

# Midland's Mink Eradication Programme



BREEDING WADERS  
EIP



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta  
agus Fiadhúlra  
National Parks and Wildlife Service



# Agenda



1. Programme Overview
2. Species Overview
3. Key Objectives
4. Programme Actions
5. Programme Area Map
6. Mock Trap Network (Athlone)
7. App Data Collection
8. Public Sightings Survey Form
9. Volunteer Network
10. Expected Outcomes



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# 1. Programme Overview



- First large-scale Mink Eradication effort in Ireland
- Led by Breeding Waders EIP & NARGC, supported by NPWS
- 'Collaborative conservation'
- Combining professional conservation strategies, fieldcraft, local knowledge, data analysis, citizen science, outreach & education

# 2. Species Overview



**Paw Print**



2.5 - 4cm

**Den**



- 10-14cm opening
- Usually close to water
- Often with scat nearby
- Prey remains sometimes visible

**Scat**



- Approximately 6 - 8cm in length
- Typically twisted or tapered at the ends
- Found near waterways
- Often placed prominently as territorial markers
- Strong, musky odour
- Usually contains fur, piece of bones and feather

# 3. Key Objectives



- Eradicate American Mink from core area in 3.5 years
- Prove 'citizen science' model works
- Accurately cost expansion
- Explore funding opportunities for 'sister' project in Northern Ireland



# 4. Programme Actions



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This pilot programme takes a more strategic and comprehensive approach, using a combination of innovative methods to achieve lasting results:

- Innovative detection and trapping techniques
  - Scent gland
  - Detection Dog
  - Remote sensing
  - Genetic analysis
- Citizen science model for cost-effective trapping
  - Training and upskilling volunteers
  - Public sightings portal
- Data collection and analysis
- Scaling and cost forecasts



# 5. Programme Area Map



## Midland's Area as Pilot Project:

- **Existing Investment** – NPWS has already supported long-term Mink control on Lough Ree, 2009-present
- **Critical Habitat** – Lough Ree is a Special Protection Area (SPA) with internationally important breeding waders and waterbirds. (Identification of Breeding Waterbird Hotspots: IWM No.129)
- **Proven Activity** – Mink presence and annual catch rates are well documented, making it an ideal test area.
- **Strong Local Network** – over 11 gun clubs, angling clubs, boating groups, RNLI, and community organisations ready to participate.
- **Strategic Buffer Zone** – success here can create a model for expansion and ultimately inform a national eradication programme.



# 5.1. Midland's Pilot Area

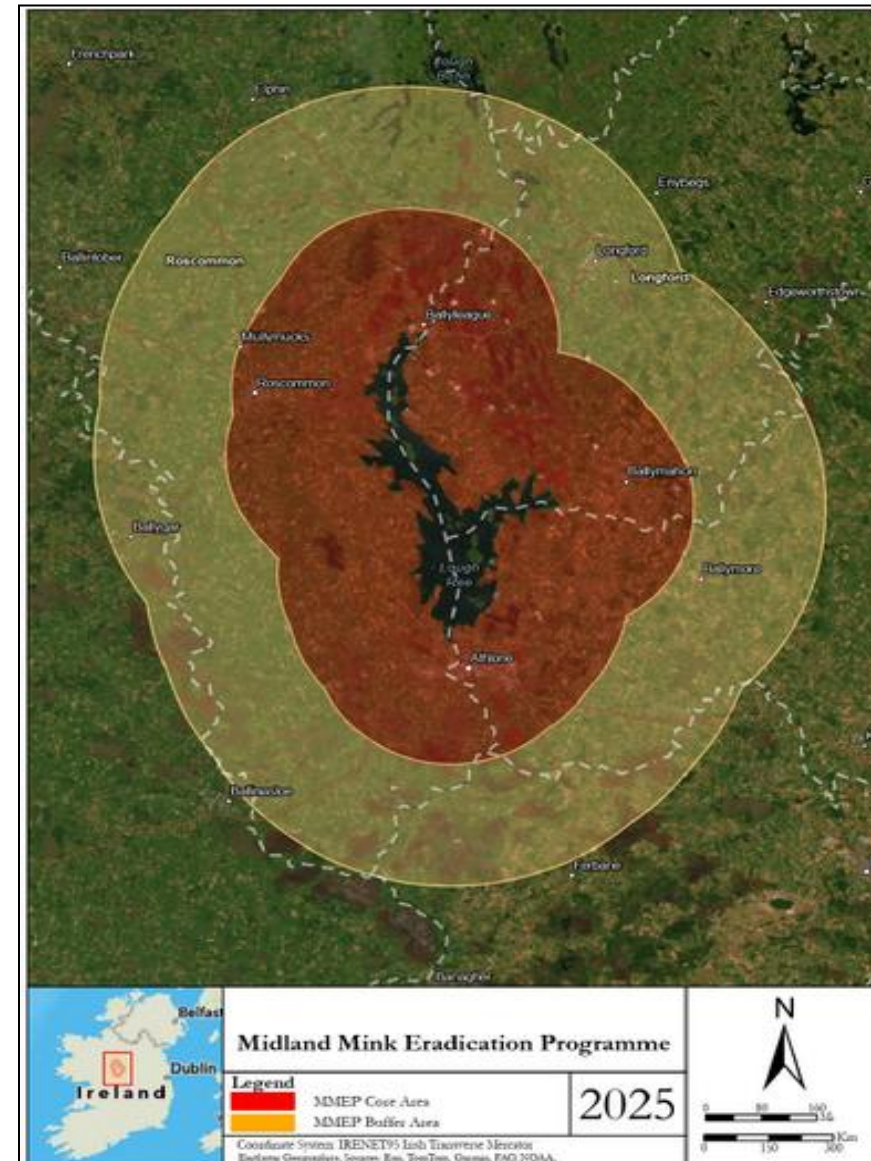


The programme covers a 2,600km<sup>2</sup> area surrounding Lough Ree divided into:

- 1,030km<sup>2</sup> core area.
- 1,570km<sup>2</sup> buffer area.

A network of 600 traps will be strategically set and monitored within these areas for the duration of the programme.

- Trapping density of 1 trap/3km<sup>2</sup>
- 1/30<sup>th</sup> the area of Ireland



# 5.2. Waterbodies Midland's Pilot Area

The area around Lough Ree is highly suitable for Mink due to the significant number of lakes and the strong concentration of rivers and streams.

## Where Mink Live & Why Waterbodies Matter

Water-edge specialists

➤ Almost all dens within 50 m of rivers/lakes (females usually <10 m).

Denning sites

➤ Rabbit warrens, hollow trees, rocky areas, scrub & dense cover.

Seasonal patterns

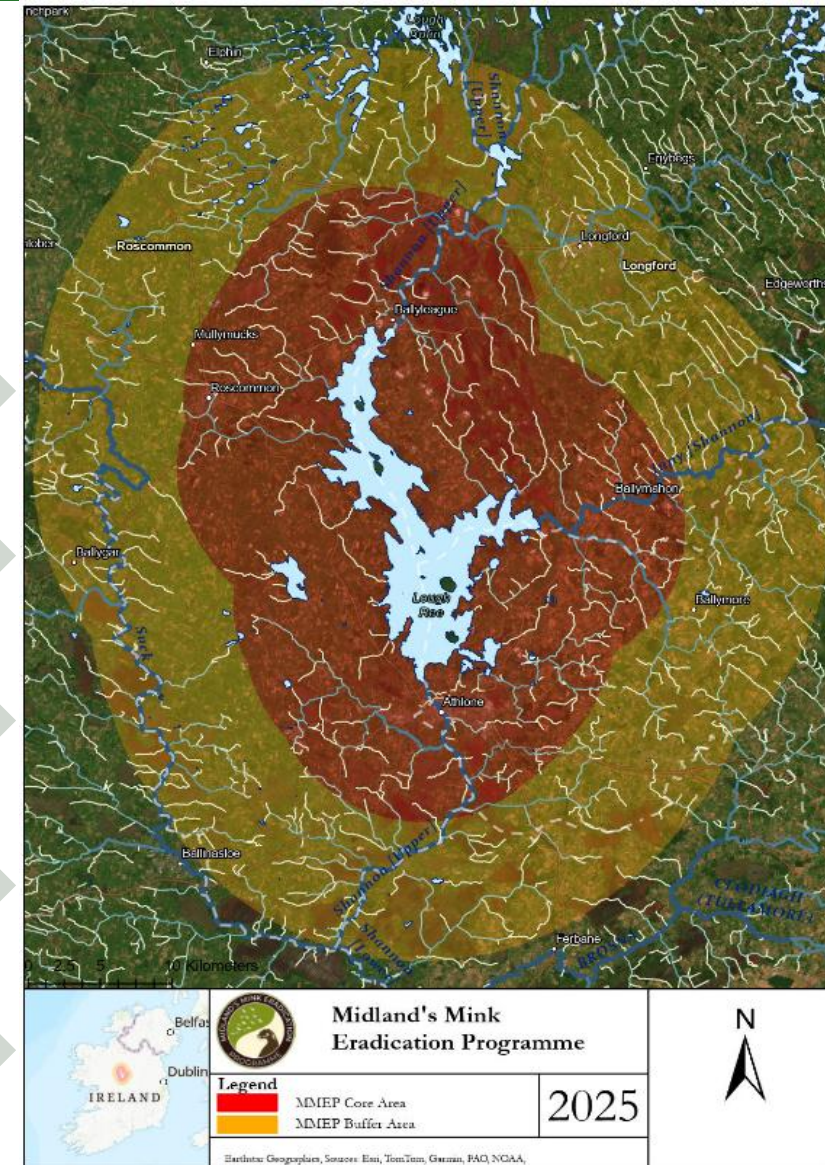
➤ Spring: males roaming, Early summer: females denning-up, Autumn: juv. dispersal.

Trapping strategy

➤ Trapping density; 1 trap/3km<sup>2</sup>  
➤ Fieldcraft & local knowledge

Conservation hotspot

➤ Lakes & wetlands hold vulnerable ground-nesting birds, most at risk.



