



Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021 – 2026

**Endorsed by Louth County Council
on 18th January 2021**

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Vision for biodiversity in Louth

The vision of this biodiversity plan is for County Louth to have healthy people and wildlife, thriving in a healthy, natural environment. The county intends to move from a goal of “No nett loss of biodiversity” to “Nett gain”, that is active management and restoration of our life support systems.

Background to this plan

The purpose of this plan is to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity within the county of Louth, Ireland, as our contribution to national and international efforts to halt the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth.

The plan is intended to implement, within County Louth, the actions set out in both Ireland’s **National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021** and in the **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** (May 2020). National and international biodiversity policies will only be achieved if lower tier biodiversity plans implement them locally. This plan is County Louth’s own contribution to saving complex life on Earth and so some locally-relevant actions have been added too.

Scope and management of this plan

This plan has been prepared for Louth County Council, and emphasises actions that the council's officers will carry out. It also includes necessary actions which Louth County Council cannot achieve on its own and which will require the collaboration of a wide range of other organisations and groups.

Louth County Council is the local authority for the whole of County Louth. It provides crucial services to the people of Louth, often in conjunction with national bodies. These services include Arts, Culture, Libraries and Heritage, community and economic development, environmental regulation and the provision of parks and other leisure facilities, such as Blue Flag Beaches. Louth County Council has substantial powers as the Fire, Housing, Planning, Roads and Waste Authority for County Louth. As well as regulating development by third parties, the Council is also one of the most active developers in the County in its own right. In all of these activities, there is potential for the Council to protect, enhance and restore the natural environment and biodiversity, as these also provide services which are crucial to the survival and thriving of our people.

The council has a more limited official role in controlling what happens in the marine areas off the county's coasts but it can influence what runs into the sea (marine areas are a major focus of the EU's new Biodiversity Strategy for 2030). Much of our landscape is used for farming, or for commercial forestry, and the County Council has limited roles in respect of these major land use activities. The County Council will therefore seek to implement this Local Biodiversity Action Plan through deepening and strengthening its working relationship with State agencies such as Teagasc, The Forest Service, Coillte, Inland Fisheries Ireland/The Loughs Agency and the EPA.

Voluntary groups, whether national organisations such as, for example, BirdWatch Ireland and the Irish Peatland Conservation Council; local bodies such as the Louth Nature Trust; or community groups, such as Tidy Towns or Men's Sheds, will also be essential partners in the implementation of this plan.

Academia has a vitally important role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. Louth County Council will continue to work with the local Third Level institution, DkIT, and with colleges across Ireland and abroad.

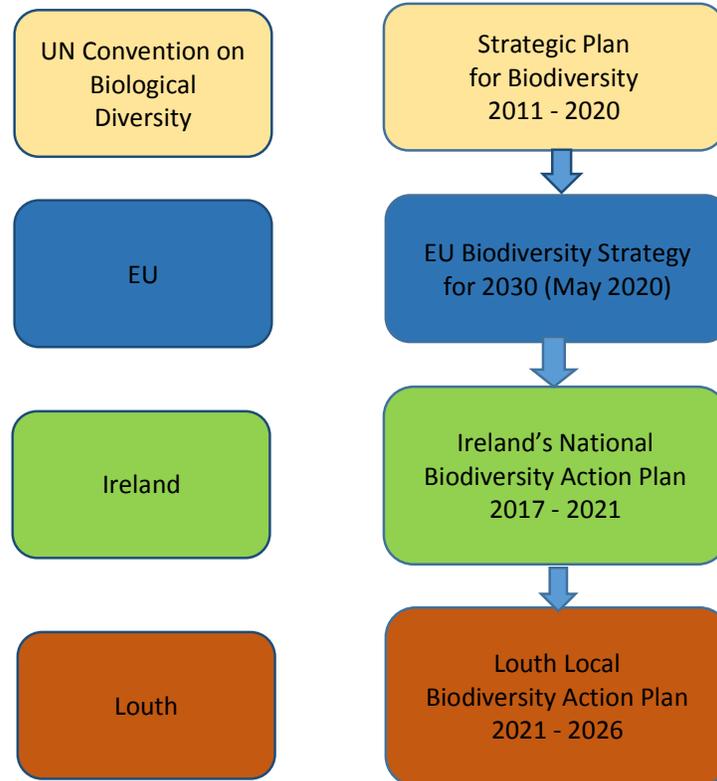
Finally, funding will be needed to achieve these objectives. Louth County Council will work with the Heritage Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and its parent Department and will seek to collaborate with others in EU-funded initiatives such as INTERREG and LIFE.

Review in relation to changing national context

The current, third National Biodiversity Action Plan covers the period 2017 to 2021. A new National Plan is therefore due during 2021. This Louth Local Biodiversity Action Plan will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, within six months of the publication of the fourth National Plan, to ensure that it continues to align with national priorities for biodiversity.

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT. “THINK GLOBALLY – ACT LOCALLY”.

The whole Earth is a single, integrated bio-geo-chemical system. Biodiversity, like the atmosphere and the oceans, is global and so the biodiversity crisis is global. What we do in County Louth affects the lives of people in South America. What people do in China or central Africa affects the lives of people in County Louth. This has long been recognised and so biodiversity conservation is based on Global Agreements.



Ireland ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1996. The Convention parties are required to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 2011 – 20 (made in Aichi, Japan). Aichi Biodiversity Target 17 requires all contracting parties to produce National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

As the EU is also a contracting party to the convention, it produced its own EU Biodiversity Action Plan 2010 to 2020, recently superseded by the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (May 2020).

Ireland’s current strategy is the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021. This will be replaced during the lifetime of the County Louth Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which will be reviewed to order to ensure its alignment with the new national plan. As the new National Biodiversity Action Plan will have to accord with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which has been taken into account in the compilation of this LBAP, it is hoped that any changes needed will be minimal.

All those actions detailed in the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy and in Ireland’s current National Biodiversity Action Plan, which have some currency within County Louth, are listed in the following sections.

The European context (extracted from the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030)

BIODIVERSITY – THE NEED FOR URGENT ACTION

From the world's great rainforests to small parks and gardens, from the blue whale to microscopic fungi, biodiversity is the extraordinary variety of life on Earth. We humans are part of, and fully dependent on, this web of life: it gives us the food we eat, filters the water we drink, and supplies the air we breathe. Nature is as important for our mental and physical wellbeing as it is for our society's ability to cope with global change, health threats and disasters. We need nature in our lives.

Healthy and resilient societies depend on giving nature the space it needs. The recent COVID-19 pandemic makes the need to protect and restore nature all the more urgent. The pandemic is raising awareness of the links between our own health and the health of ecosystems. It is demonstrating the need for sustainable supply chains and consumption patterns that do not exceed planetary boundaries. This reflects the fact that the risk of emergence and spread of infectious diseases increases as nature is destroyed. Protecting and restoring biodiversity and well-functioning ecosystems is therefore key to boost our resilience and prevent the emergence and spread of future diseases.

