

Embracing Biodiversity and nature positive approaches

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Introduction

- The Heritage Council
- Threats to Biodiversity
- Role of local authorities in biodiversity conservation
- LA Biodiversity Officers
- Case studies of good practice
- Future directions



The Heritage Council

- Statutory Agency, to propose policy, provide advice to Government
- Built, natural and cultural heritage
- Head of Climate Change
 - Sustainability of HC operations
 - Advocacy and strategy for heritage in climate change
 - Local Authority Biodiversity Officer Network





Biodiversity Challenges

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Species loss
- Invasive species
- Water quality
- Climate change



Policy and Legislation

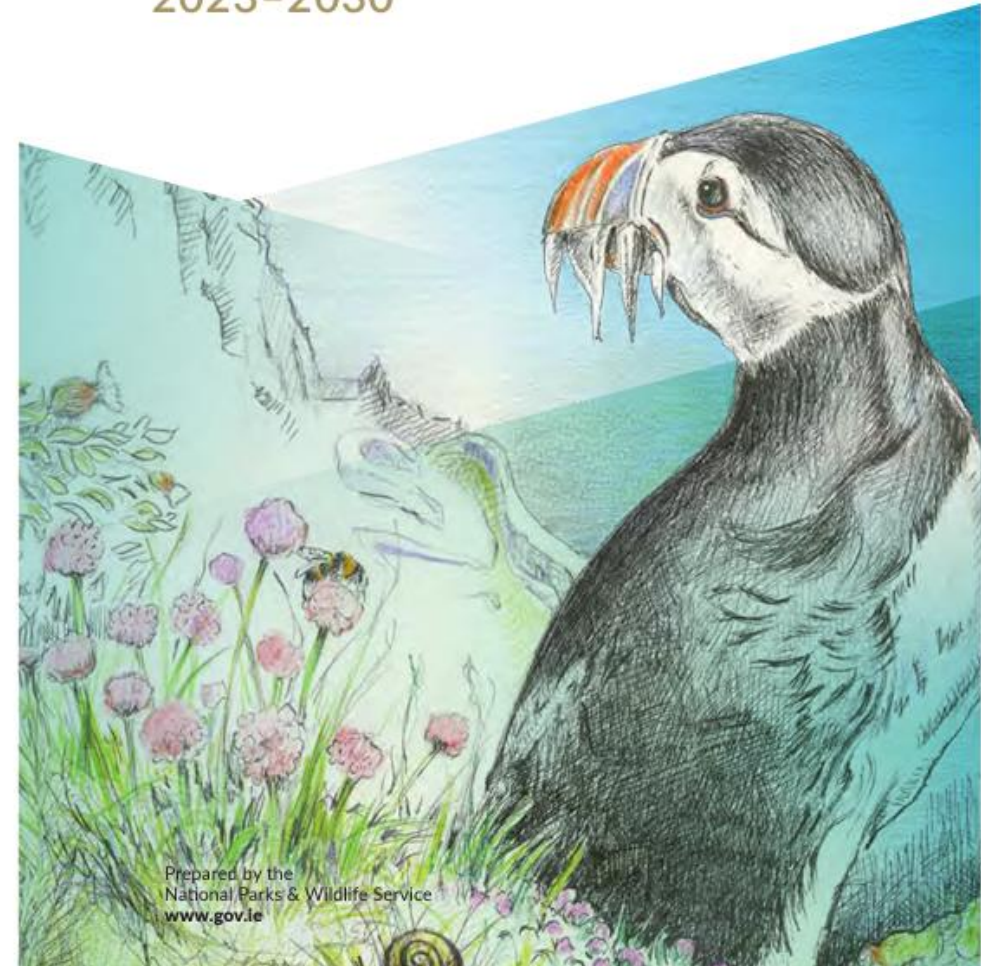
- Birds Directive 1979/2009 and Habitats Directive 1992
- Habitats Regulations 2011
- Natura 2002 sites – SACs and SPAs
- Wildlife Act (1976, 2000)
 - NHAs and pNHAs
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2028
- Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss
- Children and Young People’s Assembly on Biodiversity Loss
- Nature Restoration Law 2024



