



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Scientific research and restoration planning for woodland habitats

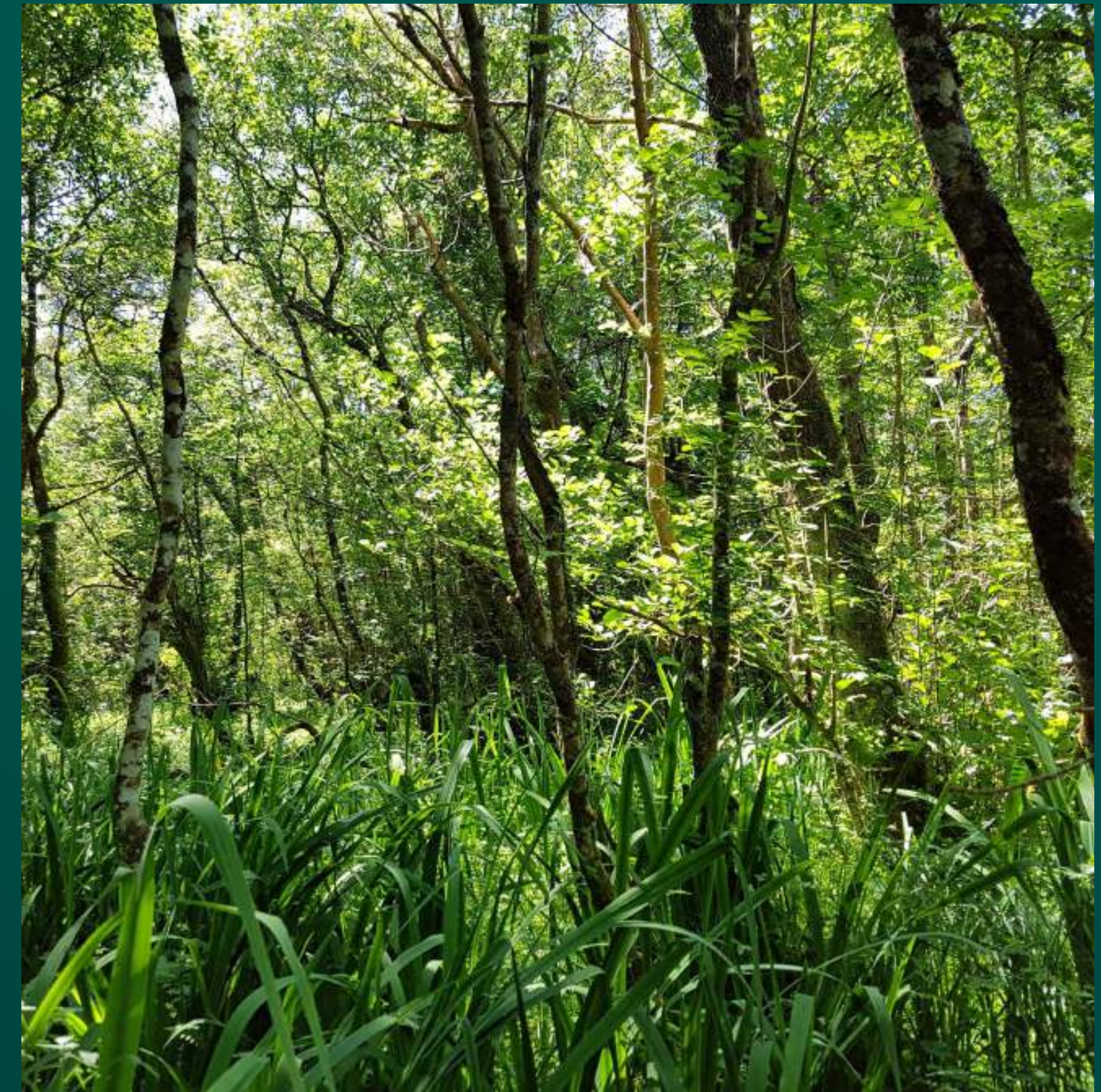
Jenni Roche, Restoration Planning Ecologist

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Woodlands of Ireland Conference, October 1st 2024