[...] The business case for biodiversity is compelling. Industry and companies rely on genes, species, and ecosystem services as critical inputs for production, notably for medicines. Over half of global GDP depends on nature and the services it provides, with three key economic sectors – construction, agriculture, and food and drink – all highly dependent on it.

Biodiversity conservation has potential direct economic benefits for many sectors of the economy. [...]

Biodiversity is also crucial for safeguarding EU and global food security. Biodiversity loss threatens our food systems, putting our food security and nutrition at risk. Biodiversity also underpins healthy and nutritious diets and improves rural livelihoods and agricultural productivity. For instance, more than 75% of global food crop types rely on animal pollination.

Despite this urgent moral, economic and environmental imperative, nature is in a state of crisis. The five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss – changes in land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species – are making nature disappear quickly. We see the changes in our everyday lives: concrete blocks rising up on green spaces, wilderness disappearing in front of our eyes, and more species being put at risk of extinction than at any point in human history. In the last four decades, global wildlife populations fell by 60% as a result of human activities. And almost three quarters of the Earth's surface have been altered, squeezing nature into an ever-smaller corner of the planet.

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. But just as the crises are linked, so are the solutions. Nature is a vital ally in the fight against climate change. Nature regulates the climate, and nature-based solutions, such as protecting and restoring wetlands, peatlands and coastal ecosystems, or sustainably managing marine areas, forests, grasslands and agricultural soils, will be essential for emission reduction and climate adaptation. Planting trees and deploying green infrastructure will help us to cool urban areas and mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse are one of the biggest threats facing humanity in the next decade. They also threaten the foundations of our economy and the costs of inaction are high and are anticipated to increase. The world lost an estimated €3.5-18.5 trillion per year in ecosystem services from 1997 to 2011 owing to land-cover change, and an estimated €5.5-10.5 trillion per year from land degradation. Specifically, biodiversity loss results in reduced crop yields and fish catches, increased economic losses from flooding and other disasters, and the loss of potential new sources of medicine.

The EU is ready to show ambition to reverse biodiversity loss, lead the world by example and by action, and help agree and adopt a transformative post-2020 global framework at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This should build on the headline ambition to ensure that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected. The world should commit to the net-gain principle to give nature back more than it takes. As part of this, the world should commit to no human-induced extinction of species, at minimum where avoidable.

EU Nature Restoration Plan: key commitments by 2030 (published May 2020)

1. Legally binding EU nature restoration targets to be proposed in 2021, subject to an impact assessment. By 2030, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored; habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend.
2. The decline in pollinators is reversed.
3. The risk and use of chemical pesticides is reduced by 50% and the use of more hazardous pesticides is reduced by 50%.
4. At least 10% of agricultural area is under high-diversity landscape features.
5. At least 25% of agricultural land is under organic farming management, and the uptake of agro-ecological practices is significantly increased.
6. Three billion new trees are planted in the EU, in full respect of ecological principles.
7. Significant progress has been made in the remediation of contaminated soil sites.
8. At least 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers are restored.
9. There is a 50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species.
10. The losses of nutrients from fertilisers are reduced by 50%, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20%.
11. Cities with at least 20,000 inhabitants have an ambitious Urban Greening Plan.
12. No chemical pesticides are used in sensitive areas such as EU urban green areas.
13. The negative impacts on sensitive species and habitats, including on the seabed through fishing and extraction activities, are substantially reduced to achieve good environmental status.
14. The by-catch of species is eliminated or reduced to a level that allows species recovery and conservation.

The National Context - Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2017 – 2021

Relevant Objectives and Actions of Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan

All NBAP actions that are considered to have particular relevance to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Louth (the Louth LBAP) are included below. Local Authorities (or 'Public Authorities', more generally) are listed, in the NBAP, as 'key partners' against those actions printed in **red** typeface. Local Authorities are considered to be 'lead partners' for those actions in the NBAP listed in ***italicised bold red*** typeface below.

Objective 1 Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors (25 Actions)

Target 1.1: Shared responsibility for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components is fully recognised, and acted upon, by all sectors (18 actions, six relevant to the Louth LBAP)

1.1.2. Public and Private Sector relevant policies will use best practice in SEA, AA and other assessment tools to ensure proper consideration of biodiversity in policies and plans

1.1.3. All Public Authorities and private sector bodies move towards no net loss of biodiversity through strategies, planning, mitigation measures, appropriate offsetting and/or investment in Blue-Green infrastructure

1.1.4. Strengthen ecological expertise in local authorities and relevant Government Departments and agencies

1.1.5. Local Authorities will review and update their Biodiversity and Heritage Action Plans

1.1.6. Local Authorities will review and update their Development Plans and policies to include policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity

1.1.7. Develop a Green Infrastructure at local, regional and national levels and promote the use of nature based solutions for the delivery of a coherent and integrated network

1.1.8. Continue to produce guidance on the protection of biodiversity in designated areas, marine and the wider countryside for Local Authorities and relevant sectors (actually a central government action)

Target 1.2: Strengthened legislation in support of tackling biodiversity loss in Ireland (seven actions none of which is within the operational parameters of Louth County Council)

Objective 2 Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity (24 actions, of which the following have some relevance to the Louth LBAP)

Target 2.1: Knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem services has substantially advanced our ability to ensure conservation, effective management, and sustainable use by 2021 (24 actions, six relevant, including one in which Local Authorities are listed as 'key partners')

2.1.3. Complete national terrestrial habitat, land cover, land use, and ecosystem service maps

2.1.6. Undertake surveys and assessments of status, trends and distribution of all habitats and species of EU interest and additional habitats and species of national and regional importance

2.1.7. Support and encourage the volunteer network and local communities to carry out biological recording and other citizen science projects

2.1.8. Ensure that international collaborative funding opportunities are effectively targeted to assist implementation of this NBAP through consultation between funders, researchers and users of research

2.1.12. Hedgerow surveys will be continued by Local Authorities

2.1.18. Conduct research into the threat posed to Ireland's marine biodiversity by marine litter including microplastics, ocean acidification, light and noise

Objective 3 Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services

(includes a total of eight actions, of which seven are considered relevant to this Louth LBAP, including one in which Local Authorities are specified as delivering organisations; "key partners")

Target 3.1: Enhanced appreciation of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services amongst policy makers, businesses, stakeholders, local communities, and the general public (eight actions)

3.1.1. Engage with local communities and stakeholders to help achieve the objectives of this plan

3.1.2. Enhance training, communication, cooperation and concerted action between relevant sectors in support of biodiversity conservation

3.1.3. Raise awareness in private sector organisations of impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystem services

3.1.4. Support radio, TV, web-based and other media products that emphasise or are centred around showcasing biodiversity, its importance, and current or future challenges

3.1.6. Include biodiversity and ecosystem services in relevant courses in primary, secondary and tertiary level education

3.1.7. Develop and implement a communications campaign in support of public and sectoral understanding of the value of biodiversity and full implementation of this NBAP

3.1.8. Engage landowners, farming and aquaculture sectors to promote the benefits of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

Objective 4 Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside
(27 Actions in total, across five 'Targets')

