



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 GLENVEAGH

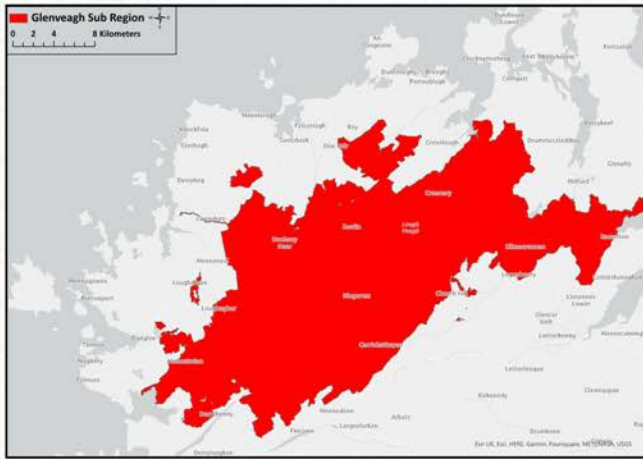


An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Co-funded by
the European Union

2024



GLENVEAGH SUB-REGION

The Glenveagh sub-region is the largest sub-region in the Donegal co-operation area at 62,497 ha. It includes Glenveagh National Park (although this is not part of the ACRES programme) and a significant area of commonage. The dominant land type is upland peatland and the area contains many high status rivers and lakes. The sub-region stretches south to north in a west-east direction, extending as far as the Leanann and Ramelton in the east. There are a large number of well known lakes in the Glenveagh sub-region such as Lough Gartan and Lough Fern.

NATURA SITES & HIGH STATUS WATERBODIES

The Glenveagh sub-region stretches from Machug Lough and Trawenagh Bay in the south to Meenaculty/Magheraroarty Mountains and Agher Lough in the north and from Arduns in the west to Glenalla in the east and has a significant area of commonage. It has 14 designated sites of international, EU and national importance, with a number of these focusing on water dependent species such as Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. Blanket bog and wet/dry heaths are also key habitats requiring protection.

Natura Sites

- Muckish Mountain SAC
- Leannan River SAC
- Lough Swilly SAC
- Ballyarr Wood SAC
- Fawnboy Bog/Lough Nacung SAC
- Coolvoy Bog SAC
- Gannivegil Bog SAC
- River Finn SAC
- Cloghernagore Bog and Glenveagh National Park SAC
- Lough Swilly SPA
- Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA
- Lough Fern SPA

International Sites

- Meenachullion Bog

Nationally Designated Sites

- Corveen Bog NHA
- Meenmore West Bog NHA



High Status Waterbodies in the CP area

There are 11 high status rivers and 6 high status lakes in the sub-region. As this CP sub-region is predominantly inland none of the rivers run into high status transitional or coastal areas.

The Glenveagh sub-region contains the largest number of high status waters of all the sub-regions in the co-operation area. These include Glaskeelan and Leannan (important rivers for freshwater pearl mussels), Owenwee, Owencarrow and Carn Low. However, in recent years there has been a marked decline in river conditions, dropping from good to moderate water quality in this area.

Other groups and agencies are working to improve water quality and peatland habitat in the area. These include Donegal Council Council, the Local Authority Waters Programme, Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Pearl Mussel Project and the Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE project. ACRES Co-operation will work with these agencies, local farmers and local community groups (e.g. angling groups) to put measures in place to protect these waterbodies.

The sub-region is home to a number of important breeding waders such as golden plover and dunlin. Additional bird species such as merlin and peregrine are also found in the area. Protecting these species is a priority under the new ACRES programme.



PRESSURES & IMPACTS

The Glenveagh sub-region contains significant areas of peatland habitats that are now considered to be in poor condition. Centuries of peat cutting, reclamation, burning, drainage, the spread of invasive species and, in recent decades, afforestation have all contributed to this decline. In particular, the blanket bogs and heaths are not reaching favourable conservation status.

The sub-region's rivers are also a cause for concern. Agricultural pressures are indicated as a key contributor due to the release of high levels of nutrients especially phosphorus and ammonia. Water quality is deteriorating due to nutrient, organic, and chemical pollution. The main pressures for lakes are physical modifications, abstraction and, in some cases, upstream waste water treatment plants are causing a decline in ecological status impacting fish populations.



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.

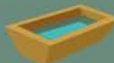
Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) and Landscape Actions (LAs) are measures that farmers can apply for through their farm advisor and through the Donegal Co-operation team. An important element of the Donegal Local Action Plan is that we will target these actions - 'right measure, right place' - to achieve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

NPIs and LAs are targeted to certain areas and species. The Donegal ACRES team have made recommendations on what areas to focus on for each area. This includes improving habitats like peatlands and rivers. These are home to many important species such as golden plover, dunlin and Atlantic salmon.

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 Glenveagh 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.

- **Pearl mussel:** The Donegal CP team will work closely with the Pearl Mussel Project team who have worked with a number of participants in the relevant river sub-basins over the last 5 years. It is important that this work continues to provide protection for these waterbodies. Additional measures may further improve conditions.
- **Grazing management:** Targeted grazing to manage overgrazed and undergrazed areas.
- **Drainage features:** Land use impacts such as physical modifications (e.g., drainage) have been highlighted through the EPA data for the high status waters. A focus on water-related landscape actions will be promoted in the area to the participants and farm advisors.
- **Nutrient Pollution:** Measures to reduce nutrient inputs into rivers in the sub-region will be promoted through the programme.
- **Invasives:** Control spread of highly invasive species such as Rhododendron.
- **Community engagement:** There are a number of organisations, such as community groups and angling groups, operating in this region who have developed a strong relationship with local landowners. Engaging with these groups will help to put the right measure in the right place for the benefit of all parties involved.



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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