



ACRES
D O N E G A L
CO - O P E R A T I O N P R O G R A M M E

Donegal Local Action Plan GLENTIES

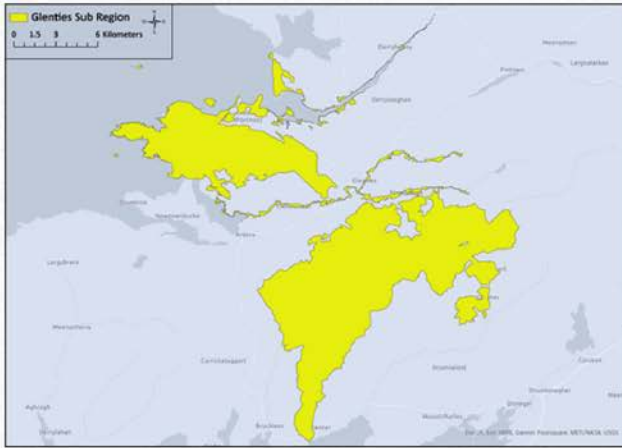


An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



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GLENTIES SUB-REGION

The Glenties sub-region covers an area of 17,952 ha and includes a number of smaller islands such as Roaninish, Inishbarnog, Inishkeel, Meashy More and Dawros Island. There is a rich cultural heritage in the Glenties region and the isolated and rugged terrain features many cold water streams suitable for mussels and other species. The Glenties sub-region has some of the most sensitive species in Ireland, such as the freshwater pearl mussel, barnacle geese and marsh fritillary butterfly. Sheep farming is the dominant farming enterprise.

NATURA SITES & HIGH STATUS WATERBODIES

There are 10 designated EU and national sites in the Glenties sub-region offering protection to habitats and species. It has some of the most sensitive species in the whole of Ireland with several sites selected for the freshwater pearl mussel. The Sheskinmore Nature Reserve has significant tidal mudflats and sandflats and is a popular area for recreational users and birds, especially the Greenland white-fronted goose. The region's Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are in-the-main reaching favourable conservation status for habitat and species except for issues relating to the coastal and peatland habitats of the West Ardara/Maas Road SAC and Meenaguse/Ardbane Bog SAC.

Natura Sites

West of Ardara/Maas Road SAC
 Meenaguse Scragh SAC
 Meenaguse/Ardbane Bog SAC
 Lough Nillan Bog (Carrickatieve) SAC
 West Donegal Coast SPA
 Roaninish SPA
 Inishkeel SPA
 Lough Nillan Bog SPA
 Sheskinmore Lough SPA

Nationally Designated Sites

Roaninish NHA



There are 5 high status rivers in the sub-region:

- Bunlacky
- Oily
- Tullinteane
- Eanybeg Water (010)
- Eanybeg Water (020)

The Glenties sub-region has 5 high status rivers within the CP area. The transitional area Gweebarra Estuary and the North Atlantic Seaboard are also high status waterbodies but these do not intersect the CP area. There are 62 lakes in the area many of which are considered to be in good or high quality condition.

Glenties has a high number of native species some of which are of international significance. Its rivers, in particular the headwaters of the Owenea River, provide suitable habitat for the freshwater pearl mussel. The West of Ardara/Maas Road SAC is designated to ensure correct management for the marsh fritillary butterfly, Ireland's only protected invertebrate. Barnacle geese are frequent visitors and breeding waters are frequent visitor and key to the area. The slender naiad, a protected plant that plays a vital role in water quality, is found in Kiltoris Lough, Sheskinmore Lough and Clooney Lough. Protecting these species is a priority under the new ACRES programme.



PRESSURES & IMPACTS

A wide range of pressures impact species and their habitats in the Glenties sub-region. For example, breeding waders and geese & swan numbers are negatively affected by predation, habitat loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat and depletion of foraging areas. Populations of the marsh fritillary butterfly are in decline due to overgrazing, drainage and habitat fragmentation.

Water species such as the slender naiad and freshwater pearl mussel are affected by agricultural activities. Runoff from agricultural land washes into streams leading to high nutrient levels and algal blooms. Erosion (from turf cutting or poaching) causes sediment to deposit onto river beds reducing the ability of the pearl mussel to filter feed. It also inhibits fish spawning and reduces water quality including the condition of drinking water sources.



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 increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

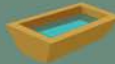
Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) and Landscape Actions (LAs) are measures that farmers can apply for through their farm advisor and through the Donegal Co-operation team. An important element of the Donegal Local Action Plan is that we will focus these actions - 'right measure, right place' - to achieve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

NPIs and LAs are targeted to certain areas and species. The Donegal ACRES team have made recommendations on what areas to focus on (see last page). This includes improving and restoring waterbodies with freshwater pearl mussel and the management of grasslands to suit species dependent on grassland habitat (e.g., chough & breeding waders).

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 them 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 land 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 Glenties 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.

- A key focus of the measures implemented through ACRES should attempt to address the need to restore or protect freshwater pearl mussel waterbodies which cover a large part of the sub-region. In particular, a high number of LPIS parcels have been submitted along the Owenea River and measures could be targeted in this area. These should be aimed at reducing sedimentation and agricultural runoff to the river.
- Targeted grazing and grassland management to suit species dependent on grassland habitats (chough and breeding waders) and control the spread of *Molinia* on peatlands.
- Install temporary predator fences on valuable breeding wader sites along with wader scrapes and scrub management.
- Nutrient pollution, agriculture and waste water treatment are the most significant water-based pressures identified across the sub-region and these may be addressed through landscape actions such as specialised training on the use of chemicals and pesticides near water, including an explanation of the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.
- Measures to support the protection of the Slender Naiad on the three lakes Kiltooris Lough, Sheskinmore Lough and Clooney Lough will be actively promoted.
- Control invasives species such as *Rhododendron* and self-sown conifers.



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

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We have offices in:

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