SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DRUMCLIFF BAY SPA

SITE CODE: 004013

Drumcliff Bay, Co. Sligo is the most northerly of Sligo Bay's three estuarine inlets. The bay comprises an inner area of sheltered estuarine habitat and an outer area of shallow seawater. It extends 9 km east to west from Drumcliff village to Raghly Point. Drumcliff Bay is the estuary of the Drumcliff River, a substantial river flowing from Glencar Lough to the east. The inner part of Drumcliff Bay is sheltered by a sandy/grassy peninsula extending north from Rosses Point. The northern part of the bay is fringed by fine sandy beaches - Ballygilgan Strand, Lissadell Strand and Ardtermon Strand. Salt marsh occurs in the most sheltered areas and at low tide, extensive inter-tidal flats are exposed. A bed of Dwarf Eelgrass (*Zostera noltii*) occurs near the south-eastern corner of the bay.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Drumcliff Bay SPA is of importance as it supports nationally important populations of two species of wintering waterfowl: Sanderling (237) and Bar-tailed Godwit (336) – all figures are four year mean peaks for four of the five winters between 1995/96 and 1999/2000.

Other species that occur regularly include Whooper Swan (45), Light-bellied Brent Goose (74), Shelduck (75), Wigeon (138), Teal (57), Long-tailed Duck (14), Red-breasted Merganser (20), Great Northern Diver (13), Oystercatcher (356), Ringed Plover (139), Lapwing (155), Knot (107), Dunlin (559), Curlew (177) and Redshank (138).

Drumcliff Bay SPA is of national importance for its winter populations of Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit, and the site supports a good diversity of other waterfowl species. Of note is that three of the species which occur regularly (Whooper Swan, Great Northern Diver and Bar-tailed Godwit) are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of Drumcliff Bay SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

25.3.2014

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: CUMMEEN STRAND SPA

SITE CODE: 004035

Cummeen Strand is a large shallow bay stretching from Sligo Town westwards to Coney Island. It is one of three estuarine bays within Sligo Bay and is situated between Drumcliff Bay to the north and Ballysadare Bay to the south. The Garavogue River flows into the bay and forms a permanent channel.

At low tide, extensive sand and mud flats are exposed. These support a diverse macro-invertebrate fauna which provides the main food supply for the wintering waterfowl. Invertebrate species such as Lugworm (*Arenicola marina*), Ragworm (*Hediste diversicolor*), Cockles (*Cerastoderma edul*e), Sand Mason (*Lanice conchilega*), Baltic Tellin (*Macoma balthica*), Spire Shell (*Hydrobia ulvae*) and Mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) are frequent. Of particular note is the presence of eelgrass (*Zostera noltii* and *Z. angustifolia*) beds, which provide a valuable food stock for herbivorous wildfowl. The estuarine and intertidal flat habitats are of conservation significance and are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Areas of salt marsh fringe the bay in places and provide roosting sites for birds during the high tide periods. Sand dunes occur at Killaspug Point and Coney Island, with a shingle spit at Standalone Point near Sligo Town.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Light-bellied Brent Goose, Oystercatcher and Redshank. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands, and as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Cummeen Strand supports important concentrations of wintering waterfowl, including an internationally important Light-bellied Brent Goose flock (223) and nationally important populations of Oystercatcher (680) and Redshank (408). Other species occurring include Shelduck (86), Wigeon (149), Teal (54), Mallard (145), Red-breasted Merganser (15), Golden Plover (428), Lapwing (695), Knot (165), Sanderling (14), Dunlin (539), Bar-tailed Godwit (85), Curlew (430), Greenshank (13) and Turnstone (62) - all figures are mean peak counts for 4 of the 5 winters between 1995/96 and 1999/2000. Whooper Swan (7) also uses the site, though not regularly.

Cummeen Strand SPA is of high ornithological importance with one species, Light-bellied Brent Goose, occurring in numbers of international importance. In addition, the site supports nationally important populations of a further two species. The regular presence of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit is of particular note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The site is also important as a component of the much larger Sligo Bay complex. Cummeen Strand is a Ramsar Convention site.

7.7.2014

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH DERG (DONEGAL) SPA

SITE CODE: 004057

Lough Derg is a large, oligotrophic lake situated north of Pettigo, Co. Donegal. The lake lies in a landscape of extensive blanket bogs and conifer plantations which make up its catchment. The underlying geology of the area is acid gneiss with some basic intrusions. The lakeshore is mainly stony, and marginal vegetation is poorly developed due to the close proximity of the conifer plantations. The lake has a number of islands.

The lakeshore has a sparse covering of Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) and Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) are found on the margins. There are areas of scrub along parts of the lake shores and on the ungrazed islands. These are composed of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), willow (*Salix* spp.), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and birch (*Betula* sp.).

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull.

A large colony of nesting gulls was discovered on Inishgoosk Island in 1977. A survey in 1999 estimated a population of 500 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gull, which is the largest colony in the country. An estimated 100 pairs of Herring Gull were also present, which is of national importance. Common Gull has bred here in the past.
The Pettigo Plateau Greenland White-fronted Goose flock formerly used Lough Derg as a feeding and/or roost site. Inishgoosk Island appeared to be the main feeding area used. In the 1980s, the bogs were largely deserted in favour of coastal grassland sites at Durnesh Lough and Brownhall. Wintering waterfowl are scarce on Lough Derg due to the oligotrophic character of the system but small numbers of Tufted Duck, Mallard and Goldeneye occur. A feral Greylag Goose flock is resident at the site.