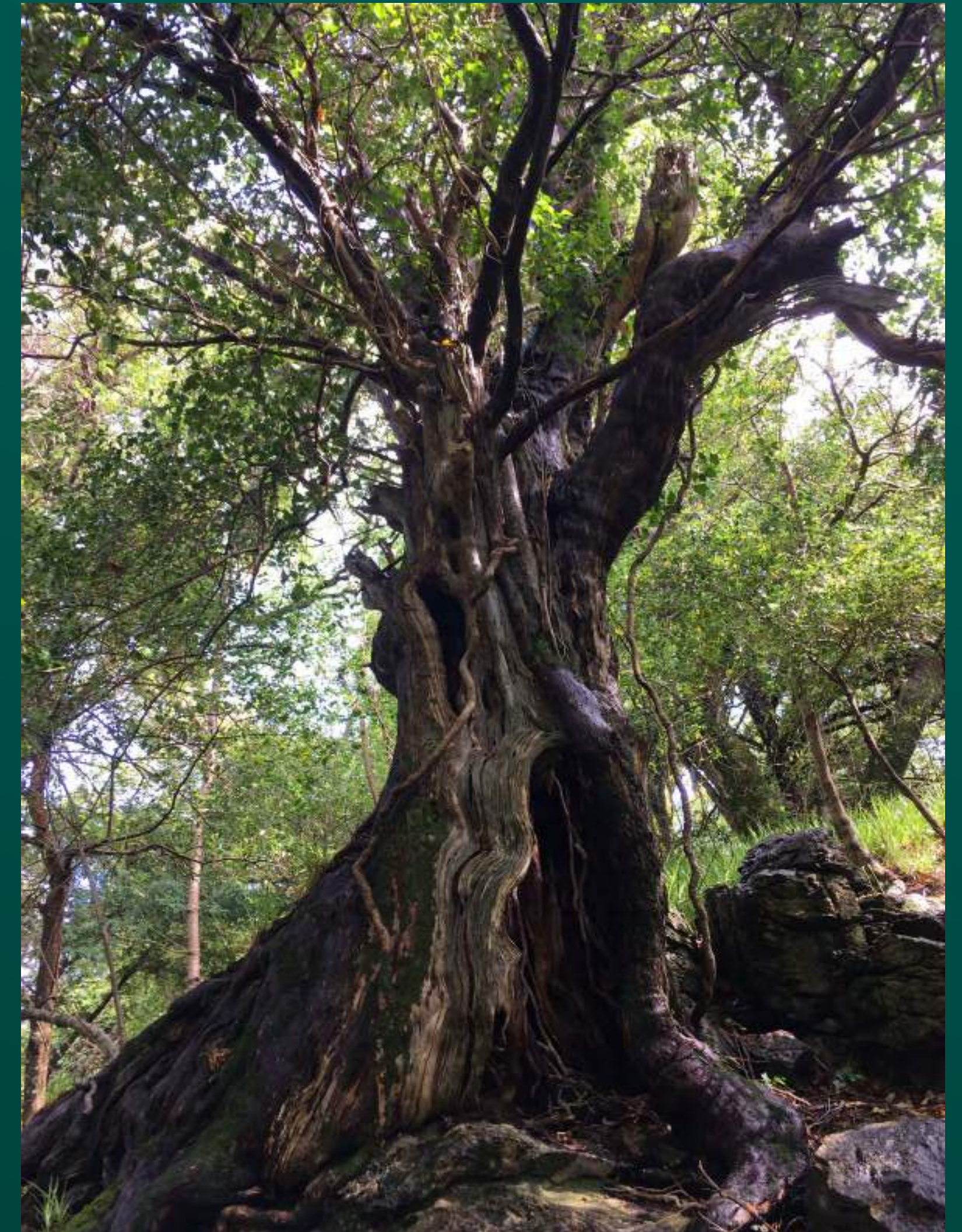
Legislative and policy framework for nature restoration

- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
- Global Biodiversity Framework
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- EU Forest Strategy for 2030
- Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030
- Afforestation policy aims to increase forest cover from 11.6-18%
- EU Nature Restoration Law
 - came into force on August 18th 2024
 - National Restoration Plan



National Conservation Assessment of Annex I woodland habitats (2019)

