



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 - 2030

Discussion Paper

Pre-draft Public Consultation

15 April – 27 May 2024

Meath County Council

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

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Meath County Council wish to acknowledge the role of the Heritage Council in funding the Local Authority Biodiversity Officer Programme and supporting the preparation and implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan, in partnership with the County Council.

Introduction

This short discussion paper sets the context for beginning the preparation of an up-to-date Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP) for Meath.

Following the launch of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, all local authorities are required to have Biodiversity Action Plans in place by the end of 2026. With the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, supported by the Heritage Council's Biodiversity Officer Programme, Meath County Council are commencing this process and plan to finalise a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan by early 2025.

To kickstart the development, Meath County Council, with the support of the Meath Biodiversity Working Group and Meath Heritage Forum, would like to hear your views on nature and your ideas on how we should be addressing the biodiversity crisis at a local level.

This is your opportunity to highlight the key issues affecting biodiversity in your locality and assist in identifying what we should be aiming to achieve over the period of the County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 – 2030.

Everyone has a role to play in the protection and restoration of nature and it is important that we, in Meath, play our part.

Meath County Council Biodiversity Working Group

A Biodiversity Working Group of County Meath's Heritage Forum has been assembled to collaborate with the Biodiversity Officer in this task. Operating as a non-statutory advisory group, it will provide observations on the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Effort has been made to pull together a broad representative group, with membership drawn from the following sectors:

- Landowners and farming representatives
- Community and voluntary groups
- Local heritage and biodiversity organisations or groups
- Local government officials
- Local Elected Representatives
- Local development and business
- State agencies of relevance to biodiversity conservation



Figure 1. Viviparous lizard at Girley Bog. Image credit: Ben Malone.

Biodiversity Working Group Members

Ben Malone	Meath County Council Biodiversity Officer
Loreto Guinan	Meath County Council Heritage Officer
Orla O'Brien	Meath County Council Senior Executive Planner
Emmet Conboy	Meath County Council Executive Chemist
Peter Olwell	Meath County Council Climate Action Officer
Bernadine Carry	Meath County Council Environmental Awareness Officer
Aaron Smith	Meath County Council Executive Engineer
Michelle Goodwin	Meath County Council Business Advisor
Cllr Elaine McGinty	Elected Member
Cllr Maria Murphy	Elected Member
Cllr Noel French	Elected Member
Cathal Flood	Local Authority Waters Programme Community Water Officer
Michael Gunn	Public Participation Network
Eimear Clowry Delaney	Public Participation Network
Terry Cassidy	Birdwatch Meath Branch Member
Dermot Ward	Irish Farmer's Association Meath Chair
Aidan Gray	An Taisce Cleancoasts Project Officer
Goska Wilkowska	Boyne Rivers Trust Board Member & Ecologist
Niamh Roche	Bat Conservation Ireland Monitoring Schemes Co-Ordinator
Kate Flood	Community Wetlands Forum Project Officer
Ciara Rock	National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Ranger
Dónal Mitchell	National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Ranger
Noel McGloin	Inland Fisheries Ireland Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer
Edward Egan	Teagasc Drystock Advisor
Ciaran O'Kelly	Boyne Catchment Angling Association Member
Pat Moran	Ecologist
Robbie Meehan	Natural history author and Geologist
Margaret Norton	Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Meath County Recorder
Michael Gurren	Officer of Public Works Drainage Maintenance
Donna Mullen	Green Foundation Ireland Chair and Ecologist
Arthur Preston	Boyne Valley Flavours Network Member



Figure 2. Members of the newly established Meath Biodiversity Working Group. Image credit: Ben Malone.

What is a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan?

A Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan is designed to provide a structured approach to biodiversity conservation at the local authority level. It outlines the objectives, strategies, and actions needed to protect and enhance biodiversity within a specific local authority area.

The plan is developed in the context of both national and international biodiversity commitments as well as regional and local policies, priorities and local consultation and is aligned with existing environmental policies and legislation.

A Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan provides the context for the local authority to work with and support local communities, agencies, NGOs and landowners to develop projects to record and conserve their local biodiversity within a regional and national context.

While the specific vision and objectives of each Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan will be decided upon locally, all plans by and large should aim to record, conserve, restore and promote biodiversity, and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of it among the people of the area.

Biodiversity – What is it and why does it matter?

Biodiversity describes the variety of life on Earth – the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world.

The species and organisms we find in the living world work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.

People often use the phrases “biodiversity” and “nature” interchangeably and rightly so, as they are intricately linked.

