



Protecting Farmland Pollinators

Geographical Location	IE 062 Mid-East Region
Keywords	Farmland, Innovation, Results-based Schemes, Biodiversity, Wildlife, Pollinators, Insects, Flora, Hedgerows, Sustainable Management
Project Leader	Dr Úna FitzPatrick, National Biodiversity Data Centre (email: ufitzpatrick@biodiversityireland.ie)
Project Type	Operational Group
Starting Date	2019
End Date	2023
Project Status	Ongoing
Main Funding Source	Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020
Total Budget	€1,194,679



Project Rationale

Farmland has experienced wide-scale loss of wild pollinators over the last fifty years. In Ireland, one third of our 99 bee species are threatened with extinction. To address this issue, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) was published in 2015. For the AIPP to be successful, it requires small changes to how we manage the entire landscape to ensure it is a place where bees and other insects can survive and thrive. Farmers are at the heart of the solution, and it is imperative that realistic mechanisms are developed that will encourage and support farmers in protecting farmland pollinators.



Project Aims & Objectives

This project aims to develop a flexible mechanism that encourages all farmers to make their whole-farm more pollinator friendly in a way that is measurable and will not impact on productivity.

To achieve this goal, the project will pursue the following specific objectives:

- (i) Test the effectiveness of a range of pollinator measures across farmland of different types in the Irish context and to identify those that have most impact and that are most cost-effective;
- (ii) Examine the impact of these pollinator measures on broader biodiversity;
- (iii) Based on the pollinator measures, develop an innovative, yet simple farm-scale scoring system that uses a habitat matrix approach to quantify how pollinator-friendly the entire farm is as a land parcel &
- (iv) Develop a simple results-based payment method that encourages and assists farmers in attempts to improve their overall farm-scale pollinator score.

Project Activities

- Assess all participating farms for existing pollinator habitat and given an initial baseline farm-scale pollinator score (year 1).
- Fully monitor all participating farms for pollinators (bees, hoverflies) and for broader biodiversity (year 1).
- Score all participating farms annually and encourage them to take simple actions to improve their score – a simple guideline document will make it very clear how the score works and how it can be maximised. Farmers will be paid annually depending on their score and the amount and quality of habitat they create (Years 2-5).
- Fully monitor all participating farms again for pollinators and biodiversity (year 4).
- Devise full critical review and make future recommendations (year 5).

