Hen Harrier Programme: design and implementation of a results-based agri-environment scheme

Dr Caroline Sullivan

### Hen Harrier Project Background

- Responded to a tender by DAFM
- Clear desire for results-based approach
- Specific target areas
- $\in$  25m budget
- Everything else up to the group applying for the tender

Slieve Beagh SPA Slieve Blooms SPA Slieve Aughty SPA Slievefelim to Silvermines SPA Stacks to Mullaghareirks, West Limerick Hills to Mount Eagle SPA Mullaghanish to Musheramore SPA

#### Design and development



- Needed to design a programme
- Needed to roll that programme out

#### **Hen Harrier Project Objectives**

Sustainable management of HNV Farmland in the most important areas for Hen Harrier

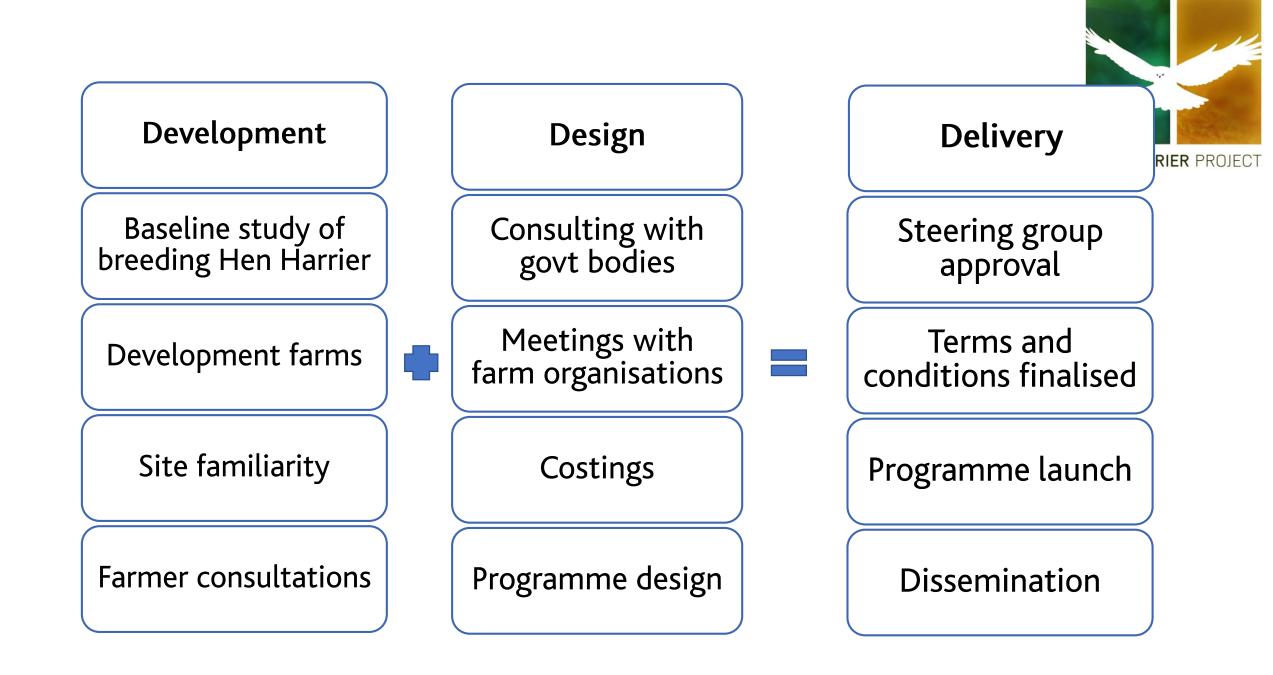
Promote a strong socio-economic outlook for agriculturally marginal upland areas

Foster positive relationships between stakeholders

### Hen Harrier Project



- Hen Harrier Project
  - Project Manager-Fergal Monaghan (Agricultural advisor)
  - Assistant Manager- Dr Caroline Sullivan (Farmland ecologist)
  - Agriculture Specialist- Eoin McCarthy (Agriculture advisor)
  - Raptor Specialist- Ryan Wilson-Parr (Ecological consultant)
  - Project Officer- Evelyn Joyce (Farmland ecologist)
- Design and administer the Hen Harrier Programme
- Project Accountants–Brendan O Gorman Accountants
- Hen Harrier Monitoring carried out by the Golden Eagle Trust