There are three principal levels of biodiversity:

Genetic: The genetic diversity of individuals within a species, or what makes one otter different from another otter. Genetics is the science of genes and how traits are passed on from one generation to the next.

Species: The variation between species, such as between a sessile oak tree, a red squirrel, a common blue butterfly and a brown trout. A biological species is a group of organisms that can reproduce with one another in nature and produce fertile offspring.

Habitats: The variety of different habitats and ecosystems that these species create and inhabit, such as grasslands, woodlands or wetlands, such as raised bogs, marsh or lowland river floodplains etc. ‘Habitat’ refers to the home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.



Figure 3. Clockwise from top-left: Buff-tailed bumblebee queen foraging on dandelion; Common Spotted-Orchid; Brown trout parr; Red Kite. Image credit: Ben Malone & Tony Hisgett (Red Kite).

We all depend on healthy ecosystems

Biodiversity provides the essential building blocks of ecosystems and the habitats that species live within. Ecosystems are thus dependent on biodiversity – from the smallest microbes, insects and complex communities of plants to the largest mammals, and their interactions, which together make up the web of life.

Although it is often not appreciated, healthy functioning ecosystems are cornerstone to the prosperity and resilience of our communities and society at large. For example:

- More time spent outdoors in nature is proven to have major health benefits such as lower risk of chronic disease and improved mental health and well-being.
- In the face of an ever-changing climate, healthy ecosystems such as our wetlands and woodlands, among others, are important for reducing the risk and severity of flooding and can lessen the impact of drought by regulating a slower flow of water through our river catchments.
- Healthy soil ecosystems, which themselves are dependent on their above ground plant communities, underpin the production of food. Additionally, ecosystems that maintain and support thriving populations of pollinators means society can grow food such as rapeseed oil, peas, beans, apples and soft fruits.
- Many habitats clean the air, capture pollutants, produce oxygen and absorb and store CO₂ in soils and biomass (e.g. wood and peat).
- Despite progressions in modern pharma, biodiversity remains an important source of inspiration for research and ingredients for modern and traditional medicines respectively.

Aside from the many benefits conferred on society by biodiversity, we must also consider that fact that nature has an intrinsic value and a right to exist as well. Concerted efforts to protect, restore and promote biodiversity should be morally just for this reason alone.



Figure 4. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment defined four categories of ecosystem services that contribute to human well-being and prosperity, each underpinned by biodiversity. These are provisioning services; Regulating services; Supporting services, and Cultural services. Image credit: Earthwise Aware.

Habitats for biodiversity in Meath

“Meath (Midhe, middle [province]) is a grand county – large, fertile, well wooded, well populated.” Robert Lloyd Praeger, The Way That I Went, 1937s

Whilst Praeger, Ireland’s preeminent naturalist of the early 20th century, found a rather simple and succinct way of describing the landscape and geodiversity of Meath, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the county’s diverse environment and habitats, and their links with cultural and human history.

A short list of some of county Meath’s broad habitat categories are described below.

Rivers flow through County Meath’s historic landscapes, providing valuable habitat and wildlife corridor for freshwater and terrestrial species alike. They include the rivers of the Boyne catchment as well as the Nanny, Ward, Broadmeadow & Dee rivers, among others.

Lakes, while relatively uncommon compared to some neighbouring counties, can be found in Meath too, several recognised as being of national importance because of their unique flora and fauna.

Wetlands occur along the margins of rivers, canals and lakes, often forming extensive reed beds, or seasonally inundated lands such as pond areas, river floodplains and wet meadows. Peatland habitats have developed over thousands of years in a number of locations also, albeit, cutover bog is a feature of these ecosystems too.

Woodland habitats are important, yet scarce. Despite Praeger’s assertion, Meath is in fact the least wooded county in Ireland, with only 4% woodland cover approximately. Fragments of riparian woodland and scrub strongly associated with watercourses can be found also.

Hedgerows are a prominent feature across Meath’s farmed countryside. Hedgerows provide an extensive network of wildlife corridors between small and isolated pockets of woodland and other habitats. Grass verges and drainage ditches at the foot of many of these hedgerows also provide important spaces for biodiversity in their own right.

Grasslands are the predominant habitat in County Meath and primarily comprise of improved agricultural grassland, a habitat of relatively low biodiversity value. While small pockets of semi-natural grasslands, which support a greater diversity of native grass and wildflower species, persist in places including small corners of fields and road verges.