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

2023–2030



Role of Local Authorities

- Across all Sections of LA
- Planning – Forward planning and DM
- Housing – ecology in urban areas
- Roads – Transport, active travel, greenways
management of hedges and verges, management
of public spaces
- Economic development – business, tourism
- Community –engagement, awareness, funding
- Environment – Water quality, pollution control,
climate, trees, waste management, parks and
greenways, graveyards





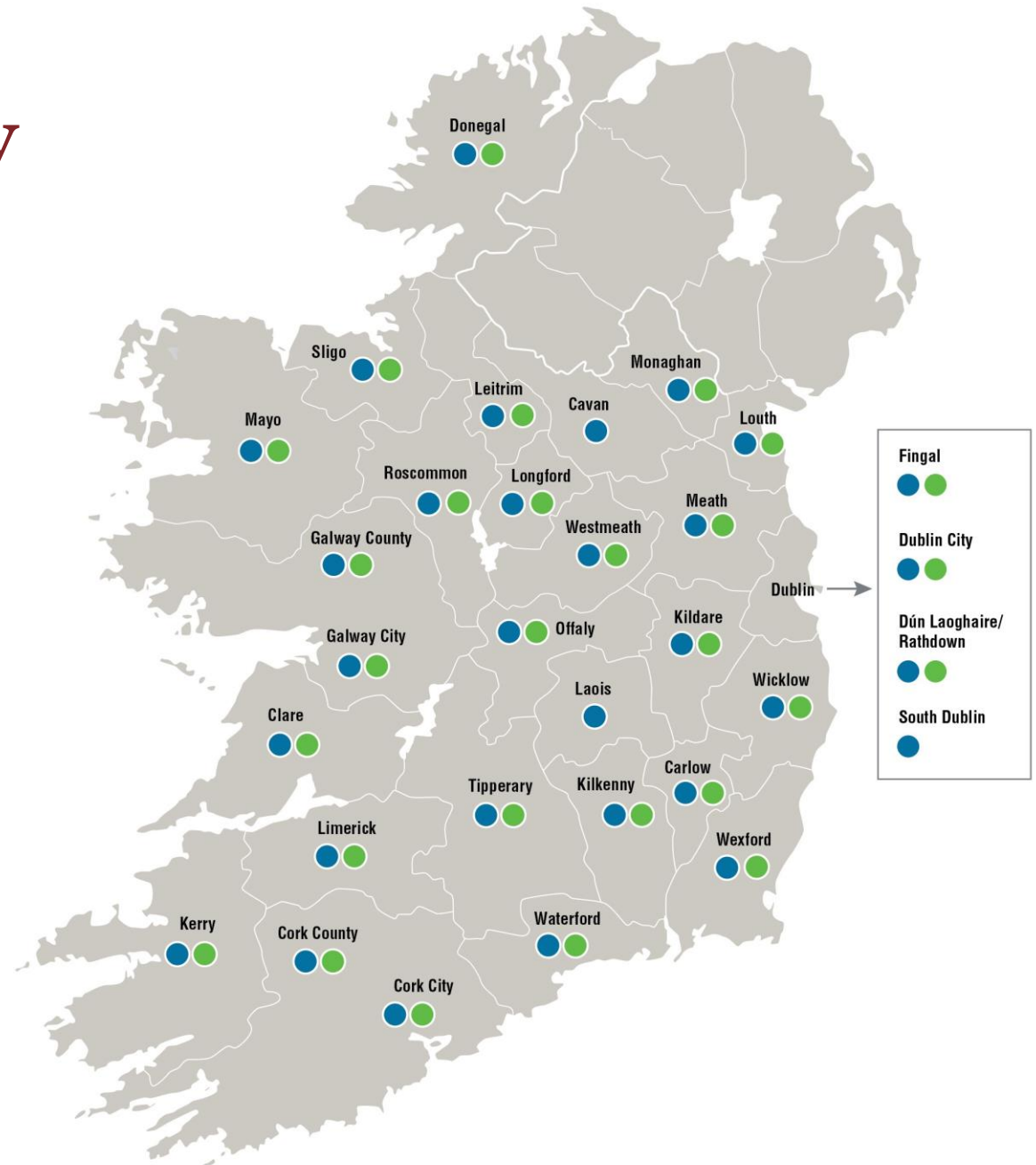
Biodiversity Officers

- Heritage Council programme – 28 LAs to date
- Funding from Dept Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- SLAs with Local Authorities
 - LBAP
 - Forum
 - Training
 - Funding



