



Cornhshool, Oldhrecht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



The Habitats and Birds Directives

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Séirbhís na bPáirceanna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra

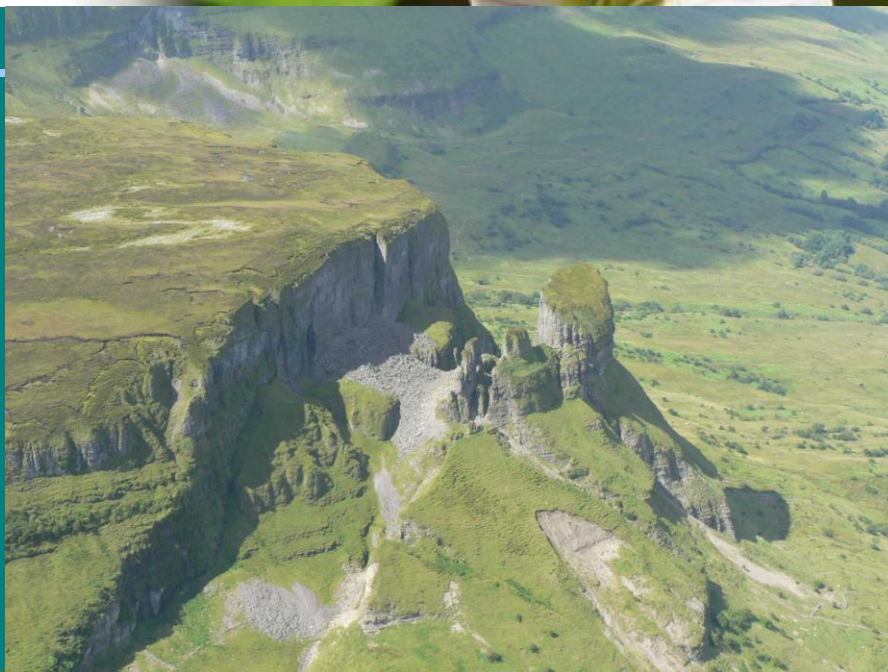




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The Habitats Directive





Habitats Directive requires Ireland to

- **Set up Special Areas of Conservation** to protect 60 different habitats and 25 species
- **Give strict protection to certain species** (without designation) :bats, otters, whales and dolphins and the Kerry Slug, and the places they use for breeding and resting



Habitats for which Ireland is especially important

- **“PRIORITY”**
- **Stable sand dunes**
- **Turloughs**
- **Raised bog**
- **Blanket Bog**
- **Machair**
- **Limestone Pavement**
- **Other examples**
- **Sea cliffs**
- **Deep sea reefs**
- **Large Bays; Reefs**
- **Clean lakes**
- **Old oak woods**
- **Degraded raised bogs**
- **60 in all**



Species requiring SACs include

- Otter
- Salmon
- Grey Seal
- Common Seal
- Porpoise
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel
- 25 in all in Ireland



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Ireland's most threatened habitat?





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IRELAND'S MOST ENDANGERED SPECIES?





Strict protection

- 10 species of bats
- 24 or so species of cetaceans
- Otter
- Kerry Slug
- Leathery Turtle

