National Lottery boost for Northern Ireland's natural

A Flapper skate in Northern Ireland

More than £500,000 has been awarded by HLF to support two new natural heritage projects in Northern Ireland.

Ulster Wildlife's Sea Deep project will protect the endangered shark, skate and ray species found in our local seas. A £208,000 grant will be used to increase awareness and understanding of these local populations and help identify methods to protect and restore these threatened species. An Northern Ireland-wide tagging programme, innovative restoration techniques, volunteer scheme and dedicated events programme will allow local people to become conservation champions for species including flapper skate, porbeagle shark and cuckoo ray.

A £368,700 award will help connect people to the natural, cultural and built heritage of Drumnaph Nature Reserve, near Maghera. The Reserve is an exciting collaboration between the local community and the Woodland Trust, having been secured with the help of an HLF grant in 2012. This new project will create new paths and routes, install fun and engaging interpretations and improve visitor facilities. An events programme will include activities such as heritage craft and archaeology days, while a network of volunteers from the wider community will be recruited and trained in a range of conservation, biodiversity and rural skills.

Saving Northern Ireland's natural heritage

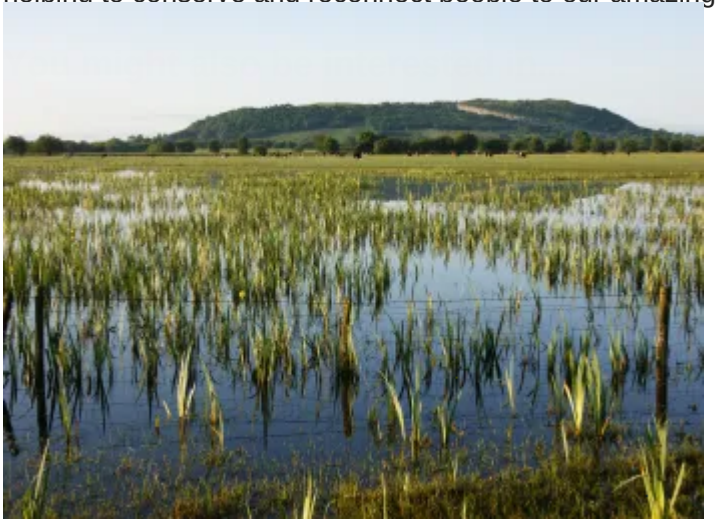
Thanks to National Lottery players:.

[quote=Paul Mullan]“Our natural heritage is under increasing pressure and if we are to protect it for future generations we must continue to invest in it. "[/quote]

- More than £46million has been invested in Northern Ireland’s natural heritage.
- 2100km2 of land across 11 landscapes is being better managed and protected for the future.
- Seven historic parks have been restored.
- A range of habitats and species, including grasslands and meadows, Barn Owls, Red Kites, bats, foxes and eels, have benefited from conservation activities.

Announcing the latest awards, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: “When we think of heritage we may think about artefacts, museums or historic buildings. But our natural heritage is all around us in our gardens and green spaces, our seas and loughs.

“Our natural heritage is under increasing pressure and if we are to protect it for future generations we must continue to invest in it. We are proud of the projects we have supported and of the huge difference this has already made to the natural environment in Northern Ireland. Now thanks to National Lottery players these two new projects are underway, helping to conserve and reconnect people to our amazing natural heritage.”



View to Knockninny, Lough Erne Giles Knight

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Getting to grips with the wildlife in Ballinderry River

Schoolchildren help local river life thanks to National Lottery players