



Wildwork

HELPING PEOPLE HELP NATURE HELP PEOPLE

The Wild Work Approach to Biodiversity Action Plans

Structured Learning Placement - Research Project Report

By: Kinga Szalecka

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Background on this Research Project Report

This report is the result of a student project conducted by Kinga Szalecka during a structured learning placement with Wild Work and University College Cork.

The project was agreed by the student, SECAD's Wild Work initiative and the School of BEES, University College Cork.

Introduction

Wild Work is an initiative of SECAD Partnership CLG, developed in response to a need identified by SECAD from years of experience supporting environmental projects in local communities. The initiative has biodiversity at its very heart and aims to contribute to a world in which people and nature can thrive together. Biodiversity loss is universally regarded as one of the most serious environmental problems facing the planet with the biggest causes including human-created pollution, changes to land and sea systems, overexploitation of organisms and climate change (Weikard, 2002). The introduction of conservation programmes such as Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) is of increasing importance in tackling this problem (Laycock *et al.*, 2009).

Biodiversity Action Plans are internationally recognized programs which examine environments, address threatened species and habitats and identify what practices are needed to protect and restore biological systems (UEBT, 2019). The role of a BAP is to provide expert guidance in designing and implementing specific actions to aid the conservation of biodiversity, identify scopes of





intervention and set out roles and responsibilities needed for the set-up and execution of plans (Groves *et al.*, 2002). With Wild Work's expert advice and support, a wide array of Irish businesses, farms, schools and local communities are able to make positive impacts on biodiversity and play their part in ensuring that local flora, fauna and habitats are protected, valued and enhanced through BAPs.

Biodiversity in Ireland

What is biodiversity and why is it important?

The loss of global biological diversity is a major concern worldwide. The term 'biodiversity' or 'biological diversity' is an umbrella term used to describe the number, variety and variability of living organisms in an area (Pimentel *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, when speaking about biodiversity we are referring to all of 'life on earth'.

Biodiversity loss may have devastating consequences for both the natural world and human society. Biological diversity is vital for human health and key ecosystem services which provide us with goods and services such as food, water, clean air, raw materials and medicine. Its loss will diminish nature's ability to adapt to the changing climate, reduce food security, affect economic and cultural wealth as well as potentially resulting in the emergence and spread of infectious diseases (Hanski, 2005).

The condition of Irish Ecosystems

The island of Ireland displays a wealth of ecologically significant habitats and wildlife in its terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. To date, over 31,000 species of birds, fish, mammals, invertebrates, plants and fungi have been recorded in Ireland and its surrounding seas in a variety of habitats including: woodlands, grasslands, uplands, peatlands, turloughs, lakes, rivers, coastal and marine (Cullen, 2011). This number represents 20% of the total species known to occur in Europe and more than 2% of all species in the world (IUCN, 2013). Improvements in the conservation and sustainable use of Irish ecosystems are vital for the survival and thriving of its biological systems.

According to the most recent assessment of the status of EU protected habitats and species in Ireland from 2019 (NPWS, 2019), 85% of the 59 examined habitats were shown to have an unfavourable conservation status. Specifically, 46% belonged to the 'Inadequate' category, 39% to the 'Bad' and



only 15% to the 'Favourable'. Another assessment which examined whether the status of unfavourable habitats showed an improving, declining or stable trend over time revealed that 53% of habitats showed a stable trend, only 2% of habitats displayed an improving trend and 18% appeared to be declining. The species assessment showed somewhat more positive figures. Of the 68 Habitats Directive species, 57% had a 'Favourable' status, 15% were reported to have an 'Inadequate' status, 15% were assessed as 'Bad' and 13% as 'Unknown'. Of those, 55% showed a stable trend, 17% appeared to have an improving trend, 15% were declining and 13% were unknown. These figures show worrying results.

Threats to Biodiversity

The overall picture is that a significant part of Ireland's biodiversity is in a vulnerable state and requires concrete conservation efforts. Ireland hosts a large proportion of the species and habitats that are threatened at the European level and has the responsibility of protecting them within its territory (IUCN, 2013). The main threats to habitats and species in Ireland include agricultural practices, natural system modifications, habitat loss, mining and quarrying, climate change, pollution of air, water and soils as well as the introduction of invasive species (Coll *et al.*, 2009).



For example, climate change models predict that in the future we will likely be faced with an increase in mean temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, sea-level rise and weather extremes such





as storms and flooding events. Degraded habitats and species will not have the ability to adapt to the changing climate and will be less resilient to the impacts of climate change (Watt *et al.*, 2007). This will affect the abundance and distribution of Irish species and potentially boost the spread of alien invasive species such as the Zebra Mussel, Grey Squirrel and Pacific Oyster which displace native species and alter Irish biodiversity and ecosystem processes (Haines-Young & Potschin, 2010).

Also, in Ireland pressures associated with agricultural activities are having a vast impact on habitats and species with over 70% of EU protected habitats reported to be adversely impacted by agriculture (IUCN, 2013). At the present time, approximately 68% of the land area in Ireland is used for agriculture (Conroy *et al.*, 2016). Pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers and animal manure are some of the agricultural pollutants resulting in eutrophication of water bodies, acidification, contamination of ecosystems, habitat loss, introduction of non-native species and biological system structure changes. With rising population trends and increasingly intensive agricultural practices and conversion of natural habitats to farmland, this issue will most likely continue growing in the future. The upcoming challenge for farms will be to balance productivity for the growing populations with reducing negative impacts on the environment (Keating *et al.*, 2010).

Without action to alter current trends, future generations may be forced to live in a diminished and degraded environment unfit to support our society and provide it with the necessary biological services. Biodiversity awareness and education is an essential element in the wider efforts to combat loss of habitats and species across the planet and stop the potentially devastating effects of climate change (Haines-Young & Potschin, 2010). Considerable conservation investment is needed from Ireland to ensure that the status of European species and habitats improves in the long term (IUCN, 2013).

Biodiversity Legislation

Policies and Regulations regarding Biodiversity

International, national, regional and local legislation has been established to protect our biological systems. The primary national legislation for the protection of wildlife in Ireland is the (Wildlife Act, 1976, and as amended). It manages and oversees the protection of threatened species and the designation of Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna as well as Wildfowl Sanctuaries. The Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for improved biodiversity conservation



by periodically introducing new measures and improving existing ones with the aim of strengthening national biodiversity. The act gives statutory protection to designated national areas of high biodiversity value (Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)), strengthens compliance with international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) as well as giving statutory recognition to the Government's responsibilities to promoting the conservation of biological diversity, in view of Ireland's commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity. National Biodiversity Action Plans lay out specific objectives and actions to protect and restore national biodiversity and are intended to be reviewed every 4 years (NPWS, 2017).

The EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EC) form the foundation of the European nature conservation policy. The two contribute to the Natura 2000 network of protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation in the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas in the Birds Directive) and other systems put into place to protect species outside of these protected areas. The two nature directives oblige member states to undertake periodic 6-year cyclical national assessments which value the conservation status of habitats and species specified in the directives in order to assess whether their objectives are being achieved. The directives are continuously being improved and redefined by the European Commission to ensure that they are effectively and efficiently achieving their own objectives and realising their full potential. The European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats Regulation, 2011 has made the Habitats and Birds directives part of Irish law.

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 aims to reverse the degradation of ecosystems and put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 with benefits for people, the climate and the planet. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) plan to create a framework for the protection of all marine, surface and ground waters and aim to achieve good status in all waters, protecting aquatic ecosystems and ensuring the sustainable use of the vital natural resource. The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) sets out to protect water bodies against pollution caused by nitrate additions from agricultural sources. The Environmental Liabilities Directive (2004/35/CE) aims to prevent environmental damage on the basis of the "polluter pays" principle. It places a monetary value of environmental degradation and holds polluters responsible for their effects on the environment. The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) ensures that all plans, programmes and projects likely to have significant



adverse effects on the environment are put through an environmental assessment before they are approved or authorised.

National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021): Actions and Objectives

Ireland's third National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2017-2021, was launched to re-define and promote Ireland's efforts to restore and strengthen biodiversity nationally and globally (NPWS, 2017). The plan lays out 119 actions in a framework of 7 strategic objectives. The objectives set out a clear approach on how the country plans to protect biodiversity, ensuring that efforts and achievements of the last NBAP are built on and continue into the future. Many of the targeted actions in the Plan also contribute towards Ireland's obligations under EU environmental directives.

