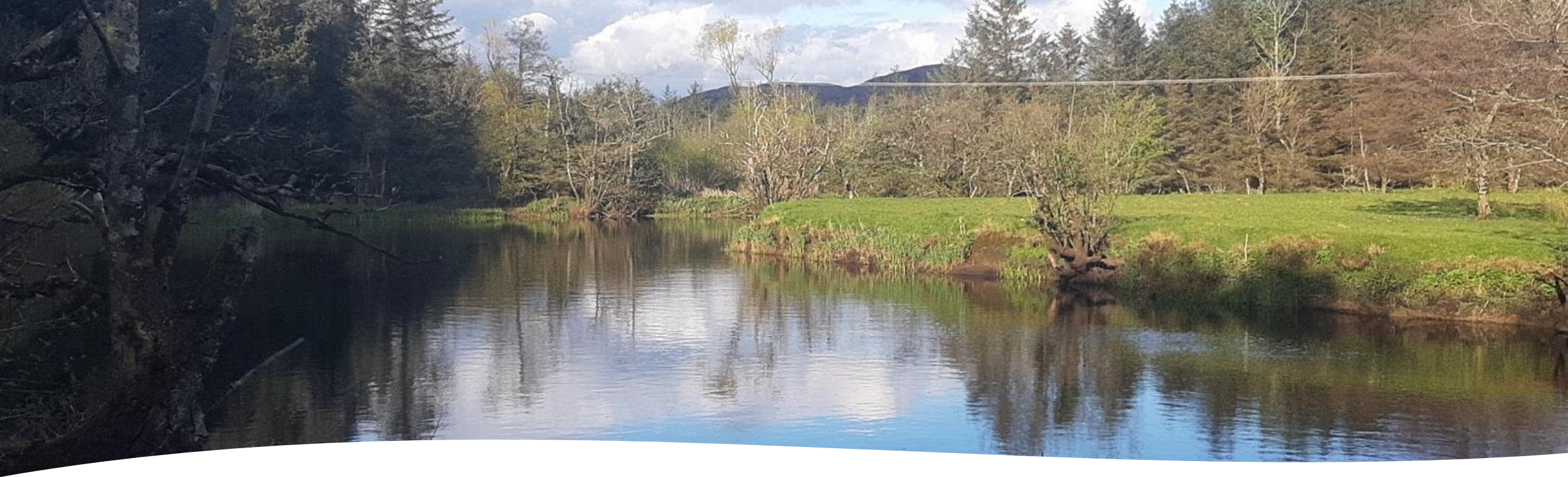




Wildlife & Habitats in Sligo

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Woodrow Sustainable Solutions Ltd.





Overview

- Designated Sites in Sligo
- Main Types of Habitats and their Species
- How to Identify and Record Biodiversity

Poetry of Nature

"The waters and the wild "

-W. B Yeats

*"The flourishing town of Sligo is surrounded
by a district unsurpassed for beauty in
Ireland and of high botanical interest"*

-Robert Lloyd Praeger, one of Ireland's
greatest naturalists



Designated Areas – what does it mean?

- Natura 2000 (SPA and SAC) sites are internationally protected
 - Most important sites in Europe!
- NHAs tend to be protected through planning policy



Protected species

- A number of species are protected by law.
- 76 species of plant are protected under the Flora Protection Order (protected from picking, uprooting and damage).
- The Wildlife Acts protect against injury, disturbance and damage to their breeding or resting sites for:
 - 32 Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles,
 - 3 Invertebrates, All birds.



