An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

2026 FAS training for new advisers

SMR 3 & SMR 4

Donal Bourke

Integrated Controls Division

Conditionality

11 Statutory Management Requirements (SMR)

AREA 1 – Environment, Climate Change and Good Agricultural Condition of Land

SMR 3 – Conservation of Wild Birds

SMR 4 – Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna

IRELAND

- 28 species of land mammals
- >400 species of birds
- >4,000 plant species
- >12,000 species of insect

- Must ensure enough suitable habitat for all these species to flourish
- Need the support of landowners

SMR 3: Conservation of Wild Birds

Birds Directive 2009/147/EC

(79/409/EEC)

- Europe: > 500 species of wild birds
- 32%: not in a good conservation status
- Birds Directive: aims to protect wild bird species naturally occurring in the EU

Annex 1: Birds Directive

- 194 species and sub-species are particularly threatened.
- Member States must designate Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to protect native & migratory bird species

SPA sites are habitats for Annex 1 birds, e.g. upland, wet grassland and scrub, blanket bogs and machairs

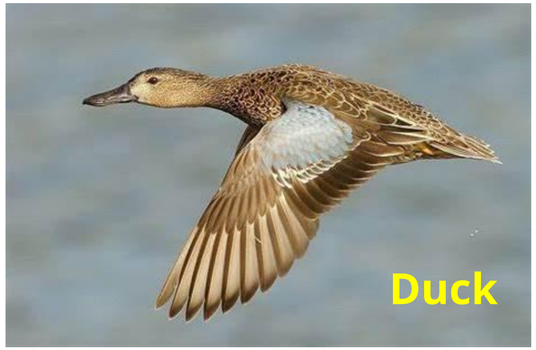
Ireland

- SPA sites selected by NPWS
- 154 SPAs – SI's formally designate each SPA
- Most sites >100 hectares in size, approx. 570,000 hectares designated as SPA

Annex 2: Birds Directive

82 bird species can be hunted. However, the hunting periods are limited, and hunting is forbidden when birds are at their most vulnerable: during their return migration to nesting areas, reproduction and the raising of their chicks

Wild game birds may be hunted at certain times of the year “Open Season”



Annex 3: Birds Directive

Bans activities that directly threaten birds

For example;

- Deliberate killing or capture of birds
- Destruction of birds' nests and eggs and taking of birds' eggs
- Trading in live or dead birds
- Deliberate disturbance of birds particularly during breeding and rearing

Derogation to hunting limits

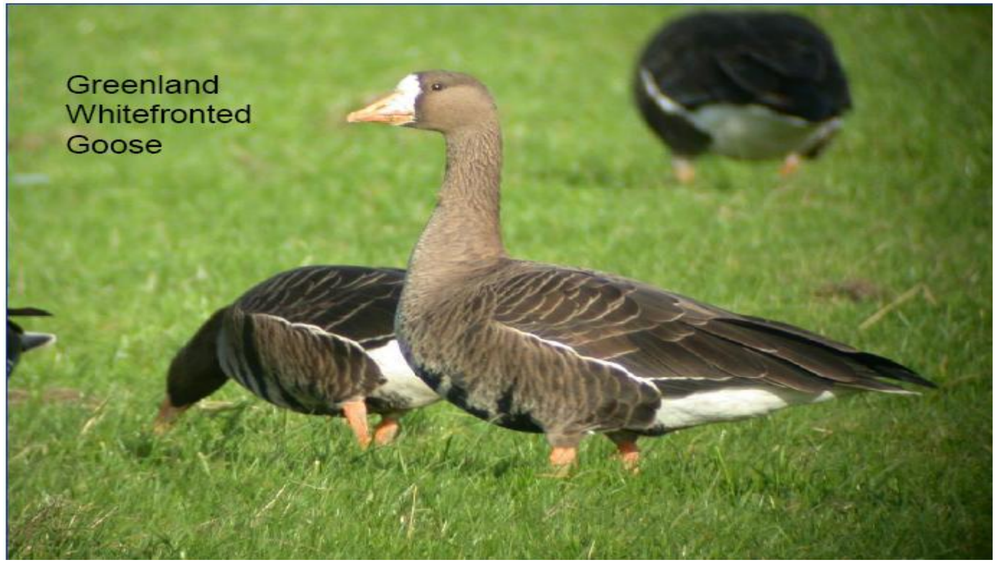
These birds can currently be captured or killed anywhere at any time of the year

Annex 4: Birds Directive

Provides for the sustainable management of hunting but Member States must outlaw all forms of non-selective and large scale killing of birds

For example:

- Snares
- Explosives
- Net/Traps
- Poisoned/anaesthetic bait



SPA: Activities Requiring Consent

Landowners have been notified by NPWS of SPA areas and associated **Activities Requiring Consent (n=38)**

ARC-01	Reclamation, including infilling.
ARC-02	Use of excavators, rock breakers, bulldozers, back hoes or use of any other hydraulically-powered excavation equipment.
ARC-03	Blasting, drilling, dredging or otherwise removing or disturbing rock, minerals, mud, sand, gravel or other sediment.
ARC-04	All activities relating to turf cutting and/or peat extraction.
ARC-05	Cutting, uprooting or otherwise removing plants. [Consent is not required for harvesting of cultivated crops, or for grazing or mowing.]
ARC-06	Introduction, or re-introduction, of plants or animals not found in the area. [Consent not required for planting crops on established grassland or cultivated land.]
ARC-07	Removal of geological specimens including rock samples, minerals or fossils.
ARC-08	Undertaking scientific research involving the collection and removal of biological material.
ARC-09	Construction or alteration of tracks, paths, roads, bridges, culverts or access routes.
ARC-10	Construction, removal or alteration of fences, stone walls, hedgerows, banks or any field boundary other than temporary electric fencing. [Consent is not required for normal maintenance.]

SPA: Activities Requiring Consent

ARC's which apply to an SPA will be outlined the SI;

Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA

S.I. No. 587/2011 - European Communities (Conservation of Wild Birds (Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains Special Protection Area 004165)) Regulations 2011.

SCHEDULE 4

SITE SPECIFIC OPERATIONS OR ACTIVITIES REQUIRING CONSENT OF THE MINISTER:

1. Construction, removal or alteration of fences, stone walls, hedgerows, banks or any field boundary other than temporary electric fencing. [Consent is not required for normal maintenance.]

2. Agricultural improvement of heath or bog.

3. Off-road recreational use of mechanically propelled vehicles.

SMR 3: DAFM Inspections

It is the beneficiary's **responsibility** to be aware if the land they declare (including rented land) for the BISS is within a SPA and to be aware of the requirements attaching

38 ARCs = basis of DAFM inspections

Are activities likely to cause a deterioration of habitats or any disturbances affecting birds?
e.g. trimming/removing a hedgerow/scrub during the bird nesting season (1st Mar-31st Aug)

NPWS – cross reporting body

KEY: Farmer must have written consent for ARCs

SMR 4: Conservation of Natural Habitats, Wild Flora and Fauna

Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

- Cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy with the Birds Directive
- Establishes the EU wide Natura 2000 ecological network of protected areas
- >1,000 animal and plant species plus 200 habitat types listed

White Prominent Moth

Sea Cliffs

Key elements of the Habitats Directive

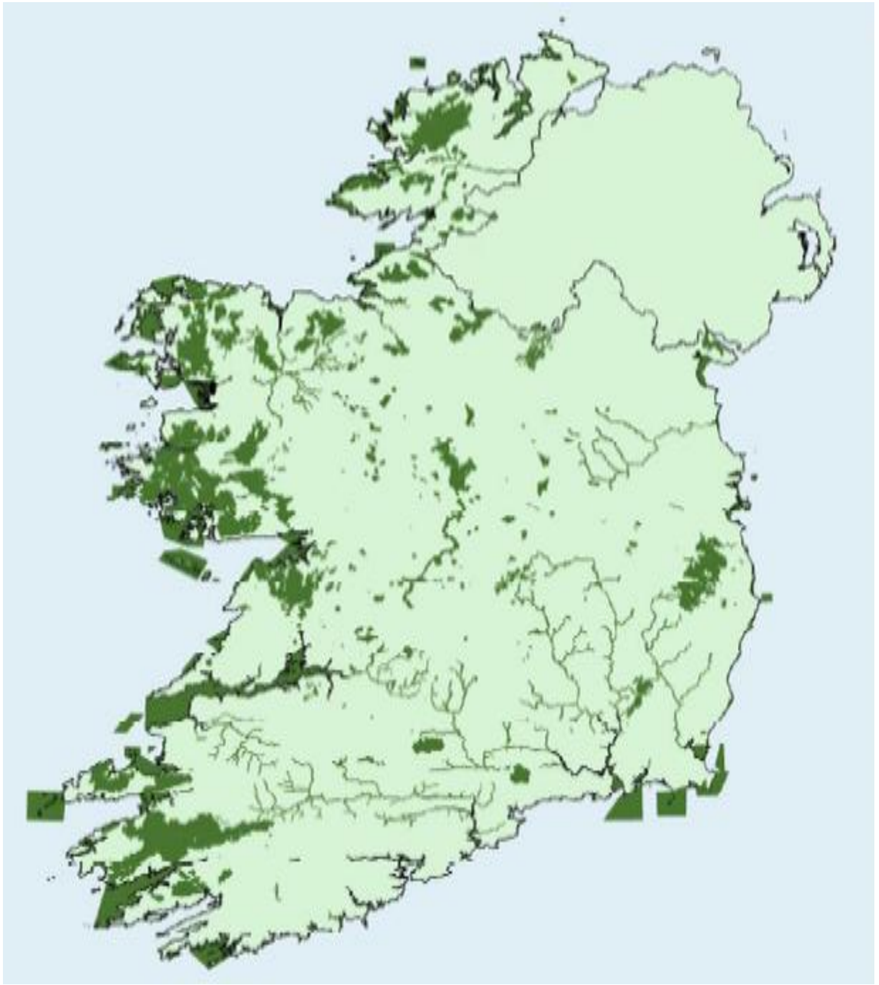
Annex 1: Member States must designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Annex 2: Certain habitats and species must be protected within SACs

Ireland

- SAC sites selected by NPWS
- 13,500 km^2 designated

SAC's In Ireland



Species for which habitats in Ireland are especially important

Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Freshwater Pearl Mussel

Salmon

Killarney Fern

Kerry Slug

Otter

SAC: ARCs or Notifiable Actions

SAC ARCs or notifiable actions will depend on the SAC's statutory instrument and/or the habitat type(s) present

E.g. Woodlands, Wetlands, Raised bogs, Blanket bogs, Grassland, Maritime habitats etc.

Habitat Type:

Rivers or Streams

Examples of NA applicable to river/stream habitats located within an SAC

1. Supplementary feeding of livestock within 30m of a river or stream
2. Applying fertiliser/lime within 30m of a river or stream
3. Extracting water for irrigation or other purposes
4. Alteration of the banks, channel, bed or flow of the river or stream
5. Dumping, burning or storing any materials within 30m of the river or stream
6. Harvesting or burning of reeds or willows
7. Causing siltation

SMR 4: DAFM Inspections

It is the beneficiary's responsibility to know if the land they declare (including rented land) for the BISS is within a SAC designated area and to be aware of the particular requirements attaching