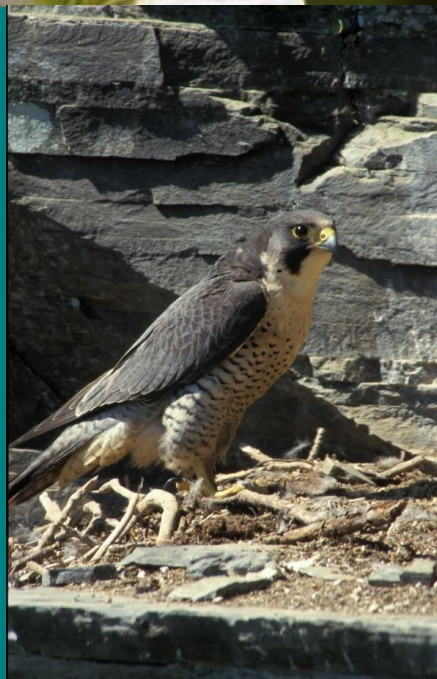


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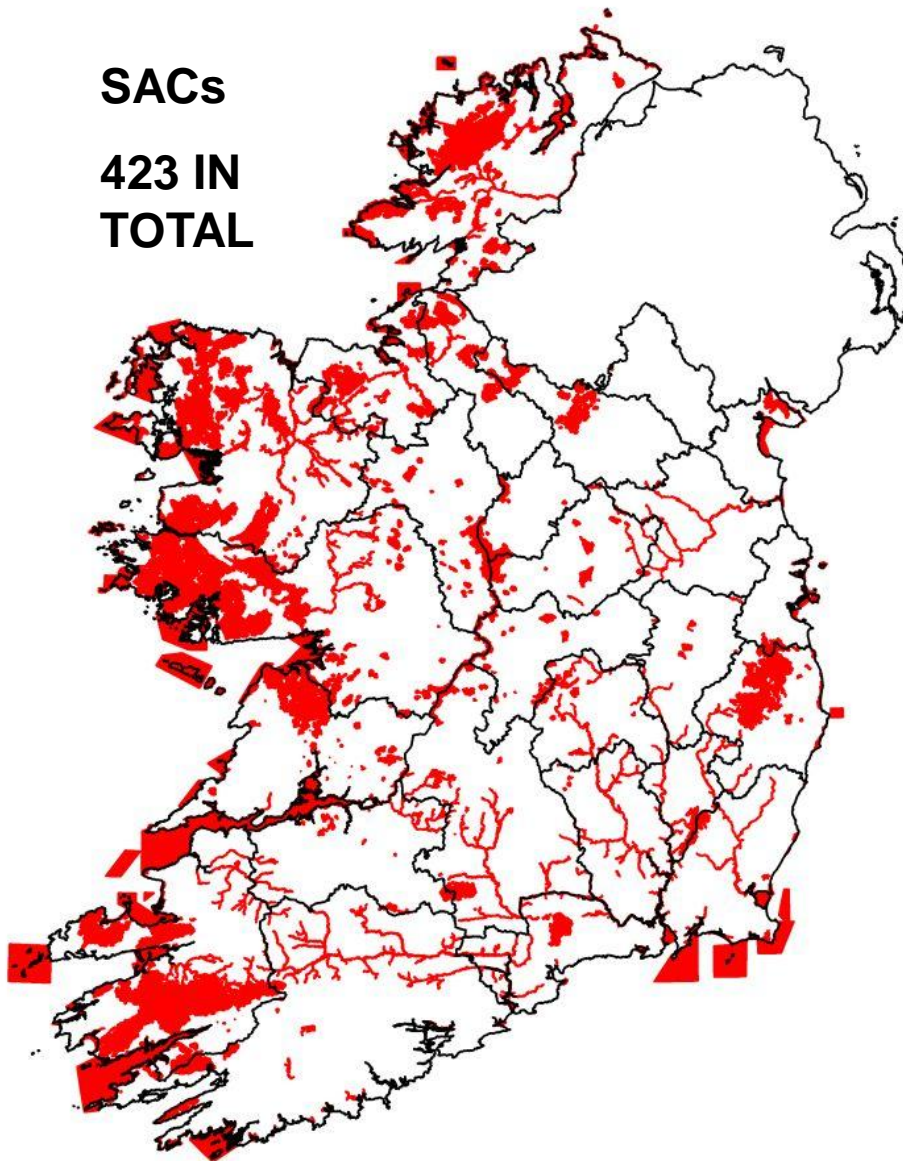
THE BIRDS DIRECTIVE

- Conserve populations of all bird species
- Set up protected sites for migratory birds and for populations of rare or vulnerable species of birds e.g.

