

Wildlife Teaching Hospital Planning Progress (2025)



Visualisation of the proposed Wildlife Teaching Hospital development at the Mornington site, illustrating building layout and integration within the surrounding coastal environment.

During 2025, Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland made significant progress in advancing plans for Ireland's first dedicated Wildlife Teaching Hospital, reaching the most advanced stage of development achieved to date. A multidisciplinary professional planning team was established to support the proposed three acre site in Mornington, Co. Meath, including an architect, ecologist, engineer, hydrologist, and landscape and visual impact specialists. Detailed technical assessments and environmental studies were undertaken to inform the planning process and ensure appropriate consideration of ecological, infrastructural, and site sustainability requirements.

In parallel, Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland prepared extensive operational documentation demonstrating how the facility would function in practice, including the development of standard operating procedures covering wildlife intake, biosecurity, veterinary teaching, rehabilitation processes, and overall facility management. The volume of material submitted reflects the significant organisational work required to progress a national wildlife teaching and training facility.

Public engagement formed an important part of the process, with both online and in person information sessions held to inform local communities and stakeholders and provide opportunities for discussion and feedback. The project also received regional newspaper coverage, contributing to wider public awareness of the need for dedicated wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary teaching infrastructure in Ireland.




The proposed Wildlife Teaching Hospital received letters of support from a high calibre group of stakeholders including veterinary and wildlife specialists, University College Dublin Dean Prof. Rory Breathnach, Senator Alison Comyn, representatives of Drogheda Chamber, conservation organisations, academic contributors, and national and international collaborators, reflecting strong cross sector confidence in the project and widespread recognition of the need for dedicated national wildlife teaching and rehabilitation infrastructure in Ireland.

Collectively, the work completed during 2025 represents a major milestone in progressing the Wildlife Teaching Hospital from concept development towards formal planning consideration and demonstrates sustained organisational capacity to deliver long term wildlife education and rehabilitation infrastructure at a national level.

Wildlife Teaching Hospital

Project Planning Team

The Wildlife Teaching Hospital project is supported by a multidisciplinary professional planning team bringing together expertise in engineering, ecological design, hydrology, and planning to ensure a robust, environmentally responsible, and professionally led development process.

		
<p>Eddie Phelan</p>	<p>Mike Haslam</p>	<p>Marie Louise Heffernan</p>
<p>Chartered Civil and Structural Engineer</p>	<p><i>Ecological Architect and Lecturer</i></p>	<p><i>Ecologist - Environmental Consultant</i></p>
<p>Eddie Phelan, BEng, CEng, MIEI, Chartered Civil and Structural Engineer and CEO of VCL Consultants, led the engineering components of the project. With over two decades' experience delivering civil and structural consultancy services across Ireland and internationally, and active leadership roles within Engineers Ireland and the Institution of Structural Engineers, he provided technical leadership in infrastructure design, structural assessment, and planning compliance.</p>	<p>Mike Haslam, BSc, BArch, MPhil, MRIAI, Director of Haslam & Co Architects and lecturer in Architectural Design at Technological University Dublin, led the architectural design and overall coordination of the Wildlife Teaching Hospital project. An ecological architect specialising in sustainable and environmentally responsive design, he developed the facility layout and building concept while coordinating multidisciplinary inputs from engineering, ecological, hydrological, and planning specialists to deliver an integrated and planning-ready proposal.</p>	<p>Marie Louise Heffernan, MSc, CEnv, MCIEEM, Chartered Environmentalist and Director of Aster Environmental Consultants Ltd., led ecological assessment for the proposed Mornington site. With over 30 years' experience in ecological consultancy, she specialises in Appropriate Assessment, Natura Impact Statements, biodiversity planning, and implementation of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Her work includes environmental impact assessment, ornithological and marine ecology studies, renewable energy and infrastructure projects, safeguarding habitats and species.</p>



Savithri Savrinati

Magnaparte Ltd

Hydrologist

Visual Impact Consultancy

Savithri Senaratne (Savrinati), Principal Hydrologist and founder of HydroS Engineering Hydrology Consultants, led hydrological assessment and water management analysis for the project. With more than 20 years' professional experience in Ireland, she specialises in flood risk assessment, drainage strategy design, surface water management, and hydrological modelling for planning and development projects, ensuring compliance with environmental and planning authority requirements relating to water systems and site sustainability

Magnaparte Ltd, an Irish architectural visualisation and design practice led the preparation of visual impact material for the planning process. The practice specialises in verified views, photomontages, 3D architectural visualisations, and in-situ representations demonstrating how proposed developments will appear within their surrounding landscape. Their work is used within planning submission documentation to assess visual impact and support decision-making through accurate spatial representation prior to construction.