



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Nature designation and protection in Ireland

Andy Bleasdale

Chief Scientific Advisor for Nature and Biodiversity, NPWS

25/09/2022



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Who am I?

- Clare man, living on Connemara, working in NPWS
- Botanist by training
- Working in NPWS as an ecologist since January 2000, and previously on contract
- One of the 5 Directors in NPWS
- Member of the NPWS Management Board
- Leading the Scientific team in NPWS



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Strategic Action Plan

for the renewal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)

2022 - 2024



Six new Directorates



Scientific Advice and Research

Nature Conservation

*Wildlife Enforcement and Nature
Protection*

Parks and Nature Reserves

Legislation and Licensing

*Engagement, Corporate and
Specialist Supports*

Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC



Requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for the protection of:

Annex I habitats (59 habitats)

Annex II species (25 species)

Required to maintain or restore at favourable conservation status (Annex I habitats & Annex II species)

Undertake surveillance of conservation status



Birds Directive 79/409/EEC



Conserve all European wild birds

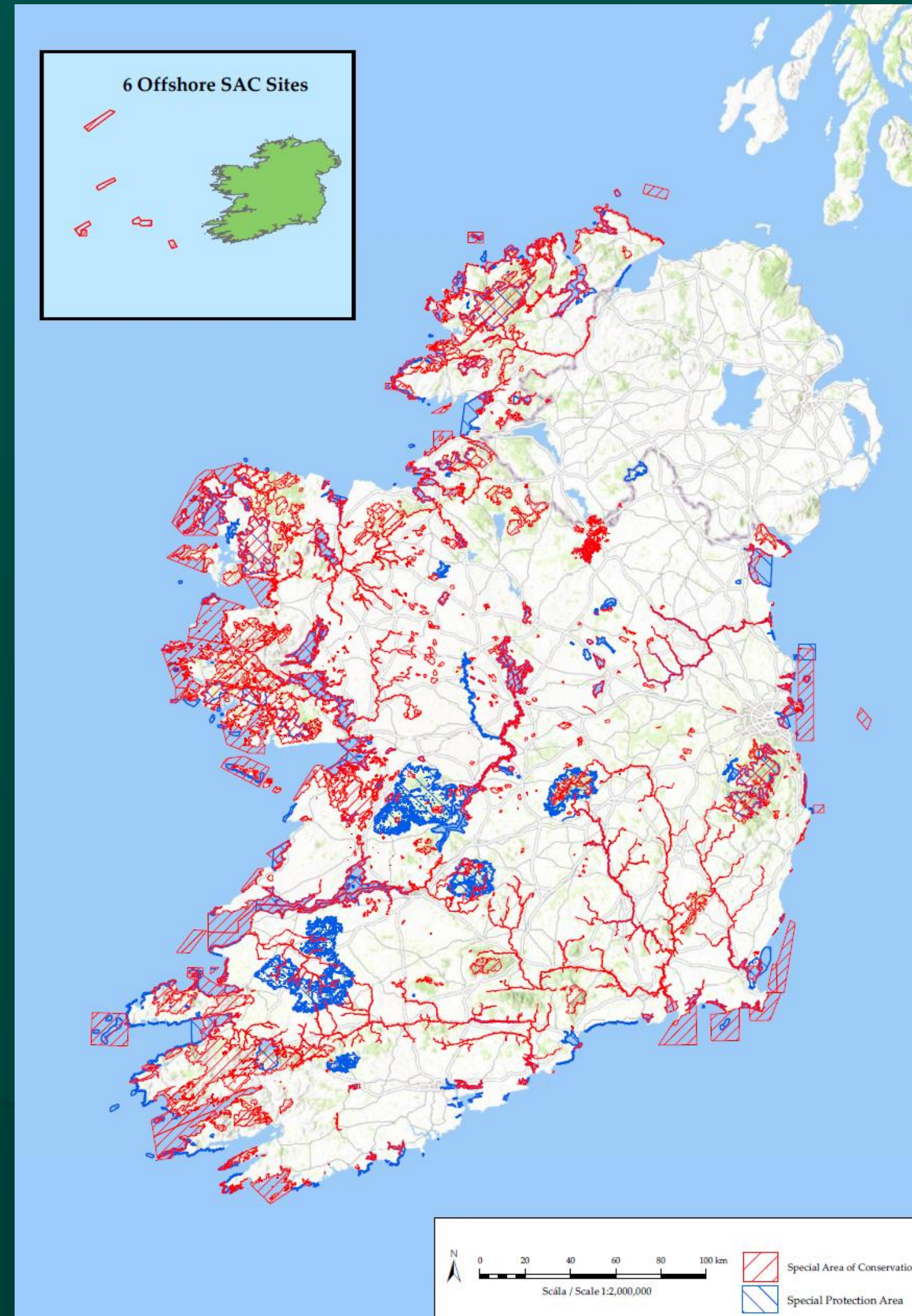
Protection, management & control
Birds, their eggs, nests & habitats

Requires designation of SPAs that contain

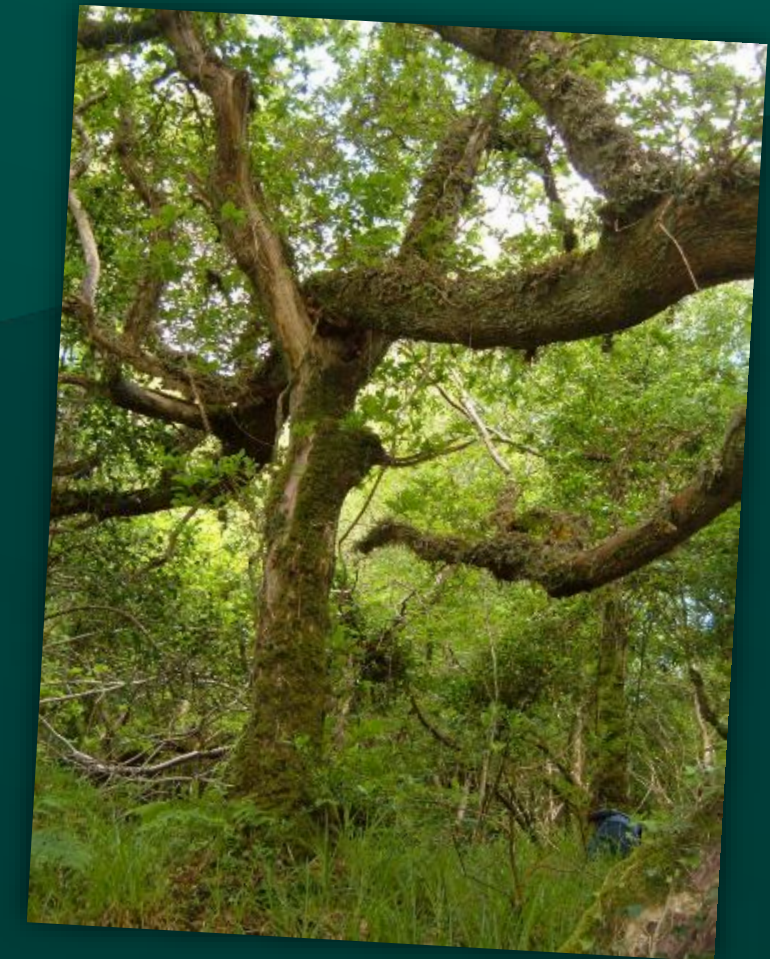
- strictly protected species (on Annex I eg Peregrine Falcon)
- internationally important assemblages of birds (eg breeding seabirds, wintering waterbirds)
- 82 SPA trigger species



Natura 2000 network in Ireland



- 439 SACs
- 154 SPAs
- 906,000 ha terrestrial area (including lakes and rivers) (13%)
- 1,042,000 ha marine area
- 90% of terrestrial area is privately owned
- 59% of terrestrial area is farmed
- Circa 35,000 farmers (26% of all farmers)



