







An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra National Parks and Wildlife Service

LIFE Atlantic Crex Also known as: Corncrake/Traonach LIFE

Improving Corncrake conservation status in Ireland by the enhancement of the SPA network and surrounding farmland

LIFE18 NAT/IE/000090

Dr. John Carey- Project Manager

RBaPS - working group #2 - selecting meaningful indicators







Round 1: LIFE Atlantic Crex (IE) – Speaker: John CAREY

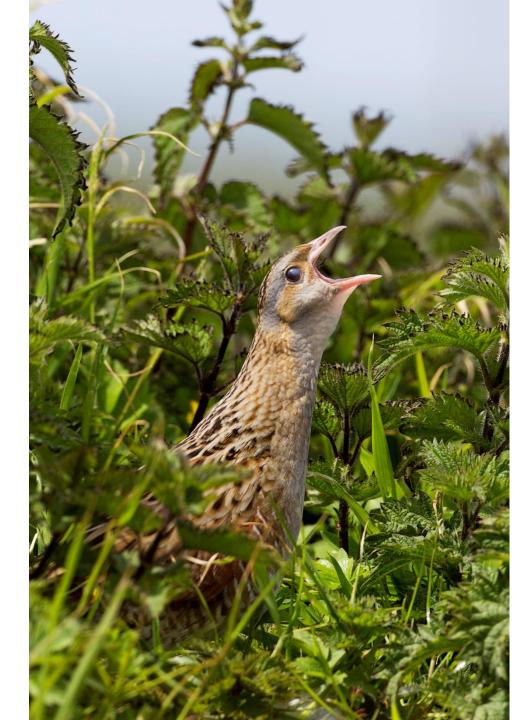
- Background to the Corncrake LIFE project and issues being addressed
- Identifying opportunities and synergy
- Developing a results-based agri-scheme for a species
- The importance of results driven by actions- a hybrid approach
- Key messages





