



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN) Progress May 2020

THEME:

Environment

FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH:

€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

End Date: 31/12/2022

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The cross-border CANN project aims to improve the condition of protected habitats and support priority species found within Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Scotland. It will help to meet the region's key EU biodiversity targets.

The project has seen a steady progression since its launch in June 2018, discovering more about the wetlands and uplands of our region and the animals and plants that inhabit them. The project has recorded new species and its on the ground conservation actions have had a direct influence on increasing the biodiversity of 3,650ha of designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation).

Award Winning

In February 2020 the project beat nine other competitors to be awarded the Best Environmental/ Ecological Project at the All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2020.



Discoveries

In July 2019 adult Marsh Fritillary butterflies were recorded from two new locations on the Sliabh Beagh site, Monaghan. One adult was found in the Northern Ireland end of the site, with the other in the Irish side. These new locations were several kilometres from the previously recorded populations. The Marsh Fritillary is Ireland's only European protected insect, listed as an Annex II species under the Habitats Directive. In late 2018, the project also discovered a rare species of snail known as the Desmoulin's whorl at a bog in Co. Down. The discovery was made by a team of specialists who were carrying out field surveys at the Lecale Fens Special Area of Conservation site, just outside Downpatrick.

Biosecurity at Lough Arrow, Co. Sligo

Work to investigate and combat the invasive pondweed *Elodea nuttallii* on Lough Arrow took place in 2019. The Elodia had invaded the lake and overwhelmed the native Charophytes / stone-worts (green algae that grow on the bottom of alkali limestone lakes).

As well as damaging the biodiversity of the lough, the Elodia was getting tangled in fishing boat engines, causing severe damage. Elodia was easily transferred to other water bodies that had been free of the weed, so CANN worked with local and visiting anglers to create temporary weed-free lanes by laying down long sheets of jute on the floor of the lough. This combated Elodia, but still allowed the Charophytes to grow through the fabric. Temporary buoys were also laid to mark the safe lane and cleaning stations around the lake.

