The island of Ireland is located on the western edge of Europe, extending from about 51°N to 55°N and from 5°W to 10°W. It has a total area of 84,421 km², of which 70,282 km² form the Republic of Ireland (hereafter referred to as ‘Ireland’). A total of 140 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are identified in this inventory (Table 1, Map 1), covering an area of about 4,309 km², equivalent to c.6% of the land area of the country. These 140 sites include 48 newly identified IBAs. In the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), 110 IBAs were identified. During the current review, 91 of these original sites were found to still qualify under the current (revised) IBA criteria. One of these sites (former site IE110) has been split into two IBAs for this inventory, and a number of the others have been expanded in size. Seven out of the 110 original sites did not meet criteria and do not feature in this inventory (they are listed in Table 1). The remaining 12 of the 110 original sites have been amalgamated with six of the 91 qualifying sites to form enlarged IBAs.

The long coastline of Ireland extends over 7,100 km (EPA 1996) and has a wide variety of habitats. About 60% of the IBAs are coastal, with islands and cliffs being important for breeding seabirds and estuaries for wintering wildfowl. The interior of Ireland is dominated by a low-lying limestone plain, surrounded by mountains.

### Table 1. Summary of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>1949 code</th>
<th>International/National name</th>
<th>Administrative region</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Criteria (see p. 11)</th>
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<td>001 IE001</td>
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<td>004 —</td>
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<td>Lough Foyle</td>
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<td>005 IE004</td>
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<td>Lough Swilly including Blanket Nook and Insh Lake</td>
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<td>IE009, IE010 Inishkeeragh and Illancrone</td>
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<td>West</td>
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<td>— Coolcarran and Carrylane complex</td>
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Table 1 ... continued. Summary of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland. 140 IBAs covering 4,309 km² *

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<td>Dungarvan Harbour</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, C2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>095</td>
<td>IE079</td>
<td>Tramore Backstrand</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>096</td>
<td>IE080</td>
<td>Bannew Bay</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>097</td>
<td>IE081</td>
<td>Kearnagh Islands</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>098</td>
<td>IE082</td>
<td>The Cull/Killig</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, C2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>099</td>
<td>IE083</td>
<td>Saltree Islands</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>B2, B3, C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>IE084</td>
<td>Tacumshin Lake</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>IE085</td>
<td>Lady's Island Lake</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, C2, C4, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>IE086</td>
<td>Westford Harbour and Slobs</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cahore marshes</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wicklow Head</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>C7</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>IE088</td>
<td>North Wicklow coastal marshes</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>IE110</td>
<td>Wicklow Mountains</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>B2, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>IE110</td>
<td>Pouaphoula reservoir</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Barrow flood-plain</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C4</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>IE090, IE089</td>
<td>Dublin Bay</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>Howth Head</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>B2, C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland's Eye</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>IE091</td>
<td>Baldyke Bay</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>IE092</td>
<td>Malahide/Broadmeadow estuary</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>A4ii, B1i, B2, C3, C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>IE093</td>
<td>Lambay Island</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4</td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>IE095</td>
<td>Rotherstoun estuary</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>368</td>
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<tr>
<td>116</td>
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<td>Skerries Islands</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>B1i, B3, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>IE094</td>
<td>Rockabill</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, C2, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nanny estuary and shoreline</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>IE107</td>
<td>Boyne estuary</td>
<td>East, North East</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>IE106</td>
<td>Stanavan-Brajantown</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>A4ii, B1i, B2, B3, C3, C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>IE108</td>
<td>Dundalk Bay</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4</td>
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<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>IE109</td>
<td>Carlingford Lough</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>4,660</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>IE105</td>
<td>Lough Oughter</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>B1i, B3, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lough Kinane and Lough Derragh</td>
<td>North East, Midlands</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>B1i, C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>IE104</td>
<td>Loughs Killass and Forbes, and Ballykenney/Fishertown bogs</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lough Arrow</td>
<td>Midlands, North West</td>
<td>1,266</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
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<td>Bellanagare bog</td>
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<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lough Ree</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>10,788</td>
<td>C7</td>
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<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>IE099</td>
<td>River Suck callows: Shannon Bridge-Castelecote</td>
<td>Midlands, West</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>IE096</td>
<td>Lough Derg</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>11,949</td>
<td>A4ii, B1i, C3, C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>IE098</td>
<td>River Shannon callows: Portumna-Athlone</td>
<td>Midlands, West</td>
<td>5,748</td>
<td>A1i, A4ii, B1i, B2, B3, B1ii, C1, C2, C3, C4, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>IE098</td>
<td>River Little Brossa callows: New Bridge-River Shannon</td>
<td>South East, Midlands</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>A4ii, A4iii, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
<td>All Saints bog</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mongan bog</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>IE102</td>
<td>Lough Iron-Clin Lough</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
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<td>Garriokil bog</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lough Sheelin</td>
<td>East, North East, Midlands</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>IE103</td>
<td>Lough Dentavaraugh</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>B1i, B3, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>IE101</td>
<td>Lough Owel</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>IE100</td>
<td>Lough Emmell</td>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1,404</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This figure includes the total area of two cross-border IBAs (sites 004 and 122), thus including (very approximately) c.120 km² of United Kingdom territory.

Sites identified in the previous inventory of IBAs in Europe (Grimmett and Jones 1989) but no longer considered to be IBAs IE034 Moynish Beg; IE035 Inishraher Islet; IE066 Moylaun Island; IE069 Whiddy Island; IE070 Rauningwater Bay Islands; IE087 Thures Sugar Factory Lagoons.
(up to 1,000 m above sea-level). Lakes and inland loughs are plentiful, covering c.6% of the land area and predominating at c.20% of the IBAs. There are numerous peatlands in the country, with raised bogs in the midlands and blanket bogs in the uplands, especially in the west, and c.10% of the IBAs are predominantly bogland.

**ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE**

Map 1 shows that 40 of the 140 IBAs are of global importance (qualifying under ‘A’ criteria) and 63 are of European importance (‘B’ criteria being the highest met). The remaining 37 IBAs qualify under EU criteria (‘C’) only.

The 48 newly identified IBAs comprise upland sites (seven are mainly blanket bog, four raised bog), coastal sites (six are mainly coastal islands, ten cliffs), wetlands identified by the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (four estuaries, 11 lakes, one coastal lake, two wetgrassland sites) and sites important for species of global conservation concern (three agricultural grasslands). Of these new sites, 24 meet IBA criteria for particular bird species (three for *Crex crex*, five for *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, four for *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, three for *Branta bernicla hrota*, four for *Branta leucopsis* and the remainder for other waterfowl). The other 24 new sites are designated or soon-to-be-designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EC Birds Directive (thus meeting C7 criteria).

There are 67 species of European conservation concern (SPEC) which breed regularly in Ireland (Tucker and Heath 1994). Of these, the only species of global conservation concern is *Crex crex*. A further 33 of these 67 breeding species have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe, including a number of seabirds for which Ireland holds important breeding congregations.

Eight IBAs have been selected to cover the most important breeding sites for *Crex crex*. Four of the sites are globally important, meeting the A1 criterion (Table 2), of which River Shannon callows (site 131) holds the largest number of breeding birds in the country, while the other four sites are important in the EU context (meeting C criteria).

On a European and global level, Ireland is particularly important for breeding seabirds and has 13 such SPECs, nine of which have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994). Of Ireland’s 84 coastal IBAs, 34 are of international importance for breeding seabirds. Nine IBAs hold (individually) at least 1% of the global breeding population of a seabird species (meeting the A4ii/i criteria), for the following five species: *Puffinus puffinus*, *Hydrobates pelagicus*, *Sula bassana*, *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* and *Sterna dougallii* (Table 3). A further three IBAs support 1% or more of a distinct breeding population of a seabird species (thus meeting the B1/i criteria), for four species: *Puffinus puffinus*, *Sterna sandvicensis*, *Uria aalge* and *Fratercula arctica* (Table 3). The Blasket Islands (site 073) and The Skelligs (site 076) are of particular note, supporting a wide diversity of breeding seabirds in numbers of international importance.

A total of 71 IBAs support particular species of wintering wildfowl or waders in numbers that are important at the global or European level—in total, 24 such species meet such criteria (A4i, B1i, B2, B3). Of these species and sites, Table 3 lists those species that meet the A4i/B1i criteria (at 66 out of the 71 sites). Regarding those species/sites meeting B2/B3 criteria outside the breeding season, eight SPECs overwinter at Irish IBAs in numbers of international importance (out of the total of 14 ‘winter SPECs’ identified in Europe by Tucker and Heath [1994]): *Cygnus columbianus*, *Cygnus cygnus*, *Branta leucopsis*, *Aythya marila*, *Calidris canutus*, *Calidris alpina*, *Limosa lapponica* and *Numenius
Thirty-six coastal IBAs are important for wintering waterfowl (31 estuaries, four coastal lakes and one coastal shore), along with river wetlands and lakes.

"Wetlands of international importance" in the sense of the Ramsar Convention, i.e. those regularly holding 20,000 or more wintering waterfowl, include Lough Swilly (site 005), Cork Harbour (site 088), Wexford Harbour and Slob (site 102), Dublin Bay (site 109) and Dundalk Bay (site 121). The River Shannon catchment, when taken as a whole (including sites 068, 129, 131 and 132), is the most important site for wintering waterfowl in Ireland, with particularly high numbers of **Cygnus cygnus, Anser albifrons, flavirostris, Pluvialis apricaria and Limosa limosa**. Although *Anser albifrons* is not a species of European conservation concern, the subspecies *A. a. flavirostris* (which breeds in Greenland) is listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive and there are especially important sites for the subspecies at sites 0102 where over a third of the Irish population winter (005 and 132). The traditional habitat for this species is bog and this is still used by some flocks in Ireland. Ireland also supports, almost exclusively, the wintering population of *Branta bernicla hrota*, which breeds in the central Canadian Arctic.

A total of 50 IBAs are important for breeding SPECs, meeting B2/B3 criteria (Table 4). The IBA network does not adequately cover a number of dispered, scarce and data-deficient breeding species, in particular *Pluvialis apricaria* and several species of raptor (Table 4), as well as *Gavia stellata* and *Melanitta nigra*.

### Table 2. Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland that are important for species of global conservation concern (meeting criterion A1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Crex crex</em> Comrake</td>
<td>012, 013, 014, 131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland that support important numbers of one or more congregatory species (i.e. meeting criteria A4 and/or B1). IBAs meeting both criteria A4 and B1 for the species are shown in **bold**. IBAs meeting only criterion B1 for the species concerned, and not A4, are shown in normal type. For key to 'Season', see p. 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em> Teal</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>004, 005, 006, 029, 058, 068, 092, 123, 131, 132, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas penelope</em> Wigeon</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>004, 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em> Teal</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>064, 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em> Shoveler</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>059, 064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aythya ferina</em> Pochard</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>056, 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mergus serrator</em> Red-breasted Merganser</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Falco subbuteo</em> Kestrel</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>005, 006, 029, 058, 068, 092, 123, 131, 132, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis apricaria</em> Golden Plover</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>068, 103, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis squatarola</em> Grey Plover</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris canutus</em> Knot</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>092, 115, 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris alpina</em> Dunlin</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>068, 088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Limosa limosa</em> Black-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>058, 068, 088, 090, 091, 092, 094, 098, 102, 130, 131, 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Limosa lapponica</em> Bastard-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>004, 074, 094, 102, 109, 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Numenius phaeopus</em> Whimbrel</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tringa totanus</em> Redshank</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>035, 068, 088, 090, 109, 121</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ardea interpres</em> Turnstone</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>065</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sterna sandvicensis</em> Sandwich Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna dougallii</em> Roseate Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>101, 117</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Unio aspera</em> Guillemit</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fratercula arctica</em> Puffin</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>075</td>
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**HABITATS**

Ireland is dominated by agricultural habitat, which comprises 68% of the land area, and this is predominantly pasture with arable crops in the more productive areas of the south and east. Peatlands are widespread, as both blanket and raised bogs, although their area...
has been substantially reduced by peat extraction and afforestation. The area of wooded land is small, with plantations (mainly of non-native conifers) occupying 5% of the country and native deciduous woodland less than 1% (EPA 1996). Wetlands occupy 14% of Ireland and open water 3% (EPA 1996). Wetlands are the dominant habitat-type (by area) at 75 of the 140 IBAs and cover a significant area at a further 14 IBAs (Figure 1). This includes estuaries, coastal lagoons, rivers, lakes and bogs and reflects the importance of Ireland for wintering waterbirds. Twenty-seven IBAs include inland lakes, while nine peatland IBAs contain large tracts of blanket bog and five are mainly raised bogs. Together, the peatland IBAs cover c.20% of the total IBA area. They are important for breeding waders such as Pluvialis apricaria and for wintering Anser albifrons flavirostris.

Islands and coastal cliffs account for most of the ‘rocky areas’ found at 49 of the 140 IBAs (Figure 1). Marine habitats are often associated with these sites and dominate (by area) at 28 IBAs, while covering a significant proportion at a further ten. These coastal and marine IBAs reflect Ireland’s importance for breeding seabirds.

Grassland is the dominant habitat at 16 of the IBAs. Two major types of grassland can be identified, wet grassland and agricultural grassland. Extensive wet grasslands occur at Wexford Slobs (site 102) and the callows of the rivers Shannon and Little Brosna (sites 129, 131 and 132). As well as their significance for wintering wildfowl, some of these grasslands are important for breeding Crex crex, Vanelius vanellus and Tringa totanus. Agricultural grasslands are important for Crex crex and Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax.

Native deciduous woodland covers less than 1% of the country and is correspondingly scarce at IBAs, being mostly confined to National Parks (e.g. sites 079 and 106). Other forested habitat is dominated by non-native conifer plantations.

**IMPACTS ON IBAs – LAND-USE AND THREATS**

Figure 2 shows the land-uses recorded at IBAs in Ireland. The most widespread land-use at IBAs is agriculture, predominantly livestock farming, which occurs at 78 of the 140 IBAs and is the dominant land-use (by area) at 26 sites (Figure 2). Correspondingly, the most widespread threat to IBAs is agricultural intensification. This threat is considered to have a high impact at 11 IBAs, primarily sites where the maintenance of non-intensive farming practices are crucial for the persistence of breeding Crex crex (sites 002, 007, 012–014, 041 and 131), sites which have suffered severe overgrazing such as at Owenduff–Nephin Beg (site 046) and water-bodies threatened by nutrient pollution as a result of agricultural run-off (e.g. sites 123 and 138). At a further 57 IBAs, the threat is considered to have a low to medium impact and mainly relates to nutrient pollution of estuarine and lake sites, overgrazing of bogs, and drainage of wetlands.

Fisheries and/or aquaculture are the second most frequent economic activity at IBAs, recorded at 66 IBAs and the main activity at 51 IBAs (Figure 2). Fishery activities, including intertidal shellfish cultivation, are considered to be a potential economic use for marine and estuarine habitats, but may not yet occur at all suitable sites. Intertidal shellfish cultivation is a serious threat at a number of IBAs, including Trawbrega Bay (site 003), Drumcliff Bay (site 033) and Dungarvan Harbour (site 094). It potentially causes a loss of mudflat habitat and also disturbance to wintering waterbirds.

Recreation/tourism activities and developments pose a threat at 63 IBAs, although they usually have a medium or low impact. In coastal IBAs, such developments include caravan sites (site 069), marinas (site 131) and golf courses (sites 038 and 086), while at inland lakes, problems are posed at some sites by boating, angling and holiday-home developments (e.g. site 130).

The other main land-uses within IBAs are tourism/recreation and nature conservation/research, which occur at 39 and 32 IBAs respectively and dominate by area at 22 and 18 IBAs. Hunting is allowed for certain bird species during the open season and occurs within at least 27 IBAs—21 IBAs, the majority of the site is open to this activity. Industrial activities occur within 15 sites, though cover most of the area at only one IBA (site 109). Forestry and water management are marginal land-uses within Ireland’s IBAs.

Significant disturbance to birds’ essential activities, e.g. nesting and feeding, occurs at a minimum of 44 IBAs, mainly due to visitor pressure and hunting activities. Visitor pressure is particularly...
threatening to sites which are important for ground-nesting seabirds or nesting waders. Hunting can lead to widespread disturbance within IBAs, particularly of waterfowl, and it is generally considered to be of medium impact.

Drainage and industrialization/urbanization both threaten over 15% of IBAs. Within Ireland, large-scale drainage programmes were carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, causing significant destruction to bog and wetland habitats (EPA 1996). While such drainage programmes are not as extensive at present, local drainage schemes, often linked to agricultural intensification, still threaten IBAs, such as at sites 058, 089 and 102. Bogs, such as sites 085 and 127, are also threatened. Industrialization and urbanization have a particularly high impact at Cork Harbour (site 088), due to recent, extensive road development and land-claim projects. A number of other, mainly estuarine, sites are also threatened by this activity, with a medium or low impact.

From Figure 3 it can be seen that infrastructure is one of the least frequent threats at IBAs. However, individual projects can have a marked effect on specific IBAs, such as road developments within Cork Harbour (site 088), Malahide/Swords (site 113) and planned road development within Dublin Bay (site 109), while port development threatens the Boyne estuary (site 119). The filling-in of wetlands is another serious threat, often linked to infrastructural or urban development, which is causing irreversible damage to wetlands such as Roperstown estuary (site 115).

The alteration of habitat structure at IBAs by introduced (non-native) plant species, e.g. cord-grass Spartina on mudflats in estuaries and Rhododendron shrubs in native woodlands, poses a threat at 11 IBAs. Other important threats, which affect an approximately similar number of sites, are extraction industries and the abandonment of land. Land abandonment is an important threat at IBAs where breeding Crex crex are present (e.g. site 013), since suitable habitat may be lost if agricultural land is not managed appropriately. This threat is also linked to agricultural intensification, since specifically non-intensive farming practices are required to maintain suitable habitat.

PROTECTION STATUS

The National Parks and Wildlife section of Dúchas, The Heritage Service, is the principal state agency involved in nature conservation. It is responsible for the implementation of the Wildlife Act (1976), the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (S.I. 291 of 1985) which implements the EC Birds Directive and the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (S.I. 94 of 1997) which implements the EC Habitats Directive. Table 5 shows the overlap between IBAs and areas that are protected by national and international law.

#### National protection

The national protected-area system for nature conservation is as follows.

1. **Statutory Nature Reserve**

Nature Reserves are designated and protected from damaging activities under the 1976 Wildlife Act. They are regarded as the most rigorous system in Ireland for the protection of ecosystems and species of flora and fauna. State ownership is not necessary.

2. **National Park**

These sites are owned and managed by Dúchas, The Heritage Service for nature conservation, public use and appreciation. Except for Killarney National Park, they have no legal protection. However, damaging activities are prevented as a result of state ownership and through management agreements where turbary or grazing rights exist.

3. **Refuge for Fauna**

These are designated under the 1976 Wildlife Act for the protection of one or more species, where they require special measures to protect their habitat. This designation has, so far, only been used to protect inaccessible sites where development threats are unlikely. State ownership is not necessary.

4. **Wildfowl Sanctuary**

These are designated under the 1976 Wildlife Act to protect certain ducks, geese and waders from hunting. Land within them can only be protected by other measures. State ownership is not necessary.

Natural Heritage Areas are a proposed designation for sites of national importance for nature conservation. There are no legal powers to prevent damaging activities within these sites, but the 1999 Wildlife (Amendment) Bill has now been published and, with its enactment, this situation should change. At present, the proposal of a site for designation may already affect grant aid and planning permissions. Natural Heritage Areas will provide a national framework for the protection of natural habitats within Ireland.

Out of the 140 IBAs identified, 20 are protected by national legislation as a result of overlapping with Nature Reserves, while

### Table 5. Protection status of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland.

A tick (✓) indicates that an IBA overlaps with a protected area (to any extent).

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<tr>
<th>IBA International code name</th>
<th>Statutory Nature Reserve</th>
<th>National Park</th>
<th>Refuge for Fauna</th>
<th>Wildfowl Sanctuary</th>
<th>Special Protection Area</th>
<th>Ramsar Site</th>
<th>Biogenetic Reserve</th>
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<th>Wildfowl Sanctuary</th>
<th>Special Protection Area</th>
<th>Ramsar Site</th>
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<td>027 Moors west and northwest of Lough Derg, Brownhill bog around Loughs Golagh and Damrha include Pettygo Plateau</td>
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### Table 5...continued

Protection status of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland.
A tick (\(\checkmark\)) indicates that an IBA overlaps with a protected area (to any extent).