Servicing the requirements of the Nature Directives

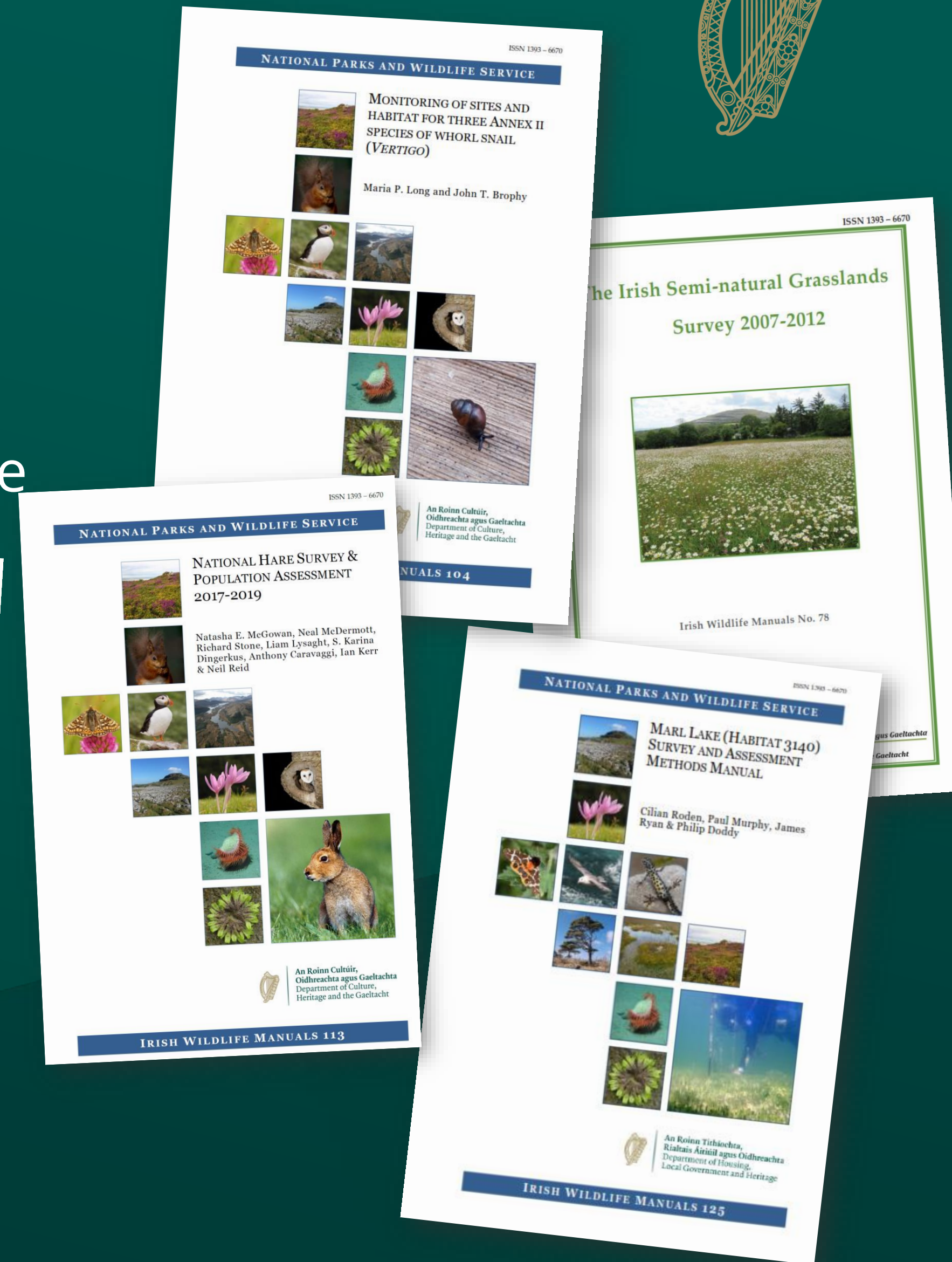
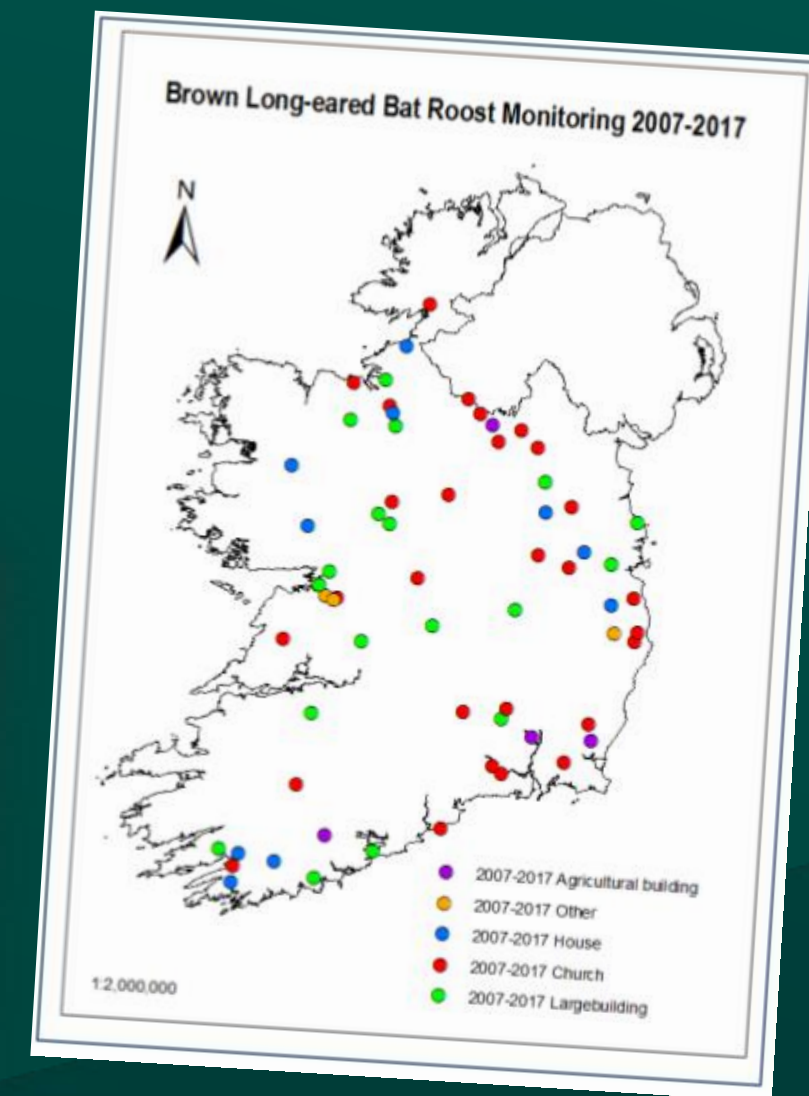


- SACs and SPAs - identification of boundaries and selection of qualifying habitats and species, and maintenance of inventories
- Reporting to the EU Commission - on a 6-year cycle
- Setting and publication of site-specific conservation objectives
- Advising on, and in some cases implementing, necessary conservation measures
- Engaging with national stakeholders and the EU



