

# Beyond AA and SEA

Putting environmental quality at  
the heart of the planning process

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Heritage Officer  
Fingal County Council  
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IPI Autumn Conference, The Gibson Hotel, Dublin 1

# Overview

- AA and SEA
- What's all this assessment for?
- What does this mean for the planning system?



# SEA and AA



# Strategic Environmental Assessment (2001/42/EC)

- SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme.
- The process includes:
  - Preparing an Environmental Report where the likely significant environmental effects are identified and evaluated
  - Consulting the public, environmental authorities, and any EU Member State affected, on the environmental report and draft plan or programme
  - Taking account of the findings of the report and the outcome of these consultations in deciding whether to adopt or modify the draft plan or programme
  - Making known the decision on adoption of the plan or programme and how SEA influenced the outcome
  - Monitoring the implementation of the plan or programme and its environmental impacts



# Strategic Environmental Assessment

*“The objective of this Directive is to provide for a **high level of protection of the environment** and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

*Article 1 SEA Directive*

# Appropriate Assessment

## Article 6(3) Habitats Directive

- a step-by-step scientific assessment
- examines impacts of plan/project on Natura 2000 sites
- focused on the conservation interests of the site(s)
- impacts considered alone or “in combination” with other plans/projects
- carried out by person(s) with ecological and/or other relevant expertise (e.g. hydrology)
- a decision making tool

# Biodiversity Loss



# Biodiversity Loss

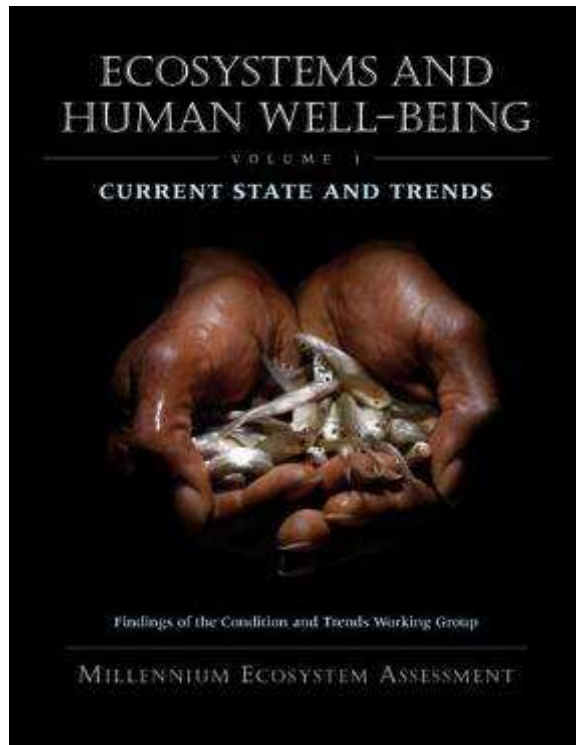
- Extinction 100-1000 faster than natural rate
- 60% world's ecosystems degraded or used unsustainably
- 75% fish stocks over-exploited or depleted
- 17% of EU habitats and species protected by legislation are in a favourable state



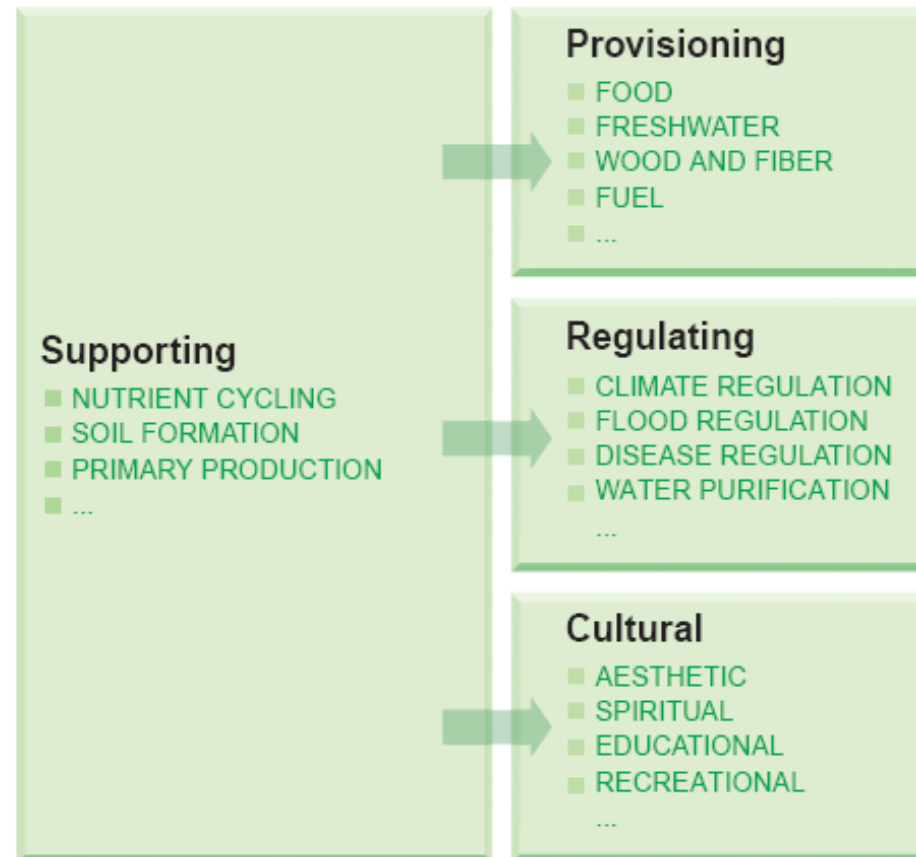
*“..all of life together consists of a membrane around earth so thin that it cannot be seen edgewise from a satellite yet so prodigiously diverse that only a tiny fraction of species have been discovered and named”*

