



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service

Beyond Bogs: How Policy and Wetlands Intersect

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23 June, 2026

Voices and Vision for Irelands Wetlands Conference
Visit by RAMSAR Secretary General Dr Mumba

Image credits wetland survey Ireland, Fernando Fernandez, Therese Kelly, Bord na Móna, Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee, Shane Regan

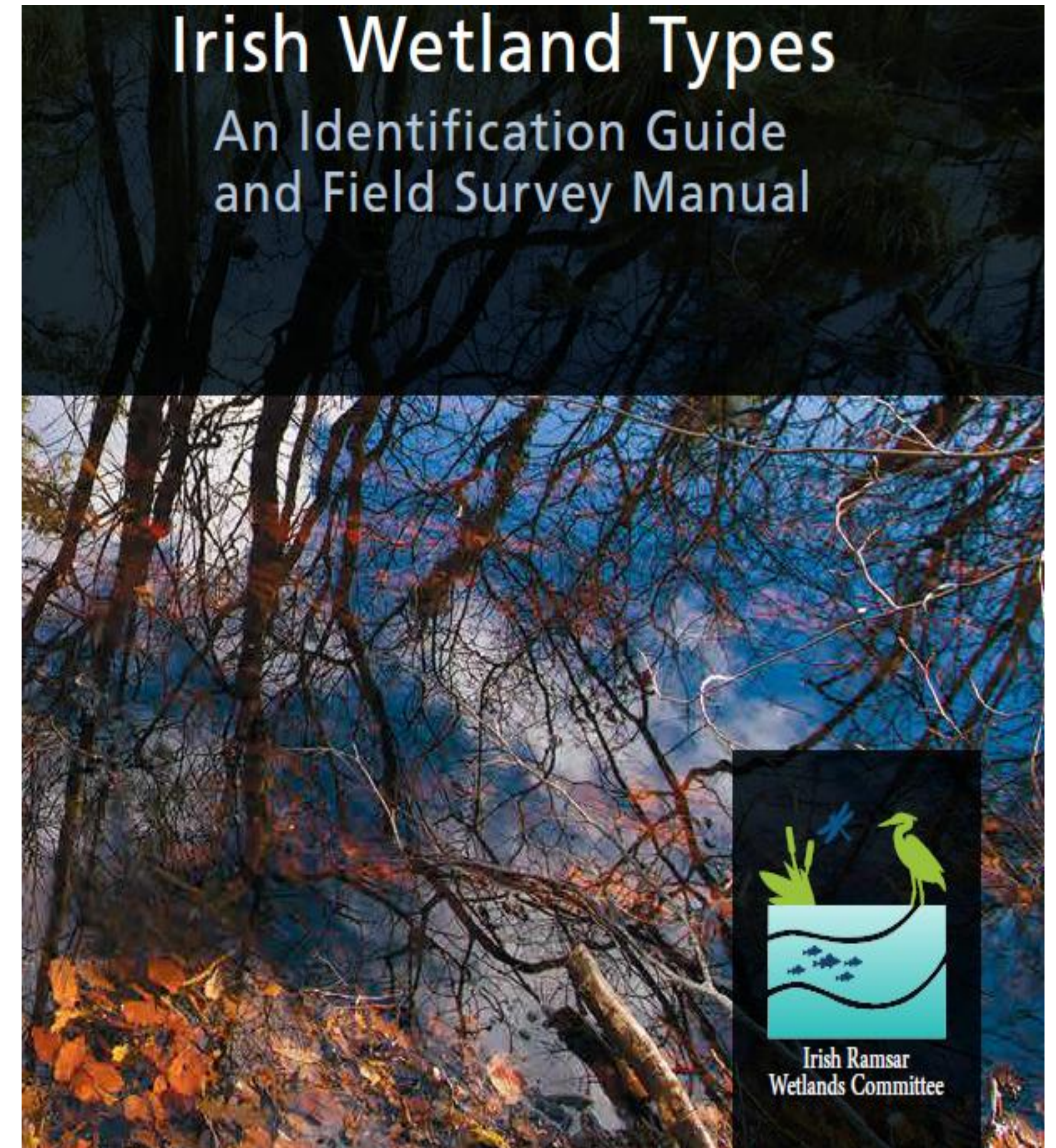
Wetlands of Ireland

The Ramsar Convention (2010) defines wetlands as:

“ areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”

Irish planning legislation (2011) defined wetlands as:

“ natural or artificial areas where biogeochemical functions depend notably on constant or periodic shallow inundation, or saturation, by standing or flowing fresh, brackish or saline water.”