Designated Sites in Sligo

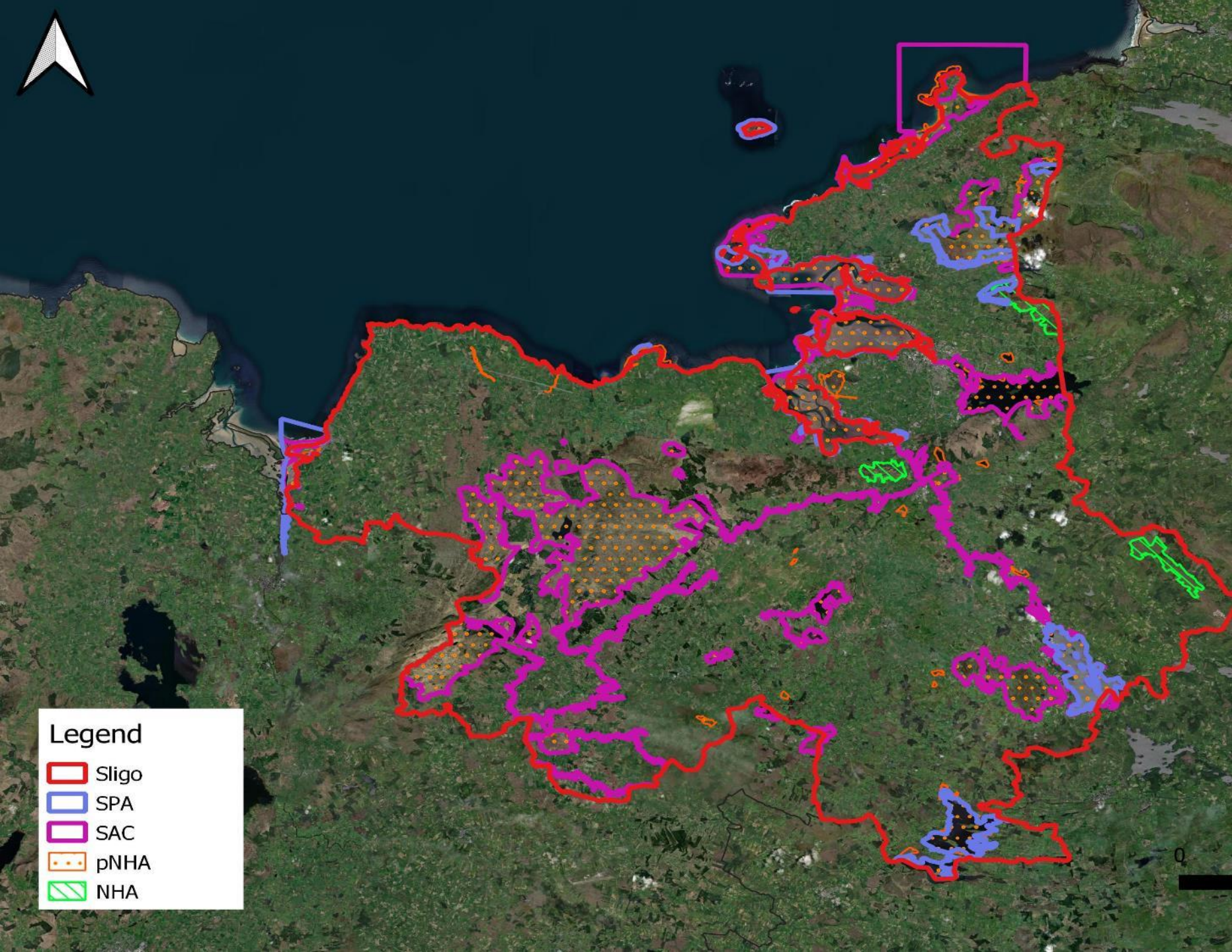
- Designated SACs within county Sligo make up a total of around 58,500 hectares
- Over 5% of the total area of designated SACs in the Republic of Ireland!
- Importance of Sligo for biodiversity.



