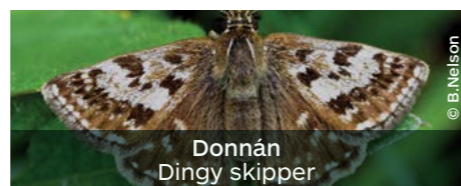


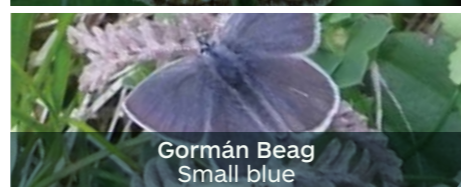
De bharr an réimse mór plandaí atá sna hoileáin, tá réimse féileacán freisin ann a bhíonn ag brath ar na plandaí seo.  
The fantastic array of plants on the islands produces a corresponding selection of butterflies which depend on the plants.

In éineacht leis an éagsúlacht shuibhir bláthanna tá réimse féileacán freisin in Oileáin Árann, agus bíonn siad seo ag ithe agus ag brath ar an réimse iontach plandaí féir atá ann. Tá fiche a haon cineál féileacán in Oileáin Árann, seo céatadán ard den 31 speiceas iomlán go náisiúnta. I measc na bhféileacán a facthas tá *Cupido minimus* (an Gormán Beag), ceann atá i mbaol go náisiúnta. Itheann péist chóilís an fhéileacán seo bláthanna an *Anthyllis vulneraria* (Méara Muire), bláth atá sách fairsing sna hoileáin. Itheann péist chóilís an *Erynnis tages* (an Donnán), seo féileacán atá beagnach i mbaol, *Lotus corniculatus* (Crobh Éin). Tá *Donnóg an Bhalla*, ceann eile atá i mbaol go náisiúnta, coitianta ar na hoileáin agus itheann péist chóilís an fhéileacán seo na féara nádúrtha.

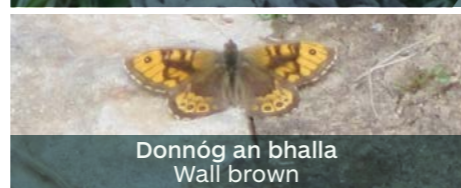
Along with the rich floral diversity, the Aran Islands also support a great variety of butterflies that feed and depend on the grassland plants. Twenty-one species of butterfly occur on the Aran Islands, a significant proportion of the national total of 31 species. Species found include *Cupido minimus* (Small blue butterfly) which is endangered nationally. The caterpillar of this butterfly feeds on the flowers of *Anthyllis vulneraria* (Kidney vetch) which occurs frequently on the islands. The caterpillar of the *Erynnis tages* (Dingy skipper), which is a near threatened species, feeds on *Lotus corniculatus* (Birds-foot-trefoil). Wall brown, also an endangered species nationally, is common on the islands and its caterpillars feed on the native grasses.



Donnán  
Dingy skipper



Gormán Beag  
Small blue



Donnóg an bhalla  
Wall brown



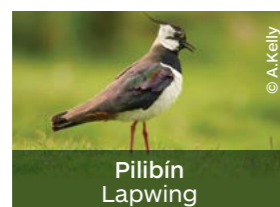
Beach (Bumbóg) Árann  
The Aran Bumble-bee

Tá beach (bumbóg) dá gcuid féin ag Oileáin Árann, *Bombus muscorum*, var *allenellus*, mar nach facthas an cineál seo ach sna hoileáin seo. Ar na féarthailte Machair freisin tá seilide nach bhfeictear ach go hannamh, sin an *Vertigo angustior* (Seilide rinseach béalchaol). D'fhéadfadh an speiceas seo a bheith i gcuid mhaith áiteacha ach teastaíonn miocraeráid ar leith uaidh agus cuireann draenáil, athruithe ar innilt agus ar bhainistiú as dó. Tá an speiceas seo liostaithe in Iarscríbhinn II Threoir an AE maidir le Gnáthóga agus measta a bheith faoi bhaol san Eoraip.

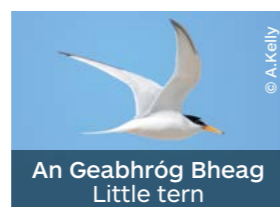
The Aran Islands has its own variety of bumble bee, *Bombus muscorum*, var *allenellus*, that has only been recorded on these islands. Also found on the Machair grasslands is the rare snail, *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed whorled snail). This species can occur on a wide variety of sites however the exact micro-climate that it requires is very strict and it is sensitive to drainage, changes in grazing and management. This species is on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive and is considered threatened within Europe.



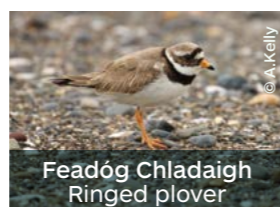
Cág Cosdearg  
Chough



Pilibín  
Lapwing



An Geabhróg Bheag  
Little tern



Feadóg Chladaigh  
Ringed plover



Clochrán  
Wheatear

Tá neart éanacha freisin ann de bharr an chórais feilméarachta. Neadáin *Vanellus vanellus* (Pilibín) speiceas éan ar an liosta dearg – sna féara Machair ar na hoileáin cé go bhfuil a n-uimhreacha ag titim in áiteacha eile. Taifeadh líon tábhachtach geabhróg (*Sterna paradisaea* (Geabhróg Artach), *Thalasseus sandvicensis* (Geabhróg Scothdhubh) agus *Sternula albifrons* (an Geabhróg Bheag) ar gor ar na hoileáin. Tá *Anthus pratensis* (Riabhóg Mhóna) agus *Alauda arvensis* (Fuiséog) coitianta freisin i chuide áit sna hoileáin. Tá an córas innilte fabhrach d'éanacha neadaithe talún, seo éanacha a d'fhulaing in áiteacha eile in Éirinn. De bharr innilt geimhridh bíonn gnáthóg freisin ann a fheileann *Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax* (Cág Cosdearg), préachán le gob dearg sainiúil, mar gur féar innilte gairid a theastaíonn uaidh le dul ar thóir feithidí agus cruimh. Tá an *Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax* liostaithe in Iarscríbhinn 1 Threoir an AE maidir le hÉin agus áirithe ar Liosta Dearg an leabhair 'Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland' (Newton et al., 1999)

The bird life associated with the farming system is also vibrant. *Vanellus vanellus* (Lapwing) a Red listed bird species are found nesting on Machair grassland on the islands whilst their numbers are declining elsewhere. Important numbers of terns (*Sterna paradisaea* (Arctic tern), *Thalasseus sandvicensis* (Sandwich tern) and *Sternula albifrons* (Little tern)) have been recorded breeding on the islands. *Anthus pratensis* (Meadow pipit) and *Alauda arvensis* (Skylark) are also common throughout the islands. The grazing system is favourable for ground nesting birds which have suffered in other parts of Ireland. The winter grazing also leaves a favourable habitat for *Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax* (Chough), a member of the crow family with a distinctive red beak, as it requires short turf grazed grasslands to forage for insects and grubs. *Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax* is on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and has been included in the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Newton et al., 1999)



## Bileog Eolais AranLIFE: FEILMÉARACHT OILEÁN AGUS AN BHITHÉAGSÚLACHT A THÉANN LEIS

### AranLIFE Information Sheet: ISLAND FARMING AND ITS ASSOCIATED BIODIVERSITY

CURTHA LE CHÉILE LE CÚNAMH IONSTRAIM AIRGEADAIS LIFE AN CHOMHPHOBAIL EORPAIGH  
PRODUCED WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LIFE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



Gnáth thírdhreach Árann  
Typical Aran landscape

## Feilmeacha Oileán

Ar Oileáin Árann, is é meánsaghas na bhfeilmeacha ná 6ha in Inis Oírr go 20ha in Inis Mór (i gcomparáid le 32ha go náisiúnta) agus is buailte beaga astu fhéin iad le claíocha cloch ina dtimpeall. Ní aon píosa mór amháin a bhíonn sna feilmeacha de ghnáth ach go leor buailte beaga a bhíonn scaipthe ar fud an oileáin. Sna hoileáin is córas talmhaíochta isealdéine i dtáirgeacht beithíoch atá i gceist agus go traidisiúnta d'fhágtai paiste go leataobh le curadóireacht dá n-úsáid fhéin. Ní bhíonn mórán beithíoch sa tréad, níos lú ná deich gcinn de ghnáth (meán de 0.4 Aonad Beostoic in aghaidh an heicteáir). Tharla na feilmeacha a bheith beag agus an meánráta stocála íseal tá na táirgí talmhaíochta a dhíoltar teoranta. Bítear ag brath go mór ar fhóirdheontais feirme ó tharla nach mórán beithíoch a bhíonn ann le díol. I 2014 ba €108 an heicteár ar an meán a bhí in íocaíocht Aonair Feirme na dtrí oileán i gcomparáid le meán náisiúnta de thimpeall €270.

## Island farms

The Aran Island farms range in average size from 6ha on Inis Oírr to 20ha on Inis Mór (compared to 32ha nationally) and consist of separate small fields surrounded by stone walls. Typically the farms are not in one block but consist of many small fields that may be scattered throughout the island. The agricultural system on the Islands is low-intensity agricultural production of cattle, traditionally with a small area of tillage for on-farm use. Herd size is low with most herds having less than 10 cattle (average 0.4 Livestock Units per hectare). With small farm size and low average stocking rate, sales of produce is limited. With low potential for livestock sales, there is a high reliance on subsidies on the farm. In 2014 the average Single Farm Payment per hectare for the three islands was €108 compared to a national average of approximately €270.

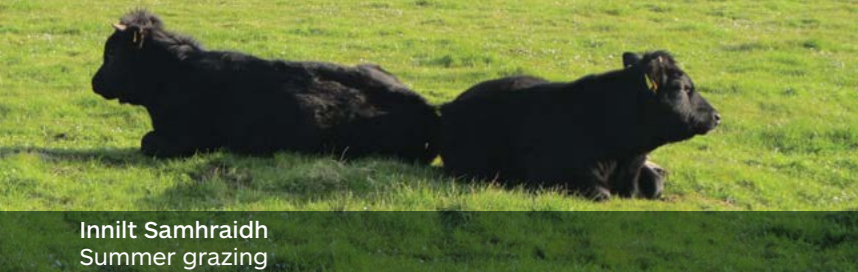
## An Córas Feilméarachta: Féar Geimhridh

Le linn an tséasúir fáis, itheann na beithíoch píosa den fheilm, déantar an innilt samhraidh seo de ghnáth ar ithir domhain níos gaire do na tithe cónaithe agus itear iad ó am breith (Márta/Aibreán) go deireadh an Fhómhair/Tús an Gheimhridh. Fágfar an féar geimhridh gan ithe sa samhradh le go mbeidh neart féir ann le n-ithe mar bharr ar a chois sa tréimhse ó Shamhain go Márta/Aibreán.

## The Farming System: Winterage

During the growing season, cattle graze part of the farm, with the remainder left to allow grass to grow which is then grazed in the winter as a standing crop. The summer grazing tends to be on deeper soils closer to the dwelling houses and is grazed from calving time (March/April) to late Autumn/Early winter. The winter grazing is left ungrazed during this period building up a bank of grass for grazing in the period November to March/April.





Innilt Samhraidh  
Summer grazing



Innilt Geimhridh  
Winter grazing

Is córas feilméarachta éifeachtúil é córas an Fhéir Geimhridh, ní bhíonn gá beithigh a choinneáil faoi dhíon ná áit a fháil do sciodar agus baineann an córas an fiúntas is tairbhí as teacht chun cinn cúiteach, seo nuair nach dtagann beithigh acu féin chomh maith sin ar feadh roinnt míosa de bharr tearc-chothaithe ach ansin, nuair atá cothú maith ar fáil ina dhiaidh sin go dtéann an breisiú beomheáchain níos airde ná mar a bheadh sé de ghnáth.

De bharr a bhfuil de chlaíocha tógtha timpeall ar bhualte agus go mbíonn na píosaí beaga feirme scaipthe thall is abhus, tá an córas talmhaíochta bunaithe ar chóras innilte de réir uainíochta. Faoin gcóras innilte de réir uainíochta baintear úsáid mhaith as an bhféar ach bíonn go leor oibre i gceist de bharr an méid buailte atá ann. Tá feilm 32 heicteár in Inis Mór mar shampla, sa bhfeilm seo tá 43 dáileacht talún atá scaipthe thart in áiteacha difríocht san oileán agus idir na dáileachtaí uilig tá 158 buaile ann.

Bíonn difríochtaí sa díolachán beostoc ó fheirm go feirm, ní dhíolann roinnt feilméaraí laonna ach ag an staid scoite i nDeireadh Fómhair agus coinníonn siad corr bhodóg, ach coinníonn dream eile na laonna ar feadh an gheimhridh agus díolann iad an bhliain dár gcionn. Tagann ceannaitheoirí beithíoch chomh fada leis na hoileáin agus ceannaíonn na beithigh le cur chun na mórthíre le bailchríoch a chur orthu. Bíonn beithigh de mhianach difríocht ar fheirmeacha difríocht freisin, ba 'Shorthorn' is mó a bhíodh ann ach táthar ag díriú anois ar chineálacha Mór-Roinne ar nós Charolais agus Limousine mar go bhfuil níos mó airgid astu.

The Winterage system is an efficient farming system, no cattle housing or slurry accommodation is required and the system takes full advantage of compensatory growth, a process where if growth is less than normal for some months due to under-nutrition, then later when good nutrition is available the live weight gain of the cattle will be greater than would otherwise be the case.

The dense network of field walls and highly fragmented farms mean the farming system is based on a rotational grazing system. The rotational grazing system means utilisation of grass is good but there is a high labour requirement particularly due to high number of fields. For example one 32 hectare farm on Inis Mór has 43 different land parcels scattered across the island made up of 158 fields.

Sales of livestock vary on farms; some farms sell the calves at weaning stage in October only keeping an occasional replacement heifer whilst others keep the calves over winter and sell the following year. Cattle buyers come to the islands and buy the cattle before exporting them to Ireland's mainland for finishing. Cattle breeds also vary on farms, Shorthorn was the predominant breed but with a higher financial return for continental cattle, breed type has switched to more continental types such as Charolais and Limousine.



Mianach éagsúil beithíoch ar Oileáin Árann  
Various cattle breeds of the Aran Islands

## Na Gnáthóga

Is ar ghnáthóga na bhféar cailcreach agus ar an bPábháil Aolchloiche, a chruthaíonn mosaic go minic sna buailte, is mó a dhéantar feilméarach. Tá tábhacht idirnáisiúnta leis na gnáthóga feirmithe seo ó thaobh chaomhnú an dúlra de agus tá siad ainmnithe mar Ghnáthóga Tosaíochta i dTreoir an AE maidir le Gnáthóga, mar fhéarthailte tirime leathnádúrtha agus faiséis talamh scrobarnaí ar shubstráití cailcreacha (Festuco-Brometalia) (suímh thábhachtacha magairlí) (\*6210) agus pábháil Aolchloiche (\*8240\*). Tá suas le 75% de na hoileáin ainmnithe mar LCSanna mar gheall ar na gnáthóga tosaíochta speiceas shaibhir fheirmithe seo. Gnáthóg tosaíochta feirmithe eile atá ann ná Machair (21A0\*), seo talamh cothrom féarach le cósta agus níl sé ach ar chóstaí thiarthuaidh na hAlban agus na hÉireann agus níl níos faide ó dheas ná Oileáin Árann in aon áit sa domhan. Is le linn an tSamhraidh is mó a itear an Machair ar na hoileáin.

## The Habitats

Calcareous grasslands and Limestone Pavement are the main farmed habitat types often forming a mosaic within the fields. These farmed habitats are internationally important for nature conservation and are designated as Priority Habitats in the EU Habitats Directive as Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (important orchid sites) (6210\*) and Limestone pavement (8240\*). Approximately 75% of the islands are designated as SACs because of these species-rich farmed priority habitats. Another designated farmed habitat present is Machair (21A0\*), a flat coastal grassland that only occurs on the northwest coasts of Ireland and Scotland with the Aran Islands marking the most southerly end of Machair distribution globally. On the islands, Machair is grazed predominantly during the summer months.

## Bithéagsúlacht agus an córas feilméarachta

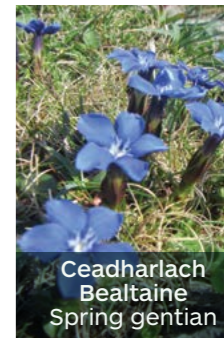
Caomhnaíonn an córas feilméarachta ina n-itear glasfhéar is féar geimhridh bithéagsúlacht na bhféarthailte. Fágann an innilt geimhridh an féar gearr agus san Earrach tagann luibheanna ar nós *Gentiana verna* (Ceadharlach Bealtaine), *Geranium sanguineum* (Crohb Dearg), *Lotus corniculatus* (Crohb Éin) agus *Galium verum* (Boladh Cnis) faoi bhláth agus líonann siad na buailte le dath agus cuireann a síolta i dtalamh, agus ó tharla nach n-itear na buailte seo sa samhradh caomhnaítear agus feabhsaítear an carnán síolta agus saibhreas speiceas na mbuailte.

Chomh maith leis an meascán speiceas plandaí atá ar na hoileáin tá speicis shuimiúla eile go fairsing iontu freisin, cinn nach mbíonn ach go hannamh nó nach mbíonn beag ná mór in áiteacha eile. Tá plandaí anseo nach bhfeictear níos faide ó thuaidh ná seo agus a cheanglaítear níos mó le ceantair Mór-roinne de chuid na Fraince agus na Spáinne, samplaí de na plandaí is ea *Neotinea maculata* (Magairlín Glas), *Ophrys apifera* (Magairlín na mBeach), *Rubia peregrina* (Garbhluas na Boirne).

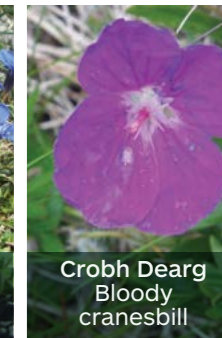
## Biodiversity and the farming system

The farming system of winter and summer grazing conserves the biodiversity of the grasslands. The winter grazing produces a short turf which in the springtime, herbs such as *Gentiana verna* (Spring gentian), *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody cranesbill), *Lotus corniculatus* (Birds foot trefoil) and *Galium verum* (Lady's bedstraw) flower and fill the fields full of colour, and then set seed, free from grazing in the summer months and so the seed bank and species-richness of the fields is conserved and enhanced.

As well as the diversity of plant species on the islands there are also interesting species frequent on the islands that are rare or absent elsewhere. There are plants at their most northerly limit of their distribution and are more associated with Mediterranean regions of France and Spain, *Neotinea maculata* (Dense flowered orchid), *Ophrys apifera* (Bee orchid), *Rubia peregrina* (Wild madder) are examples of such plants.



Ceadharlach Bealtaine  
Spring gentian



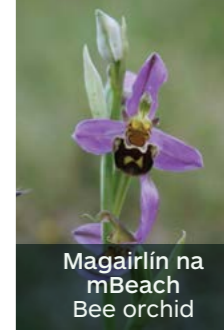
Crohb Dearg  
Bloody cranesbill



Crohb Éin  
Birds foot trefoil



Magairlín Glas  
Dense flowered orchid



Magairlín na mBeach  
Bee orchid



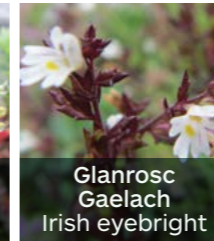
Garbhluas na Boirne  
Wild madder



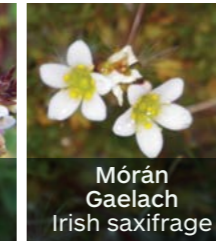
Plandaí Artacha-Alpacha  
Arctic-Alpine plants



Lus na Laoch  
Roseroot

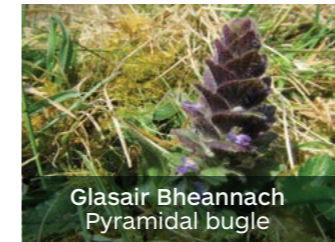


Glanros Gaelach  
Irish eyebright



Mórán Gaelach  
Irish saxifrage

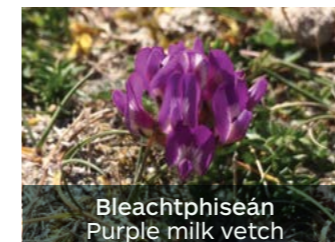
Speicis atá in Oileáin Árann ach iad go hannamh in áiteacha eile  
Species that occur on the Aran Islands but are rare elsewhere



Glasair Bheannach  
Pyramidal bugle



Grianrós Liath  
Hoary rock rose



Bleachtphiseán  
Purple milk vetch



Cainneann  
Babington's leek

Bíonn plandaí Artacha-Alpacha freisin ann agus plandaí nach bhfuil ach in áiteacha ar leith i Sasana agus in Éirinn, ar nós *Rhodiola rosea* (Lus na Laoch), *Gentiana verna* (Ceadharlach Bealtaine), *Euphrasia salisburgensis* (Glanros Gaelach) agus *Saxifraga rosacea* (Mórán Gaelach). Fásann na speicis seo sna móineir thuas an-ard ar mhór-roinn na hEorpa ach fásann siad anseo ag leibhéal na farraige. Rud eile atá difríocht faoi Flóra Oileán Árann ná go bhféadfadh na 'gnáthphlandaí' Artacha Alpacha seo a bheith ag fás taobh le taobh le plandaí a d'fheicfeá in áiteacha gar don Mheánmhuir.

Ansin tá speicis ann a fhásann i gcorr-áit in Éirinn agus Sasana, e.g. *Ajuga pyramidalis* (Glasair Bheannach), *Helianthemum oelandicum* (Grianrós Liath), *Astragalus danicus* (Bleachtphiseán), agus *Allium ampeloprasum* leagan eile, *babingtonii* (Cainneann). Tá na speicis seo in Oileáin Árann agus i gcorr áit fánach eile sa tír, níl an Bleachtphiseán (*Astragalus danicus*) mar shampla in aon áit in Éirinn ach amháin ar Oileáin Árann.

There are also Arctic-Alpine plants and plants with restricted distribution within Britain and Ireland, such as *Rhodiola rosea* (Roseroot), *Gentiana verna* (Spring gentian), *Euphrasia salisburgensis* (Irish eyebright) and *Saxifraga rosacea* (Irish saxifrage). These species are found in the meadows at high altitudes in mainland Europe but occur close to sea level here. An anomaly of the Aran Island Flora is that these 'typical' Arctic-Alpine plants may occur alongside plants typical of Mediterranean regions.

Then there are species with a limited distribution in Ireland and Britain, e.g. *Ajuga pyramidalis* (Pyramidal bugle), *Helianthemum oelandicum* (Hoary rock rose), *Astragalus danicus* (Purple milk vetch) and *Allium ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii* (Babingtons leek). These species occur on the Aran Islands and few other places within the country, for example *Astragalus danicus* (Purple milk vetch) only occurs on the Aran Islands within Ireland.

Féarthalamh cailcreach le saibhreas Magairlí (6210\*), Pábháil Aolchloiche (8240\*) agus Machair (21A0\*)  
Orchid-rich calcareous grassland (6210\*), Limestone pavement (8240\*) and Machair (21A0\*)

