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CANN

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Introducing the CANN Project Newsletter

Welcome to the very first edition of the CANN newsletter - a bi-annual newsletter which aims to keep you informed and updated about what is happening and the works being completed as part of the CANN project.

The CANN team have some fantastic news and stories to share with you in this edition, and hope you enjoy reading about and are inspired by the positive work being undertaken to preserve and protect peatland and wetland habitats and their associated species across Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Lastly, from all at CANN, we would like to take the opportunity to wish you a very merry Christmas, and a happy and peaceful New Year.

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Rare Snail Found at CANN Project Site

The CANN project team are delighted to report that a rare species of snail has been discovered at the Lecale Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in Co. Down, Northern Ireland. The Desmoulin's whorl snail, known scientifically as *Vertigo moulinsiana*, was found by a team of specialists who were carrying out field surveys at the site as part of the project.

The Desmoulin's whorl snail has been in decline in recent years, caused by wetland drainage and changes in land management practices. This finding is the first ever recorded in Northern Ireland, and Explaining the importance of the find, Dr Trish Fox from Ulster Wildlife said:

"To say this find has rocked the conservation world in Northern Ireland would be an understatement. The Desmoulin's whorl snail is such a significant species that its presence has previously halted infrastructure construction in both the UK and Ireland. There has already been a major survey for the species regionally so for it to be found now is quite amazing."

The discovery of the snail at the Co. Down location is especially notable given the size of the Desmoulin's whorl snail; typically less than 3mm in size, these molluscs are smaller than a new-born baby's fingernail.



The Desmoulin's Whorl Snail which was found at a CANN project site in Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

CANN/CABB

At the beginning of October the CANN project team were privileged to join with our 'sister' project, "Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity" (CABB), for a few days of learning, exploring, and sharing of information and best practice.

The CANN project team visited CABB project sites at the Garron Plateau and at Montiaghs Moss, where they saw and learnt about all the positive work being undertaken for these valuable peatlands and their associated species.

Many thanks again to the CABB project team for organising such an interesting and informative few days.



CANN project staff (plus a few friendly dogs) at the CABB/CANN information sharing event in October 2018.

Conference Season

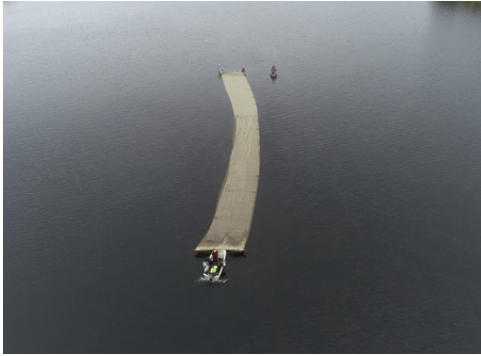
Team CANN were out in force during October 2018 representing the CANN project at several different conferences.

Martina (NMDDC), Shirley and Rory (MCC) attended the Irish Uplands Forum Conference in Mulranny, Co. Mayo, where the topic was "Innovation and Partnerships in the Uplands".

Jennifer Fulton (UW) attended the IUCN UK Peatland Conference 2018 in Balloch, Scotland, where the topic was "Peatland Connections: Building Prosperity".

Both conferences were very insightful and provided an opportunity to learn more about the challenges facing peatlands and emerging peatland management strategies, and to raise the profile of the CANN project across the project jurisdictions.

Success in Lough Arrow Invasive Species Trial



Surveys carried out in on Lough Arrow, Co. Sligo, Ireland, in 2017 and 2018 as part of the CANN project identified a decline in the abundance of native Charophytes on the lake bed, and pinpointed a number of areas which had become adversely affected by weeds and invasive species.

Loughbrick Bay, which is one of the main entry points for boats at Lough Arrow, was found to have a significant quantity of Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), an invasive species which presented a biosecurity risk. To combat this risk, an innovative scientific trial involving jute matting was implemented to try and remove some of the waterweed.

The jute matting excludes light from the waterweed, thus significantly reducing their capacity to grow and spread, giving the native Charophytes a chance to regrow. Laid in 100m long strips in Lough Arrow, and secured to the lakebed, the jute has been positioned to create invasive species free "lanes" for boats entering and exiting the Lough, as well as eliminating potential waterborne obstructions for these angling vessels.

The CANN project team will carefully monitor the progress of this trial, which has been used to great success in other freshwater lakes in Ireland affected by invasive weed species.



Boats deploying lengths of jute matting on trial sites in Lough Arrow to try to eradicate the growth of invasive species Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*) which outcompetes native Charophyte

Patching-Up Peatlands: A Bog Restoration Trial

In a number of places the bog at Peatlands Park, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, was very degraded despite historic drains being filled in many years ago and natural bog restoration occurring on large areas of the bog.

To help restore the remaining degraded areas, the CANN project team enlisted the help of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council to trial a bog moss restoration method which was pioneered in Canada.

Before the CANN team began, the peat on the chosen area was bare and slimy algae covered the soil surface. The dead top layer was dug out and the plot was levelled, before the team transplanted red bog moss gathered from healthy hummocks. The plot was then covered over in straw to protect the delicate transplanted moss over the winter.

Within the year it is hoped that the transplanted moss will start to put down roots and begin rebuilding the bog again. Watch this space for further updates on the success of this trial.



The bog restoration trial area at Peatlands Park, covered in straw for the winter.

Volunteering on Islay

In September Butterfly Conservation Scotland's Bog Squad volunteers visited Islay, and carried out work removing Conifer saplings and small Rhododendron from Duich Moss. Their work is invaluable, and it is planned that they will return next year to carry out similar work on other sites. During their recent visit the Bog Squad volunteers saw Hen harriers, Merlin and Snipe, and witnessed the spectacle of the vast numbers of geese which arrive on Islay at the start of Autumn.

A massive "THANK-YOU" to all the volunteers for the crucial work completed during this recent visit.



A Bog Squad volunteer removing Conifer saplings from the bog at Duich Moss, Islay, Scotland.

Biosecurity Basics

As part of Science Week 2018, the CANN project was host to INVAS Biosecurity who delivered biosecurity training to key stakeholders of Lough Arrow, a CANN project site. The Science Week event took place in IT Sligo was well attended, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants who learnt about invasive species, the impacts they can have, and how to stop them spreading. The CANN project team hope to follow up on the training by installing biosecurity boxes around Lough Arrow in the near future.



INVAS Biosecurity and IT Sligo CANN Project Staff

Project Partners

Lead Partner: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC).

- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI);
- Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT);
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABCBC);
- East Border Region (EBR);
- Golden Eagle Trust (GET);
- Institute of Technology Sligo (ITS);
- Monaghan County Council (MCC);
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH);
- Ulster University (UU);
- Ulster Wildlife (UW).

The CANN project partnership also works very closely with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Contact Us

The CANN Project



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry
BT35 8DJ



0044 28 3031 3116



thecannproject@nmandd.org



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www.thecannproject.org



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