Arctic Char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), a threatened Red Data Book species, was recorded from the lake as recently 1990/91.

Lough Derg SPA is of national importance for both Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull. In the past it was used by Greenland White-fronted Goose, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive

27.1.2012

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYSADARE BAY SPA

SITE CODE: 004129

Ballysadare Bay extends for approximately 10 km westwards from the town of Ballysadare, County Sligo. It is the most southerly of three inlets that form the eastern part of the larger Sligo Bay complex. The estuarine channel of the Ballysadare River winds its way through the bay, finally reaching the open sea near the Strandhill Dunes sand spit. The bay is underlain by sedimentary rocks of limestones, sandstones and shales which are exposed as low cliffs and small sections of bedrock shore at several locations.

The bay contains extensive intertidal sand and mudflats. The flats support good populations of macro-invertebrates which are important food items for wintering waterfowl. Common species present include the polychaete worms *Hediste diversicolor*, *Arenicola marina*, *Lanice conchilega* and *Nepthys hombergii*, and the bivalves *Cerastoderma edule*, *Macoma balthica* and *Scrobicularia plana*. Also present on the intertidal flats are the vascular plants Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) and Beaked Tasselweed (*Ruppia maritima*), which provide food for herbivorous wildfowl. Well-developed salt marshes, which provide roosting sites for birds at high tide, occur at several locations around the bay. The sandy beaches around the Strandhill peninsula are used by roosting birds.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Light-bellied Brent Goose, Grey Plover, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit and Redshank. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Ballysadare Bay is important for a range of waterfowl species in autumn and winter. The population of Light-bellied Brent Goose (188) is of international importance (all figures are mean peak counts for four winters in the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000). The populations of four other species are of national importance, i.e. Grey Plover (70), Dunlin (1,420), Bar-tailed Godwit (251) and Redshank (435). A range of other species occurs, including Whooper Swan (15), Shelduck (55), Wigeon (617), Teal (179), Mallard (304), Goldeneye (17), Red-breasted Merganser (26), Cormorant (43), Oystercatcher (518), Ringed Plover (96), Golden Plover (301), Lapwing (467), Curlew (508), Greenshank (22), Turnstone (40), Black-headed Gull (261) and Common Gull (203).

Ballysadare Bay SPA is of high ornithological importance - it supports a Light-bellied Brent Goose population of international importance as well as nationally important populations of four other wintering waterfowl species. The presence of Bar-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover and Whooper Swan is of particular note as these species are

listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The site forms an important component of the larger Sligo Bay complex.

8.2.2010

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DONEGAL BAY SPA

SITE CODE: 004151

Donegal Bay SPA is a very large, marine-dominated, site. It extends from Doorin Point, to the west of Donegal Town, to Tullaghan Point in County Leitrim, a distance of approximately 15 km along its north-east/south-west axis. It varies in width from about 3 km to over 8 km. The site includes the estuary of the River Eske, which flows through Donegal Town, and the estuary of the River Erne, which flows through Ballyshannon. Much of the shoreline is rocky or stony, with well-developed littoral reefs in places. There are also extensive stretches of sandy beaches, especially from the Murvagh peninsula southwards to Rossnowlagh and at the outer part of the estuary of the River Erne. Shingle or cobble beaches are also represented. There are extensive areas of intertidal flats associated with the estuary of the River Eske, reflecting the very sheltered conditions in this part of the bay. These have been shown to be biotope rich, and supporting a range of macro-invertebrates, including polychaete worms (*Hediste diversicolor, Arenicola marina* and *Nephtys hombergii*) and bivalves (*Scrobicularia plana, Cerastoderma edule* and *Macoma balthica*). Elsewhere, a narrow fringe of intertidal flats is exposed at low tides. Salt marshes are found in the sheltered conditions of the innermost part of the bay. A number of small, grassy, islands occur in the innermost part of the bay. The waters of the shallow bay overlie mostly sandy substrates, though reefs occur in places.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Great Northern Diver, Light-bellied Brent Goose, Common Scoter and Sanderling. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands, and as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Donegal Bay supports an excellent diversity of wintering waterbirds, especially species associated with shallow bays (all figures are mean peak counts for four of the five winters between 1995/96 and 1999/2000). It has an internationally important wintering population of Great Northern Diver (138) and is consistently one of the top sites in the country for this species. It also has one of the few regular populations of Black-throated Diver in the country (11), and Red-throated Diver (21). It supports an internationally important population of Light-bellied Brent Goose (207) and nationally important populations of Common Scoter (860) and Sanderling (68). A range of other species associated with estuarine and shoreline habitats occurs at the site, including Cormorant (29), Shelduck (24), Wigeon (224), Mallard (100), Long-tailed Duck (14), Red-breasted Merganser (38), Oystercatcher (581), Ringed Plover (99), Golden Plover (103), Lapwing (122), Dunlin (269), Bar-tailed Godwit (49), Curlew (359), Redshank (93), Greenshank (12) and Turnstone (53). Gulls are regular in autumn and winter, especially Black-headed Gull (239) and Common Gull (297).

This large coastal site is of high ornithological importance, with two species having populations of international importance (Great Northern Diver and Light-bellied Brent Goose) and a further two species having populations of national importance (Common Scoter and Sanderling). Also of note is that five of the regularly occurring species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Great Northern Diver, Black-throated Diver, Red-throated Diver, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit.

