

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT BALLYCARRY, RATHLIN
ISLAND, COUNTY ANTRIM. 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 by the solid black line on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Ballycarry area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its heath and wetland vegetation. The site occupies a relatively flat plateau on the Lower Basalt rock to the north-east of the island. A series of depressions and troughs form a number of small wetlands, interconnected by low-lying channels and flushes. Exposure to wind and salt have produced a characteristic assemblage of plants.

The vegetation over much of the area is dominated by the sub-shrubs Ling Calluna vulgaris, Bell Heather Erica cinerea and Western Gorse Ulex gallii, which together form a distinctive dwarf-heath community. This vegetation type is restricted in its distribution within the British Isles, and Rathlin represents its most northerly known location. Maritime species such as Sea Pink Armeria maritima, Sea Plantain Plantago maritima and Sea Campion Silene maritima become more frequent in the vicinity of the cliff edge, where the peat soils are very thin and exposure reduces the vigour of the main heath species. Moss and lichen cover is high in this area.

Small depressions are poorly drained and contain wet heath vegetation with Cross-leaved Heather Erica tetralix, Purple Moor Grass Molinia caerulea and Bog Asphodel Narthecium ossifragum. Larger hollows form peat-bottomed lakes where such species as Bogbean Menyanthes trifoliata, Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata and the Bog Mosses Sphagnum spp. are dominant.

SCHEDULE

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

1. Any activity which involves the damage or disturbance, by mechanical means or otherwise, of the surface or sub-surface of the land, or of any wild vegetation growing on that land.
2. Any change in the grazing regime, including any change in stock feeding practice.
3. Any application to the surface, sub-surface, or vegetation, of any manure, fertiliser, lime, pesticide, herbicide, fungicide or other chemical.
4. Any change in the practice of burning.
5. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials or objects.

6. Killing, destruction, damage, displacement or removal of any wild animal or wild plant, save for:-
 - i. any birds which are listed in Schedule 2 Part II of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985;
 - ii. any mammals not listed in Schedule 5 of the same Order; and
 - iii. plants listed as noxious weeds in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.
7. The introduction or release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice and control of grazing animals), plant or seed.
8. Use of vehicles or craft (but excluding farm vehicles and machinery being used in normal farming practices) in a manner likely to damage the vegetation.
9. Recreational, educational or research activities other than those which have been regularly undertaken in the past.

Sealed with the Official Seal of
The Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 16 September, 1991



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