
Fw: Maughanaclea Wind Farm, Case Reference ACP-324165-26

From SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>
Date Mon 9/14/2026 9:01 AM
To Honor Caird Marren <honor.cairdmarren@pleanala.ie>

 1 attachment (90 KB)

Observation Ref 4.3.2 Nature Conversation.pdf;

From: Tim Foster <timlfoster141@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2026 2:11 PM
To: SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>
Cc: Collette Foster <ctfoster28@gmail.com>
Subject: Maughanaclea Wind Farm, Case Reference ACP-324165-26

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Good afternoon,

In response to your letter of 14 August 2026, please find attached our comments on the latest documents from the Developer specifically in respect of Section 4.3.2 Nature Conversation.

We trust that you will give due consideration to these comments in making your decision.

Regards

Collette and Tim Foster

Dear Sirs,

Ref: Maughanaclea Wind Farm ACP-324165-26

In response to your letter of 14 August 2016 on the above reference case please find below our observations on the Developer's latest information.

We live in the Mealagh Valley and are within 4km of the development. However, nobody from the Developer's team has ever called to discuss the development with me nor my wife.

We raised objections to this development on several grounds in our original observations but in the light of the comments from the Developer with their responses on Clause 4.3.2 - Nature Conservation we should like to make the following observations for you to consider in your decision as to whether to approve this proposal.

The only metric considered by the Developer seems to be the effect on the wildlife is collision.

However, there are other factors which will affect Section 4.3.2 Nature Conversation that need to be considered.

Firstly, the effect of the red lights, identified in Section 4.2 of the MKO document as being required.

Red lights do particularly bother birds, especially migratory species, and are more disruptive than other colours due to how birds perceive light and their navigational strategies

This is thought to be due to a few factors:

Atmospheric Scattering: Red light penetrates atmospheric haze and fog more effectively than other colours. This means red lights are visible over longer distances, attracting birds from further away.

Navigational Disruption: Some research suggests that the wavelengths associated with red light interfere with birds' internal magnetic compass, which they use for orientation during migration. This interference can lead to disorientation and collisions.

Attraction/Entrapment: Birds may be mistakenly drawn to red lights, perceiving them as celestial bodies or suitable landing sites. Once trapped within the light's aura, they can become disoriented and exhaust themselves.¹

This could have a major impact on the avian environment but cannot be deemed to have been considered in the analysis of the effect on wildlife submitted by the Developer as there is no data on nocturnal flight in the EIAR Ch. 7 nor in the Responses to Observations Section 4.3.2.

The only conclusion, therefore, must be that the Developer has failed to establish the effect on wildlife of the development and therefore it should not be allowed.

¹ Do red lights bother birds? Laura Young / October 27, 2025 Institute for Environmental Research and Education (IERE)

Secondly, an article in The Moorland Association of the UK, Dr Jennifer Brewin concluded that:

1. It is clear that poorly sited wind turbines can have negative impacts on some species of bird in the local area.
2. We don't yet know how significant these effects might be in the context of local or UK-wide species populations, but this is an important question as a small additional mortality can lead to significant population effects for some species.
3. However, turbines located inappropriately, especially on sensitive moorlands can cause significant habitat displacement for ground-nesting birds and potential collision risks for raptors.²

Has the Developer considered all mitigation in siting of and design of the turbines? This article would indicate that the Developer has not. Analysis of the application shows that there are several mitigating factors suggested that have not been considered by the Developer. Again, further grounds for rejecting the application. For example, not having all the blades the same colour may prevent collision (but what is the effect of that to humans?)

Third, the effect of such a large development and in conjunction with other proposed developments on the whole environment.

One study published in 2009 looked at twelve moorland bird species and found that seven were affected by the presence of turbines. Across these species, the density of breeding birds was between 15 and 53% lower within 500m of the turbines, compared to further away. The effect was most marked for buzzard, hen harrier, golden plover, snipe, curlew and wheatear.³

Findings from specific studies have shown:

- 79% fewer golden plover within 400m of turbines.
- Declines in curlew (40%), snipe (53%), and red grouse during wind farm construction.
- Habitat use by golden plovers within wind farm areas significantly reduced up to at least 200 m from the turbines, and breeding density lower than predicted at wind farm sites.
- Total bird densities 0.3-1.3 birds/ha lower at wind farm sites compared to reference areas.

In a research paper from October 2018 on the effects of the development of wind farms on upland areas the following results were found.

1. Total bird densities were lower at wind farms than at control sites, and the greatest differences occurred close to turbines.
2. Densities of forest species were significantly lower within 100 m of turbines than at greater distances.

² T Fernández-Bellón, Darío & Wilson, Mark & Irwin, Sandra & O'Halloran, John. (2018). Effects of development of wind energy and associated changes in land use on bird densities in upland areas. *Conservation Biology*. 33. 10.1111/cobi.13239.

³ Pearce-Higgins, James & Stephen, Leigh & Langston, R. & Bainbridge, Ian & Bullman, Rhys. (2009). The distribution of breeding birds around upland wind farms. *Journal of Applied Ecology*. 46. 1323 - 1331. 10.1111/j.1365-2664.2009.01715.x.

3. In particular, reductions in forest cover adjacent to turbines was linked to the observed decrease in densities of forest species.
4. Open-habitat species' densities were lower at wind farms but were not related to distance from turbines and were negatively related to size of the wind farm. This suggests that, for these species, wind-farm effects may occur at a landscape scale.
5. Our findings indicate that the scale and intensity of the displacement effects of wind farms on upland birds depends on bird species' habitat associations and that the observed effects are mediated by changes in land use associated with wind-farm construction. This highlights the importance of construction effects and siting of turbines, tracks, and other infrastructure in understanding the impacts of wind farms on biodiversity.⁴

In respect of Wind Turbine Noise (WTN), a scoping review on the impacts of wind turbine noise on wildlife was conducted to explore the effects of WTN on wildlife. These impacts are summarised below and it highlights several key knowledge gaps that limit our ability to assess the effects on the environment and in particular birds of wind farm developments of this scale:

- Taxonomic and geographic bias: Research on WTN remains concentrated on a limited number of taxa and regions, leaving substantial gaps in tropical systems, aquatic environments, and under-studied species. Expanding research across a broader range of ecosystems and taxa will improve understanding of variation in species responses and help identify vulnerable groups that may be overlooked.
- Long-term and population-level effects: Most existing studies focus on short-term behavioural responses, while relatively little is known about the long-term consequences of chronic noise exposure on populations, species diversity and community-level interactions (Francis et al 2023, Radford 2024). Larger-scale, longer-term studies will therefore be important for determining whether observed behavioural responses translate into ecologically significant effects.
- Acoustic characterisation and reporting: Greater consistency is needed in the reporting of acoustic metrics and study design details (McKenna et al 2016). Improved acoustic characterisation, including frequency-specific measurements and standardised reporting, will facilitate comparisons among studies and strengthen future meta-analytical assessments. Addressing this gap will require closer integration of acoustic monitoring with biological sampling across species and landscapes.
- Mechanisms of impact: Further research is needed to distinguish direct effects of WTN from responses associated with other forms of disturbance linked to wind energy infrastructure. Natural experiments can provide insight into the consequences of prolonged noise exposure (Bunkley et al 2015, Phillips et al 2021), while well-designed playback studies can isolate underlying mechanisms by controlling for confounding variables (Ware et al 2015, Simpson et al 2016, Lehnardt et al 2025). Combining these methods

⁴ Effects of development of wind energy and associated changes in land use on bird densities in upland areas Darío Fernández-Bellón, Mark W. Wilson, Sandra Irwin, and John O'Halloran

Environ. Res.: Ecol. 5(2026) 032001 G Shannon et al enables ecological realism to be coupled with experimental precision to better understand the direct and indirect effects of noise on wildlife (Nedelec et al 2022).

Overall, the evidence reviewed here indicates that WTN can affect wildlife across a range of taxa and ecological contexts, although important uncertainties remain regarding the scale, persistence, and population-level consequences of these effects.

Given the still limited evidence base, addressing the key knowledge gaps identified in this review is essential. Progress will require coordinated interdisciplinary approaches integrating ecology, acoustics, engineering, and policy to support wind energy development compatible with biodiversity conservation⁵

The studies carried out by the Applicant do not consider anything other than the effect on population of avian species through collision, whereas there are clearly other effects on wildlife populations which should be considered and analysed to show the real effect on the environment of such large-scale projects. This analysis of Wind Turbine Noise shows that we do not fully understand the harm that such projects can have on the environment.

There are so many reasons why this development is incompatible with the local and national economy, the Cork County Development Plan and the mental and physical health of the community. However, in respect of the Nature Conservation and Section 4.3.2, the Developer should not be allowed to ignore the latest information in respect to the environment and An Coimisiún Pleanála should reject the application on the grounds that the full scale of the harm to the environment have not been identified by the Developer.

Yours faithfully

Collette and Tim Foster
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P75 R206

⁵ Shannon, Graeme & Cordes, Line & May, Roel. (2026). A scoping review on the impacts of wind turbine noise on wildlife. Environmental Research: Ecology. 5. 10.1088/2752-664X/ae7f90.