

BANAGHER

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 Banagher 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 2-3 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

Rare plant sites are reliant on the maintenance of the habitat in which the particular rare species grows. Often this is a mosaic of habitats with the particular species often associated with habitat edge or transitional communities. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of these habitats and habitat transitions through the conservation of their associated native plants and animals.

Many rare plants are sensitive species and can quickly be lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. However, most rare plants have survived because of traditional land management and so these practices generally need to continue to retain the interest.

At Banagher the Schedule 8 species Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris* occurs in a wet grassland complex in the west of the site. Specific objectives include:

Grassland generally needs some management to retain its interest. Although occasional small patches of scrub can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates, in the absence of management, coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing by cattle is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species and helping to maintain open areas and a diverse sward structure, although overgrazing should be avoided as the wet soils are particularly susceptible to poaching. In the absence of grazing, cutting of the vegetation to create open areas and reduce the dominance of coarse grasses is desirable.

Prevent the loss of more sensitive grassland species through the control of scrub, bracken and rushes. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases, other methods of control such as cutting, may be required.

Ensure that disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

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 grassland, such as fen, swamp and old hedgebanks through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife and at Banagher contain several other notable plants.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment
hereunto affixed is authenticated
by



Dr JS Faulkner
Senior Officer of the
Department of the Environment

Dated the 21st of March 2005