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Newsletter: August 2026

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Its implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

To spot this month: can you find more populations of this rare hoverfly?

The Hornet Plumehorn (*Volucella zonaria*) established in Britain in the 1940s. It was recorded for the first time in Ireland in July 2023 at Churchtown in Co Wexford.

It is a very large hoverfly and can be recognised by its yellow and black banded abdomen, where the upper band is chestnut in colour. If you think you have spotted it, please take a photograph, and send to us for confirmation.

In Britain, *Volucella zonaria* occurs in a range of habitats, but can be especially frequent in suburban settings with good populations of Common and German Wasps. The larvae develop as scavengers and larval predators in social wasp nests. In Britain, it occurs from May to November, but peaks in August.

Photo: David McAdams.



[Technical pdf guide to hoverflies in the genus Volucella](#)

[Submit your hoverfly sightings](#)

To do this month: check if your bee hotel is being used

Now is the perfect time to check if your bee box has been used this year. These boxes are mainly used by two types of solitary bees - leaf cutter bees and mason bees. Leaf cutter bees cut circular pieces of leaves and use them to line the cells in the nest. The Red Mason Bee lines the cells of its nest with mud.

Check if any of the cavities in your next box are closed off with pieces of leaf or with mud. If there are all still empty, it hasn't been used this year. In that case, it's worth storing it indoors over winter, and planning to move to a new location next spring. The more flowers there are around your next box, the more likely it is to be found and used. Remember, only a very small number of species use bee hotels. Creating areas of bare soil for mining solitary bees, will potentially help much greater numbers of species.



Ideal size for a solitary bee nest box

- You'll know your bee box/hotel is being used if the cavity entrances have been closed off with pieces of leaf or mud. If it's not being used, consider moving it to a new location
- They should be placed 1.5-2m off the ground in a sheltered south or east facing location
- They must be close to food sources – solitary bees don't fly far!
- These boxes only target a small number of our cavity nesting solitary bees. Don't forget that 80% of our solitary bees nest in bare ground which is even easier to create by scraping back vegetation!
- Larger bee boxes or insect hotels will attract predators and are more likely to harbour disease

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030 is here!

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030 was launched on 9th Jul at the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin, by Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland, Andrew Muir, and Ireland's Minister for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, Christopher O'Sullivan TD.

Now in its third phase, the AIPP aims to create a landscape with pockets of nature every 200 metres. This ambitious goal builds on the successes of the previous phases and aims to increase pollinator numbers, creating a thriving landscape for pollinators and people.

The third phase will be supported by a dedicated team of eight staff within the NBDC. A Steering Group with representation across both NI and ROI will provide oversight to the rollout of the 2026-2030 phase, with representation from each of the 10 new work packages. We are also very grateful to our 130 partners who have pledged their support across these 10 work packages. Under the new Plan structure, additional partners can join at any time over the course of the Plan.

Find out more about the new All-Ireland Pollinator Plan below.

ALL-IRELAND Pollinator Plan **2026-2030**



An tIonad Náisiúnta
Sonraí Bithéagsúlachta
National Biodiversity
Data Centre

pollinators.ie

Overview of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030

Free upcoming webinars

Next week, we have two free webinars exploring various aspects of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and pollinator-friendly action. Links to register on both webinars can be found below.

Monday 17th August, 19:30: Havens for Nature: Supporting Biodiversity in Faith Grounds

Our Communities Pollinator Officer Kate Chandler will be speaking at the Heritage Council's free webinar, which is for any faith groups or individuals interested in taking action for biodiversity on their faith grounds. Kate will be speaking about actions for pollinators, and other speakers include Meadhbh Bolger, Biodiversity Officer, The Heritage Council; Jennie Drysdale, Chairperson of Doonbeg Tidy Towns / Doonbeg Church Return to Nature; Jane Mellett, Trócaire and Laudato Si' Working Group; The Reverend David White, Rector, Zion Church of Ireland Parish; Satwinder Singh, EcoSikh Ireland Chairperson; and Paul McNamee, Sunyata Buddhist Centre.

Wednesday 19th August, 12:00: the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030: What's new and how to get involved

Join us for a free lunchtime webinar at 12:00 on Wednesday 19th August with All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Programme Manager, Dr Sarah Larragy, to explore the next phase of the AIPP (2026–2030) and hear about the plans for the next five years.

Sarah will introduce the Plan's vision and priorities, highlighting it's 10 work packages which bring together actions across sectors including farmland, public land, transport networks, communities, businesses and researchers. You'll also hear about how the Plan's 50 strategic aims and 75 success metrics will help guide and measure progress towards an island where pollinators can survive and thrive. Find out how you can get involved and help turn individual actions into lasting, landscape-scale change for pollinators across the island of Ireland.



ALL-IRELAND Pollinator Plan

2026-2030

WEBINAR

THE ALL-IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN 2026-2030: WHAT'S NEW AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED

19th August
12:00 - 1:00pm

An tIonad Náisiúnta Sonraí Bithéagsúlachta
National Biodiversity Data Centre

pollinators.ie

**An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council**

HAVENS FOR NATURE: SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY IN FAITH GROUNDS

Join the Heritage Council and expert biodiversity & faith community speakers to learn how to take biodiversity action on your faith grounds.

**Havens for Nature:
Supporting Biodiversity in
Faith Grounds Online Talk**

17 August, 7:30pm - 8:45pm

Online

Logos: National Biodiversity Data Centre, EcoCongregation Ireland, Trócaire, Sunyata Buddhist Centre, Doonbeg Tidy Towns, Zion Church of Ireland Parish, EcoSikh Ireland, Laudato Si' Working Group, Meadhbh Bolger, Jennie Drysdale, David White, Satwinder Singh, Paul McNamee, Kate Chandler.

Register for the webinar: Havens for Nature: Supporting Biodiversity in Faith Grounds

Register for the webinar: The AIPP 2026-2030: What's new and how to get involved

First sighting of critically endangered bee in 26 years

Earlier this month, our Rare Pollinator Officer Joshua Clarke re-found the Critically Endangered Silver-sided Nomad Bee (*Nomada argentata*) in Co. Offaly by sweeping Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) in suitable habitat.

Nomada argentata had not been seen in Ireland for 26 years prior to this new record, with just 7 confirmed records overall for the island from counties Galway, Laois, and Carlow. This new record makes it the 8th record, in a new county, and a new site for the species.

These species can be searched for in habitats rich in scabious flowers like Devil's-bit Scabious, though other associated flowers have included Knapweed (*Centaurea sp.*) and Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*). Typical habitats are dry calcareous grasslands, heaths, and stabilised coastal dunes. Both species are found in low densities making them challenging to survey, and their habitats are under threat from factors such as intensive agriculture and scrub encroachment.

Find out more about Josh's discovery below. Photo: Joshua Clarke.



First sighting of critically endangered bee in 26 years

Can you help by carrying out a Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count)?

FIT Counts are an important way that you can help us monitor pollinators. They are a quick and easy survey that involves watching a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. Anyone can get involved, and you can carry out a FIT Count anywhere, and on any flower, but where you can, please use one of our 15 target flowers. In June, it's especially useful to carry out FIT Counts on White or Red Clover.

In 2025, 1,323 validated FIT Counts were submitted by 235 different volunteers. The average number of insects per FIT Count was 9. The most common insect group recorded were other flies followed by hoverflies then bumblebees. Gardens were the most common habitat FIT Counts were carried out in last year. Why not try one where you are to see how your site compares.

Visit the FIT Count homepage (link below) to download the 2025 newsletter and see the full results of the scheme last year.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre also runs a Garden Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. You can help by counting the number of butterflies visiting your garden. Find out more by visiting the link below.

Pollinator monitoring: Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts)

<https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/>

Watch a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. This scheme runs from April until September.



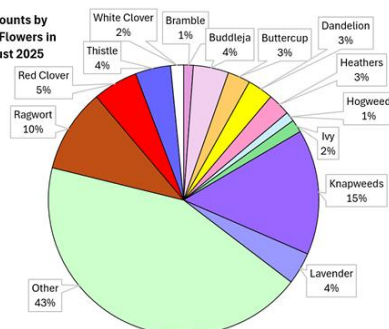
AUGUST

Target Flowers for August 2026: **Ragwort or Knapweed**. Other target flowers are Bramble, Buttercup, Buddleja, Heathers, Hogweed, Lavender, Thistle, White Clover and Red Clover

August 2025

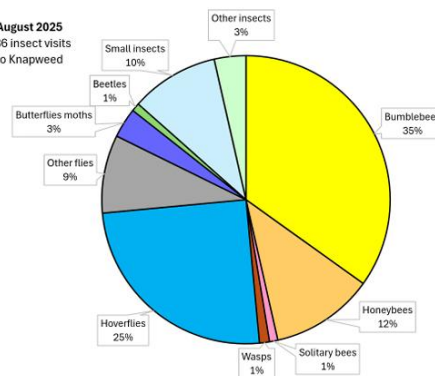
Total number of FIT Counts 260
Average Insects/FIT Counts 11.88

FIT Counts by Target Flowers in August 2025



August 2025

536 insect visits to Knapweed



Bumblebees and hoverflies accounted for 60% of visits to Knapweeds in August



Hoverfly visiting Knapweed (Michelle Larkin)

[Flower-Insect-Timed Count Homepage](#)

[Garden Butterfly Monitoring Scheme](#)

[Download Android app from Google Play](#)

[Download Apple \(iPhone/iPad\) app from the App Store](#)

August's Seeds Feed Next Year's Bees

Long-flowering meadows (one cut and lift a year) are entering an important part of their cycle. Soon, their seeds will drop into the soil and join the seedbank for next year's meadow. Once developed they are fabulous habitats, bursting with native wildflowers and grasses, and supporting an abundance of life above and below ground.

If you have a long-flowering meadow, don't cut yet. Wait until September; don't forget to remove the cuttings to reduce soil fertility; and leave some areas totally uncut to help overwintering insects. August's seeds feed next year's bees!



Does your meadow
look like this?

Late summer meadows look messy to humans, but this is a crucial part of their cycle. It's time for the seeds to drop...

Find out more about managing meadows in local communities and gardens in our free guide



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