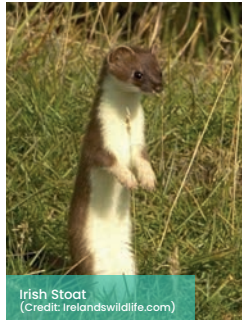


## Mammals

A number of mammals including badger, Irish Stoat and Irish Hare have been recorded in the area. Badgers live in social groups with family members and can live within complex tunnelling systems known as setts. Irish Stoat and Irish Hare are subspecies which are endemic to Ireland and are therefore of particular conservation interest.



Irish Hare  
(credit: The Vincent Wildlife Trust)



Irish Stoat  
(credit: Irelandswildlife.com)

There are nine bat species in Ireland, and a number of these species have been recorded foraging within the study area, including Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Myotis species, Leisler's bat, Nathusius' pipistrelle, Brown long-eared bat, and Lesser horseshoe bat.

Lesser Horseshoe Bat are highly restricted in their range in Ireland, being found only within the western counties from Cork to Mayo. They have a characteristic horseshoe-shaped 'nose leaf' on their nose which helps them to echolocate.

Ireland's smallest bat is the soprano pipistrelle which weighs as little as a €1 coin. Each bat can eat over 3000 midges in one night! Ireland's largest bat, Leisler's bat, has also been recorded.



Pipistrelle  
(credit: Bat Conservation Ireland)

## Bird species

A wide variety of common and widespread bird species typical of farmland habitats have been recorded in the study area. Of particular note are Buzzard and Kestrel.

Buzzards are seen and heard soaring above fields. Kestrels are easily distinguished by their trademark hovering behaviour as they search the ground for prey. The song of the Skylark, a distinctive continuous stream of warbling notes, can be heard throughout the site in spring and summer.



Buzzard  
(credit: Birdwatch Ireland)



Kestrel  
(credit: Birdwatch Ireland)



Skylark  
(credit: Birdwatch Ireland)

# Laurclavagh Biodiversity

Information Leaflet

09.01.2023

## Laurclavagh Biodiversity

Laurclavagh is situated within an agricultural grassland landscape with areas of karst limestone pavement and calcareous grassland. This leaflet provides an overview of the main habitats and species recorded during ecological surveys of the area.

## What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is a term given to the variety of life on earth, including all species and ecosystems.

A wide variety of specialist ecological surveys are being undertaken at Laurclavagh by MKO, with the project designed to avoid sensitive ecological receptors.

These surveys have targeted a wide variety of species and habitats with the aim of determining their distribution in the area. Species recorded in the study area to date include Badger, Irish Stoat, Irish Hare and a number of bat and bird species.

This leaflet provides a brief overview of a variety of habitats and species of interest with potential to occur within the site as well as some interesting facts for the reader.

## Habitats

Map 1 illustrates the biodiversity study area. The following habitat types, which may be of interest to the local community, are found within the study area:



**Agricultural grasslands** – The grassland habitats on the site comprise mainly improved agricultural grassland.

Although agricultural grasslands are often of relatively low biodiversity value, they do provide some supporting habitat for foraging fauna such as Badger.



**Limestone pavement** – Areas of exposed karst limestone are found within the site. This is a rare and protected habitat type found in the west of Ireland. The porous nature of the limestone has resulted in a lack of surface water/rivers within the site. Unusual wildflowers and plants can be found growing between the cracks of the limestone which provide a valuable microclimate.



**Calcareous meadow** – The limestone nature of the site has resulted in some areas developing into species-rich calcareous grasslands. A high number of unusual wildflowers, including orchids, can be found on these grasslands which provide a valuable food source for pollinators and other invertebrates. Some of the butterflies recorded at the site include Common Blue, Meadow Brown, and Tortoiseshell.



**Hedgerows and stone walls** – The agricultural fields across the site are often bordered by hedgerows which consist of hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn and bramble. These species provide vital sources of food for insects in spring and summer and berries in autumn for birds and mammals. Hedgerows and stone walls as linear features provide vital habitat links and shelter for mammals, particularly bats which depend on these features for commuting, foraging and roosting.

**Scrub and woodland** – Small areas of scrub and immature woodland are found around the site and are often dominated by hazel, a species typical of limestone areas. These areas provide shelter and foraging opportunities for fauna.