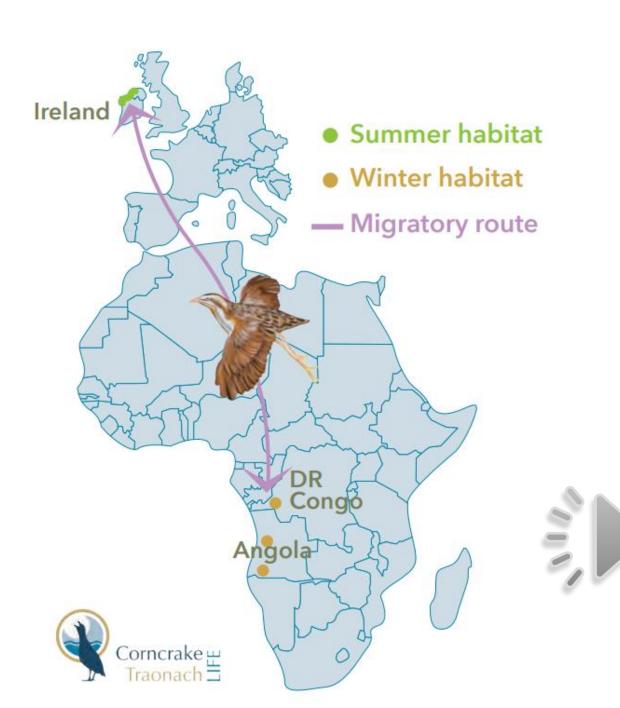
Background to the LIFE project







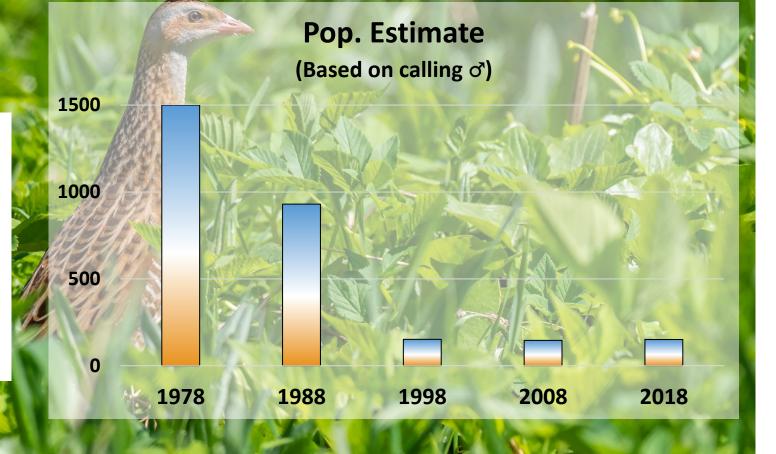






Current status in Ireland

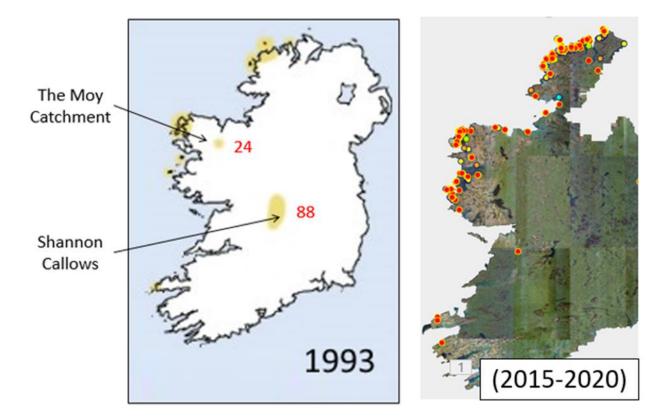
- Current status: in decline
- Population loss 85-90% (1978)
- Range contraction 93% (1978)
- Population est. up to 2020 was 150-160 (5 year)





Distribution in Ireland

- Central populations lost
- Now a coastal species
- 50% occur on island sites
- Push to the very edge of existence





Reasons for Decline

- Loss of Habitat
- Landscape homogenisation and intensification of land use
- Mechanization/Speed of work- loss of nests and chicks
- Drainage of wet grasslands
- Low numbers cannot absorb predation pressure
- Successive 'bad years' for a shortlived bird is drastic (high philopatry)







Project Background

- No. LIFE18 NAT/IE/000090 LIFE Atlantic Crex.
- Start Date: 01/01/2020 (01/01/2021)
- Budget: €5.9m. €4.3m EU contribution, €1.6m project beneficiaries
- Co-ordinating Beneficiary: DHLGH/NPWS



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





An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra National Parks and Wildlife Service



Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh Atlantic Technological University

