



The Hen Harrier Project

Locally Led Scheme for the Conservation of the Hen Harrier

Geographical Location	IE 041 Border, IE 042 West, IE063 Midlands, IE 053 South-West, IE 051 Mid-West Region
Keywords	Hen Harrier, Special Protection Area, High Nature Value Farming
Project Leader	Fergal Monaghan, The Hen Harrier Project Ltd. (email: fergal.monaghan@henharrierproject.ie)
Project Type	Operational Group
Starting Date	2017
End Date	2022
Project Status	Ongoing
Main Funding Source	Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020
Total Budget	€25,000,000



Project Rationale

The Hen Harrier is a rare, ground nesting bird of prey, adapted to open moorland and marginal grassland habitats. These semi-natural habitats that the bird depends on however have decreased in area over the last 40 years, as demographic, economic and regulatory factors have driven changes in land use. In fact, within the SPA network the breeding population of Hen Harrier has declined by 27% since 2005. The national Hen Harrier now only stands at an estimated 108 – 157 pairs.

Project Aims & Objectives

The project aims to deliver sustainable benefits for biodiversity, upland ecosystems and a vibrant local rural economy by building strong partnerships with farmers who have land designated as Special Protection Areas for breeding Hen Harrier through a practical, results-based approach to farming for conservation.

To achieve these goals, the project will pursue the following specific objectives over a 5 year, locally targeted conservation Programme:

- (i) Ensure the sustainable management of High Nature Value farmland in the most important areas for Hen Harrier in Ireland, with special emphasis on providing quality habitat for the Hen Harrier and the various other species of wildlife that share the same landscape;
- (ii) Promote a stronger socio-economic outlook for what are generally difficult to manage marginally agriculturally productive upland areas;
- (iii) Develop an effective model for future sustainable management of Hen Harrier areas &
- (iv) Foster continued positive relations through locally-led solutions between the people who have managed this landscape for generations, the relevant Government Departments and the special biodiversity that exists on the land.

Project Activities

- Design and implement a conservation pro-gramme in six Special Protection Areas designated for breeding Hen Harriers.
- Incentivise farmers to enhance the habitat value of their designated lands.
- Support enabling measures that facilitate habitat enhancement.
- Recognise the farmer’s role in delivering defined conservation objectives.
- Carry out annual surveys of breeding Hen Harriers to inform the advisory and training services pro-vided to farmers.
- Work with Government Departments to minimise negative impacts arising from disturbance and habitat loss.
- Co-ordinate the delivery of landscape level inter-ventions to reduce the risk to the Hen Harrier and other Ground nesting birds from predation and wildfire.