*E.O. Wilson*

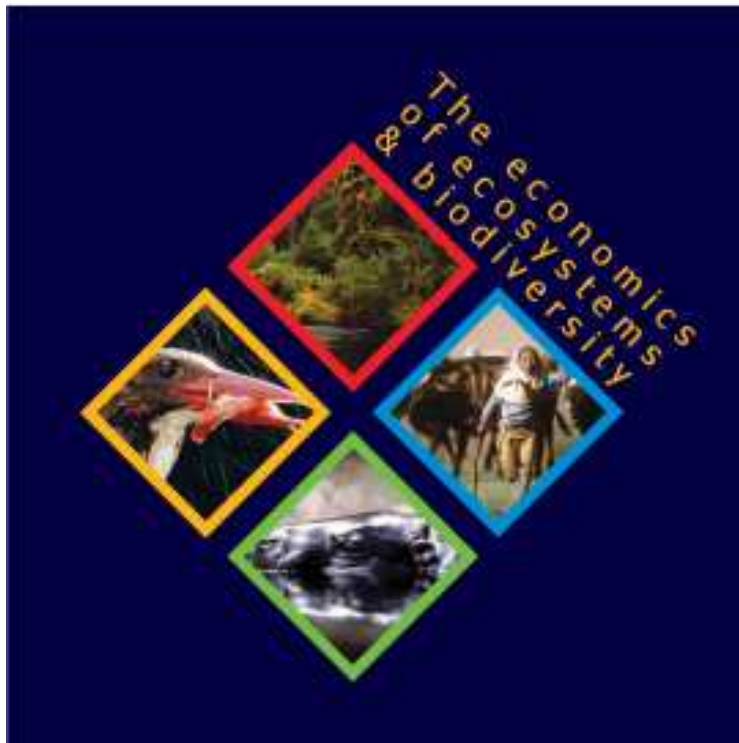
# Millennium Ecosystem Assessment



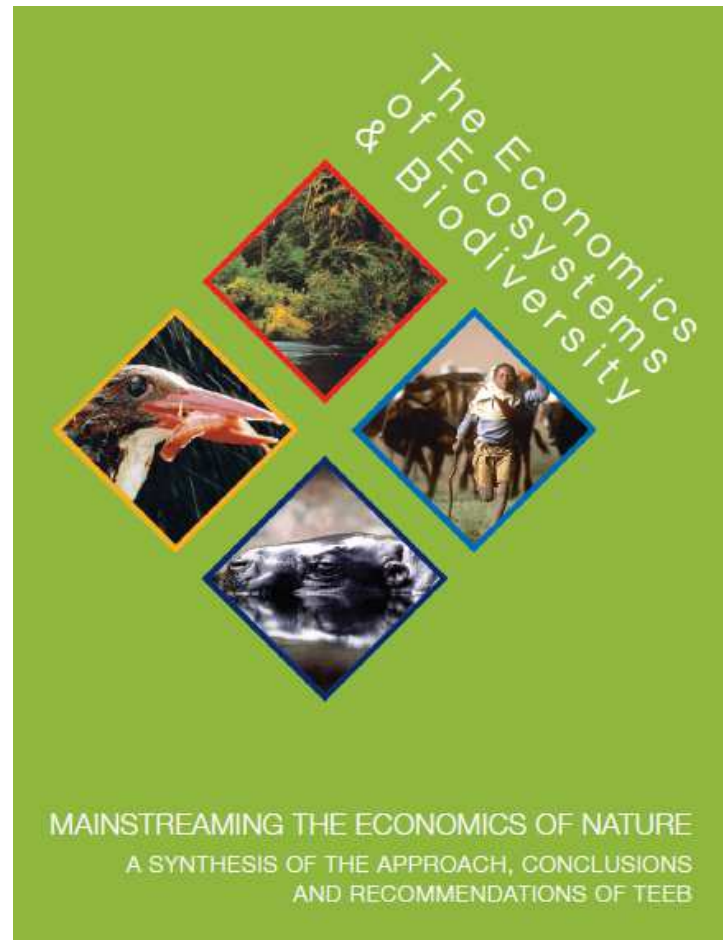
## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES



[www.maweb.org](http://www.maweb.org)



[www.teebweb.org](http://www.teebweb.org)



*“By 2050, European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides — its natural capital — are protected, valued and appropriately restored for biodiversity's intrinsic value and for their essential contribution to human wellbeing and economic prosperity, and so that catastrophic changes caused by the loss of biodiversity are avoided”*

*EU Biodiversity Strategy, 2011*

(<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/>)



*Biodiversity loss the most critical global  
environmental threat alongside climate change*

EU Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

# Habitats and Birds Directives



# Birds Directive

(2009/147/EC)

- Aims to maintain populations of all wild bird species in EU across their natural range. Measures to be taken to achieve this.
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) must be designated for rare or vulnerable species, and for all regularly occurring migratory species, paying particular attention to the protection of wetlands of international importance
- Establishment of a general scheme of protection for all wild birds



# Habitats Directive

## (92/43/EEC)

- Aims to maintain or restore protected habitats and species at a favourable conservation status
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) must be designated
  - 200 habitat-types and certain species
  - together with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) forms the Natura 2000 network
- Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure **appropriate assessment** of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on SACs.
- Endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network
- Ensure strict protection of certain species

**Environment:  
growing concern  
evident in legislation  
and policy**



# Growing List of Directives

- Birds Directive
- EIA Directive
- Habitats Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- SEA Directive
- Environmental Liability Directive
- Floods Directive
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive



# Recent Legislative Changes

## European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

- duty on public authorities to exercise functions in compliance and, as appropriate, so as to secure compliance with the requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directives (Reg. 27)
- Reg 51 and 52 puts in place strict protection for animal and plant species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive.

- Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010

- Section 10(2) of 2000 Act:
  - » DP must promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives for surface waters and groundwater set out in River Basin Management Plans
  - » DP must have objective to encourage management of landscape features such as hedgerows pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive

# P+D Act, 2000-2011

- Development Plans: growing list of environment/heritage deliverables
  - conservation/protection of archaeological heritage
  - conservation/protection of natural heritage inc. European sites
  - encouraging management of features such as hedgerows
  - compliance with surface and ground water quality standards
  - settlement and transportation strategies which reduce greenhouse gases and address climate change adaptation
  - preservation of structures of special interest
  - preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas
  - landscape objectives
  - identify public rights of way
- written statement must contain a separate statement showing that objectives in the DP are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment

# Core Strategy

Department Guidance Notes 2010, p.2

- The Core Strategy does not stand alone from other strategic and EU Directive related requirements
- CS must be informed by matters such as
  - the spatial distribution of Natura 2000 sites and their ecological inter-relationship with other parts of a city or county
  - the implementation of River Basin Management Plans
  - flood risk assessment