Surveying habitats and species

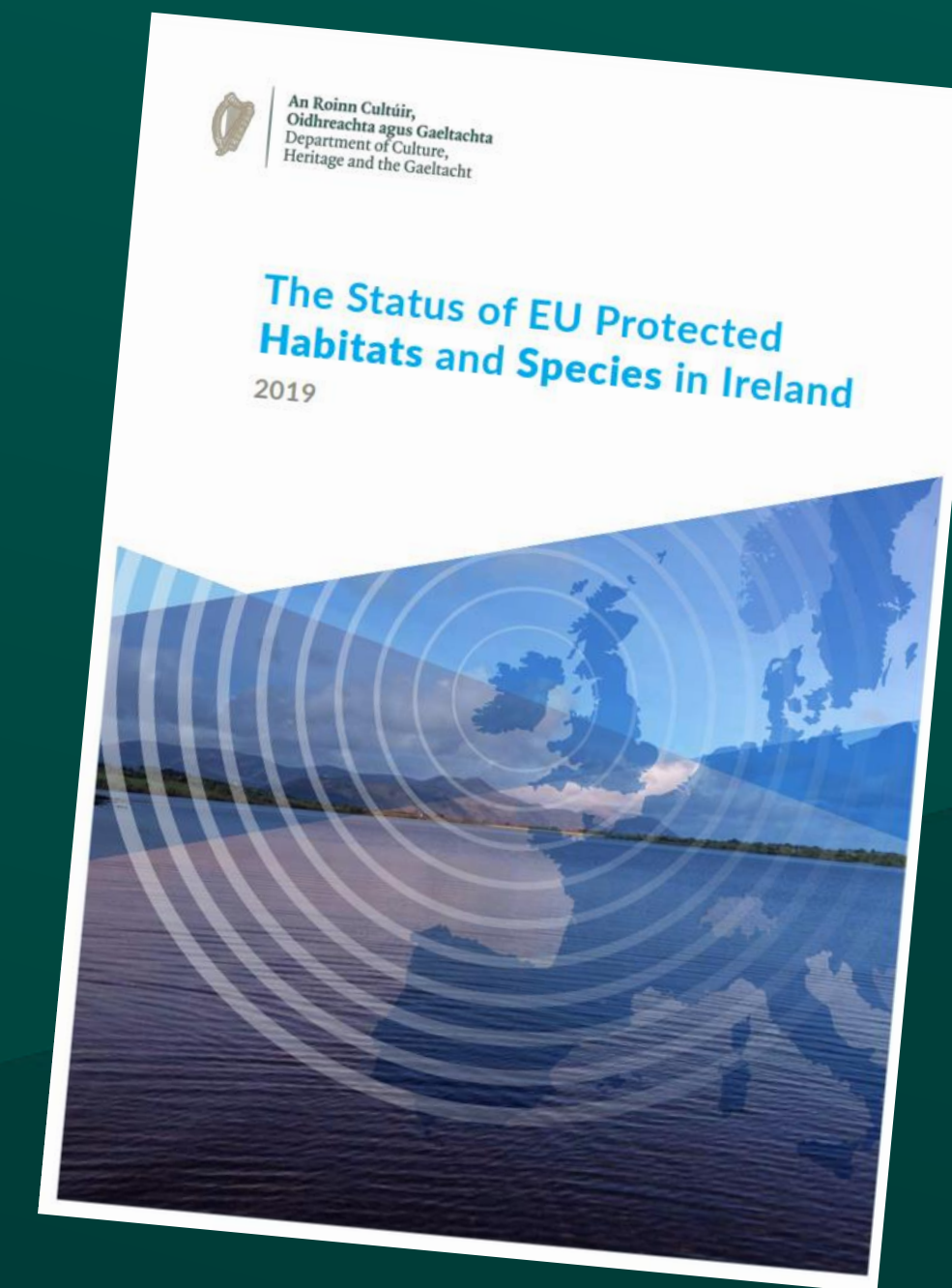
- Developing national monitoring schemes for habitats and species listed in Birds and Habitats Directive both inside and outside Natura
- Includes mapping condition as well as identification of pressures and threats
- Reports often published as Irish Wildlife Manuals and available on the NPWS website



Reporting under the Nature Directives

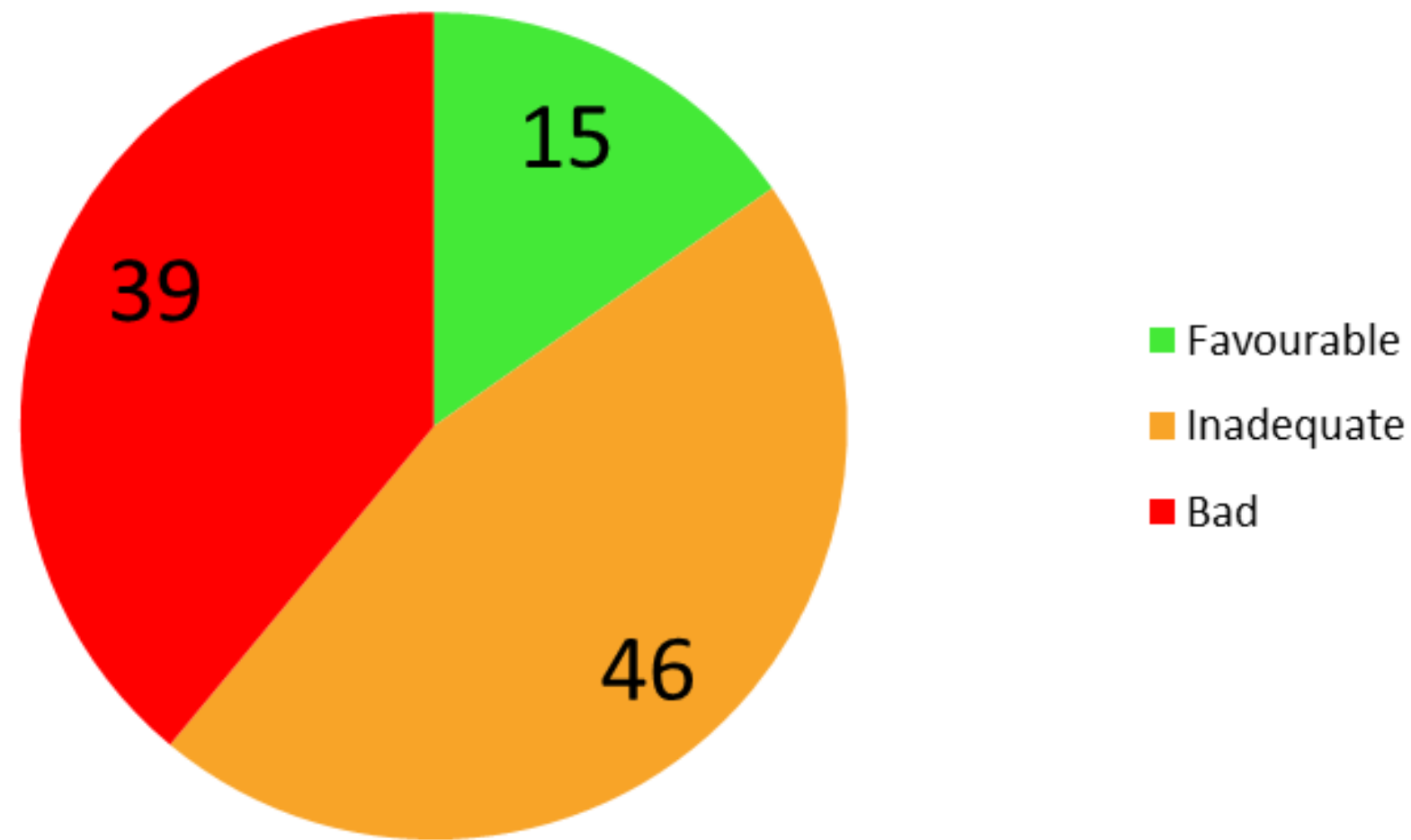


- Under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive - have to report the national conservation status of habitats and species listed in Annexes I, II, IV and V
- Under Article 12 of the Birds Directive- have to report on population status and trends for all wild bird species
- Requires data to be collected and analysed for all habitats and species that have to be reported on
 - So how are we doing???

