

Targeted agri-environment schemes and output-based projects in Ireland's RPD

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Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

- Measures for traditional hay meadows & low-input pastures
- Support protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation



Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

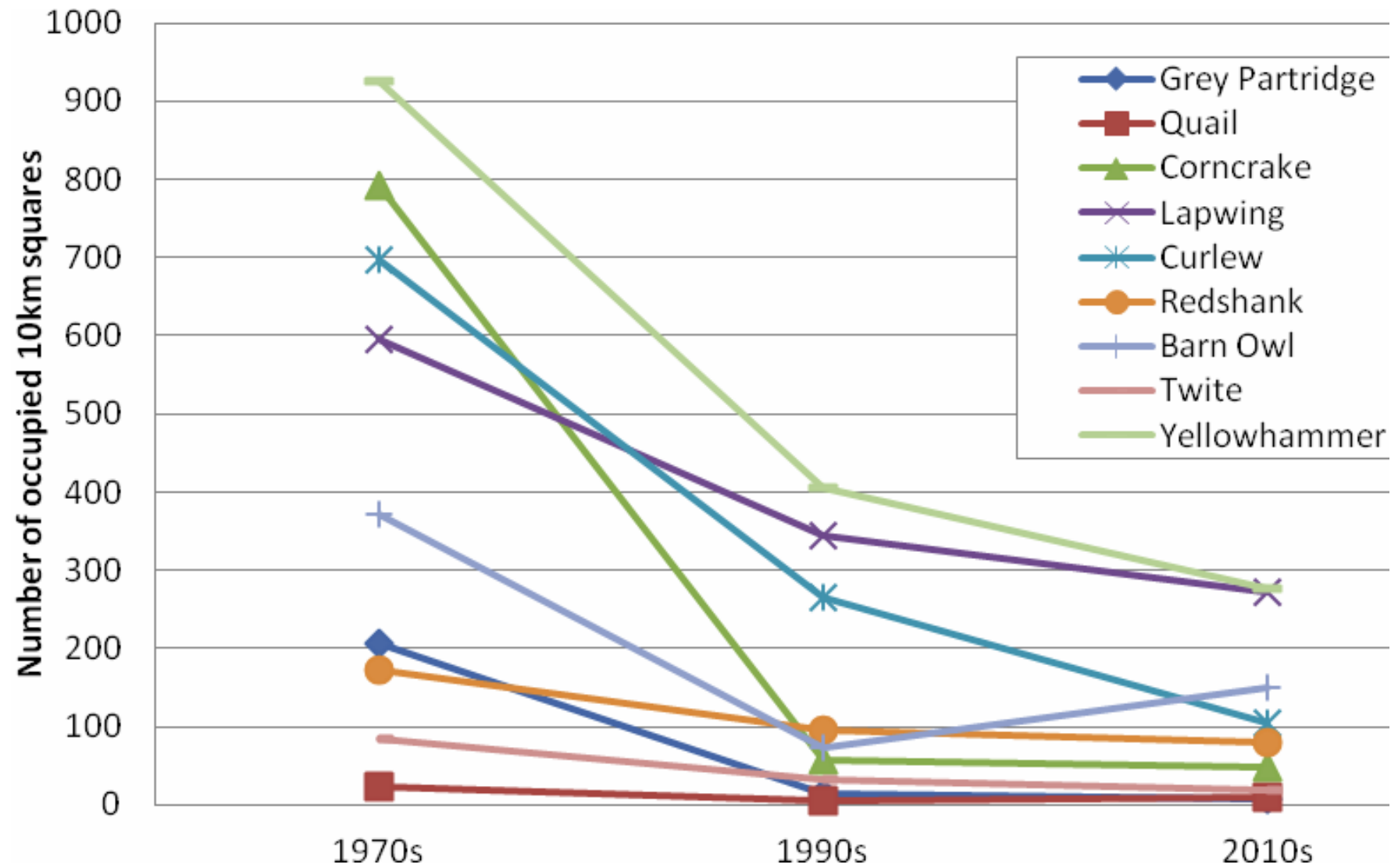
All farmers with '**Priority Environmental Assets**' get first priority access to the Scheme