The 7 objectives set out are:

- (i) Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors
- (ii) Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity
- (iii) Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- (iv) Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside
- (v) Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment
- (vi) Expand and improve management of protected areas and species.



(vii) Strengthen international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services



According to the NBAP, 2017, Ireland’s Vision for Biodiversity in the future is “biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally”.

Some of the plan’s chief actions include:

- Implementing legislative initiatives, including a National Parks Bill and the introduction of a requirement on public bodies to consider biodiversity in policy and decision making
- Improving management of agricultural and forest land which account for over 70% of total land use in the State
- Measures to tackle invasive alien species
- Science communication and engagement with local communities on biodiversity issues.
- A commitment on the integration of biodiversity concerns into Ireland’s Overseas Aid programme



- One specific action of the National Biodiversity Action is Action 1.1.5. ‘Local Authorities will review and update their Biodiversity and Heritage Action Plans’. This action will encourage the protection and restoration of local biodiversity.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

Elements of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan is a document which acts as a guide in the management of local areas to aid the conservation and enhancement of local biodiversity. There is no set format for a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The structure and format of a BAP will differ between different organisations depending on what sector the BAP was created for (farming, community, business, education or state), the resources available, the project’s timeframe and feedback from the community. Steps to producing and implementing a BAP will be chosen depending on the specific circumstances and needs of a project. A variety of BAPs are available in the public domain and should be consulted before deciding on the specific steps of your BAP.

The following is a common breakdown of a BAP based on desktop research. Certain elements may be skipped or extra elements which are not discussed in this sector may be added depending on the scale of the project, resources available and the condition of the areas biodiversity.

Baseline Information

An overview of the area where the BAP is to be implemented detailing land-use practices, geology, hydrology, settlements, the wider geographical context. A description of the current state of biodiversity in the area, giving an account of the ecosystems, habitats, species, areas managed to promote biodiversity and initiatives as well as the threats and opportunities for biodiversity in the area.

Goals and Objectives

It is important to set out what the BAP intends to accomplish. Goals should address the conclusions from the baseline information, tackle main weaknesses and threats, and take advantage of strengths



and opportunities. Not all goals may be achievable at once, so it is important to prioritise actions based on resources available.

One technique used to rate actions based on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is a [SWOT Analysis](#).

Measures

These are the concrete actions that will be taken to fulfil the BAP's goals. Measures depend on the context and may be diverse between different plans.

Action plan

The action plan sets out the timeline of the project, expected costs of all actions, responsibilities, responsibility owners and risks. The staff responsible for the BAP implementation should be identified in the action plan. Certain actions may be suitable for trained volunteers, others may require technical experts. The people in charge need to have a certain degree of practical and theoretical knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. A BAP should include a plan for gradual implementation through continuous improvement. Although a BAP includes a proposed timeline for implementation, the staff is not expected to implement the selected measures all at once.

Monitoring System

A Monitoring System does two things:

- (i) assesses whether the BAP is being implemented according to the plan
- (ii) measures its effects on biodiversity. It does this by using indicators which are quantitative measurements or qualitative criteria that calculate the progress and impacts of the plan.

This allows for reflection on what has been achieved, what hasn't been achieved and what should be changed. Monitoring systems may include:

- (i) The performance and impact indicators for actions
- (ii) The methods and tools necessary to collect them
- (iii) Staff responsible for collecting them



- (iv) The timeline when they will be collected.

BAP's should be periodically reviewed. If the results of a first phase of implementation indicate a change needs to happen, the BAP may be re-defined for that purpose as far as it can still provide specific goals and measures to be fulfilled.

Biodiversity Action Plan Process

Conducting a Baseline Assessment

The collection of baseline information can be conducted through desk research (publications and reports are available from local institutions, universities, research centres and civil society organisations), site visits, mapping and consultations with the local government, land owners, state agencies, conservation and environmental non-government organisations, local businesses, community groups and educational establishments. The process of consultation may include online surveys, face-to-face interactions and organised meetings. A template for what information needs to be collected can be defined beforehand.