Target 4.1: Optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development, forestry and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity (nine actions, most of which are beyond the Louth LBAP's remit)

4.1.8. Implement the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan including: making the Irish countryside more pollinator friendly; raising awareness of pollinators; supporting beekeepers and growers; expanding knowledge of pollinators; and collecting evidence to track changes

Target 4.2: Principal pollutant pressures on terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity substantially reduced by 2020 (two actions, both of which are relevant to the Louth LBAP as Local Authorities are 'key partners')

4.2.1. Continue to protect, enhance and monitor the ecological status of water during the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive (2015- 2021) including reducing risks to water quality and utilising ecological expertise in decision-making, and in analysis of cumulative effects

4.2.3. Implement recommendations of EPA STRIVE Report Series No. 99 (Management Strategies for the Protection of High Status Waterbodies) including, amongst other measures: prioritisation for protection measures; planning/licensing control; assessment of cumulative impacts; and integrated monitoring and protection

Target 4.4: Harmful invasive alien species are controlled and there is reduced risk of introduction and/or spread of new species (seven actions, three of which mention Local Authorities, with one leading role)

4.4.2. Develop national and whole island plans to implement the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation and relevant sections of Ireland's EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 including: development and adoption of biosecurity plans in relevant state bodies; a Rapid Response Protocol for the island of Ireland; coordination and collation of invasive species surveillance and monitoring data; and work with Northern Ireland and UK authorities on invasive species of mutual concern

4.4.3. Continue and enhance measures for eradication, where feasible, control and containment of invasive species

4.4.4. Encourage horticultural nurseries to produce native species, varieties and landraces from appropriate native sources for public and private sector plantings. Public bodies will endeavour to plant native species in order to reduce importation of non-native species, varieties and landraces

Objective 5 Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment (contains eight actions in total, divided equally between two targets)

Target 5.1: Progress made towards good ecological and environmental status of marine waters over the lifetime of this Plan (four actions, two of which mention Local Authorities as lead partners)

5.1.2. Implement measures to achieve good ecological and environmental status of marine and coastal habitats as required by the Habitats, Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and in line with the OSPAR Convention (Convention for the protection of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic)

5.1.4. Promote the incorporation of ecological engineering features in new and existing structures such as coastal defences

Target 5.2: Fish stock levels maintained or restored to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield, where possible, no later than 2020

Objective 6 Expand and improve management of protected areas and species (17 actions)

Target 6.1: Natura 2000 network designated and under effective conservation management by 2020 (Ten actions, of which two specify Local Authorities as 'key partners')

6.1.2. Develop and utilise licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites

6.1.7. Implement the conservation measures necessary to achieve the published conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites. Develop and implement additional measures as necessary to achieve favourable conservation status both nationally and at site level

6.1.10. Continue to collect information on sites to be considered towards the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Area network

Target 6.2: Sufficiency, coherence, connectivity, and resilience of the protected areas network substantially enhanced by 2020 (two actions)

6.2.1. Increase connectivity of the protected areas network using appropriate buffer zones, corridors, stepping stones and/or flyways

Target 6.3: No protected species in worsening status by 2020; majority species in, or moving towards, favourable status by 2020 (five actions)

6.3.4. Implement species action plans, including for: Red Squirrel, Red Grouse, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier and reintroduced raptors and initiate further management actions as necessary

Objective 7: Strengthen international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services (ten actions in total, of which only those relating to northern Ireland are relevant to this LBAP)

Target 7.1: Strengthened support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in external assistance (1 action)

Target 7.2: Enhanced contribution to international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services (two actions)

Target 7.3: Enhanced cooperation with Northern Ireland on common issues (three actions)

7.3.1. Continue communication and harmonized action at an all-island level on issues of common concern including for the implementation of international legislation and tackling wildlife crime

7.3.2. Cooperation and coordination (where possible and relevant) on Species and Habitat surveillance initiatives under the Habitats and Birds Directives (e.g., All-Ireland seal surveys, All-Ireland cetacean strandings scheme, All-Ireland Red List for Birds (BoCCI), All-Ireland Brent Research Group)

Target 7.4: Reduction in the impact of Irish trade on global biodiversity and ecosystem services (four actions)

7.4.1. Adopt measures to significantly reduce negative impacts of trade on biodiversity and to enhance positive impacts

The local context, County Louth

Louth is one of Ireland's most historic counties, having been created by king John of England and first 'Lord of Ireland' in the early 13th century. It is also Ireland's smallest county; at a little over 800 square kilometres (around the same size as the Inishowen peninsula in north-east County Donegal). Louth is, however, strategically located, with its county town of Dundalk lying midway between Belfast and Dublin, on some of the busiest communications routes in the county. Drogheda, Ireland's largest town, lies in the south of the county, on the same busy communications routes and the Boyne. Louth is a highly desirable location for both businesses and households, permitting easy access to the two largest cities on the island of Ireland.

Louth is a coastal county. It is generally low-lying, fertile, sunny and relatively dry, and is also well-watered by rivers rising in other, wetter counties, which must flow through Louth to reach the Irish Sea. The main exceptions to this picture of a fertile, arable plain are the high, rocky mountains of the Cooley peninsula in the north and the Oriel Hills, which separate the Boyne valley in the south from the rest of Louth.

Louth is densely settled (by Irish standards), with a population of around 130,000, and is also intensively farmed. Much of Louth is ideal for arable farming and so it was highly desirable to the Norman colonists who seized it in the late 12th century, founding several walled towns. When the Normans abandoned much of the North and West of Ireland after the Black Death, Louth was firmly held onto and formed a major part of the English Pale in the later Middle Ages, when it was separated from cattle-farming, Gaelic Ulster by a 'paling'.

Louth is still a border county. It fills the north-eastern corner of the Irish state, bordering two counties in the territory of Northern Ireland, retained by the United Kingdom when the rest of Ireland became independent in 1922. Most of the areas comprising the borders between Louth and its northern neighbours are important for wildlife, including Carlingford Lough and the mountains of north Louth and south Armagh. While both Ireland and the UK were members of the European Union they shared similar wildlife protection laws, something that may now change, as Brexit works itself out.

Biodiversity in Louth

Louth has one of the highest population densities in Ireland. It also has fertile and productive farmland and a good climate. It might be tempting to assume that Louth has no 'wild', biodiversity-rich areas but such an assumption would be mistaken. Louth is rich in biodiversity but mostly on its coasts, river and upland areas. Most of Louth's coast falls within European-protected biodiversity sites.

Louth has the lowest areal proportion of native or broadleaved woods, at just 0.18% (less than one five-hundredth of the area of the county). Louth also has the lowest percentage of its land area covered in lakes. These figures make it all the more important to protect, enhance, restore and, if possible, expand the woods and lakes we do have.

The Irish Peatlands Conservation Council is Ireland's leading voluntary peatland conservation charity. It lists 736 important sites in the State, of which 11 lie within Louth (one is shared). Much of the Cooley or Carlingford Mountains is covered in peat, a very valuable 'sink' of Carbon.