13.10.2010

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SLIGO/LEITRIM UPLANDS SPA

SITE CODE: 004187

The Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA is located north-east of the town of Sligo in the mountain ranges of Ben Bulben, Arroo and Cope's Mountain/Crockauns. The site straddles the Co. Sligo/Co. Leitrim border. The site includes six separate lengths of cliffs in these ranges, including those of King's Mountain, Benbulbin, Benwiskin, Gleniff, Truskmore, Tievebaun, Glenade, Glencar, Arroo Mountain and Cope's Mountain/Crockauns. The upper boundary of the site is taken to be 50 m from the cliff top except in the King's Mountain area, above Glencar Lough, where an expanse of suitable foraging habitat *c*. 200 m from the cliff top is included. These uplands are formed of Carboniferous limestone, capped in places by shales. They stand on a high plateau, 300-450 m above the surrounding countryside, and the edges form lofty cliffs from 15 to 300 m in height. Areas of scree occur below the cliffs on slopes of 40-50°.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Chough and Peregrine.

Inland cliffs and scree slopes are the predominant habitats of the site. Other habitats present on the site include heath, blanket bog, grassland, scrub, woodland and streams.

The cliffs hold an internationally important population of breeding Chough (14 breeding pairs recorded from the site in the 1992 survey and 15 in the 2002/03 survey). Chough forage mostly in unimproved, closely grazed grassland and flocks of up to 29 birds have been seen. The land on the plateau is, for the most part, vegetated by heath and blanket bog which is largely unsuitable habitat for Chough. The suitable grassland occurs mainly on the steep slopes below the cliffs.

The extensive uplands on the plateau provide excellent habitat for Peregrine; the cliffs are ideal nesting sites and four pairs were recorded here in 2002. Small numbers of Red Grouse are also known to occur within the site.

The Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA is of considerable ornithological significance, being a site of international importance for Chough and of national importance for Peregrine; both species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

30.5.2015

ENVIRONMENT
AND HERITAGE
SERVICE

Register entry UK9020051 under regulation 10 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.

This is the register entry for the European site known as Pettigoe Plateau Special Protection Area. The site has been classified by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland pursuant to Article 4(1) and/or 4(2) of Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds as a Special Protection Area.

The register reference number for this European site is UK9020051 and a folder, kept under this reference as part of the register, contains a map of the European site and a citation giving the reasons for the classification of the site as a Special Protection Area. The map and citation are identified by the register reference number and signed by me on the date of registration.

Other details of the European site are as follows:

Date of classification: 19 November 1996

Site centre location (1):

longitude: 007° 58' 55" W
latitude : 054° 31' 57" N

Area: 1270 hectares

Priority status(2): N/A

Date of registration: 17 February 1998

Signed:

on behalf of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland on

R. Lanchelaus.
Civil Servant in Clarence House Belfast.

1. This indicates the approximate centre of the site. Where the European site consists of several distinct areas, the co-ordinates of the most important sub-area are entered.

2. Indicates if the site has been identified under Article 4.2 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora as hosting one or more priority natural habitat types or priority species.

S001_LMC.DOC

An Agency within the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland

Natural Heritage
Commonwealth House, 35 Castle Street
BELFAST BT1 1GH
Tel: 01232 251477. Fax: 01232 546660

An Agency within the
Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland

ENVIRONMENT
AND HERITAGE
SERVICE

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds

PETTIGOE PLATEAU SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

The Pettigoe Plateau is situated in Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland to the north of Lower Lough Erne. It abuts the International border with the Irish Republic. It is one of the largest expanses of blanket bog in Northern Ireland formed on a relatively low elevation rolling landscape interspersed with hills with mineral soil and depressions with several small lakes. The extensive blanket bog which covers most of the site exhibits the full range of characteristic vegetation and structural features associated with this type of habitat. The area of the Special Protection Area is 1270 ha.

The Special Protection Area boundary is entirely coincident with both that of the Pettigoe Plateau Area of Special Scientific Interest and the Pettigoe Plateau Special Area of Conservation.

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds by regularly supporting nationally important numbers of breeding golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria,* an Annex 1 species. The population is estimated to up to 12 pairs, representing 4% of the Irish population (based on 1987 and 1995 surveys).

The site forms part of an extended cross-border site which occasionally supports nationally important numbers of wintering Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris,* an Annex 1 species. The average peak winter count of the extended site is 133 birds, representing 0.95% of the Irish population (based on the five year peak mean for 1989/90 to 1993/94). The Special Protection Area is used for both feeding and roosting and held a peak of over 60 birds in 1993/94 .

The Pettigoe Plateau also supports an important assemblage of breeding birds including four Annex 1 species, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus,* merlin *Falco columbarius,* dunlin *Calidris alpina*, and common tern *Sterna hirundo*. Other breeding species include lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, curlew *Numenius arquata* and snipe *Gallinago gallinago*.