Local Authority Heritage & Biodiversity Officers

- Heritage Officer
- Biodiversity Officer



Biodiversity Officer Role

- Co-ordinate writing and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Establishment of a Biodiversity Forum
- Research, surveys and data collection
- Advise the Council on biodiversity related issues
- Delivery of Biodiversity Training and Publications
- Co-ordinate implementation of national policies - NBAP and AIPP
- Facilitate implementation of national species and habitat action plans
- Source funding for biodiversity actions
- Collaborate with local and national agencies and neighbouring authorities
- Identifying & Promoting Nature Based Solution projects with other Sections of LA





Local Heritage Teams

- Training and development
- Local Heritage and Biodiversity Action Plans
- Network - Locally based, nationally coordinated



Opportunities and Partnerships

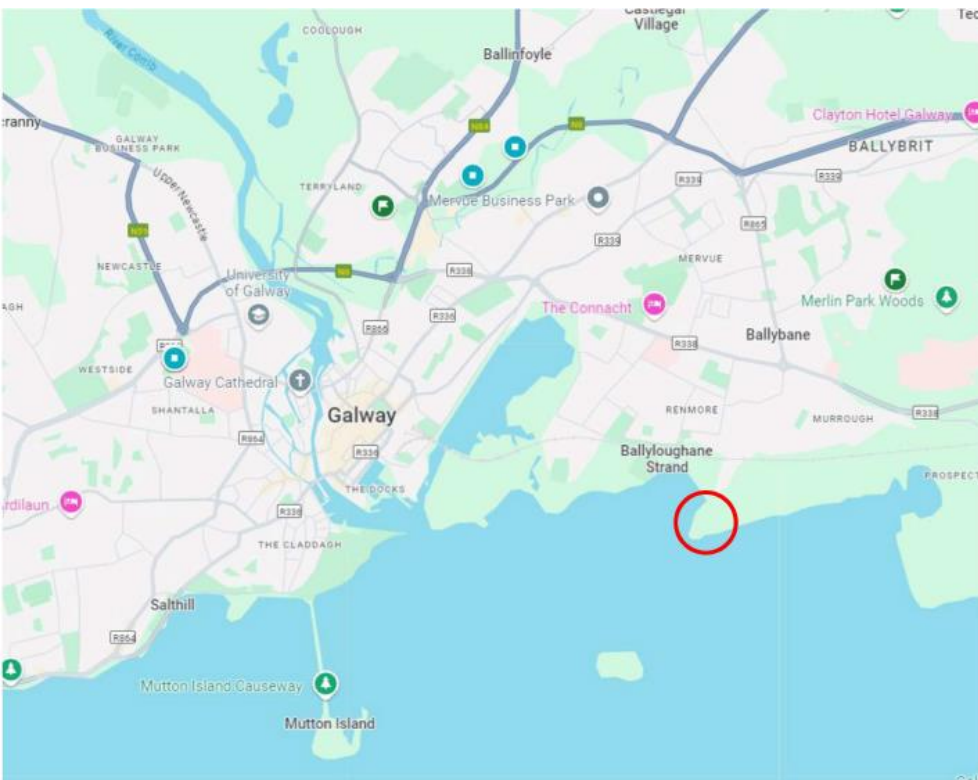
- Teagasc – Hedgerow Week
- Burren Beo – The Hare's Corner
- Church 30% Return to Nature initiative





Buaile Bó Ballyloughane

- Galway City Council 2024
- Public land, near Ballyloughane Beach
- Five Dexter Cattle grazing headland
- Conservation grazing – use of grazing animals to maintain and enhance biodiversity
- Maintain open areas, manage scrub – benefit pollinators, ground nesting birds
- Use of Irish native and rare breeds





