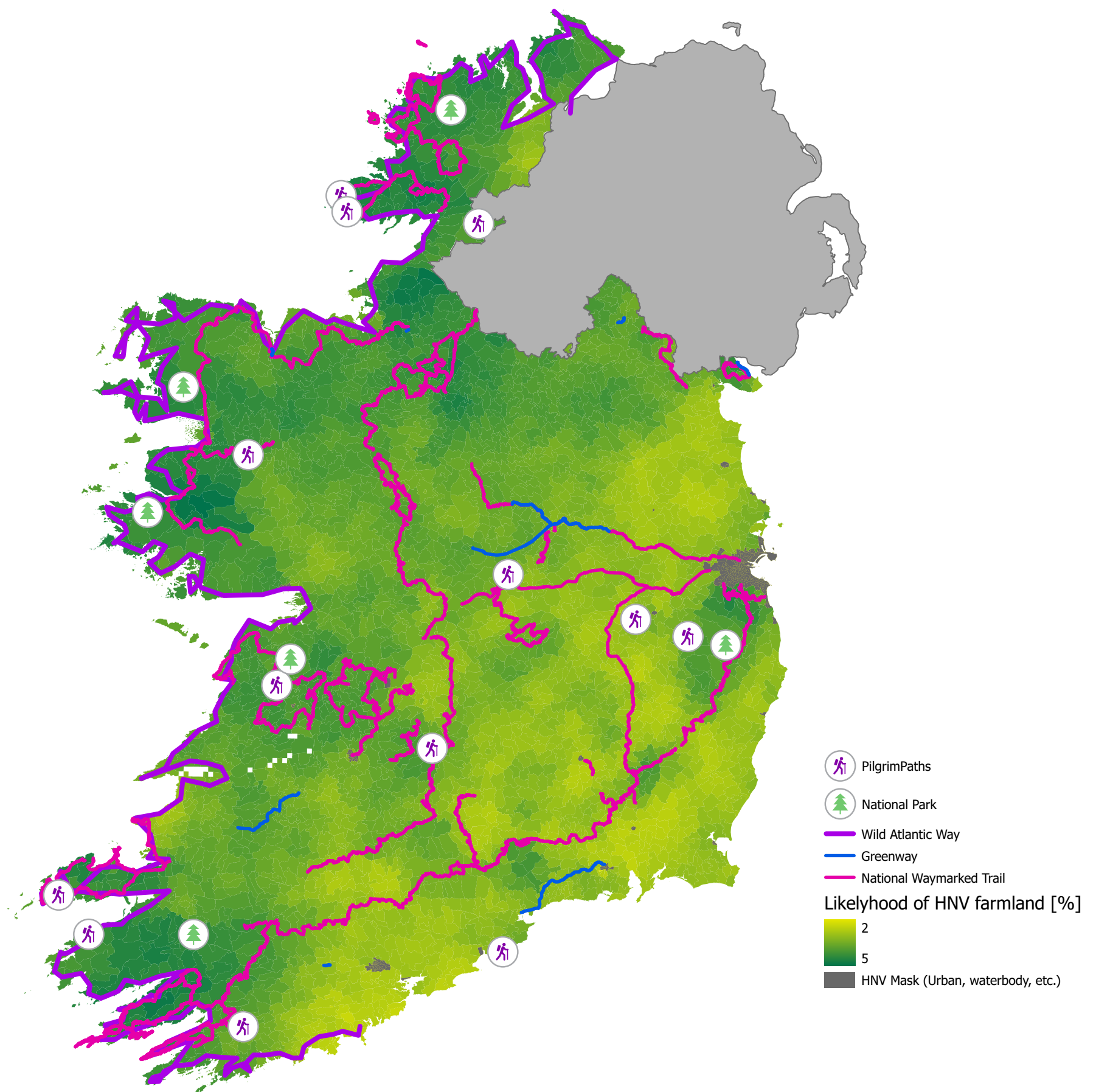


Natural Capital, foundation of the bioeconomy

Spotlight on HNV farmland and cultural services



As the Bioeconomy in Ireland relies on our Natural Capital, understanding natural capital stocks and flows facilitates a clear understanding of how natural systems can be used in a sustainable way to build Ireland's Bioeconomy. Natural Capital Accounting involves mapping the extent and condition of nature's stocks to account for the services that flow from these areas for human benefits. This is the focus of the INCASE (Irish Natural Capital Accounting for Sustainable Environments) project. INCASE is gathering data for selected catchment areas to establish the process steps to develop natural capital accounts in the Irish context. The High Nature Value farmland map developed by Teagasc incorporates five indicators of Natural Capital extent, condition and use, thereby linking the stocks of natural capital with flows of services and benefits. The HNV map combines data relating to: areas of high cover of semi-natural habitat cover, stocking density, hedgerow density, river and stream density, and soil diversity; therefore, it provides a useful baseline indicator of natural capital in Ireland. To further showcase the importance of Natural Capital, we overlaid the HNV map with Cultural services. Specifically national parks, pilgrimage trails and national walking trails, as well as the Wild Atlantic Way. These trails are of cultural (heritage, recreation) and economic (tourism and recreational industries) importance, and are strongly linked to farm structure, HNV farmland landscapes and our tourism sector. This is highlighted on the map, illustrating that the majority of the cultural services is linked to areas with a high probability of HNV occurring.

Sources of data: Heritage Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sports Ireland, activeme.ie