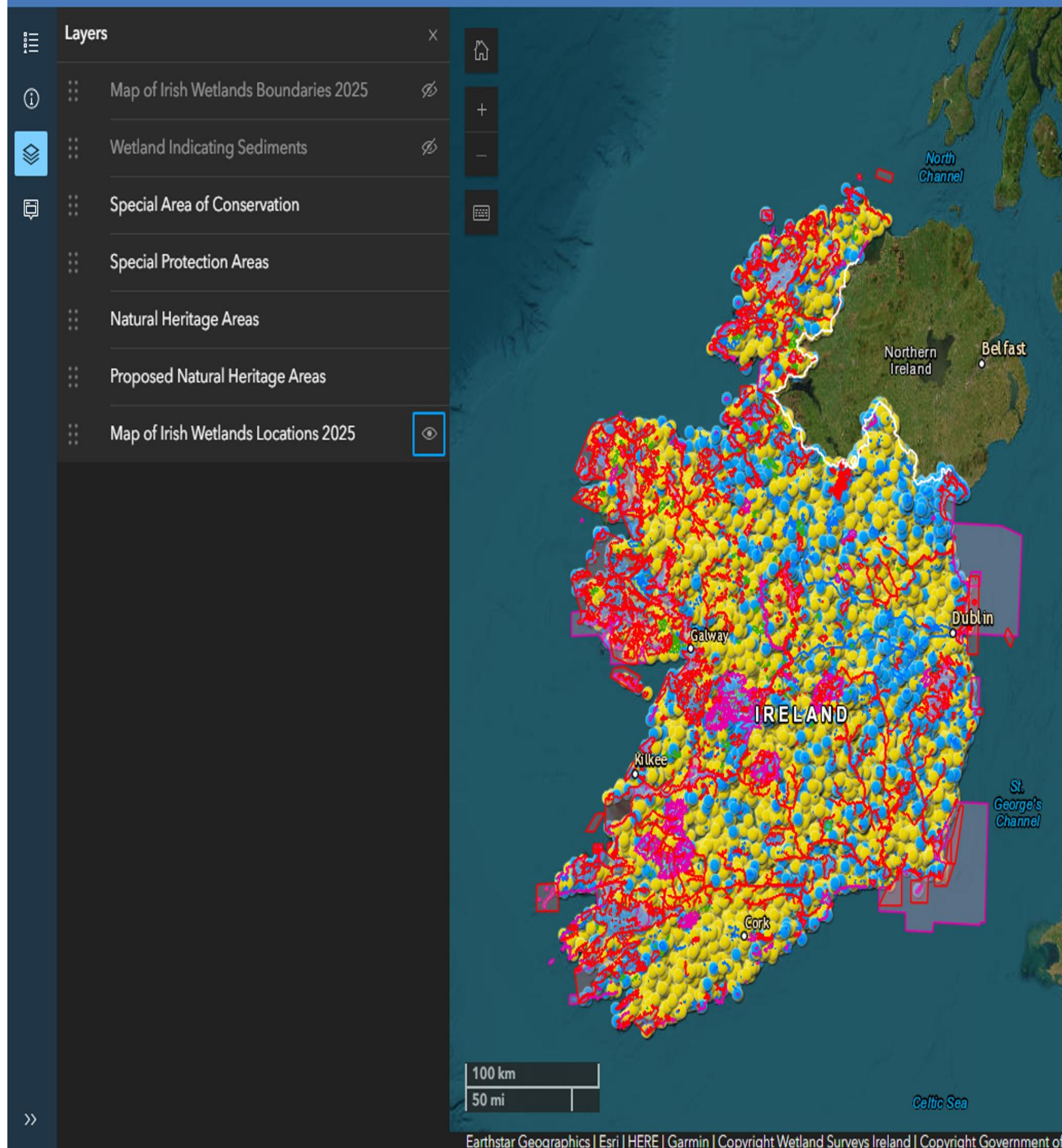
Types of Irish Wetlands

- Peatlands (bogs and fens)
- Freshwater wetlands (lakes, marshes, turloughs)
- Coastal wetlands (estuaries, lagoons, saltmarshes)

Peatlands as the dominant wetland type in Ireland, covering roughly 20% of the country