Arable lands are also a feature of the county and have been for many centuries. Once associated with a rich variety of ‘weed’ species, many have now disappeared. Nevertheless, arable farmland can still support a wide breadth of biodiversity when managed appropriately.

Coastal habitats are found in the east of the county and include estuaries, mudflats, various sand dune systems, and sandy beaches.

Urban and sub-urban areas support a wide range of habitat for wildlife also, across parks, open green spaces, gardens, stone walls and road verges. All these habitats provide important corridors and stepping stones to the wider ecological network.

Protecting Biodiversity in Meath – Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

There are several international and nationally important sites that are designated for nature conservation in county Meath, while some are proposed for official designation. Habitats protected and proposed for protection in Co. Meath are mapped below, on page 10, and listed in full in Appendix 1.

Some of these sites include, but are not limited to:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Lough Sheelin SPA
- Boyne Estuary SPA
- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC
- Girley (Drewstown) Bog SAC
- Mount Hevey Bog SAC
- Lough Bane and Lough Glass SAC
- Jamestown Bog Natural Heritage Area (NHA)

There are many sites throughout the County that host a range of plant and animal species or their habitats (including protected species) which are not designated for nature conservation but nonetheless their ecological value is of high importance in the county.

Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. Flora and fauna found in Meath with varying degrees of protection include for example (note: this is not an exhaustive list):

- White-clawed crayfish
- Marsh fritillary
- Otter
- Common Wintergreen
- Kingfisher
- Atlantic salmon
- Brook lamprey
- All Bat species



Figure 5. A composition picture of Pipistrelle bats. Light pollution and habitat loss are significant threats to Irish bats. Image credit: John Purvis.

