



THEME:

Environment

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€9,210,813.93

MATCH FUNDING:

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

LEAD PARTNER:

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

PROJECT PARTNERS:

East Border Region Ltd; Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute; Ulster University; Ulster Wildlife; Monaghan County Council; Institute of Technology Sligo; Golden Eagle Trust; Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust; and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Start Date: 01/01/2017

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 @theCANNproject

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN) - Optimism for rare waders across borders

Over the past four years the bird monitoring teams from the Golden Eagle Trust (GET) and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) have been studying important wading bird populations across CANN's upland and lowland moorland and bog sites. These baseline surveys will help the project to monitor the effectiveness of its conservation actions like the restoration of natural water levels, leading to re-wetted habitats with wader-friendly pool-systems across the sites.

One of the most endangered breeding species the project works with is the golden plover, protected at the highest level in the EU. Winter on Cuilcagh, Slieve Beagh and Fairywater is marked by large flocks, the speckled gold of their feathers catching the light. In summer they develop a black chest and head and their piercing, shrill call echoes across the mountains and bog.

During 2019 and 2020 breeding golden plover were recorded on Cuilcagh Mountain, a habitat that straddles the Irish Border. In 2019, three or four territories were identified and despite Covid-19 restrictions, 2020 saw two or three pairs in Northern Ireland and two in Ireland. The restoration and continued management of the CANN project sites is key to improving the fortunes of these important species. The project shows early indications of the capacity of waders to rebound, when conditions are right. Several pairs of curlews were recorded around the other cross-border site, at Sliabh Beagh Mountain.

Five to seven curlew pairs nested across the mountain in Monaghan and Tyrone and Fermanagh during 2020. Curlew were also seen near Moneygal Bog and the Fairywater Bog complex. Following restoration works, which are continuing apace, there is hope that we may soon see the return of this species to some of the lowland raised bogs.

Photo: Golden Plover
in winter plumage
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