Ollscoil



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

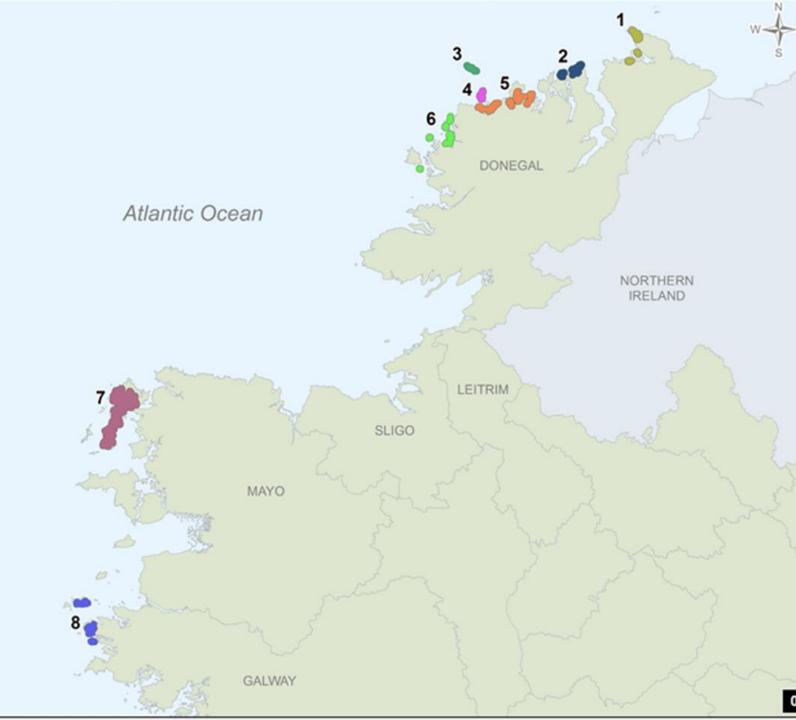




Project Scope

The project takes place on 8 project sites (in 9 SPAs and adjacent supporting farmland)

Overall operational area > 4,300 ha





Main Targets

Targets

- Deliver action on 1000 Hectares (25% of the target area)
- Creation of ELC (specialized habitat) across 5% of managed areas
- Ambition of a population increase of 20%





Project Team

All areas

- Project manager
- Project administrator

Donegal

- Field officer
- Community Engagement Officer
- Seasonal officer (contract)

<u>Mayo/Galway</u>

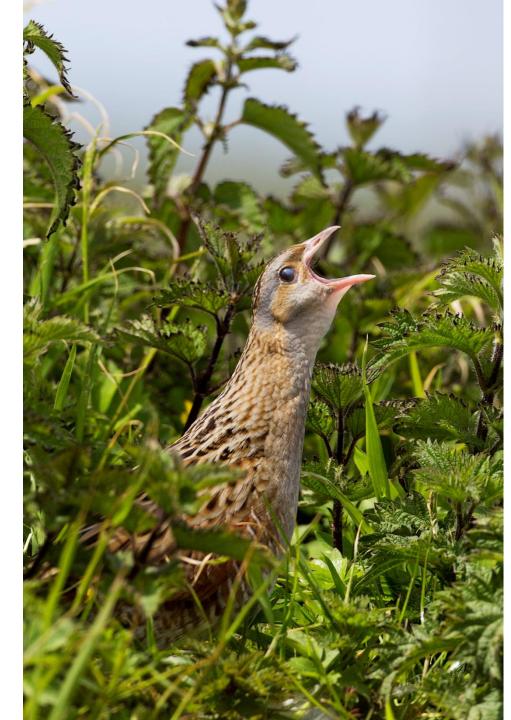
- Field officer
- Community Engagement Officer (P/T)
- Seasonal officer (contract)

Atlantic Technological University

• 2 x PhD researchers







Identifying opportunities and synergy



Where to start?

- 1. Look at what is currently in place (what works/doesn't work)
- 2. Identify what is coming down the track (CAP, national plans)
- 3. Ask how can we direct or influence this to our advantage?





2020- existing measures for conservation



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Service



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Corncrake Grant Scheme

Measures linked to bird ecology

Reactive in nature

Farm Plan Scheme

Bespoke measures incorporating some **RBaPs** elements

Small scale

National Agri-Env programme

Landscape level

Prescriptive but lacking in expertise to deliver at ground level



What's coming down the road for Agri-schemes in Ireland?

CAP 2023 in Ireland was shifting towards results-based models

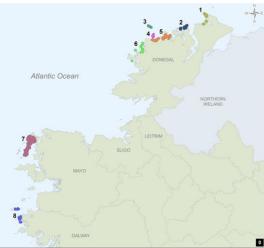


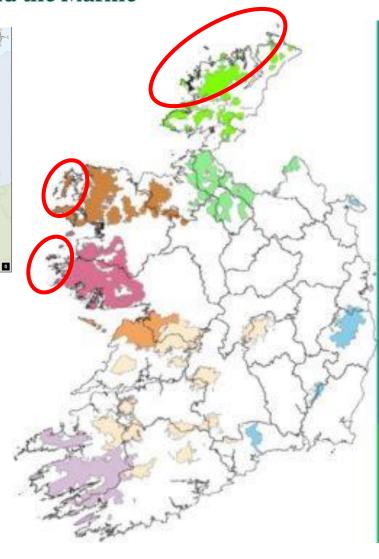






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 Burren - High Nature Value Services