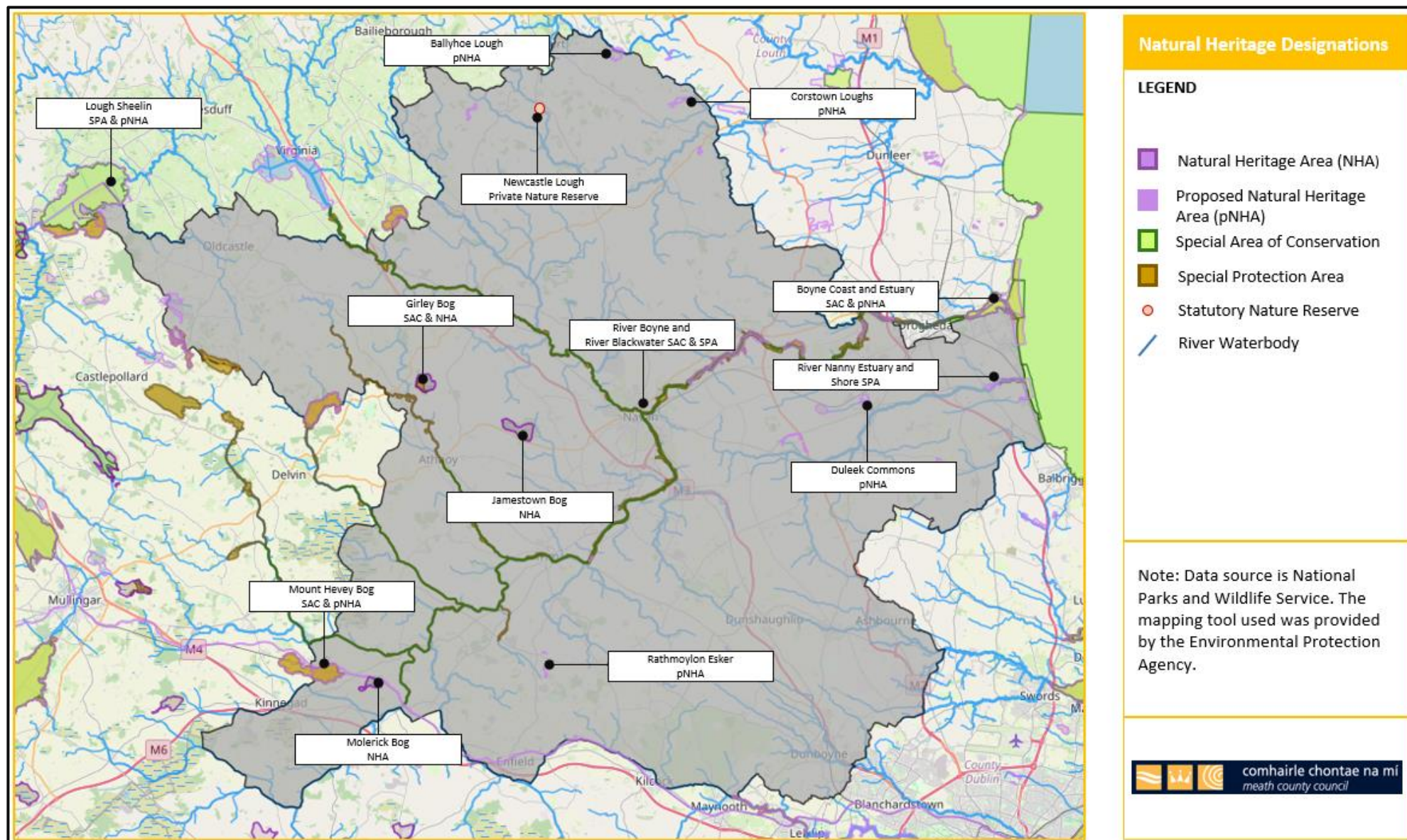


Figure 6. Designated sites in Meath for the conservation of nature, including proposed sites. Note: Not all designated sites have been labelled in the map.

Progress to date in advancing the biodiversity agenda

Action for biodiversity has increased significantly in recent years, with a strong emphasis being placed on collaboration with landowners and local communities to enable a collective response to the challenge.

A wide array of initiatives, projects and funding streams are delivering positive change for a range of habitats and species across the country. Many actions for biodiversity are focused on accelerating the restoration agenda and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity.

The legal and policy landscape has also changed dramatically.

Several initiatives have been launched also, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals at its core, the EU Green Deal and its supporting EU Biodiversity Strategy, a new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and an updated Forestry Programme. In addition, a 3rd River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) cycle and new legislation for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are currently in train. These developments are reflected throughout the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2030.

National Schemes of Note

- Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (i.e. ACRES)
- European Innovation Partnership Scheme (e.g. Water EIP, Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme EIP, Protecting Farmland Pollinators EIP, Bride Project etc.)
- Native Tree Forestry Programme (e.g. Native Tree Area Scheme, Native Woodland Conservation Scheme etc.)
- Peatlands Climate Action Scheme
- LIFE Programmes (e.g. KerryLIFE, Lough Carra LIFE, Burren LIFE etc.)
- Conservation Measures Programme
- Marine Protected Areas
- National Parks
- Local Authority Biodiversity Officers Programme
- Local Biodiversity Action Fund (NPWS)
- Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund



Figure 7. The Kells Blackwater. Image credit: Ben Malone.

Action at a Local Level

The new Biodiversity Action Plan builds on the work of previous plans which covered the period 2008 – 2012 and 2015 – 2020 respectively. In this time, implementation of actions within the plans has been led and supported by the Meath Heritage Office and the Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Working Group of the Meath Heritage Forum along with key stakeholders in the county.

Over the years projects and initiatives have been delivered with the key objectives of raising awareness of biodiversity, its value and issues facing it; better understanding the biodiversity of Meath; conserving and enhancing habitats and species in Meath; and fostering active participation to help biodiversity.

Simultaneously, Meath has seen a growing interest in biodiversity take place within community groups such as the Tidy Towns network, various development associations and sports clubs. Environmental groups have been active and growing their membership base while more and more people seem to be getting involved in biodiversity projects and citizen science.

Recent increases in funding for projects along with the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer have come as welcome developments. Both will allow for a more ambitious approach to action within the county. While a primary task of the Biodiversity Officer in the short term is to support the preparation of a new Biodiversity Action Plan, the Biodiversity Officer will also provide internal support to operations within Meath County Council and external advice on relevant issues.



Figure 8. Common swift. Image credit: Andrey Gulivanov.

Meath County Council have applied for Local Biodiversity Action Fund support to deliver the following projects in 2024:

- The Hare's Corner
- Hill of Lloyd Grassland Management & Biodiversity Enhancement Trial
- County Meath Swift Project
- Barn Owl Conservation Project
- Mayfly Red List Project
- County Meath Biodiversity Audit
- Community Biodiversity Initiatives

Pressures on biodiversity

“Biodiversity is central to human well-being, but we are destroying it and, therefore, undermining our own future.” Sir Robert Watson, Former Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services speaking to the Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, 2022

Science research proves biodiversity is in decline globally and this is reflected here in Ireland. In 2019, the Irish Government declared a Biodiversity Emergency. In Ireland, here are some examples of biodiversity decline;

