

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
 DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT BALLYGILL NORTH, 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 'Ballygill North area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of the complex pattern of heath and associated habitats, which form a mosaic of vegetation within a varied topography of plateaux and valleys.

The plateaux contain a dry dwarf-heath community on shallow peat soils and are dominated by Ling Calluna vulgaris, Bell Heather Erica cinerea and Western Gorse Ulex gallii. This distinctive type of heath is restricted in its distribution within the British Isles and Rathlin is the most northerly site known for it. Surface depressions have impeded drainage and are covered by a mixture of wet heath, where Cross-leaved Heather Erica tetralix is prominent, and acid grassland with species such as Mat Grass Nardus stricta and Purple Moor Grass Molinia caerulea.

Many of the slopes are flushed by mineral rich waters and are dominated by sedges eg Carnation Sedge Carex panicea, Common Sedge Carex nigra, Common Yellow Sedge Carex demissa and Black Bog-rush Schoenus nigricans. Troughs and valley bottoms contain a range of wetland communities with a large number of wetland species, including Bogbean Menyanthes trifoliata, Bog Pondweed Potamogeton polygonifolius, Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata and Marsh Cinquefoil Potentilla palustris.

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


R W ROGERS

Assistant Secretary

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