Louth's intensive farming means the county does very well in relation to one important wildlife habitat. Louth has the highest density of hedgerows of all counties where sample surveys have been done, very marginally ahead of neighbouring Monaghan. Hedges are important in their own right, as habitats for wild creatures to live in but they also act as important wildlife corridors, permitting the movement and dispersal of plant and animal species through an otherwise almost treeless landscape.

Wetlands are important places for biodiversity. Louth County Council has surveyed almost all of the county's wetlands and found that many have been lost (polluted, drained or infilled) over the years. It is therefore vitally important that we protect the wetlands that survive intact and protect them as functioning hydrological units.

International and national protection of biodiversity within County Louth

As a member of the EU, Ireland must implement European Directives. The Birds and Habitats Directives require Ireland to designate and protect sites of European (or higher) importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

Local protection of biodiversity (wildlife) sites within County Louth

The County Development Plan (CDP) for County Louth (and other, more local area plans) protects those sites named as proposed Natural Heritage Areas under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 (and originally as Areas of Scientific Interest under the Wildlife Act, 1976).

The Louth Wetland Survey (2011 to 2014) identified many additional, and previously unrecognised, sites that qualified for designation as Natural Heritage Areas (cf. NBAP actions 2.1.6 and 6.1.10). The Geological Heritage Survey of Louth (2013) identified many geological sites which qualified to be designated as geological Natural Heritage Areas (as well as County Geological Sites). The State, rather than Louth County Council, has the legal power to designate Natural Heritage Areas and, as of the time of writing, no Natural Heritage Areas have been fully designated in Louth.

The County Development Plan also protects selected groups of trees, primarily for amenity (scenic) reasons, rather than as wildlife habitats, from destruction for built development. This is done either through listing the group of trees in the CDP or, more formally, through the passing of a Tree Preservation Order on the tree or trees.

How does the need to conserve biodiversity impact on social and business groupings?

Builders and developers, including the Council, need to know where the most important wildlife sites are located and what works or activities could damage them. Works need to be planned so that no damage will be caused to such sites and, ideally, that they will even be enhanced (NBG = nett biodiversity gain). It is very important to consider connectivity to protected biodiversity sites. Development immediately adjacent to such sites might not cause problems, while other developments, ten kilometres upstream might.

Farmers and foresters are advised by Teagasc and the Forest Service, both branches of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Louth County Council does not have primary responsibility in terms of regulating farming and forestry. The Council will however ensure that staff of both agencies are aware of the location of all protected biodiversity sites and wetlands within the county so that they can prevent development, under their regulatory systems, that might damage such sites.

Fishermen and anglers. Sea-fishing is regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Louth County Council will seek to build working relationships with that side of the Department and with Bord Iascaigh Mhara. We will also work with angling groups and related interests, such as Inland Fisheries Ireland, to achieve the objectives of this plan.

PROPOSED POLICIES FOR THE LOUTH LBAP 2020 – 2025
(presented in the order of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021).
LCC section with lead responsibility and timescale is listed in red after each action

Objective 1: Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors

Louth LBAP Action

- 1 Louth County Council will continue to apply best practice in SEA, AA and other assessment tools to ensure proper consideration of biodiversity in policies and plans, for both those projects it is promoting itself and in its role as regulating authority e.g. in planning, waste management etc. This includes adopting a rigorous approach to enforcement and requiring remediation of environmental damage caused by unauthorised activities. (NBAP action 1.1.2) **PLANNING, Environment, Infrastructure, Operations, Water Services - ONGOING**
- 2 Louth County Council will require no nett loss of biodiversity in relation to grants of planning permission or in any other activity in which it may have a regulatory role and will, if possible, require nett gain for biodiversity (NBAP action 1.1.3 and influenced by the EU Strategy) **PLANNING - ONGOING**
- 3 Louth County Council will investigate the possibility of establishing a specialist biodiversity technical advisory facility should government provide the resources needed (NBAP action 1.1.4) **SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM, ASAP**
- 4 Louth County Council has reviewed its Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan, 2015 and drafted a new plan. Louth County Council will adopt the new plans before the end of 2020 (NBAP action 1.1.5) **HERITAGE OFFICER, ASAP**
- 5 Louth County Council has reviewed its County Development Plan as part of the process of writing the County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. The protection and restoration of biodiversity features in a new separate chapter on Natural Heritage. Local Development Plans will be created following its adoption, nested under this new County Development Plan and will address biodiversity similarly (NBAP action 1.1.6) **PLANNING, Ongoing following adoption of the new CDP 2021 - 2017**
- 6 Louth County Council has reviewed its county Green Infrastructure Strategy as part of the process of developing a new County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. Consideration will be given to how County Louth's Green Infrastructure Strategy might relate to and integrate with similar strategies for adjacent counties and regions and to the rest of the country (NBAP action 1.1.7) **PLANNING – see CDP Policy NBG 52**
- 7 Louth County Council will have due regard for any and all guidance on the protection of biodiversity in designated areas, marine and the wider countryside issuing from the national authorities (NBAP action 1.1.8) **ALL TECHNICAL SECTIONS, with the support of the Heritage Office**

Objective 2: Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity

Target 2.1: Knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem services has substantially advanced our ability to ensure conservation, effective management, and sustainable use by 2021

- 8 Louth County Council will participate, as far as resources permit, in any national terrestrial habitat, land cover, land use, and ecosystem service mapping exercise, building on the work it

- has already carried out on hedgerows and wetlands (NBAP action 2.1.3) **The Heritage Office, as and when appropriate/required**
- 9 Louth County Council will participate in and support surveys and assessments of status, trends and distribution of all habitats and species of EU interest and additional habitats and species of national and regional importance. Much potentially valuable biodiversity data is generated through the planning and other regulatory processes. Louth County Council will require that applicants submit copies of any ecological assessments, requested by it as part of its regulatory function, to the National Biodiversity Data Centre too, in a suitable format. (NBAP action 2.1.6) **The Heritage Office, Planning and other sections with regulatory functions**
- 10 Louth County Council will support, train and encourage staff, local communities and volunteers to carry out biological recording and other citizen science/conservation projects (NBAP action 2.1.7) **The Heritage Office, with the cooperation of other sections**
- 11 Louth County Council will investigate the possibility of running (and demand for) specialist training courses for volunteers, to develop local expertise in surveying and recording 'less visible' taxa, such as bats, bees, herps, mosses, liverworts (NBAP action 2.1.7). **The Heritage Office, over the lifetime of this plan, aiming at one course per year**
- 12 Louth County Council will ensure that international collaborative funding opportunities are effectively targeted to assist implementation of this LBAP. LCC has participated in two previous INTERREG-funded biodiversity projects, one led by Queen's University, Belfast (NBAP action 2.1.8) **The Heritage Office, with the support of the European Funding office and the agreement of Senior Management Team**
- 13 Louth County Council will develop a pilot scheme to survey the condition of selected roadside verges and hedges. It will also consider the potential for a Louth Hedgerow (or similar) Annual Award scheme, where privately-owned farm hedges would be nominated, by their owners, for assessment and award (NBAP Action 2.1.12) **The Heritage Office, 2021 - 2022**
- 14 Louth County Council will continue to co-ordinate and support the annual CoastWatch Survey within the county and will attempt to maximise the coverage of Louth's coast, using staff and volunteers, reaching 20% coverage of the Louth coast (52 units) by 2026 (NBAP action 2.1.18) **The Heritage Office, with 'volunteers' from other sections, ongoing**