Map of Irish Wetlands

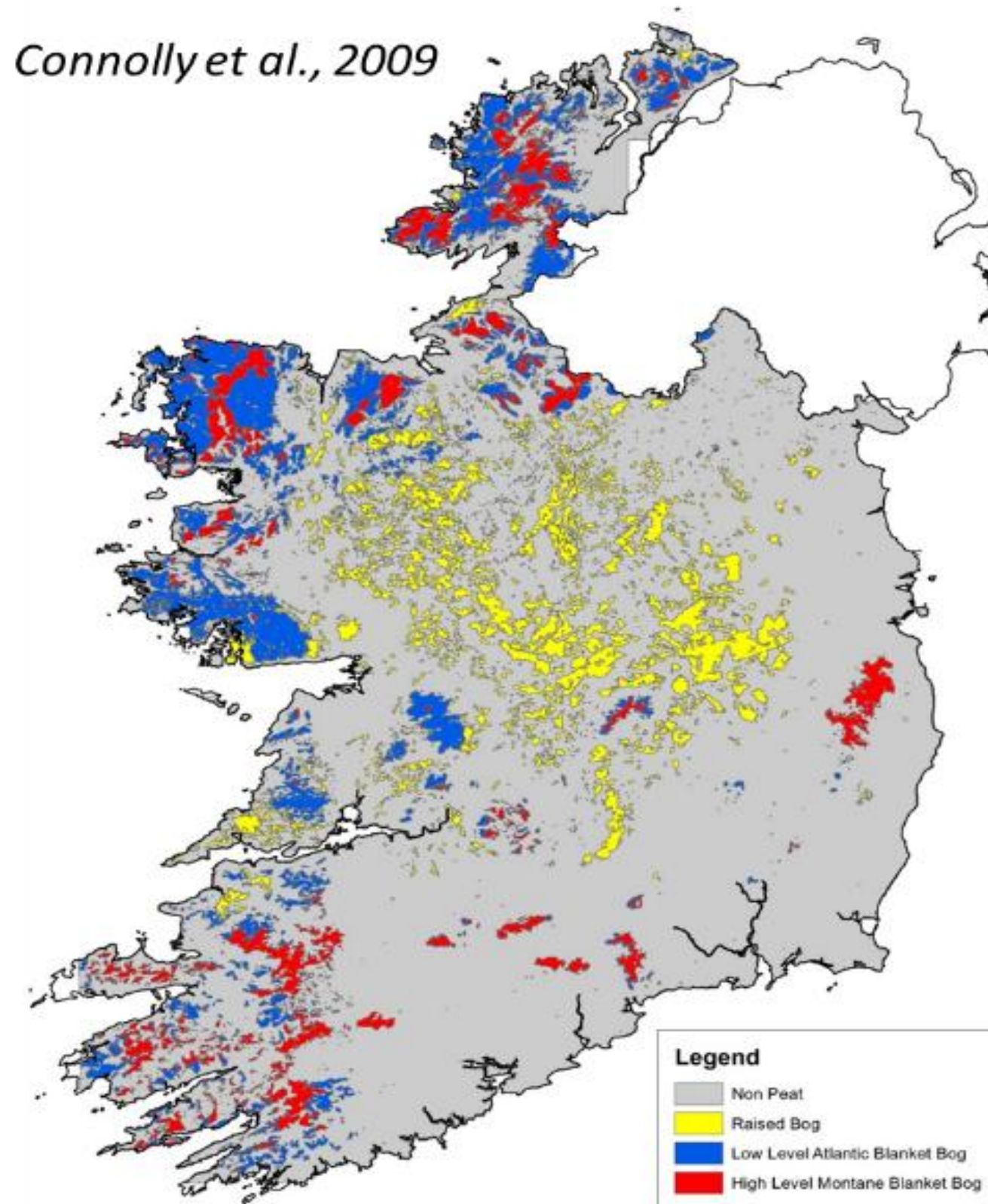


Ireland has a **large and ecologically distinctive wetland resource** because of our:

- Atlantic climate – Atlantic biogeographic region
- High rainfall and poor drainage conditions

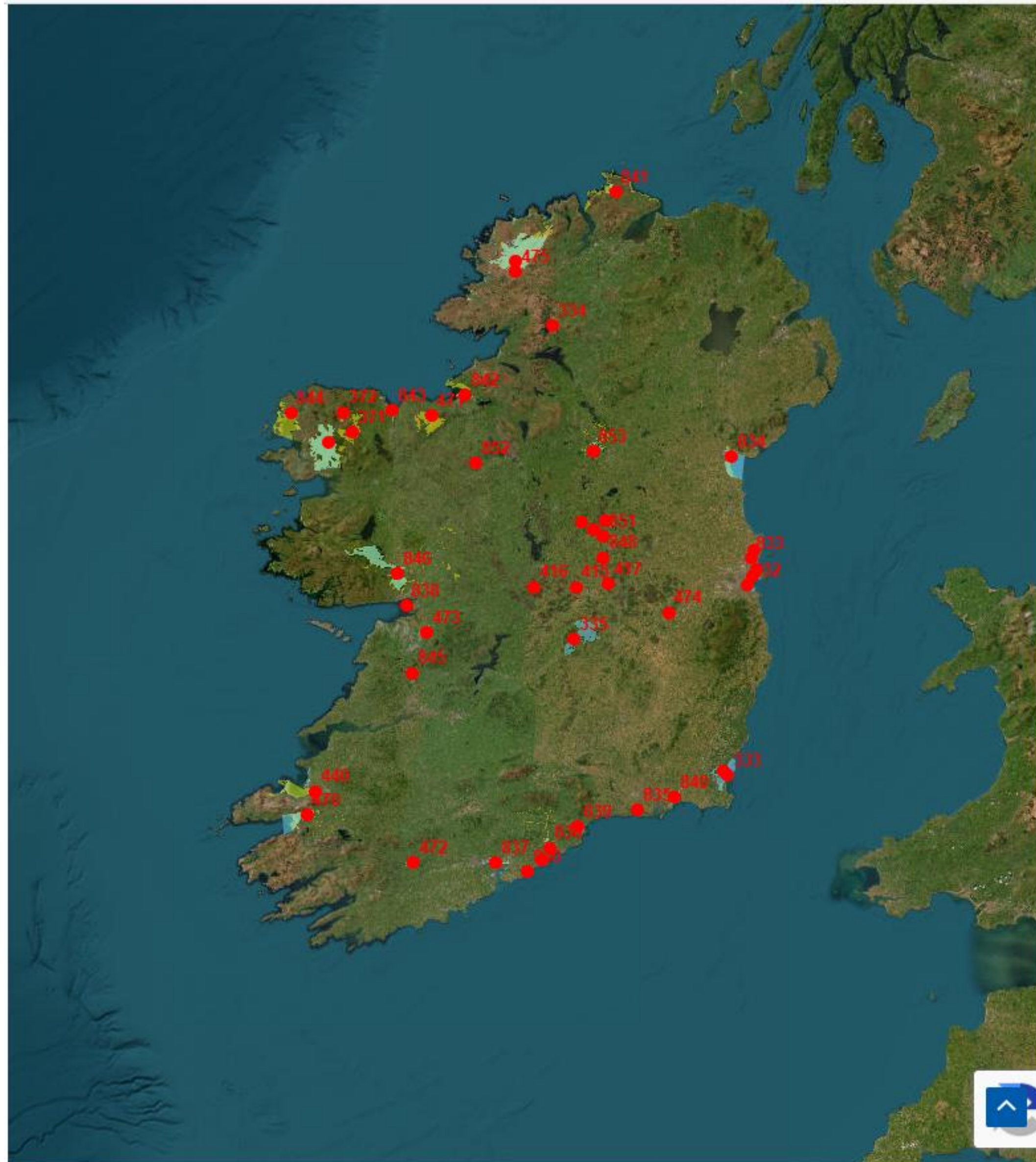
[\[epawebapp.epa.ie\]](http://epawebapp.epa.ie/)