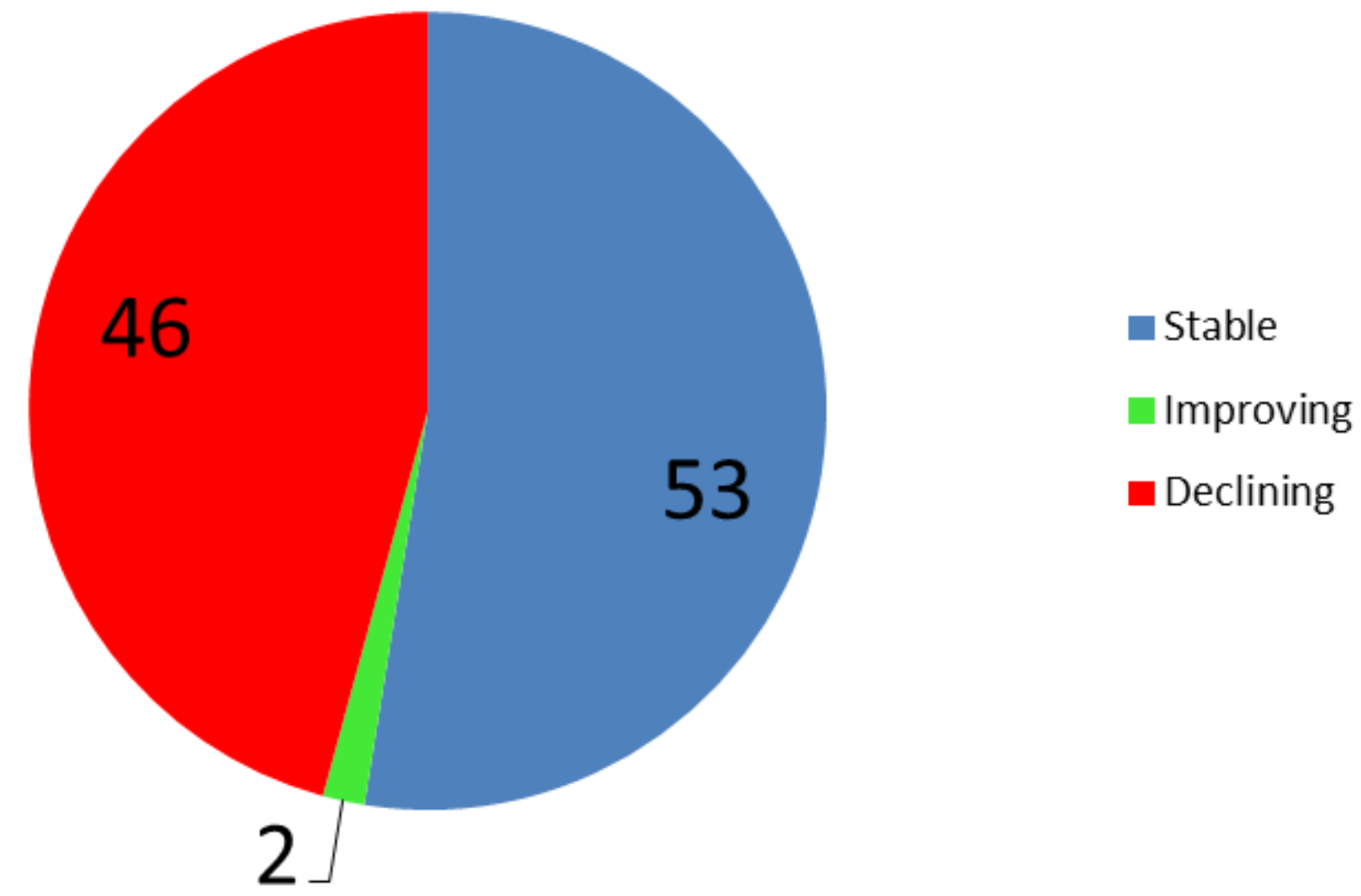


Conservation status assessment of EU protected Habitats and Species 2013-2018

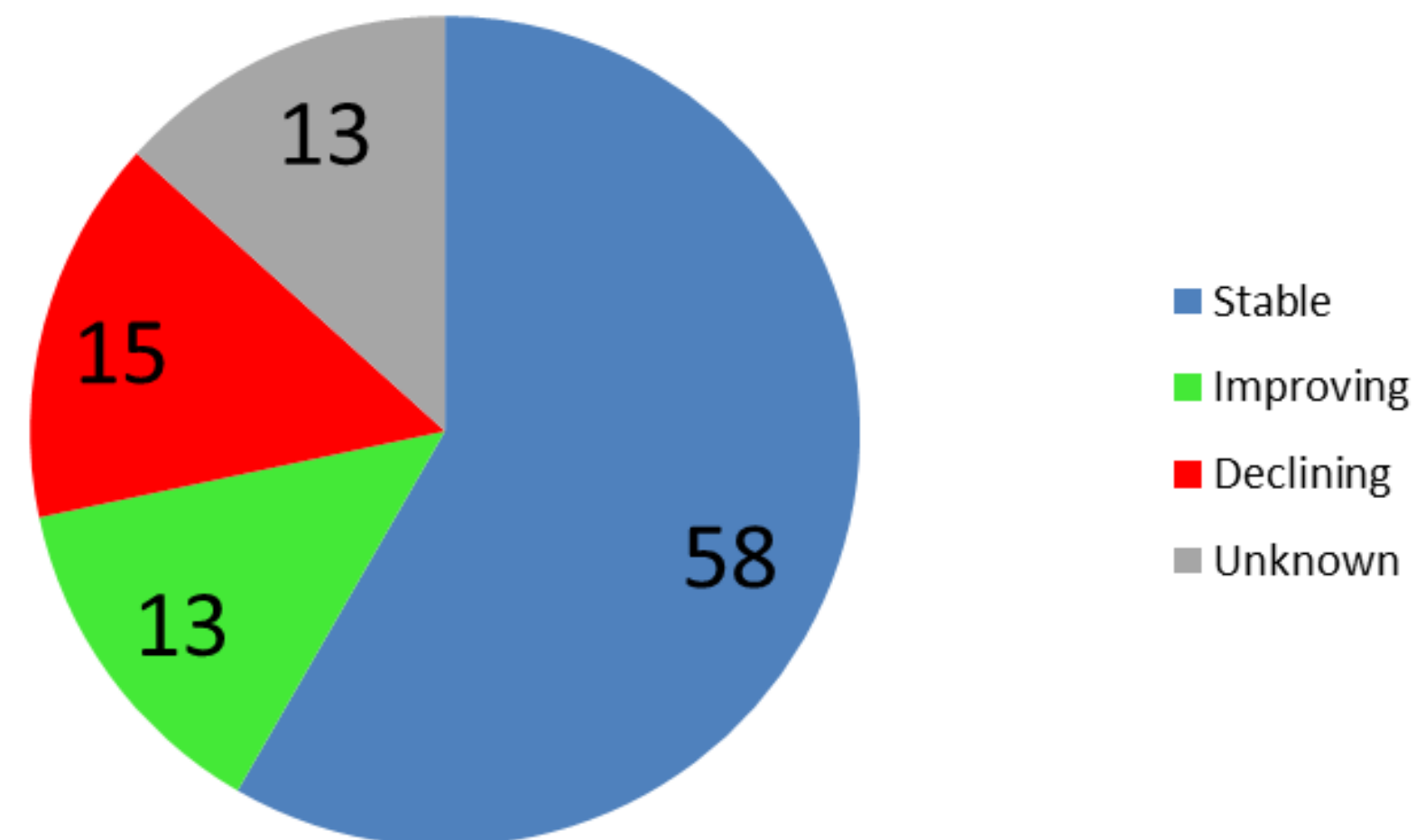
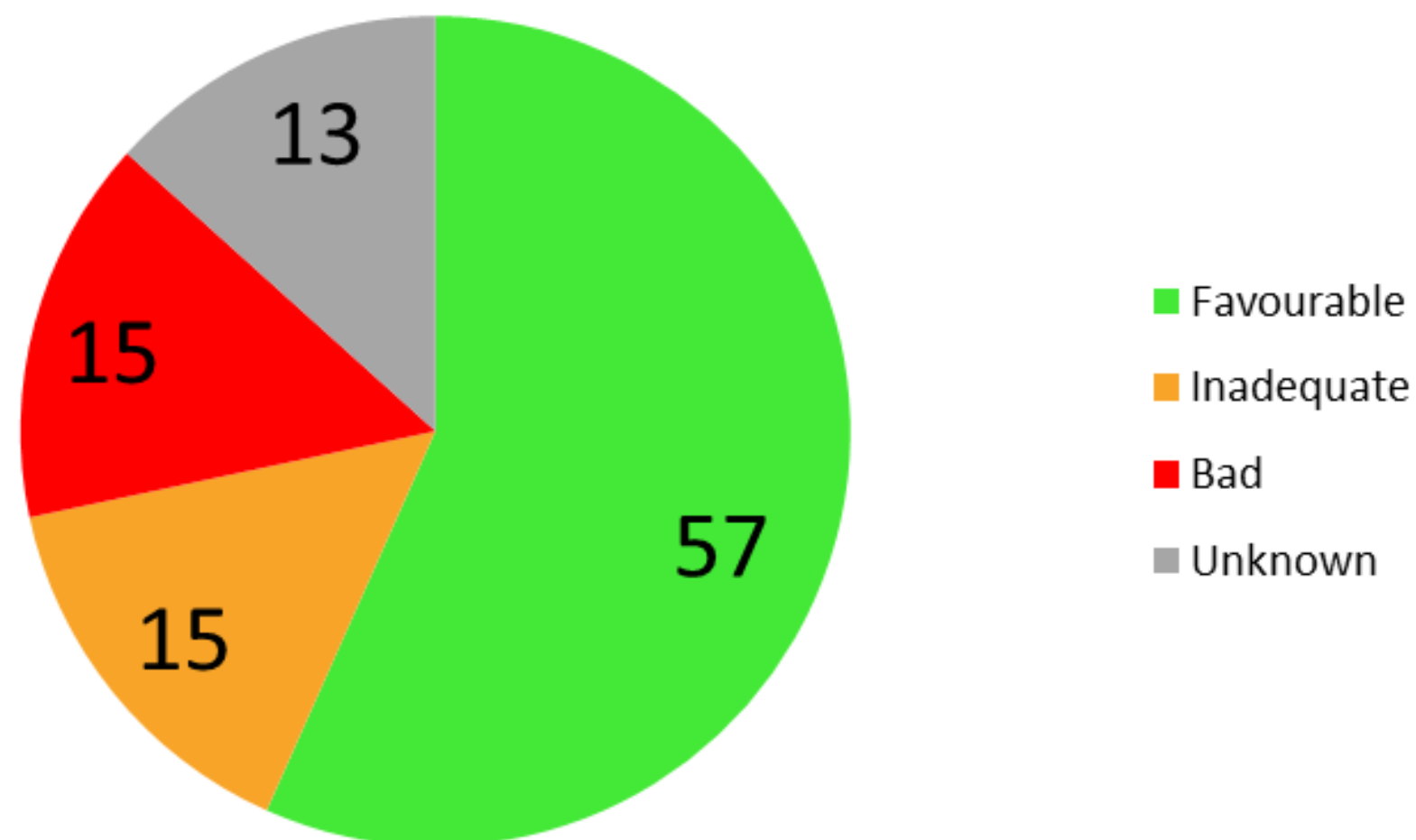
STATUS