Project Objectives

- Cut down on green waste from public spaces, alternative to powered equipment
- Reduce nutrient richness of grassland – encourage native meadow species
- Provide safe nesting spaces for coastal birds
- Managing grassland to enhance soil organic carbon (climate benefit)
- Develop public awareness of cultural value of native breed
- Educational and outreach value – demonstrate benefits of conservation grazing and NBS
- Animal welfare, planning and public consultation all important factors





Biodiversity Engagement in Donegal

- New Biodiversity events for Biodiversity Week and Heritage Week
- Great public interest and engagement
- “Put Donegal on the Biodiversity Map” – Citizen Science
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Consultation
- Building partnerships – Schools, Library events and ag shows



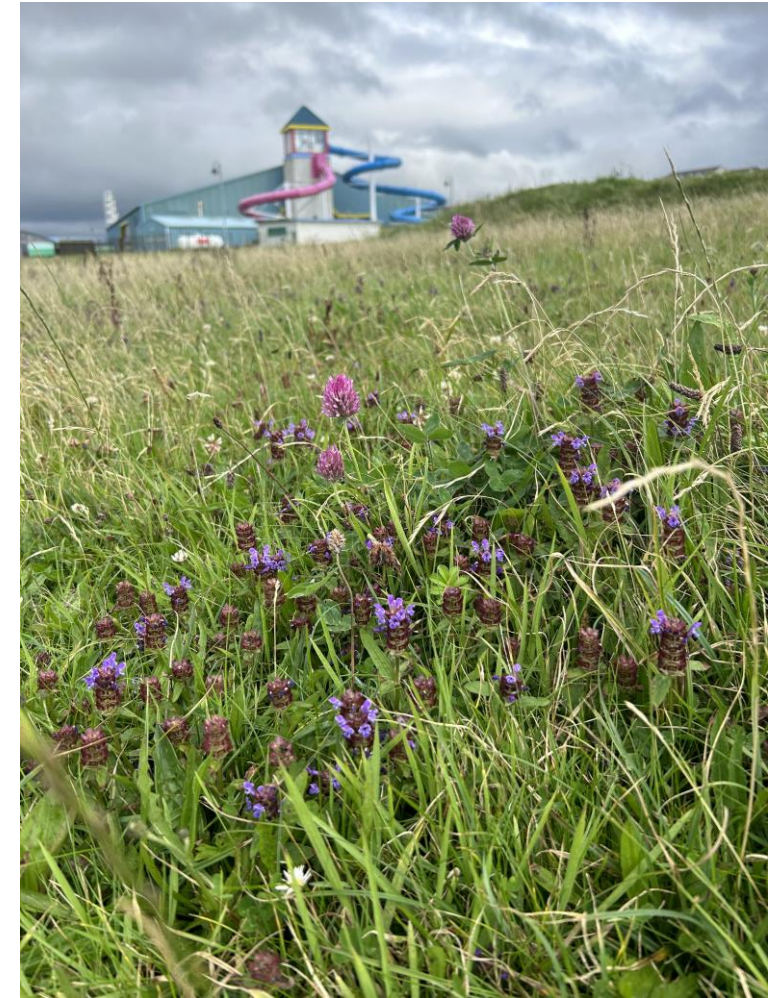


Management for Pollinators

- All Ireland Pollinators Plan Partners
- Building on excellent work of Buncrana outdoor staff and Buncrana Tidy Towns
- Expanding portfolio of “Let it Bee” sites with later/modified mowing
- New meadow area shorefront Bundoran
- Positive results already



Buncrana & Bundoran





Connecting with nature for well-being

- Limerick City and County Council
- Milford Care Centre and Little Company of Mary sisters
- Specialist Palliative Care and Older Persons Services
- Heritage Week collaboration with local groups and Church 30% return to Nature Initiative
- Music, poetry readings in newly planted native woodland
- Positive impact of woodland on staff, patients and service users of Milford Care Centre





Training in Biodiversity

- Kilkenny County Council
- Training in biodiversity for staff and public
- Integration of biodiversity to all roles
- Prepared in collaboration with GSS
- Ensure relevant, practical, targeted
- Future workshops - invasive alien species
 - Identification
 - Treatment
 - Standard approach



Future Directions

- Future development of Local Heritage Teams
- Development of local partnerships
- Embedding biodiversity across the LA
- Developing collaborations



Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan
Guidelines

2024



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Thank you



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