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<th>IBA code</th>
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<th>National site</th>
<th>Special Protection Area</th>
<th>Statutory nature reserve</th>
<th>Ramsar site</th>
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<td>084</td>
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<tr>
<td>085</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal of IBAs</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 2 3 18</td>
<td>16 1</td>
<td>52 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total number of IBAs:** 20 3 6 31 36 2 97 3
International protection during the current IBA review. Proposed or designated SPAs and are mainly new sites identified as Nature Reserves (Table 5). Out of the 140 IBAs identified, 97 are Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and of which 10 are also state-owned, and the C7 sites qualify as IBAs primarily because as an SPA has not been problematic for the island sites since they are mainly uninhabited and state-owned. The National Parks are also state-owned, and the C7 sites qualify as IBAs primarily because of their SPA status and so match the SPA area.

The remaining one-third of the 97 IBAs do not overlap to such a high extent with SPAs (see Figure 5). At a number of these IBAs, a significant and integral part of the IBA lies outside the designated boundary of the SPA, e.g. at Dublin Bay (site 109) and Cork Harbour (site 088). Within other IBAs, only the state-owned foreshore has been designated as an SPA, leaving important parts unprotected (Magee and Coveyn 1995). Where this has happened, the SPA boundary needs to be increased to include all parts of the IBA. Proposed SPAs should be designated at the 20 IBAs with which they overlap, and the remaining 23 IBAs without any SPA protection should be considered for SPA designation. Proposed candidate Special Areas for Conservation overlap with 52 IBAs. The exact areas and boundaries of these sites are unknown as they have yet to be designated.

Box 1. International legislation and initiatives that are relevant to site conservation in the Republic of Ireland (see Appendix 1 for a general description of these agreements).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBA overlaps</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Pan-European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Convention ratified/initiative supported</td>
<td>Convention signed</td>
<td>Biodiversity Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ramsar Convention</td>
<td>EC Birds Directive</td>
<td>Bern Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Bern Convention</td>
<td>EC Habitats Directive</td>
<td>Europan-Beeren Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>World Heritage Convention</td>
<td>Convention signed</td>
<td>Habitats Directive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % of area of individual IBA overlaps with national protected areas: |
|---|---|---|---|
| High | >50% | High | 4 IBAs (3%) |
| Partial | 31-50% | Partial | 25 IBAs (11%) |
| Low | <10% | Low | None |

Total area of overlap between IBA network in the Republic of Ireland and international protected-area system (see Table 5 for categories) = 2,301–2,335 km² (55% of total IBA area).

Figure 4. The national protection status of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland.

CONSERVATION

- **BirdWatch Ireland** has 14 reserves, which are contained within IBAs (Kilcolman Bog, Cuskinny Marsh, Lough Beg, Sheskinmore Lough, Regerstown Estuary, Little Skellig, Puffin Island, Tomnacarragh Lake, Annagh Marsh, Illaunmaistir, Bullock Island, Bishops Island, Wexford Wildfowl Reserve and Kilcoole Reserve). BirdWatch Ireland is preparing management plans for a number of its reserves which lie within IBAs. These reserves have been acquired for the protection of habitats important for birds and cover a total area of 409 ha, c.1% of the total IBA area.

- Research and conservation projects for *Crex crex* and terns *Sterna* are ongoing. The Corncrake Conservation Project operates in the Shannon callows (site 131), north Donegal and north-west Mayo. It promotes non-intensive farming practices for the conservation of breeding habitat for *Crex crex*, and an annual census of population numbers and distribution is undertaken. Tern conservation projects operate on Rockabill island (site 117), Lady’s Island Lake (site 101) and at Kilcoole marshes (site 105). These projects aim to protect breeding sites through habitat management and to continue research on population demography. Annual data on population numbers is collected. The INTERREG Programme of the EU funds research and monitoring of the colonies of *Sterna dougallii* at Rockabill island and Lady’s Island Lake.

- The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) monitors the numbers and distribution of waterfowl in the Republic of Ireland during the non-breeding season. All wintering sites are monitored for *Anser albifrons fluviatilis, Anser anser, Branta bernicla hrota* and *Sterna dougallii*. The Countryside Bird Survey (CBS) monitors the numbers and distribution of common countryside birds during the breeding season. The former survey has been in operation since 1994 and the latter since 1998. These surveys aim to provide an indication of species’ population trends at wintering sites and in the wider countryside.

- Annual monitoring of seabird colonies is carried out at key breeding colonies (e.g. sites 076 and 099). The last seabird population census for the Republic of Ireland occurred in 1987. Seabird 2000, a joint project between the Republic and the United Kingdom, will census Ireland’s coastal areas, including islands and inland breeding sites, to provide data on breeding seabird numbers and distribution. This project will start in 1999 and continue until 2001. A census of *Cephus grylle*, on the east coast of Ireland, was completed in 1998.

- Conservation plans for SPAs and SACs are being prepared by Dúchas, The Heritage Service. These areas overlap with IBAs and the plans should provide specific objectives to maintain the conservation importance of each site. The Rural Environment Protection Scheme—Ireland’s implementation of the EU’s agri-environment regulations—should ensure that environmentally sensitive farming takes place within IBAs with agricultural land-uses.

Figure 5. The international protection status of Important Bird Areas in the Republic of Ireland.
Inishtrahull
Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 55°26′N 7°14′W
Altitude 0–43 m Area 315 ha

Site description
A formerly inhabited marine island with an automated lighthouse located 5 km north of Malin Head, in County Donegal. The site also includes Tor Rocks, c.1 km to the north, and the intervening sea area. The island is predominantly grassland, which until recently was grazed by red deer Cervus elaphus. Low-intensity fishing takes place between the main island and Tor Rocks.

Habitats
Grassland (12%), dry siliceous grassland, Marine areas (18%); sea inlet/coastal features
Land-use
Agriculture, Fisheries/aquaculture (60%), Not utilized (40%)

Birds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc.</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</td>
<td>Shag</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus canus</td>
<td>Lesser Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlidonias leucopterus</td>
<td>Black Guillemot</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cliffs and rocks support important colonies of breeding seabirds. Other breeding species present in nationally important numbers (1991–1992) include Fulmarus glacialis (250 pairs), Larus argentatus (500 pairs), Larus canus (30 pairs) and Larus canus (50 pairs). Additionally Inishtrahull is a nationally important winter feeding site for Branta leucopsis (153 birds, 1987) and is a breeding site for Somateria mollissima (over 200 pairs, 1992).

Protection status
National None International High
315 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inishtrahull, 315 ha).

Conservation issues
Threats
Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Until their recent removal, overgrazing by deer was a potential threat to the site. There may be some disturbance to birds due to rock-angling and scuba-diving activities.

Malin Head
Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 55°22′N 7°21′W
Altitude 10–110 m Area 750 ha

Site description
A long stretch of unspoilt coastline in northern County Donegal, extending from just north of Ballygorman village around Malin Head to White Strand Bay on its southern side. Mixed farmland is the main habitat, with meadow and grazing pasture.

Habitats
Grassland (100%), mesophile grassland
Land-use
Agriculture (100%)

We would like to thank the following for their help and advice in compiling the IBA database and this chapter: BirdLife International Secretariat; Dúchas, The Heritage Service, especially Oscar Merne; Simon Delany and Kendrew Colhoun (I-WeBS coordinators), Ann Marie McDerritt (Corncrake Project Officer), Catherine Casey (Habitat Management Officer), Oran O’Sullivan (General Manager, BirdWatch Ireland); Shelley Hackett and Mark Kavanagh, both of whom contributed directly to the preparation of the IBA Review, and numerous members of BirdWatch Ireland, to whom we are very grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

calls: flood-meadows traditionally used for producing hay.
drumlin: a mound of glacial deposits (sand and gravel).
esker: a ridge of glacial deposits (sand and gravel).
INTERREG: a source of funding, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the EU, aimed at encouraging cross-border development, in this case maritime and general economic developments between eastern Ireland and western Wales.
I-WeBS: Irish Wetland Bird Survey.
karst: a limestone region with underground drainage and many cavities and passages caused by the dissolution of the rock.
lonch: a lake or narrow sea inlet.
NUTS: Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques—the administrative regions of the European Union are called NUTS regions, and are designated by the EC Statistical Office.
NPW: National Parks and Wildlife (formerly National Parks and Wildlife Service), part of Dúchas, The Heritage Service, which is part of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.
polder: a flat area of land, often below sea-level, with an artificially regulated water-regime, having been claimed from the sea or from a lake or river.
SAC: Special Area for Conservation (to be designated under the EC Habitats Directive).
SPA: Special Protection Area (designated under Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive).
turlough: a deep, grassy depression on limestone, which fills with water in wet weather, especially in winter.
**Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland**

### Site description

An almost land-locked bay, situated next to Malin Head on the north County Donegal coast. At its mouth Doagh Isle on the western shore encloses most of the bay, which at low tide is largely exposed mud- and sandflats, with some rocky substrate. The Isle consists of machair and sand-dunes, the latter also being present on the eastern shore of the bay, again at its mouth. Feeding fields for geese Branta, adjacent to the bay, are included. Land-uses include intertidal shellfish cultivation, and recreation.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (23%); humid grassland; machair; Wetland (80%); tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand-dunes/sand beach; shingle/sandy beach
- Land-use: Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (50%), Not utilized (30%)

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (A)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Branta leucopsis</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crex crex</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Trawbreaga Bay is the most northerly wetland in Ireland and is important for a diversity of wintering waders and wildfowl.

### Site description

This is of international importance for wintering waterfowl. Most of the birds use the Northern Ireland section of the site, but notable concentrations of Anas crecca, Calidris canutus and, increasingly, Branta bernicla use the Donegal section.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (mesophile grassland), Wetland (tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand-dunes/sand beach; river/stream), Marine areas (sea inlet/coastal features), Artificial landscape (highly improved reseeded grassland)
- Land-use: Agriculture, Fisheries/aquaculture, Not utilized

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: Low

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C)

For many years, expansion of rubbish-dumping activities has threatened mudflats in County Donegal. There is currently a proposal to extend Derry city airport which would result in a significant adverse impact on the site (loss of mudflat).

### Site description

This site encompasses a large part of Lough Swilly between Letterkeny and Buncrana, in County Donegal. It is a long, narrow sea inlet with extensive banks of mud and shingle between Letterkenny and Inch, including Inch Island. There is some empoldered land at Big Isle and Blanket Nook and an embanked sea channel between Inch Island and the mainland. The boundaries of the IBA have been redrawn to cover a smaller area compared to that in the previous European inventory (Grinnell and Jones 1989).

**Habitats**
- Grassland (10%); humid grassland; mesophile grassland; Wetland (80%); tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; Artificial landscape (10%); highly improved reseeded grassland; arable land
- Land-use: Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (80%), Hunting (95%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
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</table>

This is a key wetland for birds in Ireland, important for the richness and abundance of its wintering and breeding species. Wintering waterbirds regularly occur in total numbers of international importance (22,750-26,600 birds in 1995 and 1996). Up to 14 other wintering species also occur in numbers of national importance, including Tadorna tadorna (793 birds, 1996), Anas penelope (1,361 birds, 1995), Anas crecca (1,669 birds, 1996) and Charadrius hiaticula (167 birds, 1996).
**Protection status**

**National Low International Partial**

Part of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Blanket Nook, 48 ha). IBA overlaps with Ramsar Site (Lough Swilly; area not known). 3,107 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Swilly, 3,107 ha). 278 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inch Lough, 278 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Filling-in of wetlands (B)

Parts of the site are threatened by nutrient pollution due to agricultural run-off. Changes in agricultural practice could threaten the feeding fields of swans *Cygnus* and geese *Anser* at Inch Lough and Blanket Nook. Use of the site for water-sports and aquaculture (intertidal and subtidal shellfish cultivation) is increasing and may threaten habitat quality. In 1998 land-claim, apparently unauthorized, for the construction of a marina at Fahan on the site’s east shore, damaged intertidal sandflats. Inch Island, where *Sterna sandvicensis* breeds, lies within the Lough Swilly SPA.

**Site description**

This site encompasses an 8-km estuarine stretch of the River Foyle, with mudflat and saltmarsh habitat and two contiguous river valleys, with wet meadow, arable fields and improved pasture. It is located south of Derry city in Northern Ireland, while its eastern boundary is the County Donegal/Tyrone border. Nearby Lough Foyle, located north of Derry city, is a separate site (site 004).

- **Habitats** Scrub (10%), scrub, Wetland (50%), tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat sandflats: river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; Artificial landscape (50%); highly improved reseeded grassland; arable land
- **Land-use** Agriculture (50%), Hunting (70%), Not utilized (10%)

**Birds**

This is an important site for wintering wildfowl. Species occurring in nationally important numbers include *Anas crecca* (657 birds, 1995), *Bucephala clangula* (115 birds, 1996) and *Mergus serrator* (42 birds, 1996).

**Protection status**

**National None International None**

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (B), Industrialization/urbanization (C)

Wildfowling causes disturbance to birds, and the proximity of Derry city may also adversely affect the site.

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### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

#### Fanad Head Peninsula

**Admin region Donegal**

**Coordinates** 55°13'N 7°40'W

**Altitude** 0–100 m

**Area** 8,600 ha

### Site description

A peninsula west of Malin Head, of mainly mixed farmland habitat. The site boundary extends from Saldanha Head, south of Portsalon on the east side of the peninsula, around to Marks Point at Broad Water in Mulroy Bay, on the west side. The major water-bodies are excluded from the IBA.

- **Habitats** Grassland (100%; mesophile grassland)
- **Land-use** Agriculture (100%)

#### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Crex crex</em></td>
<td>Conacre</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>A, C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fanad coast, adjacent to but outside the IBA, is also notable for wintering seaduck, with *Somateria mollissima* (420 birds, 1995) and *Clangula hyemalis* (38 birds, 1995) occurring in numbers of national importance.

### Greer’s Island (Massmount), Mulroy Bay

**Admin region Donegal**

**Coordinates** 55°13'N 7°42'W

**Altitude** 0–5 m

**Area** 19 ha

### Site description

A small island and surrounding waters in Mulroy Bay, County Donegal. The site has been extended since the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) to include 18 ha of surrounding waters.

- **Habitats** Grassland (5%), Wetland (95%), tidal river/enclosed tidal water
- **Land-use** fisheries/aquaculture (95%), Not utilized (5%)

#### Birds

This is formerly of importance for *Sterna sandvicensis*, holding the second-largest breeding colony in Ireland (180 pairs) in 1984, although more recently numbers have declined (with none breeding in 1995). The species may yet recolonize—the birds that used to nest at the site are now believed to breed at Inch Lake (site 005). There are also breeding *Sterna paradisaea* (20 pairs, 1984) and a nationally important colony of *Larus ridibundus* (180 birds, 1984).

### Protection status

**National None International High**

19 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Greer’s Island, 19 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Recreation may cause some disturbance to nesting terns *Sterna*, and fisheries may deplete their prey stock, with implications for their breeding success. The site retains its conservation status as an IBA.
due to its designation as a Special Protection Area and beacause of the potential for recolonization by *Sierus sandvicensis*.

**Lough Fern**

**Admin region** Donegal  
**Coordinates** 55°03'N 7°43'W  
**Altitude** 21–21 m  
**Area** 185 ha

**Site description**  
Lough Fern is situated south of Mulroy Bay in County Donegal. There are wetlands at its south and north ends, with marsh, reedbed and wet woodland. The lake is used by anglers.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%), standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation  
**Land-use** Hunting, Not utilized (100%), Tourism/recreation

**Protection status**  
National High  
International High

**Birds**  
Lough Fern was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of migratory waterfowl populations. It is one of the most important wintering sites in Ireland for *Aythya ferina*, (1,208 birds, 1996).

**Conservation issues**  
**Threats** Disturbance to birds (U), Recreation/tourism (C)

There is little information available in relation to threats. However, use of the site by anglers, together with wildfowling, is likely to cause disturbance to wintering birds.

**Horn Head cliffs**

**Admin region** Donegal  
**Coordinates** 55°13'N 7°58'W  
**Altitude** 0–170 m  
**Area** 176 ha

**Site description**  
High, rocky quartzite cliffs on a well-defined peninsula to the north of Dunfanaghy, on the County Donegal coast.

**Habitats** Rocky areas (100%); sea cliff/rocky shore  
**Land-use** Not utilized (100%)

**Birds**

This site contains an internationally important colony of breeding seabirds. Other species breeding in numbers of national importance include *Fulmarus glacialis* (1,000 pairs), *Rissa tridactyla* (4,500 pairs), *Uria aalge* (5,000 birds) and *Cepphus grylle* (25 birds).

**Protection status**  
National High  
International High

**Conservation issues**  
**Threats** Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Recreation/tourism (U)

Disturbance to breeding seabirds is limited by the inaccessibility of the cliffs. However, an increase in tourist activity could pose a threat. Offshore fishing may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Horn Head and Ringlevean; area not known).

**Tory Island**

**Admin region** Donegal  
**Coordinates** 55°16'N 8°14'W  
**Altitude** 0–83 m  
**Area** 607 ha

**Site description**  
A large, inhabited marine island and surrounding waters, situated 11 km north of Bloody Foreland in County Donegal. The island is mainly low-lying but high cliffs occur along the northern side, and at the east end rise to 90 m. Back from the cliffs maritime heath dominates. Farming is largely low intensity with hay meadows and grazing by cattle and sheep. However, there has been some improvement of land for arable crops. There is an unmanned lighthouse at the west end.

**Habitats** Grassland (20%); humid grassland, Wetland (5%); standing fresh water, Marine areas (35%; open sea; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (25%; sea cliff/rocky shore; rock stacks/islets), Artificial landscape (15%; arable land; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)  
**Land-use** Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (40%), Nature conservation/research (100%), Urban/industrial/transport (10%), Water management (10%)  

**Birds**

This site is an internationally important site for the globally threatened *Crex crex*. It is also of national importance for a diversity of breeding seabirds, including *Fulmarus glacialis* (260 pairs, 1987), *Rissa tridactyla* (530 pairs, 1987), *Uria aalge* (650 birds, 1987), *Alca torda* (630 birds, 1987) and *Fratercula arctica* (>1,000 birds, 1994).

**Protection status**  
National None  
International High

**Conservation issues**  
**Threats** Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

*Crex crex* is highly sensitive to changes in agricultural practices and the late cutting of hay-meadows is essential to its survival at this site.
However, the site is threatened by the intensification of farming, mainly the extension of winter grazing into the summer, preventing meadow growth. BirdWatch Ireland, with support from NPW and RSPB, operates a grant scheme on the island to encourage farming practices that favour Crex crex. Predation may also threaten Crex crex on this island. Other threats include erosion of maritime heath due to its extreme exposure together with grazing by domestic stock and rabbits, and localized peat-cutting. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Tory Island; area not known).

**Inishbofin, Inishdooey and Inishbeg**

**Site description**
The site comprises three islands, Inishbofin, Inishdooey and Inishbeg and is located 2 km off the Donegal coast, 5 km north-west of Falcarragh. The largest island, Inishbofin, comprises mainly dry grassland which, although farmed in the past, is now largely abandoned. In the previous European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) the site included just one island, but the nearby islands of Inishdooey and Inishbeg, together with the surrounding waters, have now been added. Inishbofin is inhabited during the summer months.

**Habitats**
- Scrub (5%), Scrubland (5%), Grassland (5%), Marshland (5%), Wetland (5%) (shingle and mudflats), Marine area (5%), Sea inlet (5%), Artificial landscape (5%), other urban/industrial areas (5%)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (5%), Fisheries/aquaculture (15%), Nature conservation/research (20%), Not utilized (30%), Urban/industrial/transport (15%)

Together with Tory Island (site 012), these islands held 20% of the national population of Crex crex in 1996 (numbers are calling males, 1995–1996). The site was also nationally important for breeding terns Sterna. Recently only Sterna paradisaea has bred (72 pairs, 1995).

**Protection status**
- National None International High

604 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inishbofin, Inishdooey and Inishbeg, 604 ha).

**Conservation issues**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (C)
- This site is threatened mainly by agricultural abandonment. Crex crex is highly sensitive to changes in agricultural practice, and the late cutting of hay-meadows is essential to its survival at the site. However, most of the land is managed for conservation by BirdWatch Ireland, with support from NPW and RSPB, to maintain hay-meadows, the late cutting of hay and early cover.