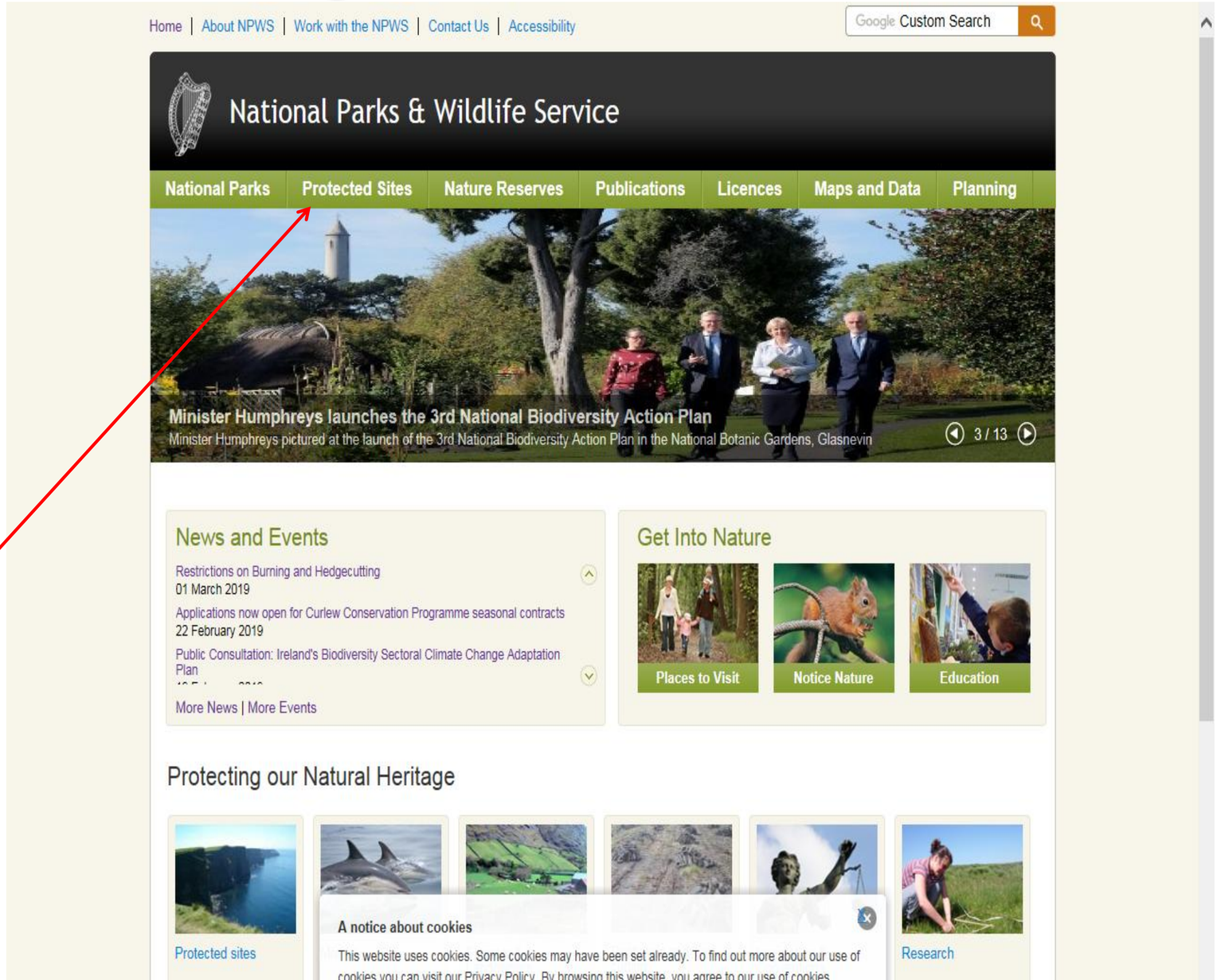
Have ARCs or Notifiable Actions (NAs) been carried out without the appropriate prior consent?

Where there is consent, did the works go beyond what was granted?
e.g. land reclamation activities, fencing etc.