- Farmland Habitat (private Natura sites)
- Farmland Birds (Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese/swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite)
- Commonages (50% target participation in GLAS Commonage Plan)
- High Status Water Area
- Rare Breeds

So GLAS is well targeted to key environmental challenges

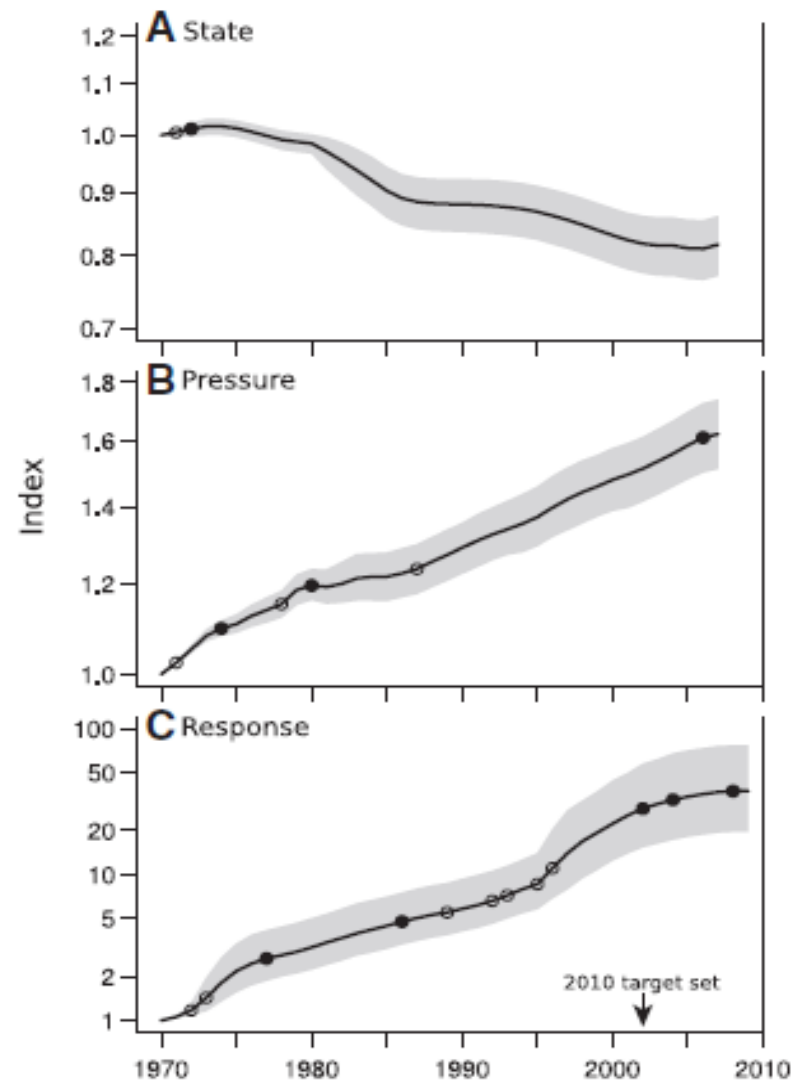


Facing the challenge?



Global Biodiversity indicators

Fig. 2. Aggregated indices of (A) the state of biodiversity based on nine indicators of species' population trends, habitat extent and condition, and community composition; (B) pressures on biodiversity based on five indicators of ecological footprint, nitrogen deposition, numbers of alien species, overexploitation, and climatic impacts; and (C) responses for biodiversity based on six indicators of protected area extent and biodiversity coverage, policy responses to invasive alien species, sustainable forest management, and biodiversity-related aid. Values in 1970 set to 1. Shading shows 95% confidence intervals derived from 1000 bootstraps. Significant positive/upward (open circles) and negative/downward (filled circles) inflections are indicated.



