



ACRES
DONEGAL
CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

Donegal Local Action Plan

DONEGAL COAST & ISLANDS



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



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PRESSURES & IMPACTS

The key priority species for the Donegal Coast & Islands are chough, corncrake, breeding waders and marsh fritillary. Populations of these species are under pressure due to predation, habitat loss, improved grassland, changes in landuse management, drainage, overgrazing, peat extraction and habitat fragmentation.

The main pressures on rivers and estuaries in the region include nutrient pollution, domestic waste water treatment, organic pollution and agriculture.

As a result of monitoring by the EPA, six river catchments that are under pressure from agriculture will be targeted for improvement. These are Ballincrick and Ballynabrocky, Glenvar, Laddan, Big Burn, Rosapenna and Gleanna. Poor water quality and sedimentation are among the key impacts to the rivers.



TAKING ACTION

The ACRES programme, like previous agri-schemes, provides participating farmers with a chance to improve their farm infrastructure, access continued agricultural support payments and support rural sustainability. ACRES differs from previous schemes because it also supports farmers to take on actions to benefit wildlife, improve water quality and help resilience to the effects of climate change.

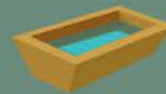
Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) and Landscape Actions (LAs) are measures that farmers can apply for through their farm advisor and through the Donegal Co-operation team. An important element of the Donegal Local Action Plan is that we will target these actions - 'right measure, right place' - to achieve our aims.

NPIs and LAs are targeted to certain areas and species. The Donegal ACRES team have made recommendations on areas to focus on (see last page). This includes improving habitats like coastal cliffs and machair. These are home to many important species such as chough, lapwing, marsh fritillary and a wide range of native plants.

The CP team will work with farmers to choose actions that will support the goals of the plan to create a healthy environment with a thriving farming community.



EXAMPLE NPI AND LA



NPI: Watering Systems

Install solar pumps, pasture pumps, and water storage tanks to help keep livestock out of watercourses.



LA: Invasive Alien Species

Training on identification of invasive species, understanding their impact and how to control on your land.



NPI: Tree Planting

Plant native trees for carbon capture, to help soak up excess nutrients, and provide nesting and feeding areas for wildlife.



LA: Targeted Grazing

Change livestock density to improve ground that has been undergrazed or overgrazed, using temporary or virtual fencing.



NPI: Fencing

Repair or install new fencing to block access to watercourses, protect trees and wildlife habitat plots or crops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for the Donegal Coast & Islands sub-region and activities will primarily be targeted at these specific sites or species. Further actions may be developed over the lifetime of the project.

- Targeted grazing and grassland management to suit species dependent on grassland habitat (corncrake, chough and breeding waders).
- Install temporary predator fences on valuable breeding wader sites along with wader scrapes and scrub management.
- Support geese and swans through targeted LAs.
- Increase areas of early and late cover (ELC) in the corncrake SPAs and use of wildlife friendly mowing.
- Nutrient pollution, agriculture and waste water treatment are the most significant pressures identified across the sub-region and these may be addressed by landscape actions such as specialised training to landowners on the use of chemicals and pesticides near water, and an explanation of the Source-Pathway-Receptor model for understanding how pollution reaches rivers and lakes.
- Measures to support the protection of the native aquatic plant, the slender naiad, on the six lakes in which it occurs will be looked at closely as part of efforts to protect this species.



A full copy of the ACRES Donegal Local Action Plan 2023-2028 can be downloaded from our website.

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