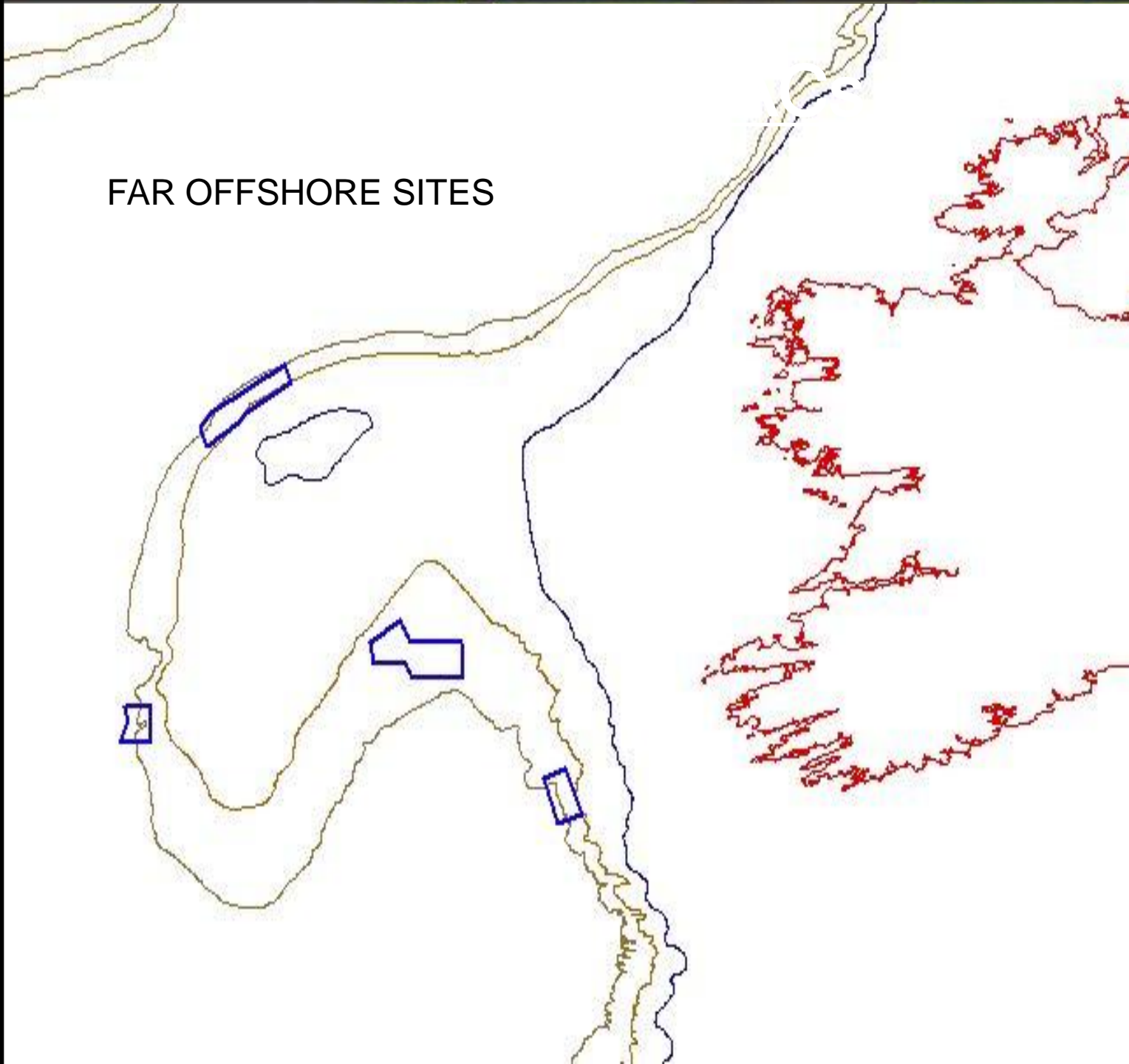




SACs
423 IN
TOTAL



FAR OFFSHORE SITES





**The Natura 2000 network
across biogeographical
regions, status July 2008**

 Nature 2000 sites

