

Have your say in Galway County's Biodiversity Plan!

Galway County Council's **'People and Nature'** Project would like to announce a period of public consultation for their forthcoming **'Biodiversity Action Plan'**. The plan aims to provide a framework for the conservation of nature and wildlife within the County Council, which will tie together the policy of national government with the issues that most affect us here in the county.

Why a Biodiversity Action Plan?

This local Biodiversity Action Plan is an opportunity to work together to preserve the unique natural heritage of County Galway and prevent further loss of biodiversity. A local Biodiversity Action Plan provides a framework for conserving biodiversity at a local level. It is designed to ensure that national and international targets for the conservation of biodiversity can be achieved while at the same time addressing local priorities. Raising public awareness and encouraging community involvement in the project are also important components of the plan.

Bio-diversity (short for biological diversity) refers to the variety of all plant and animal life on earth, and its conservation aims to prevent the decline or extinction of species and their habitats. Galway County contains some of the most rare and valuable habitats and wildlife remaining in Ireland (and even Europe!), and the County Biodiversity Action Plan represents part of the Council's efforts to protect them.

It is important that the Biodiversity Action Plan represents our local interests, and for this reason we are keen to hear the opinions of the public of Galway County. All interested parties are encouraged to view the plan, and any comments or observations would be most welcome! The plan can be accessed online in the Heritage section of the council website:

<http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/BiodiversityProject/>

Print copies will be available in all Galway County Council Area Offices and Galway County Libraries during February.

Please note that the Galway County **'Biodiversity Action Plan'** applies only to the areas governed by Galway County Council.

Any comments or questions on the report are welcomed from now until 10 March, 2008,

please contact: Mr Nick Marchant,
Acting People and Nature Project Manager,
Applied Ecology Unit, Centre for Environmental Science, NUI, Galway.
Tel. 091 493863

'People and Nature', the Galway County Biodiversity Project is a partnership project in association with the Galway County Heritage Forum, The Heritage Council, N.U.I. Galway and Galway Rural Development.

Galway Biodiversity

In Galway, we are fortunate to have such a rich natural heritage, much of it relatively unspoilt. Galway's biodiversity includes habitats and species of plants and animals that are rare or absent elsewhere in Ireland and Europe. Intact blanket bog, raised bogs, sea cliffs, sand dunes, turloughs, river callows, limestone pavement, maerl beaches and species rich grasslands are just some of the habitats of national and international importance to be found in County Galway. Galway County Council has been proactive in the process of integrating biodiversity and natural heritage into aspects of local plans, programmes and strategies.

Habitats and Species info (*from poster and booklet*)

There are six National Parks in Ireland, one of which is Connemara National Park (c.3000 hectares)

Further information is available at:

www.npws.ie/en/Nationalparks/ConnemaraNatpark/

Nature Reserves are areas of importance to wildlife. They are protected under ministerial guidelines. They can be owned by the State, Private Landowners and Organisations . Examples in County Galway [SP1] include:

Ballynastaig Wood: (9.758 ha.)

Coole-Garryland: (363.583 ha.). These two reserves near **Gort, Co. Galway**, See www.coolepark.ie

Clochar na gCon/Bealacooan Bog: (1,247ha) **Co.Galway**. Situated in **South Connemara**, approximately two miles north of **Inverin**,

Derryclare: situated on the N.W. shore of **Derryclare Lough, Ballinahinch, Co. Galway**, total area is 19 ha

Rosturra Wood: 3 km east-north-east of **Woodford, Co.Galway**, (17.68 ha.).

Derrycrag Wood, Co. Galway: 1 km south-east of **Woodford** (110.477ha.).

Leam West Bog: (373.48 h.a.) Grid Ref: M0342. The Reserve is situated two miles south east of **Maam Cross, Co. Galway**.

Pollnaknockaun Wood: comprising 38.85 ha. 1 km north-east of **Woodford village, Co. Galway**

Richmond Esker: 4 km north-west of **Moylough, Co.Galway** (15.7 ha.)

Knockmaa Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) Protected Under: Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000

Sites may have been selected by virtue of having special scientific significance for one or more species, communities, habitats, landforms, or geological or geomorphologic features, or for a diversity of natural attributes. Depending on their quality and importance, NHAs may carry other designations including SAC, SPA, Statutory Nature Reserve or National Park.

Map of NHA's in County Galway:

www.galway.ie/planning/developmentplan/landscape/landscape_maps/NHA.pdf

Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs)

Protected under: **Habitats Directive of 1992 (EU Directive 92/43/EEC)**
Natural Habitats Regulations 1997 (S.I.94/97)

These are sites that have been identified to be of conservation importance in a European context, based on the habitats and species, both plant and animal that they support. All SACs are also proposed Natural Heritage Areas. Examples of candidate Special Areas of Conservation in County Galway:

<http://www.npws.ie/Conservationsites/SpecialAreasofConservationSACs/SiteSynops is/Galway/>

Map of cSAC's in County Galway:

www.galway.ie/planning/developmentplan/landscape/landscape_maps/SAC.pdf

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Protected under: Birds Directive of 1979 (EU Directive 79/409/EEC) Natural Habitats Regulations 1997 (S.I.94/97)

These are sites of European importance that have been identified as being of conservation importance on account of the bird species and populations they support. The Directive directs all member states to take measures to protect all wild birds and to preserve a sufficient diversity of habitats for all species naturally occurring within their territories, so as to maintain populations. All SPAs are also proposed Natural Special protection Areas.

Map of SPA's in County Galway:

www.galway.ie/planning/developmentplan/landscape/landscape_maps/SPA.pdf

www.npws.ie/NatureReserves/Galway/

'People and Nature': the Galway County Biodiversity Project. The People and Nature project is an action of the Galway County Heritage Plan 2004 - 2008 supported by Galway County Council, NUI, Galway, Galway Rural Development, Galway County Heritage Forum and the Heritage Council.

Galway County Biodiversity Project Manager Applied Ecology Unit, Centre for Environmental Science, NUI, Galway Phone 091 493863 Fax 091 494598