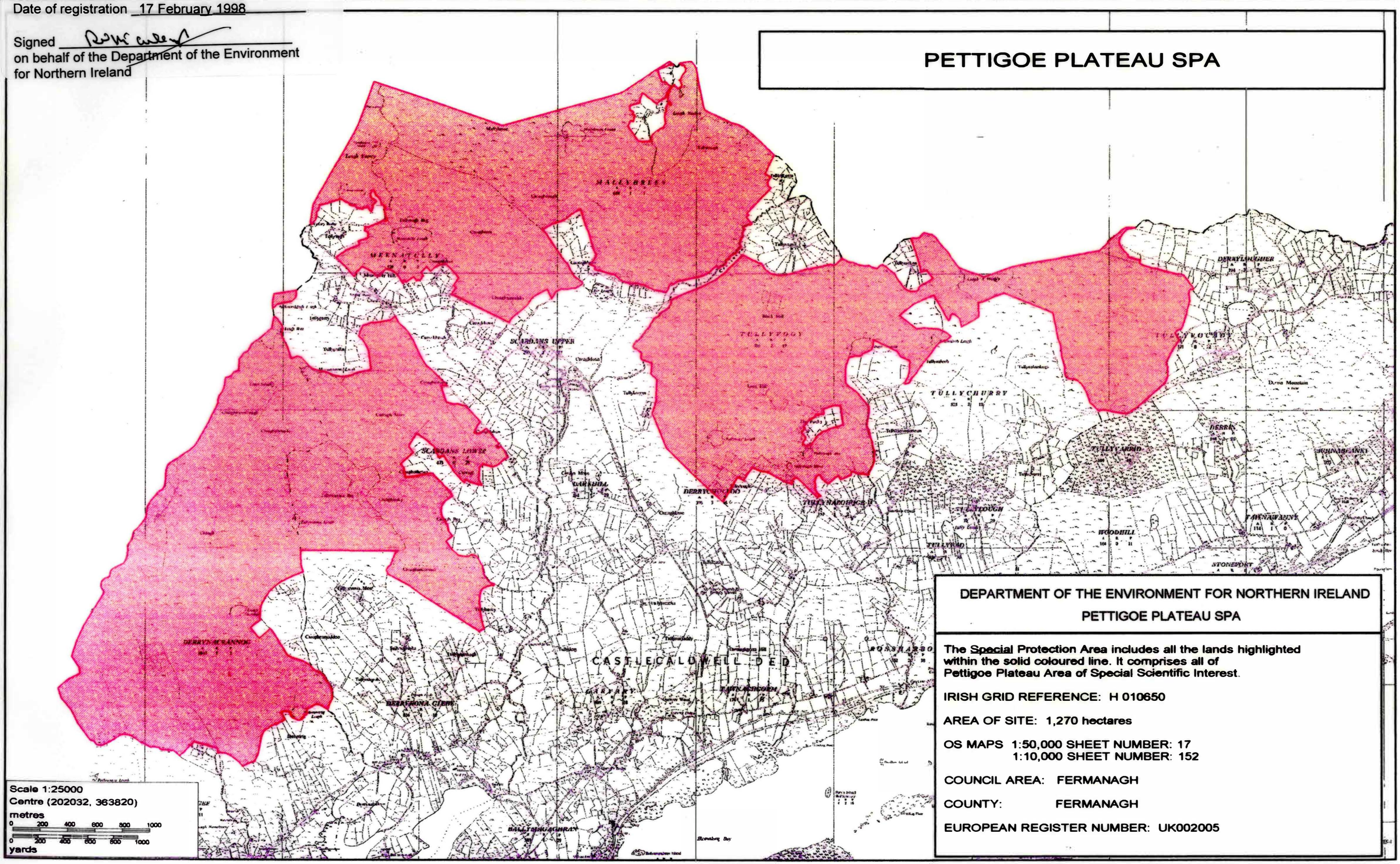
The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland
Register reference number UK9020051
Date of registration 17 February 1998

Signed Dw McCullagh
on behalf of the Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland

The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland
Register reference number UK9020051 (originally shown as UK002005)
Date of registration 17 February 1998

Signed _____
on behalf of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland

PETTIGOE PLATEAU SPA



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

PETTIGOE PLATEAU SPA

The Special Protection Area includes all the lands highlighted within the solid coloured line. It comprises all of Pettigoe Plateau Area of Special Scientific Interest.

IRISH GRID REFERENCE: H 010650

AREA OF SITE: 1,270 hectares

OS MAPS 1:50,000 SHEET NUMBER: 17
1:10,000 SHEET NUMBER: 152

COUNCIL AREA: FERMANAGH

COUNTY: FERMANAGH

EUROPEAN REGISTER NUMBER: UK002005

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT CUILCAGH MOUNTAIN, COUNTY FERMANAGH. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area delineated and described on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Cuilcagh Mountain area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its geology, physiography and peatland flora and fauna. Geological interest is comprised of the complete representation of the Carboniferous Leitrim Group, including richly fossiliferous sequences, while physiographical interest relates to various active processes, notably slope weathering and peat pseudo-karst features. Biological interest relates to the size, quality and diversity of the habitats within the area, in addition to the presence of particular plant and animal species of note. Cuilcagh Mountain is the second largest expanse of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland. The summit ridge contains a fine example of Racomitrium moss heath, a scarce feature in Northern Ireland, in addition to a well-developed oceanic montane bryophyte flora. Heath and grassland communities are also well represented, producing a varied and diverse mosaic of habitats. A considerable number of rare plants are associated with these various habitats, while the area supports an important upland bird community, including a significant breeding population of Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria.