Connolly et al., 2009



<https://wetland.maps.arcgis.com/>

45 Ramsar Sites in Ireland



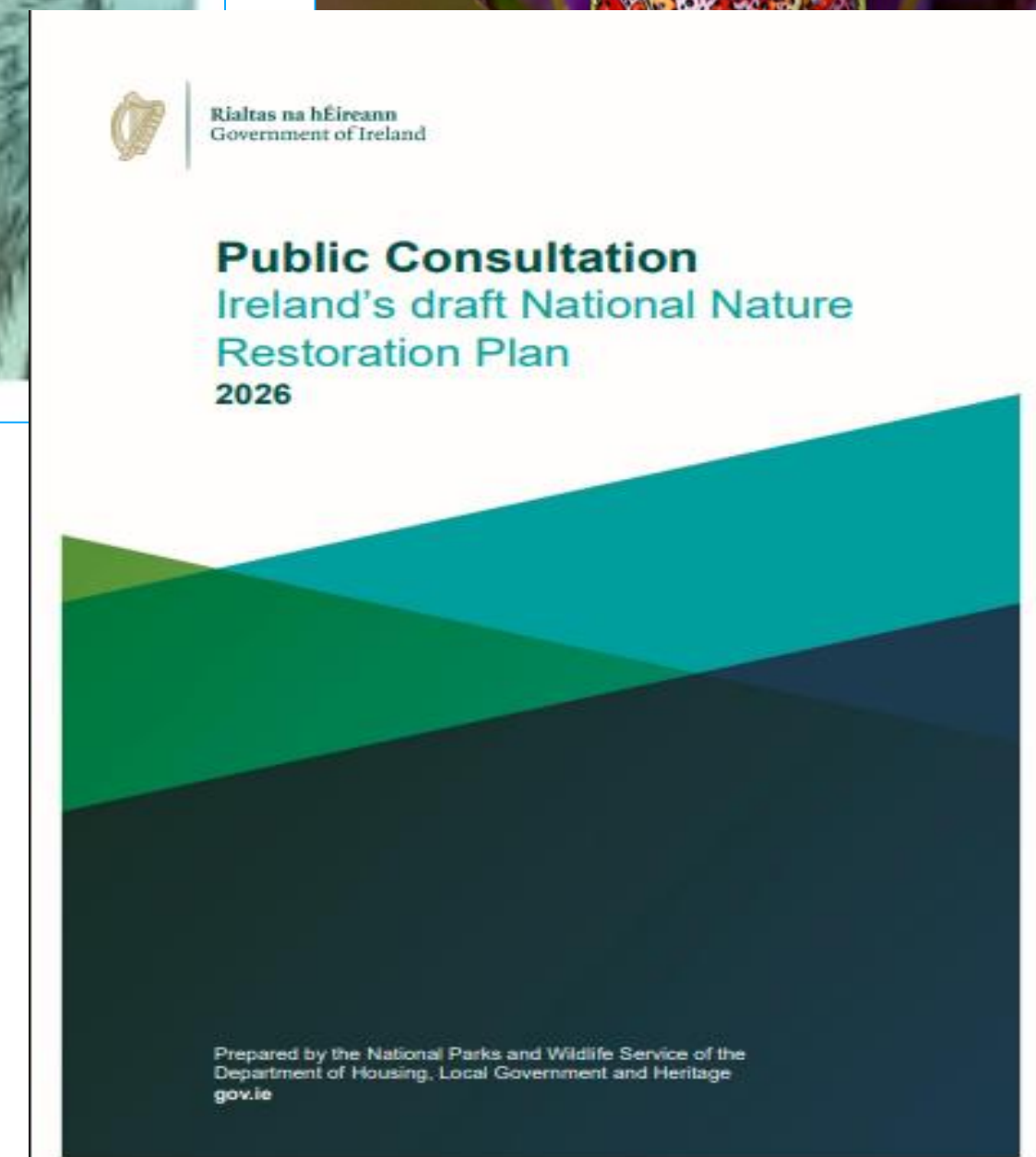
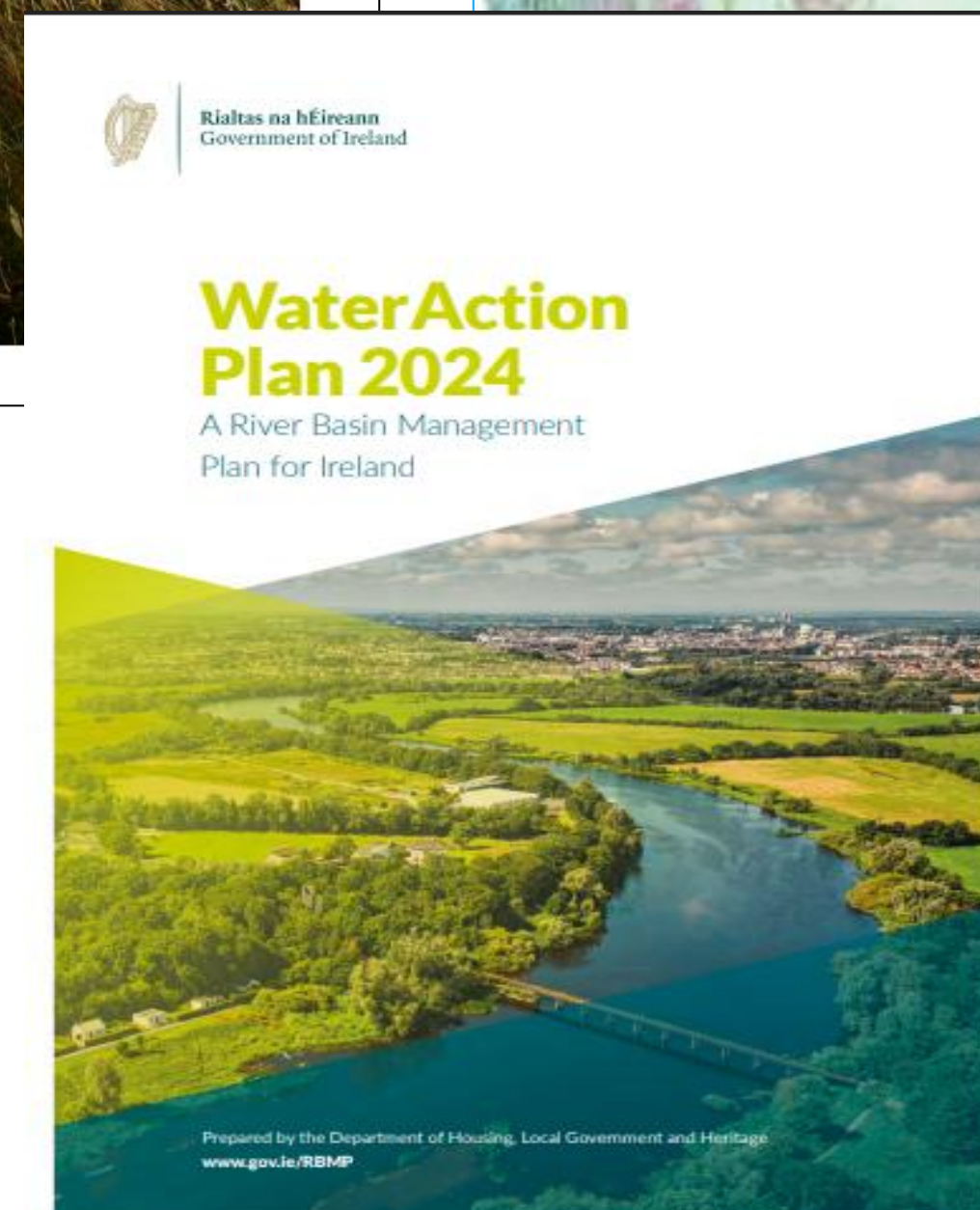
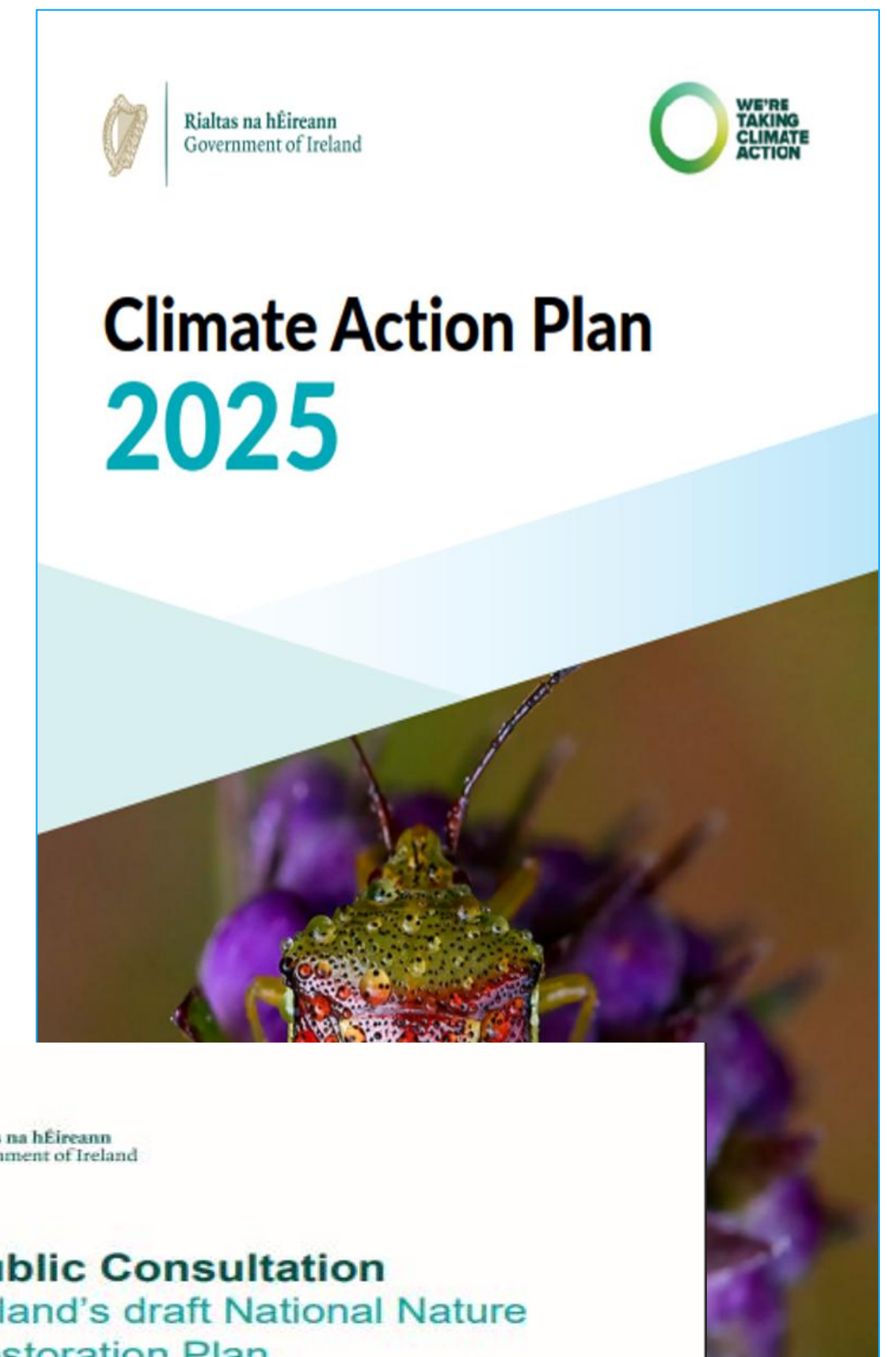
