



COUNTY TIPPERARY

Biodiversity Action plan 2026 - 2031



Comhairle Contae Thiebraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



Ceangal
Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta
A Heritage Council programme



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Foreword

Tipperary County Council

Biodiversity is central to our past, our present, and our future. It supports healthy ecosystems, underpins our communities, and contributes greatly to the quality of life in both our urban and rural areas. It is shared by all, and our interaction with the natural environment provides important physical and mental health benefits, contributing to overall wellbeing.

The natural environment of County Tipperary - from its rivers and wetlands to its farmland, woodlands and urban green spaces - gives the county its unique character. It plays an important role in making Tipperary an attractive place to live, work and visit.

This Biodiversity Action Plan provides a framework to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and to take practical steps to protect, enhance and restore it. The Plan aligns with national and European priorities, including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Its implementation will contribute to achieving key objectives within the County Tipperary

Development Plan 2022 – 2028, the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029. Reshaping Tipperary's Future Together, and the Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.

By encouraging a greater understanding and appreciation of biodiversity, we aim to support positive actions across all sectors, helping to protect habitats, support pollinators, and strengthen the resilience of our natural environment.

We wish to acknowledge the work of the Biodiversity Forum and all who contributed to the development of this Plan. We also recognise the ongoing support of the Heritage Council, and other partners in its delivery.

We look forward to the implementation of the Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan 2026 – 2031 and to seeing positive outcomes for nature and communities over the coming years.

As Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council, we are pleased to introduce the Draft Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan 2026 – 2031.



Sinead Carr
Chief Executive



Fiona Bonfield
Cathaoirleach

Introduction

County Tipperary's rich and diverse biodiversity forms the foundation of its natural environment, supporting a wide range of habitats and species. This Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a coordinated approach to protect, restore, and enhance biodiversity from 2026 – 2031. Through collective action involving communities, stakeholders, and public bodies, it aims to conserve and strengthen the county's ecosystems for the benefit of both people and nature into the future.



Vision Statement

To protect and restore the rich biodiversity of County Tipperary, creating resilient ecosystems that support wildlife, enhance climate adaptation and provide lasting benefits for nature and people.



What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity, short for biological diversity, refers to the full variety of life on Earth. It encompasses the richness of species, the genetic variation within those species, and the diversity of the ecosystems they form. Biodiversity is not simply a catalogue of plants and animals; it is the complex web of relationships that supports healthy, functioning natural systems and the services they provide to people.

Levels of Biodiversity

1. Genetic Diversity

Within every species, individuals vary genetically. This diversity enables populations to adapt to changing environmental conditions, resist disease, and maintain healthy reproductive success. High genetic diversity improves the resilience and long-term survival prospects of species.



2. Species Diversity

Species diversity includes all the different species found in a particular area - plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms. The number of species, their abundance, and the balance between them shape the structure and function of ecosystems. Species diversity is often the most visible and commonly measured form of biodiversity.

3. Ecosystem Diversity

Ecosystem diversity refers to the variety of habitats, ecological processes, and landscapes present within a region. From wetlands and grasslands to rivers, woodlands, and coastal environments, different ecosystems support distinct communities of species and deliver essential services such as nutrient cycling, water purification, flood regulation, and carbon storage.



Why Biodiversity Matters

Biodiversity underpins the natural processes that sustain life.

Healthy ecosystems provide a suite of ecosystem services, including clean air and water, climate regulation, pollination of crops, soil fertility, and opportunities for recreation and wellbeing. Biodiversity also holds cultural value and contributes to local identity, heritage, and a sense of place.

Beyond its ecological and cultural importance, biodiversity is critical for economic stability. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism all rely on healthy, functioning ecosystems and the species within them.

Biodiversity is essential because it underpins the ecosystem services that support human wellbeing, economic activity, and environmental stability. Healthy, diverse ecosystems provide clean air and water,

pollination of crops, fertile soils, carbon storage, flood regulation, and natural pest control. These services are fundamental to food security, climate resilience, and public health.

When biodiversity is rich, ecosystems are more resilient and better able to adapt to pressures such as climate change, pollution, and extreme weather. A wide range of species performing different ecological roles helps maintain stable, functioning natural systems even when conditions change.

Biodiversity also contributes to our cultural identity, recreation, and quality of life. Protecting it ensures that communities continue to benefit from nature's services and that future generations inherit a healthy, functioning environment.



What is a Biodiversity Action Plan?

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a strategic framework that outlines how a county will protect, restore, and enhance its natural habitats and wildlife over a set period. In the case of Tipperary County Council, a county BAP provides a clear, locally focused vision for safeguarding biodiversity across the county. It sets out practical measures that the Council, together with local communities, landowners, state agencies, and environmental organisations, can implement to support nature. By translating national and EU biodiversity commitments into local actions, the Tipperary County BAP helps to strengthen ecosystem health, build climate resilience, and protect the county’s rich natural heritage for current and future generations.



Why do local authorities need a plan?

Local authorities play an important role in protection, enhancement and sustainable management of biodiversity, as many of their key services such as planning, housing, roads, water and parks have the potential to directly impact biodiversity. The plan provides the framework which enables the council to address and respond to biodiversity loss, climate change and meet statutory obligations regarding protected habitats and species. The plan will also help the council to meet its responsibilities under the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030.



The Role of the Biodiversity Forum in Developing the BAP

The Tipperary Biodiversity Forum supported the development of this plan by bringing together a diverse range of knowledge and perspectives. Through collaboration, discussion and facilitation, the forum helped to identify biodiversity priorities and opportunities for conservation and enhancement, which in turn, shaped the overall direction of the plan. The input of the Forum has ensured that the plan is well-informed, practical and reflective of the commitment to both protecting and promoting biodiversity within County Tipperary.



The Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan

The Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan was created in a series of clear stages, following the guidance provided by the Heritage Council. This approach helped ensure the plan was carefully developed, building on good information and input from a range of people throughout the process. By following this national guidance, the plan was put together in an organised and transparent way, supporting strong and practical actions for nature in Tipperary.

Steps in Developing the County Biodiversity Action Plan:



Threats and Challenges to Biodiversity in Tipperary



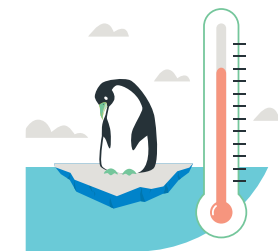
Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

The continued loss of natural habitats - such as wetlands, hedgerows, woodlands, and species-rich grasslands - poses one of the greatest threats to biodiversity in County Tipperary. Changes in land use, agricultural intensification, and expanding settlements fragment wildlife corridors, making it harder for species to move, feed, and breed.



Pollution and Declining Water Quality

Nutrient runoff, chemical inputs, and sedimentation from land management activities can reduce water quality in rivers, lakes, and groundwater. Poor water quality affects fish, aquatic plants, invertebrates, and the wider ecosystems that depend on healthy freshwater environments.



Climate Change

Shifting rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and more frequent extreme weather events place additional stress on local species and habitats. Flooding, drought, and seasonal disruption can change breeding cycles, reduce food availability, and alter the distribution of plants and animals.



Invasive Non-Native Species

Plants and animals such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, and certain invasive aquatic species can outcompete native flora and fauna. They disrupt natural ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and often require significant long-term management to control.



Decline in Pollinator Habitats

Loss of flower-rich meadows, hedgerows, and field margins reduces food and nesting resources for bees, butterflies, and other pollinating insects. This not only threatens pollinator populations but also impacts wider ecosystems and local food production.



Infrastructure and Transport Pressures

Roads, rail lines, and other infrastructure create barriers for wildlife, increase the risk of collisions, and contribute to noise and light disturbance. These cumulative impacts can reduce habitat quality and limit species movement across the landscape.



Artificial Light at Night (ALAN)

Artificial light at night is an emerging and growing concern: excessive or poorly directed lighting can disorient bats, moths, birds, and other nocturnal wildlife, disrupting feeding, navigation, and breeding cycles.

Biodiversity of County Tipperary

Overview

County Tipperary supports a rich variety of habitats and species due to its varied geology, soils, landforms and freshwater systems. The limestone lowlands and river floodplains along with the upland areas of sandstone and shale create diverse ecological conditions across the county. As a result of this varied geology, Tipperary contains an important mix of peatlands, wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, upland habitats and freshwater ecosystems. These habitats sustain a rich variety of flora and fauna and form a vital part of the county's natural heritage.

Habitats of County Tipperary

Peatlands and Wetlands

Peatlands and wetlands are among the county's most valuable ecological assets, supporting a rich diversity of specialised flora and fauna while delivering essential ecosystem services such as carbon storage, water regulation and flood mitigation. These interconnected habitats form a vital network across the landscape and play a key role in maintaining ecological resilience.

Peatlands in the county include raised bogs, blanket bogs and fens. Raised bogs were once extensive; however, only an estimated 10% of intact habitat now remains due to historical pressures such as industrial turf cutting and afforestation. Despite this decline, remaining sites, such as Redwood Bog, Scohaboy Bog and Slievenamon Bog, retain significant conservation value and continue to function as important carbon sinks.

Fens are a transitional habitat between peatlands and wetlands and are particularly important within this network. Unlike rain-fed bogs, fens are nourished by mineral-rich groundwater, resulting in more nutrient-rich conditions that support a distinct range of plant and animal communities. They are typically found along river floodplains, at groundwater springs and within larger peatland complexes, with sites such as Liskeenan Fen and Cabragh Wetlands, highlighting their ecological importance.

Beyond fens, the county's wetland habitats include marshes, reed swamps and turloughs, each contributing to overall biodiversity. Marshes occur in low-lying areas, often along floodplains, and are dominated by moisture-loving grasses and sedges. Reed swamps develop in shallow, still or slow-moving water, where dense reedbeds provide important



habitat for birds and aquatic species. Turloughs, found in limestone areas, are seasonal wetlands that fill and empty with groundwater, creating dynamic conditions that support specialised flora and fauna.

Woodlands

Woodlands in Tipperary are generally comprised of semi-natural broadleaf woodlands, mixed woodlands and more recent conifer plantations. Native species such as oak, ash and hazel are the backbone of these semi-natural habitats and support a diverse range of wildlife including bats, birds, insects, plants and fungi. Woodlands also act as vital ecological corridors for wildlife by connecting other habitats across the landscape. Some good examples of semi-natural woodlands in Tipperary are Knocknacree Woods, Clare Glens and Borrisokane Woods. As with peatlands, woodland ecosystems also provide critical ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, soil stabilisation and flood mitigation.

Uplands

The upland habitats of Tipperary form important ecological zones which are often less impacted by intensive agriculture and development pressures. These ecosystems are characterised by heathlands, upland grasslands, blanket bog and rocky outcrops. The flora and fauna of our uplands have adapted to survive in the harsh and often nutrient-poor conditions. As the headwaters for streams, the condition of the uplands can influence water quality downstream. Upland areas such as the Galtee Mountains and Slieve Felim to Silvermine Mountains are also county strongholds for the Hen Harrier, a native bird of prey which currently is one of our most threatened raptors, having experienced a decline of 33% between 2015 and 2022.