**Falcarragh to Min an Chladaigh**

**Site description**
This large site follows the coastline from Falcarragh to Min an Chladaigh in north County Donegal. It encompasses a large area inland, much of which is small, extensively managed farms, and it excludes the estuary at Ballyness Bay.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (100%), mesophile grassland

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (100%)

This site is an important breeding area for Crex crex and is the closest mainland site to Inishbofin (site 013) and, further out to sea, Tory Island (site 012), two islands which together held 20% of the national population of this species in 1996.

**Protection status**
- National None International None

**Conservation issues**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (C)

The late cutting of hay-meadows is essential to the survival of Crex crex at this site. However, the site is threatened by agricultural intensification, including an increase in silage production which leads to earlier cutting, and loss of hay-meadows for conversion to pasture. BirdWatch Ireland, with support from NPW and RSPB, operates a grant scheme in this area, to try to ensure farming practices that continue to favour Crex crex.

**Inishsirrer and Inishmeane**

**Site description**
Two formerly inhabited islands, lying 1–2 km offshore and 6 km north of Bunbeg in County Donegal. Information on land-use and threats is incomplete. The site does not include surrounding waters, and lies adjacent to Gola Island (site 024).

**Habitats**
- Grassland (100%)

**Land-use**
- Unknown (100%)

**Glenveagh National Park**

**Site description**
Glenveagh National Park is situated 15 km west of Letterkenny in north-west County Donegal. The area is dominated by Atlantic blanket bog, with lakes, rivers, woodland and heath. Grazing and peat-cutting (‘Other’ land-use) take place within the area. The National Park Visitor Centre and Glenveagh Castle attract visitors.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%), Bogs (100%), Standing fresh water, river/drain, blanket bog, rocky areas (100%), Scree (100%), meadows (50%), heath (100%)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (50%), Nature conservation/research (100%), Not utilized (20%), Tourism/recreation (100%)

**Birds**
The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of breeding Gavia stellata, Pluvialis apricaria, Falco peregrinus and...
**Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland**

F. columbarias, and wintering Anser albifrons flavirostris (all species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive).

### Protection status
**National High** *International High*
9,593 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Glenveagh, 9,737 ha). 9,593 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Glenveagh National Park, 9,593 ha).

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Alienisation (B)  
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)  
- Consequences of animal/plant introductions (B)  
- Extraction industry (B)

### Site description
The site comprises two uninhabited marine islands: Inishkeeragh, located 2.5 km from the mainland and comprising unimproved dry grassland, and Illancrone (former site IE010), a small island on a stony reef, 1.5 km from the mainland. The only land-use is sheep-grazing (intensity not known).

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)

### Site description
Sheskinmore Lough is situated approximately 6 km north-west of Ardara in County Donegal. The site comprises intertidal mud- and sand-flats.

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (L)

### Site description
There is no precise information on threats, although fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. The site is a proposed (by NPW) Special Protection Area (Roaninish, 144 ha).

### Protection status
**National High** *International High*
176 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Lough Barra bog, 176 ha). 176 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Barra bog, 176 ha). 739 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Barra bog, 739 ha).

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)  
- Consequences of animal/plant introductions (B)  
- Extraction industry (C)  
- Intensification/extension (C)  
- Hydroelectric power (C)  
- Intensive management (C)

### Site description
Roaninish is a tight group of small, flat, uninhabited islets, located 3.5 km off Dawros Head in County Donegal. Much of the site is sparsely vegetated with the exception of the main island Roaninish, which is covered in lush maritime grassland, and has two small ponds.

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (75%), Tourism/recreation (5%)

### Site description
This is an important site for breeding Branta leucopsis and breeding seabirds, particularly terns Sterna. Historically, five tern species bred on these islands, but in recent years (1994–1995) Sterna dougallii has not bred, and the number of Sterna sandvicensis has been small (1 pair, 1995). Sterna hirundo continues to breed, and the islands are one of the top five breeding sites in the Republic of Ireland for Sterna paradisaea and Sterna albifrons.

### Protection status
**National High** *International High*
9,593 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Glenveagh, 9,737 ha). 9,593 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Glenveagh National Park, 9,593 ha).

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Alienisation (B)  
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)  
- Consequences of animal/plant introductions (B)  
- Extraction industry (B)

### Site description
Trampling and overgrazing by sheep and deer have caused damage to some areas of bog, while other areas are threatened by peat-cutting, erosion and burning. Introduced (non-native) Rhododendron scrub has invaded and choked some areas of woodland and covered adjacent hillside, but a removal programme is now nearing completion. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Glenveagh National Park; area not known).

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (75%), Tourism/recreation (5%)

### Site description
This important site for wintering Branta leucopsis and breeding seabirds, particularly terns Sterna. Historically, five tern species bred on these islands, but in recent years (1994–1995) Sterna dougallii has not bred, and the number of Sterna sandvicensis has been small (1 pair, 1995). Sterna hirundo continues to breed, and the islands are one of the top five breeding sites in the Republic of Ireland for Sterna paradisaea and Sterna albifrons.

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (75%), Tourism/recreation (5%)

### Site description
This is an important site for breeding Branta leucopsis and breeding seabirds, particularly terns Sterna. Historically, five tern species bred on these islands, but in recent years (1994–1995) Sterna dougallii has not bred, and the number of Sterna sandvicensis has been small (1 pair, 1995). Sterna hirundo continues to breed, and the islands are one of the top five breeding sites in the Republic of Ireland for Sterna paradisaea and Sterna albifrons.

### Protection status
**National None** *International None*

### Conservation issues
**Threats**
- Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (75%), Tourism/recreation (5%)

### Site description
This is an important site for breeding Branta leucopsis and breeding seabirds, particularly terns Sterna. Historically, five tern species bred on these islands, but in recent years (1994–1995) Sterna dougallii has not bred, and the number of Sterna sandvicensis has been small (1 pair, 1995). Sterna hirundo continues to breed, and the islands are one of the top five breeding sites in the Republic of Ireland for Sterna paradisaea and Sterna albifrons.
sandflats, together with sand-dunes, machair and extensive marshes. Of particular ecological interest is Sheskinmore Lough itself, which is a partially sand-filled lagoon. The site is grazed, although a large part of it is managed for nature conservation. A caravan site lies within a relatively small section of the dunes.

**Birds**

This site supports a diversity of wintering and breeding bird species. The number of wintering Branta leucopsis has fallen just below the B1 criterion threshold in recent years, but in view of high numbers during the 1980s (1,123 birds in 1981, and an average of 556 birds in the mid-1980s) the site has been retained as an IBA.

**Protection status**

National High, International High

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Sheskinmore Lough; area not known), 944 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Sheskinmore Lough, 944 ha).

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Drainage (C)

Past attempts at drainage of the lake and marsh have caused damage. NPW now own 365 ha of the site and there are plans to reverse the drainage. Parts of the site are threatened by overgrazing (mainly by rabbits), agricultural improvement and recreational use. 15.8 ha of it is managed for nature conservation. A caravan site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Sheskinmore Lough; area not known).

**Inishkeel**

Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°50’N 8°27’W
Altitude 0–19 m Area 126 ha

**Site description**

A small island and surrounding waters in Gweebarra Bay, 0.5 km offshore from Portnoo in west County Donegal. There is an old church on the island and it can be accessed by foot at low tide. It is mainly grass covered with a rocky shoreline.

**Habitats**

- Grassland (10%), Mesophile grassland, Marine areas (80%), Sea inlet/coastal features, Rocky areas (10%), Rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**

- Fisheries/aquaculture (80%), Not utilized (20%)

**Birds**

In the winter this site provides feeding habitat for internationally important numbers of Branta leucopsis, which also use Sheskinmore Lough (site 020). A nationally important flock of Somateria mollissima (500 birds, 1987/88) winter around the island.

**Protection status**

National None, International None

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

This site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Inishkeel, 126 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future.

**Lough Nillan bog**

Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°45’N 8°17’W
Altitude 200–600 m Area 4,168 ha

**Site description**

A large blanket bog complex in the range of hills immediately south of Glenties, County Donegal. Upland areas support drier heathland vegetation, while in the lower parts of the site there are pools and on some of the slopes, flushes. There are numerous lakes and rivers. Three areas of conifer plantations are excluded from the IBA. Land-use includes peat-cutting (‘Other’ land-use).

**Habitats**

- Wetland (90%), Standing fresh water: river/stream: blanket bog

**Land-use**

- Agriculture (80%), Other (20%)

**Birds**

The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of its wintering Anser albifrons flavirostris (72 birds, 1992), and breeding Pluvialis apricaria (13–15 pairs) and Falco columbarius, all species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive.

**Protection status**

National None, International High

4,168 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Nillan Bog, 4,168 ha).

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Afforestation (B), Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Extraction industry (B)

Overgrazing combined with peat-cutting is causing erosion in some parts of the site. Afforestation within the bog complex has resulted in habitat fragmentation, degrading the value of the site for conservation. The IBA lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lough Nillan Bog; area not known).

**Tormore Island**

Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°46’N 8°42’W
Altitude 0–139 m Area 30 ha

**Site description**

A small island just offshore of the Slieve Tooey area, a wild and remote part of County Donegal, 15 km west of Ardara. The site includes the surrounding waters and the mainland cliffs 1 km to either side of the island.

**Habitats**

- Grassland (10%), Marine areas (80%), Sea inlet/coastal features, Rocky areas (10%), Rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**

- Fisheries/aquaculture (80%), Not utilized (20%)

**Birds**

On the island and the mainland cliffs 1 km on either side there are nationally important numbers of breeding seabirds, including Rissa tridactyla (600 pairs, 1987), Fratercula arctica (3,000 birds, 1970) and Alca torda (362 birds, 1987). Smaller numbers of Fulmarus glacialis (155 pairs, 1987), Phalacrocorax aristotelis (11 pairs, 1987) and Uria aalge (50 birds, 1987) also breed at this site.

**Protection status**

National None, International None

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

On the basis of its breeding seabirds (especially Fratercula arctica), this site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Tormore Island, 30 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Slieve Tooey/Tormore Island/Loughros Beg Bay; area not known).

**West Donegal coast**

Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°43’N 8°48’W
Altitude 0–300 m Area 4,050 ha

**Site description**

An extended coastal site in County Donegal, which covers the mainland coastline from Dunmore Head in the north to Muckross...
Head in the south, and also includes Aranmore Island and Gola Island, lying 15 and 25 km north of this coastal stretch respectively. A number of other IBAs occur within this area but are treated separately. Information on land-use and threats is incomplete.

**Habitats**
- Scrub (15%; heathland), Grassland (50%; mesophile grassland), Rocky areas (35%; sea cliff/rocky shore)
- Agriculture (65%), Not utilized (35%)

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Disturbance to birds (U)

For the survival of *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* at this site, it is vital that low-intensity farming along the cliff-tops is maintained. The site overlaps with three proposed candidate Special Areas for Conservation (Slieve League; Slieve Tooey/Tormore Island/Loughros Beg Bay; West of Ardara/Maas road; areas not known).

This area is important for *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, and good numbers of breeding seabirds and wintering geese also occur.

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Disturbance to birds (U)

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. The site is a proposed (by NPW) Special Protection Area (Inishduff, 47 ha).

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</em></td>
<td>Chough</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B, C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Figure is sum of possible, probable and definite breeding pairs.

The island is important for breeding seabirds.

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Afforestation (B), Burning of vegetation (B), Disturbance to birds (C)

Restricted access to Brownhall estate limits disturbance to this goose-feeding site. However, a deterioration since 1989 in the suitability of Brownhall grasslands for *Anser albfrons flavirostris* (following agricultural improvement) may be the reason for a decline in numbers of this species. Alternative feeding sites, such as Durnesh Lough, are known.

**Threats**
- Agriculuture/fisheries (C)

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. The site is a proposed (by NPW) Special Protection Area (Inishduff, 47 ha).

**Birds**

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<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
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<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</em></td>
<td>Shag</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus marinus</em></td>
<td>Great Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moors west and north-west of Lough Derg, Brownhall bogs around Loughs Golagh and Dunragh (includes Pettigo Plateau)

**Site description**
Located in County Donegal 10 km east-south-east of Donegal town, this is an extensive complex of blanket bog, wet heaths, lakes and pools covering an area of low hills and broad basins. There is grassland within the Brownhall estate, which lies adjacent to the bog and forms part of the site. This complex is also known as the Pettigo Plateau and extends across the border into Northern Ireland (County Fermanagh) where it is covered by an immediately adjacent IBA (UK site 282; ‘Pettigo Plateau’). Land-uses include peat-cutting (‘Other’ land-use).

**Birds**

This site has been designated as a Special Protection Area due to the presence of breeding *Pluvialis apricaria* and *Gavia stellata* and of wintering *Anser albfrons flavirostris* (average 113 during 1992–1996), all of which are listed under Annex I of the EC Birds Directive. This is also a notable breeding site for the nationally scarce *Lagopus lagopus*.

**Protection status**
- National: High
- International: High

691 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Pettigo Plateau, 900 ha). 691 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Pettigo Plateau, 691 ha).

**Conservation issues**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Afforestation (B), Burning of vegetation (B), Disturbance to birds (C)

Restricted access to Brownhall estate limits disturbance to this goose-feeding site. However, a deterioration since 1989 in the suitability of Brownhall grasslands for *Anser albfrons flavirostris* (following agricultural improvement) may be the reason for a decline in numbers of this species. Alternative feeding sites, such as Durnesh Lough, are limited and more disturbed. In the past, afforestation caused serious degradation of blanket bog and is now the subject of an action against Ireland in the European Court. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Pettigo Plateau; area not known).
Lough Derg
Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°37'N 7°53'W
Altitude 143–143 m Area 888 ha

Site description
Lough Derg is a large lake, situated approximately 6 km north of Pettigo in County Donegal. The lake is naturally nutrient-poor (oligotrophic). It is surrounded by extensive conifer plantations; good examples of wetland scrub occur on the lakeshore and islands.

Habitats
- Scrub (5%; scrub, Wetland (95%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation)

Land-use
Not utilized (100%)

Protection status
National None International None

Conservation issues
None

Birds
The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of migratory waterfowl populations. An island within the lough is regularly used as a winter feeding site by small numbers of Anser albifrons flavirostris. The main flock uses site 027, immediately east of Lough Derg and separated by conifer plantations. There is also a nationally important breeding colony of Larus fuscus (800 birds, 1990).

Protection issues
Deforestation (commercial) (C)

Donegal Bay
Admin region Donegal
Coordinates 54°35'N 8°15'W
Altitude 0–20 m Area 40,000 ha

Site description
A large sea bay, extending from Doorin Point in the north to Kildoney Point in the south, directly west of Donegal town, County Donegal. The innermost part of the bay, a tidal area behind sand-dune systems, is not included as it is surprisingly poor for waterfowl.

Habitats
- Marine areas (100%; open sea; sea inlet/coastal features)

Land-use
- Fisheries/aquaculture (100%)

Protection status
National None International None

Conservation issues
Aquaculture/fisheries (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

Birds
This is one of the most important wintering sites in Ireland for Melanitta nigra (1,150 birds, 1996), which occur in nationally important numbers, together with Cygnus olor (109 birds, 1995), Clangula hyemalis (32 birds, 1996) and Mergus serrator (50 birds, 1996). The shores of Donegal Bay support nationally important numbers of Calidris alba (100 birds, 1996).

Inishmurray
Admin region North West
Coordinates 54°26'N 8°40'W
Altitude 0–20 m Area 260 ha

Site description
A low, flat marine island, with rocky coastline and several small lakes, situated 6 km north-west of Streedagh Point in County Sligo. The main habitat is wet acidic grassland. The island has been uninhabited since the 1950s and is an important archaeological site. The IBA has 260 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inishmurray, 260 ha).

Habitats
- Grassland (20%; humid grassland), Marine areas (65%; open sea), Rocky areas (15%; sea cliff/rocky shore; rock stacks/islets)

Land-use
- Fisheries/aquaculture (65%), Other (20%), Tourism/recreation (20%)

Protection status
National None International High

Conservation issues
Aquaculture/fisheries (U), Recreation/tourism (U)

Birds
An important site for breeding seabirds and for wintering wildfowl, as well as a nationally important breeding site for Somateria mollissima.

Protection status
National None International High

Conservation issues
Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Wildfowling causes disturbance to birds, and agricultural intensification of surrounding farmland may threaten water quality due to nutrient pollution.
**Conservation issues**

**Protection status**

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta leucopsis</td>
<td>Barnacle Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an alternative feeding site for *Branta leucopsis* from Drumcliff Bay and Ballintemple (site 033). Breeding seabirds also occur on both islands, with Ardboline Island supporting nationally important numbers of *Phalacrocorax carbo* (205 pairs, 1985).

**Protection issues**

**Conservation issues**

**Site description**

Ardboline and Horse Island lie 1 km apart and 15 km north-west of Sligo town in County Sligo. Both islands are uninhabited and grass-covered with a rocky shoreline. The surrounding waters are not included within the site.

Habitats: Grassland (100%)

Land-use: Unknown (100%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
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<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta bernicla</em></td>
<td>Brent Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Limosa lapponica</em></td>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**

**Protection status**

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Branta bernicla</em></td>
<td>Brent Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Limosa lapponica</em></td>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Number needs confirmation.

This site supports a range of waterfowl species in winter.

**Conservation issues**

**Habitats**

**Land-use**

**Threats**

Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

Little information is available on this site.

**Site description**

Drumcliff Bay is the most northern section of Sligo Bay’s three estuaries. The main habitats are extensive mud- and sandflats together with goose-feeding fields at Ballintemple, Lissadell and Balgilgan. The site previously included goose-feeding fields at Lissadell and has been considerably enlarged since the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) to include Drumcliff Bay itself. There is intertidal shellfish cultivation (aquaculture).

Habitats: Wetland (40%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand-dunes/sand beach), Marine areas (40%; sea inlet/coastal features), Artificial landscape (20%; highly improved reseeded grassland)

Land-use: Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (20%), Nature conservation/ research (5%), Not utilized (60%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,774</td>
<td>1,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site supports large numbers of wintering wildfowl and waders. In particular, the improved grassland at Ballintemple and Lissadell provides feeding habitat for internationally important numbers of *Branta leucopsis*, as well as *Anser albifrons* flavirostris and *Cygnus cygnus*. Wintering waders include nationally important numbers of *Tringa totanus* (593 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**

**Protection status**

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**

Aquaculture/fisheries (B)

An important wintering and passage site for wildfowl and waders.

**Site description**

Cummeen Strand is the middle of Sligo Bay’s three discrete estuarine areas. It lies at the mouth of the River Garavogue and stretches west from Sligo town. Intertidal mud- and sandflats are the dominant habitat, with sand-dunes at Killaspug and Coney Island, and a shingle spit at Standalone Point. The estuary has been modified with the construction of a training wall. There is intertidal shellfish cultivation.

Habitats: Grassland (20%; mesophile grassland; machair), Wetland (80%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand-dunes/sand beach; sea inlet/coastal features)

Land-use: Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (10%), Not utilized (60%), Urban/industrial/transport (10%)

**Birds**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The proximity of Sligo town may negatively affect the site. The feasibility of completing Capital Dredging Works is currently being considered, including the disposal of dredge spoil on mudflat. Habitat quality may be reduced by intertidal shellfish cultivation and increasing recreational use.

**Site description**

Ballysadare Bay, located 7 km south of Sligo town, is the most southern of the three estuarine areas which comprise Sligo Bay. The site encompasses extensive areas of mudflat, with well-developed saltmarsh in places. It extends as far as the spit at Strandhill dunes, where it opens out to the sea. Shooting is permitted in the marshes at the upper reaches of the bay.

Habitats: Forest and woodland, Grassland (10%), Wetland (90%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; saltmarsh; sand-dunes/sand beach)

Land-use: Agriculture (10%), Fisheries/aquaculture (20%), Hunting (10%), Not utilized (60%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
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<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This site supports a range of waterfowl species in winter.
Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

**Lough Gara**

**Site description**

Lough Gara, in Counties Sligo and Roscommon, is situated 7 km west of Boyle at its northern end and 7 km north-east of Ballaghadereen at its southern margin. It is a shallow limestone lake, with a maximum depth of 16 m. To the south it is fed by the Lunge and Brededge rivers, while in the north it drains into the River Shannon via the River Boyle. The lakeshore comprises reedbed and marsh, which extend along the River Boyle and within the lake are low-lying islands. Adjoining the lake is raised bog. Land-uses include peat-cutting (‘Other’ land-use).

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Extraction industry (C)

The lake has been subject to various drainage schemes since the mid-nineteenth century and water-levels are now permanently lowered. Threats include siltation due to peat-cutting and further drainage, while wildfowling causes some disturbance to geese.

**Birds**

- Species: *Cygnus cygnus* Whooper Swan
- Season: W
- Year: 1996
- Pop min: 110
- Pop max: 110
- Acc: A
- Criteria: B1i, C3

- Species: *Anser albifrons* White-fronted Goose
- Season: W
- Year: 1994
- Pop min: 503
- Pop max: 503
- Acc: A
- Criteria: B1i, C3

This is an important site for wintering wildfowl.

**Killala Bay**

**Site description**

A north-facing triangular bay, on the county borders of Mayo and Sligo and at the mouth of the Moy river. A long, sand island, Bartragh Island, separates the south-west side of the bay from open water. Most of the inner region is intertidal, with extensive sand- and mudflats. The main land-uses are for amenity, and the Moy estuary is renowned for salmon fishing.

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C), Recreation/tourism (B)

The main threats to the site are uncontrolled or accidental emissions into the estuary and bay from Ballina sewage plant and, until recently, from the chemical plant (Asahi) at Killala (now closed). Other threats include intensive holiday-village developments adjacent to the bay, and golf-course expansion and development on the dunes at Inishcrone and Bartragh Island. There is damage to saltmarsh due to grazing and tractors. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Killala Bay; area not known).

**Birds**

- Species: *Branta bernicla* Brent Goose
- Season: W
- Year: 1996
- Pop min: 229
- Pop max: 229
- Acc: A
- Criteria: B1i, C1

- Species: *Calidris canutus* Knot
- Season: W
- Year: 1996
- Pop min: 802
- Pop max: 802
- Acc: A
- Criteria: B2

- Species: *Limosa lapponica* Knot
- Season: W
- Year: 1996
- Pop min: 413
- Pop max: 413
- Acc: A
- Criteria: B2


**Aughris Head**

**Site description**

A stretch of mainland cliff, c.1.5 km long, situated on the north-facing County Sligo coastline, approximately 20 km west of Ballysadare. The cliffs, reaching 30 m in height, are near-vertical and horizontally stratified.

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Grazing (SA), Hunting (CA), Other (SA)

The cliffs are of significant interest to the bird, bat and marine life communities. Although the cliffs are likely to be affected by future tourism and coastal development, there is international interest in their conservation status due to their important biodiversity. A proposal for a coastal access route from Lettermacaward to Lettermacaward (Naturist Beach) was recently refused consent.

**Birds**

- Species: *Rissa tridactyla* Knot
- Season: F
- Year: 1995
- Pop min: 1,788
- Pop max: 1,788
- Acc: Partial
- Criteria: A

- Species: *Uria aalge* Fulmar
- Season: F
- Year: 1996
- Pop min: 1,788
- Pop max: 1,788
- Acc: Partial
- Criteria: A

This is a notable site for breeding seabirds: there are nationally important numbers of *Rissa tridactyla* (742 pairs, 1997) and *Uria aalge* (1,211 pairs, 1997). Other species include *Alca torda* (at least 87 birds, 1997), *Fulmarus glacialis* (94 pairs, 1997) and *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (9 pairs, 1997).
This is an important site for breeding seabirds; additional species include Fulmarus glacialis (10 pairs), Puffinus puffinus (10–100 pairs), Phalacrocorax aristotelis (>10 pairs) and Cepphus grylle (5 pairs).

**Protection status**

National None International High

165 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Illumaunstaith, 165 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

The island (5 ha) is a reserve owned by BirdWatch Ireland. Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success.

### Stags of Broadhaven

#### Admin region West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinates</th>
<th>Altitude 0–100 m</th>
<th>Area 136 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Site description

A group of four precipitous rocky islets (totalling 4 ha and rising to 100 m) and the surrounding area, located off the cliff-dominated north coast of County Mayo and 2 km north of Benwee Head.

**Habitats**

- Marine areas (95%; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (5%; sea cliff/rocky shore)

**Land-use**

- Not utilized (100%)

#### Birds

**Species**

- Oizornisca inornata (Leach's Petrel) B 1982 200 200 B C6

An important site for breeding seabirds; additional species include Hydrobatides pelagicaus (no recent data; <100 pairs, 1996), Fulmarus glacialis (100 pairs, 1982), Larus argentatus (c.25 pairs, 1971), Rissa tridactyla (c.25 pairs, 1969), Alca toroa (9 pairs, 1971) and Fratercula arctica (no recent data; one of the most densely populated colonies in 1966).

**Protection status**

National None International High

136 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Stags of Broadhaven, 136 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success.

### Broadhaven, Blacksod and Tullaghan Bays and parts of the Mullet peninsula

#### Admin region West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinates</th>
<th>Altitude 0–30 m</th>
<th>Area 10,852 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Site description

A very large coastal complex, next to Belmullet in County Mayo. This site includes the intertidal mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh of several bays as well as parts of the Mullet peninsula and mainland, with machair, lake, marsh and non-intensive farmland. This site is an amalgamation of three sites which were listed as separate IBAs in the previous European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989). Broadhaven Bay (formerly IE028), Ternoncarragh Lake (formerly IE029) and Blacksood Bay (formerly IE033).

#### Birds

**Species**

- Gavia immer Great Northern Diver W 1996 37 65 A Aii, B1, C2
- Cygnus cygnus Whooper Swan W 1996 107 124 B B3
- Branta leucopsis Brent Goose W 1996 194 277 B Aii, C1
- Crex crex Common Snipe B 1996 10 10 A C6
- Phalaropus lobatus Red-necked Phalarope B 1966 0 2 A C6
- Sterna sandvicensis Sandwich Tern B 1995 81 81 B A1, B2, C6

The bays and other coastal, lake and intertidal habitats support a wide diversity of wintering and breeding birds. In winter, there are internationally important numbers of several waterbirds. In addition, there are nationally important numbers of Anser albifrons flavirostris, Mergus serrator (43 birds, 1996), Pluvialis squatarola (61 birds, 1995), Charadrius hiaticula, Calidris alba (65 birds, 1995), Calidris alpina (2,465 birds, 1996) and Laimo limosa (136 birds, 1996).

**Protection status**

National None International Partial

683 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Blacksod/Broadhaven Bay, 683 ha), 7,493 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Blacksod and Broadhaven Bays, 7,493 ha). 109 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Cross Lough (The Mullet), 109 ha). 377 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Termoncarragh Lake, 377 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Aquaculture/fisheries (U)

Onshore, the site is threatened by overgrazing, increased fencing and increased use of fertilizer, while pressure to develop intertidal shellfish cultivation is increasing within the bays. The breeding habitat of Crex crex, in particular, is threatened by changes in agricultural practice, with earlier cutting of hay and silage, and the replacement of meadow with sheep-grazing pasture. Farming practices that favour Crex crex are being encouraged within the area through a grant scheme. There are plans to attract Phalaropus lobatus back to Annagh marsh on the Mullet peninsula, through habitat-restoration measures. A 24 ha reserve owned by BirdWatch Ireland lies within the site. The IBA overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Blacksod/Mullet; area not known).

### Inishgloha and Inishkeeragh

#### Admin region West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinates</th>
<th>Altitude 0–22 m</th>
<th>Area 137 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Site description

Two low-lying offshore islands, 1 km west of Corraun Point on the Mullet peninsula, County Mayo. This site includes Carricknarony Rocks, Duffar Rocks and the surrounding sea area.

**Habitats**

- Grassland (10%; humid grassland), Marine areas (85%; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (15%; sea cliff/rocky shore; rock stacks/sits)

**Land-use**

- Fisheries/aquaculture (85%), Not utilized (15%)

#### Birds

These islands are important for their breeding colonies of seabirds, and are also notable for wintering Branta leucopsis (265 birds, 1994; birds also use sites 043 and 044), and for breeding Sterna paradisaea (105 pairs, 1995). There are also small numbers of Sterna albifrons. Other breeding seabirds in numbers of national importance are
Phalacrocorax carbo (57 pairs), Larus marinus (75 pairs) and Larus fuscus (min. 20 pairs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydrophasus pygargus</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A4i, B1ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus canus</td>
<td>Common Gull</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. One of the largest colonies in Ireland.

**Protection status**
National None International High
337 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inishglora and Inishkeeragh, 337 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Fishing may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success.

**Inishkea Islands**
Admin region West
Coordinates 54°07'N 10°13'W
Altitude 0–75 m Area 592 ha

This is the most important wintering site for Branta leucopsis in Ireland (birds also use sites 042 and 044). Other wintering birds of national importance (no more recent data) include Pluvialis apricaria (1,500, 1987), Calidris alba (200, 1987), Calidris maritima (175, 1987) and Arenaria interpres (400, 1987). After an absence from the islands since the 1960s, Crex crex have returned to breed (2 birds, 1998). The islands comprise one of the top sites in Ireland for shorebirds breeding on machair, e.g. Haematopus ostralegus, Vanellus vanellus and Calidris alpina.

**Protection status**
National Partial International Partial
IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Inishkea Islands; area not known). 272 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Inishkea Islands, 272 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Day-trippers may cause disturbance to nesting birds. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation by 272 ha (Inishkea Islands; area not known).

These islands support important numbers of wintering geese and breeding seabirds. Seabirds breeding in numbers of national importance are Phalacrocorax carbo (185 pairs, 1981), Fulmarus glacialis (500 pairs, 1981), Larus canus (20–50 pairs, 1981) and Larus argentatus (300–400 pairs, 1981).

**Protection status**
National None International None

**Conservation issues**

The site is a proposed (by NPW) Special Protection Area (Duvillaun Island, 446 ha), and should be designated in the near future.

**Carrowmore Lake**
Admin region West
Coordinates 54°11'N 9°48'W
Altitude 30–30 m Area 967 ha

Carrowmore lake is situated 2.5 km north-west of Bangor, in north-west County Mayo. It is a medium-sized, fairly shallow lake, originally with low to moderate nutrient-levels (oligotrophic–mesotrophic), and is surrounded by blanket bog and some new forestry plantations. The IBA is considerably larger than in the previous European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), when it comprised solely Darreen’s Island, a low-lying grassy island in the north-western part of the lake. The lake is used for angling.

**Protection status**
National High International High
IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Carrowmore Lough; area not known). 967 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Carrowmore Lake, 967 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Water quality is threatened by the intensification of agriculture and the effects of nutrient pollution. It is not known why terns stopped breeding on Darreen’s Island, which was designated as a Special Protection Area on account of them, but they may return to breed in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta leucopsis</td>
<td>Barnacle Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>A B1i, B2, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus canus</td>
<td>Great Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>A B1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Birds also use sites 042 and 044.
future. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Carrowmore Lake; area not known).

**Site description**
A large area of relatively intact blanket bog in north-west County Mayo, bounded by Bangor to the north, Mullranny in the south-west and Lough Feeagh to the east. The site is one of the best examples of an Atlantic blanket-bog system in Europe and supports a diversity of other habitats, including upland grassland, mountainous terrain, lakes and rivers. Sheep graze the area.

**Birds**

**Site description**

A wetland complex, 2 km east of Foxford in County Mayo and comprising two large lakes, with islands, and a diversity of shoreline habitats including fens, marshes, wet grasslands, rocky shorelines and deciduous woodland. The lakes are drained by the Moy river and the site also includes grasslands which surround this river to the east and north-east of Lough Cullin (Moy valley). The site has been extended since the previous European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) to include the Moy valley. The Moy river was drained in the 1960s and its adjacent grasslands no longer flood. The lakes are popular for angling.

**Birds**

Loughs Conn and Cullin are important for their waterfowl populations, and the Moy valley is notable for breeding *Crex crex* (5 pairs, 1996). Wintering species of national importance are *Anser albifrons* *flavirostris* (146 birds, 1994), *Aythya ferina* (431 birds, 1995), *Fulica atra* (1,500 birds, 1996), *Cygnus olor* (284 birds, 1996), *Aythya fuligula* (694 birds, 1996) and *Ruc Hernandez clangula* (102 birds, 1996). This is also one of three regular breeding sites for *Melanitta nigra* in Ireland.

### Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cypus cygnus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**

National Partial International Partial

2,600 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Conn, 2,600 ha), 1,135 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Cullin, 1,135 ha). 5,291 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Conn, 5,291 ha). 1,136 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Cullin, 1,136 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Previously the herb-rich grasslands alongside the Moy river provided breeding habitat for large concentrations of *Crex crex*. However, drainage of the river in the 1960s dried out the land, allowing more intensive farming with earlier cutting of meadow and increased use of fertilizer. This is likely to have caused the reduction in numbers of *Crex crex*. BirdWatch Ireland, with support from NPW and RSPB, operate a grant scheme in the area to encourage farming practices that favour *Crex crex*. The main threat to the lake is nutrient pollution, due partly to agricultural intensification within the catchment and partly to increased silting (probably as a consequence of large-scale mechanical peat extraction taking place upstream). There is also increasing pressure from lake shore developments (holiday homes/marinas) which cause habitat loss, and increase the problem of nutrient pollution due to inputs of domestic waste.

**Site description**

Clare Island is situated at the entrance of Clew Bay, 5 km from the mainland in County Mayo. The sea cliffs extend for 8 km along the north-western side of the island; the site boundary runs parallel to, and 100 m inland from, the cliff-edge.

**Birds**

The cliffs hold notable seabird colonies, including one of the largest colonies of *Fulmarus glacialis* (1,898 pairs, 1990) in Ireland, and nationally important numbers of *Larus argentatus* (min. 550 pairs, 1987) and *Rissa tridactyla* (1,712 pairs, 1990). This is also a notable breeding site for *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

This site is being considered by NPW for designation as a Special Protection Area, and it overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Clare Island Cliffs; area not known). The cliffs are listed as an area of international scientific importance, on account of their rare Arctic-alpine plant communities and seabird colonies.
**Lough Carra**  
Admin region West  
Coordinates 53°41’N 9°15’W  
Altitude 21–21 m  
Area 1,595 ha

### Site description
Lough Carra is situated south of Castlebar, in County Mayo. It is a large, clear, calcareous lake with many bays, and islands, and is predominantly spring-fed. There are areas of wet woodland, marsh and reedbed on the lake shore. The lake is linked hydrologically to Lough Mask (site 051), immediately to its south.

### Protection status
National High  
International High  
IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Carra; area not known).  
1,595 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Carra, 1,595 ha).

### Conservation issues
Reduced water-levels may have led to a decline in diving duck populations. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lough Carra/Mask complex; area not known).

### Cross Lough (Killadoon)

#### Site description
Cross Lough is situated near Killadoon village, south-west of Louisburgh in County Mayo. The lough is a coastal lagoon separated from the sea by a shingle ridge, within which there is a small islet.

#### Protection status
National None  
International None

#### Conservation issues
The breaching of the shingle bar may lead to erosion of the islet. The colony of terns Sterna has declined in recent years, possibly due to predation by American mink Mustela vision.

### Lough Mask

#### Site description
Located in County Mayo, Lough Mask is situated south of Lough Carra (site 049), which drains into it, and north of Lough Corrib (site 056), into which it drains. It is one of the deepest lakes in the country and is calcareous. It is fed by the Owenbrin river which deposits large amounts of sandy sediment at its entrance forming an extensive delta.

#### Protection status
National None  
International None

### Birds
The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of its migratory waterfowl populations, including nationally important numbers of Aythya fuligula (438 birds, 1995).

#### Protection status
National High  
International High  
IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Mask; area not known).  
8,529 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Mask, 8,529 ha).

#### Conservation issues
Nutrient pollution may threaten the lake, due to intensification of agriculture on surrounding farmland. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lough Carra/Mask complex; area not known).

### Inishbofin and Inishshark (including Davillaun)

#### Site description
A group of marine islands situated approximately 5.5 km off the west County Galway coast. Inishbofin, the largest island, is inhabited year-round by approximately 250 people. Two-thirds of this island is used for agriculture, mainly sheep-grazing, with small areas of meadow. Sheer cliffs and two very large stacks are present at its western end. Inishark is situated less than 1 km south-west of Inishbofin, and has been uninhabited since 1960. Its main habitat-type is heathland, the other third is used for agriculture, mainly sheep-grazing, with small areas of meadow. The much smaller Davillaun Island lies 2 km east of Inishbofin, it is uninhabited. The IBA has been expanded to encompass Inishark and Davillaun, which were not included within this site in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989).

#### Protection status
National None  
International None

#### Birds
Breeding Puffinus puffinus and wintering Branta leucopsis occur on both Inishark and Inishbofin, the latter species occurring also on Davillaun. Other seabirds breeding in numbers of national importance are Fulmarus glacialis (>30 pairs, 1965). Inishbofin was formerly a stronghold of the globally threatened Crex crex, but breeding numbers are now small (3 calling males, 1998), though still of national importance. Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax breed in low numbers on the two main islands.
### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (B).
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (B).
- Extraction industry (C).

With changes in farm practice on both islands, mainly the replacement of meadow with sheep-grazing pasture, there has been a stark decline in breeding numbers of *Crex crex* and a total disappearance of *Miliaria calandra*. To try to reverse this trend, farming practices that favour *Crex crex* are being encouraged through a grant scheme. Other threats to Inishbofin in particular include peat-cutting and drainage.

### Site description

A small, uninhabited marine island lying 3 km west of Aughris Point, off the west coast of County Galway. The island, with a largely sheer cliff coastline, rises to 60 m in height. It is of archaeological interest for its ancient monastic settlements. (30 pairs, 1987).

### Protection status

**National** None | **International** High

169 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (High Island, 169 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (C).

The isolation and difficulty of landing on this island have so far secured it from serious human disturbance. Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success.

### Connemara Islands

**Admin region West**

Coordinates: 53°30'N 10°09'W

Altitude: 0-63 m | Area: 20,000 ha

### Site description

This very large site encompasses many small islands and islets stretching from Slyne Head (Illaunamid Island) south-eastwards via Ballyconneely, Bertraghboy and Kilkieran Bay as far as Greatman’s Bay. Several IBAs which were treated separately in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) have been combined to form this site, including Eeshal Island (formerly IE044), Horse Island (formerly IE042), Hen Island (formerly IE043), Oilean Geabhrog (formerly IE045), Oilean nan Abhignneach (formerly IE041), Horse Island (formerly IE042), Hen Island (formerly IE043), and more recently in Inishmuckery. A detailed review of tern usage from surveys in 1969–1970, 1984 and 1995 is required to clarify which are the most important islands. In the absence of such a review, a single such IBA is considered a better approach as terns appear to be very mobile within this area.

### Protection status

**National** None | **International** None

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta leucopsis</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>B1i,C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna sandvicensis</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>A B2,C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna hirundo</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>A C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna paradisaea</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>A C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna albifrons</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>A B2,C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This group of islands supports some of the most important colonies of breeding terns *Sterna*, especially *Sterna paradisaea*, in Ireland and is also an important winter feeding site for *Branta leucopsis*, particularly on St Macdara’s Island and more recently in Inishmuckery. A detailed review of tern usage from surveys in 1969–1970, 1984 and 1995 is required to clarify which are the most important islands. In the absence of such a review, a single such IBA is considered a better approach as terns appear to be very mobile within this area.

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (UI), Recreation/tourism (B).

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success, while increasing tourism (trips to the islands) may lead to disturbance of nesting terns. The site overlaps with a proposed Special Protection Area (Slyne Head, 1,514 ha).

### Roundstone bog

**Admin region West**

Coordinates: 53°23'N 9°47'W

Altitude: 20–300 m | Area: 7,000 ha

### Site description

Roundstone bog is a complex of lakes, rocky outcrops and lowland Atlantic blanket bog. Rocky outcrops and variations in topography have resulted in a complexity of peatland plant communities, making the site of particular conservation interest. The site includes Lough Scannive (83 ha) which was treated as an IBA (formerly IE044) in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989).

### Protection status

**National** None | **International** Low

49 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Scannive, 49 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Afforestation (C), Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Drainage (C), Extraction industry (B), Industrialization/urbanization (A).

A development proposal for an airstrip within the western margin of the bog is a significant threat. Other hazards to the site include large-
Lough Corrib

Site description
Lough Corrib is situated north of Galway city, and is the second-largest lake in Ireland. It consists of two parts: a smaller, shallower basin to the south and a large, deeper basin to the north, connected by a relatively narrow channel. It supports one of the largest areas of wetland vegetation in the country, with extensive submerged beds of stonewort Chara, as well as reed-swamp, marsh, fen and wet grassland. The lakeshore includes woodland, raised bog, callow, and limestone pavement. Apart from raised bog these habitats are also present on the many lake islands. The lake is used for trout fishing.

Habitats
Forest and woodland (5%); broadleaved deciduous forest; Grassland (10%); humid grassland; mesophile grassland; Wetland (85%); standing fresh water; river/stream; water-finge vegetation; fen;transitional mire/spring

Land-use
Agriculture (20%); Fisheries/aquaculture (80%); Hunting (100%)

Conservation issues
This is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Several additional species occur in numbers of national importance, including Anser albifrons flaviostris (140 birds, 1996), Anas penelope (1,000 birds, 1995), Anas strepera (35 birds, 1996), Anas clypeata (94 birds, 1996), Aythya fuligula (2,676 birds, 1996), Botaurus stellaris (145 birds, 1996), Vanellus vanellus (4,050 birds, 1995) and Pluvialis apricaria (7,000 birds, 1995). Lough Corrib is one of three only regular breeding sites known for Melanitta nigra in Ireland, and numbers are of national importance (30 pairs, 1995).

Protection status
National None International High

Conservation issues
Threats
Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B)
The uncontrolled discharge of particulate matter into the southern part of the lake, is causing nutrient pollution. Other threats to habitat quality are wildfowling (causing disturbance to birds) and increasing pressure from fishing and from lakeshore developments such as hotels, holiday homes and marinas.

Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

Lough Corrib

Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aythya ferina</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>25,100</td>
<td>25,100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulica atra</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl and breeding seabirds. Several other species occur at this site in numbers of national importance, including wintering Anas penelope (1,413 birds, 1995), Clangula hyemalis (71 birds, 1996), Charadrius hiaticula (449 birds, 1996), Pluvialis squatarola (86 birds, 1996), Pluvialis apricaria (2,273 birds, 1996) and Calidris alpina (1,835 birds, 1996), as well as breeding Phalacrocorax carbo (min. 220 pairs, 1987) and Sterna hirundo (98 pairs, 1995).

Protection status
National None International High

Conservation issues
Threats
Aquaculture/fisheries (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Other (C), Recreation/tourism (C)
An ongoing problem is the discharge of untreated sewage from Galway city into the sea bay (Other threat). A proposal for the construction of a causeway across intertidal mudflats, to carry a pipeline to a sewage-treatment plant on Mutton Island, has met with controversy. However, this solution is now being implemented despite opposition and lack of favour from the European Commission. Effects on the inner bay in terms of changes to sediment patterns are unknown. Other threats to habitat quality include intertidal shellfish cultivation and development of the recreational and amenity potential of the site. The IBA overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Inner Galway Bay; area not known).

Rahasane turlough

Site description
Situated on the Dunkellin river, west of Craughwell in south-west Galway, this is the last large turlough (karst lake) remaining in Ireland. The site comprises marshes, seasonally flooded wet meadows, with limestone outcrops and scrub at its margins. In the summer the site is grazed by cattle and sheep.

Habitats
Scrub (5%); scrub; Grassland (75%); steppedy calcareous grassland; humid grassland; Wetland (20%); standing fresh water; river/stream; water-finge vegetation

Land-use
Agriculture (75%); Hunting (100%)

Birds
Species Season Year Pop min Pop max Acc Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cypripedium coum</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cypripedium cypripedium</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa limosa</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B1i, C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Species wintering in nationally important numbers include Anser albifrons flaviostris (139 birds, 1995) and Anas penelope (5,570 birds, 1996).

Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland
**Protection status**
National None International Partial
221 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Rahasane Turlough, 221 ha).

**Conservation issues**
Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B)

Drainage of the site has been a long-standing threat. However, its designation as a Special Protection Area and its status as a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Rahasane Turlough; area not known) should reduce this threat. Disturbance to wintering birds is caused by wildfowling. There has been some clearance of limestone pavement next to the lake, with implications for water quality and disturbance to birds.

**Site description**
A small lake with islands and some reed-swamp, situated just south of the town of Loughrea in County Galway. It is a popular public amenity area.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation)
- Land-use: Tourism/recreation (100%)

**Birds**
- *Anas crecca* (Shoveler)
  - Season: Winter
  - Year: 1996
  - Pop min: 467
  - Pop max: 681
  - Acc: B1, C1

This is one of the most important wintering sites in Ireland for *Fulica atra* (1,700 birds, 1980s). *Aythya fuligula* (452 birds, 1986), and *Pluvialis apricaria* (1,000 birds, 1995) also occur in numbers of national importance.

**Protection status**
National None International None

**Conservation issues**
Threats: Recreation/tourism (C)

The main threat to the lake is nutrient pollution from agricultural runoff, as many of the surrounding fields have been fertilized.

**Coole Park and Garryland complex**
Admin region West
Coordinates 53°05'N 8°52'W
Altitude 0–30 m Area 389 ha

**Site description**
A site comprising a range of habitats including turloughs. Lough Coole, grassland and mixed deciduous woodland, situated north-west of Gort in County Galway. It is a popular public amenity area.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (60%; broadleaved deciduous forest), Wetland (15%; mesophile grassland), Wetland (25%; standing fresh water; river/dream; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Land-use: Agriculture (15%), Tourism/recreation (85%)

**Birds**
- *Sterna paradisea* (Arctic Tern)
  - Species: 1.318 pairs on Rock Island, the most westerly of a group of small islands west of Inishmore; the remainder on Inishmaan.

This area supports the largest discrete breeding colony of *Sterna paradisea* in Ireland, most of which occur on Rock Island. Low numbers of *Sterna albifrons* (3 pairs, 1995) breed on Inishmaan. Other breeding seabirds at this site include *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*, *Fulmarus glacialis* and *Cepphus grylle* (140 birds on Inishmore, 1999).

**Protection status**
National None International None

**Conservation issues**
Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Agricultural intensification would have a significant negative effect upon this site. Tourism is an important industry on the Aran Islands, especially Inishmore, and needs to be controlled to minimize the impact to the environment. Terns *Sterna* on Inishmaan are vulnerable to disturbance. Two proposed candidate Special Areas for Conservation (Inishmaan, 928 ha; Inishmore, 20 ha) lie within the IBA.

**Lough Cutra**
Admin region West
Coordinates 53°01'N 8°46'W
Altitude 35–35 m Area 390 ha

**Site description**
A freshwater lake, with low to moderate nutrient levels, lying on limestone 4 km south-east of Gort in County Galway. The lake supports aquatic vegetation, with reedbeds in sheltered bays.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation)
- Land-use: Tourism/recreation (100%)

**Lough Rea**
Admin region West
Coordinates 53°11'N 8°30'W
Altitude 83–83 m Area 200 ha

**Birds**
- *Fulica atra* (Shoveler)
  - Year: 1996
  - Pop min: 467
  - Pop max: 681
  - Acc: B1, C1

This is one of the most important wintering sites in Ireland for *Fulica atra* (1,700 birds, 1980s). *Aythya fuligula* (452 birds, 1986), and *Pluvialis apricaria* (1,000 birds, 1995) also occur in numbers of national importance.

**Protection status**
National None International Partial
364 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Coole Lough and Garryland Complex, 364 ha). 389 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Coole Park and Garryland Complex, 389 ha). 363 ha of IBA covered by Biogenic Reserve (Coole Park and Garryland Complex, 363 ha).

**Conservation issues**
Threats: Disturbance to birds (C)

Shooting on adjacent lands causes disturbance to birds. A large part of the site is owned by NPW. A proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Coole Park and Garryland Complex; 363 ha) lies within the IBA.
Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

**Lough Cutra**

Lough Cutra was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of important numbers of breeding *Phalacrocorax carbo* (166 pairs, 1985; up to 300 birds in winter).

**Protection status**

National None International High

390 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Cutra, 390 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Agricultural intensification, including excessive use of fertilizer and slurry-spreading, is leading to nutrient pollution of the lake.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas creca</em></td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aythya marila</em></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Protection status**

National High International High

308 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Ballyalla lake, 308 ha). 308 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Ballyalla lake, 308 ha). 308 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Ballyalla lake, 308 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Intensification of farming adjacent to the lake threatens its water quality, due to increased fertilizer run-off. The site has been managed as a Wildfowl Sanctuary for the last twenty years.

**Mid Clare coast including Mutton and Mattle Islands**

The site encompasses Mutton and Mattle Islands, lying approximately 3.5 km west of Quilty, County Clare. The site boundaries have been extended since the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) to include the mainland coastline between Rinnamyrall Point (on the western edge of Doonbeg Bay) and Spanish Point to the north, as well as the sea area between the coast and the islands. Mattle Island, previously treated as a separate IBA (former site IE057), is now also included within this site. Mutton Island is a small, rocky, uninhabited island, covered by maritime grass and grazed by goats year-round; Mattle Island is also small and rocky, but is not grazed.

**Habitats**

Grassland (5%), Mesophytes (40%), Marine areas (40); Sea inlet/coastal features, Rocky areas (55); Sea cliff/rocky shore; Rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**

Agriculture (5%), Fisheries/aquaculture (40%), Not utilized (55%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta leucopsis</em></td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Arenaria interpres</em></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This site is important for wintering shorebirds and wildfowl. Also along the coast are nationally important numbers of wintering *Charadrius hiaticula* (180 birds, 1996), *Calidris maritima* (134 birds, 1995), *C. alpina* (2,200 birds, 1996) and *C. alba* (170 birds, 1996), as well as breeding *Hydrobates pelagicus*, *Phalacrocorax carbo* (60 pairs, 1987) and *Larus marinus* (50 pairs, 1987).

**Protection status**

National Low International Low

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Mutton Island; area not known). 54 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Mattle Island, 54 ha). 516 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Mutton Island, 516 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Overgrazing by goats, made worse by the presence of rabbits, is a problem on Mutton Island. Additionally, the area is visited by large numbers of tourists, which need to be regulated. The site overlaps...
with two proposed candidate Special Areas for Conservation (White Strand/Carrowmore marsh; Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands; areas not known).

**Illeunonearaun**

**Admin region Mid West**
**Coordinates 52°39′N 9°44′W**
**Altitude 0-30 m Area 46 ha**

**Site description**
A small island and surrounding sea, situated 500 m off the County Clare coast, and about 7 km south-west of Kilkee.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (15%; mesophyle grassland)
- Marine areas (80%; sea inlet/coastal features)
- Rocky areas (5%; rock stacks/isle)

**Land-use**
- Fisheries/aquaculture (80%), Not utilized (20%)

**Protection status**
- National None
- International None

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C)

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. On the basis of wintering Branta leucopsis, this site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Illaunonearaun, 46 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future.

**Loop Head**

**Admin region Mid West**
**Coordinates 52°34′N 9°55′W**
**Altitude 0-70 m Area 401 ha**

**Site description**
Loop Head is the most westerly point in County Clare, approximately 20 km south-west of Kilkee. The site comprises horizontally stratified vertical sea cliffs with stacks, rising up to 60 m, and the surrounding sea area. There is a lighthouse on the headland.

**Habitats**
- Scrub (20%; heathland)
- Marine areas (75%; sea inlet/coastal features)
- Rocky areas (5%; sea cliff/rocky shore)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (15%), Fisheries/aquaculture (75%), Not utilized (10%)

**Protection status**
- National None
- International None

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

Above the cliffs, grazing and trampling pressure has severely degraded the heathland, causing erosion. Parts of the cliffs used by nesting birds are vulnerable to human disturbance. On the basis of its breeding seabirds, the site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Loop Head, 401 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future.

**Shannon and Fergus estuary**

**Admin region Mid West**
**Coordinates 52°40′N 9°04′W**
**Altitude 0-10 m Area 16,718 ha**

**Site description**
A large estuarine complex with islands, saltmarshes, mudflats, raised saltmarsh and wet meadows. The site encompasses the Fergus river estuary from Clarecastle (where it becomes tidal) to the junction with the Shannon estuary, and includes the estuary inland as far as Limerick city. The estuary lies within Counties Clare, Limerick and Kerry, and contains the largest port and most extensive areas of industrial development in mid-west Ireland.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (20%; humid grassland)
- Wetland (80%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (80%), Not utilized (20%)

**Protection status**
- National None
- International High

This is one of the most important sites in Ireland for wintering and migrating waterfowl, supporting 10 species in numbers of international importance. A further 13 species occur in numbers of national importance, including Anser anser (216 birds, 1996), Tadorna tadorna (1,060 birds, 1996), Anas penelope (6,935 birds, 1996), Anas crecca (2,590 birds, 1995), Anas acuta (48 birds, 1995), Anas clypeata (84 birds, 1996), Vanellus vanellus (28,194 birds, 1995), Numenius arquata (2,896 birds, 1995) and Tringa nebularia (36 birds, 1996).

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Consequences of animal/plant introductions (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Recreation/tourism (U)

Threats to the site include industrial and urban development, the spread of non-native cord-grass Spartina over intertidal mudflats, marina developments and increased boating activities, pollution from industry, and increasing intertidal shellfish cultivation. The effects of these pressures on the site include habitat loss and disturbance and lead to a general degradation of habitat quality.

**Tralee Bay and Barrow Harbour**

**Admin region South West**
**Coordinates 52°16′N 9°48′W**
**Altitude 0-10 m Area 3,290 ha**

**Site description**
A large, shallow sea bay on the north coast of County Kerry, including intertidal areas at the mouth of the River Lee (where the town of Tralee is located) and at Barrow Harbour. Some protection is given to the River Lee estuary by Derrymore Island, a spit formed of shingle ridges, while Barrow Harbour is protected by land with only a small inlet open to the sea. North of Barrow Harbour the site encompasses a large, sandy intertidal inlet, sand-dunes and beach
which extend as far as Akeragh Lough. The site has been extended since the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) to include Akeragh Lough and intervening coastal habitats (former site IE059).

**Habitats**
- Grassland (10%)
- Mesophile grassland
- Wetland (80%)
- Mudflat/sandflat
- Saltmarsh
- Sand-dunes/sand beach
- Shingle/shelly beach
- Rocky areas
- Sea cliff/rocky shore

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (10%)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (50%)
- Hunting (80%)
- Nature conservation/research (20%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas platyrhynchos</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aquila chrysaetos</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta bernicla hirta</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta leucopsis</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,112</td>
<td>4,112</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**
- National: None
- International: None

**Conservation issues**
- Threats: Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

Disturbance is a possible threat to the site. However, visitor pressure so far seems to be controlled. Overgrazing by livestock on Illauntannig and Illaunamill may affect *Branta leucopsis*. The IBA overlaps with a proposed Special Protection Area (Magheree Islands, 288 ha).

**Site description**

Lough Gill is situated on the Magharees peninsula in Tralee Bay, on the north coast of County Kerry. It is a very shallow coastal lagoon, with a modified inlet and sluice gate, draining into Tralee Bay. The lagoon is fringed by extensive reedbeds and bordered by dunes, dune grassland and machair on its northern side, while intensive farmland borders most of its southern side. The dune system has been modified by golf-course development. The lagoon is used for fishing and boating.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%)
- Sand-dunes/sand beach
- Standing fresh water
- River/stream
- Water-ridge vegetation

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (20%)
- Hunting (100%)
- Water management (5%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cygnus cygnus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cygnus columbianus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important wintering site for swans *Cygnus*.

---

**Dingle peninsula**

**Site description**

The most northerly of five peninsulas in south-west County Kerry. This linear coastal site stretches from Brandon Point in the north...
around the coast as far as Annascaul in the south. Information on land-use and threats is incomplete.

**Habitats**
- Scrub (20%; heathland)
- Grassland (30%; mesophile grassland)
- Rocky areas (50%; sea cliff/rocky shore)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (50%), Not utilized (50%)

### Birds

#### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>B2, C6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fratercula arctica</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>A, B1, C1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calidris canutus</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>A, B4, B1, C2, C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Figure is sum of possible, probable and definite breeding pairs.

This is an important site for breeding *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.

### Protection status

#### National
- None

#### International
- None

### Conservation issues

#### Threats
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)
- Disturbance to birds (C)

For the survival of *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* at this site, it is vital that low-intensity farming on the cliff-tops is maintained. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Mount Brandon; area not known).

### Site description

This is the largest group of islands on the south-west coast, lying a few kilometres from the Dingle peninsula in County Kerry. The group includes Great Blasket Island, with steep cliffs on its northern side, and the five smaller, exposed rocky islands of Inisstooi, Inisvickillaun, Inisnabro, Tearaght and Beginish. Great Blasket Island includes Great Blasket Island, with steep cliffs on its northern side, and the five smaller, exposed rocky islands of Inisstooi, Inisvickillaun, Inisnabro, Tearaght and Beginish. Great Blasket Island was once inhabited and now has a visitor centre at its northern end. A small herd of feral red deer (*Cervus alaphus*) are present on Inisvickillaun. The islands are visited by tourists.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (30%; dry siliceous grassland)
- Rocky areas (50%; sea cliff/rocky shore)
- Rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**
- Not utilized (80%), Tourism/recreation (20%)

This site is of particular importance for its seabird colonies. Additional species occurring in numbers of national importance are *Fulmarus glacialis* (2,200 pairs, 1988), *Rissa tridactyla* (750 pairs, 1988) and *Alca torda* (450 birds, 1988).

### Protection status

#### National
- Low

#### International
- Partial

927 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Castlemaine Harbour, 927 ha). IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Castlemaine Harbour; area not known). 923 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Castlemaine Harbour, 923 ha). 2,973 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Castlemaine Harbour, 2,973 ha).

### Conservation issues

#### Threats
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)
- Aquaculture/fisheries (C)
- Natural events (C)

Potential threats to the site are pollution of the wetland due to agricultural run-off, degradation of the dunes by a possible golf-course development, and erosion of the dunes by natural processes. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Castlemaine Harbour; area not known).

### Site description

A long, narrow and grassy, uninhabited island, lying 0.5 km off the northern side of St Finan’s Bay in south-west County Kerry. It is steep-sided with a long narrow twin-peaked ridge rising to 145 m. The island is owned by BirdWatch Ireland and permission is required for access.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (80%; mesophile grassland)
- Rocky areas (20%; sea cliff/rocky shore)
- Rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (80%), Nature conservation/research (100%)

### Birds

#### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
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<td>1,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calidris canutus</td>
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<td>Haematopus ostralegus</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>1,173</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>A, B4, B1, C2, C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This site is owned by BirdWatch Ireland and permission is required for access.

### Site description

A large, shallow, tidal estuary at the head of Dingle Bay in County Kerry, Sheltered from the open sea by sand- and shingle-spits on the north and south sides, the estuary supports extensive intertidal mudflats with beds of eelgrass (*Zostera*) and fringes of saltmarsh. Inch spit on the north side supports the most extensive and intact dunes in the region, while on the south side, a smaller spit with a dune system occurs. Since the previous IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), the site has been extended to include the feeding areas of *Melanitta nigra* in the open part of the Bay immediately to the west of the sand-spits.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (30%; humid grassland)
- Wetland (80%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflats/saltmarsh; sand-dunes/sand beach; shingle/estuary beach)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (60%), Not utilized (20%)

An important wetland for wintering birds, with numbers exceeding 20,000 individuals in most years. It is also the most important wintering site in Ireland for *Gavia stellata* (230 birds, 1996) and *Melanitta nigra* (5,000 birds, 1996). Many other species occur in numbers of national importance, including *Anas penelope* (4,093 birds, 1996), *Haematopus ostralegus* (1,173 birds, 1995), *Pluvialis apricaria* (2,300 birds, 1995), *Calidris alpina* (1,350 birds, 1995) and *Tringa totanus* (270 birds, 1995).

### Protection status

#### National
- Partial

#### International
- Partial

927 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Castlemaine Harbour, 927 ha). IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Castlemaine Harbour; area not known). 923 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Castlemaine Harbour, 923 ha). 2,973 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Castlemaine Harbour, 2,973 ha).

### Conservation issues

#### Threats
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)
- Aquaculture/fisheries (C)
- Natural events (C)

Potential threats to the site are pollution of the wetland due to agricultural run-off, degradation of the dunes by a possible golf-course development, and erosion of the dunes by natural processes. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Castlemaine Harbour; area not known).

### Site description

A large, shallow, tidal estuary at the head of Dingle Bay in County Kerry, Sheltered from the open sea by sand- and shingle-spits on the north and south sides, the estuary supports extensive intertidal mudflats with beds of eelgrass (*Zostera*) and fringes of saltmarsh. Inch spit on the north side supports the most extensive and intact dunes in the region, while on the south side, a smaller spit with a dune system occurs. Since the previous IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), the site has been extended to include the feeding areas of *Melanitta nigra* in the open part of the Bay immediately to the west of the sand-spits.
An important site for breeding seabirds. Additional species occurring in numbers of national importance include *Puffinus puffinus* (700 pairs, 1987), *Larus marinus* (150 pairs, 1987) and *Alca torda* (800 birds, 1987).