Objective 3: Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services

- 15 Louth County Council will continue to engage with and support local communities (e.g. schools, Tidy Towns groups) and stakeholders (e.g. Anglers, the Oriel River Catchments and Coastal Association, Louth Nature Trust) to help achieve the objectives of this plan (NBAP action 3.1.1) **The Heritage Office and the Community Office re PPN etc, Louth LEADER, ongoing**
- 16 Louth County Council will continue to take a lead in providing training, communication, cooperation and concerted action between relevant sectors, including staff, locally in support of biodiversity conservation, so far as resources allow (NBAP action 3.1.2) **The Heritage Office and the Community Office re PPN etc, Louth LEADER, ongoing**
- 17 Louth County Council will raise awareness in private sector organisations (through e.g. Chambers of Commerce, BIDS companies) of the economy's impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystem services (NBAP action 3.1.3) **The Heritage Office, LEO, ongoing**

- 18 Louth County Council will support radio, TV, web-based and other media products that emphasise or are centred around showcasing biodiversity, its importance, and current or future challenges, insofar as resources allow (NBAP action 3.1.4) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 19 Louth County Council will endeavour to support environmental education e.g. An Taisce Green Schools and the Heritage Specialists in Schools programmes, in their efforts to include biodiversity and ecosystem services in relevant courses in primary, secondary and tertiary level education (NBAP 3.1.6) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 20 Louth County Council will support the development and implementation of any communications campaign in support of public and sectoral understanding of the value of biodiversity and full implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, insofar as available resources permit (NBAP policy 3.1.7) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 21 Louth County Council will, so far as its resources permit, engage landowners, farming and aquaculture sectors to promote to them the benefits of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This includes achieving Good status for all surface waters, the sensitive management of hedgerows and respect for the 'closed' season for hedgerow and vegetation management and assisting with the development of any proposed local Agri-Environment Schemes (NBAP action 3.1.8) **The Heritage Office, Planning, Environment, ongoing**

Objective 4 Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside

- 22 Louth County Council will implement the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan within its operational area and in collaboration with other authorities, including: managing its own land in a biodiversity and pollinator-friendly way; making Louth's countryside more pollinator friendly; raising awareness of pollinators; supporting beekeepers and growers; expanding knowledge of pollinators; and collecting evidence to track changes (NBAP action 4.1.8) **The Heritage Office, Parks (Operations); Housing, ongoing**
- 23 Louth County Council will continue to protect, enhance and monitor the ecological status of water during the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive (2015- 2021) including reducing risks to water quality and utilising ecological expertise in decision-making, and in analysis of cumulative effects (NBAP action 4.2.1) **Environment, ongoing**
- 24 Louth County Council will implement the recommendations of EPA STRIVE Report Series No. 99 (Management Strategies for the Protection of High Status Waterbodies) including, amongst other measures: prioritisation for protection measures; planning/licensing control; assessment of cumulative impacts; and integrated monitoring and protection (NBAP action 4.2.3) **Environment, ongoing**
- 25 Louth County Council will develop a county plan to implement the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation and relevant sections of Ireland's EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 including working with other local authorities both in the State and in Northern Ireland on invasive species of mutual concern (NBAP action 4.4.2) **The Heritage Office, Operations, Planning, Infrastructure, by the end of 2021**
- 26 Louth County Council will continue and enhance measures for eradication, where feasible, and, elsewhere, for control and containment of invasive species listed in EU or Irish policy (NBAP action 4.4.3) **The Heritage Office, Operations, Planning, Infrastructure, ongoing**

- 27 Louth County Council will endeavour to plant native species, where appropriate, in order to reduce importation of non-native species and varieties. This will create a market which will encourage local horticultural nurseries to produce native species and varieties from appropriate native sources for public and private sector plantings (NBAP action 4.4.4) **Parks (Operations) beginning in 2021**

Objective 5 Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment

- 28 Louth County Council will implement measures to achieve good ecological and environmental status of marine and coastal habitats as required by the Habitats, Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and in line with the OSPAR Convention (Convention for the protection of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic). This relates primarily to using the planning system to prevent damaging run-offs into the coastal and marine environment (NBAP action 5.1.2) **PLANNING, with the support of the Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 29 Louth County Council will promote the incorporation of ecological engineering features in new and existing structures such as coastal defences. This is referred to as Green Engineering, as opposed to Grey Engineering (NBAP action 5.1.4) **Operations, Infrastructure, with the support of the Heritage Office, from the adoption of this plan onwards**

Objective 6 Expand and improve management of protected areas and species

- 30 Louth County Council will utilise licensing and consent systems to facilitate only sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites (NBAP action 6.1.2) **Planning, ongoing**
- 31 Louth County Council will implement the conservation measures necessary to achieve the published conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites, including those sites which might be designated in future. Develop and implement additional measures as necessary to achieve favourable conservation status both nationally and at site level (NBAP action 6.1.7) **Planning, Environment, Water Services, the Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 32 Louth County Council will continue to collect information on sites to be considered towards the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Area network (previous examples are the Louth Wetland Survey and the Geological Heritage Assessment of the County, which found many previously unrecognised sites of regional or national (and higher) importance. All sites of 'moderate local' (D); 'high local'(C), 'county' (C+) or higher importance (as rated by the Louth Wetland Survey), found in these previous surveys will be listed in and protected through the County Development Plan 2021-2027 (NBAP action 6.1.10) **The Heritage Office, to collect information. Planning to list and protect the sites, ongoing**
- 33 Louth County Council will increase the connectivity of the protected areas network using appropriate buffer zones, corridors, stepping stones and/or flyways by bearing such requirements in mind when assessing applications for planning permission, waste permits etc., remembering that protected sites can be affected by what happens some distance away, if pathways exist. The protection of the wetland sites referred to above will also contribute to the maintenance of ecological connectivity in the county and beyond (NBAP action 6.2.1) **Planning, Environment, with the support of the Heritage Office, ongoing with increased intensity**
- 34 Louth County Council will implement species action plans, where relevant (for e.g. **Red Squirrel**, which is recovering strongly in the county, and will investigate the potential for species reintroduction schemes, as appropriate (NBAP action 6.3.4) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**

- 35 Louth County Council will continue communication and harmonized action with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Loughs Agency on issues of common concern, including the management of cross-border sites such as Carlingford Lough, the Cooley Mountains/Ring of Gullion and cross-border rivers (NBAP action 7.3.1) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 36 Louth County Council will cooperate (where possible and relevant) on Species and Habitat surveillance initiatives under the Habitats and Birds Directives (e.g., All-Ireland seal surveys, All-Ireland cetacean strandings scheme, All-Ireland Red List for Birds (BoCCI), All-Ireland Brent Research Group) (NBAP action 7.3.2) **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 37 Louth County Council will continue to adhere to ISO 14001 as a means to reduce negative impacts of trade on biodiversity and to enhance positive impacts (NBAP action 7.4.1) **Corporate Services, ongoing**

