



**THEME:**

Environment

**FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH):**

€4,935,983

**MATCH FUNDING:**

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; Peatland Restoration; and the Bannister Charitable Trust.

**LEAD PARTNER:**

RSPB NI

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

RSPB Scotland, BirdWatch Ireland, NI Water, Butterfly Conservation and Moors for Future.

**Start Date:** 01/01/2017

**End Date:** 31/12/2021



<https://bit.ly/2m1wdM0>



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## SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

### Project Case Study: Cooperation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) - Impact of COVID-19

#### Impact of COVID-19 on CABB

2020 was a challenging year for the multi-partner, large scale habitat restoration project.

COVID-19 restrictions hampered the delivery of its habitat management work on the ground. Restrictions also curtailed species and habitat monitoring, and prevented Project Officers from getting out and about to familiarise themselves with their sites. Staff were also unable to have important face-to-face conversations and meetings with farmers, statutory agency staff and other key stakeholders.

Fortunately, every cloud has a silver lining and the CABB team were able to utilise time confined to their immediate surroundings to plan and prepare the documentation to enable quick on-the-ground action when restrictions did lift.

RSPB NI is now in the midst of managing habitat for breeding waders in Lough Erne, using its CABB-funded low pressure tracked tractor. BirdWatch Ireland is delivering predator-proof fencing in Donegal and blanket bog drain blocking in Sligo. RSPB Scotland has delivered an additional 127 hectares of peatland restoration and Butterfly Conservation has delivered habitat management at another three sites.

As a result of COVID-19, the CABB team now uses virtual platforms for all Board, Delivery Group and Steering Group meetings. Staff have been able to attend and participate in conferences virtually without the financial cost, carbon usage and time associated with travel.

CABB hosted a very successful Information Share and Best Practice virtual event in autumn 2020 with an attendance of over 60 people. It also exhibited its work to 560 delegates at the IUCN's UK Peatland Programme conference in December. These were both excellent opportunities for the project to hear from others, share experiences and knowledge and learn from best practice elsewhere.



# Northern Ireland