 Donegal - Inishowen Development Partnership

 East Southeast - The Hen Harrier Project Limited

 Mid-West Southern Uplands - The Hen Harrier Project Limited

 North Connaught Ulster - The Hen Harrier Project Limited

 North Connaught - Wetland Services Ireland

 South Mayo Connemara - Wetland Services Ireland

 West Cork Kerry - South Kerry Development Partnership

ACRES



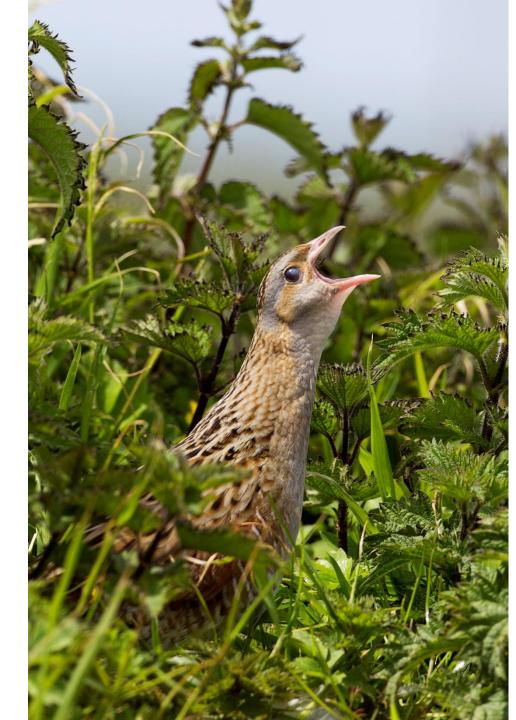
Time to become influencers?





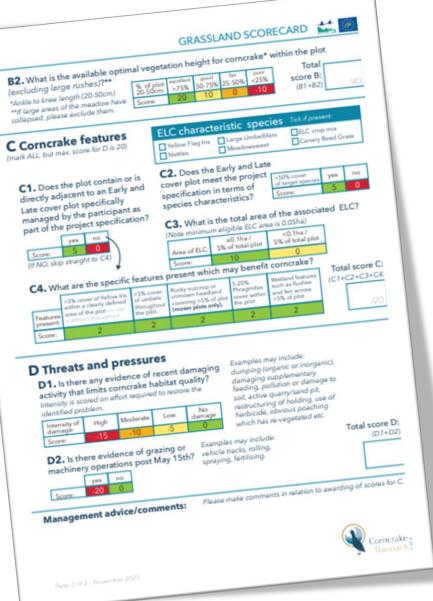
Developing a resultsbased agri-scheme for a species





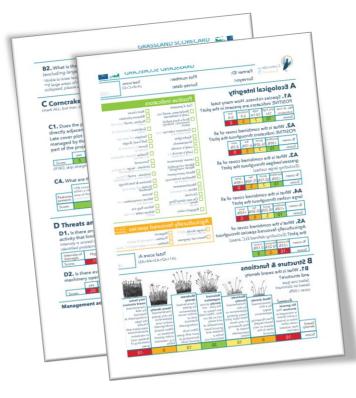
Developing habitat Scorecards was one of our project actions:







We needed more than just scorecards....we needed a system



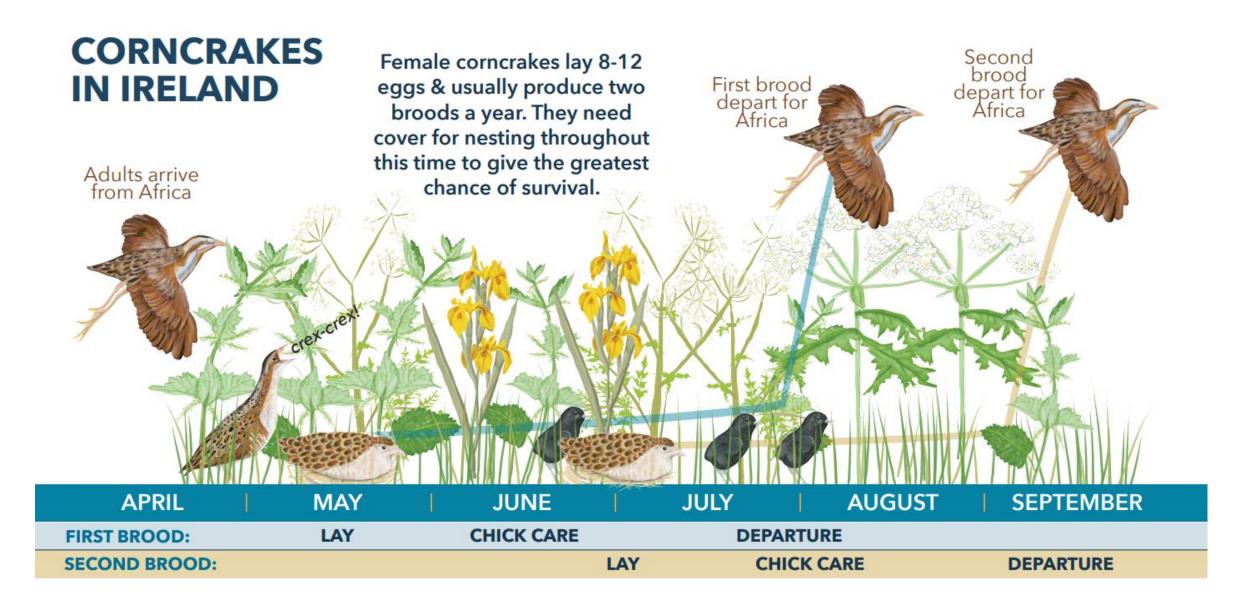


What is a Results-Based Payment Scheme (RBPS)?

Results-Based Payments Schemes (RBPS, pronounced 'r-baps') link payments to the environmental quality of land, with higher nature quality resulting in a higher payment level.

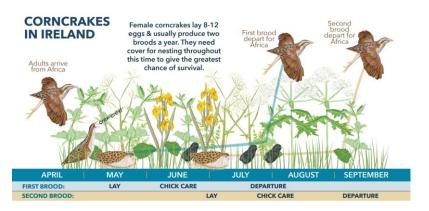








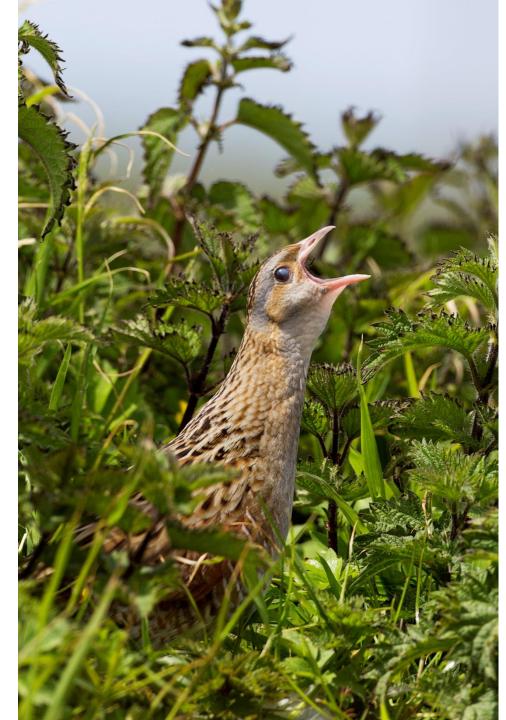
Making corncrake action into something tangible



'Ecology is not rocket science...it's much more complex than that!'







The importance of results driven by actions- a hybrid approach







Explain away our madness.....

Corncrake breeding habits

Throughout the breeding cycle, corncrake require continuous cover of tall vegetation, at least 20cm in height, which retains an open structure that allows the birds to move along the ground.