### Protection status

**National High**  
**International High**

53 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Puffin Island, 53 ha). 53 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Puffin Island, 53 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**  
Agricultural intensification/expansion (B)

Unauthorized grazing which may cause erosion, occurs on the site.

### Site description

Two precipitous, rocky, uninhabited islands, situated 16 km west of Bolus Head on the Iveragh peninsula in County Kerry. Great Skellig reaches a height of 240 m and is the site of an old Celtic monastery. Little Skellig lies 1 km to its north-east and reaches 134 m in height. Great Skellig is popular with day-trippers. Landing on Little Skellig is prohibited.

The Skellig Islands are of international importance for breeding seabirds. In particular, the colony of *Sula bassana* on Little Skellig is the largest in Ireland. Other species breeding in numbers of national importance are *Puffinus puffinus* (>800 pairs, 1993), *Rissa tridactyla* (>2,000 pairs, 1993), *Alca torda* (>300 birds, 1993) and *Uria aalge* (1,500 birds, 1993).

### Protection status

**National High**  
**International Partial**

23 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Great Skellig, 23 ha). 8 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Little Skellig, 8 ha). 25 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (The Skelligs: Great Skellig and Little Skellig, 25 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**  
Disturbance to birds (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

It is important to ensure that visitors to Great Skellig use the paths, to prevent erosion of the fragile soils where many of the birds have their nest-burrows. BirdWatch Ireland has a long-term lease on Little Skellig.

This is an important site for breeding *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.

### Protection status

**National None**  
**International None**

For the survival of *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* at this site, it is vital that low-intensity farming on the cliff-tops is maintained.

### Site description

Eirk bog is situated in the Owenreagh valley, 1 km north of Moll’s Gap and 3 km south-west of Killarney National Park (site 079) in County Kerry. It is a classical example of an intermediate bog, between blanket and raised bog.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</td>
<td>Chough</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>A, B2, C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Figure is sum of possible, probable and definite breeding pairs.

Eirk bog provides wintering habitat for a small flock of *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, which is now the only regular flock of this species in the south-west of the country, and that is the basis for the designation of the site as a Special Protection Area.

### Conservation issues

**Threats**  
Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Burning of vegetation (C)

Overgrazing by sheep and deer pose a potential threat to the site. The IBA lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Eirk Bog: area not known).

### Site description

Killarney National Park extends south-west from Killarney town in County Kerry. It supports a diversity of habitats, from blanket bog and heath, to lakes which include the extensive Lough Leane and smaller Muckross lake. Parts of the lake shores are bordered by conifer plantations, and deciduous woodland occurs on the southern shore of Muckross lake; both are popular for angling and recreational boating.
**Site description**

Two uninhabited rocky islets and surrounding waters, 6 km west of the Beara peninsula in south-west County Cork. There is a lighthouse on Bull Rock which is owned by Commissioners of Irish Lights. Cow Rock is publicly-owned.

**Conservation issues**

The main threats to the site include overgrazing by sheep and deer, turf-cutting and peat extraction. The spread of non-native *Rhododendron* scrub is causing major damage to woodland habitat quality. However, coniferous forestry is gradually being replaced by native tree species. Nutrient pollution of Lough Leane, due to agricultural intensification, is a serious problem. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Killarney National Park; area not known).

**Birds**

This site supports important breeding seabird colonies. Additional seabirds breeding in nationally important numbers include *Phalacrocorax carbo* (50 pairs, 1987), *Rissa tridactyla* (590 pairs, 1987) and *Uria aalge* (2,000 pairs, 1987).

**Protection status**

National High International High

10,129 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Killarney National Park, 10,129 ha). 8,308 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (Killarney National Park, 10,129 ha). 8,308 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Killarney National Park, 10,129 ha).
Kilcolman bog

**Admin region** South West  
**Coordinates** 52°15’N 8°35’W  
**Altitude** 122–122 m  
**Area** 63 ha

**Site description**
Kilcolman bog, situated 4 km north-east of Buttevant in County Cork, is an area of reed-swamp, floating fen and open water. It is the site of a former lake and water-levels are currently managed for conservation using sluice gates.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Land-use Nature conservation/research (100%)

**Protection status**
National High  
International High

**Birds**

From 1992 to 1996, the Cloheen Strand Intake was threatened by plans to develop a golf course. However, following court action by BirdWatch Ireland and NPW, this threat has been averted. The area has now been purchased by NPW which should ensure its long-term protection. The site is a proposed Special Protection Area for Conservation (Kilcolman Bay; area not known).

**Conservation issues**

**Old Head of Kinsale**

**Admin region** South West  
**Coordinates** 51°38’N 8°32’W  
**Altitude** 0–60 m  
**Area** 15 ha

**Site description**
A 5-km long headland situated on the south County Cork coast, approximately 5 km from Kinsale.

**Habitats**
- Rocky areas (100%; sea cliff/rocky shore)
- Land-use Not utilized (100%)

**Protection status**
National High  
International High

**Birds**

The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of its migratory waterfowl, notably those species wintering in numbers of national importance: *Anas penelope* (2,000 birds, 1996), *Anas crecca* (1,600 birds, 1996), *Anas platyrhynchos* (1,750 birds, 1985), *Fulica atra* (312 birds, 1995) and *Pluvialis apricaria* (1,500 birds, 1985).

**Conservation issues**

**The Geareagh and the Iniscarra reservoir**

**Admin region** South West  
**Coordinates** 51°53’N 8°58’W  
**Altitude** 80–80 m  
**Area** 323 ha

**Site description**
The Geareagh valley is located 3 km south of Macroom, County Cork, and forms part of the channel of the Lee river. In the 1950s the valley was dammed, trees felled and 60% of it flooded for a hydroelectric scheme. Some of the original alluvial woodland remains. The site also encompasses the upper part of the Iniscarra reservoir as far as the Carrigadrohid Dam.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (15%); alluvial/very wet forest
- Grassland (10%; humid grassland)
- Wetland (75%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation)
- Land-use Agriculture (20%), Hunting (100%), Water management (100%)

**Protection status**
National High  
International High

**Birds**

This site was designated as a Special Protection Area based on its migratory waterfowl populations, particularly for *Cygnus cygnus* which is an Annex I species under the EC Birds Directive. Additionally, *Anas crecca* (950 birds, 1996) and *A. clypeata* (126 birds, 1996) winter in numbers of national importance.

**Conservation issues**

**Kilcolman bog**

**Admin region** South West  
**Coordinates** 51°53’N 8°58’W  
**Altitude** 15 ha  
**Area** 323 ha

**Site description**
Kilcolman Bog, situated 4 km south of Macroom, County Cork, and forms part of the channel of the Lee river. In the 1950s the valley was dammed, trees felled and 60% of it flooded for a hydroelectric scheme. Some of the original alluvial woodland remains. The site also encompasses the upper part of the Iniscarra reservoir as far as the Carrigadrohid Dam.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (15%); alluvial/very wet forest
- Grassland (10%; humid grassland)
- Wetland (75%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation)
- Land-use Agriculture (20%), Hunting (100%), Water management (100%)

**Protection status**
National High  
International High

**Birds**

This site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of its migratory waterfowl, notably those species wintering in numbers of national importance: *Anas penelope* (2,000 birds, 1996), *Anas crecca* (1,600 birds, 1996), *Anas platyrhynchos* (1,750 birds, 1985), *Fulica atra* (312 birds, 1995) and *Pluvialis apricaria* (1,500 birds, 1985).

**Conservation issues**

**Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland**

**Habitats**
- Scrub (15%; scrub)
- Grassland (15%; humid grassland)
- Wetland (60%; mudflats/sandflats; standing brackish and salt water)
- Marine areas (10%; sea inlet/coastal features)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (15%), Not utilized (85%)

**Birds**

Species | Season | Year | Pop min | Pop max | Acc | Criteria
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
*Limosa limosa* | W | 1995 | 945 | 945 | A | (B1, C1)
*Numenius arquata* | W | 1995 | 1,844 | 1,844 | A | (B2)

This is an important wetland for wintering waterfowl. Additional species that occur in numbers of national importance include *Tadorna tadorna* (160 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis squatarola* (86 birds, 1995), *Vanellus vanellus* (1,466 birds, 1995), *Calidris alpina* (1,827 birds, 1995) and *Tringa totanus* (309 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**
National None  
International None

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C)
- Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barrage (B)
- Recreation/tourism (B)

**Wildfowling causes disturbance to birds and is a problem at this site. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (The Geareagh; area not known).**
The area above the sea cliffs has been developed as a golf course, which could pose a threat to *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.

**Sovereign Islands**

**Admin region South West**

Coordinates 51°40'N 8°27'W

Altitude 0-32 m Area 2 ha

**Site description**

Two small, flat-topped islands (less that 30 m high) and surrounding waters, 1.5 km offshore from Oysterhaven in County Cork.

**Habitats**

Grassland (1%), Marine areas (98%); sea inlet/estuarine flooding; Rocky areas (1%); sea cliff/rocky shore

**Land-use**

Fishing (95%); Recreation (5%)

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

Fishing in surrounding waters may deplete the prey stock of seabirds, with implications for their breeding success. On the basis of its breeding seabirds, the area and its surrounding waters have been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Sovereign Island, 125 ha).

**Cork Harbour**

**Admin region South West**

Coordinates 51°50'N 8°17'W

Altitude 0-5 m Area 5,950 ha

**Site description**

A large, very sheltered sea bay with several river estuaries situated in County Cork. Intertidal mudflats are extensive with some areas of saltmarsh. There are three to four adjoining small freshwater or brackish lagoons and two large areas of open water, Lough Mahon and Lower Harbour, which are separated by Great Island. Large centres of human habitation lie adjacent to this site, including Cork city, which is a major port. Cork harbour and port form the largest industrial area on Ireland’s south coast.

**Habitats**

Forest and woodland (5%); alluvial/very wet forest), Grassland (10%); humid grassland), Wetland (80%); tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflats/sandflats; saltmarsh; standing brackish and salt water; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (5%); other urban/industrial area

**Land-use**

Agriculture (20%), Not utilized (60%), Tourism/recreation (20%)

**Protection status**

National Partial International Partial

**Conservation issues**

The site is of particular importance for *Cygnus columbianus*. However, due to loss of the main lagoon, numbers have declined drastically over the last ten years. This is also one of the most important sites in Ireland for wintering *Arenaria interpres* (275 birds, 1996) which, along with several other species, including *Anas crecca* (1,109 birds, 1996), *Charadrius hiaticula* (182 birds, 1996) and *Pluvialis apricaria* (3,755 birds, 1995), occur in numbers of national importance.

**Ballycotton, Ballynamona and Shanagarry**

**Admin region South West**

Coordinates 51°49'N 8°02'W

Altitude 0-5 m Area 200 ha

**Site description**

A composite coastal system, stretching northwards from Ballycotton towards Garrvroe in County Cork. The site consists of brackish and freshwater lagoons saltwater marshes, mudflats, sandflats, dunes and wet meadows. The main lagoon was an inlet of the sea until the 1930s when it was cut off by the development of a shingle-bank. The bank was breached only from time to time until 1991 when a new breach was created which has remained open, changing the lake back to a tidal inlet.

**Habitats**

Grassland (20%); humid grassland), Wetland (80%); tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflats/sandflats; saltmarsh; sand-dunes/sand beach; shingle/shingle beach; coastal lagoon

**Land-use**

Agriculture (20%), Not utilized (60%), Tourism/recreation (20%)

**Protection status**

National Partial International Partial

**Conservation issues**

Past drainage, land-claim and breaching of the shingle-bar have damaged this wetland site. Visitor pressure may cause disturbance to wintering birds, and the natural erosion of intertidal habitats is a threat. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Ballycotton, Ballynamona and Shanagarry; area not known).
### Ballymacoda

**Admin region** South West  
**Coordinates** 51°54’N 7°54’W  
**Altitude** 0-5 m  
**Area** 602 ha

#### Site description
A coastal site situated north-east of Ballymacoda in County Cork and encompassing the Womanagh river estuary, comprising a windswept headland flanked by marshy fields, saltmarsh and mudflats. The estuary is sheltered from the open sea by a stabilized shingle-bar and extensive sand beach. Much of the land adjacent to the estuary has been claimed for agricultural use, mainly cattle-grazing and silage, but most fields remain marshy.

#### conservation issues
Permission is currently being sought for construction of a bypass around Youghal town, which will cross the Tourig estuary. Subsequent to consultation, the route of least damage to the estuary was taken; however, some loss of intertidal habitat will occur and increased disturbance to the site is likely.

#### Protection status
- **National None**  
- **International Partial**  

#### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Calidris alpina</em></td>
<td>Dunlin</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Limosa limosa</em></td>
<td>Black-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Limosa lapponica</em></td>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>B1i, A2</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Numenius arquata</em></td>
<td>Curlew</td>
<td>W 1995</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, A2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Land-use
- Agriculture (20%), Not utilised (80%)

#### Habitats
- Grassland (20%; humid grassland), Wetland (80%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; saltmarsh; sand-dunes/sand beach)

#### Site description
This is an important wetland site, which in the past has regularly held over 20,000 waterfowl, but in recent years numbers have not reached this threshold. Additional species present in nationally important numbers include *Pluvialis apricaria* (8,850 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis squatarola* (514 birds, 1995), *Vanellus vanellus* (3,050 birds, 1996), *Calidris alba* (131 birds, 1996) and *Arenaria interpres* (142 birds, 1996).

#### Protection status
- **National None**  
- **International Partial**

#### Conservation issues
- **Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Aquaculture/fisheries (B)
- Water quality is adversely affected by run-off from slurry spreading. Intertidal shellfish cultivation is a recent development within the site, which may threaten habitat quality.

### River Blackwater callows

**Admin region** South East  
**Coordinates** 52°09’N 8°03’W  
**Altitude** 0-20 m  
**Area** 1,053 ha

#### Site description
A narrow flood-plain of the River Blackwater surrounded by parallel sandstone ridges and extending 29 km along the river from Fermoy east to Cappoquin. The site comprises the river itself and adjacent wet grassland along either side.

#### conservation issues
- **Habitats** Forest and woodland (10%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alka/varying wet forest), Grassland (40%; humid grassland), Wetland (50%; river/stream; water-firnge vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)  
- **Land-use** Agriculture (30%), Fisheries/aquaculture (50%)

#### Protection status
- **National High**  
- **International High**  

#### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Clypeata haleata</em></td>
<td>Common Sandpiper</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Anas penelope</em></td>
<td>Teal</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>1,100</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Anas platyrhynchos</em></td>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>Eurasian Wigeon</td>
<td>W 1996</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1i, B2, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Land-use
- Agriculture (50%), Fisheries/aquaculture (50%)  

#### Habitats
- Forest and woodland (10%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alka/varying wet forest), Grassland (40%; humid grassland), Wetland (50%; river/stream; water-firnge vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)

#### Site description

#### Protection status
- **National High**  
- **International High**

#### Conservation issues
- **Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Drainage (B)
- A potential threat to the site is loss of wet meadows due to the deepening of drains.

### Helvick Head

**Admin region** South East  
**Coordinates** 52°03’N 7°33’W  
**Altitude** 0-90 m  
**Area** 78 ha

#### Site description
Helvick Head is situated on the southern tip of Dungarvan Harbour in County Waterford. Steep sandstone cliffs provide nesting sites for seabirds. The adjacent sea area is included within the site.

#### conservation issues
- **Habitats** Scrub (10%; heathland), Marine areas (70%; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (20%; sea cliff/rocky shore)  
- **Land-use** Fisheries/aquaculture (70%), Not utilised (30%)

#### Birds
Breeding seabirds include nationally important numbers of *Rissa...
**Protection status**
**National** None **International** None

**Conservation issues**
**Threats** Aquaculture/fisheries (C)
The inaccessibility of the cliffs prevents significant disturbance. On the basis of its breeding seabirds, this site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Helvick Head, 78 ha) by NPW and will be designated in the near future.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1; C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calidris alpina</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calidris canutus</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1593</td>
<td>1593</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1; B2; C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This wetland supports several wintering waterfowl in numbers of international importance. Additional species wintering in nationally important numbers include *Pluvialis apricaria* (7,480 birds, 1995), *Pluvialis squatarola* (280 birds, 1996), and *Vanellus vanellus* (3,450 birds, 1995) and *Tringa totanus* (485 birds, 1996).

**Protection status**
**National** None **International** Partial

367 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Tramore Backstrand, 367 ha). 367 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Tramore Backstrand, 367 ha).

**Conservation issues**
**Threats** Consequences of animal/plant introductions (C), Consequences of pollution (C), Consequences of habitat degradation (C), Natural events (B), Natural events (C)

A municipal dump adjacent to the site threatens habitat quality due to the effects of pollution. Other threats include erosion of the dune system and the spread of non-native cord-grass *Spartina* across the mudflats. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Tramore Backstrand; area not known).

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B1; C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calidris alpina</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5,520</td>
<td>5,520</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Protection status**
**National** High **International** High

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Bannow Bay; area not known). 958 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Bannow Bay, 958 ha). 900 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Bannow Bay, 900 ha).

**Conservation issues**
**Threats** Consequences of animal/plant introductions (C), Consequences of pollution (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Disturbance to plants (C), Human induced (C), Human induced (B), Natural events (B), Natural events (C), Pollution (B)

A small, shallow bay next to Tramore village in County Waterford, comprising mainly intertidal mudflat with some saltmarsh. It is sheltered from the sea by a long, shingle spit with sand-dunes, leaving only a narrow opening out to sea. The site has been extended since the last pan-European inventory (Grinnett and Jones 1989) to include Tramore Bay, outside of the shingle spit, between Great Newtown and Brownstone Head.
Intertidal shellfish cultivation is a possible threat to habitat quality, while wildfowling causes disturbance to birds. Habitat quality is reduced by the spread of non-native cord-grass Spartina. In 1997 unauthorized mechanical cockle-harvesting caused damage to the intertidal mudflats.

### Keeragh Islands

**Admin region** South East  
**Coordinates** 52°12'N 6°44'W  
**Altitude** 0–9 m  
**Area** 22 ha  

**Site description**
The Keeragh Islands are two low-lying islets located approximately 2 km offshore to the west of Ballyteigue Bay in County Wexford. The vegetation is mainly maritime in character and there are surrounding reefs.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (5%), esplanade grassland, Marine areas (90%), sea inlet/coastal features, Rocky areas (5%), rock stacks/islets

**Land-use**
- Fisheries/aquaculture (90%), Not utilized (10%)

**Protection status**
- National: None  
- International: None

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**
The number of breeding *Phalacrocorax carbo* (239 pairs, 1987) comprises about 5% of the Irish population; also notable were the numbers of breeding *Sterna paradisaea* (12 pairs, 1984) which, however, have ceased to breed at the site despite an attempted restoration programme.

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion
- Disturbance to birds

**Conservation**
- Nature conservation/research (100%), Tourism/recreation (50%)

### Site description
Situated next to Kilmore quay in County Wexford, the western part of this site (the Cull) is a long, narrow sea inlet and estuary, protected from the open sea by a shingle spit with dunes. The eastern part of this intertidal system (Killag) was claimed in the last century by construction of the Cull bank and is now polderland, most of which is intensively farmed grassland and arable land.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (50%), tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflats/sandflats; sand-dunes/sand beach; shingle/stony beach; Marine areas (30%); sea inlet/coastal features; Artificial landscape (20%); highly improved reseeded grassland; arable land

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (80%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cygnus columbianus</em> Bewick’s Swan</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>A, B1, B2, C2</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Branta bernicla</em> Brent Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Limosa limosa</em> Black-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Numenius arquata</em> Curlew</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</em> Shag</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus fuscus</em> Lesser Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus marinus</em> Great Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alca torda</em> Razorbill</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fringilla arctica</em> Puffin</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Feeding on improved grasslands.

This is an important site for wintering waterbirds; additional species occurring in numbers of national importance are *Anas crecca* (520 birds, 1996), *Anas acuta* (55 birds, 1996), *Mergus serrator* (41 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis apricaria* (4,100 birds, 1995), *Vanellus vanellus* (6,210 birds, 1995) and *Calidris alpina* (1,275 birds, 1996).

### Protection status

**National Partial International** Partial  
531 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Ballyteigue Burrow, 531 ha).  
8 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Ballyteigue Burrow, 8 ha).  
526 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Ballyteigue Burrow, 526 ha).

### Conservation issues

- Agricultural intensification/expansion
- Disturbance to birds
- Industrialization/urbanization
- Recreation/tourism

There is a proposal for a wind-farm at Killag, which may cause displacement of *Cygnus columbianus* from parts of the site. Changes in agricultural practice threaten the feeding sites of swans *Cygnus*. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Ballyteigue Burrow; area not known).

### The Cull/Killag

**Admin region** South East  
**Coordinates** 52°12'N 6°39'W  
**Altitude** 0–14 m  
**Area** 896 ha

**Site description**

**Habitats**
- Artificial landscape (90%), Not utilized (10%)

**Land-use**
- Fisheries/aquaculture (90%), Artificial landscape (50%), ruderal land

**Protection status**
- National: B2, B3, C7  
- International: None

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sula bassana</em> Gannet</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</em> Shag</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A, B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus fuscus</em> Lesser Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus marinus</em> Great Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alca torda</em> Razorbill</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>A, B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fringilla arctica</em> Puffin</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Great Saltee.  
2. Both islands.

The Saltees are internationally important for breeding seabird colonies. Species occurring in numbers of national importance are: *Fulmarus glacialis* (350 pairs, 1996), *Larus argentatus* (500 pairs, 1996), *Rissa tridactyla* (2,500 pairs, 1996) and *Uria aalge* (15,000 birds, 1996). Great Saltee is also a notable site for spring and autumn passerine migration.

### Protection status

**National High International High**  
126 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Saltee Islands, 126 ha).  
126 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Saltee Islands, 126 ha).

### Conservation issues

- Recreation/tourism

Day-trippers, mainly to Great Saltee, may cause some disturbance to seabird colonies. NPW runs a long-term seabird population monitoring and ringing programme on the islands, which are a private bird sanctuary.

### Tacomshin Lake

**Admin region** South East  
**Coordinates** 52°11'N 6°29'W  
**Altitude** 0–20 m  
**Area** 528 ha

**Site description**

A shallow, coastal lagoon situated on the south coast of County Wexford, 15 km south of Wexford town. The lagoon was formerly a...
shallow sea bay which over time has been separated from the sea by a spit of shingle and sand. A drainage pipe reduces the water-level in the lagoon during the summer months, but in the winter, inflow exceeds outflow and the lake floods.

The waterfowl population of this lagoon is exceptionally diverse and the area supports large numbers of birds throughout the year, which is unusual among Irish wetlands. Additional species occurring in numbers of national importance include Anas penelope (4,980 birds, 1996), Anas acuta (440 birds, 1996), Anas clypeata (111 birds, 1996), Fulica atra (2,100 birds, 1996), Pluvialis apricaria (7,860 birds, 1995) and Vanellus vanellus (5,660 birds, 1995).

### Protection status
National Low International High

The lake is used by recreational windsurfers and boats, which can cause disturbance to nesting terns. In years a channel is cut in the barrier to relieve flooding; however, this reduction in water-level can permit predators to reach nesting terns. Construction of a sluice to control water-levels is likely in the near future. There is nutrient pollution of the lake due to agricultural run-off. The terns have been studied on the islands since 1960, and BirdWatch Ireland have co-managed the colonies with NPW since 1993. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lady’s Island Lake; area not known).

### Site description
An extensive shallow estuary at the mouth of the Slaney river, next to Wexford town, County Wexford. The site includes intertidal mud- and sandflats which are protected by Raven and Ross Care Points and which lie the north and south ‘slobs’. These are two flat areas of farmland, mainly arable and pasture, empoldered behind 19th century sea-walls. There are partially aﬀorded dunes at Raven and Ross Care Points. The main remaining intertidal areas are at Horsepool on the south shore and between Ferrybank and Ferry Carrig on the inner north shore. There is bottom culture of mussels Mytilus within the estuary. Parts of the site are heavily used for recreation. Compared to its listing in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), the site has now been extended to include the waters offshore from Raven Point.

### Conservation issues
Plans are underway for the construction of a sluice at the shingle-bar, to control water-levels. Wildfowling is regulated by NPW. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Tascumshin Lake; area not known).

### Lady’s Island Lake
Admin region South East Coordinates 52°11’N 6°24’W Altitude 0–10 m Area 466 ha

### Wexford Harbour and Slobs
Admin region South East Coordinates 52°19’N 6°26’W Altitude 0–10 m Area 5,000 ha

### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

This is an internationally important site for breeding terns, with colonies of four species (formerly five) present. The site was formerly of international importance for wintering waterfowl and still holds nationally important numbers of Aythya ferina (639 birds, 1995), Aythya marila (140 birds, 1996), Anas penelope (1,850 birds, 1996), Anas crecca (72 birds, 1996), Aythya fulgula (231 birds, 1995) and Vanellus vanellus (2,230 birds, 1995).

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cygnus olor</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1,968</td>
<td>1,968</td>
<td>A B2, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya marila</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>A B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numenius arquata</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>A B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mouling.
2. One of two regular breeding sites in Ireland.

This is a wetland of international importance for several species of waterfowl, regularly holding over 20,000 wintering birds. It is one of the two most important sites in the world for wintering Anser albifrons flavirostris. The sea oﬀ Raven Point holds nationally important numbers of Melanitta nigra (1,260 birds, 1997; one of the top wintering sites in Ireland) and divers Gavia. Many other species also occur in numbers of national importance, including wintering Anas penelope (5,125 birds, 1995), Anas crecca (690 birds, 1995), Anas platyrhynchos (2,521 birds, 1995), Haematopus ostralegus (2,205 birds, 1996) and Vanellus vanellus (12,080 birds, 1996).
### Conservation issues

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (A), Recreation/tourism (B)

The site has been damaged due to the filling-in of 8 ha of intertidal mudflat at Ferrybank on the north shore, which was the subject of an official complaint to the European Commission by BirdWatch Ireland. Drainage and land-claim at Hopeland, a key part of this wetland and still not included within the Special Protection Area, is another threat.

### Site description

Located just south of Cahore Point in County Wexford, this site comprises a large area of polder, which is separated from the sea by a ridge of sand-dunes. The polder was formerly a wetland, which was drained to provide agriculturally improved grassland for grazing.

**Habitats** Grassland (40%; mesophile grassland), Wetland (60%; sand-dunes/sand beach; fen/transition mire/spring)

**Land-use** Agriculture (40%), Not utilized (60%)

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl, including nationally important numbers of Anas penelope (1,400 birds, 1996), Anas acuta (22 birds, 1996), and Vanellus vanellus (6,800 birds, 1996).

### Protection status

**National** None **International** None

### Conservation issues

Although the site has no formal protection, the landowner is sympathetic to waterbird conservation. However, damage to the adjacent dunes for a caravan site has recently taken place.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cypria olivacea</td>
<td>Bewick’s Swan</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Anser albifrons</td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluvialis apricaria</td>
<td>Golden Plover</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10,250</td>
<td>10,250</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An important site for wintering waterfowl and for breeding terns Sterna. Following empolderment, Kilcoole marshes are now a prime feeding area for Branta bernicla. Other species wintering in numbers include Anser anser (250 birds, 1997), Anas penelope (1,084 birds, 1996), Anas crecca (500 birds, 1996), Melanitta nigra (200 birds, 1996) and Vanellus vanellus (2,800 birds, 1996).

### Protection status

**National** High **International** Partial

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

Drainage of the marshes is reducing habitat quality. There is disturbance to wintering birds due to wildfowling while the amenity importance of the area results in some disturbance to the colony of Sterna albifrons and to wintering birds. Proposals for an industrial jetty will lead to habitat loss and fragmentation, with implications for coastal erosion. BirdWatch Ireland and NPW have operated a Little Tern Protection Scheme at Kilcoole since 1985. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Coast, Greystones–Wicklow; area not known).
**Wicklow Mountains**  
**Admin region** East  
**Coordinates** 53°10’N 6°24’W  
**Altitude** 100–925 m  
**Area** 30,000 ha

**Site description**
Located 20 km south of Dublin city, this site encompasses the upland areas of Counties Wicklow and Dublin. It comprises broad granite domes interspersed with pinnacled tops, rocky foothills, deep glens, numerous rivers and streams, and several lakes. Much of the area is a mosaic of heath, blanket bog and upland grassland, with stands of bracken and pockets of woodland. Poulaphouca reservoir, included within this site in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989), is now treated separately (site 107). Land-uses include peat-cutting (which is also a potential threat), forestry and recreation (due to the close proximity of Dublin).

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**
- Falco columbarius  Merlin  
- Falco peregrinus  Peregrine

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (5%; broadleaved deciduous forest), Scrub (15%; heathland), Grassland (10%; humid grassland), Wetland (30%; standing fresh water; river/stream; blanket bog), Artificial landscape (20%; highly improved reseeded grassland; forestry plantation)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (40%), Forestry (20%), Nature conservation/research (50%), Other (10%), Tourism/recreation (70%)

**Protection status**
National None  International Partial

20,000 ha of IBA covered by National Park (Wicklow Mountains, 20,000 ha). 157 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Glendalough, 157 ha). 1,958 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Glenealo Valley, 1,958 ha). 15,399 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Wicklow Mountains National Park, 15,399 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Upper Barrow flood-plain**  
**Admin region** East  
**Coordinates** 53°05’N 7°03’W  
**Altitude** 20–30 m  
**Area** 3,000 ha

**Site description**
A large river and floodplain, confined within a narrow valley and extending from Monasterervin, 16 km south to Athy on the County Kildare/County Laois border.

**Conservation issues**

**Dublin Bay**  
**Admin region** East  
**Coordinates** 53°21’N 6°12’W  
**Altitude** 0–10 m  
**Area** 3,000 ha

**Site description**
A large bay and estuary adjacent to Dublin city in County Dublin. This site encompasses North Bull Island, Sandymount Strand, Tolka estuary, Dalkey Island area (a number of islands and surrounding waters), and part of Dublin docks. Dublin docks was treated as a separate IBA (former site IE089) in the previous pan-European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989). There are extensive sand- and mudflats, saltmarsh, and sand-dunes and beaches. North Bull Island is Dublin’s main recreational beach, and its two main land-
uses are conservation and recreation. There is high amenity use of Dublin Bay as a whole.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>A, B1, C1</td>
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<td>Haematopus ostralegus</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>1,067</td>
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<td>A, C6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calidris canutus</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4,380</td>
<td>4,380</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calidris alpina</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>6,416</td>
<td>6,416</td>
<td>A, B2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>Numenius arquata</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>1,007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tringa totanus</td>
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<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,900</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>A, C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Ironman at Dalkey difficult to estimate and numbers may be much larger.
2. Colours in Dublin Port area and at Dalkey.

This is a wetland of international importance for waterfowl, regularly supporting over 20,000 wintering birds. Species wintering in numbers of national importance include *Tadorna tadorna* (1,119 birds, 1995), *Anas penelope* (1,270 birds, 1995), *Anas crecca* (1,490 birds, 1995), *Anas acuta* (414 birds, 1995), *Anas clypeata* (370 birds, 1995), *Pluvialis squatarola* (914 birds, 1995), *Calidris alba* (450 birds, 1995) and *Limosa limosa* (466 birds, 1995). During August, large numbers of terns *Sterna* (typically about 5,000 and occasionally up to 30,000) birds use Sandymount Strand as an evening roost.

**Protection status**

National Partial International Partial

1,436 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (North Bull Island, 1,436 ha). IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (North Bull Island; area not known). 1,436 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (North Bull Island, 1,436 ha). 500 ha of IBA covered by Biosphere Reserve (North Bull Island, 500 ha). 1,396 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Bull Island, 1,396 ha). 654 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Sandymount Strand and the Tolka estuary, 654 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Disturbance to birds (A), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Infrastructure (B), Recreation/tourism (A)

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand-dunes; sand beach; fen/transitional mire/spring)
- Scrub (10%; heathland), Marine areas (50%; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (10%; sea cliff/rocky shore)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (40%), Other (50%), Tourism/recreation (10%)

**Birds**

Species | Season | Year | Pop min | Pop max | Acc Criteria |
---|--------|------|---------|---------|--------------|
*Cephus grylle* | Black Guillemot | B | 1990 | 21 | — | — | B2 |

The sea cliffs are important for breeding seabirds, with nationally important numbers of *Rissa tridactyla* (c.1,700 pairs, 1987) and *Alcata torda* (280 birds, 1987).

**Protection status**

National None Internationally None

Sewage disposal is a threat but plans for a new sewage-treatment plant are now underway. The site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Howth Head, 102 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future.

**Site description**

An uninhabited island and surrounding waters, located 1.5 km north of Howth, in County Dublin. The island is mainly rough grassland with steep sea cliffs on the north-east side. The island receives quite high numbers of visitors in the summer months given its proximity to Dublin.

**Habitats**
- Grassland (20%; mesophile grassland), Marine areas (50%; sea inlet/coastal features), Rocky areas (10%; sea cliff/rocky shore; rock stacks/islets)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

Control and management of visitors to the island is important to ensure there is no disturbance to nesting seabirds. On the basis of its breeding seabirds, this site has been proposed as a Special Protection Area (Ireland’s Eye, 90 ha) by NPW and should be designated in the near future.

**Birds**


**Protection status**

National None Internationally None

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**
- Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Industrialization/urbanization (B)

**Site description**

A coastal site extending from just south of Portmarnock village to the west pier at Howth in County Dublin. This tidal bay is located 5 km north of Dublin and is protected from the open sea by a large sand-dune system. It comprises the estuary of the Shaece and Mayne rivers and includes the marsh adjacent to the Mayne river. Up to 95% of the estuary is exposed at low tide. The site is used for recreational boating.

**Habitats**
- Wetland (100%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat; sand dunes; sand beach; fen/transitional mire/spring)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (20%), Other (80%), Tourism/recreation (20%)

**Birds**

Species | Season | Year | Pop min | Pop max | Acc Criteria |
---|--------|------|---------|---------|--------------|
*Branta bernicla* | Brent Goose | W | 1995 | 480 | 480 | A, B1, C3 |
*Limosa lapponica* | Bar-tailed Godwit | W | 1996 | 348 | 348 | A, B2 |

**Protection status**

National High International High

203 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Baldoyle Bay, 203 ha).

203 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Baldoyle Bay, 203 ha).

203 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Baldoyle Bay, 203 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats: Consequences of animal/plant introductions (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C), Recreation/tourism (B)

The infestation of intertidal mudflats by non-native cord-grass *Spartina* threatens habitat quality. The site is of educational value due to its close proximity to Dublin.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Clypeota hyperborea</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>A B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Clypeota kislingii</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>A B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris alpina</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris canutus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris pugnax</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis apricaria</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis squatarola</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tringa stagnatilis</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tringa totanus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alca torda</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,646</td>
<td>3,646</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lambay Island is internationally important for breeding seabirds. Several other seabird species breed in nationally important numbers, including *Puffinus puffinus* (573 pairs, 1995), *Platacaracora carbo* (605 pairs, 1995) and *Rissa tridactyla* (5,102 pairs, 1995). This site also supports nationally important numbers of wintering *Anser anser* (437 birds, 1995) and is one of the top sites for this species in Ireland.

**Protection status**

National None International High

612 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lambay Island, 612 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats: Industrialization/urbanization (U), Recreation/tourism (C)

Under the present management, the island’s bird populations are secure and little disturbed. The NPW and BirdWatch Ireland have an ongoing population monitoring programme for seabirds and geese.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Branta bernicha</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>A B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Calidris canutus</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>A B1i, B2, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Additional species wintering in numbers of national importance include *Taiera tadora* (827 birds, 1996), *Anas crecca* (677 birds, 1995), *Platacaracora carbo* (4,000 birds, 1996), *Vanellus vanellus* (7,735 birds, 1996) and *Tringa totanus* (861 birds, 1996).

**Protection status**

National High International Partial

196 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Roggerston Estuary, 196 ha). 368 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Roggerston Estuary, 368 ha). 195 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Roggerston Estuary, 195 ha). 196 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Roggerston Estuary, 196 ha).
Conservation issues

**Birds**

Site description

A group of three small islands (Shenicks, St Patricks and Colt) and surrounding sea, situated 1–2 km east of Skerries, in north County Dublin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Land-use</th>
<th>Admin region East</th>
<th>Coordinates 53°34'N 6°05'W</th>
<th>Altitude 0-30 m</th>
<th>Area 62 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</td>
<td>Shag</td>
<td>Not utilized (30%)</td>
<td>B1i, B3, C3</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td>Brent Goose</td>
<td>Not utilized (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site is important for waterfowl and shorebirds. *Phalacrocorax carbo* breeds in numbers of national importance (350 pairs, 1996).

**Protection status**

National None

Conservation issues

Day-trippers from Skerries can cause disturbance to birds. Shenick Isle (6.3 ha) is a bird reserve managed by BirdWatch Ireland. The site is a proposed Special Protection Area (Skerries Islands, 62 ha).

**Site description**

Two small, rocky islands approximately 7 km off the north coast of County Dublin. The lighthouse present on one island has been unmanned since 1989.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Land-use</th>
<th>Admin region East</th>
<th>Coordinates 53°36'N 6°01'W</th>
<th>Altitude 0-25 m</th>
<th>Area 1 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phalacrocorax carbo</td>
<td>Shag</td>
<td>Not utilized (30%), Tourism/recreation (50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td>Brent Goose</td>
<td>Not utilized (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rockabill is important for breeding seabirds and supports the largest breeding colony of *Sterna dougallii* in the north-east Atlantic and, thus, in Europe.

**Protection status**

National High

Conservation issues

Since 1989 BirdWatch Ireland have, with NPW, managed the tern colony and there is presently very little disturbance.

**Site description**

Situated in County Meath this is a 3 km long and approximately 500 m wide stretch of shoreline, extending between Laytown and Béné. This site includes the muddy estuarine channel of the River Nanny, which opens out into a wide, exposed sand beach. This is an important recreation and amenity area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Land-use</th>
<th>Admin region East, North East</th>
<th>Coordinates 53°43'N 6°15'W</th>
<th>Altitude 0-10 m</th>
<th>Area 404 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calidris canus</td>
<td>Knot</td>
<td>Not utilized (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)</td>
<td>B1, B2, C3, C6</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional species which winter in nationally important numbers include *Melanitta nigra*, *Pluvialis apricaria*, *Pluvialis squatarola*, *Charadrius hiaticula* and *Calidris alba*.

**Protection status**

National None

Conservation issues

Beach-users may cause some disturbance to wintering waterfowl.

**Site description**

A rather narrow estuary, which widens at its mouth and comprises intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh habitats. It is situated on the east coast, at the border between Counties Louth and Meath and is the port for the town of Drogheda. The estuary has been modified by the construction of training walls on either side, to facilitate deep water access to the port.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Land-use</th>
<th>Admin region East, North East</th>
<th>Coordinates 53°43'N 6°15'W</th>
<th>Altitude 0-10 m</th>
<th>Area 404 ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calidris canus</td>
<td>Knot</td>
<td>Not utilized (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)</td>
<td>B1, B2, C3, C6</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important site for wintering waterfowl; additional species that winter in numbers of national importance include *Pluvialis apricaria* (6,000 birds, 1995), *Pluvialis squatarola* (255 birds, 1996), *Vanellus...
vanellus (7,500 birds, 1996), Calidris alba (163 birds, 1996), Limosa limosa (287 birds, 1996) and Arenaria interpres (444 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**
National High  
International High

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Boyne Estuary; area not known). 404 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Boyne Estuary, 404 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**  
Filling-in of wetlands (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

This estuary is threatened with urban and particularly industrial expansion, including dredging and land-claim of wetlands.

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anser anser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calidris canutus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calidris alpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numenis arquata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tringa totanus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Birds most here but feed at site 120.

This wetland is of international importance for its waterfowl, regularly holding over 20,000 wintering birds. Several other species occur in numbers of national importance including Tadorna tadorna (391 birds, 1996), Anas penelope (1,026 birds, 1995), Anas acuta (112 birds, 1996), Haematopus ostralegus (6,605 birds, 1995), Pluvialis apricaria (7,240 birds, 1996) and Limosa limosa (360 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**
National Partial International High

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Ballymascanlon; area not known). IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lurgan Green; area not known). 4,768 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Dundalk Bay, 4,768 ha). 4,768 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Dundalk Bay, 4,768 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**  
Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Aquaculture/fisheries (B), Consequences of animal/plant introductions (C), Industrialization/urbanization (B)

Pressure from housing development is leading to loss of saltmarsh. Further habitat loss, due to the proximity of Dundalk town, may impact on the site. Habitat quality may be reduced by intertidal shellfish cultivation and by the spread of non-native cord-grass Spartina.

