particularly important for biodiversity connectivity. Many of our annex species such as lesser horseshoe bats and barn owls favour feeding along the hedgerows. A recent LCCC survey on hedgerows in the county indicates that 40% of our hedgerows are in poor condition.

The 'Guide to Habitats in Ireland' Heritage Council (2000) has been used as a guideline to outline areas of key biodiversity significance in Limerick.

Ireland supports 60 different habitat types that require special conservation measures (referred to as Annex I from the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, amended by Directive 97/62/EC). Of these 16 are priority types that are considered to be in danger of disappearance. It is important, that attention be drawn to all Annex I habitats within Limerick because of their significance for nature conservation at local, national and European level.

Special Protected Areas & Special Areas of Conservation



Appendix 2 Limerick's Special Areas of Conservation Appendix 3 Limerick's Special Protection Areas

Natural Heritage Areas & Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas

- A: Moyreen Bog NHA
- B: Carrigerry Bog NHA
- C: Gragreen Fen And Bog NHA
- D: Lough Gay Bog NHA

1: Tarbert Bay	7: Fergus Estuary And Inner Shannon, North Shore	12: Ballyvoheen Bog	19: Ballinivrick Marsh	25: Ardagh Church, Newcastlewest (Disused)	32: Ballyhouna Mountains
2: Suramus Island	8: Knockallsheen Marsh	14: Bilboa And Gortnageragh River Valleys	20: Curragechase Woods	26: Lough Gur	33: Castledriver Woods
3: Inner Shannon Estuary	9: Castleconnell (Domestic Dwelling, Occupied)	15: Knockanavar Wood	21: Adare Woodlands	27: Glen Bog	34: Ballynacourty Wood
4: Bannigone	10: Clurn Glen	16: Ballymorrisheen Marsh	22: Tory Hill	28: Herbertstown Fen	35: Ballinlela Wood
5: Dromore & Bleach Loughs	11: Glenstar Wood	17: Coppahill Fen	23: Skoolhill	29: Heathfield Wood	36: Carrigeenamonney Hill
6: Loughmore Common Turlough	12: Dromsalish Bog	18: Gortennamrock	24: Glenastar Wood	30: Mountnussell Wood	37: Glenacurran River Valley
				31: Ballyroe Hill & Mortlestown Hill	38: Galilee Mountains

Appendix 5 Limerick's Proposed National Heritage Areas

NATURE IN LIMERICK

Freshwater

Fresh water is naturally occurring water on the Earth's surface in ice sheets, ice caps, glaciers, bogs, ponds, lakes, rivers and streams, and underground as groundwater in aquifers and underground streams.

Transitional Waters

Our estuarine waters or transitional waters are bodies of surface water near river mouths that are partly saline due to their proximity to coastal waters, but are substantially influenced by freshwater flows.

Wetlands

Wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems. A wetland is an area of land whose soil is saturated with moisture either permanently or seasonally. Such areas may also be covered partially or completely by shallow pools of water. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, and bogs, among others and water found in wetlands can be saltwater, freshwater, or brackish. Natural and constructed wetlands provide a valuable flood control function and are effective at filtering and cleaning water pollution removing pollutants and sediments from stormwater or diffuse agricultural runoff.

Woodlands, Specimen Trees and Hedgerows

Woodland habitats, (one of the scarcer habitat types in Limerick) and are composed of trees, shrubs, ferns, mosses and lichens and all the associated birds, insects and animals. The main types of woodland in Ireland are Oak Woodland, Willow Ash-Alder, Whitethorn and Beech Woodlands and woodlands made of a mixture of these trees.

Woodland habitats are rich in biodiversity, particularly if they are made up largely of native Irish trees. While Conifer plantations, provide shelter, they do not provide the same level of habitat for indigenous Irish wildlife as native woodlands. There are few native woodlands left in Ireland and in Limerick. Woodlands highlighted in this Plan have a special significance.

Hedgerows are typically a rural feature although there are areas of hedgerows scattered throughout Limerick City. Where ever they are, hedgerows act as 'habitat corridor links' for birds, bats, small mammals, insects and other invertebrates. Standalone trees are also important to local biodiversity. Hedgerow and tree habitats are currently the most threatened of all in Ireland. They are removed to facilitate development and replaced with something much less valuable to nature



Grasslands and Agricultural lands

Grass is the dominant plant of our grasslands. Sprinkled throughout the grasslands are our wild flowers such as Lady's bedstraw, dandelions, thistles, orchids and plantains. The more "natural" the grassland the greater its biodiversity. The seeds and insects in grassland habitats supply food for birds and other wildlife.

Farmland is man-managed grassland which is generally a species poor habitat. However if managed as a traditional hay meadow as in a minority of farms, (often equine farms) across the country, this will enhance the number of plant species will be home to the species of plant and animal found in natural grassland.

Urban Habitats

Important areas for wildlife in the City and towns and villages across Limerick include private gardens, municipal parks, cemeteries, the grounds of institutions, railway embankments, canals, canal banks and walls and urban wildflower meadows, bridges and old walls. Derelict sites although transient in nature can also provide valuable natural habitats. It is important that biodiversity and nature based solutions are considered and designed into all new and refurbished developments.

Uplands

A significant proportion of county Limerick is upland, i.e. the West Limerick Hills covering the entire western quarter of the County, the Ballyhouras and the Galtees in the south and the Slieve Felims in the north east. These areas are important for Hen Harriers in particular and were also known for several other now lost breeding species such as Curlew and Red Grouse.





POLICY CONTEXT

Policy Context

Policy is required at local, national and global levels to provide a framework to protect Limerick's natural heritage. The main government agency responsible for the conservation of habitat and species in Ireland is the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Plan 2024-2028, (a statutory document), highlights the role that Local Authorities have in promoting and protecting natural heritage. Limerick City and County Council recognises its responsibility to protect, restore and promote local biodiversity and natural heritage in conjunction with stakeholders and citizens. The 2025-2030 LBAP may identify gaps in policy and action that might guide future initiatives and focus.