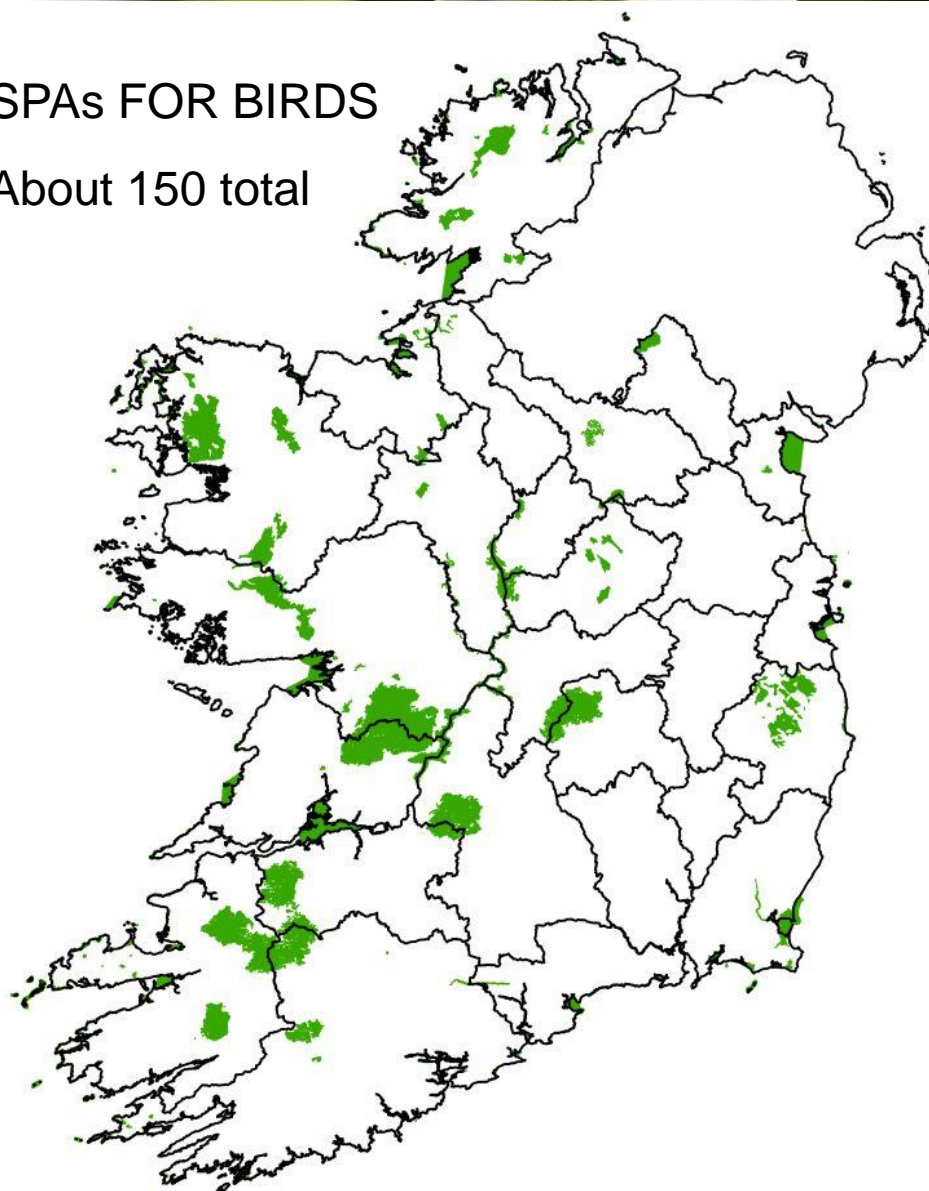
Biogeographical regions

-  Alpine
-  Atlantic
-  Black Sea
-  Boreal
-  Continental
-  Macaronesia
-  Mediterranean
-  Pannonian
-  Steppic
-  Outside data coverage