#### Words farmers associate with Hen Harrier

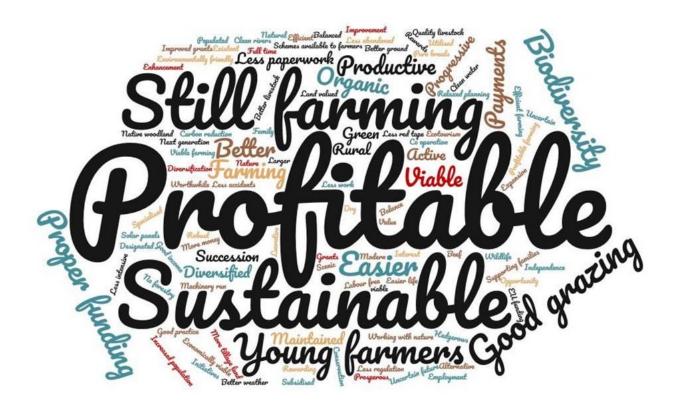








# Words farmers associate with farming in the area in 20 years time in an ideal world



#### HHP in the media



be available shortly, as part of the p the locally-led scheme for the conservat hen harrier.

#### Its diminishing population over the past 40 years has made the plight of the hen harrier a pressing issue, writes Denis Lehane.

There has been a long search in Ireland for a hen harrier programme that suits all the relevant parties.

The relevant parties are the EU, the Government, environmentalists, farmers and of course, the humble hen harrier.

It's amazing really to think that one bird, with an estimated 108 to 157 breeding pairs remaining in this country, can exercise the minds of so many.

But its diminishing population is the very reason why the plight of the hen harrier has become such a pressing issue.

#### The hen harrier is a bird of prey that feeds on small birds, mice and other mammals.





#### 2018 to be ninth year of export gro

# **EIP-AGRI BLOG**









#### Embracing the Ethos of the **AGRI** Initiative

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In this NRN quest blog, Dr Barry O'Donoghue, He Ecology with the National Parks & Wildlife Service, at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, gives u thoughts and opinions on how the European Innovation Par for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) ir can play a fundamental role in ensuring a brighter future for Ireland and its heritage.

In April 2016, I remember sitting with a farmer in one of my places in Ireland, the Derrynasaggart Mountains. These Mc straddle the Cork and Kerry border - perhaps the very mou referred to in the great song "Whiskey in the Jar". There is a music to these mountains themselves: literally and metaphe

#### HHP in the media

- Mostly positive
- Though not exclusively



Shane McAuliffe @ShaneMcAuliffe1

A farmer in the room has compared the @HenHarrierProj like "apartheid in Africa" his "land has been taken away from him and he hasn't been given anything for it"

Shane McAuliffe @ShaneMcAuliffe1

The view of the @IHenharrier is simple - limited funding, no transparency and no farmer involvement in setting up the structure, even no farm organisation like @IFAmedia was involved!!!

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#### 12:41 PM - 9 Jan 2018 from Kerry, Ireland

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HEN HARRIER PROJECT

### New hen harrier scheme will backfire

#### CLAIRE FOX

IRISH Farmers with Designated Land Group (IFDL) have warned that "inadequacies" in the new hen harrier scheme will mean there will be a renewed demand for afforestation.

IFDL chair Jason Fitzgerald said the new scheme was meant to give farmers an income that is an alternative to planting the land with trees but feels that its shortfalls will mean it will only lead to an increased demand for afforestation. "The background of this scheme was to address the shortcomings of GLAS. It is far short of what we were promised. It will increase the intensity and appetite for forestry," he said.

Mr Fitzgerald added that €510 per hectare for 15 years as opposed to €48-€75 per hectare in the habitat scheme would intensify demand for forestry and said he has contacted Minister Michael Creed and TDs in the affected areas about the issue.

## Design Priorities and challenges

- Achieve improved habitats
- Recognise the value of ecosystem services provides by farmers
- Easy applications process
- No application cost
- Minimal negative implications for cash flow
- Meaningful payments

- Support that empowers participants
- Minimal administrative burden
- Bring "Local" to the fore in what could easily be seen as a national scheme
- Integrate the Programme with other agri-environment schemes
- Deal with non-agricultural issues that impact on Hen Harrier



### Programme implementation



- Launched Programme on Dec 8th 2017
- Received 1,384 applications in the first three months
- End Nov 2018 received 1,673 applications

### Programme implementation



- Three payment streams
  - Habitat payment
  - Supporting Actions Payment
  - Hen Harrier Payment

### Habitat payment

- Recognise high quality habitat value
- Incentivise enhancement
- Key habitats

















### HHP Scorecards



- HEN HARRIER PROJECT
- Based on the principles of the Burren and RBAPS Programmes
- Developed with key Ecosystem Services and Hen Harrier in mind
- Input from Ecologists, Ornithologists and Agriculturalists
- Tested on Development farms
- Habitats assessed on basis of ecological integrity
  - Marks earned for diversity and structure
  - Marks lost where that is under threat