1. Greater than 50% of native Irish plant species have declined in range and/or abundance when compared with historic records extending as far back as the 1950s (Walker, 2023)
2. Nearly 33% of our semi-natural grasslands have been lost in the last decade (Martin, 2018)
3. Over 50% of Ireland’s 100 bee species have seen substantial declines in numbers since 1980, with 30% of species threatened with extinction (Fitzpatrick, 2007)
4. 85% of our EU-protected habitats are in unfavourable conditions, while 30% of our 60 EU-protected species are in unfavourable status (NPWS, 2019)
5. 26% of birds are on the Red List and considered to be of conservation concern (Gilbert, 2021)



Figure 9. Left to right: Semi-natural grassland & Yellowhammer - one of our regular farmland birds in Meath, but a red-listed species in Ireland. Image credit: Great Irish Grasslands & John Knight.

In contrast, 80% of non-native species introduced to Ireland since the year 1500 have increased. Whilst most are benign, some have become invasive, such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and rhododendron with negative impacts on native flora and fauna. There is a significant growing threat associated with emergent diseases such as Ash Dieback, Fireblight, Crayfish Plague etc.

While it is recognised that many knowledge gaps remain to be filled, Meath would appear to be no exception.



Wetlands

- In 2010, Meath County Council commissioned consultants to carry out a Wetland and Coastal Survey of County Meath.
- Wetland habitats are dwindling while a significant majority of the county’s peatland bogs have been impacted by human activity (e.g. drainage, exploitation, in-filling, fertilisation & afforestation).



Grasslands

- Semi-natural grasslands are a rarity, relative to other areas of the country, as demonstrated by the Irish Semi-natural Grasslands Survey 2007-2012 (O'Neill, 2013).
- In the past, these grasslands would have been managed traditionally by cutting or light grazing, but these practices are now largely a thing of the past.
- Conversion to intensive forms of agriculture (e.g. ploughing, re-seeding, fertilizing) would be the primary cause of their reduced distribution.



Woodlands

- Meath currently has the lowest percentage area cover of woodland on record in Ireland at 4%, a statistic which includes coniferous, broadleaved, transitional and mixed forest (O'Rourke, Byrne, & Smith, 2023).
- Of those tracts of broadleaved woodland that are left, they are often competing in many cases against non-native invasive species and suffering from poor management.



Hedgerows

- The county has a rich resource of hedgerows. However, maintenance of our hedgerows remains an issue.
- Many are unmanaged, of poor quality and run the risk being lost by neglect. In other cases, hedgerow management falls short of best practice guidelines (Teagasc, 2021).



Rivers

- 70% of the river waterbodies in Meath are not meeting their water quality objective (i.e. 'Good' ecological status)
- A small section of the Dee river catchment in the north of the county is the only stretch of river which is hanging on to its 'High' ecological status.
- The most significant issues for water quality in Meath's river catchments are nutrient pollution (i.e. excess phosphorus and nitrogen; phosphate fertiliser use doubled since 2012), and impacts on the physical condition of river channels.
- The source of these issues include agriculture, inadequate waste water infrastructure, arterial drainage, water abstraction and presence of river barriers such as weirs (Catchments.ie, 2016 - 2021).



Coastal

- Closer to our coastline, our estuaries are suffering from moderate pollution, largely a result of excess nutrients originating from agriculture and waste water infrastructure (Catchments.ie, 2016 - 2021).
- The ecological health of our dune systems has deteriorated also which is largely attributable to recreational activities (NPWS, 2023).

In summary...

The most significant impacts observed on many of our habitats in Meath are attributable to a range of threats and pressures.

These primarily include:

- Agriculture (e.g. nutrient enrichment, drainage and land conversion)
- Development (e.g. the construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial, transport and recreational infrastructure, including light pollution)
- Urban wastewater infrastructure
- River drainage & river barriers (Hydromorphology)
- Invasive alien species & emergent diseases

All the above are resulting in a decreasing availability of high-quality habitat for biodiversity, both locally and nationally (NPWS, 2019).

It is important to note that whilst climate change has not been mentioned in the above, it is fast becoming a very significant pressure and will affect biodiversity in Meath at scale through the occurrence of extreme weather events and an exacerbation of all other pressures.

Importantly, underpinning these drivers are our societal values and behaviours. Transforming these is crucial if we are to reverse the trends of loss (NPWS, 2023).



Figure 10. Clockwise from top-left: A carpet of algae coats the bed of the Moynalty river due to excessive nutrients from industry, waste water and agriculture; arterially drained Boyne river channel; a bird's eye view of a growing town in Meath, and an exposed turf bank in Molerick bog. Image credit: Ben Malone & Google Earth (satellite image).