The spectacular summit Gritstone edge and pavement, consisting of the Lackagh Sandstone Formation (also known as the Millstone Grit), is unique in Northern Ireland. The underlying sequences, principally of sandstone, shales and mudstones, can be richly fossiliferous, notably the Dergvone Shale Formation with its Killooman Shale Member and the Carraun Shale Formations. These strata are of P_1 - P_2 (Upper Visean) and E_1 - E_2 (Lower Namurian) goniatite stage ages, some 320 million years old. Fossil remains include an outstanding range of goniatites and also brachiopods, together with other fauna.

The total sequence on the Upper Cuilcagh area provides an excellent section through approximately 580 metres of the Leitrim Group of Carboniferous rocks. On the lower ground, particularly on east Cuilcagh, a series of potholes or shakeholes (dry vertical shafts) and sinks (shafts and surface water plunges) have developed on limestone. Some of these shafts have limited underground passages associated with them. Several caves are also present, with examples of dripstone and flowstone formations. Other karst features include the sizeable blind valley at Legacurragh. The limestones represented are the Dartry Limestone Formation.

Landforms due to past and present processes are also notable on Cuilcagh Mountain, and include periglacial rock shattering and associated blockfields at the Gritstone edge, rock slides and bog flows. Development of pseudo-karst features on the peat are notable with collapsed dolines, sinks, pipes, collapsed pipes, peat caves and blind valleys all represented.

The extensive blanket bog which mantles the mountain slopes exhibits a wide range of characteristic vegetation and structural features, with well developed pool, hummock and lawn complexes, acid flushes and bog bursts. The bog vegetation is characterised by Sphagnum and hypnoid mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs and other associated species, with the composition and abundance of these components dependent on local edaphic conditions.

Flat, water-logged ground is characterised by the presence of such species as Cross-leaved Heath Erica tetralix, Bog Asphodel Narthecium ossifragum and Common Cotton-grass Eriophorum angustifolium over a Sphagnum moss mat of predominantly S. capillifolium and S. papillosum. On more freely draining slopes, Heather Calluna vulgaris, Bilberry V. myrtillus, and Hare's-tail Cottongrass E. vaginatum are more typical over a mixed bryophyte mat. The presence of weak flushing of acidic water through the surface peat layer is indicated by the occurrence of scattered Purple Moor-grass Molinia caerulea or Sharp-flowered Rush Juncus acutiflorus. Where flushing is concentrated over a thinner peat or a peaty gley soil the vegetation is characterised by a small sedge community where Yellow-sedge Carex viridula, Carnation Sedge C. panicea and Star Sedge C. echinata predominate, while more mesotrophic waters are indicated by the presence of Tawny Sedge C. hostiana, Dioecious Sedge C. dioica and Flea Sedge C. pulicaris.

Mountain summit Racomitrium heath, a scarce vegetation type in Northern Ireland, grows as a short, tight carpet among the exposed rock and scattered boulders on the summit ridge. On the lower slopes at Aghatirourke, limestone grassland, dominated by Blue Moor-grass Sesleria caerulea, provides additional habitat diversity.

A number of rare and notable plants have been recorded for the area, mainly from the steep, north facing scarp slope and boulderfield below the summit. These rare plants are predominantly bryophytes, and include the mosses Dicranodontium asperulum and Dicranum scottianum and the liverworts Herbertus aduncus ssp. hutchinsiae, Bazzania tricrenata, Anastrepta orcadensis, Marsupella sphacelata and Gymnomitrion crenulatum. Higher plants include Dwarf Willow Salix herbacea, Starry Saxifrage Saxifraga stellaris, Stiff Sedge Carex bigelowii, Green Spleenwort Asplenium viride, Tunbridge Filmy Fern Hymenophyllum tunbridgense, Alpine Clubmoss Diphasiastrum alpinum and Stagshorn Clubmoss Lycopodium clavatum.

This mountainous area is the most important upland breeding site for Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria in Northern Ireland. Peregrine Falcons Falco peregrinus regularly breed along the cliff faces while Merlin F. columbarius are frequently seen. The bog is occasionally used as a feeding and roosting site by Greenland White-fronted Geese Anser albifrons flavirostris. Ring Ouzel Turdus torquatus have been recorded for the area.

The invertebrate interest is known to include some notable species of aquatic insect. Of particular note are several alpine species, including the water beetle Dytiscus lapponicus and the water boatman Glaenocorisa propinqua, both of which are found in Lough Atona. The bog pools also support some of these species, in addition to the rare whirligig beetle Gyrinus natator.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features of the area:

1. Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating or re-seeding.

2. Increase in grazing intensity or change either in the type of livestock used or in feeding practices.

3. Introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.

4. Application of manure, slurry, fertiliser or lime.

5. Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.

6. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter.

7. Burning.

8. The release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal,plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, but excludes livestock and animals used in controlling livestock.

9. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, or the disturbance, killing or removal of any wild animal in a manner likely to affect the continued existence of the species within the area except as provided for under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

10. The introduction of tree or woodland management, including afforestation or planting.

11. Drainage, including peat drainage or the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.

12. Modification of the structure of water courses, including their banks and beds as by realignment, regrading or dredging.

13. Management of aquatic and bank vegetation.

14. The alteration of water levels or water tables or the utilisation of water including storage or extraction, but excluding water used for domestic requirements.

15. Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or lakes.

16. Reclamation of land from bog, marsh, river or lake.

17. Extraction of minerals including peat, sand, gravel, topsoil or subsoil.

18. Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches and other earth works or the laying or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.

