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Environmental Protection Agency  
*An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil*

# Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Climate Change

Laura Burke, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022

# Environmental Protection Agency



## **Vision**

**‘We live sustainably in a healthy environment that is valued and protected by all’**

# Climate change



- Climate change is recognised as the defining challenge for this century
- IPCC
  - Evidence shows warming of the climate system is happening. The human causes of this are clear
- Observations show that Ireland's climate is changing
  - Increases in average temperature
  - Changes in precipitation patterns
  - Ongoing mean sea level rise
  - Changes in the character of weather extremes

# Climate change impacts on biodiversity



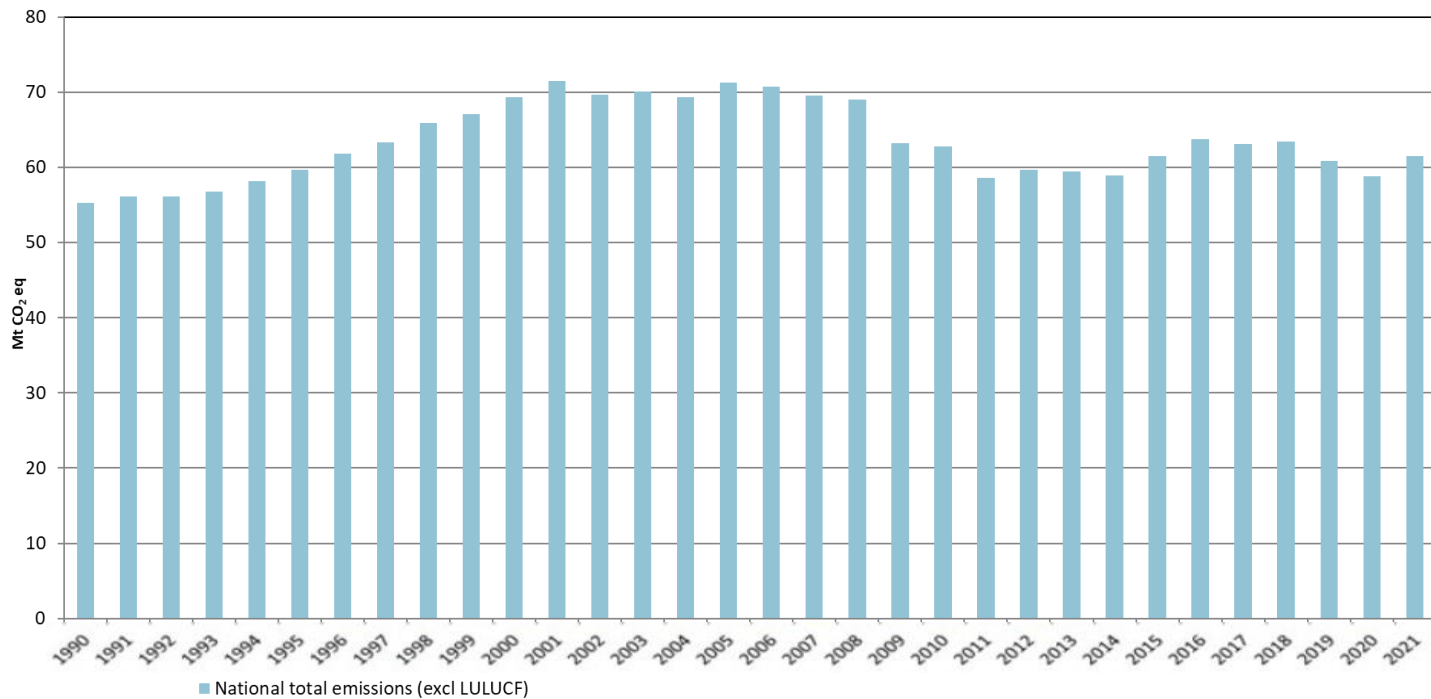
IPCC AR6 Report - climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerabilities related to biodiversity



Climate impacts on biodiversity in Ireland



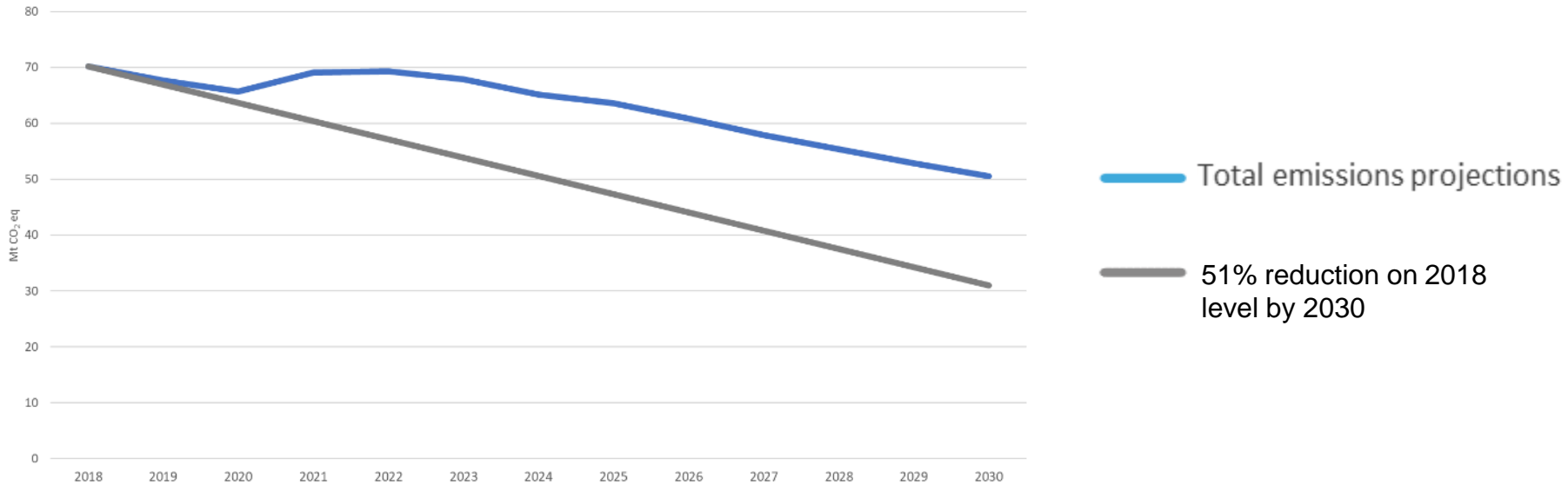
# National total GHG emissions 1990 – 2021