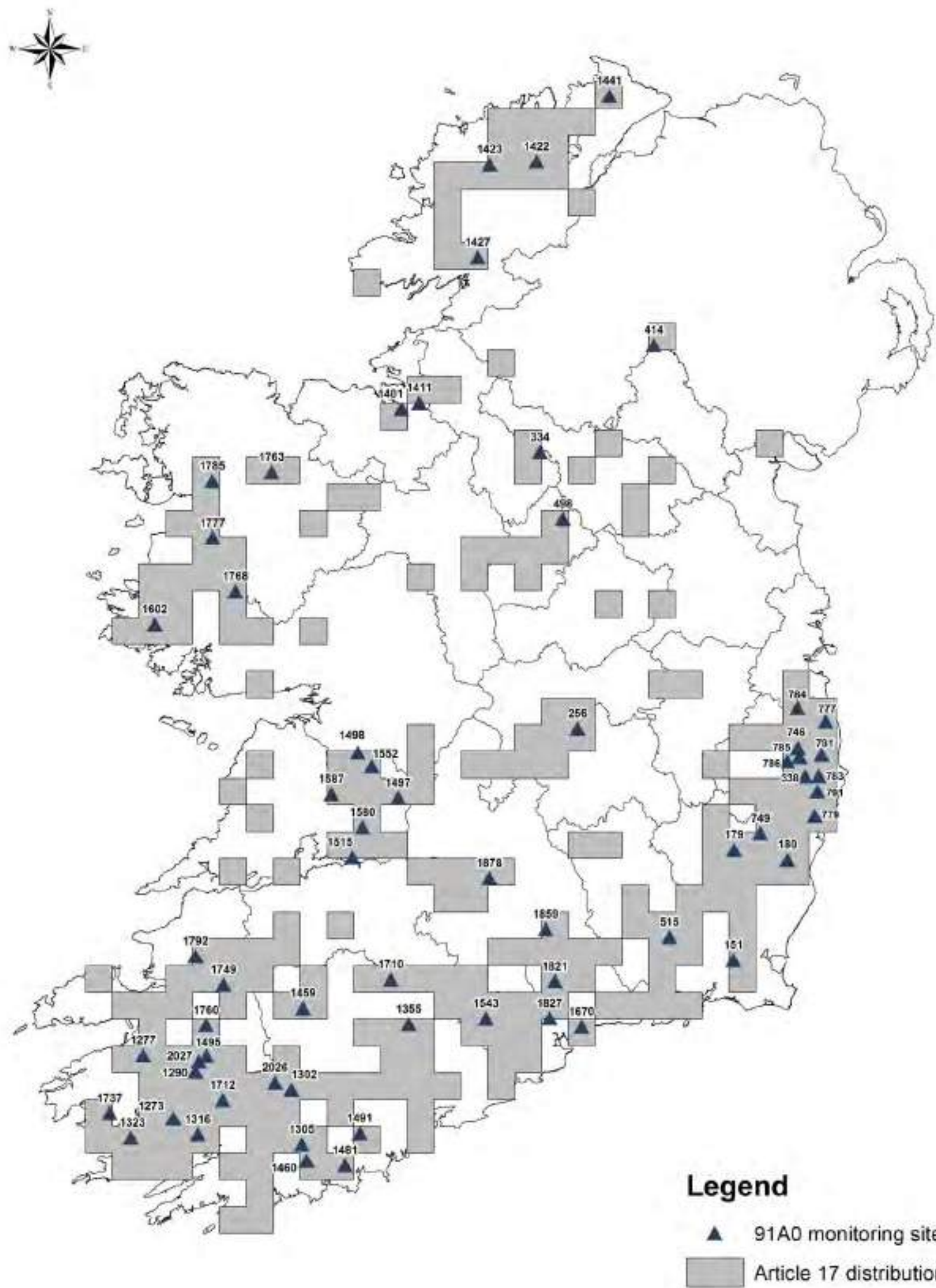
Code	Habitat	Conservation status
91A0	Old sessile oak woodland	Bad↓
91D0	Bog woodland*	Favourable
91E0	Alluvial woodland*	Bad↓
91J0	Yew woodland*	Bad=



Nature Restoration Law

- Article 4: Restoration of terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems
 - Measures in place to improve Annex I habitats to good condition: 30% by 2030, 60% by 2040, 90% by 2050
 - Measures in place to re-establish Annex I habitats to Favourable Reference Area: 30% by 2030, 60% by 2040, 100% by 2050
- Article 12: Restoration of forest ecosystems
- Article 13: Planting three billion additional trees

