



233 Calling male corncrakes' territories were recorded in 2024. This is a 7% increase on 2023 and a 42% increase on our 2018 baseline. **Fantastic!**

## Saol, Timpeallacht agus Ealáine

Bhí samhradh ar dóigh againn i mbliana agus muid ag comhoibriú le tionscadáil aitiúil, le tógra 'Saol, Timpeallacht agus Ealáine' a chur ar fáil do chúig scoil naisiúnta i nDún na nGall.

Bhí scoileanna ó Na Dúnaibh, Gort a Choirce, Mín a Chladaigh, Macharie Rabhartaigh agus Annaigre uilig páirteach sa tógra, 119 dálda san iomlán.

I gcuideachta le Cluain na dTór chuir Traonach LIFE eolas agus eachtarrachtaí ag baint leis an timpeallacht, go háirithe an Traonach chun tosaigh.

D'fhoghlaim na páisti faoi feirmeoireacht a chuidíonn le fiadhúlra, faoi eolaíocht an Traonaigh agus fá na dtimpeallacht agus a gceantar fhéin.

Trí mheán na Gaeilge agus le ealáin, bhí an mhórchuid den

tógra amuigh faoin spéir le béim ar phlandaí, crainn, ainmhithe agus éanacha. Bhí tráth na gceist ann agus rinne na rannpháirtithe ulig buamaí pór le tabhairt leo na bhaile.

Bhain na dáldaí agus na múinteoirí uilig sult as agus luaigh said go mbeadh suim acu páirt a ghlacadh i dtionscadail eile dá leithéid a bheadh níos mó ama agus eachtaireachtaí ann.



## Welcome

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE newsletter!

Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is a 5-year EU-funded project aimed at improving the conservation status of one of Ireland's most iconic farmland bird species. The project works across counties Donegal, Mayo and Galway and is co-operating with farmers, landowners and local communities.



## 2024: Corncrake numbers



The weather in the summer of 2024 was incredibly poor and the impact on farming is mirrored by the impact on corncrake breeding. The survey team had to work very hard to verify the location of corncrakes owing to prolonged bad weather but the 2024 census shows a very similar number of bird territories to 2023. A total of 233 territories were confirmed marking the highest number in almost 25 years.

While we always like to see an increase in the population, stability is also very important and we have that in place now.

Some areas have seen an increase in birds whilst others dropped a little - but the overall picture is good. A 7% increase in the bird population was noted in 2024 compared to 2023 and although this year was the largest number of territories recorded in 25 years, we must remain cautious.

As Corncrake LIFE enters its final year in 2025 we hope that the efforts of all the farmers and landowners involved will continue to have such a positive impact.

## Corncrake LIFE hosts a pan-European Workshop



Some of the 80 participants of the Pan-European Corncrake Workshop held in Belmullet in May 2024

In May of this year the project hosted a workshop for corncrake conservation groups from across Europe in Belmullet Co. Mayo. Over 80 people participated in the workshop which was launched by Minister Malcolm Noonan and attended by many of the projects farmers and landowners.

The event was held over two days and consisted of talks, site visits and demonstrations from the LIFE team.

Corncrake conservationists from Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland all presented on their work to save

the corncrake. It was clear that while much has been done, the situation remains critical and Ireland is one of the few countries seeing some improvement.

It is our hope that these workshops will continue across Europe every two years so that corncrake conservation can become more coordinated across the EU and allow for improved exchange of knowledge.