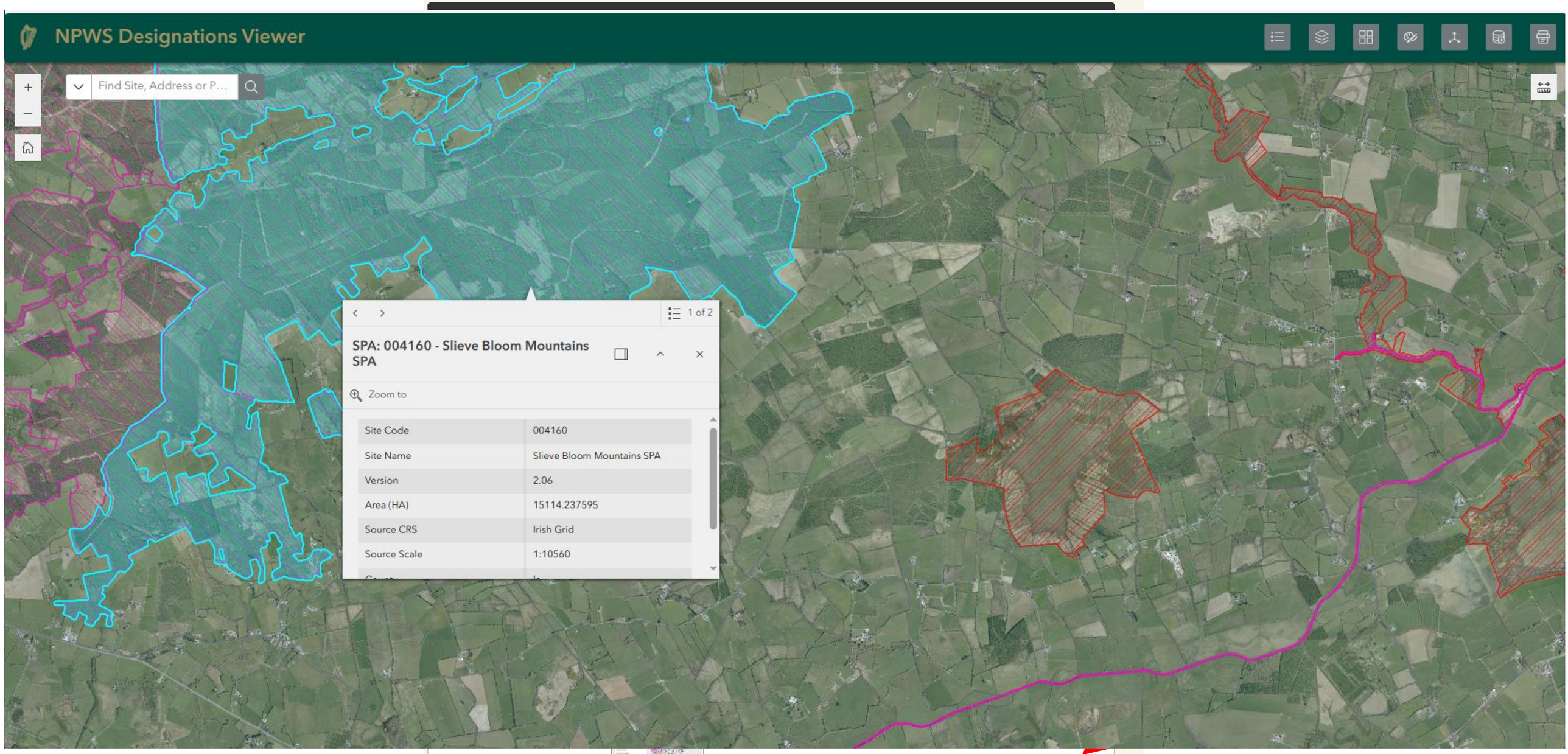
NPWS – cross reporting body

KEY: Farmer must have written consent for ARCs or NAs

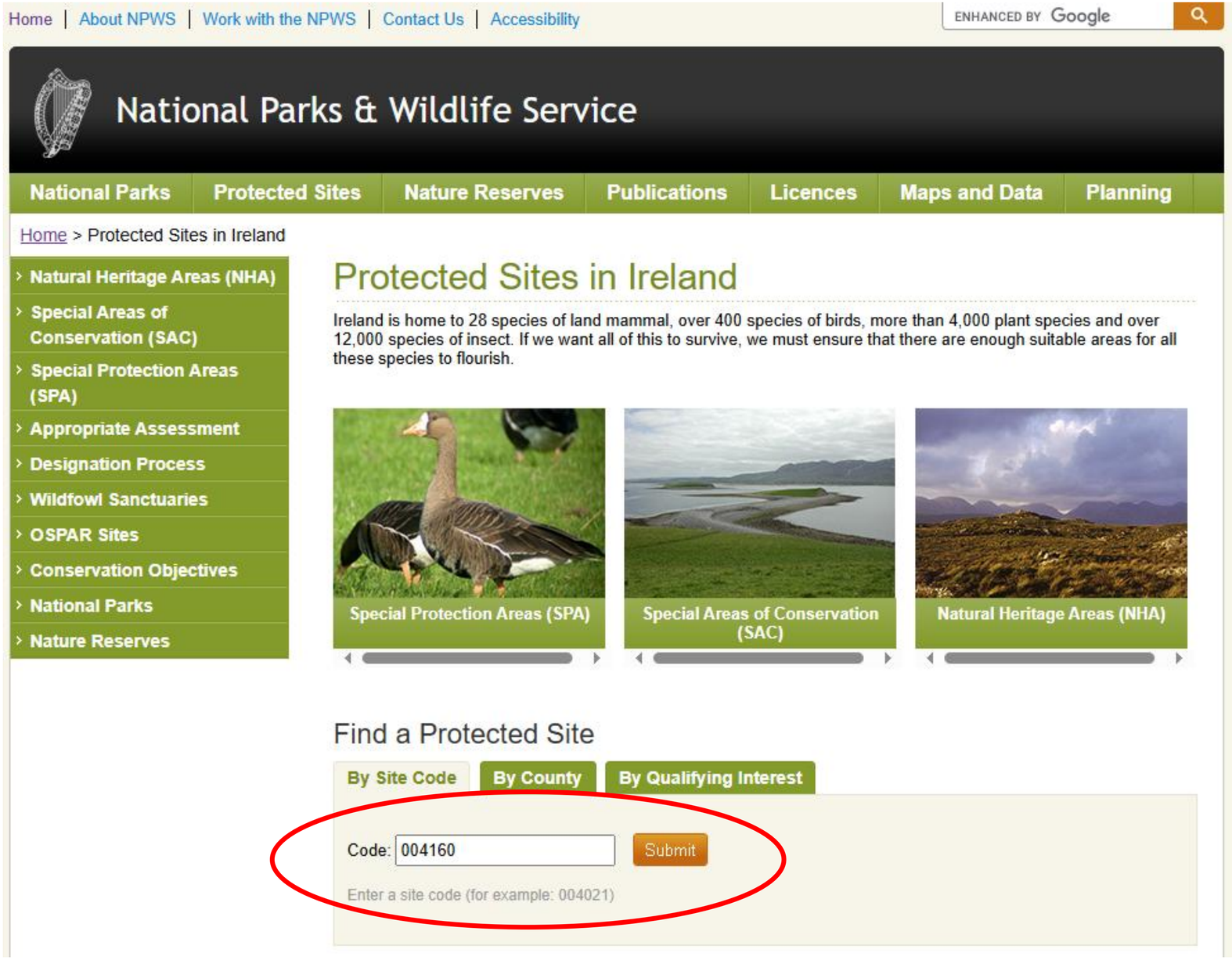
Finding ARCs/NAs on NPWS website



npws.ie



View and download Protected Sites spatial data through the NPWS Protected Sites map-viewer.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Special Protection Areas (SPA)
Appropriate Assessment
Designation Process
Wildfowl Sanctuaries
OSPAR Sites
Conservation Objectives
National Parks
Nature Reserves
Protected Sites in Ireland
Ireland is home to 28 species of land mammal, over 400 species of birds, more than 4,000 plant species and over 12,000 species of insect. If we want all of this to survive, we must ensure that there are enough suitable areas for all these species to flourish.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)
Find a Protected Site
By Site Code
By County
By Qualifying Interest
Code: 004160
Submit
Enter a site code (for example: 004021)

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Home > Protected Sites > Special Protection Areas (SPA) > Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA

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- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Appropriate Assessment
- Designation Process
- Wildfowl Sanctuaries
- OSPAR Sites
- Conservation Objectives
- National Parks
- Nature Reserves

Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA

Site Details

Site code	004160
Designation	Special Protection Area (SPA)
Counties	Laois Offaly
Coordinates	Latitude: 53.0706 Longitude: -7.59454

Qualifying Interests

Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082]

Site Documents

Download Conservation Objectives

CO004160.pdf [3.7 MB]

Download Site Synopsis

SY004160.pdf [14 KB]

Statutory Instrument

https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2012/en/si/0184.html

Scroll to Schedule 4 to view all applicable ARCs

SCHEDULE 3

SPECIAL CONSERVATION INTERESTS

Bird Species

Scientific Name	**Common Name**
Circus cyaneus	**Hen Harrier**

SCHEDULE 4

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Further information

- DAFM
  - www.agriculture.gov.ie
- NPWS.ie
  - www.npws.ie
  - Helpline 1800 405000
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
  - www.biodiversityireland.ie
- Birdwatch Ireland
  - www.birdwatchireland.ie
- Invasive Species Ireland
  - www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Thank you