Source: Zoë Devlin



Source: Liam Lysaght



Legend

- Sligo
- SPA
- SAC
- pNHA
- NHA

Designated Sites in Sligo

- 10 SPAs
- 20 SACs
- 3 NHAs
- 34 pNHAs

Upland Habitats

Alpine and Boreal Plants

Heaths

Blanket Bogs

Raised Bogs

Springs

Cliffs



Ben Bulbin

- One of the best in the country for alpinists, in terms of species diversity & numbers
- Some of the alpine plants found here occur nowhere else in Ireland such as Fringed Sandwort and Alpine Saxifrage!
- The cliffs also support a population of Chough.



Blanket Bogs

- Forms in high rainfall upland areas in the wet Atlantic climate.
- Blanket bog is associated with plant species such as Heathers, Cotton-grasses and Bog Mosses
- Important bird species such as wintering Greenland white-fronted geese and breeding golden plover and merlin are associated with this habitat



Upland Species

- Heather grows abundantly on the acid soils of upland bogs and heaths
- Sundews are one of our native carnivorous plants
- Peregrines frequently nest along cliff faces



Watercourses

- The County is within the catchments of the Ballysadare, Moy and Garavogue rivers.
- Easky River: healthy population of Freshwater pearl mussel
- River Moy and its tributaries: designated for Salmonids
- White-clawed crayfish (Lough Gill)



Source: Salmon Watch Ireland



Source: Catchments.ie

Lakes and wetlands

- Turloughs* (Doocastle Turlough)
- Hard-water lakes (Lough Arrow)
- Raised Bogs



Turloughs

- These are ephemeral (or transient) lakes that are found in depressions in limestone areas.
- Found almost nowhere but Ireland





Loughs

- Loughs can vary considerably depending on features like their bedrock and the quality of water that comes into them.
- Sligo holds loughs that are naturally nutrient-rich (such as Lough Gill),
- Others that have a medium nutrient status and are spring-fed through limestone beds (such as Lough Arrow)
- And many that are acidic and nutrient-poor.

Value of Wetlands and Lakes

- Biodiversity Value
- Amenity Value
- Flood Protection
- Water Quality



Woodlands

- Upland oak woodlands, such as that found around Lough Gill, support many important species including Strawberry Tree, Ivy Broomrape and Purple Hairstreak butterfly.
- Wet woodland is associated with lough shores and is a transition habitat between the lakeshore fen and drier woodland. Normally dominated by Willows and Alder and supports a wealth of invertebrates.



Examples of Woodland Habitats in Sligo

- Slish Wood
- Union Wood
- Lough Gill Forest
- Ben Bulbin Forest



Source: Widflowersofireland.net

Species in Woodlands

- Mammals including Pine Marten, Red Squirrel, Badger, Fox, Bats and Fallow Deer.
- Birds including Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Jay, Raven, Goldcrest, Treecreeper, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzards
- Various Insects types including butterflies and damselflies near wetlands



Source: Birdwatch Ireland



Source: Vincents Wildlife Trust

Woodland Species



Bats

- 9 confirmed species in Ireland
- All protected
- All nocturnal
- Active during summer
- Hibernate during winter
- Navigate largely by echolocation
- Often associated with 'habitat features'



Human-influenced Habitats

- Gardens
- Parks
- Graveyards
- Railway lines
- Walkways
- Hedgerows and scrub
- Bare earth banks



Agricultural Area



Coastal Habitats

Dunes

Salt marshes

Mud and Sandflats

Estuaries

Machair

Rock pools



Sand Dunes

- Stable or “Fixed” dune systems are a particularly rare habitat
- These habitats often including species such as Wild Thyme, Thyme Broomrape and Wild Carrot as well as orchids such as Bee and Pyramidal Orchids.





Machair and Coastal Lagoons

- Machair is often associated with species rich grassy areas with a mixture of wet and dry habitats.
- A plant unique to the West of Ireland, Fringed Rock-cress, is found near Rosses Point.
- Coastal lagoons hold important species such as the rare Slender-leaved Pondweed.

