

What is Ireland's Biodiversity worth?

12/05/08

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr John Gormley, T.D., has today (12 May 2008) announced the publication of a study investigating the social and economic aspects of biodiversity in Ireland.

The report, produced by a consortium led by Dr Craig Bullock of Optimize Consulting, considered a number of key sectors including agriculture, forestry, infrastructure development, human health and climate change. By drawing a comparison between the value of ecosystem services provided by biodiversity and the cost of implementing biodiversity protection policies, the authors established a marginal value of biodiversity to Ireland of at least €2.6 billion per annum. For example, the report has estimated that the value of the humble earthworm to Ireland to be in the region of €700 million per annum for the services it provides in removing dead matter and releasing nutrients back to the soil. Dr Bullock emphasised that the value of €2.6 billion suggested by the report was a conservative estimate and that the true value was likely to be much higher if you considered other areas such as the benefits to human health.

Minister Gormley welcomed the publication of the report stating. *“Most of us recognise the need to protect our native wildlife for its intrinsic value and as something to be preserved for future generations. However, this report presents a compelling case to strengthen policies for the protection of biodiversity for economic reasons and highlights far reaching social, as well as financial benefits, for our society”.*

The Minister noted, *“In recent years, many of Ireland’s species and habitats have been endangered by increased development and inadequate policies across a range of economic sectors. Our biodiversity now faces increased threats from climate change and other threats such as the introduction of non-native invasive species. We must develop and implement appropriate policies to meet this challenge”.*

The Minister added that the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government would be preparing a revised Biodiversity Strategy for Ireland during 2008 and this new report highlights the need for a strong engagement from both the public and private sectors.

[Links & Further Reading](#)

'The Economic and Social Aspects of Biodiversity: Benefits and Costs of Biodiversity in Ireland'.

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Heritage/NatureConservation/FileDownload,17321,en.pdf>

National Biodiversity Plan (3,395 kb)

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Heritage/NationalParksandWildlife/Biodiversity/Publications/Documents/FileDownload,2188,en.pdf>

Environmental Data

<http://www.seupb.eu/consultation/documents/SEA/INTERREGIV%20Appendix%204.pdf>

Protecting Ireland's Biodiversity

<http://www.sciencetechnologyaction.com/lessons/18/Teagasc.pdf>

All-Ireland cooperation on Biodiversity - Ramsar

http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_ireland_biodiversity_2007.htm

Biochange

<http://www.biochange.ie/>

Biodiversity - Comhar

<http://www.comharsdc.ie/themes/index.aspx?TAuto=2>

Biodiversity Garden Awards

<http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=375>

Biodiversity and Protected areas - Ireland

http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/bio_cou_372.pdf

Biology.ie

<http://www.biology.ie/home.php?m=biodiversity>

Farmland Biodiversity

http://www.environment.teagasc.ie/Heritage/Farmland_biodiversity.asp

Friends of the Irish Environment

<http://www.friendsoftheirishenvironment.net/>

Invasive Species in Ireland

http://www.icaais.org/pdf/20Monday/pm/Jamie_Dick.pdf

Ireland's National Platform for Biodiversity Research

<http://www.biodiversityresearch.ie/>

Ireland - Water Framework Directive

<http://www.wfdireland.ie/>

The Irish Gardner's forum

<http://www.irishgardeners.com/>

National Biodiversity Data Centre

<http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/>

The National Biodiversity Plan

<http://www.agriculture.ie/forestry/files/biodiv.doc>

An Taisce

<http://www.antaisce.org/>

Voice - Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment

<http://www.voiceireland.org/>