SPAs FOR BIRDS

About 150 total

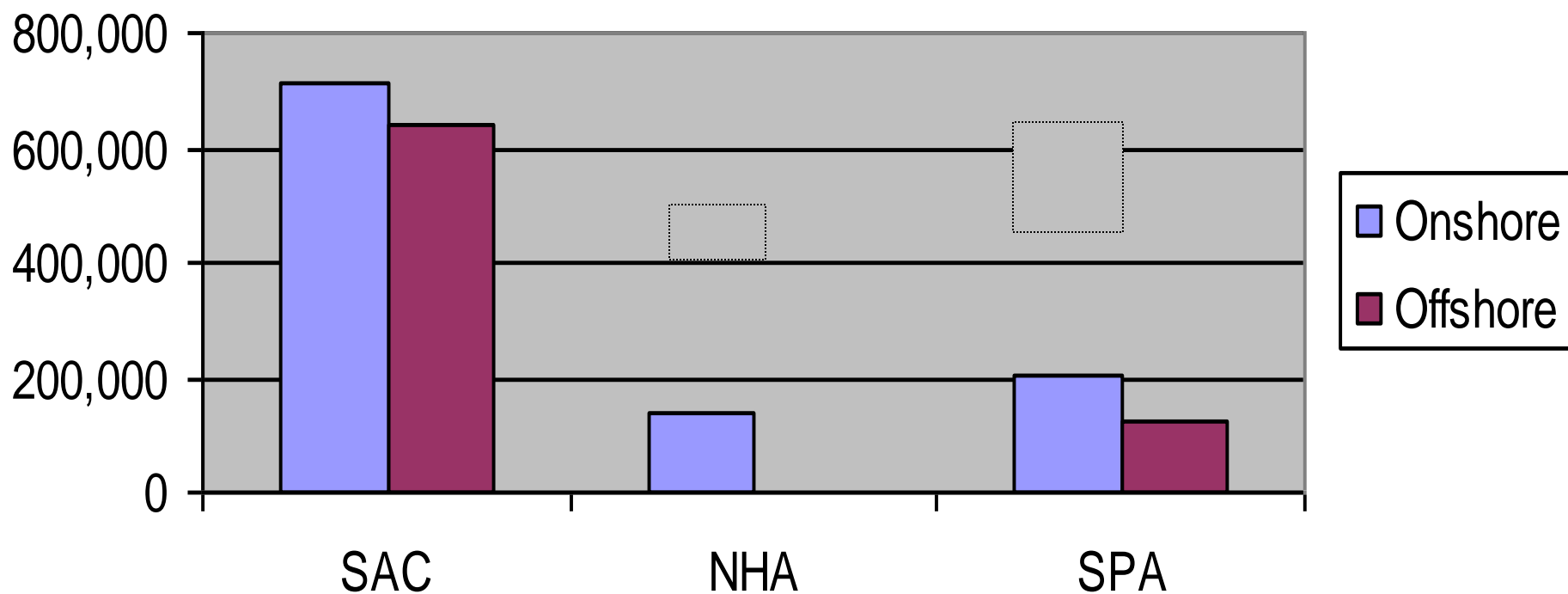




Area of Onshore and Offshore designations

Total Area 1.6 million ha

57% on land, 43% marine





Article 6

- Member States shall establish necessary conservation measures to protect sites
- Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and species..or restore
- Any project or plan must be subject to an appropriate assessment...must not affect the integrity of the site



Steps in a project to ensure conformity with Habitats and Birds Directives

- Screening
- Examination of alternatives
- Appropriate assessment (may be discrete part of EIA) of impacts including cumulative impact
- Decision
- (Mitigation/compensatory habitat)



Screening

- Is a project likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site?
- Size, land take,
- Physical change resulting, e.g. drainage
- Emissions, waste, resource requirements e.g. water abstraction
- Disturbance during build and operation



Alternatives

- Must always seek a site/route that is least damaging for habitats /species/ integrity of Natura 2000 site
- If a project is proposed on a Natura 2000 site and it will have impacts, it is essential to show that alternatives have been fully investigated and that no feasible alternative exists
- Only health&safety allowed as considerations in case of priority habitat



“Over riding public interest”

- the citizens' life (health, safety, environment);
- - within the framework of fundamental policies for the State and the Society;
- - within the framework of carrying out activities of economic or social nature, fulfilling
- specific obligations of public service.



EIA

- Ensure compliance with EU Habitats Regulations and Wildlife Acts
- Should also consider areas of value to wildlife even if not designated e.g. pNHAs local Biodiversity Areas, ecological corridors



Mitigation

- Avoids adverse impact
- Requires monitoring to ensure success
- Flexibility so that feedback from monitoring can if necessary change the work



Compensatory provision

- Where human health and safety considerations, or environmental benefit, apply and there is no alternative
- Design of compensatory measures, i.e. creation or restoration of equivalent habitat consistent with objectives for Natura site
- Results of “compensation” should be effective at time of damage
- Notify / consult Commission



Article 12 (bats, cetaceans*, otter)

- State must ensure no deliberate disturbance of species, particularly during breeding, rearing, migration
- No deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places

*whales, dolphins, porpoise



Article 12 *continued*

- Implications for marine surveys such as seismic exploration, seabed mapping using acoustics; and offshore oil/gas or renewables projects
- Bat sites commonly encountered in land-based projects
- Otters feature in road developments crossing rivers



Natural Heritage Areas

- National rather than EU designation
- Protects features not covered by EU Directives
- Provision for protection of geological sites
- No geological NHAs designated to date, much baseline work achieved by GSI



Further information

- NPWS Divisional Ecologists
- Natura website:
ec.europa.eu/environment/nature
- <http://www.npws.ie/en/WildlifePlanningtheLaw/AppropriateAssessment/>
- <http://www.npws.ie/en/Marine/BestPracticeGuidelines/>