(from Butchart et al, Science, Vol 328, May 2010)

Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

Measures for most threatened farmland birds:

Corncrake, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier,
Chough, Twite

Breeding waders such as Curlew, Lapwing and
Redshank

In geographically targeted areas, priority status given
(i.e farmers undertaking actions for these spp given
preference for scheme entry)





Curlew decline in Ireland: 90% since 1990
Other breeding waders facing similar declines

Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

- measures for hedgerows
- wild bird cover
- extensive grassland management



All GLAS participants will also have to comply with Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) code

Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

- However.... Intensive farming also get priority

Measures for intensive farming

- Minimum Tillage (arable farm >30ha)
 - Catch crops Establishment from a Sown Crop (arable farm >30ha)
 - Low Emission Slurry Spreading (livestock farm >140kg N/ha only)
 - Wild Bird Cover (livestock farm > 140kg N/ha only)
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- **TIER 2 Environmental Assets and Actions**
 - **Tier 2(a)** Farmers, who do not have Priority Environmental Assets but whose lands include a **Vulnerable Water Area**, may apply for access to the scheme under Tier 2. In such cases, the appropriate actions relevant to Vulnerable Water Areas **must** be selected.

CONSTRAINTS

Training and Advisory Services

- advisory services to farmers through sectoral Knowledge Transfer Groups (KTGs)
- Farmers participating in the biodiversity-focused options need specialist support
- So far there is lack of adequate specialist advisory support

Improved training and advisory (including high-quality environmental advice to farmers) essential to successfully deliver on environmental commitments and objectives

- ❖ preservation and enhancement of ecosystems;
- ❖ improvements in water quality;

Monitoring??!!

Further opportunities

Need to support non-productive investments, such as funding one-off capital works (such as the highly-successful predator-proof fences in some of our breeding wader hotspots)

Locally-led **output-based** agri-environment schemes to address local conservation challenges

- output-based agri-environment measures can bring far larger benefits than generic approaches
- Example 'Burren Farming for Conservation Programme'

Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

Burren is very special limestone Kast region, winterage, traditional land management

- Programme Exclusive to Habitats Directive Annex I habitats, including land outside Natura 2000



Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

Programme is Pillar 1 so is explicitly NOT an RDP measure!



Drystock farming of cattle with a traditional pastoral system of 'winterage' where cattle are put on the higher ground through winter and moved to better pastures only in summer. Beef is the market product.



Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

- Payments are based on the results achieved in terms of grassland condition
- This provides essential incentive to on-going grassland management under a format that allows farmers to make their own decisions on how to achieve conservation results
- Capital improvements also supported
- No management actions – but can get score '0' = no payment Measure 1
- Supported peer learning

Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Farmer-led approach that draws on their knowledge and skill;
- output-based payments based ecological assessment – with qualitative elements;
- farm planning approach is innovative;
- strong support for the project across farming and conservation sectors;
- good monitoring data



Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

- Innovative methodology applicable to any field or any farm anywhere
- Participative approach of working well with landowners - farmer driven;
- High degree of farmer involvement to determine appropriate actions
- Successfully maintains a culturally and ecologically rich landscape
- Model for future partnerships
- Simple to assess (ecological) output –
delivery of PG/ESS
- Strong positive communications important
- Operated by an SME (Burren LIFE project)