91A0 Old sessile oak woodland



NRL Article 4 targets

91A0 Old sessile oak woodland



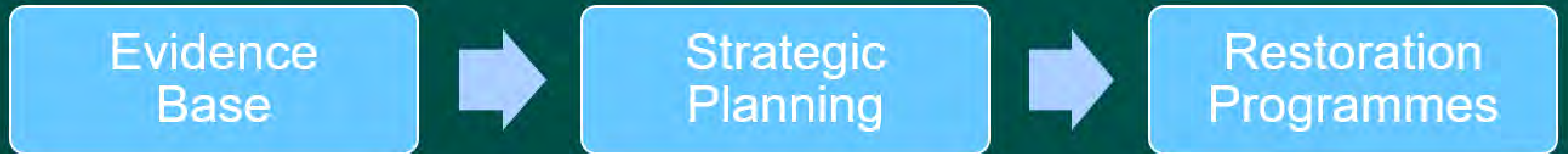
Current status		2019
91A0 Old sessile oak woodland		
Surface area	km ²	60
Area not in good condition	km ²	18
Favourable reference area	km ²	399

NRL targets (by decade)		2030	2040	2050
Area to be restored	km ²	5.4	10.9	16.3
Additional surface needed	km ²	102	203	339

Timeframe	Target	Total area to be restored	Area to be restored per year
2026-2030	30%	540 ha	135 ha
2031-2040	60%	540 ha	54 ha
2041-2050	90%	540 ha	54 ha

Timeframe	Target	Total area to be re-established	Area to be re-established per year
2026-2030	30%	10,170 ha	2543 ha
2031-2040	60%	10,170 ha	1017 ha
2041-2050	100%	13,560 ha	1356 ha

How do we approach this challenge?



Building the Evidence Base

- National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003-2008
- Provisional Inventory of Ancient and Long-established Woodland
- Article 17 Monitoring Surveys of Woodland Habitats
- Long-term woodland vegetation monitoring, Killarney National Park
- Ancient Woodland research programme
- Survey of NPWS Woodland Properties (SWOOP)

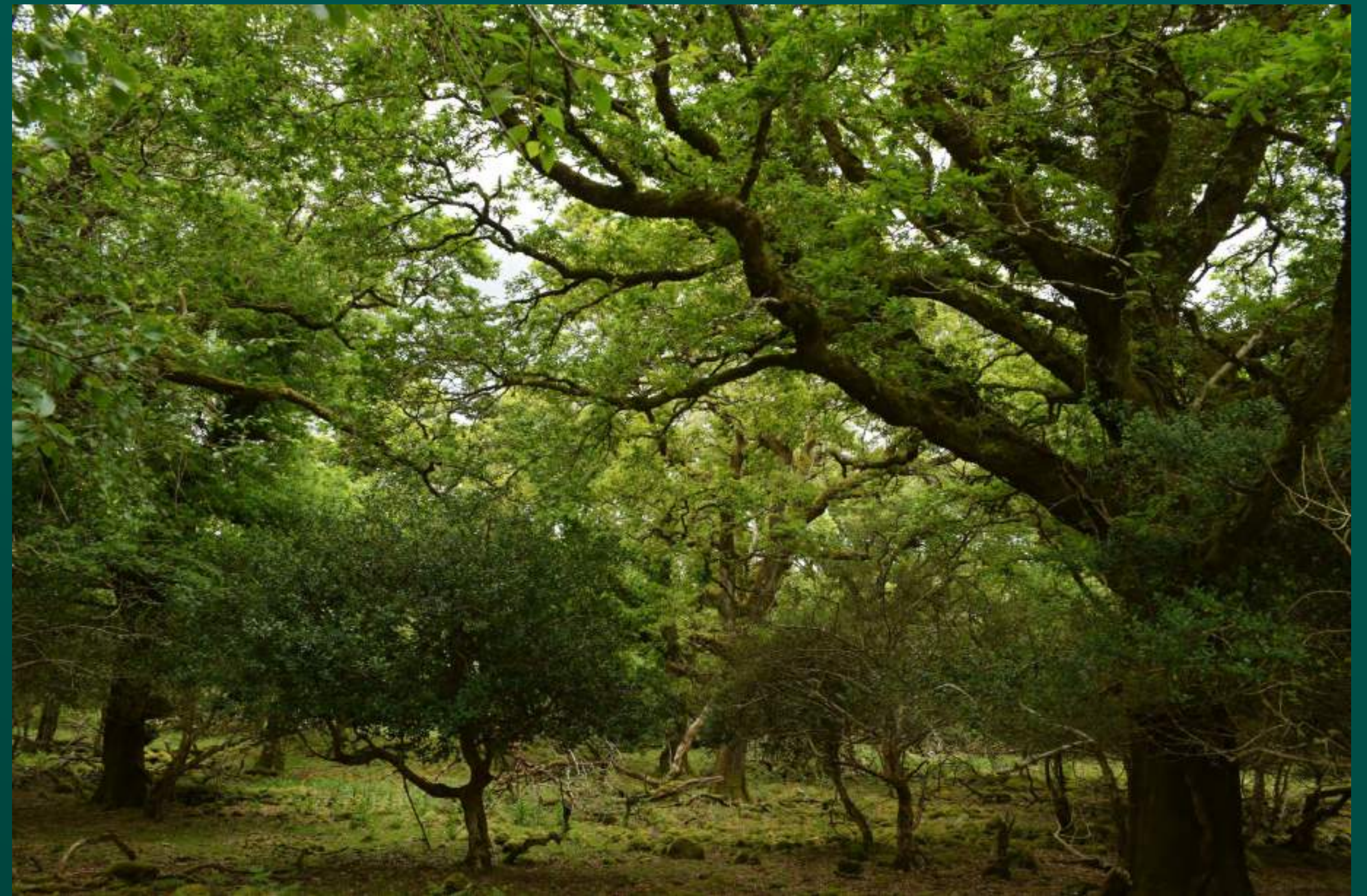
Article 17 Monitoring Surveys of Woodland Habitats

Code	Habitat	Number of sites
91A0	Old sessile oak woodland	63
91D0	Bog woodland*	14
91E0	Alluvial woodland*	40
91J0	Yew woodland*	6

Article 17 reports 2013, 2019, 2025
Irish Wildlife Manuals No. 71 and 146

Long-term woodland vegetation monitoring, Killarney National Park

- Department of Botany,
TCD
- Monitored for 30 years at
five year intervals
- Six sites incl. oak, yew and
holly woodlands
- Vegetation and
regeneration
- No sustained regeneration
of trees
- Irish Wildlife Manual No.
141



Ancient woodland research programme

- Ancient Woodlands Ireland
- Desk-based scoping study on the mapping, monitoring and protection of ALEW in Ireland
- PhD Project on ALEW in Leinster (Thomas Leniston)
- Paper on ancient woodland at the Glen of the Downs
Irish Naturalists' Journal Vol. 40



Survey of NPWS Woodland Properties (SWOOP)

- Pilot completed in South West region in 2023
- Full habitat mapping
- Baseline monitoring
- Assessment of conservation status, restoration potential, conservation and threat scores
- Will inform restoration planning and restoration measures
- SWOOP in Co. Wicklow in 2025



Strategic planning for woodland restoration

- National Restoration Plan is in development
- Prioritisation of sites needed for 2030, 2040 and 2050 deadlines
- Memorandum of Understanding between NPWS and Coillte

NPWS woodland restoration planning:

- Yew woodlands – necessary conservation measures identified
- Woodland Management Strategies for large-scale sites
- Woodland Management Plans for priority sites/clusters of sites
 - e.g. Ballyconnell Wood, Co. Cavan
 - e.g. All NPWS woodland properties in Co. Wicklow

Yew woodland in Ireland



- Priority habitat
- Book chapter "*Taxus baccata* woods in Ireland: ecology, conservation status and necessary conservation measures" – Habitat Action Plan
- QR code for download





Woodland Management Strategy for Glenveagh National Park



Glenveagh National Park

Woodland Management Strategy

- Main Goal: To restore, expand and reconnect native woodland habitats in Glenveagh National Park, targeting Glen Beagh
- Landscape-scale forest restoration
- Long-term 100 year Vision
- Actions include deer management, invasive species control, tree propagation and planting, promotion of natural regeneration, and education and outreach
- Long-term funding and resourcing needed
- First phase of implementation is underway
- This approach can be replicated and upscaled elsewhere

Prioritised implementation underway

- Native Woodland Scheme pilot projects
 - Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve (NWS Conservation)
 - Srahduggaun, Wild Nephin National Park (NWS Establishment)
- Reenadinna yew wood, Killarney National Park
- Glen of the Downs Nature Reserve
- Vale of Clara Nature Reserve
- Glenveagh National Park Woodland Management Strategy

National Restoration Plan



- Scale up to national level
- Whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach
- Stakeholder input and public consultation over next 2 years
- Brings significant opportunities for the native woodland sector

Thanks



NPWS Woodland Conservation Meeting, Glenveagh, May 2023