Responding quickly but effectively to opportunities
Hen Harrier Project

• Response to potential legal action from EU if Irish government didn’t do something for the Hen Harrier
• Hen Harrier is a threatened bird species
• ~150 breeding pairs
• Breeding Hen Harrier SPAs established in 2008
Hen Harrier
Hen Harrier

- 82 confirmed breeding pairs in the SPAs in 2005
- 50 confirmed breeding pairs in the SPAs in 2015
- 58 confirmed breeding pairs in the SPAs in 2017 (HHP)
- Loss of habitat
- 50% of the SPA land is forestry
- Habitat quality compromised
Hen Harrier Project

- Is a European Innovation Partnership (EIP)
- These EIPs aim to stimulate innovation across Europe.
Hen Harrier Project

• Hen Harrier Project is an EIP and a national pilot project
• Hen Harrier Project Team
  • Project Manager- Fergal Monaghan (Agricultural advisor)
  • Assistant Manager- Caroline Sullivan (Farmland ecologist)
  • Agriculture Specialist- Eoin McCarthy (Agriculture advisor)
  • Raptor Specialist- Ryan Wilson-Parr (Ecological consultant)
  • Project Officer- Evelyn Joyce (Environmental Scientist)
• Hen Harrier monitoring carried out by the Golden Eagle Trust
• Project Accountants– Brendan O Gorman Accountants
• Design and administer the Hen Harrier Programme
Results-based programme

• Payment contingent on the delivery of something tangible
• Ecosystems approach
• Hen Harrier is a flagship species
• If it is doing well, the ecosystems it relies on are also doing well
• A rising tide lifts all ships
• Plant communities and the habitats they comprise are key building blocks
Hen Harrier Project

• Modelled on the Burren approach
• Adapted for a very different objective
• Adapted for very different lands
• Sustainable upland farmland is a key focus
Hen Harrier Project

- Awarded contract in May 2017
- Fergal Monaghan in place
- Monitoring team immediately began work (a month later than ideal)
- C Sullivan, E McCarthy and R Wilson-Parr in place by June
- Programme launched Dec 8\textsuperscript{th} 2017
- 6 months after contract awarded
Hen Harrier Project

• Knew the results-based approach was desirable
• Focused on not re-inventing the wheel
• Adapted carefully for Hen Harrier objective
• Farming needed to be central
Scorecards

• To improve the habitat quality we needed to identify the key habitats

• Peatland-bog/heath
  • Essential nesting and foraging habitat

• Wet grassland
  • Foraging habitat

• Scrub/woodland
  • Foraging and nesting
### Scorecards

- Burren scorecards
- Species-rich calcareous grasslands
- Dry heath
- RBAPS
- Species-rich wet grasslands
- Species-rich meadows
- HHP
- Not focused on Annex I habitats
- Adapted for the bird
- Species indicators retained
- Thresholds and influence reduced
- Landscape and/or functioning ecosystem focused

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Baseline Indicator</th>
<th>Low Position Indicator</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High Position Indicator</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Comments or any recommended actions

Any issues to be brought to farmland attention for immediate action or to rectify in short/medium term.

\[
\frac{45}{100} = \frac{9}{20} = 5
\]
Payments

- Payments were calculated on the basis on costs incurred and income foregone
- Challenging for peatlands in particular
- More biodiversity-focus would allow more freedom
- Compatible with existing AE schemes
- EIP requirement that it not be area-based
- Developed a points-based system with area as an element
Hen Harrier Project

• This work was carried out in June-Sept
• Farmer input also vital
• 12 development farmers
• Across the 6 SPAs
• Nominated by the main farming organisations
• Had to have land in the area
• Represented a range of enterprises and habitats
• First point of contact between the Project and the farmer
Hen Harrier Project

• Communication of the project ideas and goals to the target audience is extremely important
• SPA designation was fiercely opposed in 2008
• Still vigorously opposed in some areas
• Want compensation for designation
• Needed to clearly communicate what this Programme was about
Hen Harrier Project

- Also carried out farmer consultations
- 31 meetings
- 500 farmers attended
- Gauged attitudes and gained Programme input
Hen Harrier Project

- Farmers wanted something flexible
- Wanted compatibility with existing AE schemes
- Wanted meaningful payments
- Terms and conditions drawn up
- Development farmer opinions NB
- Think we delivered these to the best of our ability
Hen Harrier Project

• Hitting milestone
  • Scorecards
  • Payments
  • Launch date
  • Advisor training
  • 1300 applications since Dec 8th
  • First 160 farmers selected

• Future milestones
  • First contract signed
  • Farmer training
Hen Harrier Project

• Key elements
  • Good mix of skills
  • Clear objective
  • Good framework to build on
  • Flexibility
  • Adaptability
  • Good relationship with DAFM
Hen Harrier Project

• Things to monitor
• Media
• Farmer feedback
• Progress
• Habitat quality
Engaging the farmers is key.
Initially seems complicated and different but hope this will change.
Sustainable upland farming is the goal.
Farmers, project team.
Has to go beyond the farming community also.
Long road ahead.

Still farming
Profitable
Sustainable
Young farmers
Good grazing

Biodiversity
Proper funding
Succession
Maintained
Easier
Reduced planning
More money
No forestry
Machinery run
Subsidised
Working with nature
Hedgerows
Line of hedges
Meadows
Water meadows
Deserted.

Enhancement
Negotiation
Enforcement
Uncertainty
Experience.

Solar panels
Designated, Rare, Biodiversity

Farm to Forest
Less Regeneration
Co-Operation

Rural
Ecology
Biodiversity

Grants
Schemes available to farmers
Better ground
Balanced

Quality livestock
Efficient
Clean water
Less red tape
Expansive
Uncertain future
Employment

Organic
Productive
Growth

Less paperwork
Land valued
Less work

Environmental friendly
Efficient
More money

Sunflower seeds
Conservation
line of hedges
Lightning
Diversification

Less accident
Less regulation

Grassland
Cattle
Beef

Grants
Less work

Diversified
Agriculture

Improved grants
Existing

Full time
Grazing

Next generation
Family

Carbon reduction
Nature

Extension
Based on research

Charities
Pollution

Development
Efficient

Working with nature
Hedgerows

Meadows
Line of hedges
Deserted.
Hen Harrier Project

• A lot done, a LOT more to do
• www.henharrerproject.ie
• @HenHarrierProj
• Hen Harrier Project-Facebook
• Caroline.Sullivan@henharrerproject.ie