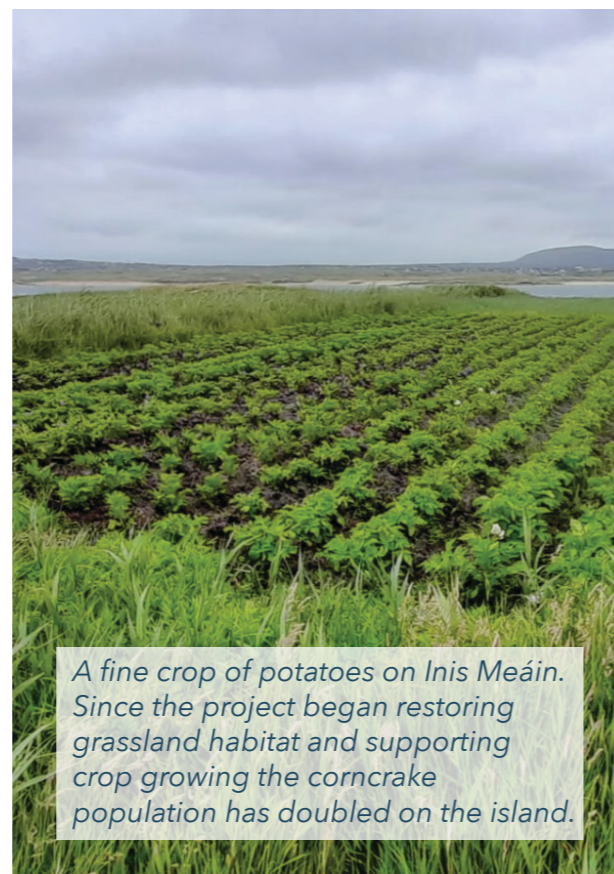
All the talks can be watched on our Corncrake LIFE YouTube Channel and the Workshop Proceedings can be found on our website [CorncrakeLIFE.ie](http://CorncrakeLIFE.ie).

## Embracing our heritage

We are delighted to be working with the island communities in Donegal to help re-establish land management on sites which are important for corncrakes. The islands have a long and proud history of crop cultivation, which creates habitat mosaics for wildlife and critical cover for corncrakes. We have been working with the islanders of Toraigh, Inis Meáin and Inis Bó finne in Co. Donegal to plant oats, kale and potatoes.

Embracing the heritage of land use on the islands has been transformative and helped our project integrate into the island communities to maintain not just rare wildlife, but our vulnerable traditions.

Over 13 acres of barley and oats were grown on Toraigh this season, providing excellent late cover for corncrakes and hopefully some feed to the many small birds that visit the island over the winter months.



A fine crop of potatoes on Inis Meáin. Since the project began restoring grassland habitat and supporting crop growing the corncrake population has doubled on the island.

## How are Ireland's corncrakes doing?

The NPWS has been monitoring corncrake populations annually in Ireland for over 25 years and while numbers have fluctuated in that timeframe there has been a positive increase since 2018.

The LIFE project areas has recorded an increase of 35% since the project began its actions back in 2021. There is no doubt that this improvement is as a result of the massive effort of landowners and farmers in these areas.

Though not limited to working in the Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas (SPA), these SPAs are a crucial component in the conservation of corncrakes. Our project covers nine of these sites and project participants are now rewarded where a site that overlaps their land meets its required population target. **Whilst some sites are still recovering their populations, the overall picture remains very optimistic.**

Catchment	No. of birds RECORDED in 2024	SPA TARGET number	County
Malin Head	1	6	Donegal
Fanad Head	2	3	Donegal
Toraigh	21	25	Donegal
Inishbofin & Inishdooley	46	13	Donegal
Falcarragh to Meenlaragh	6	7	Donegal
West Donegal Islands	16	13	Donegal
The Mullet peninsula	33	4	Mayo
Inishbofin, Omey & TurbotIslands	11	9	Galway

The St. Brendan mural in Eachléim, Co. Mayo.

## Art in the community

The Corncrake LIFE project in collaboration with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Údarás na Gaeltachta funded a mural in Eachléim Co. Mayo.

The mural combined local heritage with natural history and features the Corncrake, St. Brendan and the now extinct Corn Bunting; which was last recorded in North Mayo.

The mural is a celebration of nature but also a reminder of what can be lost.

The Corncrake mural in Eachléim, Co. Mayo which also features the now extinct Corn Bunting.