TRENDS



59 Habitats

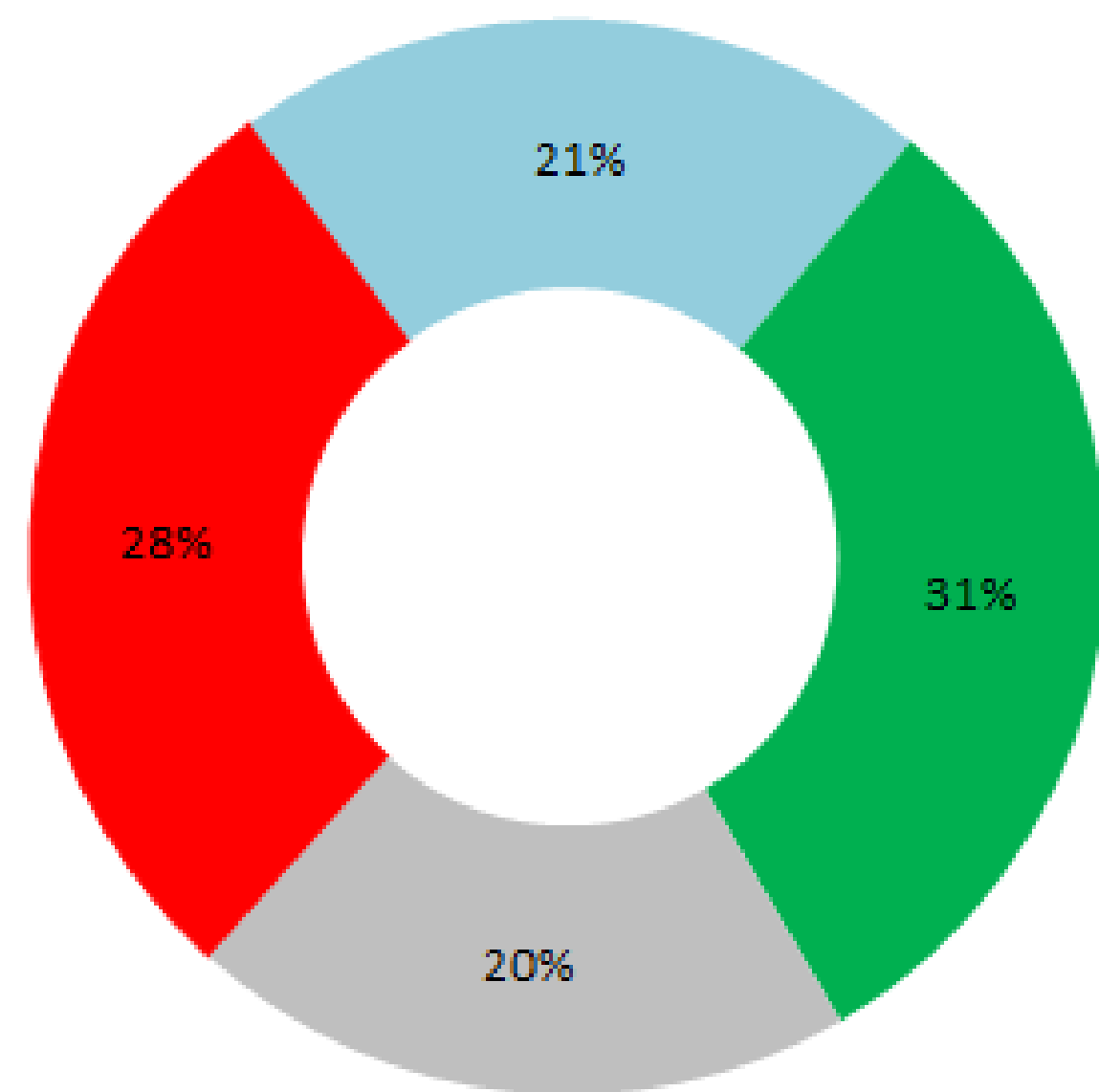


57 Species
3 Species groups

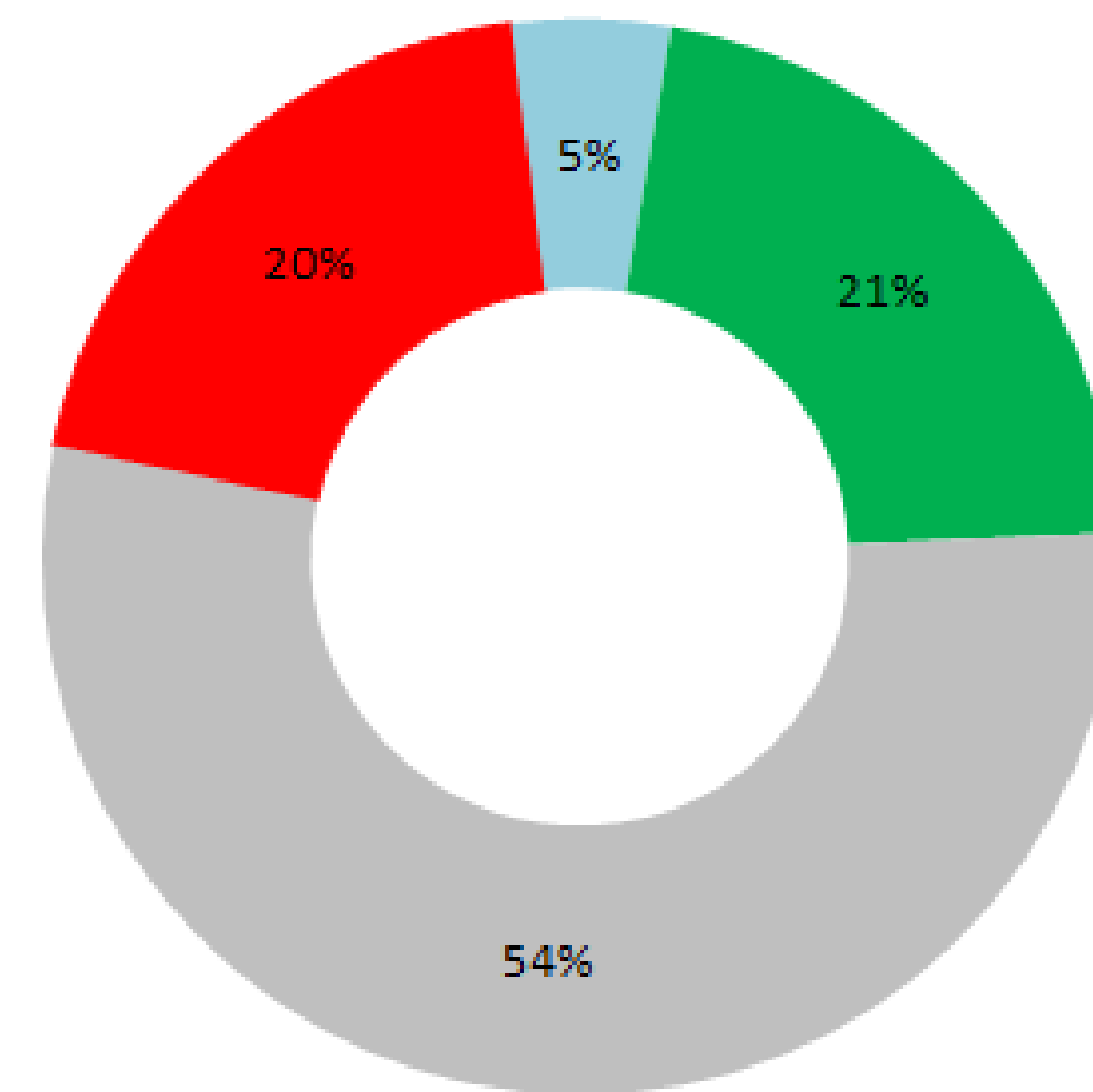
Status of birds in Ireland

Population trends for 209 species:

Short term (last 12 years)



Long term (since c. 1980)



- Decreasing
- Stable
- Increasing
- Unknown

Pressures and Threats

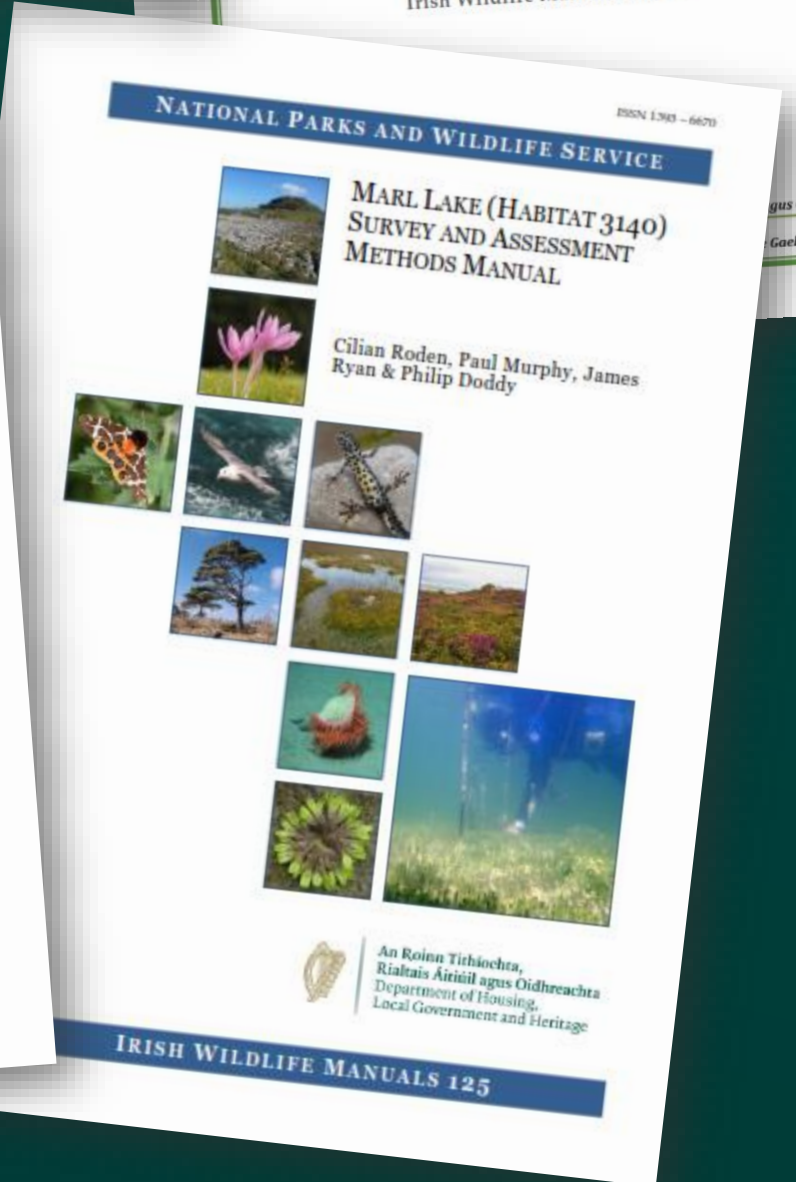
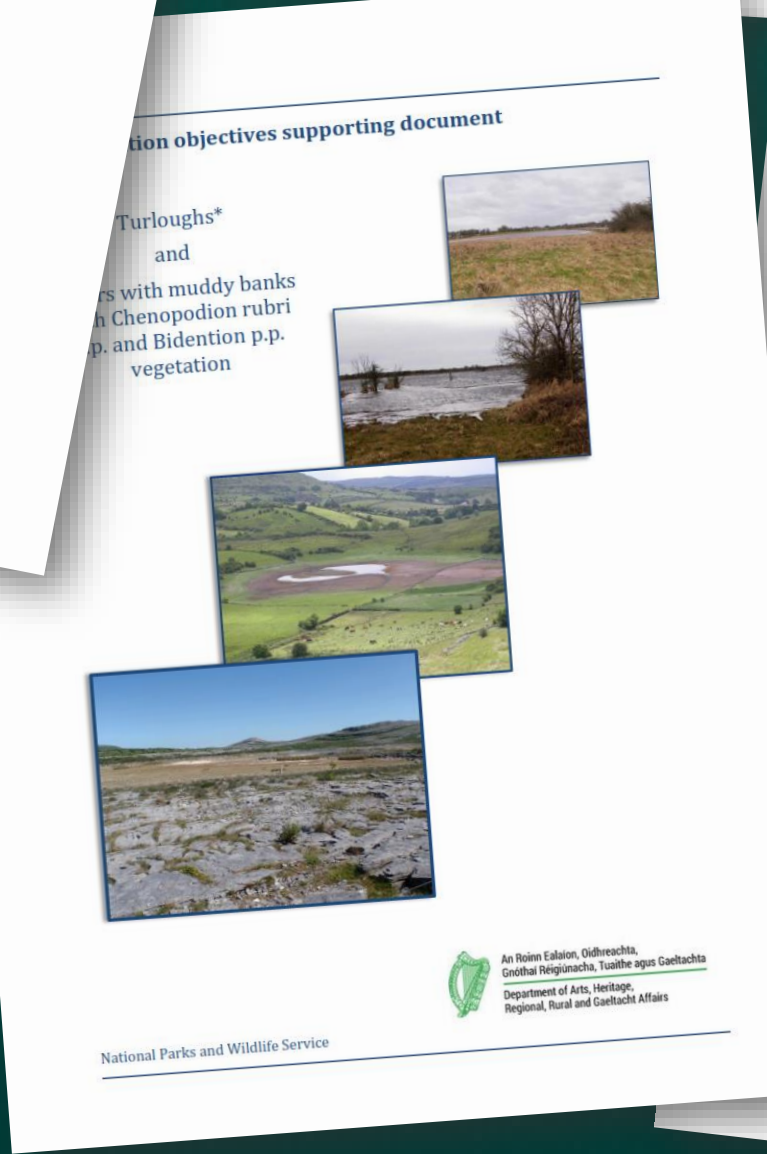
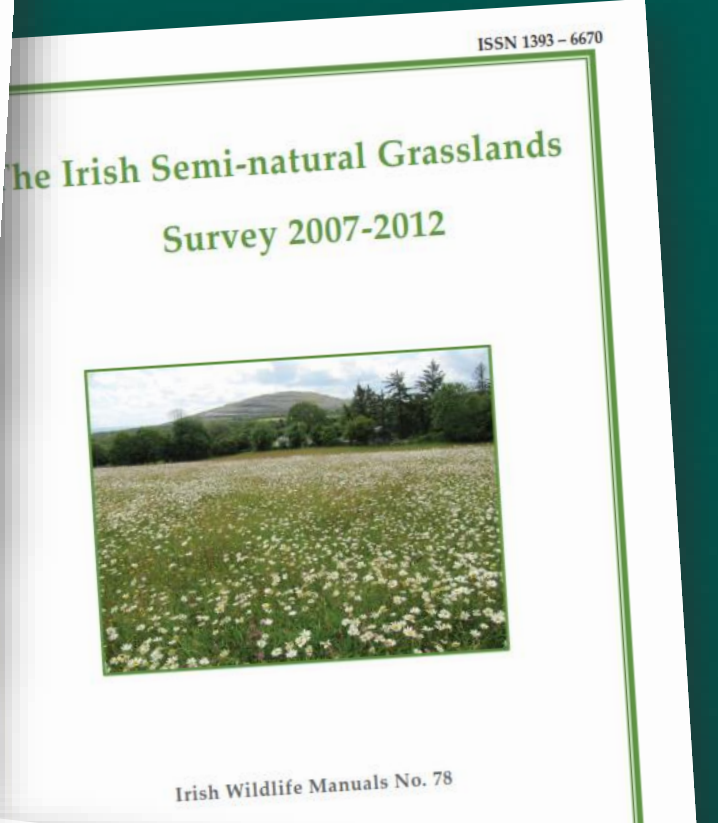
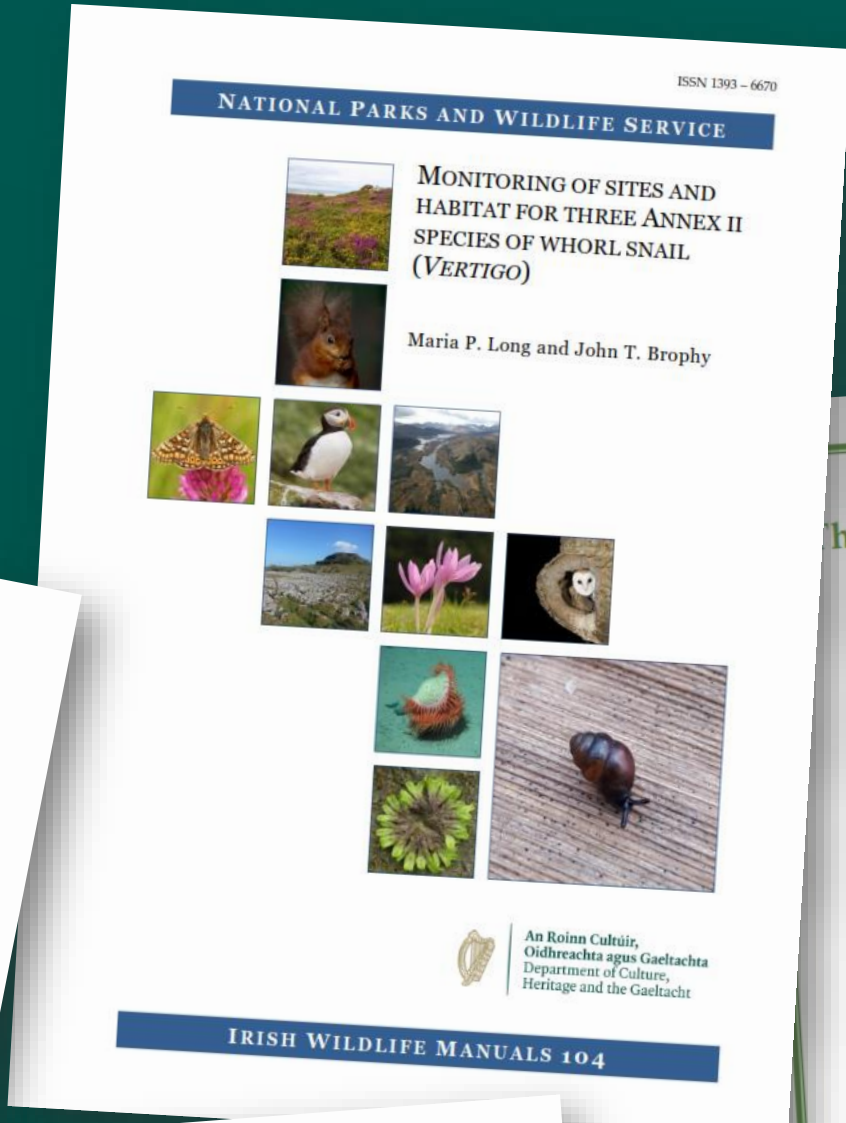
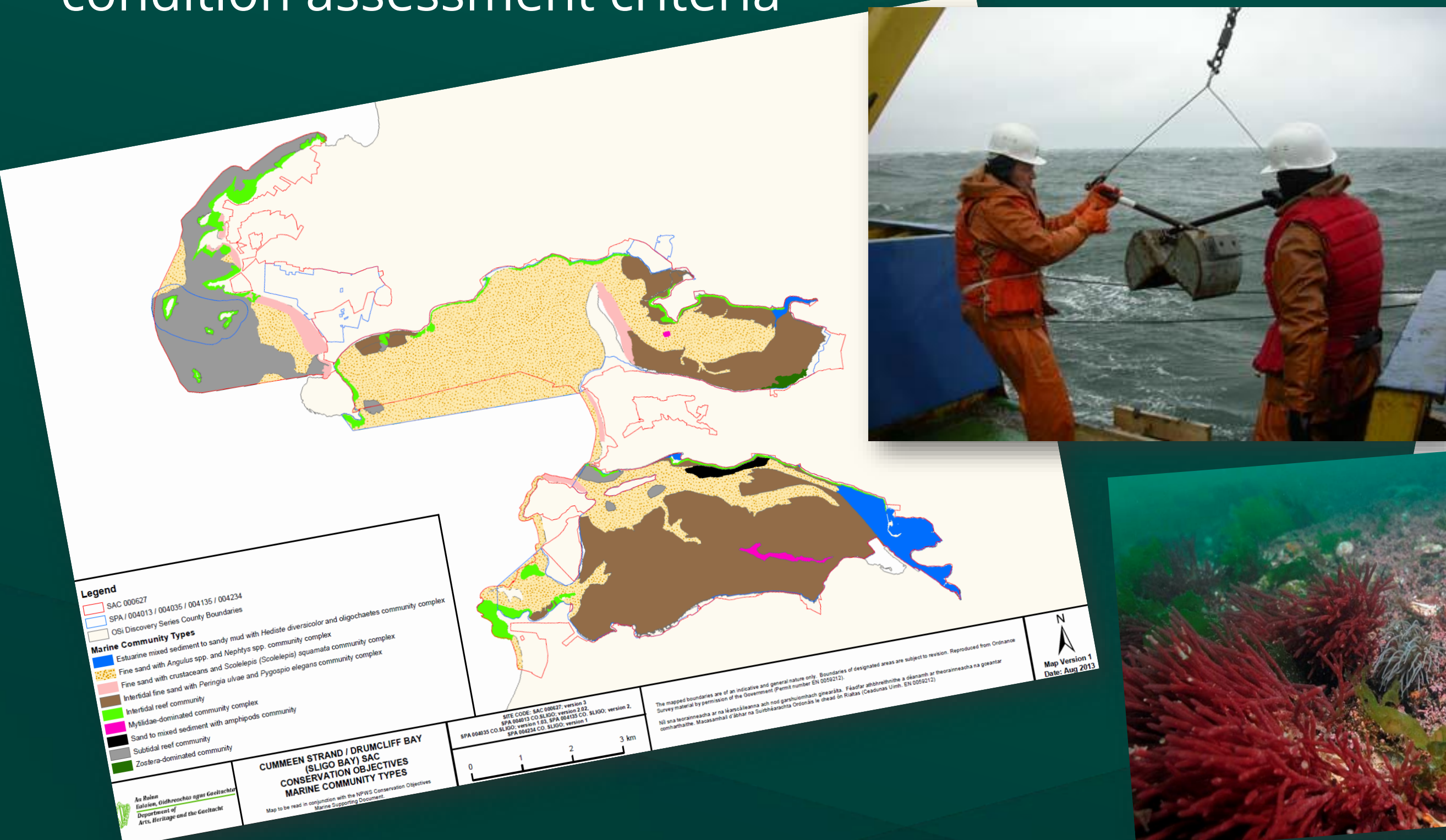


- Agriculture
- Development
- Water Pollution
- Forestry
- Extraction of resources
- Invasive Alien Species

Site-specific conservation objective setting process



- Standard template with suitable attributes and targets that define favourable conservation condition developed for each habitat and species
- Based on ecological requirements of the habitat/species, of using condition assessment criteria