**Carlingford Lough**

**Admin region**  
North East

**Coordinates**  
54°04'N 6°12'W

**Altitude**  
5–10 m

**Area**  
4,660 ha

**Site description**

A 15 km long, narrow sea lough, surrounded by mountains. The southern shore lies in County Louth, while the rest of the site is in Northern Ireland (UK site 274), this being a cross-border site—the stated area of 4,660 ha covers the entire site on both sides of the border but other data given here (on habitats, land-uses, threats and birds) are specific to the Republic of Ireland side. Much of the lough is relatively deep. However, there are intertidal mudflats in the south-east and north-east and pockets of saltmarsh. There is intertidal shellfish cultivation and the lough is used for boating.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (mudflat/sandflat; saltmarsh; sand-dunes/sand beach; shingle/stony beach), Marine area (sea inlet/coastal features)

**Land-use**  
Fishing/aquaculture, Tourism/recreation

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branta bernicla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aythya marila</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Other waterbirds which winter in numbers of national importance are Podiceps cristatus (40 birds, 1996), Phalacrocorax carbo (106 birds, 1995) and Charadrius hiaticula (126 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**
National None International Low

172 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Carlingford Lough, 172 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats**  
Aquaculture/fisheries (B), Recreation/tourism (B)
Habitat quality may be threatened by intertidal shellfish cultivation and increasing pressure from recreation interests.

### Site description

A complicated system of inter-drumlin lakes, basins and islands on the River Erne, County Cavan. Sheltered shores support swamp and marsh habitat and the site also includes adjacent fields which occasionally flood. The site is a southward extension of Upper Lough Erne (UK site 287) in Northern Ireland.

#### Protection status

**National High International**

IBA overlaps with Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Oughter; area not known). 1,464 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Oughter, 1,464 ha). 1,464 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Oughter, 1,464 ha). 1,464 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Oughter, 1,464 ha). 1,464 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Oughter, 1,464 ha).

#### Conservation issues

**Threats**

- Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Drainage (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

The deepening of drains and excessive use of fertilizer are resulting in nutrient pollution of the lake.

### Site description

Located east of Longford town mainly within County Longford, this site comprises the larger Lough Kinale and, to its south-east, Lough Derragh. Lough Kinale has two main basins which are almost separated by swamp formations. The main input of water comes from Lough Sheelin via the River Inny. Both lakes are linked by a short channel and are used for fishing.

#### Protection status

**National None International High**

Loughs Kinale and Derragh are important for waterfowl. Species occurring in nationally important numbers are Aythya ferina (1,639 birds, 1996), Aythya fuligula (873 birds, 1996) and Fulica atra (552 birds, 1996).

#### Conservation issues

**Threats**

- Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

Wildfowl numbers have declined recently and this could be due to an increase in cruisers and other pleasure boats on the site. The site overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lough Forbes Complex; area not known).

### Site description

Lough Arrow is a large, limestone lake with wooded islands and reedbeds. It is situated north of Ballinafad in Counties Sligo and Roscommon. Historically, the nutrient-levels in the lake-water have been moderate (mesotrophic). There is trout- and eel-fishing and boating. Information on land-uses is incomplete.

#### Protection status

**National None International High**

Lough Arrow was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of migratory waterfowl, with the following number of individuals recorded during the period 1986–1987: Tachybaptus ruficollis (35),
Anas penelope (87), Anas platyrhynchos (27), Aythya ferina (36), Aythya fuligula (226), Bucephala clangula (49) and Fulica atra (325).

**Protection status**
National None International High
1,266 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Arrow, 1,266 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

Little information is available on threats but it is believed that nutrient pollution of the lake due to fertilizer run-off from adjacent farmland may be a problem.

**Bellanagare Bog**

**Admin region** Midlands.
**Coordinates** 53°49'N 8°25'W
**Altitude** 90–140 m Area 1,243 ha

**Site description**
A large, upland bog situated 6 km north-east of Castlerea in County Roscommon. The bog consists of ridges and flushes and several streams rise within the site. Peat-cutting takes place within the site ('Other' land-use).

**Habitats** Wetland (100%; river/stream; raised bog; blanket bog; fen/transition mire/spring)
**Land-use** Other (50%), Water management (50%)

**Birds**
The site was designated as a Special Protection Area on the basis of breeding Pluvialis apricaria, a species listed under Annex I of the EC Birds Directive.

**Protection status**
National None International High
1,243 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Bellanagare Bog, 1,243 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Burning of vegetation (B), Drainage (B), Extraction industry (B)

The site is vulnerable to water loss, as it has an extensive drainage network in its northern half, and peat is actively cut in places all around the site. As the bog has become quite dry, it is now vulnerable to burning to improve it for grazing. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Bellanagare Bog; area not known).

**Lough Ree**

**Admin region** Midlands.
**Coordinates** 53°32'N 7°57'W
**Altitude** 18–38 m Area 10,788 ha

**Site description**
Lough Ree is the third-largest lake in Ireland, and is situated on the River Shannon system between Lanesborough and Athlone. The shoreline, with many indented bays, has extensive reedbeds, callow and lowland wet grassland. Land-uses include low-intensity grazing on the grasslands, angling and other recreational uses.

**Habitats** Grassland (10%; humid grassland), Wetland (90%; standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation)
**Land-use** Agriculture (10%), Hunting (50%), Tourism/recreation (50%)

**Birds**
This site was designated a Special Protection Area on the basis of its migratory waterfowl, with nationally important numbers of Tachybaptus ruficollis (145 birds, 1985), Anas penelope (1,306 birds, 1985), Anas crecca (584 birds, 1985), Aythya fuligula (1,317 birds, 1985) and Fulica atra (798 birds, 1985). This is also one of only three regular breeding sites in Ireland for Melanitta nigra (37 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**
National None International High
10,788 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Ree, 10,788 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Disturbance to birds (C), Recreation/tourism (C)

The lake is threatened by nutrient pollution, with organic enrichment coming from agricultural and probably domestic sources. There is increasing pressure on the lake, from leisure developments, such as lakeshore holiday homes, marinas and hotels as well as cruiser traffic. The site lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Lough Ree; area not known).

**River Suck callows**

**Admin region** Midlands, West
**Coordinates** 53°24'N 8°10'W
**Altitude** 33–45 m Area 4,000 ha

**Site description**
A long, sinuous stretch of semi-natural, lowland wet grassland (callows) alongside the River Suck, in Counties Galway and Roscommon. This site extends for 50 km from Castlecove in the north to Shannonbridge in the south where it meets the River Shannon (site 131). The callows are seasonally flooded between October and April. The area is flanked by raised bogs, many of which have been converted to agricultural use following peat extraction.

**Habitats** Grassland (20%; humid grassland), Wetland (60%; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (20%; highly improved reseeded grassland)
**Land-use** Agriculture (40%), Fisheries/aquaculture (60%). Hunting (100%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

This is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Additional species wintering in numbers of national importance include Anas penelope (1,351 birds, 1995) and Vanellus vanellus (3,282 birds, 1995). Crex crex was breeding until recently (1 pair, 1993).

**Protection status**
National Partial International Partial
1,100 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Muckanagh Wildfowl Sanctuary, 1,100 ha). 3,225 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (River Suck Callows: Shannon Bridge–Athleague, 3,225 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B), Extraction industry (C), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

Crex crex is highly sensitive to changes in farming practice. Agricultural intensification is likely to have caused the decline and eventual loss of breeding Crex crex at this site. Water and habitat quality are threatened by siltation due to mechanical peat extraction in surrounding areas. Wildfowling is likely to cause disturbance to wintering birds.

**Lough Derg**

**Admin region** West
**Coordinates** 52°59'N 8°19'W
**Altitude** 31–57 m Area 11,989 ha

**Site description**
An extensive lake system, extending from Portumna south to Killaloe in Counties Tipperary, Clare, Offaly and Galway. In the previous
European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) the site included only Church Island, but the area has been expanded to incorporate the whole of Lough Derg and its islands. Lough Derg is used by anglers and for recreational boating.

### Conservation issues

The callows are threatened by changes in farming practice, mainly intensification, with serious implications for breeding birds, particularly *Crex crex*. BirdWatch Ireland, with support from NPW and RSPB, operates a grant scheme to encourage farming practices that favour *Crex crex*, and breeding numbers have recently stabilized. However, problems remain due to earlier mowing of hay and the replacement of hay with silage (which involves earlier mowing, increased use of fertilizer, and multiple cuts per year). Further, an extension of the grazing season and higher stocking rates have increased the risk of disturbance to breeding waders. The River Shannon is of high recreational value, being used by anglers, watersport enthusiasts, and for boating holidays (motor-cruisers, all of which may cause some disturbance to birds. Pressure to develop the recreational potential of the river has increased, with particular pressure for marina developments away from existing towns. Siltation of the river due to extensive mechanical peat extraction within the surrounding area is a further threat. Athlone town is expanding, with increasing pressure for drainage of callow habitat. BirdWatch Ireland owns a reserve at Bullock and Bishops Island on the callows (3 ha).

### Site description

This site is of international importance for wintering waterfowl and regularly supports over 20,000 wintering birds. The Shannon callows are one of the last strongholds for the globally threatened *Crex crex* in Ireland and are also of importance for breeding waders, particularly *Tringa totanus*. Additional wintering species that occur in numbers of national importance include *Cygnus olor* (575 birds, 1995), *Anas penelope* (3,135 birds, 1996), *Anas crecca* (576 birds, 1995), *Aythya fuligula* (200 birds, 1995), *Vanellus vanellus* (15,400 birds, 1995) and *Calidris alpina* (1,250 birds, 1996).

### Protection status

**National None International High**

5,788 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (River Shannon Callows: Portumna to Athlone, 5,788 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (A)
- Disturbance to birds (B)
- Drainage (C)
- Extraction industry (U)
- Industrialization/urbanization (B)
- Recreation/tourism (C)

### Site description

The traditional map of the River Shannon, the longest waterway in Ireland lies between Lough Ree in the north (site 128) and Lough Derg in the south (site 130) and is contiguous with the Little Lough Brosna callows (site 132) and the Suck callows (site 129), both of which are tributaries. This complex is one of the few relatively unmodified flood-plain complexes within the European Union. Beside the river are extensive areas of callow (seasonally flooded, semi-natural wet grassland) which is used for permanent hay or silage or for summer grazing, mainly by cattle. The river is used for coarse angling and leisure-boat cruising. The callows were once flanked by raised bog, which is now largely lost due to mechanical peat-cutting.

### Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Agricultural intensification/expansion (A)
- Disturbance to birds (B)
- Drainage (C)
- Extraction industry (U)
- Industrialization/urbanization (B)
- Recreation/tourism (C)

## Important Bird Areas in Europe – Republic of Ireland

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>A B1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an internationally important wetland, regularly supporting over 20,000 wintering waterfowl. Additional species wintering in numbers of national importance include *Anas platyrhynchos* (700 birds, 1996), *Anas acuta* (250 birds, 1996), *Anas clypeata* (200 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis apricaria* (8,100 birds, 1996), *Vanellus vanellus* (6,500 birds, 1995) and *Calidris alpina* (1,250 birds, 1995). Until recently *Crex crex* were breeding (2 pairs, 1993).

### Protection status

**National None International High**
1,154 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (River Little Brosna Callows: New Bridge–River Shannon, 1,154 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (C)

*Crocus crex* is highly sensitive to changes in farming practice. The intensification of farming, with earlier mowing and the replacement of hay with silage (including earlier mowing, increased use of fertilizer, and multiple silage cuts), is likely to have caused the decline and eventual absence of breeding *Crocus crex* from this site. Further, an extension of the grazing season and higher stocking rates have increased the risk of disturbance to breeding waders. Disturbance to wintering birds is minimized by the bogland to the south of the site, which serves to isolate it. However, wildfowling on parts of the site is likely to cause disturbance.

**Site description**

All Saints bog is a lowland raised bog lying about 5 km north-west of Birc, County Offaly. It includes a wooded section with birch *Betula* and also areas of cutaway and drained bog. Peat-cutting (‘Other’ land-intensification of farming, with earlier mowing and the replacement of hay with silage), is likely to have caused the decline and eventual absence of breeding *Crocus crex* from this site. Further, an extension of the grazing season and higher stocking rates have increased the risk of disturbance to breeding waders. Disturbance to wintering birds is minimized by the bogland to the south of the site, which serves to isolate it. However, wildfowling on parts of the site is likely to cause disturbance.

**Protection status**

National High International High

119 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Mongan Bog, 119 ha). 129 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Mongan Bog, 129 ha). 129 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Mongan Bog, 129 ha). 117 ha of IBA covered by Biogenetic Reserve (Mongan Bog, 117 ha).

No threats are known. This site is almost entirely privately-owned by An Taisce (it is a private, non-statutory reserve) and has been intensively researched since 1972. The area lies within a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Mongan Bog; area not known).

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**

This site was formerly important for wintering *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, although it is now only occasionally visited by this species. Other breeding species which are listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive are *Falco peregrinus*, *Falco columbarius* and *Circus cyaneus*.

**Site description**

Mongan bog is a raised bog situated immediately east of the monastic site of Clonmacnoise and 12 km south of Athlone in County Offaly. Lying in a basin, it is surrounded mainly by high ground, including an esker ridge, and comprises a well-developed system of hummocks, pools and *Sphagnum* lawns.

**Protection status**

National Partial International High

182 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Iron, 182 ha). 263 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Iron–Glen Lough, 263 ha). 81 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Lough, 81 ha). 82 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Iron, 182 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**

In recent years numbers of wintering swans *Cygnus* and *Anser albifrons flavirostris* have declined at Glen Lough. Birds of the latter species also use Lough Ennell (site 140), Lough Owel (site 139), Lough Derravaragh (site 138) and Garriskil bog (site 136). Dabbling duck occur in large numbers and this is one of the most important sites in Ireland for wintering *Anas crecca* (159 birds, 1996). Other species occurring in numbers of national importance are *Anas penelope* (3,118 birds, 1995), *Anas crecca* (950 birds, 1995), *Aythya fuligula* (350 birds, 1995), *Fulica atra* (370 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis apricaria* (5,300 birds, 1996) and *Vanellus vanellus* (7,000 birds, 1995).

**Protection status**

National Partial International High

182 ha of IBA covered by Wildfowl Sanctuary (Lough Iron, 182 ha). 263 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Iron–Glen Lough, 263 ha). 81 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Lough, 81 ha). 82 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Iron, 182 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**

In 1997 the Office of Public Works completed maintenance drainage at Glen Lough which resulted in less frequent winter flooding over shorter periods. A complaint in relation to this damage was made to the European Commission. Restoration measures are now in place, though their success is yet to be determined. Also within Glen Lough the area where *Anser albifrons flavirostris* used to feed has been planted with conifers. At both lakes disturbance to birds is likely due to wildfowling.
**Lough Derravaragh**  
**Admin region Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°39′N 7°20′W  
Altitude 64–64 m  
Area 1,120 ha  

**Site description**  
Lough Derravaragh is located approximately 12 km north of Mullingar town, in County Westmeath. The River Inny flows into and out of the north-west end of the lake, which is wide and shallow with extensive reedbed and swamp, backed by small areas of raised bog. The south-east arm of the lake is long and narrow, with fresh water marsh and fen. The lake is important for fishing and is used for water-sports.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)  

**Land-use**  
Fisheries/aquaculture (100%), Hunting (100%), Tourism/recreation (100%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
1,120 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha). 1,120 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha).

**Conservation issues**  
Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Recreation/tourism (B)  

**Birds**  
Species | Season | Year | Pop min | Pop max | Acc Criteria
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Cyanus cyanus | Whooper Swan | W | 1996 | 108 | 108 | A B3

**Lough Owel**  
**Admin region Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°34′N 7°24′W  
Altitude 100–100 m  
Area 1,032 ha  

**Site description**  
Lough Owel is a large calcarious lake located north-west of Mullingar in County Westmeath. It is relatively shallow with a rocky, marl-covered bottom, and a rockyShore with patchy vegetation. Marsh and fen areas are present in the south-western and northern corners of the lake, and the surrounding farmland is used by geese *Anser*. Fishing, especially for trout, is popular at this site.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)  

**Land-use**  
Fisheries/aquaculture (100%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
1,032 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha). 1,120 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha).

**Conservation issues**  
Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Recreation/tourism (B)  

**Birds**

**Garriskil bog**  
**Admin region Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°40′N 7°27′W  
Altitude 64–64 m  
Area 324 ha  

**Site description**  
A raised bog situated 3 km west of Lough Derravaragh (site 138) and 3 km east of the village of Rathowen, in County Westmeath. It is bounded to the south-west by the Inny and Riffey rivers. The site comprises a well-developed system of pools and hummocks and there are some areas of cutaway bog which have drier heathland vegetation. Human use of the site is low.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%; raised bog)  

**Land-use**  
Nature conservation/research (80%), Water management (20%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
324 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Garriskil bog; area not known). 1,885 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Sheelin, 1,885 ha).

**Conservation issues**

**Birds**

**Lough Sheelin**  
**Admin region East, North East, Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°48′N 7°20′W  
Altitude 65–66 m  
Area 1,885 ha  

**Site description**  
Situated south of Cavan town, Lough Sheelin is part of the Inny sub-catchment of the Shannon system, lying north-east of Loughs Kinale/Derragh (site 124) into which it drains. Raised bogs surround the lake and there are two wooded islands. The lake is used for angling.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (15%; broadleaved deciduous forest), Wetland (95%; standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation)  

**Land-use**  
Tourism/recreation (100%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
1,885 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Sheelin, 1,885 ha).

**Conservation issues**  
Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A)  

**Birds**

**Lough Owel**  
**Admin region Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°34′N 7°24′W  
Altitude 100–100 m  
Area 1,032 ha  

**Site description**  
Lough Owel is a large calcarious lake located north-west of Mullingar in County Westmeath. It is relatively shallow with a rocky, marl-covered bottom, and a rockyShore with patchy vegetation. Marsh and fen areas are present in the south-western and northern corners of the lake, and the surrounding farmland is used by geese *Anser*. Fishing, especially for trout, is popular at this site.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)  

**Land-use**  
Fisheries/aquaculture (100%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
1,032 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha). 1,120 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha).

**Conservation issues**  
Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Recreation/tourism (B)  

**Birds**

**Lough Derravaragh**  
**Admin region Midlands**  
Coordinates 53°39′N 7°20′W  
Altitude 64–64 m  
Area 1,120 ha  

**Site description**  
Lough Derravaragh is located approximately 12 km north of Mullingar town, in County Westmeath. The River Inny flows into and out of the north-west end of the lake, which is wide and shallow with extensive reedbed and swamp, backed by small areas of raised bog. The south-east arm of the lake is long and narrow, with fresh water marsh and fen. The lake is important for fishing and is used for water-sports.

**Habitats**  
Wetland (100%; standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)  

**Land-use**  
Fisheries/aquaculture (100%), Hunting (100%), Tourism/recreation (100%)  

**Protection status**  
National None International High  
1,120 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha). 1,120 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Derravaragh, 1,120 ha).

**Conservation issues**  
Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Recreation/tourism (B)  

**Birds**

Since the 1970s the lake has suffered periodic heavy agricultural pollution, although water quality is now approaching its natural nutrient-poor status.
### Site description

A large open, steep-sided but shallow limestone lake, situated 3 km south of Mullingar in County Westmeath. The Brosna river flows into the lake from the north. There are limited areas of reedbed and scrub and a number of small wooded islands. Calcareous grassland has colonized parts of the former lake bed. The site is used for angling, boating and camping, and some sections are managed for visitor access.

### Conservation issues

#### Threats

- **Agricultural intensification**/expansion (B)
- **Aquaculture/fisheries** (B)
- **Drainage** (B)
- **Recreation/tourism** (C)

Possible threats include increasing abstraction for water-supply to Mullingar, resulting in a lowering of the lake’s water-level. Nutrient pollution due to agricultural intensification and pressure from recreational boating and fishing may also adversely impact on the site.

### Protection status

- **National None**
- **International High**

1,032 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Lough Owel, 1,032 ha), 1,032 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Lough Owel, 1,032 ha).

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
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This site supports internationally important numbers of *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, which also use Lough Owel (site 139), Lough Iron-Glen Lough (site 135), Lough Derravaragh (site 138) and Garriskil bog (site 136).

### References