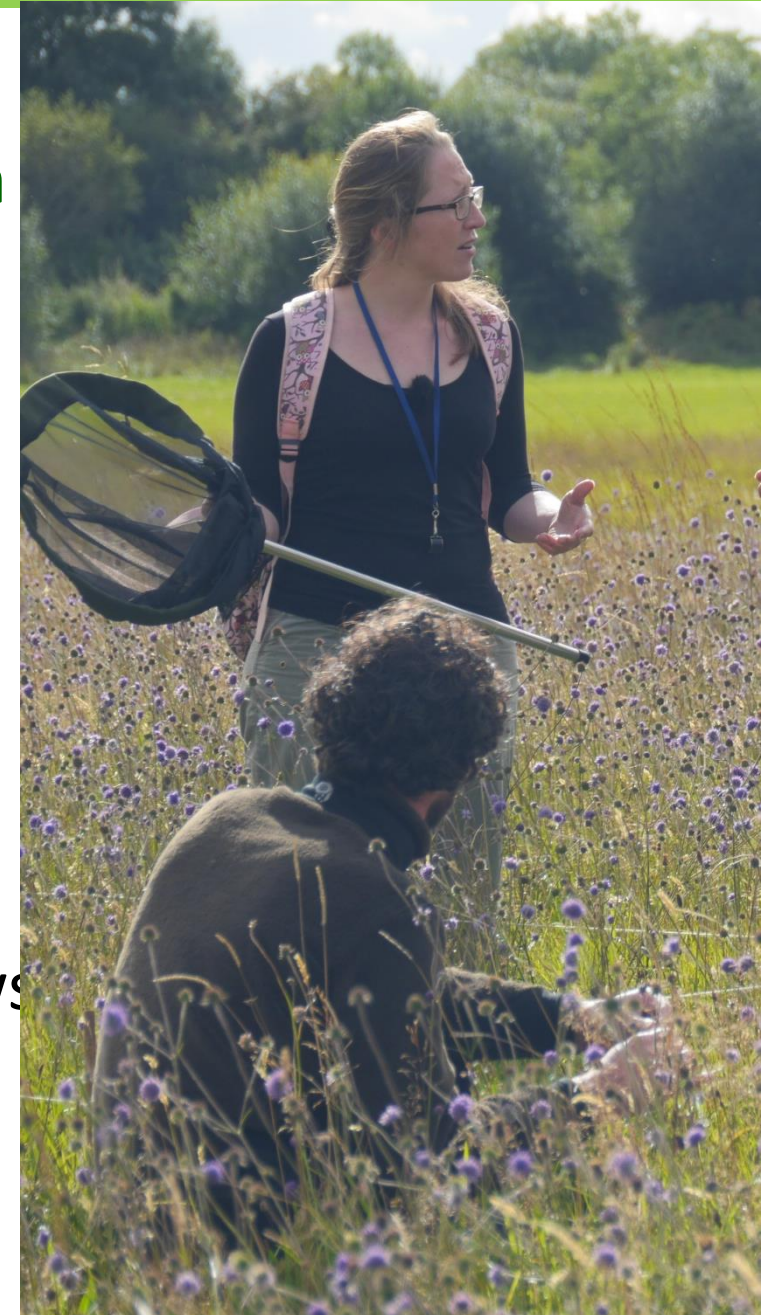


Tackling the loss of Semi-natural grassland habitats rich in biodiversity in Shannon Callows, Irish Midlands

- EFNCP & BirdWatch Ireland trialling results based approach in species rich floodplain grasslands

the more a farmer does to produce suitable habitat the more he gets paid on a per ha basis

- Annex 1 *Molinia* meadows and lowland hay meadows
- DG ENV supported research scheme- also not RDP



Shannon Callows Output Based Trial

Threats:

- over-deepening of drains
- ploughing and fertilising botanically-rich fields
- herbicides use

Traditional CAP support divorced from ecological outcomes

GLAS does not allow for sufficient advisory support & targeting



Shannon Callows Output Based Trial

Pilot scheme: integrated results-based approach –

hopes to allow flexibility for farmer + delivery of ecological outputs

(no rigid prescriptions which force farmers to choose one or the other for each parcel, no need to choose between species-rich grassland, or low-intensity hay meadow, or breeding waders!!)