Developing National Biodiversity Action Plans



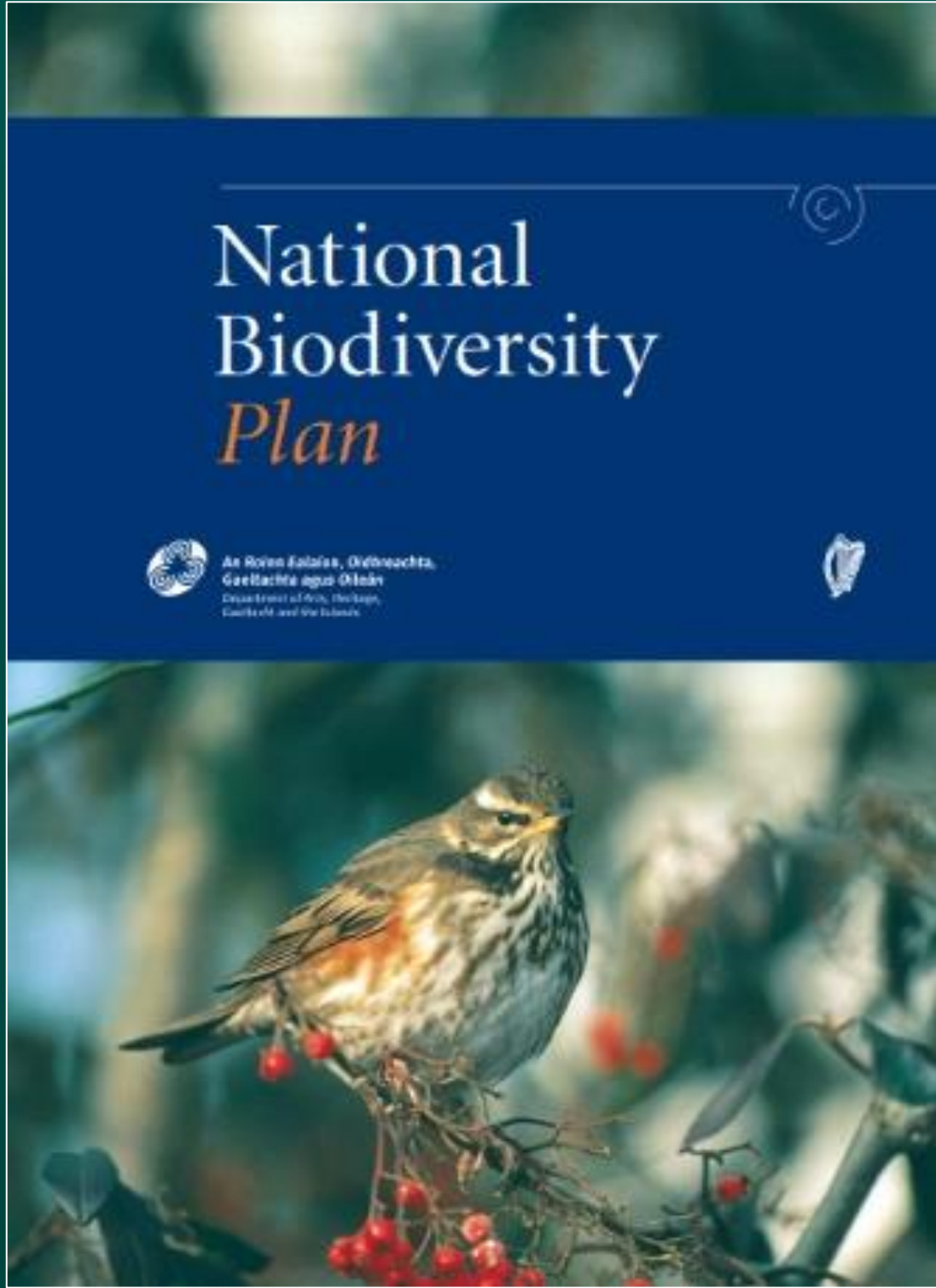
- Compiling the NBAP and associated reviews
- Delivering grants to Local Authorities
- Providing support to Business and Biodiversity Platform
- Organising National Biodiversity Conference



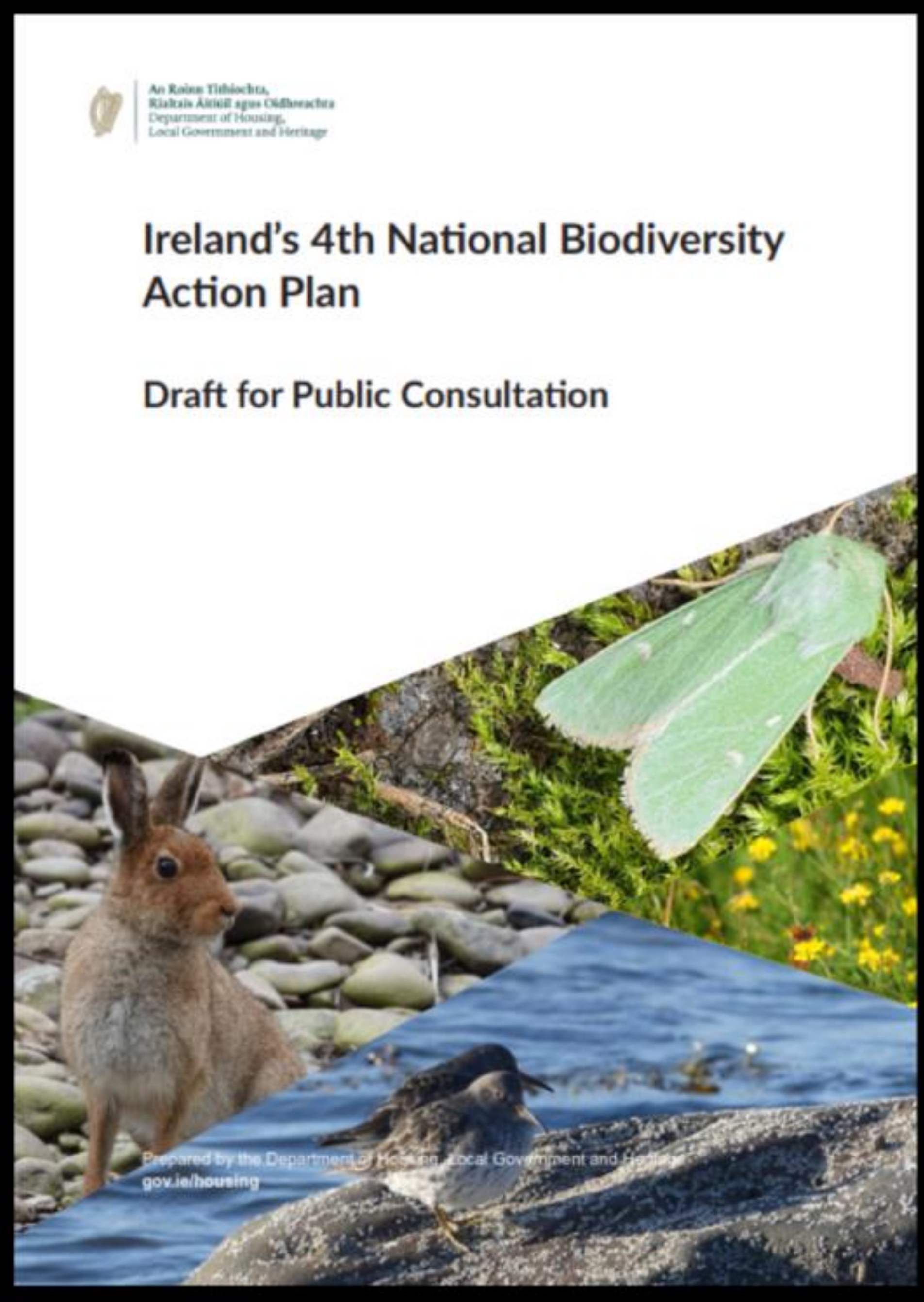
Table of Actions		
OBJECTIVE 1	Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors	26
OBJECTIVE 2	Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity	33
OBJECTIVE 3	Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services	40
OBJECTIVE 4	Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside	45
OBJECTIVE 5	Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment	55
OBJECTIVE 6	Expand and improve management of protected areas and species	60
OBJECTIVE 7	Strengthen international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services	67

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021
 Ireland's Vision for Biodiversity

"That biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally."



First Biodiversity Action Plan (April 2002)



Biodiversity Action Plan



Vision to 2050

Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people

OBJECTIVES

1. Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
2. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
3. Secure Nature's Contribution to People
4. Embed Biodiversity at the Heart of Climate Action
5. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
6. Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

162 ACTIONS in the draft plan



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Challenges

- Resources and capacity
- Coherence across Government
- Provision of appropriate incentives
- Strengthening enforcement
- Developing partnerships
- Improving policy and guidance
- Anticipating future policy



Míle buíochas