19. Storage of materials.

20. Use of craft or vehicles likely to damage the vegetation.

21. Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling.

22. Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation.

23. Changes in game management.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 28 September 1994

Assistant Secretary

M Cunningham
CIVIL SERVANT OF CLARENCE COURT
BELFAST.

FOOTNOTES

(a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the above operations or activities does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. Operations or activities covered by planning permission are not normally covered in the list of Notifiable Operations.

(b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed above are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.

CUILCAGH MOUNTAIN

Views About Management
The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)

A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Cuilcagh Mountain Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on pages 2 and 3 of the attached Document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Blanket Bog

Blanket bog is a unique habitat for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the bog through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. The latter includes important invertebrate communities.

Bogs depend on rainwater and maintaining a high water table is vital to the "health" of the bog. In addition, the peat soils and many of the species that grow there are very sensitive to physical disturbance.

Specific objectives include:

Ensure that the blanket bog is not burnt in order to prevent the loss of more specialised plants and animals and to avoid damage to peat soils which could lead to erosion.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent the bog from drying out.

Where appropriate, prevent the loss of light-demanding peatland species through the control of scrub and trees.

Where the surface is not too wet, blanket bogs can sustain very light levels of grazing by sheep. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a regime that avoids overgrazing or poaching.

Where the habitat has been subjected to heavy grazing, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a reduction in stocking density to allow the bog to recover.

Wet and Dry Heath

Wet and dry heaths are also important habitats for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the heath through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Most heathland communities need some management to retain their interest. Small patches of scrub within heathland are valuable in providing additional habitat niches, but in the absence of management, woody species can quickly take over. On the other hand, too much grazing, especially through the winter, can cause heathers to be replaced by coarse grasses. Shepherding can help to spread grazing pressure over a wider area while fencing may also be useful in some cases to control stock numbers and movement.

Specific objectives include:

Low intensity grazing has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the heathland. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation and extension of this practice.

Where the habitat has been subjected to heavy grazing, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a reduction in stocking density to allow the heath to recover. Shepherding and fencing to control the movement of stock may also be beneficial in some situations.

Where burning is considered appropriate, it should only be undertaken after close consultation with, and the agreement of, Environment and Heritage Service. Burning can cause the loss of more specialised plants and animals and may damage the peat soils, leading to erosion.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent wet heath from drying out.

Prevent the loss of light-demanding heathland species through the control of scrub and bracken. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases other methods of control, such as cutting, may be required.

Montane Heath

Montane heath is an important habitat for wildlife. In Northern Ireland it is only found in a few of the highest, most exposed upland areas. The vegetation usually consists of low-growing, wind-clipped dwarf-shrubs, such as Heather, growing with mosses, lichens and sedges. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the montane heath through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. These include important invertebrate communities, in addition to a number of rare plants.

Due to the effects of high altitude and harsh climate, montane heath is very slow growing and requires little active management. However, it is also slow to recover from disturbance and is therefore highly susceptible to damage through grazing and trampling.

Montane heath can generally sustain light summer grazing by sheep with stock being removed during the winter. Shepherding can help to spread grazing pressure over a wider area, avoiding localised trampling, erosion and nutrient enrichment through dunging. Fencing may also be useful in some cases to control stock numbers and movement. Where montane heath has been damaged by heavy grazing, it may be necessary to consider temporarily removing grazing stock to allow the vegetation to recover.

Montane heath is vulnerable to trampling through recreational use. The effects are usually localised but visitor pressure may require careful management through, for example, the appropriate placement and maintenance of footpaths.

Specific objectives include:

Montane heath can sustain light summer grazing by sheep. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation of this practice.

Where the habitat has been subjected to heavy grazing, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a reduction in stocking density to allow the montane heath to recover. Shepherding and fencing to control the movement of stock may also be beneficial in some situations.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage sensitive recreational management, for example, through careful routing of footpaths and siting of information panels.

The use of burning to manage montane heath is damaging and should be avoided.

Inland rock

Inland cliffs and screes often support specialised communities of plants and animals that are not found elsewhere. Many species use the scree, crevices and cliff ledges as a shelter from extremes of climate and from competition with more dominant plants, or as a refuge from grazing. A number of birds of conservation importance, such as peregrine falcon, also use rock ledges as safe nesting sites.

Cliffs and screes often need little or no management. Low levels of grazing can be beneficial in some circumstances, by preventing more vigorous species from shading out the less vigorous plants. Where heavy grazing has restricted particular species and communities to cliffs and scree slopes, controlling stock levels on the surrounding land could allow some of these species to spread more widely.

Screes are often unstable and their fragile plant communities are vulnerable to physical disturbance such as trampling. As a result some screes and cliffs may require protection from damage caused by heavy grazing and recreation such as walking and rock climbing.

Specific objectives include:

Light grazing can prevent less vigorous plants from being shaded out. Where appropriate, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation of this practice.

Where the habitat is subject to heavy grazing or where grazing on surrounding land has isolated the vegetation communities of cliffs and screes, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a reduction in stocking density to allow grazing-sensitive species to disperse more widely.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage sensitive recreational management. For example, where possible new footpaths should generally be routed around scree rather than through it. Where rare plants or cliff-nesting birds are known to be present careful management of climbing routes and the timing of the activity may be required.