# Emission projections



## Emission projections to 2030 with all policies implemented in full



# Climate policy in Ireland



- **1997** - Kyoto Protocol adopted under the UNFCCC. First commitment period 2008-2012.
- **2013** – National policy position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development published.
- **2015** - Ireland joins the Paris Agreement. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 establishes the National Mitigation Plan (NMP), National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and the Climate Change Advisory Council.
- **2016-2018** - Citizens' Assembly deliberate "*How the State can make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change*" and issue 13 climate recommendations.
- **2018** - Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action (JOCCA) is established to respond to each recommendation.
- **2019** – Dáil declares a climate and biodiversity emergency. 1<sup>st</sup> Climate Action Plan published.
- **2021** - Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act signed into law. 2nd Climate Action Plan published.

# International context



## Paris Agreement

- Ireland and the EU are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its 2015 Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change.
- Parties to the Agreement collectively aim to “*holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change*” [Paris Agreement, Article 2.1.(a)].
- Parties submit ambitious climate policies under the Paris Agreement, known as **Nationally Determined Contributions** (NDC’s), every 5 years.
- The Paris Agreement entered into force in 2016 and currently is adopted by 196 Parties. Ireland ratified it in 2016.
- Progress on achievement of the Paris Agreement goals will be assessed every 5 years. The first of these will take place in 2023.



- Ireland's contribution to the Paris Agreement comes under the European Union NDC targets and is based on the European Union's 2030 emissions reductions targets:
  - At least 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels).
  - At least 32% share for renewable energy.
  - At least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

## 'Fit for 55'

- In September 2020, the EU Commission proposed to increase ambition and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least **55%** by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

# Delivering climate action in Ireland

- To meet our international commitments and EU climate targets, Ireland has implemented ambitious national policies to achieve the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy:
  - Climate Action Plan 2021-2022
  - National Adaptation Framework - Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan
  - Local Authority Climate Action Plans/Biodiversity Action Plans
  - National Biodiversity Action Plan



# Intention action gap

Documented gap between climate action planning/intentions and implementation/action in Ireland:

- Ireland failed to meet its 2020 EU target of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2019 Climate Action Plan finished with many delayed actions, and many of the initial 2021 Climate Action Plan actions have been delayed.
- Delays and shortfalls in reporting and organizing national bodies.
- The current sectoral climate budgets will not deliver – they do not add up to the 51% reduction in emissions promised by 2030.

## Existing mechanisms to improve implementation

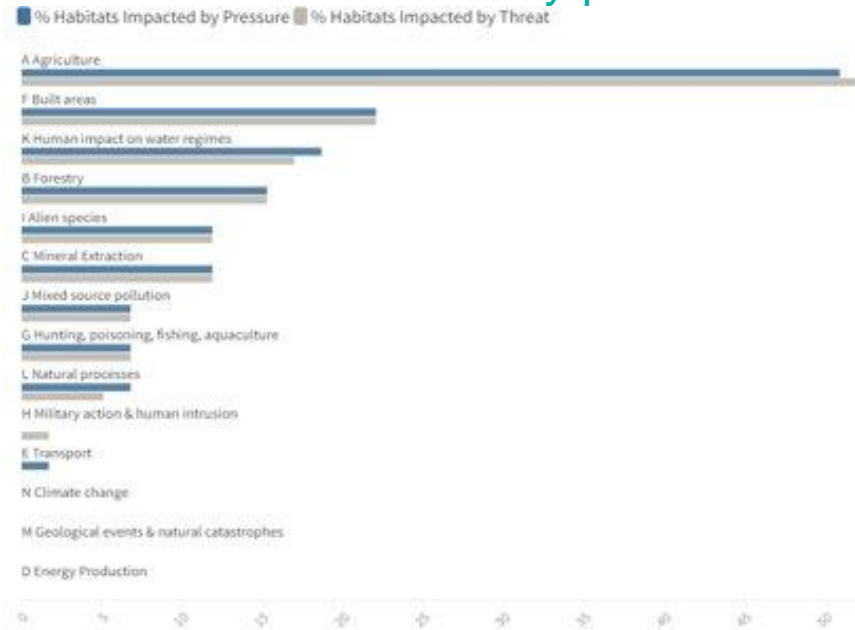
- Climate Action Delivery Board
- EPA emissions statistics – inventories and projections
- Climate Change Advisory Council annual report scores progress in Ireland on planning, integration and implementation



# Land use, climate change and biodiversity



## Land use as a biodiversity pressure



# Biodiversity & climate co-benefits





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**Thank you**