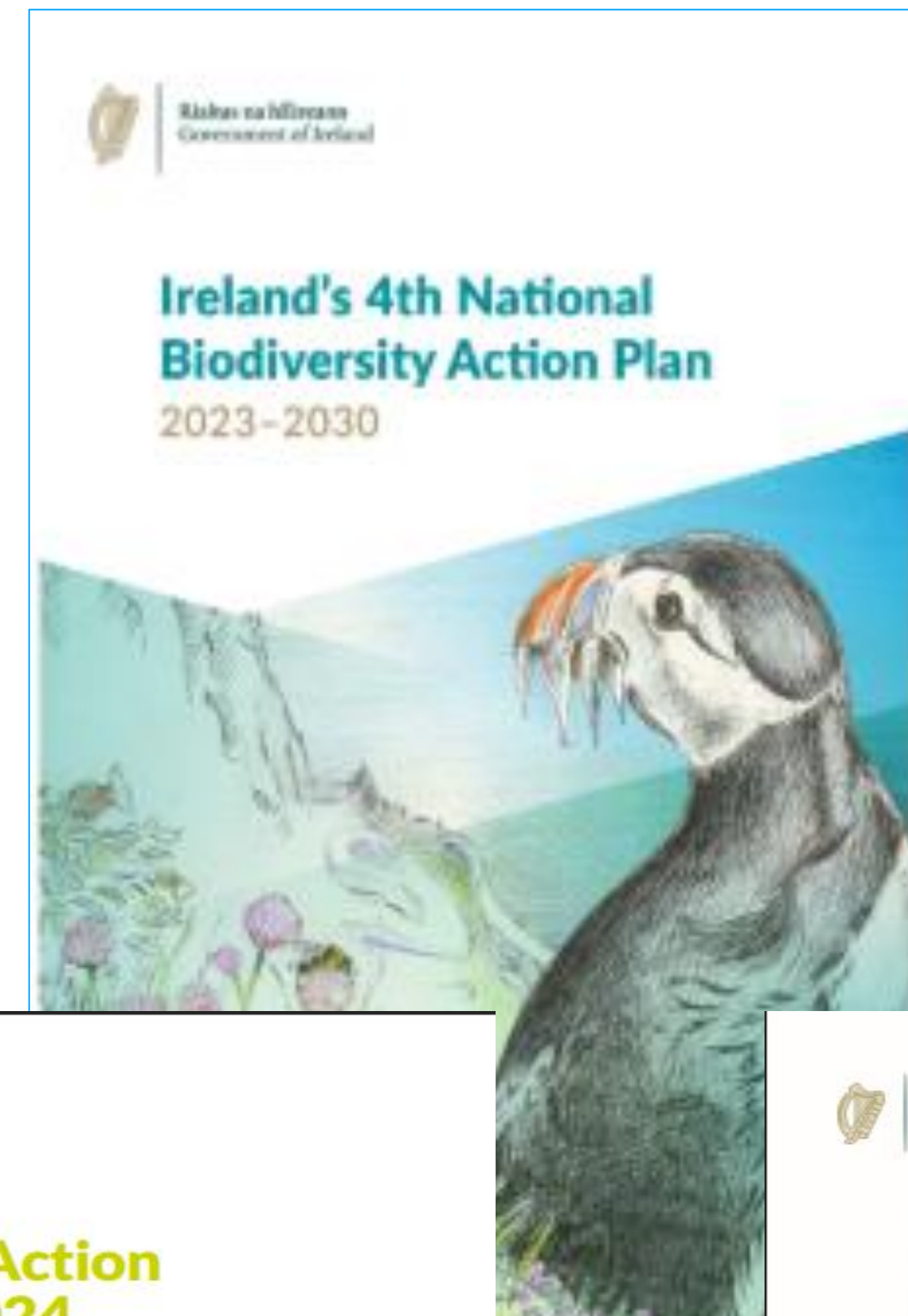
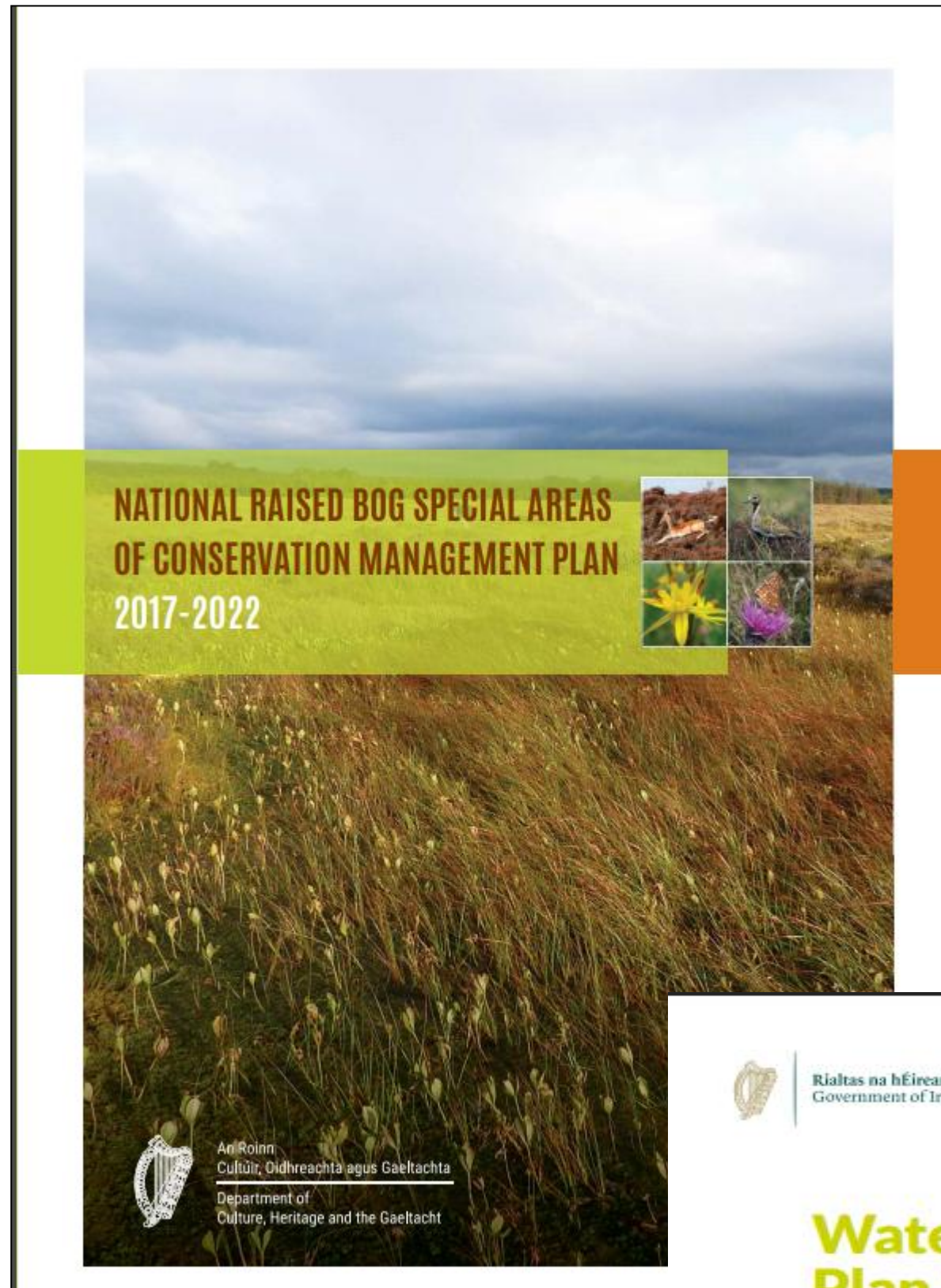
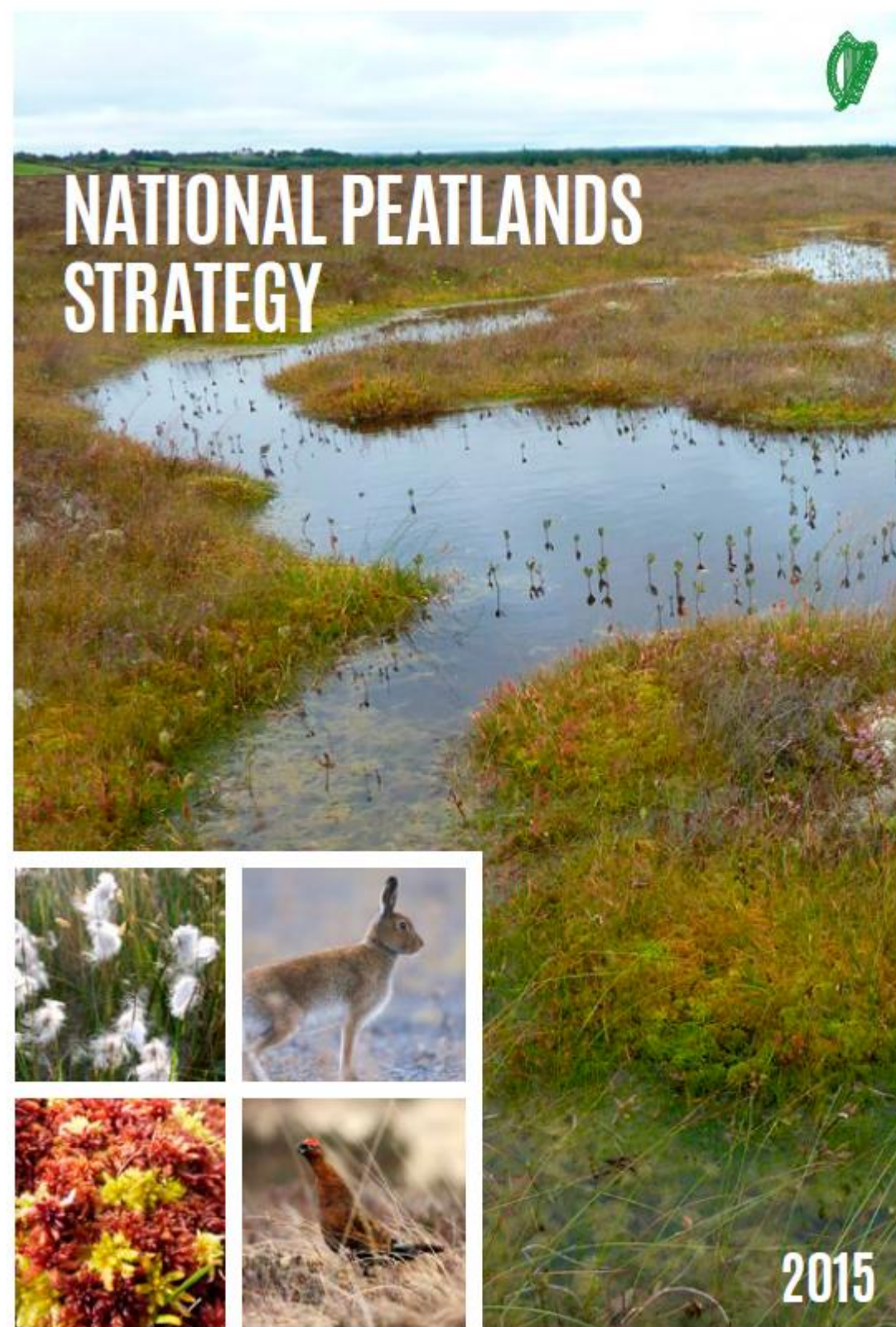
Priority Habitats protected under Annex I of the Habitats Directive

- Turloughs
- Lagoons
- Machair (in Ireland),
- Active raised bogs
- Calcareous fens

Ireland's Evolving Wetlands Policies



National Policies



Land Use Plans
Local and Regional Policies
Local Biodiversity Action
Plans
CAP Strategic Plan

Legislation Protecting Wetlands



- International Conventions- Ramsar etc.
- Birds and Habitats Directives
- EIA Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Nature Restoration Law
- Environmental Liabilities Directive
- Wildlife Acts & Regulations
- Planning & Development Acts & Regulations
- EIA Regulations
- Leadshot Regulations



Condition of Wetlands



- Long-term decline- pressures and threats
- Degraded ecosystems
- Overall condition: largely unfavourable
 - Many wetland habitats are in “poor” or “bad” conservation condition
 - Few achieving favourable conservation status

So What Next?



An Ambitious Restoration Programme

Restoration Measures designed based on hydrological and geotechnical monitoring and conditions,

NPWS Peatlands Restoration Programme – High Level Achievements



Accelerated programme of restoration on protected raised bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Blanket Bog SACs (LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature) and Fen SACs (Tóchar Wetlands Project), LIFE on Machair, Shared Island and many more projects.....

To date c. 8,000 hectares of restoration measures have been undertaken by NPWS on protected raised bogs in State and private ownership. More planned.

Positive Trend: Active Raised Bog habitat in Ireland increased by 7% between 2018 and 2024, marking the first positive change for this habitat since 2018.

All Saints Bog – lowland cutaway bog restoration



Beyond Bogs

- All Wetlands Approach
- Whole of Society
- Creating Vibrant Spaces for Communities