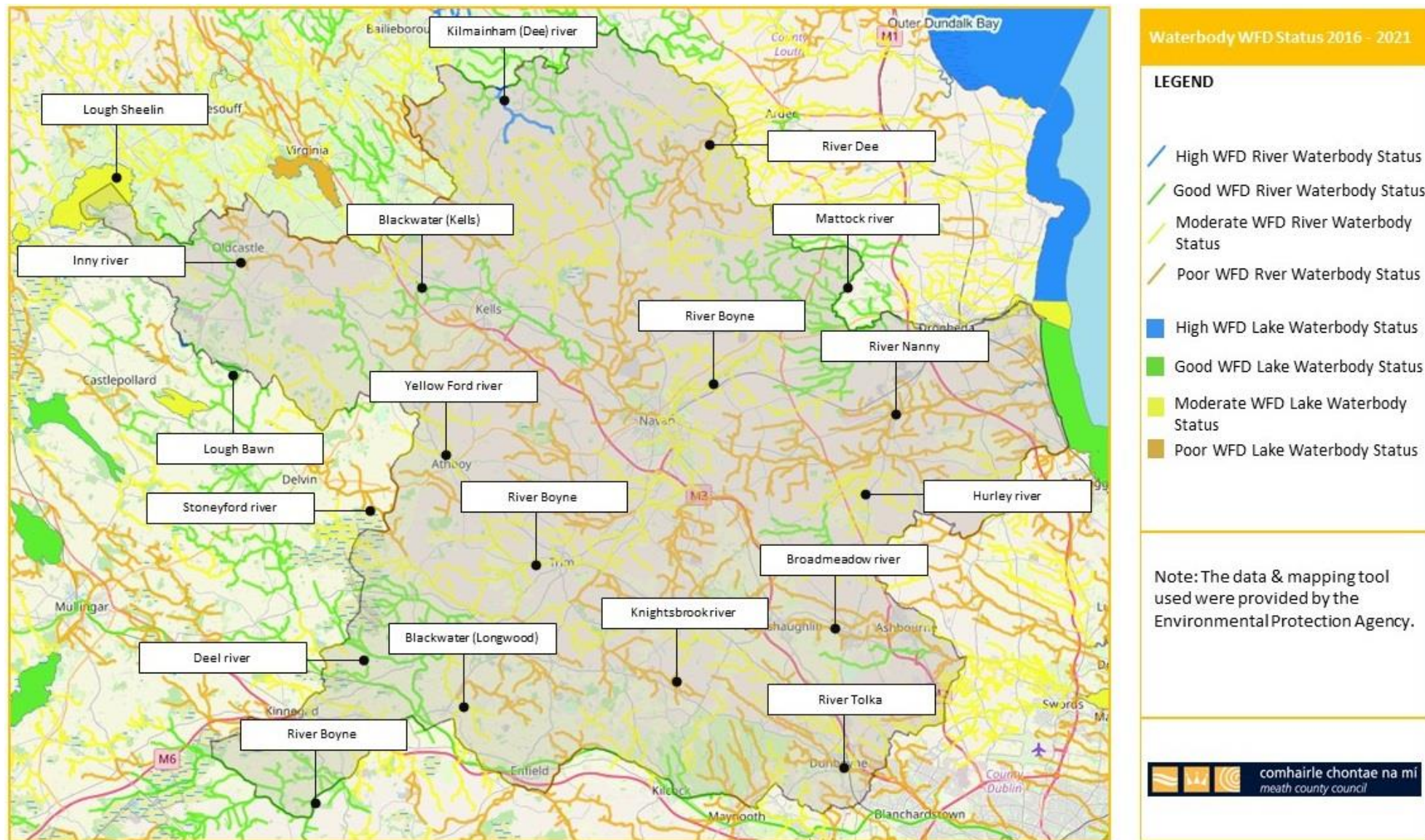


Figure 11. Water Framework Directive Ecological Status designations of Meath's waterbodies.

The Need for Action with Multiple Benefits

There is an increased understanding that ‘everything is connected’ in the landscape. The interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change and water quality in our river catchments is now widely recognised.

Many of the measures needed to protect, restore and promote biodiversity across both rural and urban environments can also deliver multiple benefits for water quality and both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The development of a local Biodiversity Action Plan is perfectly positioned to capture these multiple benefits.



Figure 12. A school group take part in outdoor learning at Girley Bog.

Why a County Biodiversity Action Plan?