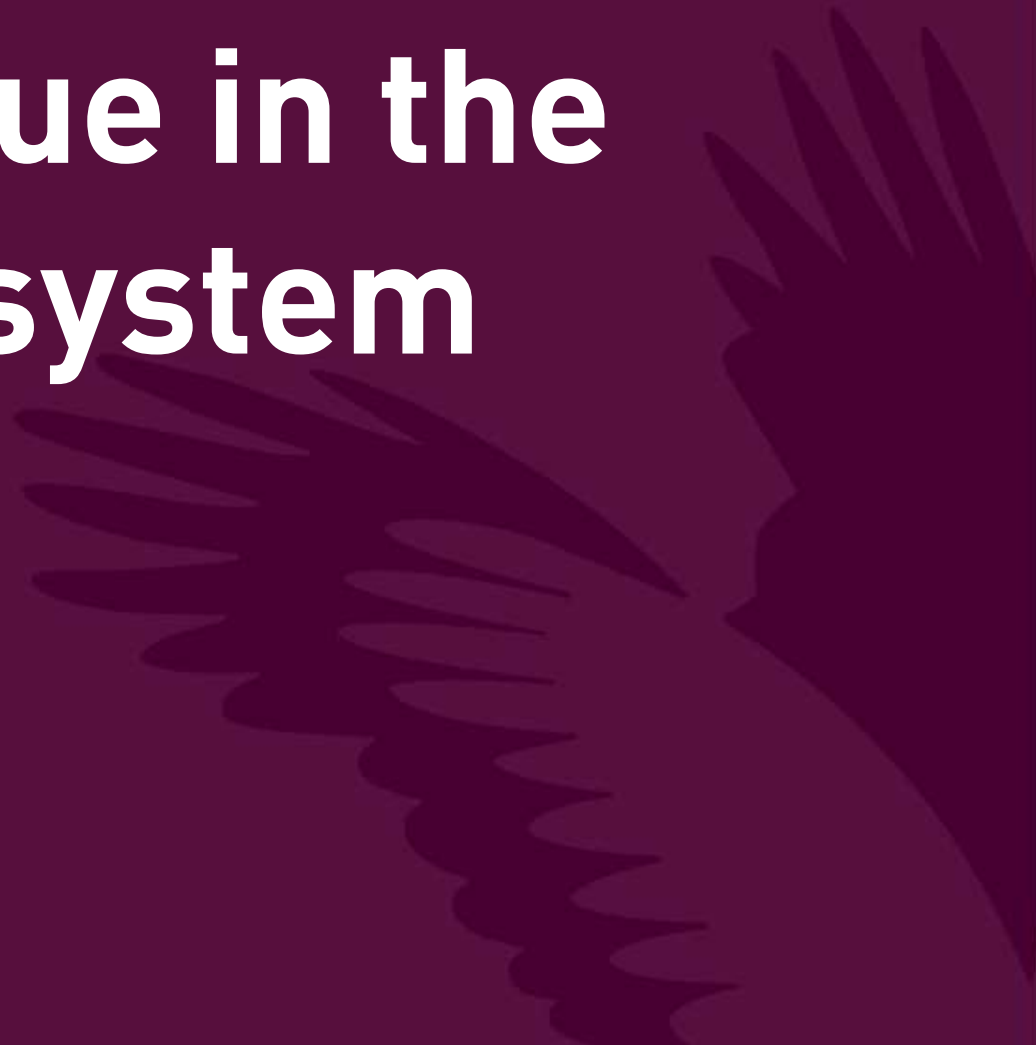


# Strategic Environmental Assessment

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*Article 1 SEA Directive*

**Environment:  
a core value in the  
planning system**





















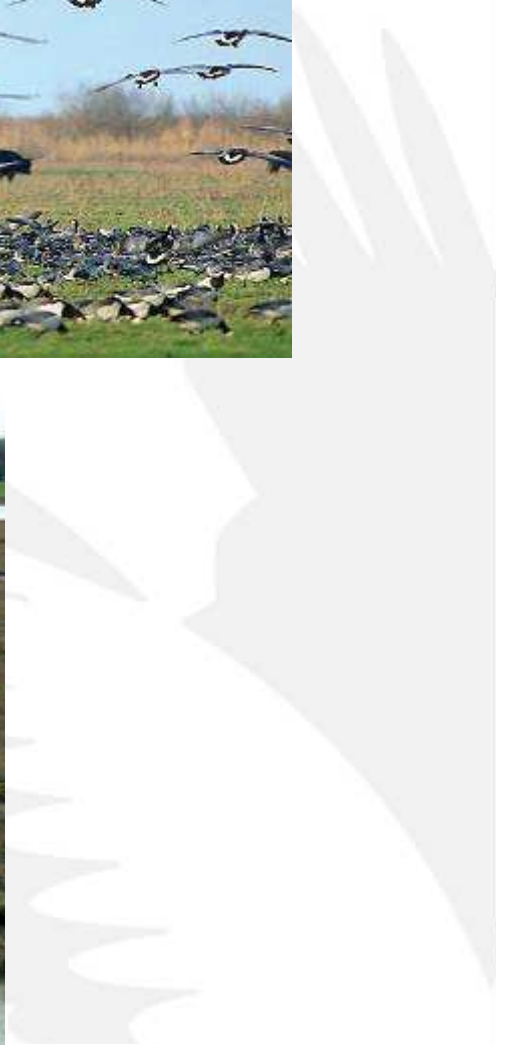






# Beyond Protection





# green

infrastructure  
connecting nature, people & places

an interconnected network of green spaces that conserves nature and natural systems and provides benefits to people



A two-day international conference  
4th & 5th November 2008, Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin



Your Fingal...

# FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2017

WRITTEN STATEMENT



YOUR FINGAL... THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

## CHAPTER 4 PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

AIM

Ensure that the County's transportation, water services and other infrastructure and natural and energy resources are developed in a sustainable, timely and efficient manner in order to promote the economic, social and physical development of the County.

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2017

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

## CHAPTER 5 NATURAL HERITAGE

AIM

Conserve, enhance and manage the County's natural heritage including its biodiversity, landscape and geological heritage and promote understanding of and sustainable access to it.

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

## CHAPTER 6 ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

AIM

Ensure that the protection and conservation of the archaeological and architectural heritage of Fingal is an integral part of the sustainable development of the County and safeguard this valuable, and in many instances, non-renewable resource through proper management, sensitive enhancement and appropriate development.

YOUR FINGAL... THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

## CHAPTER 3 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

AIM

Create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure for the County which will protect and enhance biodiversity, provide for accessible parks and open space, maintain and enhance landscape character including historic landscape character, protect and enhance architectural and archaeological heritage and provide for sustainable water management by requiring the retention of substantial networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to serve the needs of communities now and in the future including the need to adapt to climate change.

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2017

# Fingal Development Plan 2011-2017

- Green Infrastructure Framework
- Key GI themes identified:
  - Biodiversity
  - Landscape
  - Parks and Open Space
  - Sustainable Water Management
  - Archaeological & Architectural Heritage
- Integrate GI into all new development emphasising multifunctionality and synergy
- Commitment to develop a GI Strategy for Fingal

# Fingal Development Plan 2011-2017

- Biodiversity is a key element in the Green Infrastructure framework
- Natura 2000: Development Plan provides robust policy framework for protection of sites
- Integration of Biodiversity Action Plan provisions via the Fingal Ecological Network



Fingal County Council  
Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall



# FINGAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

2010-2015

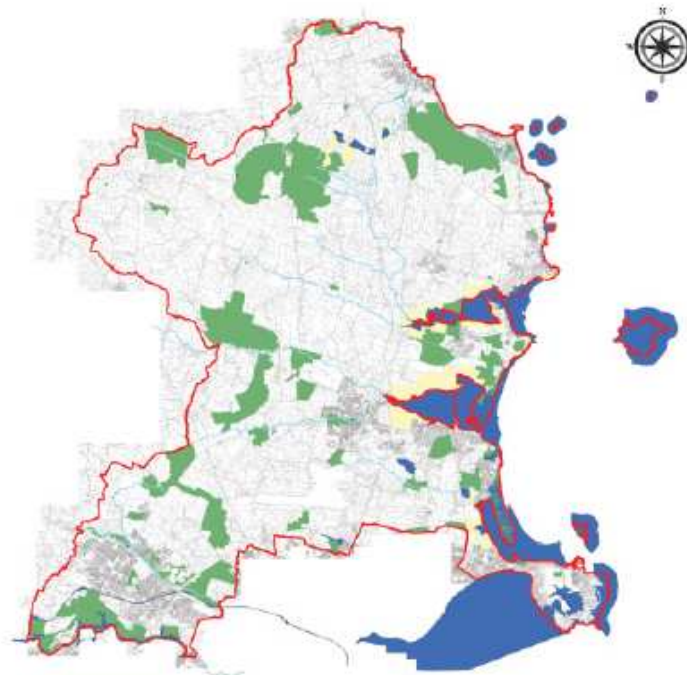


Fingal County Council  
December 2010

Creating  
Connections for  
Wildlife and People



Chapter 7: THE FINGAL ECOLOGICAL  
NETWORK - A NEW APPROACH



Legend	
Blue square	Core Areas
Light blue square	River Buffers
Green square	Natural Development Areas
Yellow square	Buffers for Designations
Red square	County Boundaries

FINGAL ECOLOGICAL NETWORK - MAP 1  
Index No. 4480



# Green Infrastructure: the challenge ahead

- How we do this in practice?
- Requires multi-disciplinary working
- A creative challenge



# Conclusions

- AA and SEA are tools: a means to an end
- Environmental stewardship is the goal
- Must be a core value for planning system
- Proactive integration with other land-uses (green infrastructure)
- Planners: embrace the challenge and become change leaders

**Thank you**

