

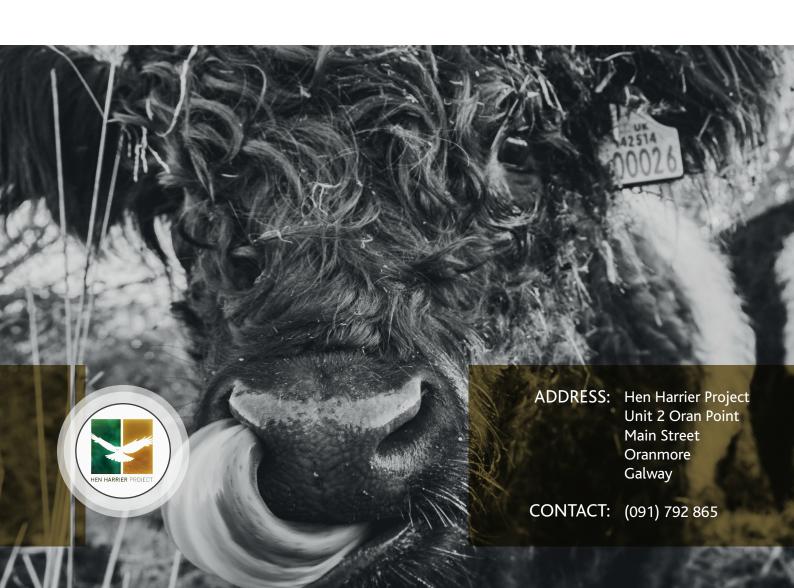




HEN HARRIER PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR 1: MAY 2017 - APRIL 2018



About Us

......

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine awarded the administration of a new pilot Locally Led Agri-Environment Scheme (LLAES) to the Hen Harrier Project Ltd. The Hen Harrier Project brings together a team of experienced Conservationists, Agricultural Advisors and Environmental Scientists in conjunction with Brendan O'Gorman (Accountants) and the Golden Eagle Trust Ltd. The Project aims to deliver a range of environmental benefits on marginal and upland farms. The development of the Project commenced on the April 20th 2017 and will run until 2023. This 5 year programme is targeted specifically at farmers with land in Slieve Beagh, Slieve Bloom Mountains, Slieve Felim to Silvermines Mountains, Slieve Aughty Mountains, Stacks to Mullaghereirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills & Mount Eagle and Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Areas (SPAs).



The Hen Harrier Project is a locally targeted conservation programme building strong partnerships with farmers to deliver sustainable benefits for biodiversity, upland ecosystems and a vibrant local rural economy. The Hen Harrier Project Ltd is the lead partner in a consortium contracted to by Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to administer the Hen Harrier Programme. A practical results based approach to farming in Special Protection Areas designated for the protection of breeding Hen Harrier.

We support and encourage farmers and farming communities to farm for conservation. We work with farmers to help ensure that upland management is rewarded and valued for the delivery of vital ecosystem services. The Hen Harrier Project uses a novel 'hybrid' approach to farming for conservation which sees farmers paid for both work undertaken and, most importantly, for the delivery of defined environmental objectives.

Our Structure

Hen Harrier Project Ltd

Golden Eagle Trust

Brendan O'Gorman

LEAD PARTNER

The Hen Harrier Project Limited is a special purpose vehicle set up to provide a service to the client. It is the lead partner in the consortium. The company has no other clients and does not engage in any business activity outside of the contract with the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

MONITORING TEAM

The Golden Eagle Trust Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. They provide specialised monitoring services and training in support of the Hen Harrier Programme. The Golden Eagle Trust undertake annual monitoring of Hen Harrier within the SPAs and also monitor predator densities to inform nest protection measures as part of the Programme. The Golden Eagle Trust is a registered charity.

ACCOUNTANTS

Brendan O'Gorman (Accountants) are chartered accountants in Galway. They provide a range of supports for the financial administration of the Hen Harrier Project Ltd. They organise and manage the payments to participating farmers in the Hen Harrier Programme.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

The Project Manager commenced full time employment with the Hen Harrier Project Ltd on the signing of the contract. The Assistant Manager Dr. Caroline Sullivan commenced work in late May 2017, Eoin McCarthy and Ryan Wilson Parr started work in early June 2017. Evelyn Joyce started with the Company in December 2017.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hen Harrier Project Ltd is based in Unit No. 2, Oran Point, Main St, Oranmore, Co. Galway. A second office opened in Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, May 2018.

Staff Training

.....



The Hen Harrier Project ran an employee induction course in Loughrea, Co. Galway in June 2017. This course was also attended by Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and National Parks and Wildlife Service staff. The course included instruction on Hen Harrier ecology, current DAFM schemes and results-based models for agri-environment schemes. It also included Mountain Safety training for staff as part of the Hen Harrier Project Ltd commitment to Health and Safety Training for its employees.

Development Farms

......



Twelve Development Farms were selected by the Project team. These included nominees from three of the Farm Organisations. Development farms were selected in each of the Special Protection Areas. Farms were representative of the range of habitat types and farm enterprises.

The development farmers provided their lands for the use of the project team for developing methodologies for habitat assessment. They also gave site specific assessments of the practicalities of suggested actions and relayed general concerns. A subset of this group reviewed the Terms and Conditions and suggested edits to that document.

The Hen Harrier Project Ltd facilitated 9 of the Development farmers attending the Burren Winterage Conference in October 2017. This included an opportunity for them to meet participants in the Burren Programme and learn from them about the operation of a Result Based Agri-Environment Programme.

Farm Organsiations:

Irish Creamery & Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA)

Irish Farmers with Designated Land (IFDL)

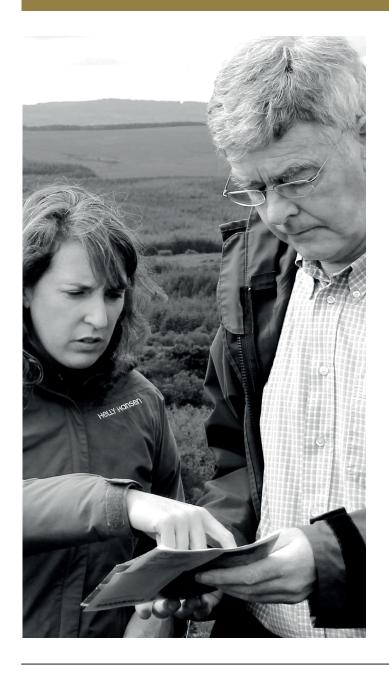
Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

Irish Natura and Hill Farmers' Association (INHFA)

Special Protection Area	No. of Farms	Nominating Body
Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	1	Hen Harrier Project
Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	4	IFDL; ICMSA; Hen Harrier Project
Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains (4162)	1	IFA
Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains (4165)	2	IFDL; Hen Harrier Project
Slieve Beagh (4167)	1	Hen Harrier Project
Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	3	INHFA; IFA

Scientific Advisory

The Hen Harrier Project is supported by a Scientific Advisory Group. The members of the Group contributed to the initial staff training programme in June 2017, reviewed position papers produced by the Hen Harrier Project and commented on ideas put forward by the Project team. A further formal meeting between the Project Team and the Scientific Advisory Group was held on March 23rd, 2018 at the Hen Harrier Project Ltd Office.





Consultation

......

Consultations with farmers were a key part of the development process for the Hen Harrier Programme. Farmer Consultations ran for seven weeks, from early-July to the end of August 2017. Meetings were held with farmers at 31 venues across the SPA network. Over 500 farmers attended these meetings.





Consultations were essential to establish a commitment to open dialogue and to demonstrate to farmers that the work on the programme had begun. Most importantly it was necessary to inform the project team of the issues of concern to farmers so that they could be appropriately addressed in the Programme design phase.



Attitudes

At the beginning of each consultation meeting, the attendees were asked to answer four set questions. These required the farmer to use 5 words to describe their area, the Hen Harrier, the future of farming and their idea of farming in their area in ideal situations.



Feedback

A Consultation Report was published that outlined how the Project will address the core issues rasied by farmers. The document highlighted important areas of agreement, interest and concern and presented the results of the attitude assessments.

Consultation

.....

Consultation Meetings with Farmers across the SPA network. (early-July to the end of August 2017)

Venue	Special Protection Area	County
Lyreacrumpane	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Kerry
Cordal	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Kerry
Killenena	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Clare
Knockdown	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Limerick
Derrybrien	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Galway
Ballyvourney	Mullaghanish to Musheramore	Cork
Templeglantine	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Limerick
Knockatallon	Slieve Beagh	Monaghan
Knocknasnsa	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Limerick
Ballydesmond	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Cork
Crusheen	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Clare
Upperchurch	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains	Tipperary
Millstreet	Mullaghanish to Musheramore	Cork
Rockchapel	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Cork
Carrickroe	Slieve Beagh	Monaghan
Woodford	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Galway
Kilchreest	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Galway
Flagmount	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Clare
Roscrea	Slieve Blooms	Tipperary
Carrigkerry	The Stacks, Mullaghareirk, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle.	Limerick
Scarriff	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Clare
Cappanrush	Slieve Blooms	Laois
Templederry	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains	Tipperary
Rearcross	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains	Tipperary
Kilbeacanty	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Galway
Clonaslee	Slieve Blooms	Laois
Camross	Slieve Blooms	Laois
Kinnity	Slieve Blooms	Offaly
Newport	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains	Tipperary
Killoscully	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains	Tipperary
Killeenadeema	Slieve Aughty Mountains	Galway

Consultation

......

Consultations Meetings and Briefings with Farm Organisations and Others.

Organisation	Venue	Date
National Parks & Wildlife Service Management	Galway & Oranmore, Co. Galway	June 2nd & October 5th 2017
Irish Farmers Association	Ballinasloe, Co. Galway	August 8th 2017
Irish Farmers with Designated Land	Charleville, Co. Cork	July 12th 2017
Irish Creamery & Milk Suppliers Association	Limerick City	July 24th 2017
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford	August 9th 2017
Farm Advisors Seminar	Athlone, Co. Roscommon	September 14th 2017
National Parks & Wildlife Service Regional Staff	Bunratty, Co. Clare	October 11th 2017
Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and his team	Agriculture House, Dublin	October 18th 2017

Design Phase

.....

The Programme was designed by the Project Team in the period June -November 2017. This structure was designed to recognise and reward achievements in the provision of high quality habitats along with an innovative Hen Harrier Payment. Unlike traditional agri-environment schemes, actions are not seen as an end in themselves, they serve primarily to improve the farmers capacity to benefit from the habitats or Hen Harrier payment.

PAYMENT TYPES

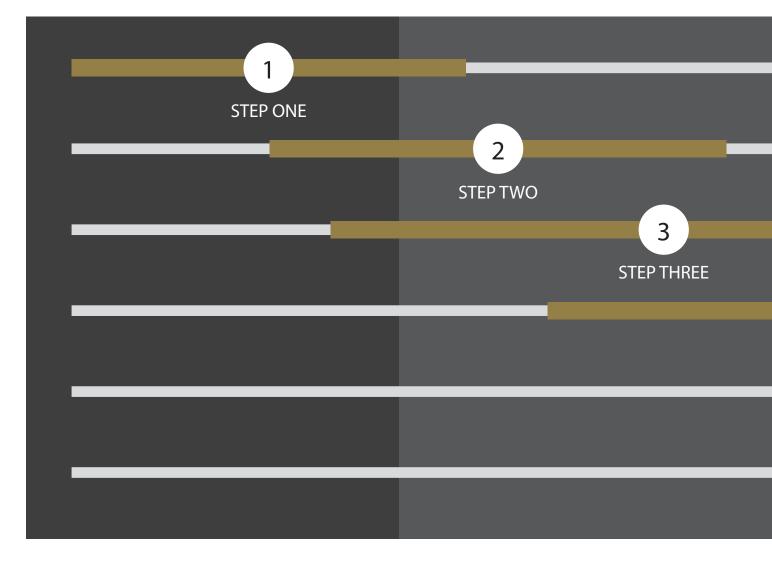
- A points-based habitat payment- this pays for the quality of the habitat delivered at the end of each breeding season.
- A Hen Harrier payment- this represents local recognition of local success in terms of supporting breeding Hen Harrier.
- A supporting actions payment- this is an investment with the farmer in actions that improve the farmers capacity to benefit from the other two payments.

Programme Process

......

QUARTER ONE

QUARTER TWO



Step One

Development of the Programme began on April 20th 2017. Focus on staff recruitment, infrastrucutre and training. Establishment of Hen Harrier Monitoring team and Scientific Advisory Group.

Step Two

The beginning of consultation Initial Farming Organisations and the nomination of development farms.

Step Three

programme phase of phase of the Project. Liaison with design, development and testing of habitat scorecards, projected costings for actions, selection criteria, applications process and data management.

...... **QUARTER THREE QUARTER FOUR**

STEP FOUR 5 STEP FIVE 6

Step Four

4

farmers across all SPAs. Feedback factored into finalised programme design and publication Terms & Conditions document. Development of GLAM mapping

Step Five

STEP SIX

Main consultation phase with The Programme was launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD on December 8th, 2017.

Step Six

Programme open for applications and operation of rolling selection system. Information meetings across the SPAs. Contract offers issued to selected applicants.

Launch



The Programme was launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD, at Jack Lynch's farm near Macroom on December 8th, 2017.

Info Sessions

.....

Hen Harrier Project team members organised 14 information metings across the SPA network. Project team members made presentations at a further 5 meetings organised by the IFA and met with the IFDL to explain the new Hen Harrier Programme.

Information Meetings held by the Hen Harrier Project			
Venue	Special Protection Area	Date	
Derrybrien	Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	19/12/17	
Camross	Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	10/1/18	
Scariff	Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	15/1/18	
Lyreacrumpane	Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	16/1/18	
Rearcross	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains (4165)	24/1/18	
Ballyvourney	Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains (4162	24/1/18	
Cordal	Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	25/11/18	
Knockatallon	Slieve Beagh (4167)	31/1/18	
Woodford	Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	5/2/18	
Templeglantine	Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	8/2/18	
Clonaslee	Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	12/2/18	
Kinnity	Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	14/2/18	
Killeenadeema	Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	15/2/18	
Crusheen	Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	21/2/18	

Applications

......

As of March 31st, the Project had received 1,625 applications of which 1,468 were valid. Each applicant was informed that their application had been received. Invalid applications were primarily from farmers without land in the SPAs designated for breeding Hen Harrier. Many of these farmers were eligible for the Hen Harrier action within GLAS and may have believed that they were eligible for this programme as well. The application system differs from traditional schemes in that it does not require the production of a plan. The application form is a simple 1-page document requesting name, address, herd number and a signature. This approach has ensured the programme is cost free at the time of application, thus removing financial risk from the application process.

Selections

Using data provided by DAFM, the Hen Harrier Programme carried out a GIS exercise that identified the designated portion of all land parcels in the SPA's. This along with the identification of 2017 Hen Harrier nests and several winter roosting sites made it possible to construct a selection system that prioritised applicants in a manner that considers conservation priorities along with facilitating those most affected by the SPA designation.

The Hen Harrier Project operates a rolling intake system. This is different from the tranche system used in recent agri-environment schemes such as AEOS and GLAS. Applicants are selected each month at SPA level according to a pre-determined prioritisation protocol. Every month the number of selected applicants from each SPA is in proportion to the number of herd numbers in that SPA. Applicants were prioritised as follows:

- Development Farms
- Critical sites, i.e. farms within a defined distance of a 2017 Hen Harrier nest or winter roost.
- All other valid applicants.

Selections

.....

Within each group applicants were ranked based on the proportion of their land designated and the area designated. The numbers selected each month varied in response to the capacity available within the Project Team. In December and January, the intake was set at 80 per month, this was increased to 100 in February and 150 in March, 6 applicants were selected in supplementary rounds, this was done to address a small number of errors arising from mapping issues or dual claims on the BPS system.

All the development farmers applied and were accepted by the end of the February. All 272 applicants with critical sites were selected by the March round. As of April 12th, a total of 416 applicants had been selected.

Total SPA Area (Basic Payment Scheme)		rea linked to Applicants Herd SPA Arc pers (Dec 2017 - Mar 2018)		rea linked to selected Applicants (Dec 2017 - Mar 2018)	
	hectares	% of total area declared for Basic Payment Scheme	hectares	% of total area declared for Basic Payment Scheme	
56,617 hectares	32,630	57.63%	15,776	27.86%	

Monitoring 2017

......

The 2017 Hen Harrier Monitoring campaign started late due to the delays associated with the tender process. It commenced immediately after the contract signing and the monitoring team under the leadership of Dr. Marc Ruddock worked hard to make up for the late start. The monitoring programmes adhered to the same methods as those used in the National Hen Harrier Survey.



The primary areas allocated for the survey were defined as the 55 individual 10 km national grid squares within which the SPAs for breeding Hen Harrier were located. These squares also included undesignated lands. All potentially suitable habitat within the SPA designated areas were surveyed. This involved more than 600 individual vantage point observations across the SPA network. More than 1,000 hours of observation were logged at these observation points. Hen Harrier territories within each SPA were classed as Confirmed or Possible. The breeding outcomes for Hen harriers within the SPA network were also ascertained along with observed pressures.

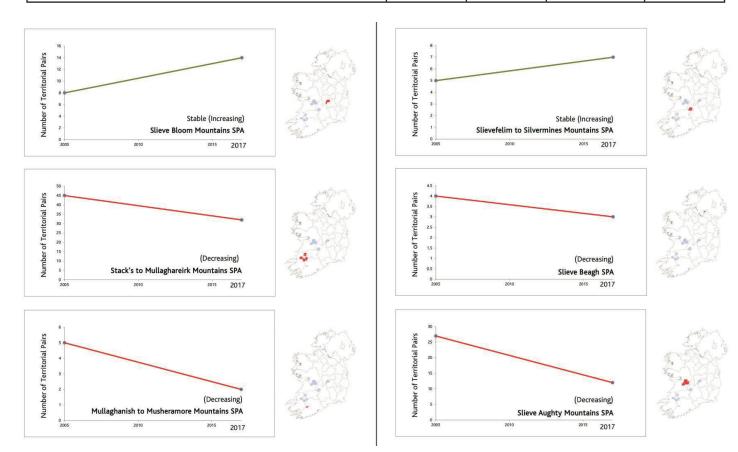
2017 Monitoring Results- Number of Hen Harrier Pairs in each SPA.

Special Protection Area	Confirmed	Possible	Confirmed +Possible	Range
Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	10	4	14	10-14
Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	27	5	32	27-32
Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains (4162)	2	0	2	2
Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains (4165)	7	0	7	7
Slieve Beagh (4167)	3	0	3	3
Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	9	3	12	9-12
TOTAL	58	12	70	58-76

Monitoring 2017

Breeding Outcomes in each SPA in 2017.

Special Protection Area	Success	Failed	Total Fledged	Young per confirmed pair
Slieve Bloom Mountains (4160)	6	4	16	1.60
Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle (4161)	13	14	32	1.19
Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains (4162)	1	1	2	1.00
Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains (4165)	3	4	6	0.86
Slieve Beagh (4167)	1	2	2	0.67
Slieve Aughty Mountains (4168)	2	7	4	0.44
TOTAL	26	32	62	1.07



The Hen Harrier Project have reached a data sharing agreement with the Forest Service and the NPWS to allow the data collected in 2017 to be used to produce up to date maps of Areas with Higher Likelihood Nesting Hen Harrier (Red Zones). The production of these maps has been contracted by NPWS to the Golden Eagle Trust utilising data collected through the Project.

Research

......

PhD Studentships

Agreement has been reached with the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) to support a student. This position will be advertised in May 2018 with the intention of the successful applicant registering in September 2018. A member of the Hen Harrier Project Team has also reached an agreement with GMIT to pursue a PhD on a part time basis. Dr. James Moran will be the academic supervisor in both cases.

Innovation

.....

Demonstration

The Hen Harrier Project are working with Devenish Nutrition to develop a low moisture block for supplementing the diet of cattle grazing on upland pastures. It is hoped that this product will encourage better pasture utilisation enhance habitat quality and ensure continued eligibility for direct payment schemes. This block will be demonstrated on 13 farms in the summer of 2018.





Events attended by Hen Harrier Project team members:

- Members of the Project Team attended the RBAPS Conference in IT Sligo-June 14th -15th.
- The Project team visited the Kerry LIFE Project- June 28th.

Events

......

- The Project Manager attended a meeting with the National Rural Network-July 4th, 2017.
- The RDP Monitoring Committee. The Project Manager was an invited speaker at this meeting- September 12th, 2017.
- National Ploughing Championship. Project Team members maintained a presence at the DAFM tent on each day of the ploughing championship- Sept 18th- 20th.
- Pine Marten Workshop organised by NPWS. The Assistant Manager attended-October 4th 2017.
- Burren Winterage School, the Project Manager was a guest speaker at this event-October 27th 2017.
- Foodwise 2025 conference, Project Manager attended- December 4th, 2017.
- Project Manager invited to address the Oireachtas Agriculture Committee-January 31st, 2018.
- The Assistant Manager was an invited speaker addressing Biodiversity and Land Use Planning M.Sc. students at an event in NUIG- February 22nd, 2018.
- Hosted field trips for students from GMIT and IT Tralee in November 2017.
- Paying for 'results' in agri-environment schemes Conference in Blaenafon, Torfaen, Wales, the Assistant Manager and one of the development farmers made a presentation at this event- February 13th 2018

Publications

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

The Hen Harrier Project have published the following documents:

- Leaflet for the Hen Harrier Project
- ★ The Terms & Conditions Booklet
- Results of the 2017 Hen Harrier Monitoring Programme
- Assessment of the results of the Consultation Programme Summer 2017
- Directory of the Hen Harrier Farm Advisors provisionally approved for the Programe

ONLINE PRESENCE

The Hen Harrier Project has developed a website www.henharrierproject.ie. As well as disseminating information on the Hen Harrier Project, the web site will showcase local producers in the SPAs. A Facebook page and a Twitter account are used to disseminate information. Several Facebook posts have reached over 10,000 people.

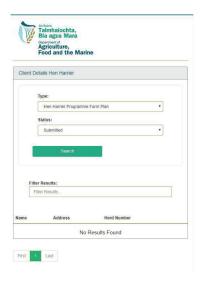
PRESS REPORTING

The Hen Harrier Project has received favourable coverage in the Irish Farmers Journal, Agriland and the Examiner. The Project Manager also wrote an article for the "Organic Matters" magazine published in December 2017. Project Team members have appeared on two radio programmes. The Assistant Manager was interviewed during a feature on the RTE Radio 1 Mooney Goes Wild Programme about the Hen Harrier. The Project Manager and one of the development farmers were featured on the RTE Radio 1 Countrywide Program about the new Hen Harrier Programme.

GLAM

......

The GLAM system is a mapping program used by DAFM to support the Burren Programme, the Hen Harrier Programme and certain forestry operations. Work on adapting this platform to meet the needs of the Hen Harrier Programme started in late 2017.



GLAM Mapping System

Objectives

- 1. Develop a mapping system to facilitate the production of Hen Harrier Programme Farm Plans.
- 2. A reporting system to allow farm advisors to report on the assessment of habitat quality in individual fields, confirm the delivery of actions and make a payment claim on behalf of their clients
- 3. A facility for farm advisors to produce an annual works plan on behalf of their clients.

FARM PLANS

All plans for farms selected in the December – March period were completed by the end of April 2018.

Farm Plans and contract offers were posted to selected applicants starting on April 23rd 2018.

PAYMENT SYSTEM

A system for paying farmers has been agreed with our Bank. Rehearsals of this system will be held in the summer of 2018 prior to the planned payment runs commencing in September.

Advisor Training

PHASE 1

Two-day training courses were held in Athlone and Templeglantine. A total of 88 Advisors were trained and provisionally approved as Hen Harrier Farm Advisors. An on-line resource site for advisors launched on March 22nd, 2018.







Procurement

TENDERS FOR SERVICES

The Hen Harrier project has published two tenders for the supply of services:

- Nest Protection Officers: A tender for the supply of nest protection services was published on March 8th, 2018. It closed on April 6th, 2018.
- Cattle Weighing Services: A tender for the supply of Cattle Weighing Services was published on April 6th, 2017. It will close on April 30th, 2018.

Monitoring 2018

.....

The 2018 monitoring campaign got underway in late March 2018. The Hen Harrier Project has invested in a cloud-based data logging system that will collate data in real time and allow the monitoring manager to report on nest sites and outcomes on an ongoing basis. This will facilitate co-operation with the Forest Service and others for the purpose of minimising disturbance to nesting Hen Harrier. A full report on the 2018 monitoring results will be ready in the Winter of 2018. It is planned to publish an abridged version of this report at the end of the year.

The faster communication of data facilitated by this system is already being used by the Forest Service to manage forestry operations in areas where there is a high risk to nesting Hen Harrier.

Other News

STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group oversees the operation of the Hen Harrier Project. Representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Forest Service, Teagasc and the National Parks & Wildlife Service. There are plans to expand this to include farmer and private agricultural advisor representation in 2018. Three Steering Group Meetings were held in Mountrath, Co. Laois, Woodford, Co. Galway and Knockatallon, Co. Monaghan.

REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS FOR FARMERS

The Forest Service have granted a general exemption from the requirement for a tree felling licence on SPA designated lands farmed by participants in the Hen Harrier Program. This covers the following situations:

- The removal of self- sown conifers.
- The removal of Conifers from small areas of native scrub or woodland.
- The coppicing of emergent trees from scrub.

Contacts

......







Email: info@henharrierproject.ie

Online: www.henharrierproject.ie/contact.html



facebook.com/henharrierproject/



twitter.com/HenHarrierProj

FERGAL MONAGHAN

Project Manager

Mobile: 087 605 8670

Email: fergal.monaghan@henharrierproject.ie

Dr. CAROLINE SULLIVAN:

Assistant Manager and Project Officer for Slieve Aughty Mountains.

Mobile: 087 649 9948

Email: caroline.sullivan@henharrierproject.ie

RYAN WILSON-PARR:

Project Officer for Slieve Beagh; Slieve Blooms; and,

Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains.

Mobile: 087 151 0849

Email: ryan.wilson-parr@henharrierproject.ie

EVELYN JOYCE:

Project Officer for Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains and, Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains.

Mobile: 087 362 3913

Email: evelyn.joyce@henharrierproject.ie

EOIN McCARTHY:

Project Officer for Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains and, Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains.

Mobile: 087 703 4348

Email: eoin.mccarthy@henharrierproject.ie