Setting Goals

A list of goals is then created based on the baseline information. The goals should focus on tackling weaknesses and threats and boosting strengths and opportunity. Some targets may be relatively easy



to achieve, others may need more time and effort. Costs of actions must be taken into account: the budget may not allow for all actions to be given an equal amount of attention. Not all goals may be achievable at once, so it is important to prioritise actions based on resources available.

SWOT Analysis

One technique used to prioritise actions is SWOT analysis. The SWOT matrix is a strategic planning technique which uses SWOT diagrams to rate actions based on their significance to the project, by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It typically consists of four boxes, one for each area, but the exact shape may vary depending on the design.

The person in charge of the BAP uses the baseline assessments to evaluate each of the goals in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and transfers the information into the appropriate grids in the SWOT diagram. Once all of the actions are analysed, the SWOT diagram must be evaluated to draw conclusions about each of the actions. If the positive outcomes (strengths and opportunities) outweigh the negative (weaknesses and threats) the action should be implemented. Depending on the value of the positive outcomes and resources available, most urgent actions with the most significant positive outcomes should be prioritised over others.

When gathering baseline information during the consultation process it is a good idea to form questions in just a way that the answers fit into the SWOT matrix. For example: 'What could happen in the future that could harm nature in _____?' (threat).

Identifying an Action Plan

Once goals are identified, actions needed to achieve these goals must be identified. More than one action might be needed per goal. When specifying goals and actions it is important to consider things such as:

- Which biodiversity components will the BAP give attention to (e.g. genetic diversity, species diversity, ecosystems and habitat diversity)
- What exactly will the BAP contribute to? (conservation, sustainable use, or both)
- What approaches will be used? (reducing negative impacts, promoting positive impacts or both)



- Who will be responsible for the intervention?

The specific timeframe for each action should be identified. No actions listed in the plan should be undertaken without prior agreement being sought from the landowners. Where necessary approvals should also be sought from bodies such as: National Monuments Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Office of Public Works, Ports, Inland Fisheries Ireland and County Councils. This is not an exhaustive list and other bodies and individuals may need to be consulted.

Designing a long-term Monitoring System

To implement the monitoring system a list of indicators (performance and impact) should be drafted. It is important to consider whether the actions and their indicators are complete, coherent, context viable and feasible.

Next the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Protocol must be created. The M&E Protocol should include the following information: a description of the M&E System, its indicators (must specify whether its performance or impact), a list of goals and actions each indicator relates to, their purpose and who is responsible for them.

Integrating the Biodiversity Action Plan

The person responsible for the BAP integrates all the gathered information into one single BAP workplan, revises the consistency and coherence of the BAP's different elements, and finalises the BAP document. A draft BAP may be shared with persons involved with the plan to get comments and opinions. Improvements may be made if necessary.

Once the final BAP is ready, implementation of the measures can begin. It is important to remember that a BAP is a process and a gradual effort. People responsible for the BAP must periodically check and update baseline assessment information, receive and review information about the implementation of the measures and coordinate the BAP redefinitions if necessary.

BAPs should be reviewed every 5 years, as that provides an opportunity to look at what has been achieved and to look at issues still to be worked on, and how future actions might be resourced.



Implementing a Biodiversity Action Plan

Developing a BAP provides a plan to put specific actions into place to better manage habitats, monitor species and conserve biodiversity. A BAP is essentially a management system which helps to reduce negative impacts such as degradation or destruction of ecosystems, overexploitation and contamination of natural resources, overexploitation of species as well as species endangerment. It also increases opportunities for everyone in the community to experience nature and promotes biodiversity restoration and maintenance (UEBT, 2019). The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in local areas has a wide-ranging number of benefits for local communities including:

- Development of green spaces and nature education for citizens, giving them an opportunity to build a connection with nature and teach children about respecting wildlife. Improving identification skills of birds, plants, insects and mammals. It provides valuable green recreational resources and opportunities to socialise with peers outdoors.
- A healthy local environment increases the well-being and physical and mental health of the locality's citizens, increasing quality of life. Aesthetic value aids relaxation. An increased number of plants (trees in particular) in an area will lead to cleaner air in the local environment.
- Protection and enhancement of habitats and species. Increased numbers of insects, invertebrates and fungi helps breakdown dead and decaying material and improve soil condition and fertility.
- The existence of green spaces increases the economic value of land in a community. Green spaces attract investments, tourism and business. This encourages money to be spent inside the community both by community members and visitors.