Local Actions

All the actions outlined above have arisen from Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan. As this is a local plan for County Louth, some actions proposed in the previous Louth Local Biodiversity Action Plans, that were drawn up by consultants in 2008 and 2014, have also been included in this plan

- 38 Louth County Council will create a list of Local Biodiversity Areas in the County. These are sites which are of importance to biodiversity at a very local or even county level but which would not qualify to be designated as NHAs or European sites **The Heritage Office, by end 2021**
- 39 Louth County Council will support the surveying of bats and birds of various species and the manufacture and erection of bat roosting and bird nesting boxes, where appropriate **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 40 Louth County Council will continue to support practical biodiversity conservation by local people in County Louth and in partnership with groups in adjacent areas. This includes, for example, support of the Little Tern Wardening scheme at Baltray and the work of Conservation Volunteers to remove Invasive Alien Species from public woodlands **The Heritage Office, ongoing**
- 41 Louth County Council will develop a Countryside and Biodiversity Access plan for the County that will highlight how members of the public, residents and visitors alike, can access safe and attractive areas in order to observe and enjoy biodiversity for the good of their physical and mental health. **The Heritage Office, Operations, by end 2021**
- 42 Louth County Council will continue to provide training for technical staff such as planners and engineers on how their work might impact negatively upon our biodiversity and how they can make a positive difference, **The Heritage Office, ongoing**

Annexes

Annex A Legislation (Global, European, National and Local)

Global protection of biodiversity

There are many United Nations Conventions which aim to protect and conserve Biodiversity. The Bern and Bonn conventions are mentioned in Annex B below. Not mentioned there is the Ramsar Convention on migratory waterbirds (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) under which Dundalk Bay is inscribed as a Ramsar site. The County Down shore of Carlingford Lough but not the Louth side, is also a Ramsar site.

European protection of biodiversity

The EU's first step towards protecting biodiversity was the Birds Directive of 1979. The justification for this Directive was the understanding that birds tie many of Europe's (and the world's) countries together, through their epic migrations. In order to avoid a race towards the bottom, where each country would have to copy its neighbours (and competitors) if they destroyed the habitats of migratory birds in order to gain short-term economic advantage, Europe agreed union-wide rules to protect birds. Thirteen years later the 'Birds Directive' was followed by the 'Habitats Directive', aimed at protecting other animals, apart from birds, and plants on a Europe-wide basis.

The Birds Directive requires EU member states to designate sites that are important for birds at a European level as 'Special Protection Areas'. There are five of these European sites, known as SPAs, wholly or partially within County Louth, including marine areas below the High Water Mark and outside Louth County Council's jurisdiction as the planning authority.

The Habitats Directive requires EU member states to designate sites that provide important habitats for certain animals, other than birds, and for plants, at a European level. There are six of these Special Areas of Conservation wholly or partially within County Louth.

Together these 'European sites', both SACs and SPAs, are known as the Natura 2000 network.

The full implementation of these European Directives in Ireland has been a drawn-out process and the main piece of domestic legislation transposing the requirements of the European Directives is the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (SI Nr 477 of 2011), as amended.

It will be noted that the SACs and SPAs in County Louth cover, almost entirely, rivers, coasts and mountain land. Intensive agriculture and high population density mean that there are very few designated sites on the lowland, terrestrial areas of Louth. It should also be noted that some sites, such as the shore of Carlingford Lough, Dundalk and the River Boyne and its estuary, are designated as both SACs and SPAs, meaning that the designated area with the operational area of Louth County Council, the county's land, is very much lower than a simple addition of the areas of the designated sites would suggest.

The Habitats Directive also requires Members States to provide strict protection to certain animals and plants.

National level protection of biodiversity

National legislation to protect biodiversity (wildlife) dates back at least to the Wild Birds Protection Act 1930. In 1976 the Oireachtas passed the Wildlife Act. The Wildlife Act, 1976 provided a good legislative basis for nature conservation. The species protection provisions, including those regulating hunting, are quite comprehensive, to the extent, for example, that they largely foresaw similar aspects of the EU Birds

and Habitats Directives. However, the habitat/site protection measures in the 1976 Act were relatively weak, and were almost completely limited to measures which could be introduced in agreement with landowners. There was very limited power to ensure protection, even in the case of outstanding habitats or sites, where agreement of landowners was not forthcoming.

Nature conservation legislation was substantially enlarged and improved by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011.

As with the EU legislation, the approach has been to try to identify and protect the most important sites for biodiversity, while accepting that wildlife of farmland and the wider countryside (and in towns) does not need or it not worthy of protection. This approach has, unfortunately, led to the ring-fencing (but not necessarily sympathetic management) of the most biodiverse sites, which gradually, if they are lucky enough to retain their value to biodiversity, become disconnected biodiversity oases in an increasingly harsh and barren biodiversity desert.

Sites of importance for biodiversity (wildlife) were surveyed by An Foras Forbartha in the 1970s, in the run up to the passing of Wildlife Act 1976. These sites were originally known as ASIs (Areas of Scientific Interest) but the 1976 Act was incapable of fully protecting them. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, the sites identified as ASIs were proposed for protection as proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). None of these areas has since been legally designated in Louth and their only protection from damaging development remains their listing in County and other Development Plans or where they overlap with a European site (an SAC or an SPA). The Wildlife Act declares a period during which vegetation cannot be destroyed, which currently covers the period from 1st March to 31st August. This allows birds time to breed and plants time to flower and set seed.

In recent years the term 'candidate Natural Heritage Area' has been used to refer to any site proposed as being potentially worthy of protection through designation as a Natural Heritage Area.

Trees are protected, throughout Ireland, by the requirement to obtain a felling licence (though exemptions apply) from the Forest Service, while drainage of wetlands greater than 0.1 ha requires planning permission.

Local protection of Biodiversity

Louth County Council protects biodiversity through its planning system and by including biodiversity considerations in all its work. The County Development Plan provides details of all European sites, both SACs and SPAs in the County and requires that any development proposals that might affect such sites be subject to, at least, screening for Appropriate Assessment.

The County Development Plan and Local Area Plans also list sites that have been proposed as Natural Heritage Areas but never designated by the national authorities. The need to protect such sites is then taken into account in the planning process. Geological sites, both Candidate NHAs and County Geological Sites are also protected through the CDP and many of these sites also support important biodiversity.

The County Development Plan (and Local Area Plans) also protect groups of trees, both through formal Tree Preservation Orders and through listing the conservation of groups of trees as an objective of the plans.

Louth County Council owns much land, some of which is of value for the conservation of biodiversity. The council is committed to managing land for biodiversity where this does not conflict with other essential uses. The best example of such a site is the northern part of Clogherhead headland. The Council owns most of the Clogher Head SAC and manages the site as a *de facto* Nature Reserve, while allowing important recreational and amenity access to the site.