Further details with links for additional information on the policies in this infographic is given in Appendices 7.

OUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Nature in Limerick is afforded legal protection under European and National Wildlife Legislation. This legislation has implications for the way Limerick City and County Council, other statutory bodies, the farming community, businesses and citizens go about their business

The principal legislation relating to biodiversity in Ireland is as follows:



Links with further details of the legislation in this infographic along with an overview of all protected sites and species is given in Appendices 8.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

It is important we realise that Ireland has experienced biodiversity loss resulting in the Dáil declaring a Biodiversity Crisis in the 2019. The Environment Protection Agency emphasised in their 2024 State of the Environment Report that the overall current assessment for nature is ‘very poor’.

- Nationally Wetlands have declined from 20% of land area to 14.9%.
- 26% of Irish bird species are now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern Ref 1
- 63% of Irish Birds are identified as declining. Ref 2
- 50% decline in Pollinators since 1980 with (2 species extinct in last 80 years) Ref 3
- 56% plus decline in Ireland’s and UK’s native plant species, with native grasslands suffering the largest decline. 35% decline in Irish population – Ref 4
- 2% of Limerick waters ecological status are deemed High, 30% Good, 32% moderate and 35% Poor. Ref 5

The National Biodiversity Plan identifies habitat loss and degradation as the main factor eroding biodiversity in Ireland today. ‘Commercial coniferous plantations, agricultural intensification, arterial drainage, industrial developments, urban sprawl, and infrastructure developments are some of the key drivers of habitat loss in Limerick and nationally. Even though historically our landscape and habitats have been modified by human activity, the pace and scale of change rapidly accelerated from the mid-20th century on.’

THREATS AND CHALLENGES

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

The rapid development of houses, roads and other infrastructure in our towns and countryside, together with major changes in agricultural and fishing practices have led to a major loss of habitats and habitat fragmentation. Fragmentation happens when, for example, a motorway cuts through a patch of landscape creating two smaller landscape patches. Smaller habitat patches generally support fewer species and support lower population numbers of the species present. Increasing fragmentation leads to a loss of connection and/or increasing distance between patches, which has negative consequences for the ability of plants and animals to move through the landscape and to sustain viable populations.

What are we going to do about it in the time frame of this plan?

- Continue to survey and map natural heritage in Limerick including wildlife corridors such as hedgerows, verges and rivers that wild animals, plants and insects need to move through the landscape

Commercial Forestry, Agricultural Intensification and Drainage

From the 1950s the introduction of commercial forestry and intensive farming practises began to impact on biodiversity in Ireland. Commercial conifer forestry was planted on what was then considered 'marginal' land including peatlands and upland areas. The preparing of this land with drainage ditches to allow growth of the commercial crop, planting and subsequent clear felling had a significant impact of biodiversity including upland species such as Hen Harrier, Merlin and Grouse.

Intensive agriculture has led to reduction in grassland species, cutting regimes that are not compatible with the ground nesting bird season and increased impact of nutrients on our water course.

Our rivers meander and flood, this is how nature has adapted to variations in climate and topography. This creates an array of habitats for biodiversity and helps prevent flooding. The 1945 Arterial Drainage Act has impacted negatively on biodiversity and landscape on some rivers and land areas.

What are we going to do about it in the time frame of this plan?

- Continue to engage with relevant national organisations and commercial forestry to ensure best practise in relation to forestry.
- Continue to work with our farming community and farming organisations to minimise impact of agricultural practises on the natural landscape.
- Encourage use of nature-based solutions rather than hard engineering solutions on water course along with encouraging national agricultural organisations to bring in farming schemes that allow for restoring of river flood plains where appropriate.



Disturbance

Some of the most important nature conservation sites in Limerick are along the Shannon River Estuary and other riverine habitats and wetlands. This is because of the thousands of birds that winter and breed there. Many of these birds roost and feed in these areas. The wintering birds are in Ireland to recover from their long flight and spend the mild winter here, while fattening up for their return journeys to Northern Europe and the Arctic. If these birds are disturbed by people and dogs, they use up a lot of energy, hampering their recovery and this can affect breeding success and mortality rates. Controlling and guiding the flow of people to avoid disturbance to feeding and roosting sites and in some cases nestsites, may be a challenge as Limerick City and County continues to grow. In addition it is estimated that feral and domestic cats kill around 16 million birds and small animals each year in Ireland.



What we are going to do about this in the Plan?

- Map and protect key roosting and feeding sites for migratory birds
- Encourage the acquisition of lands near the estuaries and manage these for migratory birds to provide undisturbed roosting and feeding sites
- Encourage better understanding of the impact of recreational activities on roosting and feeding birds and other wildlife.
- Advocate for responsible pet ownership.

Climate Change

The biodiversity crisis and the climate crisis are intrinsically linked. Climate change accelerates the destruction of the natural world through droughts, flooding and wildfires, while the loss and unsustainable use of nature are, in turn, key drivers of climate change. Climate change can affect our habitats and species in a myriad of ways. Changes in the environmental conditions at the wintering grounds of many Irish breeding birds in sub-Saharan Africa, such as droughts or floods, could have an impact on the breeding bird population in Limerick. Similarly, the warmer weather conditions in the Arctic may lead to changes in the numbers of birds wintering in Ireland. The increasingly early flowering period of trees, shrubs and plants is causing all sorts of difficulties for insects and their avian predators. Their lifecycles are fine-tuned to coincide with the flowering period of certain plants, which ensures an abundance of food supply during the breeding season. Changes to flowering periods as a result of climate change may prove problematic for many species. Sea level rise and extreme storm weather events will put extra pressure on our rivers and coastal habitats in particular, while drier and hotter weather conditions will increase the risk of wildfires.