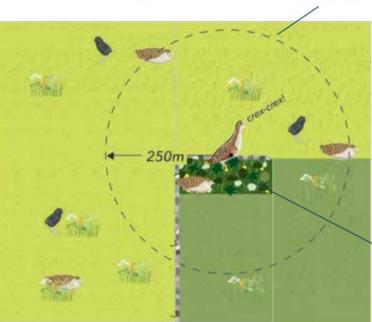
Nests are difficult to locate and are usually found within a 250m radius of a calling male, but both nests and young chicks can be much further away.



A male's territory can sometimes encompass several nests over many acres, creating local concentrations of breeding birds.



Males attract mates with their loud and distinctive rasping song, calling most consistently for several hours from midnight onwards, from shortly after arrival until mid-July.



Corncrakes are generally found in taller vegetation in traditional late cut fields and rough pastures.



Arriving back to Ireland in April each year, the birds preferentially seek out stands of herbaceous species such as nettles, cow parsley or common hogweed.











Do the basics and get
100% of your
payment

Additional efforts/results can yield a payment dividend

	Whole plan assessment Indicator	Contribution towards proportion of final payment	Note
1.	The minimum of 0.1 ha of ELC or 5% of land in ELC is met. The project team may omit ELC based on an assessment of habitat.	30%	Basic conditionality
2.	WFM monitored on all plots during operations (if applicable).	30%	Basic conditionality
3.	SPA mowing date (August 15th) adhered to if applicable <i>i.e. bird within</i> 250m of the plan.	40%	Basic conditionality
4.	Natural ELC maintained on the plan.	10%	Must have >50% natural herbaceous cover or Iris/Reed grass.
5.	 SPA baseline targets met - see Appendix 1 - subject to change based on SSCOs (Site 	10%	Determined by fieldworker.
	Specific Conservation Objectives). Applies to plans within 250m of nearest SPA.		Based on site synopsis in lieu of site specific conservation objectives.





Early & late cover (ELC) payment rates (Years 1 & 2 only)

Area:	€/0.1ha
First 1,000m ²	300
Second 1,000m ²	175
Third 1,000m ²	125
Per 1,000m ² thereafter	75*

*subject to a maximum payment of €1,000 per farm







Margins and Refuge area payments are paid per plot, to a max. of €500. Only one area payment per plot is allowable.

Margin & refuge area payment rates

Refuge area (left for a min. of 4 weeks)	€150 per plot
Margin area (left for a min. of 2 weeks)	€100 per plot





Habitat payment rates are linked to late season actions

(Action 2 dates). No habitat payment rate is available to a plot which has been *mown* prior to August 1st. A reduced payment rate is available on plots *grazed* before August 1st.

*Plots must be actively managed to receive payment unless otherwise prescribed by the project.

	Habitat quality payment rates				
		ACTION 2 DATE: (€ per ha)			
_	Habitat score range	Grazed before Aug 1st	Managed on / after Aug 1st	Managed on / after Aug 15th	
	91-100	100	275	400	
HIGHER	81-90	90	250	375	
QUALITY		80	200	350	
HABITAT	61-70	60	175	325	
HIGHER	0100	50	125	300	
PAYMEN	40-50	40	100	275	
	<40	0	0	0	











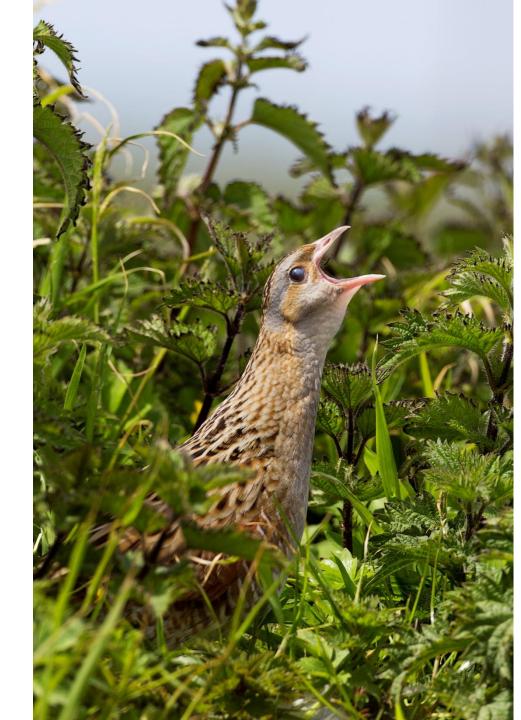


'Beyond corncrakes'