#### Habitat assessment



- Scale of task (>20,000 ha of land in the SPAs in 2018)
- Advisory capacity and calendar
- Seasonal constraints
- Year 1 is a baseline assessment
- Years 2-5 should see scores increase across the SPAs
- Hopefully these improvements will benefit Hen Harrier



Resources 企

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PAYMENTS

www.henharrierproject.ie/resources.html

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#### **SCORECARDS & GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**



#### WET GRASSLAND SCORECARD

Wet grassland can be found on flat or sloping ground in upland and lowland areas. It occurs on wet or waterlogged mineral or organic soils that are poorly-drained.

Wet grassland often contains abundant cover of rushes.

DOWNLOAD WET GRASSLAND SCORECARD >> DOWNLOAD GUIDANCE DOCUMENT >> DOWNLOAD GRASSLAND SPECIES GUIDE >>



#### **BOG / HEATH SCORECARD**

Peatland habitats are also very common throughout the SPAs. There are two main types of peatland that are commonly farmed: Heath this may be wet or dry heath; and, blanket bog - this may be upland or lowland blanket bog.

DOWNLOAD BOG / HEATH SCORECARD >> DOWNLOAD GUIDANCE DOCUMENT >> DOWNLOAD BOG / HEATH SPECIES GUIDE >>



#### SCRUB / WOODLAND SCORECARD

Patches of woods and scrub are very common on Irish farms. Gorse (furze), Whitethorn, Willow and Blackthorn are commons scrub species in the SPAs. This scrub can be very important hunting grounds



#### SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND SCORECARD

Species-rich grasslands are usually found on land that has had little or no exposure to lime, fertiliser and herbicide inputs for at least 10 years. Species-rich grasslands support a wide range of flowering

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22/06/2018

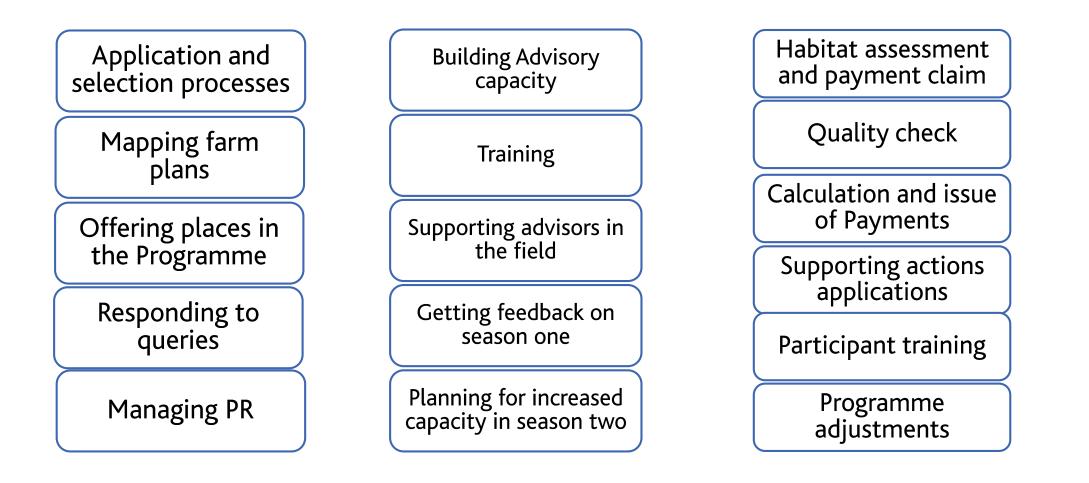
### Baseline study of breeding Hen Harrier



- National Survey data available for 2005, '10 and '15
- Needed to establish baseline population size of breeding Hen Harriers
- Have data for 2017 and 2018
- Annual surveys until 2023
- Ideally increases in habitat scores will relate to improved HH populations

### Programme implementation







### Hen Harrier Programme to date

- Offered 695 places in 2018
- 629 contracts signed
- 70 advisors trained
- 50 advisors and HHP staff scored 9,800 'fields' in 2018
- Habitat Payments are rolling out as we speak

### Hen Harrier Programme 2019



- Ensuring farmer engagement with the Programme
  - Easy to understand where marks are lost and make improvements
  - Hope that scores and payments increase
- Supporting Actions will be implemented
- Hen Harrier Payment to be paid out in March
- Additional 500 places being offered
- Feedback so far is positive







An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



HEN HARRIER PROJECT



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas

Thanks to our HHP farmers and thanks for listening http://www.henharrierproject.ie