But just as the crises are linked, so are the solutions. Nature is a vital ally in the fight against climate change. Nature-based solutions, such as protecting and restoring forests, wetlands and coastal ecosystems, or sustainably managing marine areas will be essential for emission reduction and climate adaptation (Ref 6).

What we are going to do about this in the Plan?

- Encourage the acquisition of lands around the estuary to allow estuarine habitats to move with sea-level rise, absorb floodwater, improve water quality and restore coastal ecosystems.
- Create new woodlands and other habitats at strategic locations buffering existing protected areas and recreational areas.

Pollution

All forms of pollution pose a serious threat to biodiversity, but nutrient pollution of waterbodies, pesticide pollution of soils and waterbodies and light pollution are the most relevant forms of pollution in Limerick. Nitrogen and phosphorus are common pollutants in our rivers and estuaries, originating primarily from chemical fertilizers and manure that are applied to fields to increase crop growth. Any unabsorbed nitrogen and phosphorus leaches into nearby rivers and groundwater, leading to eutrophication of ecosystems. Urban runoff, forestry felling, sewage overflows are also contributing factors to contamination of our water ways.

The common use of pesticides in farming has raised concerns about their potential adverse effects on pollinators and farmland birds. Pesticides can be present in pollen and nectar of native flowers which affects pollinators, while farmland birds such as Barn Owls are eating rodents who have eaten pesticides.

Artificial light pollution can also have negative impacts on biodiversity. Many animals have evolved to be nocturnal such as Bats, Moths and Barn Owls. They hunt or move around under the cover of complete darkness, with only the light from the moon or stars to guide their flight. Lighting can impact on bats' roosting sites, commuting routes and foraging areas and disturb bats' feeding behaviour (Ref 7).

What we are going to do about this in the Plan?

- Encourage the acquisition of lands on floodplains to develop wet woodland and other wetland habitat to trap nutrients from adjoining farmland and improve water quality
- Work with 3rd parties to carry out river restoration projects that include agri-environmental measures including, buffer strips, winter cover, silt traps in drains and integrated pest management.



Lack of Habitat Management

Some of the man-made habitat types such as hedgerows and meadows require human intervention to maintain the diversity of plants and animals they support. Hedgerows were created as living stock proof field boundaries in the past and they require cutting or laying every few years. If they are not managed, the hedgerows turn into lines of mature trees and they lose their dense cover which is so important for wildlife. Wildflower meadows need to be cut or grazed in autumn to prevent these meadows from becoming overgrown with scrub.

What we are going to do about this in the Plan?

- Develop a hedgerow appraisal and management guidance document
- Assess the hedgerow resource on Council owned lands and carry out necessary maintenance operations (e.g. coppicing and laying)
- Work with Tidy Towns groups and local resident associations to manage hedgerows in open spaces
- Trial conservation grazing schemes on Council owned lands
- Work with local farmers to collect the hay from council parks
- Work with Tidy Towns groups and local resident associations to maintain wildflower meadows in housing estates and road verges







Invasive Alien Species

Alien species are plants or animals that have been introduced in Ireland outside their natural range. Alien species can sometimes become 'invasive' when they spread rapidly and outcompete the native flora and fauna.

In Limerick, the main problem with invasive species is mostly limited to alien plant species including Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed. Garden plants have become a problem in local areas as a result of dumping garden waste and these have the potential to become invasive and impact local biodiversity.

The freshwater crayfish plague is considered highly invasive and is an issue particularly along the Maigue

What we are going to do about this in the Plan?

- Continue existing control programs for Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and extend across the county as resources allow.
- Remove Cherry Laurel and other invasive species as part of woodland management works on Council owned lands.
- Implement and promote the Check, Clean, Dry protocol; this should be done routinely before and after visiting a river or lake in Limerick.

TABLE OF ACTIONS

A. Adopt a Whole of Limerick City and County Council, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity

Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body	Resources
1	Actively communicate good news Biodiversity Case Studies/Initiatives via the Council's Communication team	Nos of media releases that will be issued	LCCC	LCCC own resources
2	Continue to host the Limerick Biodiversity Forum	Min 2-3 meetings will be held annually	LCCC	LCCC own resources
3	Biodiversity Training for all in LCCC including a) decision makers, b) elected representatives c) all outdoor and indoor staff.	Training will be undertaken	LCCC & HC others such as the CCMA	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
4	Include best practise Biodiversity Training requirement/standard in all council procurement processes	Procurement Guidance will be developed	LCCC	LCCC own resources
5	Invest /work with 3rd parties in demonstration sites to promote local biodiversity	Min of 2 Demonstration sites will be supported. 1 x Rural and 1 x Urban	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
6	Ensure biodiversity is integrated into guidance document for LCCC grant initiatives	Guidance documents will be developed	LCCC	LCCC own resources
7	Work Actively with TT groups, NGOs and Faith Communities in relation to Biodiversity etc.	Annually	LCCC	LCCC own resources
8	Develop Best Practice Guidelines to reduce the impact of development on biodiversity	Guidance document will be published	LCCC	LCCC own resources
9	Support LA housing estate communities to manage green areas in a biodiverse manner	Annually	LCCC community sustainment team and regeneration team	LCCC own resources
10	Develop and provide Teacher Training workshops on Biodiversity and nature based solutions	Annually	LCCC in collaboration with neighbouring LAs and other stakeholders	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
11	Work with the Green Schools and Heritage in Schools programme to promote biodiversity and climate issues to students and the wider schools population	2 Case studies on wildlife in schools will be developed	LCCC in collaboration with others	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
12	Promote the development of nature based outdoor classrooms to reach Science Foundation Ireland or equivalent standard where possible	Minimum of 2 promotions will be developed	LCCC in collaboration with others?	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
13	Targeted education programmes for the farming community	Minimum of 1 education programme targeting farming community will be carried out annually	LCCC in collaboration with others	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
14	Collaborate and harness Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Principles in order to collaborate with Corporate Bodies and Local Organisations where appropriate	Minimum of 2 collaborations	Local industry and LCCC	Local Industry and LCCC resources
15	Host a series of capacity building events annually for the general public and interested groups including Tidy Towns to promote the importance of Biodiversity and encourage participation in citizen science.	Minimum of 4 in-person events will be held annually with additional events online events where appropriate. One biodiversity conference will be hosted during the plan period.	LCCC in collaboration with other stakeholders	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
16	Creation of high impact, true to life Biodiversity Murals in Limerick City and County.	Project will be completed	LCCC in collaboration with Draw Out	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources

Flexible/Unknown	Start Time
Ongoing	Ongoing
Short term	Start 0-2 years
Medium term	Start 2-4 years

TABLE OF ACTIONS

B. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs			
Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body
1	Identify Locally Important Biodiversity Sites (LIBS) in Limerick City and County according to Heritage Council guidelines. Ensure these are mapped and protected through inclusion of policies in the Limerick Development Plan, the review of which will commence in 2026 and subsequently in the associated local area plans.	LIBS will be identified and mapped. The existing protection policies in the county development plan will be retained or amended where necessary, as part of the review of the development plan	LCCC & HC
2	Provide pre-planning guidance document for biodiversity inclusion in all new and refurbished developments	Guidance document will be provided	LCCC Planning Team et al
3	Ring fence a percentage of development contribution specifically for biodiversity	% to be identified	LCCC
4	Develop a City or County -wide pollinator plan for Limerick in line with the AIPP	Plan will be developed	LCCC Parks and Env Team
5	Develop an LCCC Grassland Management Plan for areas managed by LCCC with the aim of improving their nature, habitat and ecological value	Management plan will be developed. There will be an increase in land area year on year from established baseline in 2024 and display on colour coded map	LCCC
6	Develop a LCCC Dark Skies Policy to reduce unnecessary light pollution for inclusion in the Limerick Development Plan, the mid-term review of which will commence in 2026.	Policy will be developed and included in the revision of the Limerick Development Plan	LCCC
7	LCCC will minimise use of compost with peat as an ingredient and actively source new peat free compost or generate their own.	A reduction target will be identified and reported annually	LCCC
8	Continue to minimise and reduce the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides across council operations	Pesticide use across the organisation will be reported annually	LCCC
9	Undertake a mapping of all zoned lands to determine the extent of trees and hedgerows at the time of zoning and that this mapping is included in all area plans at draft stage and the Limerick Development Plan Review 2026.	Mapping will be completed and included in relevant plans	LCCC
10	Investigate and pilot use of controlled Grazing on Council Land where appropriate	An appropriate area to pilot grazing measures will be identified and introduced.	LCCC and animal owner
11	Prioritise and Ecologically Survey and develop Management Plans Council owned lands	A priority list will be developed and 1 management plan produced per year	LCCC and successful contractor
12	Continue to determine risks to water quality via source pathway receptor model on all planning applications.	% of applications that will be reviewed	LCCC planning team et al
13	Work with the LCCC Planning to incorporate IFI's Planning Guide for Watercourses in the Urban Environment in LCCC decision making	Reference Guide to be incorporated in the review of the Limerick Development Plan	LCCC planning team
14	Set targets in line with LCCC Tree Policy to maintain existing LCCC woodlands in good condition and plant new native trees in urban and rural areas.	Acreage areas currently maintained to be identified. Nos of trees planted, % increase in tree coverage to be reported annually	LCCC

TABLE OF ACTIONS

B. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs			
Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body
15	Promote native/local provenance for trees, shrubs plants etc. and LCCC to include this as a criteria for procurement	No. of promotions and no. of trees/ plants procured annually	LCCC in collaboration with others
16	Support and collaborate on environmental and biodiversity projects as identified with external stakeholders	Collaborations to be considered as they arise	LCCC collaboration with other stakeholders
17	Identify suitable nest box location on Council Lands for Barn Owls, Kestrels and other species identified by NPWS and liaise with local farming community organisations re same	5 x nest boxes to be installed annually	LCCC with BWI BOP, NPWS and Acres/ Teagasc
18	Promote the prevention of fragmentation of ecological corridors including hedgerows and riverine features	Regular capacity building and awareness initiatives will be undertaken	LCCC planning team
19	Continue to work with LAWPRO (Local Authority Water Programme) and others to identify the impacts of critical and vulnerable receptors in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan and Water Framework Directive	No. of meetings to be held no. of projects to be developed	Environment Climate Action Team
20	Support the efforts of LAWPRO and other parties to promote the reduction of chemical fertilizers on land.	Guidance booklet to be disseminated	Collaboration with farming associations LAWPRO Teagasc and LCCC
21	Support the implementation of Marine Spatial Plan and protect the Shannon estuary in collaboration with Kerry and Clare local authorities.	Support to be outlined in annual report	LCCC and other stakeholders
22	Advocate for responsible pet ownership	Recognised NGO/ Charity campaigns for spaying and neutering to be promoted	Relevant Stakeholders

Flexible/Unknown	Start Time
Ongoing	Ongoing
Short term	Start 0-2 years
Medium term	Start 2-4 years



TABLE OF ACTIONS

C. Secure Nature's Contribution to Current and Future Generations

Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body	Resources
1	Protect and enhance Biodiversity on all developments in Limerick including new, existing and refurbished developments along with Greenways and all infrastructural developments	New measures introduced to be highlighted in new developments and progress implementation of the Greenway Biodiversity Action Plan	LCCC Greenway Team and LCCC and contractors and franchises	LCCC own resources
2	Increase awareness of the intrinsic value of biodiversity and the services it provides us with.	No. of measures to be carried out and shared with the wider population	LCCC	LCCC own resources
3	In line with LCCC Tree Policy increase the planting of suitable trees and hedgerows of local provenance	No. of trees, hedgerows to be planted in urban, town and village areas (ensure right tree right place)	LCCC and developers	LCCC own resources and part of overall project development
4	Deliver a minimum of 2 case studies to combat pollution using Nature Based Solutions (NBS) and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SDS)	A min. of 2 sites to be identified where NBS and SDS will be implemented and case studies written up with data indicating pollution avoided and positive impact on biodiversity as a result of these works	LCCC in collaboration with others	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
5	Collaborate on programmes with the LCCC Arts Office, education, youth projects and others that emphasise Nature as a muse of the arts and culture	2 collaborative programmes	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources
6	Collaborate on education and research programmes that emphasise Nature's positive impact on human well being	Urban projects, BiodiverCity and Green Place to be completed and LCCC to continue emphasis on natural play	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources
7	Create online info hub of locations where people can visit and immerse themselves in existing nature areas and showcase river Shannon and its contribution and importance to biodiversity	No. of views to the online hub	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources and possible grant funding
8	Conduct wellbeing surveys to capture impact of identified actions in certain circumstances	5 x wellbeing surveys to be carried out	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources



TABLE OF ACTIONS

D. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity				
Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body	Resources
1	Carry out habitat surveys on council owned land and highlight areas at risk and identify areas suitable for restoration/enhancement and also identify potential wildlife corridors for protection through statutory plans	Areas to be identified and prioritised for survey. Min 1 survey annually	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
2	Share data from all LCCC surveys with NPWS, Heritage Council National. Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland and other relevant organisations	Data to be shared with relevant body	LCCC	own resources
3	Support NPWS national surveys for data collection on all annex species.	No. of surveys that are supported	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
4	Investigate the development of an open source digital repository for Limerick Biodiversity Related Data subject to GDPR and wildlife sensitivity restraints	Investigation to be completed and feasibility report to be undertaken/ web links one / nature sites that /you can visit (ongoing)	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
5	Progress to Phase II of Limerick Wetland Survey	Phase 1 complete with story board Q1 2025 and Phase 2 to be completed with identifying actions Q4 2025	LCCC in Collaboration with Wetland Survey's Ireland	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
6	Action the recommendations from 1. Newcastle West Demesne Ecological Survey 2024 and the annual recommendations for the 2. Baggot Estate Management Plan 2023-50, 3. Westfields Management Plan and 4. Corbally Meadow Work Programme	Actions to be identified in the report carried out as far as is practicable	LCCC in collaboration with local TT group and contracting ecologist	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
7	Compilation, centralisation and GIS mapping of existing data from assessments, reports and planning apps. Years 2023 - 2025	Body of work to be identified and costed	LCCC in collaboration with 3rd Level Institute and Midwest Roads	LCCC own resources
8	Resurvey Limerick County Barn Owls, Swifts and Bat Roosts include desktop surveys for ground truthing.	No. of surveys that will be participated in.	LCCC in Collaboration with BirdWatch Ireland / landowners	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
9	Promote Citizen Science Projects to gather evidence to aid in the collection of data which will be verified and collated on the NBDC website.	No of surveys participated in	LCCC, NBDC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources possible ESG and other grant funding sources

Flexible/Unknown	Start Time
Ongoing	Ongoing
Short term	Start 0-2 years
Medium term	Start 2-4 years

NOTE - All lower-order plans and projects supported by this plan shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening, where necessary, in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) or the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as the case may be.

TABLE OF ACTIONS

E. Strengthen Limerick's Contribution to National and Regional Biodiversity Initiatives				
Action Code	Action	Target/Measure of Success	Responsible Body	Resources
1	Promote the National Biodiversity Data Centre species recording portal	% increase in the number of Limerick recorders that engage annually	LCCC	LCCC own resources
2	Develop integrated programme to address Invasive Alien Species including a) mapping, b) management protocol for public lands and c) guidelines for private lands and d) targeted education workshops.	Species map to be developed. Protocol & guidelines will be developed. A minimum of 1 invasive workshop per annum will be carried out along with 4 x toolbox talks	LCCC in collaboration with relevant stakeholders	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
3	Continue to collaborate on Lesser Horseshoe Bat's national group and regional group.	Number of LHB meetings that are attended annually	LCCC, NPWS, BCI and other stakeholders	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
4	Engage with Inland Fisheries Ireland, Electricity Supply Board, Office of Public Works and other stakeholders to reverse decline in riparian and riverine habitat which is home to many annex species such as Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey etc, including the removal and mitigation of barriers to fish movement in our rivers.	Develop working relationship with all and report on the number of Meetings held annually	LCCC in collaboration with stakeholders	LCCC own resources
5	Develop online resources to raise awareness of birdlife in the Shannon Estuary	Digital resource to be developed	LCCC, Clare County Council and Kerry County Council	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
6	Promote seed saving of local plants and trees that support biodiversity within LCCC and with the general public	Min of 2 seed saving public events to be held annually	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
7	Promote the protection of hedgerows and other trees which contribute to green infrastructure	Min of 2 training sessions to be held annually. Educational guidance leaflet which includes case studies to be produced	LCCC in collaboration with landowners and other relevant organisations	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
8	Update 2021 Bluesky Tree Cover Survey	Bluesky Tree Cover to be updated and made more user friendly to inform LCCC	LCCC	85% NPWS LBAF 15% LCCC own resources
9	In line with LCCC Tree Policy identify and survey trees under the management of LCCC that are affected by Ash Die Back	No. of trees that will be Identified and surveyed. No. of recommendations carried out from survey	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources plus grant funding (to be identified)
10	Promote and enhance habitat for species scarce to Limerick where appropriate	Efforts will continue towards the ongoing protection of nationally scarce and species scarce to Limerick	LCCC in collaboration with relevant stakeholders	LCCC own resources
11	Support and contribute to future European, National and local plans for Nature	The nos of plans on which submissions are made or LCCC contributes to or supports	LCCC in collaboration with others	LCCC own resources
	Flexible/Unknown	Start Time		
	Ongoing	Ongoing		
	Short term	Start 0-2 years		
	Medium term	Start 2-4 years		

NOTE - All lower-order plans and projects supported by this plan shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening, where necessary, in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) or the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as the case may be.

MONITORING OF THE PLAN

- **Monitoring is an important aspect of the Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan.**
 - o Limerick City and County Council is required to report annually on the plan and this will include:
 - Total number of actions implemented using a traffic light system
 - The effects of the actions on target habitats & species, to evaluate the impacts and benefits of the actions implemented

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Leave unmown or unmanaged areas - you may be surprised what turns up there

Remember pollinators need and love Dandelions, Nettles and Ivy

Use natural methods of pest and weed control as opposed to chemicals

Plant a native tree and shrub species or have a Hawthorn hedge

Feed the birds in the winter months and put up bird nest boxes, bat boxes and insect hotels in suitable places

Make a log pile in a secluded corner - this may attract hedgehogs, ladybirds and other wildlife

Creating a pond or wetland area are great ways of improving your garden for nature

Prevent garden 'escapes'. Don't purchase species that are likely to spread beyond your own garden

Learn about seed saving and save your own seeds for planting the following year

Please don't pave all your garden surfaces. As well as providing biodiversity, permeable surfaces are good for soaking water and help prevent flooding

Learn about all the services nature provides us for free and think about nature based solutions for your surface water uptake

Visiting a city park or wildlife area? Remember to 'Leave No Trace'

CONCLUSION

Biodiversity is constantly changing and evolving. Those of us living, working, running a business, taking part in the development of or just visiting the Limerick need to recognise the interdependence between plants, animals, microorganism necessary for healthy ecosystems, ecosystems services and nature based solutions that help mitigate against climate change.

Limerick City and Council considers biodiversity to be an important factor in the overall life and development of our city and county. This plan aims to raise awareness of what each individual can do to maintain biodiversity in their local area. The plan outlines how, in partnership with stakeholders and citizens, the Council aims to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity for the benefit of future generations of wildlife and humans





FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND USEFUL LINKS

Please note these lists are not exhaustive and may be subject to change.

Funding Opportunities for NGO

- Community Foundation Ireland Home Page - Community Foundation Ireland
- Community Water Development Fund Funding - Local Authority Water Programme (lawaters.ie)
- Heritage Council - www.heritagecouncil.ie
- Forest Service - gov (www.gov.ie)
- NPWS small grants for Recording Projects - www.NPWS.ie
- Tidy Towns Grant (you must have entered Tidy Towns to be contacted directly about this grant)

Useful Links

Public Bodies

- Limerick City and County Council - <https://www.limerick.ie/council>
- Local Authority Waters Programme - <https://lawaters.ie/>
- Department of Environment Climate Action and Communications <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments/departments-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications/>
- National Parks & Wildlife Service - <https://www.npws.ie/>
- Office of Public Works - <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/office-of-public-works/>

Other relevant Organisations

- All Ireland Pollinator Plan - <https://pollinators.ie/>
- Irish Country Women's Association - <https://www.ica.ie/>
- Irish Seedsavers - <https://irishseedsavers.ie/>
- Bird Watch Ireland - <https://birdwatchireland.ie/>
- Irish wildlife Trust <https://iwt.ie/>
- Bat Conservation Ireland - <https://www.batconservationireland.org/irish-bats>
- Acres <https://acresireland.ie/>
- Business in the Community Ireland - <https://bitc.ie/>
- Hometree - <https://www.hometree.ie/>
- Birdwatch Ireland www.birdwatchireland.ie
- The Heritage Council www.heritagecouncil.ie
- Hare's Corner <https://burrenbeo.com/thc/>
- Butterfly Ireland www.butterflyireland.com
- Dragonfly Ireland <http://birdweb.net/dragonfly.html>
- Irish Whale and Dolphin Group www.iwdg.ie
- Native Woodland Trust www.nativewoodtrust.ie
- Inland Fisheries Ireland <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/>

Tidy Towns Groups and Local Community Biodiversity Action Plans

- <https://actionforbiodiversity.ie/action-plans/>
- o Caherconlish Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025
- o Glenbrohane Biodiversity Action Plan 2021
- o Croom Town Park 2022-2026
- o Abbeyfeale Community Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027

APPENDIX 1

List of Limerick Biodiversity Forum Members

1. Acres
2. An Taisce Limerick Branch
3. Ballyhoura Development
4. BirdWatch Ireland Limerick Branch
5. Castleconnell Rivers Association
6. Coillte
7. Inland Fisheries
8. Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
9. Irish Famers Association
10. Irish Wildlife Trust Limerick Branch
11. Limerick 2030
12. Limerick Bat Group
13. Limerick City and County Council
14. Limerick Civic Trust
15. Limerick Clare Education Training Bord
16. Limerick County Recorder plants
17. Limerick DAC (Designated Activity Company)
18. Limerick Dioceses 30:30 Biodiversity group
19. Local Authorities Water Programme
20. Maigue Rivers Trust
21. Mary Immaculate College
22. National Parks & Wildlife Service
23. Office of Public Works
24. PAUL Partnership
25. Representative of Limerick Tidy Towns Groups
26. Teagasc
27. Technical University of the Shannon
28. University of Limerick
29. West Limerick Resources

APPENDIX 2

Limerick Biodiversity Forum Advisory Sub-Group Organisations

Diocese Team (30% of Church Grounds to Nature by 2030)

Irish Farmers Association

Irish Wildlife Trust

Local Authorities Waters Programme

Two Limerick City and County Council Elected Representatives Nominated by the Chair of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee members

Limerick City and County Council Biodiversity Officer and Senior Executive Scientist

University of Limerick

Technical University of the Shannon

West Limerick Resources



APPENDIX 3

Limerick's Special Areas of Conservation

Site Name: Askeaton Fen Complex SAC (002279)
Site Name: Ballyhoura Mountains SAC (002036)
Site Name: Barrigone SAC (000432)
Site Name: Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (002170)
Site Name: Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC (002037)
Site Name: Clare Glen SAC (000930)
Site Name: Curraghchase Woods SAC (000174)
Site Name: Galtee Mountains SAC (000646)
Site Name: Glen Bog SAC (001430)
Site Name: Glenstal Wood SAC (001432)
Site Name: Lower River Shannon SAC (002165)
Site Name: Tory Hill SAC (000439)

APPENDIX 4

Limerick's Special Protection Areas

Site Name: River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077)
Site Name: Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA (004165)
Site Name: Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (004161)

APPENDIX 5

Limerick's National Heritage Areas

Site Name: Carrigkerry Bogs NHA (002399)
Site Name: Grageen Fen and Bog NHA (002186)
Site Name: Lough Gay Bog NHA (002454)
Site Name: Moyreen Bog NHA (002361)

APPENDIX 6

Limerick's Proposed National Heritage Areas

Inner Shannon Estuary - South Shore
Curraghchase Woods
Ardagh Church, Newcastlewest (Disused)
Castleconnell (Domestic Dwelling, Occupied)
Lough Gur
Galtee Mountains
Clare Glen
Dromore & Bleach Loughs
Glen Bog
Glenastar Wood
Glenstal Wood
Dromsallagh Bog
Bilboa And Gortnageragh River Valleys
Skoolhill
Fergus Estuary And Inner Shannon, North Shore
Castleoliver Woods
Ballyhoura Mountains
Ballintlea Wood
Ballynacourty Wood
Mountrussell Wood
Herbertstown Fen
Loughmore Common Turlough
Adare Woodlands
Barrigone
Tory Hill
Knockanavar Wood
Tarbert Bay
Ballymorrisheen Marsh
Ballinvirick Marsh
Cappagh Fen
Gorteennamrock
Heathfield Wood
Sturamus Island
Ballyvorheen Bog
Knockalisheen Marsh
Glenacurrane River Valley
Carrigeenamronety Hill
Ballyroe Hill & Mortlestown Hill

APPENDIX 7

Policy

Policy is required at local, national and global levels to provide a framework to protect Limerick's natural heritage

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030**
www.sdg.un.org/goals
 - o The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.
- **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030**
www.decadeonrestoration.org
 - o Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part.
- **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 - Bringing Nature Back Into Our Lives**
www.environment.ec.europa.eu/
 - o The biodiversity strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet. The strategy aims to build our societies' resilience to future threats such as
 - ☐ the impacts of climate change
 - ☐ forest fires
 - ☐ food insecurity
 - ☐ disease outbreaks - including by protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trades
- **4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2028**
www.npws.ie
 - o Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.
- **Ireland's Biodiversity Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2019**
www.npws.ie
 - o This plan aims to improve sustainable agriculture and fisheries and employ better soil and land management along with the urgent restoration of natural systems. It also emphasises the need to consider biodiversity as an adaptation tool for other sectors. Investing in the restoration of ecosystems will have multiple additional co-benefits including water regulation, water purification and carbon sequestration.
- **National Planning Framework 2040**
<https://www.npf.ie/>
 - o This is a national document that will guide at a high-level strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20+ years, so that as the population grows, that growth is sustainable (in economic, social and environmental terms).

APPENDIX 7

- **Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028**
<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/strategic-plan-2023-2028>
 - o This document outlines a series of actions and initiatives aimed at recording, conserving and enhancing Ireland's natural, built, and cultural heritage.
- **Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028**
www.limerick.ie/council
 - o The Limerick Development Plan details the overall strategy of the council for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county over a 6-year period. Strategic Objective 8 of the plan is to protect, enhance and connect areas of natural heritage, green infrastructure and open space for the benefits of quality of life, biodiversity, protected species and habitats, while having the potential to facilitate climate change adaptation and flood risk measures. Chapter 6 deals with the Environment, Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure
- **Climate Action Bill 2021 & Limerick Climate Action Plan 2024-2029**
 - o The Climate Action Bill 2021 provides the legal basis for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of “pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by the end of the year 2050” (referred to as the “national climate objective”) www.gov.ie
 - o The Limerick Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 sets out key actions that will support County Limerick in its transition to becoming a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. www.limerick.ie/council
- **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032**
www.southernassembly.ie
 - o This is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives.
- **Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary 2013-2020**
www.limerick.ie/council
 - o This integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) is an inter-jurisdictional land and marine based framework plan to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary. It was commissioned by Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Shannon Development and the Shannon Foynes Port Company.
- **Limerick Tree Policy 2024**
www.limerick.ie/council
 - o The overall aims of the Tree Policy are to ensure a safer, healthier tree population; enhance biodiversity; improve climate resilience; maintain and improve landscape quality and through these elements, improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Limerick
- **Limerick Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Metropolitan Area.**
 - o The objective of the Limerick Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy is to provide an evidenced based report that sets out a detailed series of recommendations to guide land use, objectives, policies, and design guidance on a wide range of GBI related issues within the proposed Limerick's Development Plan 2022-

APPENDIX 8

The principal legislation relating to biodiversity in Ireland is as follows:

- **EU Habitats Directive**
<https://environment.ec.europa.eu/>
 - o The overall objective is to ensure that these species and habitat types are maintained, or restored, to a favourable conservation status within the EU. In addition to halting the further decline or disappearance of these species and habitats, the Directive aims to allow them to recover and thrive over the long-term.
- **EU Birds Directive**
<https://environment.ec.europa.eu/>
 - o The Water Framework Directive (WFD) focuses on ensuring good qualitative and quantitative health, i.e. on reducing and removing pollution and on ensuring that there is enough water to support wildlife at the same time as human needs
- **EU Water Framework Directive**
<https://environment.ec.europa.eu/>
 - o The Water Framework Directive (WFD) focuses on ensuring good qualitative and quantitative health, i.e. on reducing and removing pollution and on ensuring that there is enough water to support wildlife at the same time as human needs
- **Wildlife Act and associated amendments**
www.gov.ie
 - o This is the principal national legislation providing for the protection of wildlife and the control of some activities that may adversely affect wildlife.
- **Flora Protection Orders**
www.npws.ie
 - o The Flora Protection Order makes it illegal to cut, uproot or damage a listed species in any way. It is illegal to alter, damage or interfere in any way with their habitats. This protection applies wherever the plants are found.
- **Planning & Development Acts**
- **EU Nature Restoration Law**
<https://environment.ec.europa.eu/>
 - o This regulation legally binds EU Member States to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. The proposed target builds on the international commitment and obligations of the EU and its Member States as a parties to the global Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **Invasive Species**
www.npws.ie
 - o Core provisions of EU Regulation 1143/2014 deal with, among other things, bringing into the territory of the Union, keeping, breeding, transporting and placing on the market, species included on the list of invasive alien species of Union concern.



REFERENCES

Reference

1. Birdlife International (2022)
2. Regional Red List of Irish Bees (2006)
3. Plant Atlas 2020 (published 2022)
4. British Society of Britain and Ireland Plant Atlas 2020
5. Environment Protection Agency Water Quality Ireland 2016-2021 and Limerick City and County Council

Documents

- Bat Conservation Ireland, 2010, Bats & Lighting Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects and developers
- Inventory of County Limerick Sites of Botanical and Habitat Interest 2020 by Sylvia Reynolds
- Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan 2024, National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Water Quality in 2023, Environment Protection Agency
- 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Fingal County Council - Biodiversity Action Plan, 2023-2028
- Dunlaoghaire Rathdown Council - Biodiversity Action Plan, 2021-2025
- Carlow County Council - Carlow Town Biodiversity Action Plan, 2021-2025
- Bristol Borough Council - Landscape Biodiversity Action Plan, 2020 - 2026
- Limerick City and County Council Heritage Plan , 2017-2030

Networks

- Limerick City and County Council Elected Representatives
- Limerick Biodiversity Forum
- Heritage Council National and Biodiversity Officer Programmes
- Staff in Limerick City and County Council
- Limerick Tidy Towns Groups

Photographs – All photos included in this document were taken in Limerick unless otherwise specified.

Page	Name	Latin	Irish	Location	Photographer
Cover	Green Hairstreak Butterfly	Callophrys rubi	Stiallach Uaine	Lough Ghé	Geoff Hunt
2	Photos of Limerick Biodiversity Forum			Meeting Room	Clara Pannelles*
5	Otter	Lutra lutra	Madra Uisce	unknown	Eddie Dunne NPWS
8	Emperor Dragonfly	Anax imperator	Snáthaid mhór	Corbally baths	Geoff Hunt
11	Water Skaters	Gerridae lacustris	-	unknown	Ruairí Ó Chonhoir, LAWPRO
14	Group photo of Dragonfly Workshop	-	-	Curraghchase	Keith Wiseman*
15	Red Clover	Trifolium pratense	Seamair dhearg	Tipperary Road	Alan Place
16	Siskin	Spinus spinus	Siscín	Thomondgate	Pat Murphy
19	Hen Harrier	Circus aeruginosus	Cromán na gCearc	Limerick/Cork Border	Barry O'Donoghue NPWS
20	River Shannon			Limerick	Derek Dowling
21	Robin Alder	Erithacus rubecula Alnus glutinosa	Spideog Fearnóg	Banks of River Shannon, Limerick	Derek Dowling
22	Lesser Horseshoe Bats**	Rhinolophus hipposideros	Ialtóg crushrónach	Clare	Susan Kerwin Bat Rehabilitation Ireland
23	Fox	Vulpes	Sionnach or Madra Rua	Abbeyfeale	Tony Kenneally
24	Biodiversity Week 2024, Pollinator Walk			Curraghchase	Kieran Ryan Benson*
27	Sea Lamprey	Petromyzon marinus			Ruairí Ó Chonhoir, LAWPRO
28	Biodiversity Week 2024, Citizen Science Training and Action, Tackling Himalayan Balsam			Banks of River Shannon, Limerick	Kieran Ryan Benson*
32	Long Eared Bat	Plecotus auritus	Ialtóg fhad-chluasach	Unknown	Bat Rehabilitation Ireland
33	Atlantic Salmon	Salmo salar	Bradán	Mulkear River	Ruairí Ó Chonhoir, LAWPRO
35	Griston Bog Outing National Biodiversity Week 2024			Griston Bog	Kieran Ryan Benson *
42	Heritage Week Event Infinity Woodland Walk			Castletroy	Paul Corey*
43	Bioblitz Participants			Castletroy	Diarmuid Greene*
Back Cover	Red Squirrel	Sciurus vulgaris	Iora rua	Curraghchase	Ruth Hanniffy

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*Photographers marked with an asterisk were contracted by Limerick City and County Council

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ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