Lakes and Pools

Upland, nutrient-poor (Dystrophic) lakes and pools are also important habitats for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the lakes and pools through the conservation of their associated native plants and animals. The latter include important invertebrate communities.

Dystrophic lakes and pools depend on water quantity and quality to maintain their conservation value. They are generally sensitive to disturbance and nutrient enrichment. Sympathetic management practices and recreation have contributed to maintaining this feature of interest.

Specific objectives include:

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of water quality through the control of pollution and artificial enrichment.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of natural water levels.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of sympathetic management practices to ensure that disturbance to the waters, bed and shore of the lakes and pools and their wildlife is minimised.

Environment and Heritage Service recognises the important economic and social roles of fishing and welcomes sustainable fishery management that is sensitive to the special interests of the lakes and pools.

Management principles applicable to all habitats throughout the site

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage all activities associated with site maintenance, management, access and recreation to be undertaken in a sensitive manner that ensures disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

Maintain the diversity and quality of the habitats by ensuring there is no application of fertiliser, slurry, herbicide or fungicide to the site.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the main habitats, such as grassland and scrub through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats are often very important for wildlife, especially invertebrates.

Golden Plover

Cuilcagh Mountain ASSI supports numbers of Golden Plover that are important in an all-Ireland context. The Golden Plover is a wading bird of the uplands that nests on relatively flat or gently sloping areas. Vegetation structure is important to Golden Plover. The species prefers shorter swards that are typically found on ridges, areas of old cut-over bog and recovering burnt areas. Low vegetation allows ease of movement for foraging and lets nesting birds detect approaching

predators easily. Flushes and other wet areas are important to Golden Plover as feeding areas for chicks because these hold large numbers of invertebrates.

Specific objectives include:

> Environment and Heritage Service would wish to see diversity in the vegetation structure of the bog and heath across the site as a whole. This should include small areas of short vegetation suitable for nesting activities. Where this structure cannot be achieved naturally or by light grazing, Environment and Heritage Service may consider alternative management treatments for specific, localised areas. These treatments could include activities such as heavier grazing or Heather flailing when undertaken in a highly controlled way. Such actions should only be considered after close consultation with, and the agreement of, Environment and Heritage Service.
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> Environment and Heritage Service would encourage actions which maintain or enhance soil wetness and wetland features, such as pools and flushes, as feeding areas for Golden Plovers - this can be achieved by blocking drains across peatland habitat.

The geological series

Earth science features provide information about a region's geological history and can also aid interpretation of geological processes in the past and present.

The earth science interest at Cuilcagh Mountain comprises important exposures of Carboniferous strata together with a range of weathered limestone (karst) features. The solid geology of interest occurs throughout the ASSI and includes minor exposures within sinks and dolines through to major outcrops along the stream valleys, ridges and the summit series. Karst features are related to the occurrences of limestone and are generally found along the southern and eastern areas of the ASSI.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of the ASSI and its earth science interest.

Provided no damaging activities, as set out in the Schedule (pages 2 and 3), are undertaken without consent, the needs of owners, occupiers and the Department can be met. Earth science features such as those at Cuilcagh Mountain may require occasional management intervention to maintain access to, and exposure of, the geology. This could include selectively removing vegetation or any major build up of loose rock.

Specific objectives include:

> Maintain the geological series in an undamaged state.
>
> Maintain access to the geological series.

Surface karst features and caves

Areas of limestone within the Cuilcagh ASSI typically exhibit surface features collectively known as karst. Such features include limestone pavement, sinking streams, springs, depressions known as dolines and dry valleys. These landforms are important in helping us to understand historical and present processes affecting and shaping these areas. Landforms can be damaged by stone removal, infilling or slope regrading. These features are also commonly related to important underground cave systems and associated groundwaters which can be affected through changes in land management, especially drainage activities, the use of fertiliser or pesticides and applications of slurry.

These features owe their form to a range of processes which have operated over tens of thousands of years. These include deep weathering, the effect of past ice action and the slow dissolving of the limestone itself by water. These processes have given rise to a landscape that is extremely vulnerable. Once they have been damaged, these features cannot be recreated.

Minor cave systems are present under parts of the Cuilcagh ASSI. In addition, the main streams flowing off Cuilcagh are all directed towards the major cave systems to the north and east of the ASSI. Although underground, these are linked to the surface by a variety of features including cave entrances, shafts, sinking streams and by water movement through the ground which ultimately flows into the caves.

Surface features can be damaged by stone removal, infilling or regarding, while caves are susceptible to damage through decline in general water quality. Caves and surface depressions can be damaged through inappropriate disposal of rubbish or waste of any type. Recreational activities such as caving may be detrimental if undertaken in an insensitive way.

Specific objectives include:

> Environment and Heritage Service would wish to see all karst surface features retained through sympathetic land management practices.
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> Environment and Heritage Service would discourage the inappropriate disposal of waste of any type within the site.
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> Caving should be undertaken in a responsible manner through adherence to best practice as advocated by national caving bodies.

E Diane Stevenson

E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer

Dated the 1st of February 2008

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: ERNE ESTUARY/FINNER DUNES

SITE CODE: 000139

The Erne Estuary/Finner Dunes occupies the area immediately west of Ballyshannon, Co Donegal and is an amalgamation of two former Areas of Scientific Interest, the Erne Estuary and Finner Dunes. The area is underlain by Carboniferous limestone, shale and sandstone, but recent blown sand and other deposits mask much of the solid geology under the site.

Much of the site is composed of a complex of intertidal habitats such as mud and sand flats, sandy and shingle beaches and sea bays, but in places a fringe of saltmarsh occurs on the shoreline. Common plants in these situations are Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Common Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*). Brown seaweeds (*Fucus* spp.) are often abundant on rocks low down the shore.

A large area of sand dunes occupies the southern side of the site. Marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) is very evident there. Younger dunes support Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sand Sedge (*Carex arenaria*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus praecox*) and an abundance of the moss *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*. Parts of the stable dunes are herb-rich, with Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Wild Pansy (*Viola tricolor*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) among the common plants. A scrub of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) is developing on the older dunes, while wetland communities occur in wetter dune hollows. Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Marsh Horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*) are frequent in these localised wetlands.

Small areas of cliff, heath, fen and reed-bed give further habitat diversity to the site.

The site is particularly important as a feeding area for waterfowl. Two species occur at nationally important levels, namely Red-breasted Merganser (32, average peak 1984/85 - 1985/86) and Sanderling (93, average peak 1984/85 - 1986/87). Other birds present in significant numbers include Cormorant (41), Wigeon (60), Teal (73), Long-tailed Duck (15), Oystercatcher (96), Ringed Plover (35), Lapwing (44) and Dunlin (61). (All average peaks are from 11 counts made over 2 seasons between 1984/85 and 1985/86).

In addition to these winter figures a very large congregation of Red-breasted Merganser occupies the area in late Summer during the annual moult, with 350 recorded on 24/8/85 and 657 on 16/8/86. Cormorants are also present in large numbers in autumn, with 250 recorded on 25/8/85. The Long-tailed Ducks are probably part of the same flock recorded for Bundoran. There was an additional count of 100 Sanderling on 17/12/87, giving a three year peak of 93.

Erne Estuary/Finner Dunes contains good examples of a number of coastal habitats and, furthermore, provides important feeding grounds for several waterfowl species.

5.11.2009

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: OWENGAR WOOD

SITE CODE: 001419

Owengar Wood occurs on the steep, north facing bank of the Owengar River, 1km south-east of Drumkeeran and 4km west of Lough Allen. This site is a good example of wet, semi-natural deciduous woodland that has developed on the often waterlogged, clay-rich soils which are typical of County Leitrim. Most of the site is intact and has retained its natural character, despite being somewhat damaged from tree felling and grazing on the east side.

Willows (*Salix caprea, S. cinerea*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) form the dominant species in the canopy with some birch (*Betula* spp.), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is also very common near the river banks. The understorey includes Hazel, Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). In some of the more ungrazed areas, the wood has developed into a very dense thicket which has a very natural character.

This woodland is notable for its excellent diversity of bryophyte and lichen communities which form a lush carpet in some of the more undisturbed parts of the wood. The ground flora also contains a good diversity of flowering herbs, ferns, grasses and sedges which are characteristic of slightly acidic soils. Common species include Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), some Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*). Wet patches and flushed channels running down slope feature Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), sedges (*Carex nigra, C. laevigata, C. remota*), Marsh Horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

Due to widespread afforestation of conifers in this region, Owengar Wood is important as it is one of the few remaining, intact wet woodland sites in this region. Although the eastern half has been damaged by grazing, much of this site is exceptionally undisturbed and contains a good diversity of plant species. The varied age structure and diversity of tree species in the Owengar Wood also creates an important resource for local wildlife species including Pheasant and Woodcock.

20.11.2009

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: COLGAGH LOUGH

SITE CODE: 001658

Colgagh Lough is a small lake nestled in the southern foothills of the Ben Bulben mountain range, 1km north of Lough Gill and 5km west of Sligo. This lake is underlain by limestone bedrock and is noted for its rich deposits of marl. Marl is white sediment composed of calcium carbonate which is derived from the decomposed matter of gelatinous algae and charophytes which grow in the lake. It accumulates on the bottom of the lake and on aquatic vegetation and is a fairly sterile substrate so few plants will grow on it.

However, at Colgagh Lough there are several aquatic species present including rafts of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) with Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*), Fen Pondweed (*Potamogeton coloratus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*).

The margin of the lake is stony and is dominated by grasses and sedges (*Carex* spp.) with herbs such as Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and the moss *Climacium dendroides*.

Colgagh Lough is also unusual in that it has no surface water outlet. Water has been seen to drain through a swallow hole and it has been suggested that Colgagh Lough may have an underground link to Lough Gill but this remains unproven. However, this interesting geomorphological aspect of the lake also makes it more sensitive to pollution as there is a more restricted flow of water in and out of the lake. The use of fertilisers on the pastures which slope steeply down to the lakeshore could pose a threat to its water quality.

Some adjacent fields have also been cleared of scrub woodland. This type of damage not only reduces the habitat diversity of the area and thus its attraction to wildlife is diminished, but it also can increase the amount and rate of runoff of fertilisers and other nutrients into the lake, thus further increasing the risk of water pollution. However at present there are no definite signs of any deterioration in water quality.

Colgagh Lough also supports a rich invertebrate fauna, comprised of molluscs, beetles (Coleoptera spp.), leeches and a variety of waterfowl such as Mallard, Heron, Little Grebe, Wigeon, Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Mute Swans and Whooper Swans.

24.11.2009