



NATURA COMMUNITIES

LOCALLY-EMBEDDED CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Dr Margaret Flaherty | LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature
Voices and Vision for Ireland's Wetlands | June 23, 2026, Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise

www.wildatlanticnature.ie | www.naturacommunities.ie



Environment

NATURA 
COMMUNITIES

People

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Focused on delivery of locally embedded conservation and restoration projects that:

- Align with national policies (biodiversity, climate, water)
- Build capacity within local communities
- Develop framework for integrated approach for sustainable landscape management

KEY OBJECTIVE: To improve the conservation status of protected areas while delivering social and community benefits



HISTORY & EVOLUTION

- Bundorragha Catchment
 - Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC
 - Freshwater pearl mussel (Pearl Mussel Project EIP)
 - *Rhododendraponticum* invasive non-native species
- Losing scores in RBPS
- Funding from NPWS via Wild Atlantic Nature
 - Pilot to inform catchment wide approach
 - Leenane Development Association partnered with PMP EIP & secured tender

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SET OF PRINCIPLES

CAPACITY & TRUST

Developing local skills and building/maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders



STEWARDSHIP

Communities informed and effective land custodians



RETAINING BENEFITS

Economic benefits for local communities, retaining skills and development of a professional workforce



COMPLIANCE & STANDARDS

- Adherence to regulations, policy and good practise.
- Standardisation in financial and technical reporting.



PARTNERSHIPS

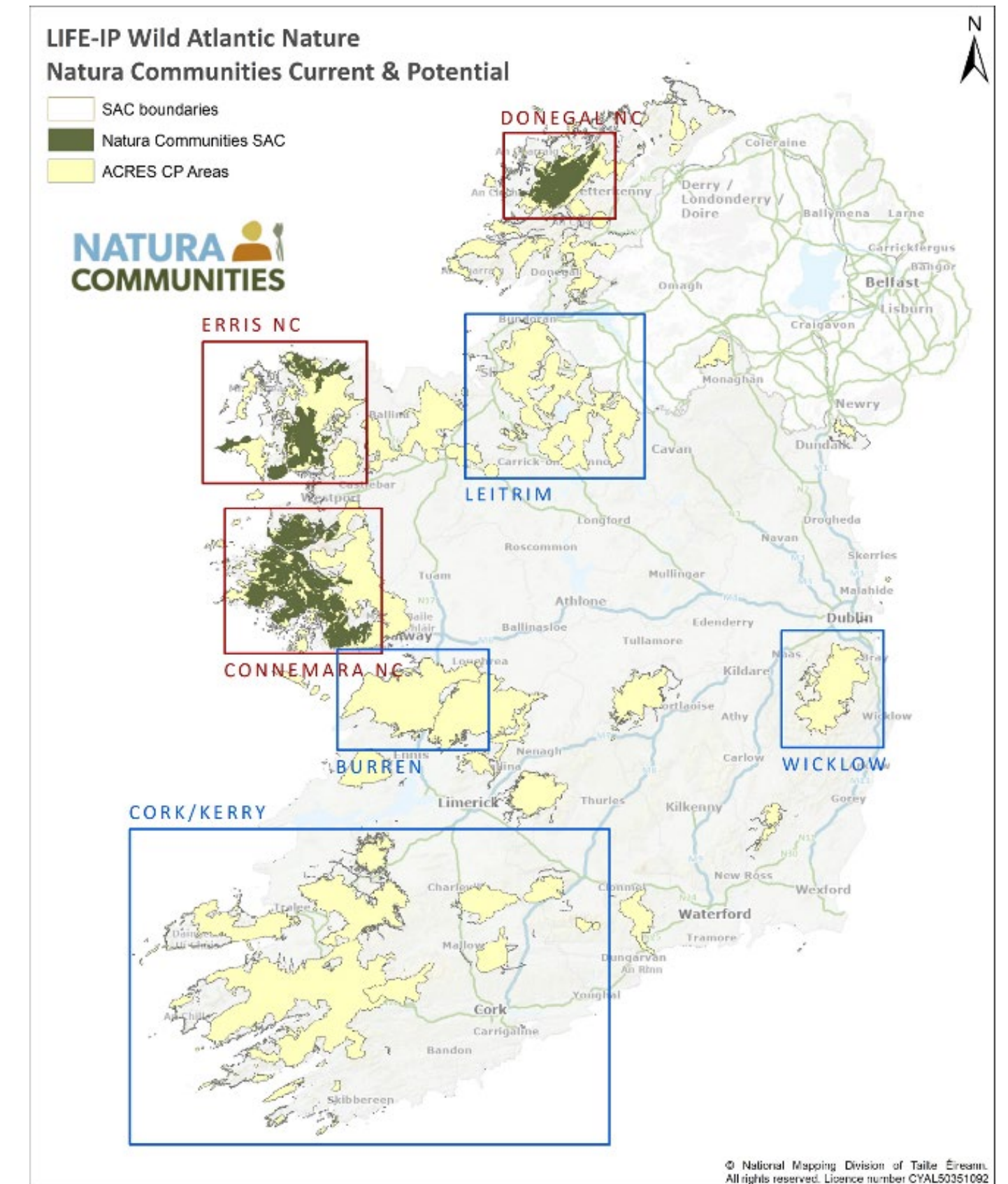
Working with external providers to enhance service delivery and fill gaps



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PROGRESS TO DATE

- Three organisations operating Natura Communities projects in Galway, Mayo & Donegal
- Community-led conservation supporting 50+ jobs and > €10 million investment
- More than 1,000 hectares restored, with multiple sites underway
- 2026-2028 funding from NPWS and the Government's Shared Island Fund, with projects extending to other SACs





Invasive non-native species control in The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex SAC



2022 Pilot

2023
Expansion

From 2026...



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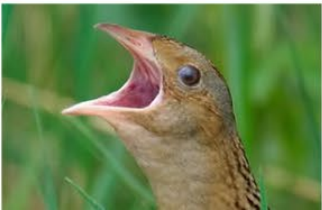
[Report a Corncrake](#)

[Project Footprint](#)



Natura Communities Corncrake Project, led by Atlantic West Community Alliance Company, working in partnership with communities within designated Natura 2000 sites.

To enhance and conserve breeding habitat for the farmland birds within Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and to strengthen community engagement in the management of Natura 2000 lands.





Natura Communities, a new initiative from LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature