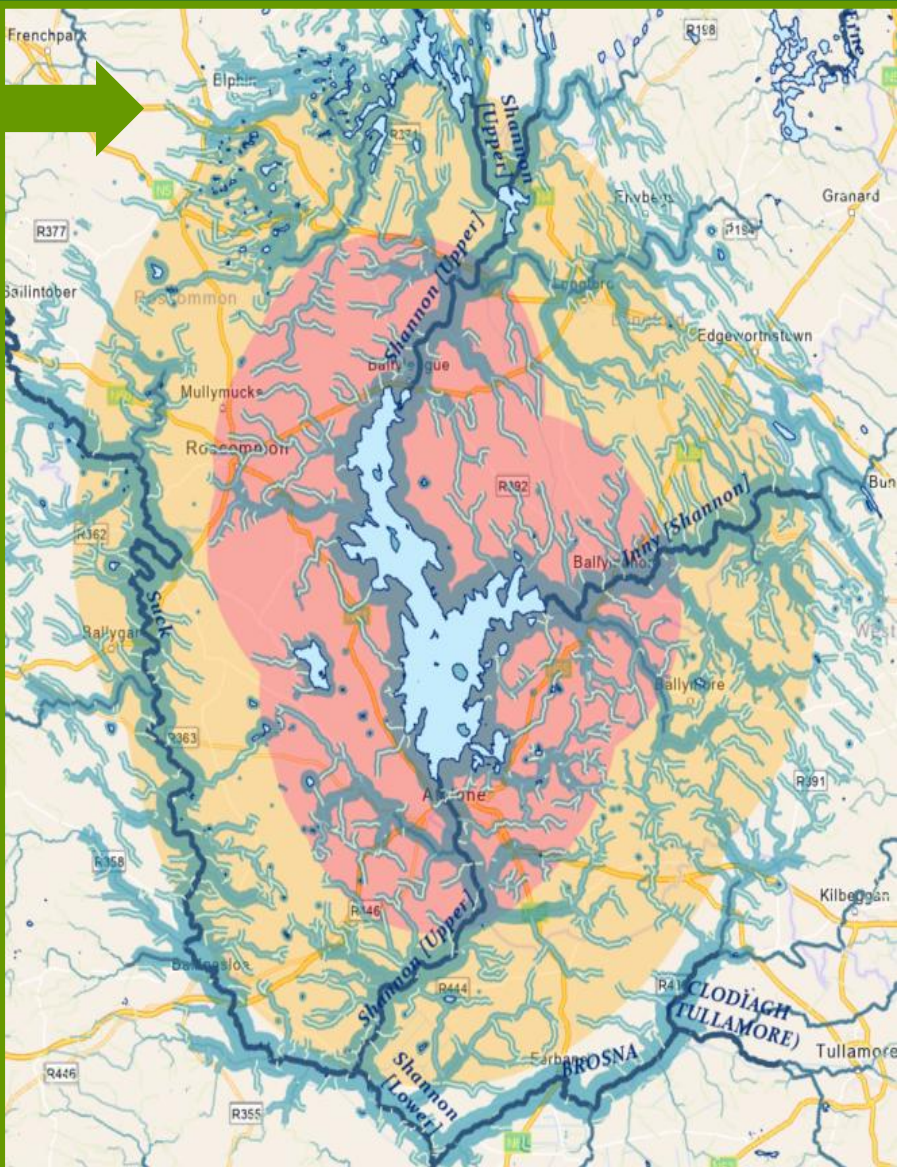
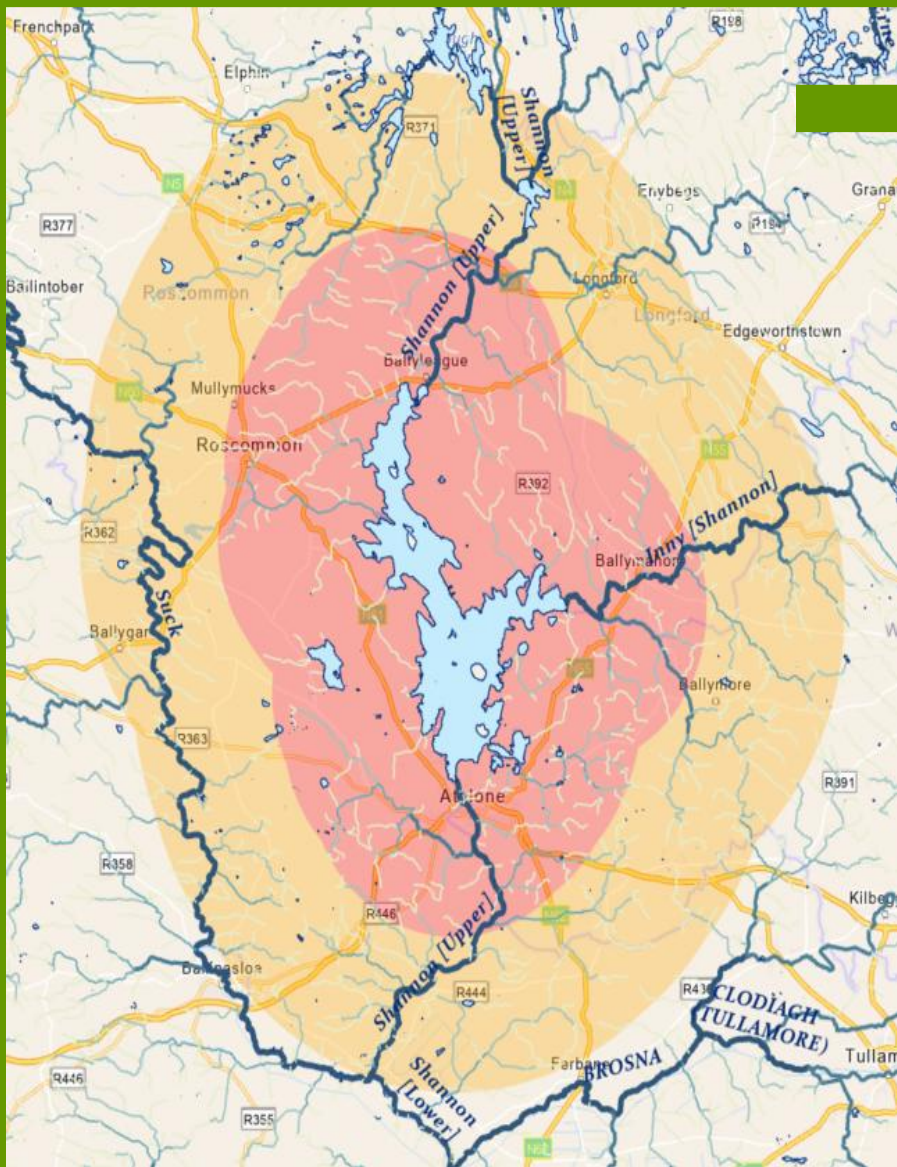
# 5.3. Watercourses Map



Beyond these standard zones, we've added **targeted buffer overlays** around key waterbodies — rivers, lakes, and wetlands — which serve as **hotspots for mink movement and denning**. These ecological corridors are prioritized for trap placement due to their high suitability for mink habitat.

**This adaptive buffer strategy ensures:**

- Coverage of high-risk areas beyond the fixed radius
- Flexibility to respond to seasonal dispersal patterns
- Enhanced protection for vulnerable bird populations near water



# 6. Mock Trap Network Map - Athlone



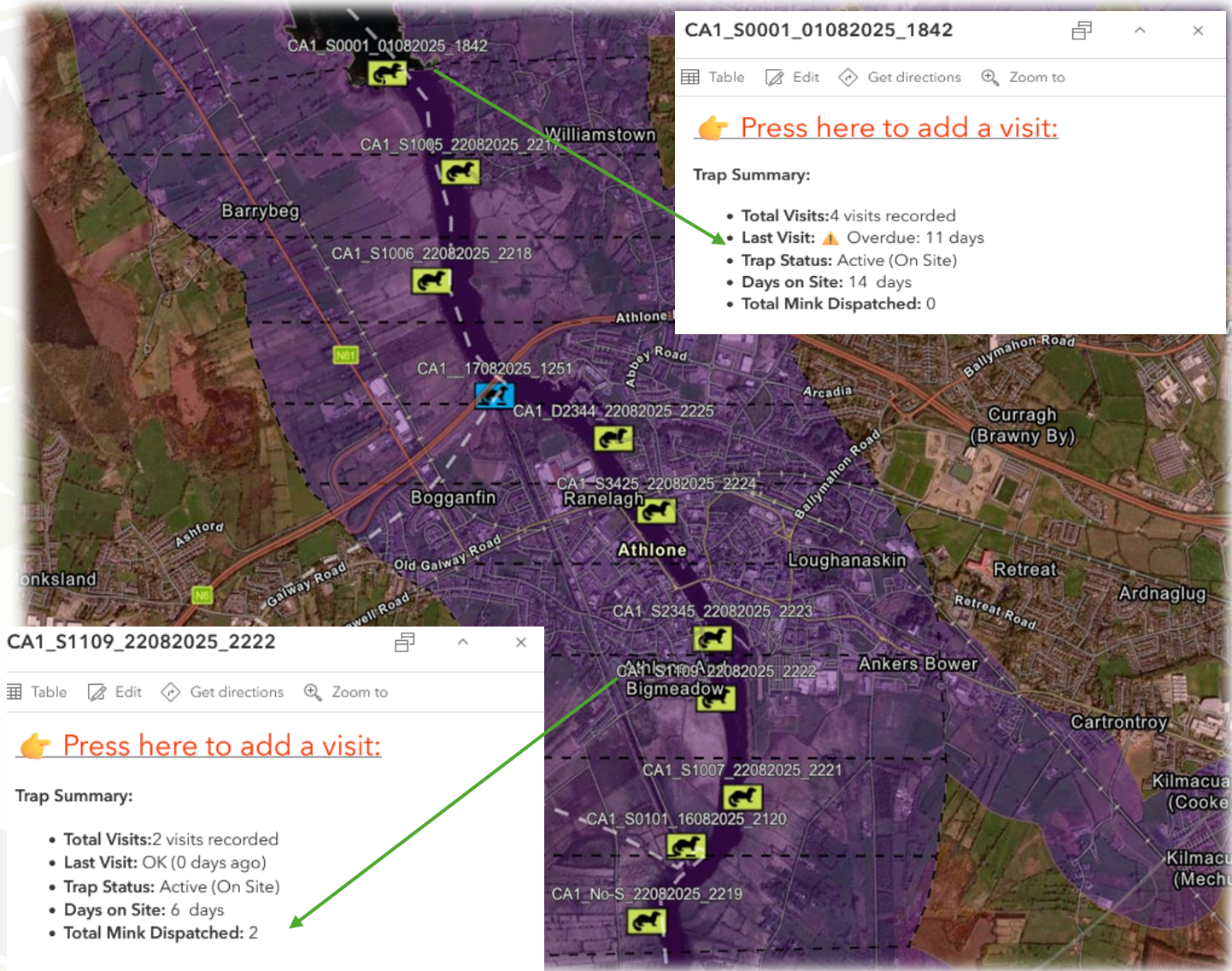
## Smart Trapping, Real-Time Results

- The Mock Area has been strategically divided into equal sections, each equipped with a trap installed by a trained volunteer.
- Trap placement was guided by internal protocols, local site conditions, and seasonal mink behavior — ensuring maximum coverage and efficiency.

Live Dashboards give the Project Officer instant access to:

- Trap status updates
- Mink capture records
- Missed visits
- Trap conditions and dispatch alerts

This system turns field data into actionable insights — empowering faster decisions and more effective mink control



# 7. App Data Collection

## Why Our Volunteers Benefit from Using These Apps?

By combining Esri's **Field Maps** and **Survey123**, our volunteers get a **simple, one-tap system** that's both easy to use in the field and powerful enough to drive real conservation action.

### Learn cutting-edge tools

• You're gaining hands-on experience with apps used by conservation professionals all over the world.

### Simple & powerful

• In just one minute, you can record data that makes a real difference for wildlife.

### Skills for the future

• Field Maps & Survey123 are industry-leading platforms in conservation, ecology, and research.

### The best on the market

• This is the same technology trusted by governments, NGOs, and scientists worldwide.

### Be part of innovation

• You're not just collecting data; you're helping pioneer a smarter, faster way to protect Ireland's wildlife.



# 7.1. App Data Collection

## Volunteer Data Collection App (Field Maps & Survey123)

Add Traps Easily

Open Field Maps, drop a point, most fields auto-filled.

Record Trap Setup

Upload a photo, date, and a few details, then submit.

Respond to Sensor Alerts

If triggered, open Field Maps → select trap → add visit (Survey123 form opens).

Streamlined Visits

Visit form pre-populated; just confirm details or update.

Routine Rebaiting

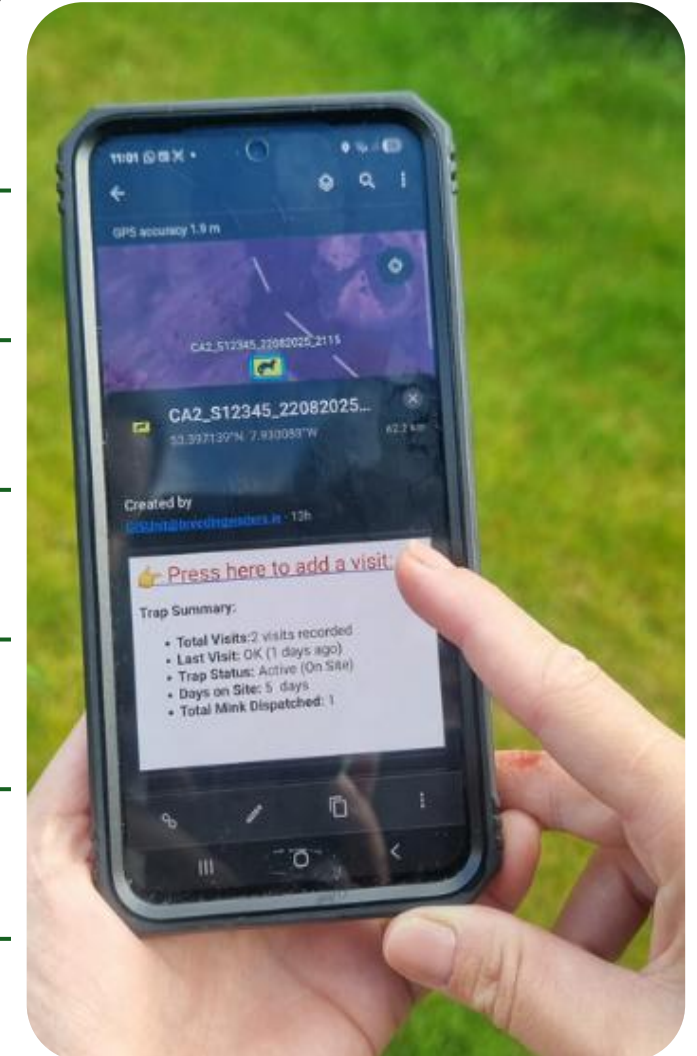
If no trigger after 10 days, volunteers record a rebait visit.

Fast & UserFriendly

With brief training, recording takes ~1 minute.

Instant Access

All submissions feed directly into the project database for analysis.



# 7.2. App Data Collection



Add Traps Easily

Record Trap Setup

Fast & User-Friendly

Instant Access

Collect

GPS accuracy 13.2 m · 10 m required

S12345  
53.397139°N 7.930088°W

UPDATE POINT

TAKE PHOTO ATTACH

Collect

S12345  
53.397139°N 7.930088°W

TAKE PHOTO ATTACH

Area Details

**You must attach a photo verifying Trap Setting before submission!**

Use **Take Photo** to snap a new picture with your phone, or **Attach** to add one from your gallery.

Trap Set Date \*  
22 Sept 2025 21:15

Note: Once the date and time are selected, the fields are locked and cannot be changed.

Trap Age  
5

Note: Trap age is calculated automatically from the installation date.

Collect

S12345  
53.397139°N 7.930088°W

Note: The default option is 'Active (On Site)'.  
Mink Raft Used? \*  
Yes

Note: Indicate whether a mink raft was used.

**⚠ Safety Warning – Mink Raft Use**  
Working with mink rafts involves significant water-related hazards. Please follow these essential safety guidelines:

1. **Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).**
2. **Avoid hazardous conditions** such as flooding, ice, or strong currents.
3. **Use safe and designated access points.** Never enter deep or fast-moving water.
4. **Comply with the MMEP Protocol** and all relevant local safety regulations.
5. **If working alone, notify a supervisor or designated contact** of your location and expected return time.

**Failure to follow these precautions may result in serious injury or loss of life.**

Please acknowledge the raft safety warning: \*  
Yes

Collect

S12345  
53.397139°N 7.930088°W

Sensor ID \*  
S12345

Note: Please type the sensor identification number.

Type of Trap \*  
Live Catch - Sensor

Note: The default option is 'Live Catch-Sensor'. Please tap to change it if other trap has been installed

Please acknowledge the trap notification: \*  
Yes

Was Bait Used? \*  
Yes

Type of Bait Used \*  
Scent Gland

Note: The default option is 'Scent Gland'. Please tap to change it if another type of bait was used.

User Notes  
test

Note: Use this field to record any additional observations or comments related to the trap or site.

Installed By \*  
Participant (Trained)

Collect

GPS accuracy 15.5 m · 10 m required

+

# 7.3. App Data Collection

## Volunteer Data Collection App (Field Maps & Survey123)

Respond to Sensor Alerts

If triggered, or to rebait/check, open Field Maps → select trap → add visit (Survey123 form opens).

Streamlined Visits

Visit form pre-populated; just confirm details or update.

Routine Rebaiting

If no trigger after 10 days, volunteers record a rebait visit.

Fast & User-Friendly

With brief training, recording takes ~1 minute.

Instant Access

All submissions feed directly into the project database for analysis.

The screenshots show the app's interface for data collection. The first screenshot is a map view showing a trap location (CA2\_S12345\_22082025\_2115) with a yellow mink icon. Below the map, it shows the trap ID, coordinates (53.397139°N 7.930088°W), and a 'Created by' field (GISUnit@breedingwaders.ie · 18m). A red arrow points to a button that says 'Press here to add a visit:'. Below this is a 'Trap Summary' section with the following data:

- Total Visits: 2 visits recorded
- Last Visit: OK (0 days ago)
- Trap Status: Active (On Site)
- Days on Site: 5 days
- Total Mink Dispatched: 1

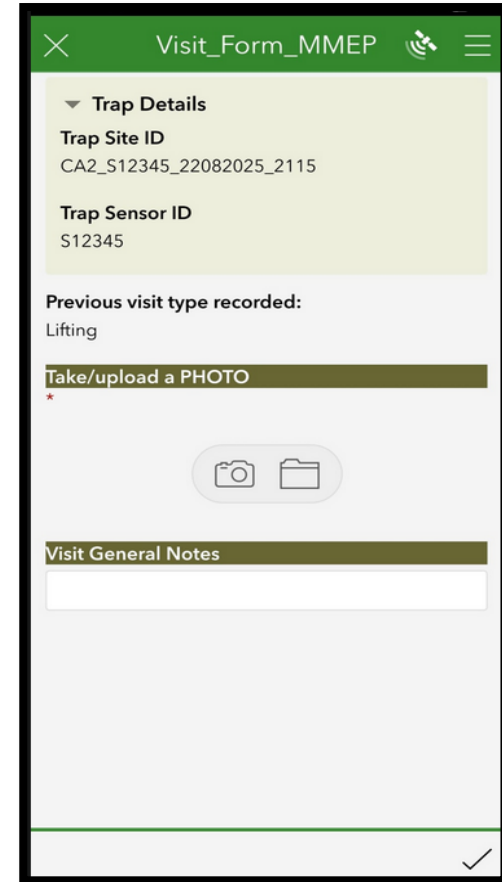
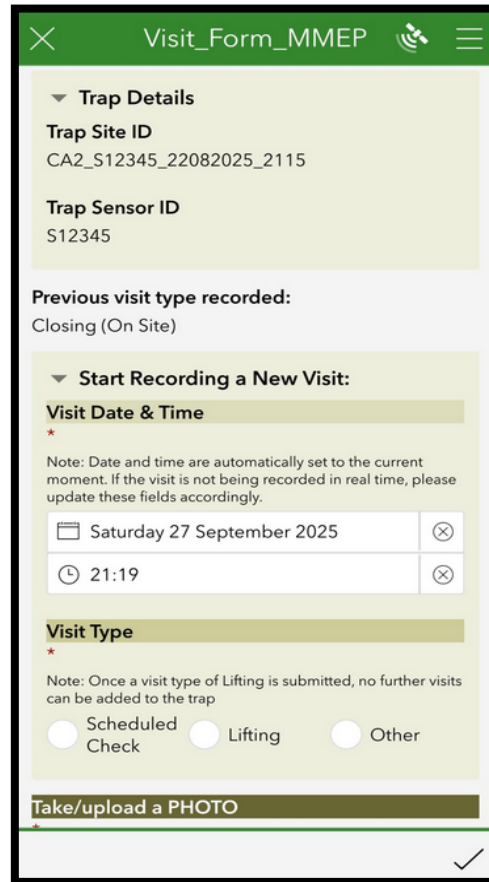
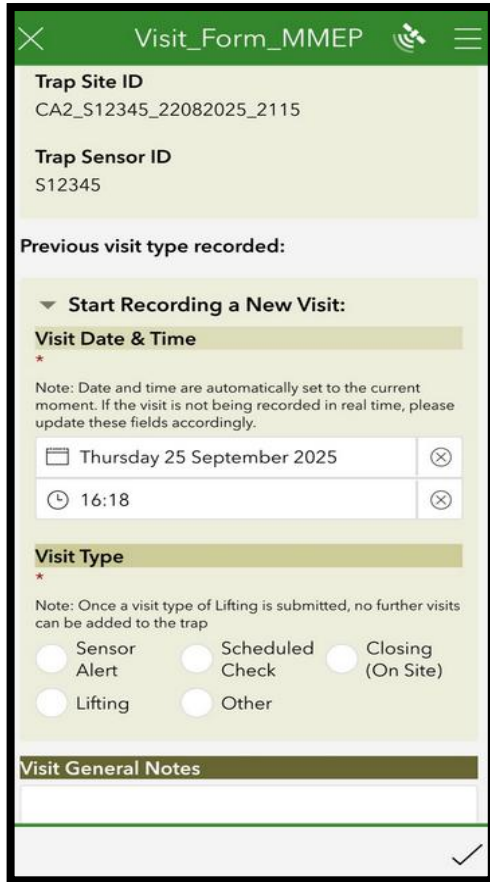
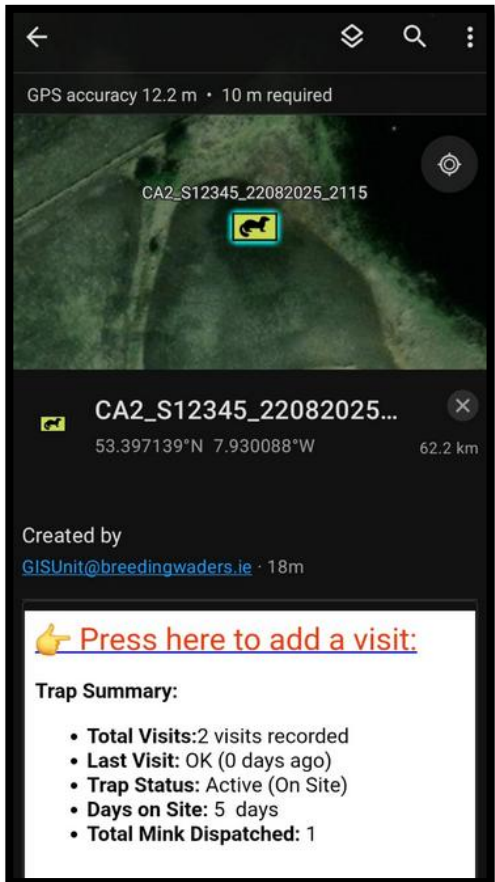
The second screenshot shows the 'Visit\_Form\_MMPEP' form. It is pre-populated with the trap ID (CA2\_S12345\_22082025\_2115) and sensor ID (S12345). It includes a 'Previous visit type recorded:' field (Lifting), a 'Start Recording a New Visit:' section with 'Visit Date & Time' (Thursday 25 September 2025, 16:18), and a 'Visit Type' section with radio buttons for Sensor Alert, Lifting, Scheduled Check, and Closing (On Site), and an 'Other' option. A note states: 'Note: Once a visit type of Lifting is submitted, no further visits can be added to the trap.' There is a 'Visit General Notes' field at the bottom.

The third screenshot shows the 'Trap Details' section of the form, which is pre-populated with the trap ID (CA2\_S12345\_22082025\_2115) and sensor ID (S12345). It includes a 'Previous visit type recorded:' field (Lifting), a 'Take/upload a PHOTO' section with camera and gallery icons, and a 'Visit General Notes' field.

# 7.4. App Data Collection

## Field Visit Workflow

Alerts open **pre-filled forms based on trap history** → Irrelevant visit types are auto-filtered (e.g. lifted traps) → **Logging takes ~1 minute**; all data syncs instantly to the database



# 8. Public Sightings Survey Form

## Why Report a Mink Sighting?

### We can't track them all

- Your eyes on the ground make the difference.

### Every sighting counts

- Reports are used immediately to guide action in the Midlands.

### Quick & Easy

- Drop a pin, add a few details, hit submit (1 minute)

### Support Conservation

- A simple way for anyone to protect Ireland's biodiversity.

### Stay in the loop

- Include your contact details to see the impact of your report.

See a mink?

Report it!

Protect Ireland's wildlife in just 1 minute.

Website: [www.minkeradication.ie](http://www.minkeradication.ie) → **Report a Sighting** → Drop a pin → Add a photo → Submit



# 8.1. Public Sightings Survey Form

## Observer's Guide- How to 'Report a Mink Sighting'

### Step 1 – Identify the Mink

#### Report a Mink Sighting

**Midland's Mink Eradication Programme**  
Your sightings help us track and humanely remove this invasive predator, protecting Ireland's ground-nesting birds and local wildlife. The Midlands Mink Eradication Programme is working to remove American Mink from the greater Lough Ree area. This pilot project is managed by the Breeding Waders EIP and the National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC), with support from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

**Is it an American Mink?**  
Below are the key identification features:



Check differences with otter, pine marten, and stoat.

### Step 2 – Reporter Information

#### About American Mink in Ireland - to expand, tap the arrow

- Fur:** they have typically dark brown fur, which may appear black when wet. Though rare, some individuals may display grey or white coats.
- Diet:** they are opportunistic carnivores, feeding on a wide range of prey including birds, fish, amphibians, invertebrates, reptiles, and small mammals. They pose a particular threat to ground-nesting birds, often consuming both adults and eggs.
- Habitat:** they are semi-aquatic mammals, thriving near rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Their webbed feet and streamlined bodies make them agile swimmers, allowing them to hunt both in water and on land.
- Predation:** they are aggressive and highly adaptable predators, often causing severe ecological disruption. They are known to raid bird colonies, sometimes taking multiple chicks or eggs in a single hunt.
- Senses:** they possess keen hearing and a strong sense of smell, which aid them in locating prey even in dense vegetation or underwater environments.

#### Reporter Information - to expand, tap the arrow

Please provide your details if you are happy to do so. This helps us follow up if we need more information about your sighting. You can still submit a report without providing your email address.

**Your Full Name\***  
Please enter your full name, including both first name and surname.

Enter your Full Name (required)

**Your Phone Number\***  
Please enter a valid phone number (e.g. 0871234567)

Add a Phone Number (required for follow-up)

**Your Email Address**  
Please enter your full email address.

Email address is optional, but recommended if you'd like updates.

### Step 3 – Location of Sighting & Animal Condition

#### Sighting Details - to expand, tap the arrow

**Please drop a pin on the map where you saw the American Mink.\***  
Tap or click on the map to drop a pin at the location of your sighting.  
You can use your current location, tap the circle symbol (O) found in the left side of the map (underneath the house symbol).  
You can also use the search box to find a place name or address.  
If you are adding a pin manually, you must zoom in until the Neighborhood level message is gone to record your pin accurately.  
**On a phone (Android or iPhone):**  
Use your fingers to zoom in and move the map.  
Tap on the map to drop a pin.  
Press OK in the top-right corner to confirm the location.  
**On a computer:**  
Use your mouse to zoom and drag the map.



**Does the point placed on the map represent the location accurately?\***  
Yes (selected) No

**What was the condition of the animal?\***  
Alive (selected) Dead Trapped Not sure Other

Select the Animal Condition that matches what you

### Step 4 – Details of the Sighting

#### Additional Details (Optional)

**Number of American Mink\***  
Enter the number of mink you saw.

**When did you see the American Mink?\***  
The date and time are set automatically to when you create this report. If your sighting happened earlier, tap the date and time fields to choose the correct values from the calendar.

**Please upload a photo\***  
Add the date and time (defaults to "now" but can be edited).

Drop image here or select image  
Upload a photo if possible

#### Additional Details (Optional) - to expand, tap the arrow

**Age & Sex Breakdown, if known\***  
Multiple choice possible  
Tick boxes if you know age or sex (adult male, female, juvenile).  
 Adult Male  Adult Female  
 Kit/Juvenile Female  Unknown Age/Sex

**Can you describe what you saw?\***  
(e.g., colour, size, no. of Kit/Juveniles, time of day, behaviour, viewing distance)  
Use the text box to describe what you saw (colour, size, behaviour, distance).

**How confident are you that it was an American Mink?\***  
Very Confident (selected) Moderately Confident Unsure, but possible

Select your confidence level (Very Confident, Moderately Confident, Unsure).

### Step 5 – Consent and Submit

**Copyright Transfer And GDPR Consent:**  
Do you transfer copyright to us of your observation's details and give us consent to store and process your above personal data? This allows us to use your report to support the Midland's Mink Eradication Programme and help protect ground-nesting birds and other vulnerable wildlife across Ireland.

Yes (selected) No  
Submit

Read the Copyright & GDPR consent text → Click/ Tap Submit, and your sighting is sent directly to the team.

**Quick Reminder Website: www.minkeradication.ie → Report a Sighting**

# 8.1. Public Sightings Survey Form



## What We Do Next?

### After You Submit a Mink Sighting:

#### Log & thank

- Report is saved instantly in our system and acknowledged.

#### Triage

- We check location, photos, details; assign High / Med / Low priority..

#### Verify

- Team reviews on screen, then field-checks priority sites

#### Act

- If confirmed, we deploy mink rafts, cameras, and traps.

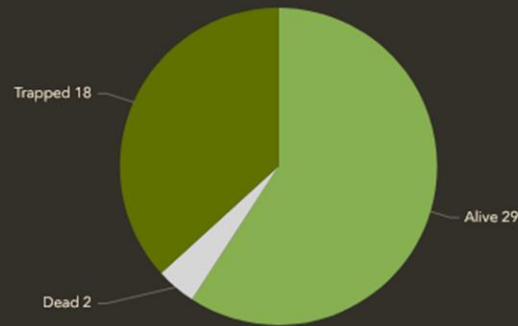
#### Remove & record

- Mink are humanely removed; all actions are geo-tagged and documented.

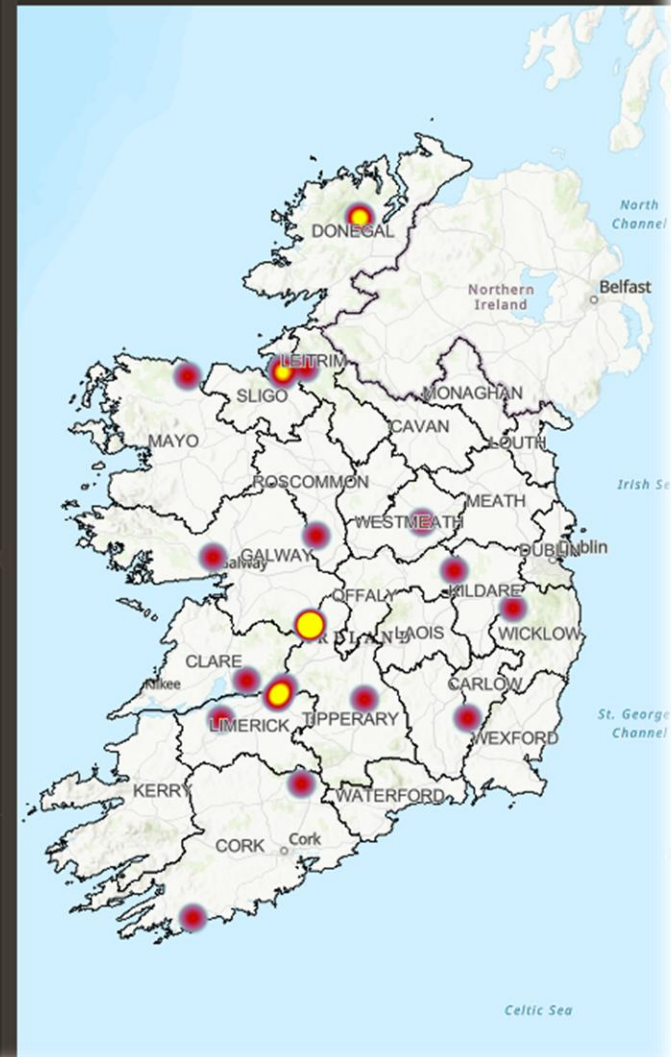
#### Monitor

- Site stays on a watchlist to prevent re-colonisation and improve future response.

Total No. of American Mink Reported



CS\_Survey\_Reports



Total reports to date

25

**Your 1-minute report drives real action on the ground!**

# 9. Volunteer Network



## Role of Volunteers in the Programme:

### Report Sightings

- Use the online form to log mink presence and signs.

### Support Trapping

- Help monitor and maintain humane traps (trained & supervised).

### Detect Evidence

- Look for tracks, scats, and dens along rivers and lakes.

### Collect Data

- Record field notes, photos, and trap results for the project database.

### Engage Community

- Act as local ambassadors, spreading awareness and encouraging others to report.

### Protect Wildlife

- Directly contribute to safeguarding ground-nesting birds and native species.



# 10. Expected Outcomes



- **Protection of Ground-Nesting Birds** – improved breeding success for vulnerable waders and waterbirds.
- **Healthier Ecosystems** – recovery of native wildlife and balance in wetland habitats.
- **Community Involvement** – citizens actively engaged in conservation through reporting and volunteering.
- **Effective Mink Control Model** – development of best-practice methods (traps, rafts, detection dogs) for wider use.
- **Pathway to National Eradication** – lessons from the pilot inform a potential all-Ireland programme.





# Thank You

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Breeding Waders EIP

Midland's Mink Eradication Programme  
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Scan QR codes for Info  
Breeding Waders EIP & NARGC



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Co-funded by  
the European Union



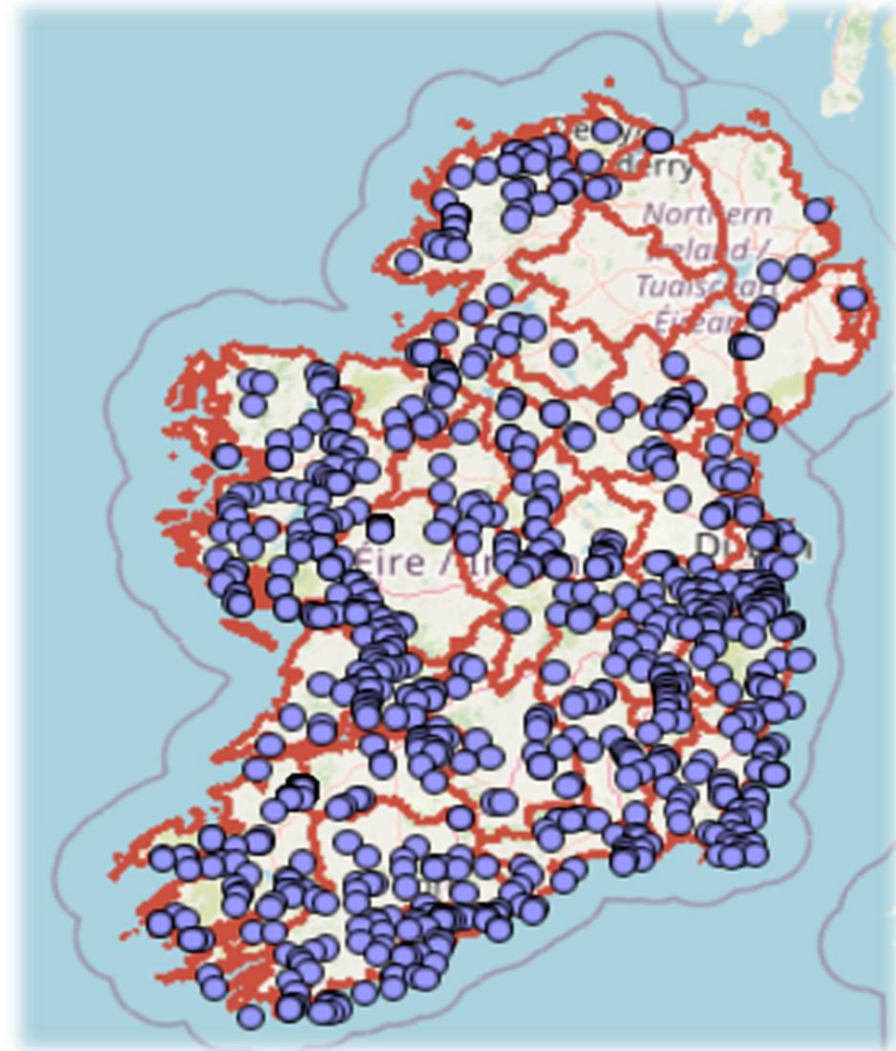
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agus Fiadhúlra  
National Parks and Wildlife Service



# Biodiversity Data Centre Records



2025 so far vs last 5 years



# Midland's Mink Eradication Programme



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