Grasslands (Lowland and Upland)

Grassland habitats dominate the landscape of County Tipperary, however, the majority of lowland grasslands are agriculturally improved and have been reseeded, fertilised and intensively managed for silage and grazing. Some good examples of species-rich lowland grasslands are still present along the Brosna and Shannon Callows. These areas of callows are vitally important for over-wintering and breeding waders such as Greenland White-Fronted Geese, Wigeon, Teal, Redshank, Snipe and Lapwing. Small pockets of semi-natural and species-rich grassland can also persist along the floodplains of the River Suir, marginal areas and farmland which is less intensively managed.

Upland grasslands in the county are found on the Silvermine Mountains, Keeper Hill, Slieve Felim, occurring on shallow, nutrient-poor soils. Common botanical species on these grasslands include mat grass and wildflowers such as tormentil and heath bedstraw. These semi-natural grasslands also support many invertebrates and birds such as Skylark and Meadow Pipit and Hen Harrier.

Rivers and Lakes

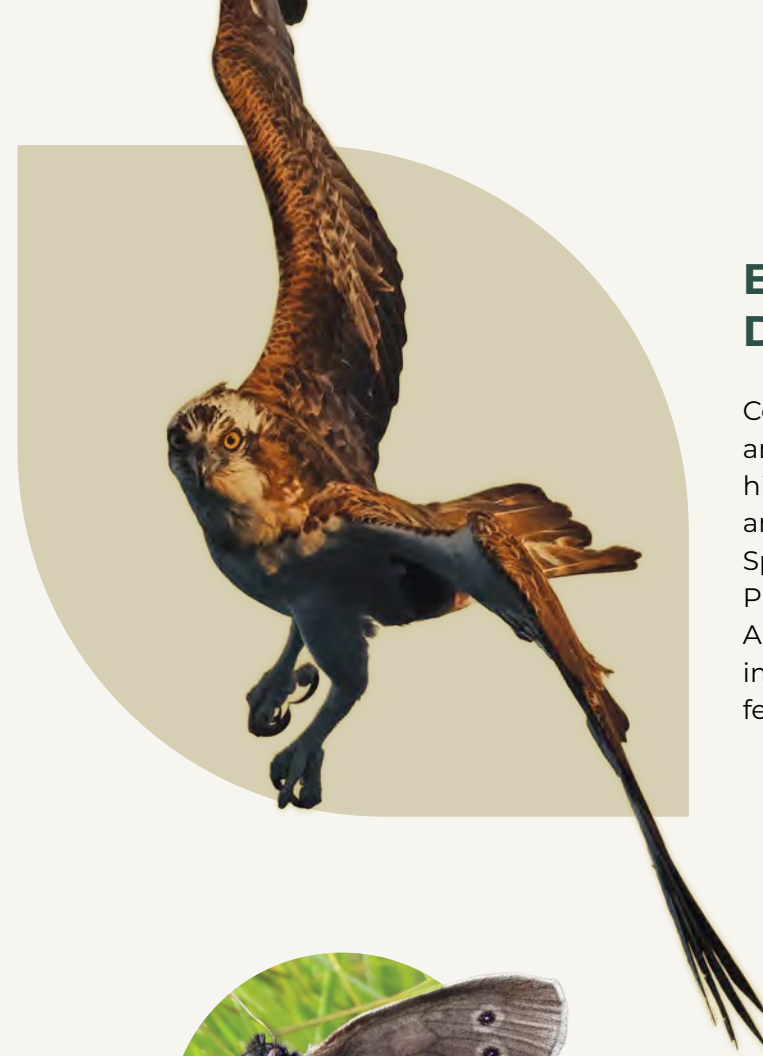
County Tipperary is rich in freshwater habitats, with an extensive network of rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands that support a wide range of biodiversity. Major river systems, including the Suir, Shannon, Nore, and their tributaries, provide important habitat for species such as Atlantic salmon, brown trout, otter, kingfisher, and freshwater pearl mussel. Lough Derg, one of Ireland's largest lakes, provides valuable feeding, breeding, and wintering areas for biodiversity. These freshwater ecosystems also deliver vital ecosystem services, including water purification, flood attenuation, and climate resilience.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a vital semi-natural habitat within Tipperary's agricultural landscape, providing food, shelter and nesting sites for birds, pollinators, small mammals and native flora. They are essentially, linear woodlands which form an important ecological network that connect woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and waterways. Well managed hedgerows store carbon, protect water quality and enable the movement of species within the wider landscape.

Urban Habitats

Urban habitats in County Tipperary include parks, gardens, river corridors and brownfield sites which provide important refuges for wildlife within towns and villages. While these habitats are not natural, they support many species of pollinators, birds, bats and other small mammals and help connect urban habitats with the surrounding rural habitats.



EU & National Designated Sites

County Tipperary contains a range of nationally and internationally designated sites that highlight the county's rich natural heritage and ecological importance. These sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). These designations protect important habitats and species and geological features throughout the county.

Natura 2000 Network

The Natura 2000 Network is a Europe-wide collection of protected sites established under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives to conserve species and habitats considered most important at a European level. It links Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) into a single, coordinated ecological network, creating the largest system of protected areas in the world. Its overall aim is to conserve biodiversity while supporting sustainable land use, ensuring that natural ecosystems remain healthy and resilient across the EU.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive to safeguard habitats and species considered of European importance. They form part of the Natura 2000 network and focus on maintaining or restoring these habitats and species to a favourable conservation status, ensuring their long-term survival and ecological health.

SACs in County Tipperary	Code
Anglesea Road SAC	002125
Ballyduff / Clonfinane Bog SAC	000641
Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC	002170
Bollingbrook Hill SAC	002124
Clare Glens SAC	000930
Galtee Mountains SAC	000646
Keeper Hill SAC	001197
Kilcarren-Firville Bog SAC	000647
Kilduff Devil's Bit Mountain SAC	000934
Liskeenan Fen SAC	001683
Lough Derg North East Shore SAC	002241
Lower River Suir SAC	002137
Moanmour Mountain SAC	002257
Philipstown Marsh SAC	001847
Redwood Bog SAC	002353
River Barrow and Nore SAC	002162
Sharavogue Bog SAC	000585
Silvermine Mountains SAC	000939
Silvermine Mountains West SAC	002258

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites designated under the EU Birds Directive to protect key bird species - especially those that are rare, vulnerable, or migratory - and the habitats they rely on. Their purpose is to maintain high-quality breeding, feeding, and resting areas so that bird populations can remain healthy and resilient. SPAs form a central part of the Natura 2000 network and work in tandem with Special Areas of Conservation to provide a coordinated system of protected sites across Europe

SPAs in County Tipperary	Code
Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA	004058
River Little Brosna Callows SPA	004086
Middle Shannon Callows SPA	004096
Slieve Felim to Silvermine Mountains SPA	004165

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are sites in Ireland, which are considered important for habitats or for species of plants and animals whose habitats require protection. NHAs are protected under the Wildlife Amendment Act 2000. Locally important sites for biodiversity, which occur outside of the Natura 2000 network or NHAs, provide vital ‘stepping stone’ habitat or ‘connectivity’ between the network of protected sites. The importance of these ‘undesigned’ sites is acknowledged in the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028.

NHAs in County Tipperary	Code
Arragh More Bog NHA	000640
Ballymacegan Bog NHA	000642
Killeen Bog NHA	000648
Monaincha Bog / Ballaghmore Bog NHA	000652
Cangort Bog NHA	000890
Scohaboy Bog NHA	000937
Lorrha Bog NHA	001684
Nore Valley Bogs NHA	001853
Mauherslieve Bog NHA	002385
Slievenamon Bog NHA	002388

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are sites identified as being of ecological importance at a national level, designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. In County Tipperary, pNHAs include a range of valuable habitats such as bogs, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands, many of which support important species and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the county. While not all pNHAs have full statutory protection, they are recognised in the planning process and are afforded protection through the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan to ensure their conservation and appropriate management.

County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)

County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) represent an important component of Tipperary's natural heritage. These locally identified, non-designated sites are recognised for their significant contribution to the county's ecological network and are identified in line with guidance provided by the Heritage Council.

Although CBAs do not have formal statutory protection, they are important for maintaining biodiversity at a local scale and for supporting habitat connectivity across the landscape. Their value is acknowledged within the planning framework, and they will be considered in the implementation of policies and objectives set out in the Tipperary County Development Plan. CBAs may occur alongside or near designated conservation sites such as SACs, SPAs and NHAs, but are distinguished by their local importance. They generally include habitats of high biodiversity value, such as wetlands, species-rich grasslands, woodlands and peatlands, or areas that support notable populations of flora and fauna.

By identifying and safeguarding these areas, Tipperary County Council aims to strengthen ecological networks, promote biodiversity conservation beyond designated sites, and contribute to wider nature recovery efforts across the county.

Policy & Legislation Context for Biodiversity

Biodiversity protection and enhancement in Ireland is guided by a strong framework of national legislation, European Union directives and international agreements. Local authorities have an important role in implementing these frameworks at a local level through land use planning, delivery of infrastructure, environmental management (compliance), corporate decision-making, climate action and community engagement.

This chapter outlines the key policy and legislative instruments that both inform and support the preparation of the County Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan.



National Policy & Legislation

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), adopted on the 25th January 2024, provides a national framework for biodiversity conservation and restoration. It sets out Ireland's response to the biodiversity crisis and outlines a roadmap of actions aimed at government and society (Whole of Government – Whole of Society approach). The NBAP places a strong emphasis on the role of local authorities in delivering positive biodiversity outcomes.

The NBAP sets out five strategic objectives focused on strengthening governance, meeting urgent conservation and restoration needs, securing nature's benefits for people, improving the evidence base, and enhancing Ireland's international contribution to biodiversity action. It also places a statutory biodiversity duty on public bodies, requiring them to integrate biodiversity considerations into decision-making.

Wildlife Acts 1976-2023

The Wildlife Acts form the basis of wildlife protection legislation in Ireland, beginning with the Wildlife Act 1976, which established statutory protection for wild birds, animals, flora, and the creation of nature reserves and refuges.

Ireland's Wildlife Act has been strengthened many times to improve protection for wildlife and habitats. Early amendments in 1985 and 1986 boosted bird conservation and addressed



problem species. A major step forward came with the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, which introduced statutory protection for Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), improved enforcement, strengthened hedgerow protections, and ensured compliance with international agreements. Later updates in 2010, 2012, 2018, and 2021 continued to refine and advance Ireland's conservation laws.

The latest update, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023, introduced statutory biodiversity duties for public bodies, requiring them to consider biodiversity in their decision-making. It also placed the National Biodiversity Action Plan on a legal footing, making it a statutory instrument for nature conservation and biodiversity enhancement.

The Act also updated procedures for reviewing and amending Natural Heritage Area (NHA) designations, including those relating to raised and blanket bog habitats. Collectively, the Wildlife Acts 1976 - 2023 represent a progressively strengthened legal framework designed to safeguard Ireland's biodiversity and support the sustainable management of its natural heritage.



European Union Policy & Legislation

Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

The Habitats Directive aims to protect endangered habitats and species of European importance by requiring Member States to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). These SACs protect priority habitats such as bogs, reefs, and woodlands, as well as species including bats, otters, and other flora and fauna listed in the directive’s annexes. Activities within or near these sites are strictly regulated to prevent habitat deterioration or species disturbance, and any plans or projects that may impact an SAC must undergo an Appropriate Assessment to ensure site integrity is maintained. Together with SPAs, SACs form the Natura 2000 network, providing an EU-wide conservation framework.



The EIA Directive

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive is an EU law that ensures major projects are carefully examined for their environmental impacts before permission is granted. First adopted in 1985 and updated in 2011 and 2014, the Directive has evolved to offer stronger environmental protection and more opportunities for the public to get involved. These rules help make sure that potential effects on wildlife, habitats, and the wider natural environment are considered from the beginning.

The SEA Directive

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive is an EU law adopted in June 2001 (Directive 2001/42/EC) that requires environmental assessments to be carried out for public plans and programmes that may significantly affect the environment. Its purpose is to make sure environmental considerations, including impacts on biodiversity, water, soil, climate, and cultural heritage are built into decision-making from the very beginning.

The Flora Protection Order

The Flora Protection Order helps safeguard some of Ireland’s rarest and most delicate wild plants. The latest version, the Flora (Protection) Order 2022, makes it illegal to pick, damage, or disturb these protected plants or harm the habitats where they grow.

The Planning and Development Act

The Planning and Development Act was first introduced in 2000. A major revision was undertaken in 2024, and this was signed into law on the 17th October 2024. This newer Act aims to make Ireland’s planning system clearer, more efficient, and better aligned with current environmental and EU standards. Importantly, it requires local authorities to consider how new developments might affect the natural environment.

Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is Ireland’s national plan for protecting all forms of heritage, including nature and biodiversity. It recognises that wildlife, habitats, and ecosystems are an important part of our shared heritage and need long-term care.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a five-year national strategy (2021 - 2025) that sets out 186 practical actions to reverse the decline of bees and other pollinating insects by improving how farmland, public land, and private spaces are managed for nature. Its key aims include restoring more land for pollinators, supporting rare species, increasing public awareness, and encouraging councils, communities, and landowners to adopt pollinator-friendly practices. Tipperary County Council became a partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan in April 2019.

The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is an EU law adopted in 2000 (Directive 2000/60/EC) to protect and improve the quality of rivers, lakes, groundwater, and coastal waters. It came into force later that same year and required Member States to develop River Basin Management Plans by 2009, aiming for all waters to reach “good status” by 2015, or by 2027 where more time is needed. This framework helps to protect aquatic habitats and supports healthier, more resilient ecosystems.

EU Biodiversity Strategy and Nature Restoration Law 2024

The EU Nature Restoration Law, adopted in 2024, introduces legally binding targets for restoring damaged ecosystems, requiring EU countries to rehabilitate 20% of land and sea by 2030, with all degraded ecosystems to be restored by 2050. The law covers a wide range of habitats such as wetlands, rivers, forests, farmland, and urban green areas and also includes specific measures to stop the ongoing decline of pollinators.

Local Policy & Plans

The County Biodiversity Action Plan is informed by, and operates within, a suite of statutory and non-statutory plans prepared by Tipperary County Council. These plans collectively establish the framework through which biodiversity is protected, enhanced and integrated into land-use planning, environmental management and service delivery across the county.

Tipperary County Development Plan 2022–2028

The County Development Plan is the primary statutory framework guiding spatial planning and development within the county. It includes specific policies and objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, designated European and national sites, and non-designated habitats. The Plan promotes the development of a coherent green infrastructure network, supports ecological connectivity, and embeds biodiversity considerations within development management, including Appropriate Assessment and environmental protection measures.

Local Area Plans (LAPs)

Local Area Plans provide detailed planning policy for key towns and settlements across Tipperary. These plans translate the strategic objectives of the County Development Plan to a local level and include specific provisions relating to biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure. LAPs play a key role in identifying locally important ecological features, managing development pressures, and ensuring that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are incorporated into the design of new development and public realm projects.

Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

The Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (Local Authority Climate Action Plan – LACAP) sets out the Council’s strategic approach to addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures across all of its functions. The Plan outlines how the local authority will deliver climate action within its own operations while also influencing, facilitating and supporting climate action across communities, businesses and other sectors.

A core objective of the Climate Action Plan is to support the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich and environmentally sustainable county by 2050. The Plan recognises the critical role of ecosystems and biodiversity in climate adaptation and resilience, promoting the use of Nature-based Solutions to address challenges such as flooding, heat stress and water quality.

Tipperary Heritage Plan

The Heritage Plan provides a strategic framework for the conservation, management and promotion of the county’s natural, built and cultural heritage. It recognises biodiversity as a key component of the county’s heritage resource and supports actions relating to habitat protection, species conservation, survey work, and public engagement. The Plan also promotes partnership working between the local authority, communities and relevant stakeholders in delivering heritage and biodiversity outcomes.



Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP establishes a framework for promoting sustainable economic development and community wellbeing within the county. It recognises the contribution of high-quality natural environments and biodiversity to quality of life, tourism, and local identity. The Plan supports community-led initiatives, environmental awareness, and actions that promote sustainable use and appreciation of natural resources.

Outdoor Recreation Plan

The Outdoor Recreation Plan guides the sustainable development and management of recreational resources across the county, including trails, blueways and amenity areas. It emphasises the need to balance increased access to the countryside with the protection of sensitive habitats and species. The Plan supports the integration of biodiversity considerations into recreation planning and promotes best practice in the management of recreational pressures.

Progress on Biodiversity to Date

Tipperary County Council has delivered a range of biodiversity projects in recent years, including habitat surveys, species monitoring, invasive species control and habitat enhancement. This work has also been supported by awareness initiatives and engagement with local communities, helping to build understanding of biodiversity and encourage participation in protecting the county’s natural environment. Some of these projects include the following:

Project	Timeline
County Swift Survey	2017
Tipperary Wetlands Survey	2021 - Present
Quagga Mussel Monitoring Project (River Shannon Catchment)	2022
Himalayan Balsam Control (Little Brosna Catchment)	2022
Alpine Newt Survey and eDNA Project	2023 - 2024
County Hedgerow Survey	2024 - 2025
Recording Irish Mayfly	2024 - 2025
Tipperary Barn Owl Project	2023 - Present
Tipperary Nightjar Survey	2025
Community Biodiversity Awareness	Ongoing



Objectives & Actions

The strategic objectives and actions outlined here will guide Tipperary’s biodiversity work over the next five years. They have been developed to align with national and EU policy and legislative requirements and informed through close collaboration with the Tipperary Biodiversity Forum. Collectively, these actions are designed to address the principal challenges identified earlier in the plan and provide a structured but flexible framework to support implementation and to meet Tipperary County Council’s reporting requirements under the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan.

- Data Collection and Monitoring
 - Conservation and Restoration
 - Policy and Decision-making
- Engagement and Awareness
 - Increasing Climate Resilience

Objective 1: Data Collection and Monitoring

A strong evidence base is essential for effective conservation. Improved monitoring and accessible biodiversity records will support informed decision-making and help guide future protection efforts across the county.

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
1.1	Carry out ecological surveys of TCC owned lands to identify sites suitable for restoration or biodiversity enhancement	• No. of surveys undertaken, • Total area surveyed annually (Ha)	TCC Biodiversity Office, TCC Climate Action , TCC Corporate (property management)
1.2	Continue with the Tipperary Wetlands Survey to maximise no. of sites assessed within the county	• No. of sites surveyed annually	TCC Biodiversity Office
1.3	Prioritise the survey / monitoring of red-listed species in council led projects	• No. of Red List specific projects commissioned	TCC Biodiversity Office
1.4	Ensure that findings of surveys (datasets etc.) commissioned by TCC are shared with the relevant organisations	• No. of datasets shared	TCC Biodiversity Office, National Biodiversity Data Centre, BirdWatch Ireland, Butterfly Conservation Ireland
1.5	Carry out an audit of ecological surveys already carried out by TCC	• Audit undertaken and completed	TCC Biodiversity Office
1.6	Carry out long-term monitoring of areas where invasive species have been managed on TCC lands to evaluate the potential for re-establishment	• No. of treated areas monitored	TCC Bio, TCC Planning, TCC Roads, LAWPRO
1.7	Commission ecological surveys and research which inform / support the Upper River Suir Restoration Project	• No. of surveys (projects) undertaken	TCC Bio, LAWPRO



No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
1.8	Develop and promote Citizen Science initiatives to enable public participation in data collection for biodiversity	No. of workshops provided	TCC Biodiversity, LAWPRO, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Bat Conservation Ireland
1.9	Repeat the county swift survey (last surveyed in 2017)	No. of surveys (projects) undertaken	Surveys repeated

Objective 2: Conservation and Restoration

Restoring and protecting Tipperary’s habitats and species is central to keeping our natural heritage alive. By supporting the recovery of damaged ecosystems and safeguarding the places where wildlife depends, we help nature flourish while strengthening the landscapes that sustain our communities. This objective encourages practical action and collaboration, so that Tipperary’s wild spaces can flourish now and into the future.

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
2.1	Ensure that TCC meets all specified requirements and actively contributes to the goals of the All -Ireland Pollinator Plan	- No. of pollinator friendly actions implemented annually - No. of training and awareness initiatives facilitated - Area of council lands managed for pollinators increasing	TCC Bio, NBDC, Municipal Districts
2.2	Identify wetland sites which are suitable for restoration and collaborate with the relevant bodies/stakeholders (Tóchar) to facilitate restoration where possible	- No. of wetland sites surveyed annually - No of sites identified with potential for restoration	TCC Bio, TCC Climate Action, NPWS (Tóchar), Municipal Districts

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
2.3	Enhance and restore biodiversity in parks and public spaces to support native wildlife and healthy ecosystems	- Area of green space improved for biodiversity annually increasing - Reduction in invasive species in public areas	TCC Bio, Municipal Districts
2.4	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to advance the restoration of ecological corridors in freshwater systems	No. of collaborative projects initiated	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, IFI
2.5	Develop management plans for sites of biodiversity (ecological) importance on TCC owned lands	- Sites identified following ecological survey - No. of management plans developed	TCC Bio, TCC Corporate (property management), Municipal Districts

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
2.6	Support projects that help restore water bodies & protect clean waters under the Water Framework Directive	No. of projects supported or funded annually	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, TCC Environment
2.7	Promote the use of Nature-based Solutions in TCC projects and ensure that such projects have adequate co-benefits for biodiversity where possible (NbS should be nature led)	- Percentage of TCC projects incorporating Nature-based Solutions - Percentage of NbS projects undertaken	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, TCC Planning
2.8	Produce ecological network maps which identify critical ecological corridors and stepping stone habitats	Number of ecological network maps completed	TCC Bio, The Heritage Council
2.9	Identify & map County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) within the county, according to Heritage Council Guidance	- CBAs identified - CBAs GIS layer created for use in planning decisions	TCC Bio, The Heritage Council
2.10	Collaborate with neighbouring LAs to protect biodiversity across county boundaries	No. of LA collaborative projects over the lifetime of the plan	TCC Bio
2.11	Ensure no net loss of green cover in urban areas and implement measures to increase green spaces in line with the Nature Restoration Law by 2030 . (This can be achieved through the promotion of green roofs / walls in development, creation of pocket parks, biodiversity gardens and Nature-based Solutions)	- No net loss incurred in urban green cover - Area of green space, tree cover increasing etc. (on phased basis)	TCC Bio, TCC Planning, TCC Climate & Environment, TCC Corporate (property management)
2.12	Enhance and protect urban biodiversity by increasing native planting, supporting species diversity and integrating Nature-based Solutions.	- No. of native species planted annually in urban areas - No. of urban projects integrating NbS or green infrastructure	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, Municipal Districts, TCC Corporate (property management)

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
2.13	Continue to support the Tipperary Barn Owl Project through the provision of nest boxes	No. of nest boxes funded TCC	TCC Bio
2.14	Control & eradicate invasive species on council lands to protect native plants and wildlife	- No. of invasive species projects completed - Area of council land (Ha) cleared of invasive species annually - No. of council sites with invasive species management plans in place	All relevant functions of TCC
2.15	Protect and enhance biodiversity along greenways and blueways to ensure these areas continue to function as ecological corridors and habitats.	- No. of corridors established or enhanced - Water quality improvements - Invasive species control implemented (as required)	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, TCC Tourism, TCC Active Travel, TCC Corporate (property management)
2.16	Support IFI and LAWPRO in the implementation of a programme aimed at removing barriers to migratory fish passage.	- No. of Barriers removed - Km of habitat opened	TCC Bio, IFI, LAWPRO
2.17	Increase nesting opportunities for swifts by incorporating swift bricks / boxes into new developments and renovation projects.	No. of projects incorporating swift bricks / boxes	TCC Bio, TCC Planning



Objective 3: Policy and Decision-making

Strong policies and well-informed decisions play a crucial role in safeguarding Tipperary's biodiversity. By ensuring that nature is considered in planning, land management, and other core activities, this objective helps guide the county toward choices that protect local ecosystems and support long-term environmental well-being.

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
3.1	Develop and implement policy on the reduction of pesticide use and adoption of sustainable alternatives within Tipperary County Council	- Alternatives Identified - Policy document prepared and adopted	TCC Biodiversity Office, TCC Roads, TCC Corporate, Municipal Districts
3.2	Planning applications to include consideration of County Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) as part of the decision-making process	- CBAs identified - GIS layer created for use in planning	TCC Biodiversity, TCC Planning, The Heritage Council
3.3	Embed a no net loss of biodiversity requirement within all planning policies	- No. of biodiversity assessments submitted with planning applications - No. of developments delivering biodiversity enhancements	TCC Bio, TCC Planning, TCC Housing
3.4	Establish Best Practice Guidance on biodiversity-sensitive lighting for adoption by TCC	Guidance document developed and adopted	TCC Biodiversity, TCC Planning, TCC Roads, Dark Skies
3.5	Develop best practice guidance and training for LA staff / contractors on the management of hedgerows	- Guidance Document developed - Training provided	TCC Biodiversity
3.6	Commission a tree management strategy for the county	County tree strategy completed	TCC Biodiversity
3.7	Develop and implement an invasive species Policy to guide the prevention, management and control of invasive species across all relevant functions of Tipperary County Council	Strategy completed and adopted	TCC Biodiversity, TCC Environment, LAWPRO, TCC Roads

Objective 4: Engagement and Awareness

Increasing awareness of biodiversity helps people better appreciate the role nature plays in Tipperary's everyday life. By encouraging participation and sharing clear, accessible information, this theme aims to build a community that is more informed, more engaged, and better equipped to support the county's natural environment.

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
4.1	Facilitate public training and awareness activities centred on biodiversity	No. of activities / workshops delivered annually	TCC Bio, PPN (Environmental)
4.2	Identify the biodiversity training gaps for TCC staff and facilitate training to address such gaps	Training delivered (at least 2 biodiversity staff training activities annually)	TCC Bio
4.3	Facilitate the establishment of a Tipperary Bat Group	- Group established - Equipment provided by TCC under LBAF programme	TCC Bio, Bat Conservation Ireland, NPWS
4.4	Collaborate with other TCC departments to deliver informative biodiversity based workshops for Tidy Towns	No. of workshops delivered annually	TCC Bio, TCC Heritage, TCC Climate Action, TCC Community, PPN
4.5	Promote biodiversity awareness through the creative arts	No. of creative projects facilitated annually	TCC Bio, TCC Heritage, Creative Ireland, TCC Arts
4.6	Raise awareness on the climate related threats to biodiversity	At least 1 climate specific campaign annually	TCC Bio, TCC Climate Action, LAWPRO
4.7	Collaborate with LAWPRO and IFI to raise awareness of pressures on freshwater dependent habitats and species	- No. of collaborative events - No. of stakeholders engaged	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, IFI
4.8	Promote the Heritage in Schools programme throughout the county to engage local schools in natural heritage education	- No. of schools contacted - Level of engagement	TCC Bio, TCC Environment (EAO)

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
4.9	Support Tidy Towns and community groups with information for creating biodiversity action plans	- Information pack created - No. of groups engaged	TCC Bio, TCC Heritage, TCC Community, PPN, Community Foundation of Ireland
4.10	Use Tipperary libraries as a platform to promote biodiversity	- No. of biodiversity related events held in libraries - Biodiversity informative materials distributed in libraries - Level of public attendance and engagement	TCC Bio, TCC Libraries
4.11	Raise awareness on wildlife crime within the county	No. of awareness campaigns annually	TCC Bio, NPWS
4.12	Promote Farming for Nature initiatives (Farming for Nature EIP, Farming for Water EIP, Breeding Waders EIP) and biodiversity-friendly farming practices.	No. of Council-hosted or supported workshops / events promoting biodiversity friendly farming practices	TCC Bio, LAWPRO, Teagasc
4.13	Raise awareness on the decline of farmland bird species (e.g. yellowhammer, skylark, curlew, lapwing, snipe)	- No. of awareness campaigns - Social media engagement	TCC Bio, BirdWatch Ireland Tipperary
4.14	Host a bi-annual TCC biodiversity conference	Conference hosted	TCC Bio
4.15	Promote the use of locally sourced, native trees and hedging in biodiversity projects	No. of projects using locally sourced, native stock	TCC Bio

Objective 5: Increasing Climate Resilience

Strengthening biodiversity is central to building climate-resilient landscapes and communities. By protecting and enhancing local ecosystems, this theme supports nature's ability to adapt to changing conditions and helps Tipperary prepare for the impacts of a warming climate.

No.	Action	KPIs	Partners
5.1	Identify areas on TCC lands which are suitable for planting of native woodlands.	- No. of areas identified - No. of afforestation licence applications annually - Total area planted annually	TCC Bio, TCC Climate Action
5.2	Support and implement the actions for biodiversity within the LACAP 2024-2029	No. of actions initiated and completed annually	TCC Bio, TCC Climate and Environment
5.3	Support Third-level institutions involved in research into climate-resilient species and habitats	No. of Third-Level institutions supported	TCC Bio, TCC Climate Action, Third-level institutions
5.4	Support the use of Nature-based Solutions in TCC developments / projects	% of TCC projects with NbS in their design - Biodiversity friendly features	TCC Bio, TCC Climate & Environment, LAWPRO, Planning and Housing



Implementing the BAP

The successful delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan requires a coordinated and structured approach across all relevant functions of Tipperary County Council. Each strategic theme is supported by defined actions, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and assigned responsibilities, ensuring that implementation is transparent, measurable and aligned with the Council's broader policy commitments. The TCC Biodiversity Office will lead and coordinate implementation, working closely with internal departments, the Tipperary Biodiversity Forum and external partner organisations to progress actions in line with available resources and emerging opportunities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress will be reviewed annually through a formal monitoring process. Each action will be assessed against its associated KPIs, enabling the Council to evaluate delivery, identify challenges, and adjust priorities where required. The outcomes of this review will inform Tipperary County Council's reporting obligations under Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, ensuring that local progress contributes effectively to national objectives.

Findings from the annual review will be presented to the Tipperary Biodiversity Forum and relevant Council committees, ensuring oversight, accountability and continued cross-departmental coordination. Where appropriate, key achievements and updates will be communicated publicly to support transparency and encourage wider engagement in biodiversity initiatives. As new environmental pressures, legislative requirements or funding opportunities arise, the plan may be refined to ensure it remains responsive, evidence-based and effective over its lifetime.



Resourcing the BAP

At present, biodiversity projects within Tipperary County Council are primarily supported through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF) and the Heritage Council's County Biodiversity Fund, which together currently provide approximately €125,000 annually. This level of funding enables the delivery of key actions within the plan; however, it is subject to change in future budget cycles and external funding availability. As new opportunities emerge, whether through national programmes, EU schemes, or partnership-based initiatives, the Council will continue to seek and secure additional resources to support the effective implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Appendix A: Biodiversity Legislation, Policies & Plans

European Legislation and Policy

- **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030**
https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en
- **EU Nature Restoration Regulation (2024)**
https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en
- **Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)**
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043>
- **Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)**
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147>
- **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060>
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)**
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>
- **Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU)**
https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/environmental-assessments/environmental-impact-assessment_en

National Legislation and Policy

- **Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030**
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7048c-national-biodiversity-action-plan-2023-2030>
- **Wildlife Acts 1976–2023**
https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/consol_act/wildlife
- **Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023**
<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2023/act/37/enacted/en/html>
- **Flora (Protection) Order 2022**
<https://www.npws.ie/legislation/flora-protection-order>
- **Planning and Development Act 2024**
<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2024/act/34/enacted/en/html>
- **Heritage Ireland 2030**
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77832-heritage-ireland-2030>
- **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan**
<https://pollinators.ie>

Local Plans and Strategies

- **Tipperary County Development Plan 2022–2028**
<https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/planning-and-development/development-plans/county-development-plan>
- **Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029**
<https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/climate-action>
- **Tipperary Heritage Plan**
<https://www.tipperaryheritage.ie>
- **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**
<https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/community-and-economic-development>

Biodiversity Forum Members

- BirdWatch Ireland (Tipperary)
- Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland
- Cabragh Wetlands CLG
- Community Wetlands Forum
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)
- LAWPRO
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC)
- Public Participation Network (PPN)
- Teagasc
- Tipperary County Council (Planning, Heritage, Climate)
- TUS Midwest

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