There are a number of basic principles you should follow when implementing a BAP. It's of great importance to always preserve features of high conservation value. The aim of a BAP is to work with nature, rather than against it. Therefore, where possible, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and any other artificial chemicals should be avoided (follow the [Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive](#) guidelines if applying any pesticides). When restoring biodiversity in an area, try to use native species whenever planting/sowing and have a good understanding of the habitats, flora and fauna species already associated with the given location. Consult with qualified ecologists such as Wild Work staff



to learn how to correctly implement any goals or targets. Try to make places aesthetically pleasing to set a good example and inspire others. Remember that people can benefit from biodiversity, just as much as biodiversity can benefit from people. Making a local Biodiversity Action Plan means we learn more about nature in our area, value nature in our area more and conserve and enhance nature in our area.

The Wild Work Approach to Local Biodiversity Action Plans

Wild Work produces bespoke Biodiversity Action Plans for villages, towns, businesses, schools, farms, community groups and other places with the aim of increased community investment in biodiversity conservation and enhancement. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan created by Wild Work is a document which acts as a guide in the management and enhancement of local areas.

Main Action Themes

Since its establishment in 2017, Wild Work has produced several high-quality BAPs and offers a wide variety of biodiversity services to go along with them. By collaborating with Wild Work on a Biodiversity Action Plan communities, businesses, farms or schools, receive expert guidance in designing and implementing specific actions to aid the conservation of local biodiversity. Wild Work's expert staff advise and support clients to help them make significant positive changes to local biodiversity and ensure flora, fauna and habitats are protected, valued and enhanced.

A Wild Work Biodiversity Action Plan:

- Provides in-depth information about biodiversity features of interest in terms of flora, fauna and habitats in the area
- Identifies all sensible actions based on cost, time and priority, that can be implemented to benefit nature and people
- Outlines the types of Wild Work activities and projects best suited to the site
- Provide information on how to implement the BAP actions
- Offer consultation and advice at the development and implementation stages

Engagement



A big part of a Wild Work BAP is communication and engagement with the client. The initiative aims to inspire people and guide them towards re-building a connection with nature and their environment while helping their local biodiversity. Whether it be members of staff, local residents, school children, Wild Work believes in working cooperatively. Working together often leads to discussions about biodiversity and other related concepts and gives people a chance to witness the charms of nature with professionals on hand to answer questions. Oftentimes people may be unsure of the meaning of the term 'biological diversity' and its importance, therefore working with Wild Work's knowledgeable experts is of great educational value to everyone interested in nature. Wild Work's motto of helping **people, help nature, help people** highlights that when people help nature, they too benefit.



Wild Work provides the expertise to produce a BAP but also values community knowledge of the local area and encourages community input and support. Wild Work's local BAPs are created through the cooperation of Wild Work's experts, people living in the community, people working in the community, people providing volunteer and community-based services and people providing services to the communities such as education, health and other service providers. BAPs created by Wild Work set out to engage the 5 key sectors of society: community, business, farming, education and state to produce a plan which preserves and strengthens biological systems and communities.



Community consultation is of prime importance in the Wild Work BAP process. Wild Work engages community members by consulting them through face to face engagement, online surveys, asking for comments about draft versions and submission of ideas at meetings with community stakeholders. People of all ages and from all types of backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the process and discuss how they see nature in their local area at the present time, as well as how they'd like to help and improve it for the future. Examples of survey questions include:

- In [name of community] where do you think are the most important places for nature and biodiversity?
- In [name of community], where do you think there are places with improvement potential for nature and biodiversity?

As these are open ended questions, the responses often do not simply identify places but also highlight other concerns and give suggestions for specific actions to protect biodiversity.

In addition to the already mentioned background research, engagement sessions and action development, as part of the BAP process Wild Work offers other services that can tie into implementing Biodiversity Action Plans. Examples of these are described below.

Habitat creation and conservation

Wild Work has hands on design expertise in creating biodiversity friendly spaces. The initiative can examine and carry out ecological surveys of areas with high biodiversity potential, manage them to enhance and protect their biodiversity value and raise awareness about their importance. 'Wild places' are an example of natural habitats deemed significant for biodiversity which Wild Work can help to establish and manage. 'Wild Places' are often abandoned or under-utilised sites where nature has been allowed to flourish. When managed correctly, these areas have a lot of biodiversity potential. 'Wild places' provide a space for community members to relax and experience nature up close. Local schools and educational groups may be allowed to use those green areas as outdoor classrooms to teach children and adults about biodiversity and species monitoring/recording. Reclaiming abandoned and under-utilised sites as 'Wild places' address anti-social behaviour, fosters a sense of pride and appreciation of the place and enhances the overall beauty of the community. The initiative can provide training for volunteers so that they may have an active role in the development of these biodiversity significant green spaces.



Managing green spaces to benefit pollinators and biodiversity

Wild Work offers expert help in creating and managing habitats for pollinators such as bees and butterflies, including grasslands, wildflower strips and school gardens. The initiative can offer training for volunteers teaching them about managing green spaces using nature friendly methodologies. Volunteers can also be taught and encouraged to monitor and record species found in these habitats as a BAP action.

Pollinators play a key role in our ecosystems. They ensure successful seed and fruit production of crops and wildflowers and help us monitor the overall health of our wildlife. Examples of pollinator friendly landscape management techniques used by Wild Work includes conversion of lawns to managed wildflower meadow, planting of native wildflower strips and creation of nesting sites for solitary bees. Some actions under this theme are of relevance to the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#).



Wild Work has been managing a grassland in the Mangala in Douglas for a number of years to aid pollinators and have produced a [case study](#) of The Mangala BAP.

Education and Research

The initiative believes that education and biodiversity awareness play a vital role in protecting our nature. Wild Work offers educational engagement sessions as part of the BAP process and/or as actions from the BAP. Sessions may include walks through the site and talks about the proposed BAP actions



As part of the BAP process Wild Work may also collaborate with educational institutions to make biodiversity expertise available to facilitate community-based research and learning opportunities related to nature and well-being. By collaborating with third-level education institutions and students, communities have access to first rate scientific research which they would not normally have the resources to pay for or carry out their own. Students can contribute to a community while gaining valuable, real world research experience. To learn more about Wild Work's collaborations with academia on research projects [click here](#).

Habitat Mapping

A habitat map shows the location and extent of the various habitat types (e.g. lakes, rivers, woodlands, grasslands). These maps provide information and context that help inform the actions within the BAP and provide context for the location of actions identified. To increase community engagement in the BAP process, Wild Work also provides training for community volunteers to carry out habitat mapping for the BAP with Wild Works support and guidance.

Some important sites for biodiversity may be outside the area the BAP focuses on. However as nature does not recognise these boundaries, habitat maps will often highlight areas outside BAP borders too. The BAP may then include actions to link up habitats both inside and outside the BAP boundaries creating wildlife corridors. In this way a BAP produced for a single community, organisation or business can help to connect habitats and species locally, regionally and internationally. So, while a Local Biodiversity Action Plan will focus on a defined area, neighbouring communities all benefit from their existence.

Management of invasive species

The initiative also manages invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia spp.*), Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) Traveller's Joy, also known as "Mile-a-minute" (*Clematis vitalba*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) by recording and mapping stands of invasive species and producing an invasive species management plan. As part of the BAP service, the initiative ensures that those responsible for managing and maintaining the sites do not cause unnecessary spread of invasive species during their work. An example of our work with invasive species is management of the invasive species *Clematis vitalba* at ['Suez Pond' in Passage West, Cork](#).



To date, Wild Work has been involved with twelve 5-year duration [Biodiversity Action Plans](#). Of those it has published five community-based BAPs including: [Ballyvergan](#), [Carrigtwohill](#), [Passage West](#), [Carrigaline](#) and [Ballybrack Woods](#) (The Mangala).

Conclusion

Due to the rising concerns about the loss of global and national biodiversity it is vital that we have targeted, effective and well-planned methods to mitigate against this increasingly urgent problem. BAPs help us to address all these requirements to protect, enhance and strengthen biological systems. They allow for collaborations between communities, businesses, farms, academia and state bodies to help promote biological diversity and in doing so, benefit people too. Wild Work uses its expertise to amalgamate problems and solutions into a comprehensive plan which gives clear and achievable goals to improve biodiversity for all.



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