Key messages



RBaPS...part of a wider approach to saving this species

yellow-flag



cow parsley

Habitat restoration

nettle

- Predation risk management
- Surveys, monitoring and planning

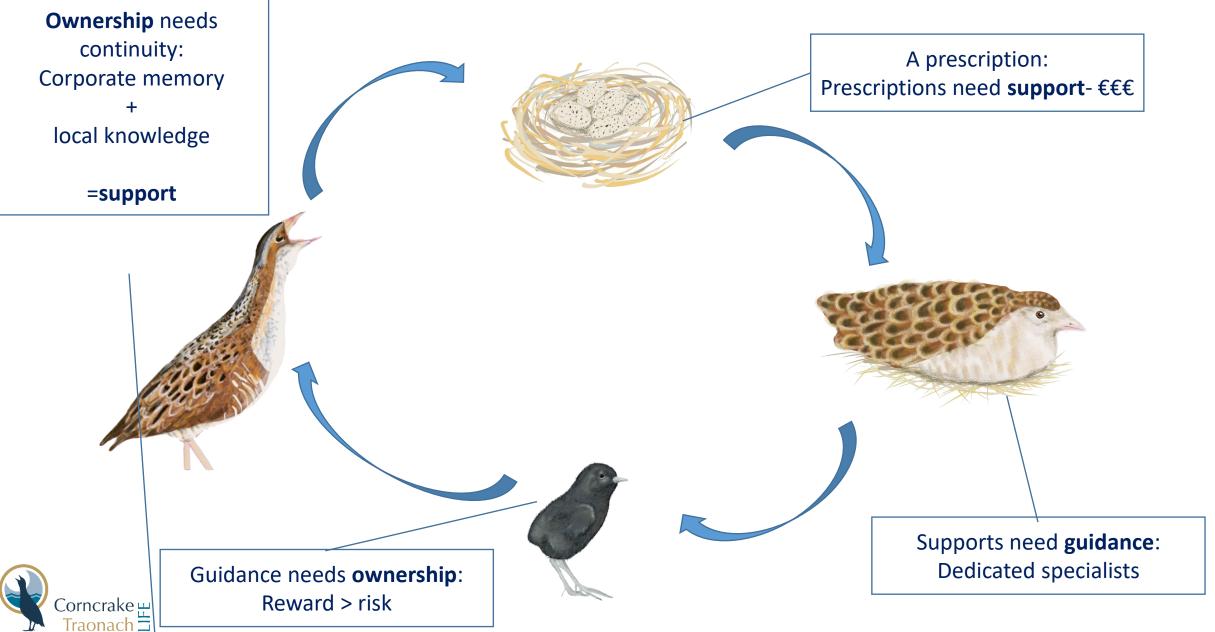
Socializing ideas

common hogweed

- Results-based approaches
- Integration by participation
- Conservation as an economy



The results-based approach



Take home messages:

1) RBaPs is an approach-build in supports for ambition and risk (hybrdi)-model)

2) A static RBaPS is a dead RBaPS.Farming and attitudes change- build in flexibility and adaptation.

3) Invest in people- build in capacity building and your farmers, contractors, advisors and local community will become your biggest champions.





Go raibh maith agaibh.



www.corncrakelife.ie

@CorncrakeLife.ie

🔰 @CorncrakeLife

email corncrakelife@housing.gov.ie



This project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under Grant Agreement No. LIFE18 NAT/IE/000090 LIFE Atlantic Crex

