Northern Ireland Species Recovery Partnership

building collective capacity to unlock greater long-term action at scale for species

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Why? The diversity of species in Northern Ireland (NI) reflects the unique wet and mild oceanic climate of the island of Ireland and its complex geology and land-use history. Sadly, however, NI is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Species recovery activity has delivered some notable successes where there has been focussed effort but is limited by the absence of a strategy for species recovery, out-of-date action plans, and insufficient funding.

What? The NI Species Recovery Partnership (NI SRP) seeks to bring together government, environmental NGOs and other key stakeholders to work collaboratively to unlock greater long-term action at scale for species. Our ultimate aim is for species to be recognised for their intrinsic value and as the essential measure of conservation success. To achieve this, we want to see the needs of species embedded across government policy and urgent targeted species action delivered through a Species Recovery Programme that has secure, long-term funding. The first phase of the Partnership focusses on terrestrial species but this also needs to be mirrored for the marine environment. We have secured funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to establish the Partnership and Phase 1 deliverables are outlined



NI Species Recovery Partnership Phase 1 (August 2024 to February 2027)

- The Partnership represents a range of expertise in species conservation delivered through targeted and widespread interventions, nature policy and legislation and data and evidence.
- We are now starting to engage a wider group of stakeholders during the process of defining critical actions for species and developing concise Species Action Plans. The Partnership will benefit from knowledge, insights and support of groups with specific expertise needed to deliver for particular species including special interest groups, major landowners and farming bodies.

Deliverables for Phase 1 & progress to date:

- We have established the Northern Ireland Species Recovery Partnership (NI SRP) to build collective capacity to unlock greater long-term action at scale for species.
- We have developed an agreed set of Species Recovery Principles for how to deliver effective species recovery.
- We have selected a cross-taxa subset of 36 species, from the NI Priority Species list (full list in Appendix). Selection focused on those species for which a species recovery approach is both practically actionable and necessary. Criteria included conservation imperative, evidence available for what is needed and a range of species that represent wider values in terms of ecosystem benefits, cultural importance and opportunities for skills development.
- July 2025 – Dec 2025: Concise Species Action Plans (cSAPs) will be produced to encompass species-specific conservation and policy critical actions.
- Dec 2025- Aug 2026: A funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund will be developed for a species recovery project to deliver the conservation critical actions from the cSAPs, similar to those developed in GB – Species on the Edge, Natur am Byth & Back from the Brink.
- The key policy actions from the cSAPs collated and clearly communicated at a bespoke event in late 2026 to inform policy makers how species recovery can be embedded in nature policy across government.



amphibian and reptile conservation · buglife · Bumblebee Conservation Trust · Butterfly Conservation N.Ireland · CEDaR Centre for Environmental Data and Recording · Plantlife The global voice for wild plants and fungi · RSPB Northern Ireland · Bat Conservation Trust · Northern Ireland Bat Group · Bat Conservation Ireland · National Trust · Ulster Wildlife · NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency / Gníomhaireacht Comhshaoil Thuaisceart Éireann / Norlin Airlan Environment Agency · Northern Ireland environment link

Appendix - NI SRP Selected Species				Photo credit (sp included in montage)
Lead organisation	**Common name**	**Scientific name**	**Common Species Group**	
Amphibian & Reptile Conservation	Common Lizard	*Zootoca vivipara*	Reptile	ARC
Bumblebee Conservation Trust	Bilberry (blaeberry) Bumblebee	*Bombus monticola*	Bee	
	Moss carder bee	*Bombus muscorum*	Bee	Daisy Headley
Butterfly Conservation	Cryptic Wood White	*Leptidea juvernica*	Butterfly	James O'Neill
	Chimney Sweeper	*Odezia atrata*	Moth	
	Large Heath	*Coenonympha tullia*	Butterfly	Jim Black
	Marsh Fritillary	*Euphydryas aurinia*	Butterfly	
Bat Conservation Trust/ Bat Conservation Ireland/ NI Bat group	Whiskered bat	*Myotis mystacinus*	Mammal	Sally-Ann Hurry
	Brown long-eared bat	*Plecotus auritus*	Mammal	
	Leisler's bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	Mammal	Hugh Clark
	Natterer's bat	*Myotis nattereri*	Mammal	
	Nathusius' pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	Mammal	
Buglife	Saproxylic beetle assemblage		Beetle assemblage	
	Irish Damselfly	*Coenagrion lunulatum*	Dragonfly	
	Northern Cockchafer	*Melolontha hippocastani*	Beetle	Mikael Nyman
	Highland Great Diving Beetle	*Dytiscus lapponicus*	Beetle	
	Two-tone Reed Beetle	*Donacia bicolora*	Beetle	Roger Key
	Northern Colletes	*Colletes floralis*	Bee	
Plantlife	Irish Lady's-tresses	*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*	Flowering plant	Kirsty Marshall
	Oysterplant	*Mertensia maritima*	Flowering plant	
	Elegant Feathermoss	*Eurhynchiastrum diversifolium*	Moss	
	Dark-purple Earthtongue	*Microglossum atropurpureum*	Fungus	
	Chara subspinosa	*Chara subspinosa*	Stonewort	
	Slender Tufted-sedge	*Carex acuta*	Flowering plant	
	Marsh Stitchwort	*Stellaria palustris*	Flowering plant	
	Pyramidal Bugle	*Ajuga pyramidalis*	Flowering plant	
	Turban Lichen	*Cladonia peziziformis*	Lichen	Dave Lamacraft
RSPB	Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	Bird	
	Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	Bird	
	Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Bird	Ben Andrew
	Corncrake	*Crex crex*	Bird	
	Swift	*Apus apus*	Bird	Ben Andrew
Ulster Wildlife	Scarce Crimson & Gold*	*Pyrausta sanguinalis*	Moth	Andrew Crory
	Small Eggar*	*Eriogaster lanestris*	Moth	Rosemary Mulholland
	West European hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	Mammal	Tom Marshall
NIEA**	Pollan	*Coregonus autumnalis*	Fish	

*Combined Plan for both Scarce Crimson & Gold and Small Eggar

**NIEA funding production of Pollan plan

For further information please contact:

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