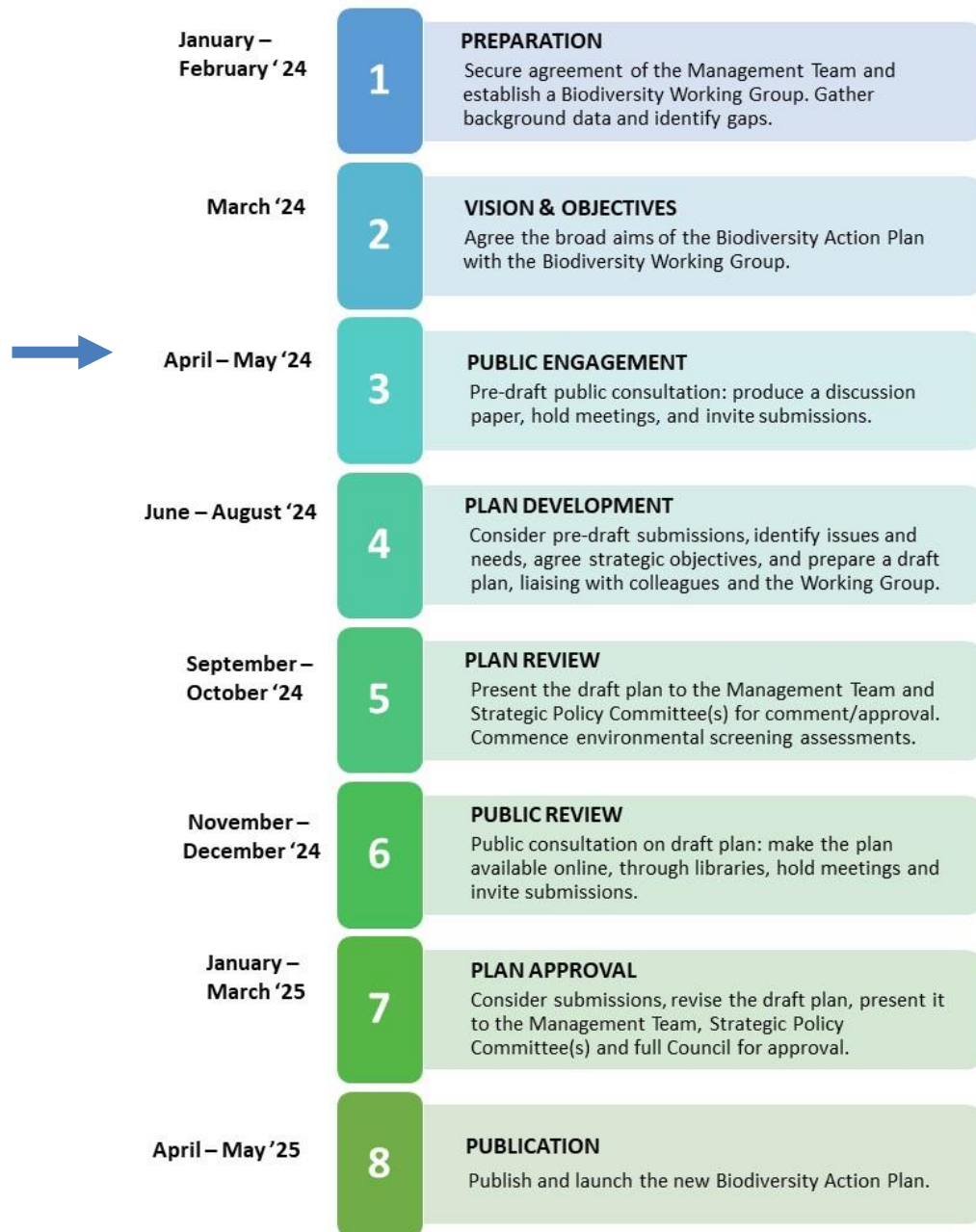
As well as Ireland’s international commitments to biodiversity conservation, Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030 aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and improve the status of Ireland’s species, habitats and ecosystems. Local authorities are expected to develop their action plans in line with this national strategy.

The recently completed County Meath Heritage Strategy 2023 - 2030 also paves the way for a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan.

Given that local authorities are responsible for the planning and management of local ecosystems, ensuring sustainable development, and enforcing environmental regulations, they are critically important for the conservation of biodiversity at county level. Not only should the Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan serve as a strategic tool to support and guide these efforts, but it should also address the concerns and needs of the community and relevant agencies and groups within the county and be underpinned by the principle of shared stewardship of biodiversity.

Our environmental challenges are significant, but not insurmountable. The development of a county Biodiversity Action Plan presents an opportunity to reassess the priorities for county Meath and ensure focus in the right areas.

The Biodiversity Action Plan Process



Why get involved?

What is important to you in terms of local biodiversity? Let us know!

Ensuring local knowledge feeds into the process is key.

Getting involved in the discussion will help identify local issues and needs, thereby informing the development of the action plan. Don't assume someone else has put forward the same idea or proposed action as you.

How to get involved

There are several ways that you can share your views or make a submission at this *pre-draft* stage of the process.

In-person walk-in events or online events as listed below:

Date	Time	Municipal District	Venue
Tue, 16th April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Navan	Solstice Arts Centre, Railway St, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 KWP1
Wed, 17th April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Kells	Kells Courthouse Tourism and Cultural Hub, Kells, Co. Meath, A82 RY62
Thurs, 18th April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Laytown Bettystown	Duleek Library, Main St, Duleek, Co. Meath, A92 CR33
Tue, 23rd April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Ashbourne	Ashbourne Library, Killegland St, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, A84 NY73
Wed, 24th April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Ratoath	Dunshaughlin Civic Office, Drumree Road, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath, A85 XK20
Thurs, 25th April	12pm - 2pm 4pm - 7pm	Trim	Swift Cultural Centre, High St, Townparks North, Trim, Co. Meath, C15 P668
Tue, 30th April	7pm – 8pm	Countywide	Online

To register for the online information session on 30th April, click on the link below or email biodiversity@meathoco.ie:

[Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 – 2030 Pre-draft Public Consultation ONLINE LINK](#)

By post – FAO Biodiversity Officer, Meath County Council, Buvinda House, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 Y291

Online – via the Meath County Council Consult Website: <https://consult.meath.ie/en/surveys>

Pre-draft Public Consultation Timeframe

Monday 15 April – Monday 27 May 2024

All submissions are due by 5pm on Monday 27 May.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Protected Natural Heritage Sites of International and National Importance, including proposed sites.

Site Name	Site Code / Ref	SAC	SPA	NHA	pNHA	SNR	WF
Ballyhoe Lough	001594				✓		
Ballynabarny Fen	001573				✓		
Balrath Woods	001579				✓		
Boyne Coast and Estuary	001957	✓			✓		
Boyne Estuary	004080		✓				✓
Boyne River Islands	001862				✓		
Boyne Woods	001592				✓		
Breaky Loughs	001558				✓		
Corstown Loughs	000552				✓		
Crewbane Marsh	000553				✓		
Cromwell's Bush Fen	001576				✓		
Doolystown Bog	001577				✓		
Dowth Wetland	001861				✓		
Duleek Commons	001578				✓		
Girley (Drewstown) Bog	002203	✓					
Girley Bog	001580			✓			
Jamestown Bog	001324			✓			
Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally)	000006	✓			✓		
Laytown Dunes / Nanny Estuary	000554				✓		
Lough Bane and Lough Glass	002120	✓					
Lough Naneagh	001814				✓		
Lough Sheelin	004065		✓		✓		
Lough Shesk	000556				✓		
Mentrim Lough	001587				✓		

Molerick Bog	001582			✓			
Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs	002340	✓					
Mount Hevey Bog	002342	✓			✓		
Newcastle Lough	NA					✓	
Rathmoylan Esker	000557				✓		
River Boyne and River Blackwater	002299	✓	✓				
River Nanny Estuary and Shore	004158		✓				
Rossnaree Riverbank	001589				✓		
Royal Canal	002103				✓		
Rye Water Valley/Carlton	001398	✓			✓		
Slane Riverbank	001591				✓		
Thomastown Bog	001593				✓		
Trim Wetlands	001357				✓		
White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo	001810	✓			✓		

- SAC; Special Areas of Conservation are selected for the conservation and protection of plant and animal species (other than birds) and habitats listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) respectively.
- SPA; Special Protection Areas are selected for the conservation and protection of birds and their habitats designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009 (2009/147/EC) (first adopted in 1979) and transposed into Irish law by the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (SI 291 of 1985).
- NHA; Natural Heritage Areas are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and encompass nationally-important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms and geomorphological features.
- pNHA; NHAs were proposed on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats.
- SNR; State Nature Reserve is an area of importance to wildlife, protected under Ministerial order. Most are owned by the State, some are owned by organisations or private landowners
- WF; Wildlife sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries.