

# Agri-Environment Scheme Field Trials

Research Institution: NPWS

Project Investigator: NPWS Agri-Ecology Unit

Undertaken across Ireland, primarily in Natura 2000 sites.

## Project Background

The National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) Farm Plan Scheme has been in operation since 2006. The main purpose of the scheme is to promote a focussed, targeted and innovative approach to farming for habitats and species of conservation concern in some of Ireland's most important biodiversity areas – where this was not covered in national AE schemes. By trialling and enacting these innovative and often pioneering approaches with farmers, valuable lessons are learned from real experience in the field. This experience can be used to advise measures that should be taken forward under the Rural Development Programme, the primary source of finance for Agri-Environment Schemes in Ireland. In total, 658 NPWS Farm Plans have been approved to date. See [here](#) for further details on the NPWS Farm Plan Scheme.

NPWS Agri-Ecology Unit are also involved in the [RBAPS](#) project, which is trialling innovative approaches to results-based agri-environment schemes.

## Overall Aim

Trial and test innovative approaches to applied conservation management

Inform effective measures under national Agri-Environment Schemes

Deliver bespoke interventions for priority conservation issues, where such interventions are not presently possible under the Rural Development Programme

## Projected benefits of the research project

A greater understanding of what works and what does not work in agri-environment schemes

Analysis of costs incurred by farmers undertaken particular measures

An informed approach to national agri-environment measures

Enhanced relations between agriculture and biodiversity