Annex B Protected habitats and sites in County Louth

The main aim of the EU Habitats Directive is to contribute towards the conservation of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species (listed on the Annexes to the Directive) at a 'favourable conservation status'. 'Priority' Habitats are those which are at risk of disappearance within the EU as a whole. EU Member States must assess the Conservation Status of all Habitats and Species every six years, under Article 17 of the Directive. The most recent assessment, produced in 2019, gives the following results: 61 EU Habitats occur within Ireland, of which 16 are 'Priority' Habitats. Forty (40) of these Habitats, including ten (10) Priority Habitats occur within County Louth. This list has grown substantially since the 2007 Report, which listed only 16 Habitats in Louth (of which only two were 'Priority' Habitats). This is partly because of increased surveying leading to better knowledge of what exists in the county. Many other important EU Habitats, e.g. Lowland Hay Meadows, are not known to occur here, though increased surveying might find more such missing habitats.

List of EU Habitats in County Louth with the 2019 Assessment of their Conservation Status

Code	Habitat	Overall Assessment of Conservation Status
1130	Estuaries	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
1140	Tidal Mudflats	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
1150*	Lagoons (PRIORITY)	Bad (Deteriorating)
1160	Large Shallow Inlets and Bays	Bad (Deteriorating)
1170	Reefs	Inadequate (Stable)
1180	Submarine structures made by leaking gasses	Favourable (Stable)
1210	Drift lines	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
1220	Vegetated Shingle	Inadequate (Stable)
1230	Vegetated Sea Cliffs	Inadequate (Stable)
1310	<i>Salicornia</i> Mud	Favourable (Stable)
1330	Atlantic Salt Meadow	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
1410	Mediterranean Salt Meadow	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
2110	Embryonic Shifting Dunes	Inadequate (Stable)
2120	Marram Dunes ("White Dunes")	Inadequate (Stable)
2130*	Fixed Dunes (PRIORITY)	Bad (Deteriorating)
3130	Mixed <i>Najas flexilis</i> lake habitat	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
3140	Hard Water Lake Habitat	Bad (Deteriorating)
3150	Rich Pondweed Lake Habitat	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
3160	Acid Oligotrophic Lake Habitat	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
3260	Vegetation of Flowing Waters	Inadequate (Deteriorating)
4010	Wet Heath	Bad (Deteriorating)
4030	Dry Heath	Bad (Stable)
4060	Alpine and Sub-alpine Heaths	Bad (Improving)

6210*	Calcareous grassland (PRIORITY HABITAT IF 'Orchid Rich')	Bad (Deteriorating)
6230*	Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands PRIORITY	Bad (Deteriorating)
6410	<i>Molinia</i> Meadows	Bad (Deteriorating)
6430	Hydrophilous tall-herb swamp	Bad (Deteriorating)
7110*	Active Raised Bog (PRIORITY)	Bad (Deteriorating)
7120	Degraded Raised Bog	Bad (Deteriorating)
7130*	Blanket Bog (PRIORITY)	Bad (Deteriorating)
7140	Transition Mires	Bad (Stable)
7150	<i>Rhynchosporion</i> depressions	Bad (Deteriorating)
7210*	<i>Cladium</i> Fens (PRIORITY)	Inadequate (Stable)
7220*	Petrifying Springs (PRIORITY)	Inadequate (Stable)
7230	Alkaline Fens	Bad (Deteriorating)
8110	Siliceous Scree	Inadequate (Stable)
8220	Siliceous Rocky Slopes	Inadequate (Stable)
91A0	Old Oak Woodland	Bad (Deteriorating)
91D0*	Bog Woodland (PRIORITY)	Favourable (Stable)
91E0*	Alluvial Woodland (PRIORITY)	Bad (Deteriorating)

Source: Adapted from NPWS (2019) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*.

In addition to the EU habitats listed above, there occur in the county other habitats listed in the habitat classification scheme of Fossitt that support notable species, for example, drainage ditches, poor fen and flush, marsh, reed and large sedge swamps, and hedgerows.

European sites in County Louth (Special Areas of Conservation)

Reference Number	Name
453	Carlingford Mountain
455	Dundalk Bay
1459	Clogher Head
1957	Boyne Coast and Estuary
2299	River Boyne and River Blackwater
2306	Carlingford Shore

European sites in County Louth (Special Protection Areas – for birds)

Reference Number	Name
4026	Dundalk Bay
4078	Carlingford Lough
4080	Boyne Estuary
4091	Stabannan - Braganstown
4232	River Boyne and River Blackwater

Annex C Protected species occurring in County Louth

As well as protecting 'Habitats', the EU Habitats Directive also protects various species of animals (excluding birds) and plants. Birds are protected and Special Protection Areas designated under the separate 'Birds Directive'. Annex I of the Habitats Directive covers Habitat types whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation. Ireland hosts 16 Priority habitats, i.e. habitats which are considered to be in danger of disappearing within the EU territory. Annex II covers animal and plant species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation. Annex IV lists Animal and plant species in need of strict protection, while Annex V covers Animal and plant species whose taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures. Many animals are also protected under the Wildlife Act, while the Flora Protection Order also protects plants.

Mammals (all these are protected under the Wildlife Act)							
English name	Scientific name	EU HD	EU BD	RDB	WA	Bern	Bonn
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>				P		
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>				P		
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>				P		
Irish Hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>	V		II	P	III	
Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex minutus</i>				P		
Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>				P		
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>			II	P	III	
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	II, IV		II	P	II	
Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	V		II	P	III	
Irish Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea hibernica</i>				P		
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>			II	P	III	
Brown long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Leisler's Bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	IV		I	P	II	
Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	II, V			P		
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	II, V			P		
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	II, IV			P		
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	II, IV			P		

Fish							
River Lamprey	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	II, V		I		III	
Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>	II		I		III	
Sea Lamprey	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	II		I		III	
Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	II, IV					U

Reptiles							
Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>				P		

Other Locally Important Reptiles		
English name	Scientific name	Comments
Leatherback Turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Seen on the Louth Coast in October 2001.

Amphibians							
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	V		II	P	III	
Smooth Newt	<i>Triturus vulgaris</i>				P		

Crustaceans							
White-clawed Crayfish	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	II, V			P	U	U

Vascular Plants							
English name	Scientific name	EU HD	EU BD	RDB	WA	Bern	Bonn
Basil Thyme	<i>Acinos arvensis</i>		FPO		V		
Parsley Fern	<i>Cryptogramma crispera</i>		FPO		R		
Red Hemp Nettle	<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>		FPO		V		
Bog Orchid	<i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>		FPO		RV		
Meadow Barley	<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>		FPO		V		
Oyster Plant	<i>Mertensia maritima</i>		FPO		R		
Round Prickly-headed Poppy	<i>Papaver hybridum</i>		FPO		E		
Annual Knawel	<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>		FPO				
Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>			R			
Fir Clubmoss	<i>Huperzia selago</i>	V					
Round-leaved Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola rotundifolia ssp. rotundifolia</i>			R			
Wild Clary	<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>			R			

Lower Plants							
English name	Scientific name	EU HD	EU BD	RDB	WA	Bern	Bonn
Tufted Thread-moss	<i>Bryum caespiticium</i>			VU			
Pointed Beard-moss	<i>Didymodon acutus</i>			EN			
Donn's Grimmia	<i>Grimmia donniana</i>			NT			
Hair-pointed Grimmia	<i>Grimmia trichophylla</i>						
Straw Bristle-moss	<i>Orthotrichum stramineum</i>			VU			
Side-fruited Crisp-moss	<i>Pleurochaete squarrosa</i>			NT			
Blunt-fruited Pottia	<i>Tortula modica</i>			VU			

Birds (Protected by their own 'Birds Directive')							
English name	Scientific name	EU HD	EU BD	RDB	WA	Bern	Bonn
Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			>			
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			>			
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		I	>	P	U	U
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			*R	P	III	II
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>			*R	P	III	II
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>			>			
Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>			*			
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>			>R	P	III	II
Greenland White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>		I	>II	P	III	II
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			*R	P	III	II
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			*			
Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>			>			
Light-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>			>II	P	III	II
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>			*			
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			*V	P	III	II
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			>			
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		I	>II	P	II	II
Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>			*			
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			>			
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>			*			
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>		I	>R	P	II	II
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		I	II	P	II	II
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			>			
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		I	>R	P	II	
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			>			
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>			*			
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			>R	P	III	II
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			*			
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			>			
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>			*E	P	III	II
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			>			
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			>			
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		I	*V	P	III	II
Great-crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			>			
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			>			
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			*			
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>			>			
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>		I	>	P	U	U
Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>		I	>V	P	II	
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>			>			
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			R	P	III	II
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>			*I	P	II	
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			*			

Other Locally Important Birds		
English name	Scientific name	Comments
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Information on population size, trends and/or densities is lacking
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Information on range and abundance is far from comprehensive.
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Third assessment of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland have demoted this species from an amber listed to a green listed species. However this species is deemed to be an iconic species in Louth for promotion of biodiversity.
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	This species is in rapid decline across Ireland
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Information on range and abundance is far from comprehensive.

EU HD = EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

- II animal and plant species listed under Annex II
- IV animal and plant species listed under Annex IV
- V animal and plant species listed under Annex V

EU BD = EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC)

- I Bird Species listed under Annex I of the Directive

RDB = Species' status in the relevant "Red Data Book"

- Ex Extinct
- E Endangered
- V Vulnerable
- R Rare
- I Indeterminate
- II Internationally important
- * Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland Red List (3rd Assessment after Colhoun and Cummins, 2013)
- > Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland Amber List (3rd Assessment after Colhoun and Cummins, 2013)

WA = Wildlife Act, 1976 & Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000

- P - Protected Species
- FPO - Listed in the Flora Protection Order (1999)

Bern = The Bern Convention

Bonn = The Bonn Convention

A blank space indicated that the Species is not listed under that heading.

U = Status unknown

For up to date information see the website of the NPWS: www.npws.ie

Annex D: Invasive Alien Species

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are animals and plants that are introduced accidentally or deliberately into a natural environment where they are not normally found, with serious negative consequences for their new environment. They represent a major threat to native plants and animals in Europe, causing damage worth billions of Euro to the European economy every year. As invasive alien species do not respect borders, coordinated action at the European level will be more effective than individual actions at the Member State level. Accordingly the EU passed the IAS Regulation Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (the IAS Regulation), which entered into force on 1 January 2015, fulfilling Action 16 of Target 5 of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, as well as Aichi Target 9 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 under the Convention of Biological Diversity.

The core of the IAS Regulation is the **list of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern** (the Union list). For information about the species currently included on this list, click [here](#).

The IAS Regulation provides for a set of measures to be taken across the EU in relation to invasive alien species included on the Union list. Three distinct types of measures are envisaged, which follow an internationally agreed hierarchical approach to combatting IAS:

- **Prevention:** a number of robust measures aimed at preventing the intentional or unintentional introduction of IAS of Union concern into the EU.
- **Early detection and rapid eradication:** Member States must put in place a surveillance system to detect the presence of IAS of Union concern as early as possible and take rapid eradication measures to prevent them from establishing.
- **Management:** some IAS of Union concern are already established in certain Member States. Concerted management action is needed to prevent them from spreading any further and to minimize the harm they cause.

Some of the core provisions of EU Regulation (1143/2014) which 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 (the 'Union list') came into force on the 3rd August, 2016. The list of IAS of Union Concern The first "Union list" of 37 species consisting of 23 animals and 14 plants came into force, following the publication of the Commission Implementing Regulation (2016/1141), in the Official Journal of the Union on the 14 July, 2016. The 'Union list' comprises species whose potential adverse impacts across the European Union are such that concerted action across Member States is required. Of the 37 species on the 'Union list', nine are already found on this island including the Grey squirrel, Muntjac deer, Chinese mitten crab, Red-eared terrapin/slider, Ruddy duck, Curly waterweed, American skunk cabbage, Floating pennywort (Northern Ireland) and Parrot's feather. Other measures in the Regulation mean that Member States will be required to take further measures in time to provide for early detection and eradication of these species, and to manage those species that are already widely spread in their territory. The Regulation also includes special provisions to deal with the specific needs of pet owners, traders, breeders and other stakeholders. The 'Union list' will be updated regularly to include further species likely to have significant impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Regulation 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011(S.I. No. 477/2011) makes it an offence to allow the spread of various invasive species of animals and plants within Ireland. These species are listed in the Third Schedule of the Regulations.

Annex E Biodiversity work previously undertaken in County Louth

Previous Local Biodiversity Action Plans for County Louth, created in 2008 and 2014

Little tern wardening at Baltray (funded by or through LCC in 2013, 2019, 2020)

Managing Council-owned land for biodiversity (including part of the SAC at Clogher Head)

Provision of Interpretation and Information Panels at various locations

Provision of Bird-watching Hides (at the Navy Bank in Dundalk and at Lurgangreen)

Provision of public viewing telescopes (Blackrock, Carlingford and Dundalk)

Nesting burrows for Black Guillemots at Port Oriel and Gyles's Quay

Making and erecting den boxes for Pine martens in Coillte-owned woods

Removing invasive Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron from Coillte-owned woods (Ravensdale and Townley Hall Forest Recreation areas)

Participation in advisory fora of Coillte and the Loughs Agency

Participation in the Ring of Gullion and Cooley Red Squirrel Group

Training Courses for members of the public (bats, hedgerows) and Tidy Towns groups

Creation of Biodiversity Enhancement Plans for Tidy Towns Groups

Biodiversity training for planning and engineering staff

Hedgerow (sample) survey

Wetlands Surveys (both *ad hoc* and organised/pre-planned)

Enhancement of access to the countryside

Green Flag awards for Parks

Blue Flag awards for beaches

Contribution to the Breeding Atlas of Birds of Britain and Ireland

Purchase and distribution of 'Gardening for Biodiversity' books

Increasing recording of biodiversity data

Signing up for the National Pollinator Plan

Declaring a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency