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Ecologist Training Ecology Overview

27/10/2023 Forest Service, DAFM

SPAs and Curlew



- SPAs
 - Not eligible
- Curlew
 - Not included in the Breeding Waders
 - Specific measures
 - 1.5km buffer around nest sites (NPWS data)
 - Not eligible for planting



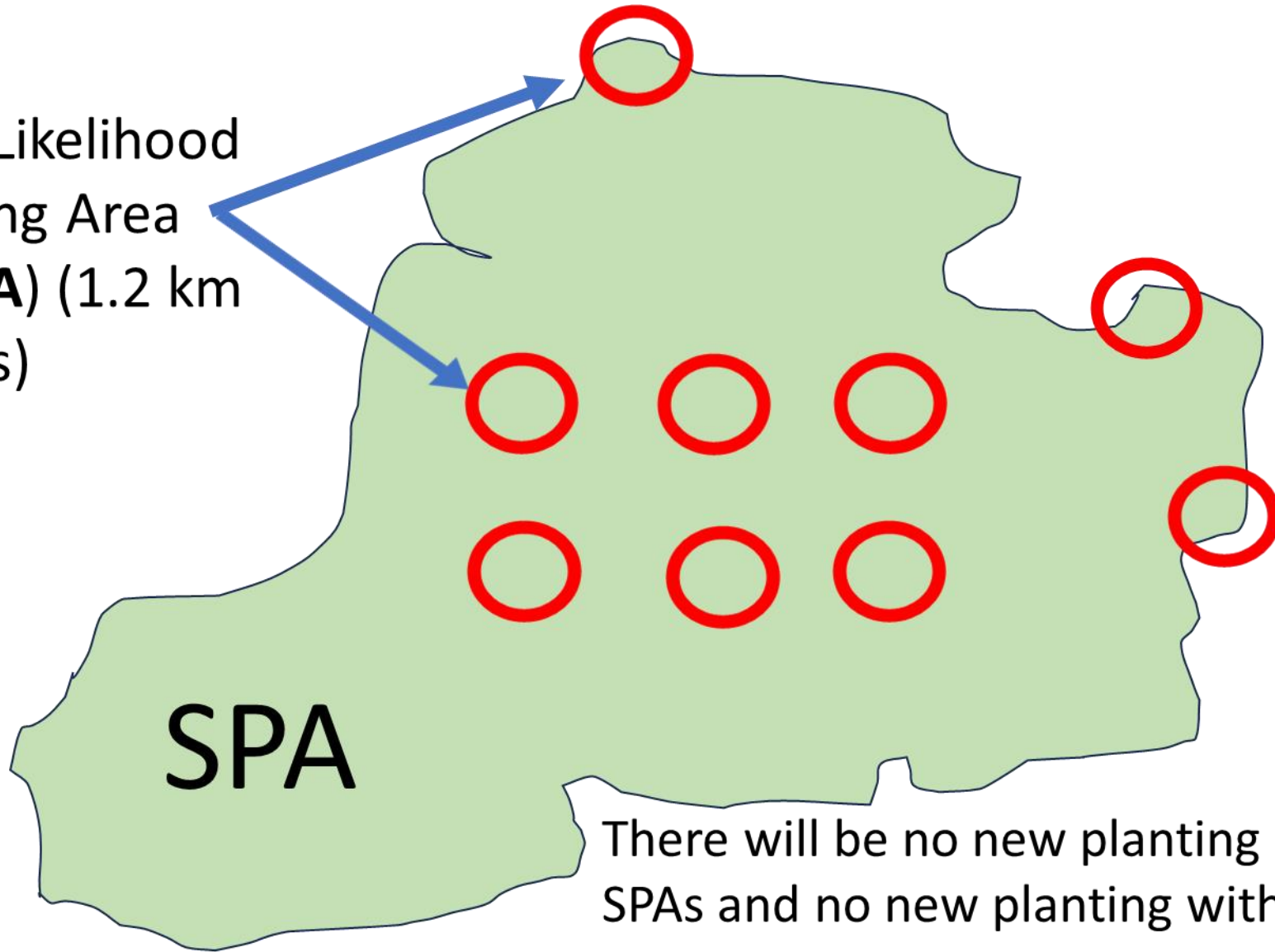
Hen Harrier



- SPAs
 - Not eligible
- High Likelihood Nesting Areas (red area)
 - 1.2km radius from nest site in SPA
 - May extend outside the SPA
 - Confidential data
 - Confirm if within or partially within
 - Contact DAFM



High Likelihood
Nesting Area
(**HLNA**) (1.2 km
radius)



There will be no new planting within
SPAs and no new planting within HLNAs.



- Article 12 Breeding Hen Harrier distribution
 - Habitat Map (all applications):
 - Habitat Description – species composition of habitats, vegetation height, site conditions, surrounding habitats, any other relevant information
 - Consideration of habitats used by hen harrier
 - Assessment by DAFM
 - Potential effects
 - Loss of foraging/breeding habitat
 - Disturbance



- Breeding season 1st March to 15th August
- Suitable breeding habitats*
 - heather dominated and/or grass moorland,
 - other open habitats with extensive scrub or bramble cover
 - developing pre-thicket forest (first and second/subsequent rotation crops).
- Unsuitable breeding habitats**
 - Areas of ground above 600m OD;
 - built-up/urban areas
 - within 100m of occupied farms and dwellings;
 - improved pasture and arable farmland;
 - the interior of unbroken, closed-canopy forest blocks;
 - sheep-walks; extensive areas of bracken; degraded or overgrazed upland areas without any heather cover and areas within close proximity to sea-cliffs,
 - inland crags, rocky outcrops, boulder fields and scree slopes

*Ruddock et al., 2012; Ruddock et al. 2016, and Hardey et al., 2013

** NPWS (2022)



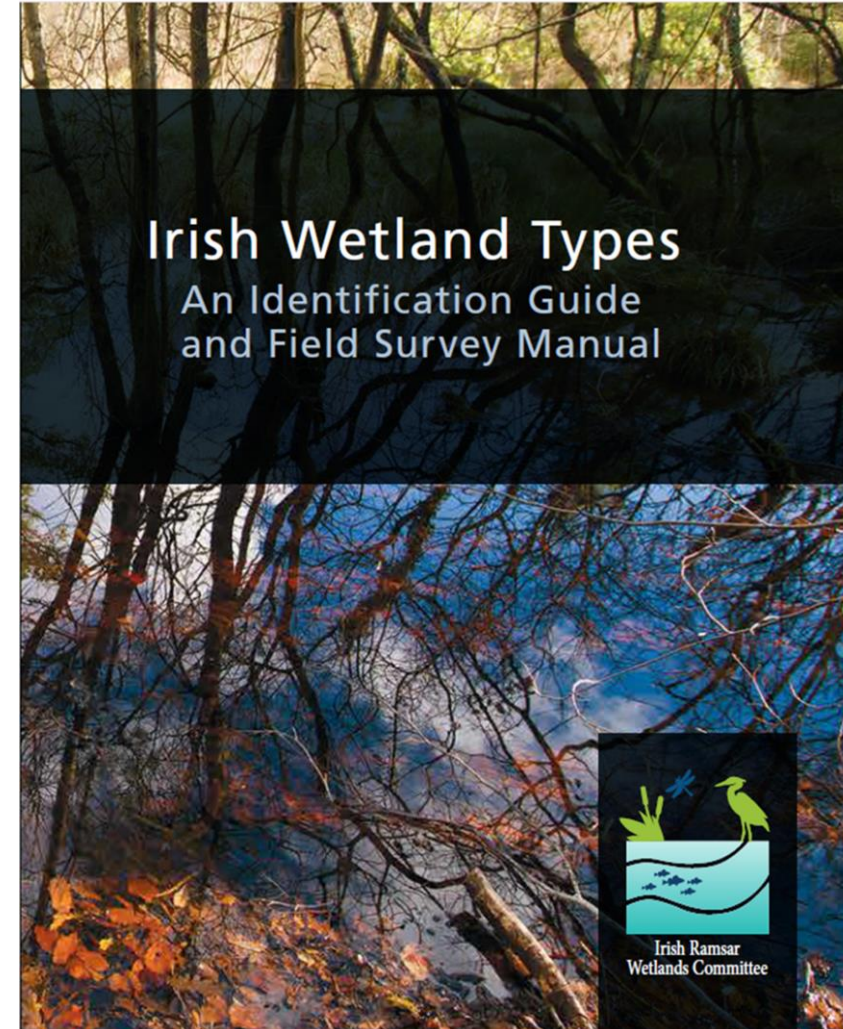
- Foraging habitats***
 - Heathland
 - Bogland
 - less-intensively farmed grassland, with well-established hedgerows and areas of scrub that support preferred prey species, including meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)
- Less-intensively farmed grassland
 - Semi-natural grasslands that support hen harrier are often referred to as “rough grassland”.
 - Moran & Wilson-Parr (2015) describes such habitats as “usually wet grassland with variable species composition, though they may also include more typical improved grassland, but with relatively high cover of rushes”

***O’Donoghue, 2004, 2010; Barton et al., 2006; Irwin et al., 2012, cited in NPWS 2022.

Wetlands



- Irish Wetland Types – An Identification Guide and Field Survey Manual (Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee, 2018)
- Must not be planted
- May be eligible as ABE
- 11 relevant habitat types
- [irish-wetlands-guide.pdf \(npws.ie\)](http://npws.ie/irish-wetlands-guide.pdf)



Irish Wetland Types

- Wet woodland
- Marsh
- Springs
- Fen
- Swamp
- Reedbed
- Wet heath
- Peat bog
- Salt marsh
- Wet machair
- Turlough
- Also caves and cliffs



Irish Wetland Types

- Identification Guide and Field Survey Manual
- Overview
- Field indicators – soil and vegetation
- Wetland habitat typology - simple identifiable “types”, potential corresponding habitat classification according to Fossitt (2000), and if relevant corresponding Annex I habitat
- R + N assessment
- References Map of Irish Wetlands



Map of Irish Wetlands

- Indicative
- National datasets
 - SACs, SPAs, NHAs,
- Local datasets
 - County wetland surveys
- Varying level of information
- Field inspection
- Report required