Estuaries

- The mud and sand flats of Sligo's estuaries support thousands of wintering and passage wading birds
- Wintering species like the Pale-Bellied Brent Goose thrive on the eel-grass that grows on the mud flats.
- These sites are also important for many other species including Common Seals and Otter.





Coastal Species - Animals

Many species live along our
coastline

Some species are migratory
Others live here year round



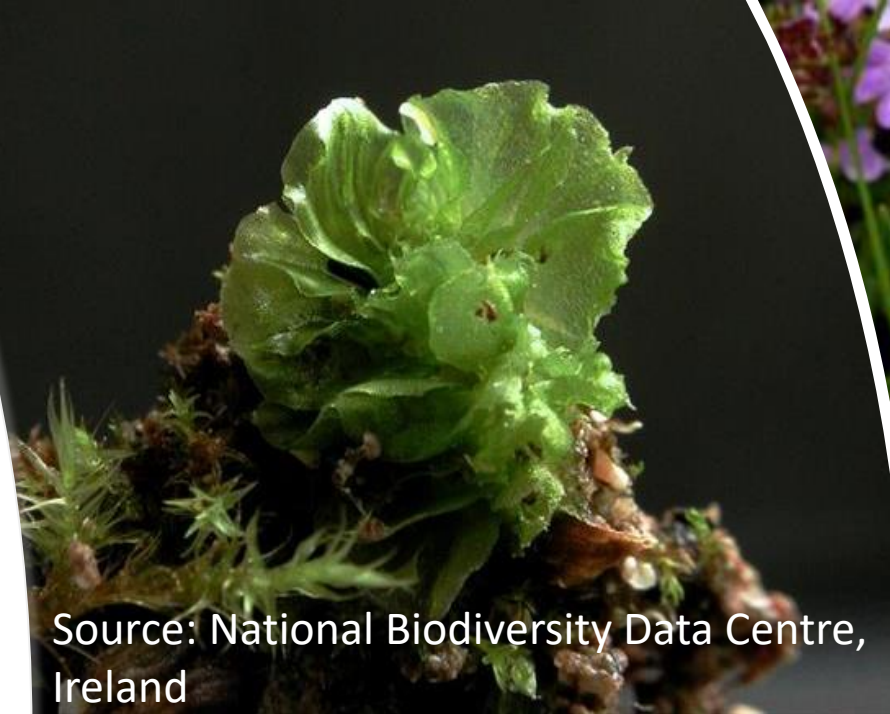
Mullaghmore Area

Examples of Protected Habitats:

- Machairs
- Semi-natural dry grasslands
- Juniper scrub
- Alkaline fens

Examples of Protected Species

- Petalwort
Petalophyllum ralfsii



Enniscrone area

- Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC/ SPA and pNHA

Examples of Protected Habitats:

- Atlantic salt meadows
- Mudflats and sandflats
- Fixed dunes*

Examples of Protected Species:

- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)
- Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)



Source: Birdwatch Ireland



Source: Birdwatch Ireland

Threats to Biodiversity in Sligo

- Habitat Loss (natural/ semi-natural areas changed to built-up areas/ single-species grasslands)
- Invasive Species
- Habitat fragmentation/ species disturbance
- Declines in species density
- Changes in environmental factors (like water quality)





Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed

Invasive Species

Giant Hogweed





Everyday Biodiversity



Everyday Biodiversity



Opportunities

Connecting the dots:

Hedgerows and other habitats create stepping stones between wild spaces

Creating Shelter

Providing Food



Free Resources - Identification

Identification apps:

BirdNet (Bird calls)

Nord University (Birds)

PlantNet (Plants)

Seek/ iNaturalist

Record what you see/do



NBDC website and app
(biodiversityireland.ie/)



Pollinators.ie website

Home

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Ho



Actions for Pollinators

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is

'*Actions for Pollinators*' is an online mapping tool that allows you to register the actions they have taken for pollinators.

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is managed by

**National
Biodiversity
Data Centre**
A Heritage Council Programme



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