

## Press Release

**Date: 7 December 2018**

### **AWARD-WINNING WILDLIFE FILM MAKER DOUG ALLAN LAUCHES NEW EU PROJECT TO SUPPORT THE CROSS-BORDER MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

**On 11 December documentary filmmaker Doug Allan will join the launch event of a €6.4 million environment project to inform and improve management and monitoring of several Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) between Northern Ireland, the border region of Ireland, and Western Scotland. The event will take place at the Whistledown Hotel in Warrenpoint, overlooking Carlingford Lough as one of the project sites. Doug Allan, about whom David Attenborough said *'wildlife cameramen don't come much more special than Doug'*, will provide an illustrated talk highlighting the beauty and connectedness of the marine environment that the project aims to conserve.**

The Marine Protected Area Management and Monitoring 'MarPAMM' project is led and coordinated by researchers from the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and involves another six leading marine research providers, forming a cross-border collaboration network developing tools to protect vulnerable marine habitats and species.

MarPAMM is supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Match-funding for this project has been provided by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland. The investment will deliver seabird, benthic habitat, marine mammal and coastal processes models and culminate in the development of six MPA management plans, including four novel regional plans.

Project coordinator Dr Annika Clements from AFBI explained: **"I am really excited to work alongside expert colleagues from statutory, academic and voluntary organisations and with a wide range of stakeholders to produce meaningful management plans for MPAs in Northern Ireland (Murlough Special Area of Conservation), in the cross-**

**border region (County Down to County Louth; Carlingford Lough; North Coast – North Channel region) and in Scotland (Outer Hebrides and Argyll)."**

Welcoming the official launch of the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB said: **"Our shared marine environment, and the many different species which live within it, need to be properly managed so that it can be protected for future generations to come. As nature does not respect any boundaries this work has the most impact when it is conducted on a cross-border basis by a multi-disciplinary team of highly trained scientists with the specific skill-sets needed to deliver long-term conservation. The MarPAMM project will deliver upon this vital work and in doing so help meet the environmental protection targets of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme across Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland."**

Dr Stanley McDowell, CEO of AFBI, said: **"The need to better protect and manage our marine environments has been increasingly recognized in recent years. I am particularly pleased that AFBI is leading on this hugely important project which brings together leading organisations and stakeholders to make a real difference for the marine environment and for society."**

John Speers, Marine and Fisheries Director at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, said: **"I am delighted to give my support to the MarPAMM project, which focusses on the evidence-based management of our local marine environment. It is an AFBI-led endeavour which will see collaboration between multi-disciplinary scientists with the aim of generating lasting policies in the form of Marine Protected Area management plans."**

**MarPAMM brings together experts across Northern Ireland, western Scotland and the border region of Ireland to study a wide range of marine species and habitats, from the seabed to seabirds. All the data will be used to produce plans supporting the conservation of those marine species, their habitats and the wider environment, helping to safeguard the health and sustainability of our marine ecosystem for future generations to enjoy."**



Minister for the Natural Environment in the Scottish Government, Mairi Gougeon, said: **“I am delighted that Marine Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage will be partners in the MarPAMM project, working with other organisations across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. This project will improve the marine evidence base particularly in relation to seabirds and provide the platform for stakeholder engagement in development of long-term regional MPA management plans.”**

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

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For more information on MarPAMM please visit [www.mpa-management.eu](http://www.mpa-management.eu)

### **The MarPAMM Partnership**

#### **1. Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI, Lead Partner)**

AFBI carries out high technology R&D, statutory, analytical & diagnostic testing and consultancy work for government and commercial companies globally. Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems Branch provides research, monitoring and technology transfer in support of evidence-based sustainable management of freshwater fisheries and marine resources in Northern Ireland. AFBI is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

#### **2. BirdWatch Ireland**

BirdWatch Ireland is the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland with over 15,000 members and supporters and a local network of over 30 branches nationwide. The primary objective of BirdWatch Ireland is the protection of wild birds and their habitats in Ireland. Extensive research and survey work are key mechanisms to fulfilling this objective.

<https://www.birdwatchireland.ie/>

### **3. Marine Scotland Science (MSS)**

MSS is the scientific division of Marine Scotland. MSS has statutory responsibility for the delivery of science advice to inform the designation, monitoring and reporting of the MPA network in Scottish waters, as well as monitoring and assessment for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Scottish waters. [www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science](http://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science)

### **4. Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS)**

The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), based near Oban, is Scotland's largest and oldest independent marine science organisation, dedicated to delivering marine science for a healthy and sustainable marine environment through research, education and engagement with society. It is a charitable organisation (009206) and an academic partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands. [www.sams.ac.uk](http://www.sams.ac.uk)

### **5. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)**

SNH is the government's adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Their role is to help people understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. [www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)

### **6. Ulster University**

Ulster University is a university with a national and international reputation for excellence, innovation and regional engagement, making a major contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland.

### **7. University College Cork**

University College Cork is a constituent university of the National University of Ireland and is located in Cork.

[www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)

## **The project funders**

### **Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)**

The SEUPB is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG



VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. For more information on the SEUPB, please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)