

CASTLE POINT

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

A statement of Northern Ireland Environment Agency's views about the management of Castle Point Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Northern Ireland Environment Agency 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. Northern Ireland Environment Agency 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 Northern Ireland Environment Agency is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on page 2 for a list of these operations and activities). Northern Ireland Environment Agency 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

The earth science interest at Castle Point occurs as cliff and foreshore exposures extending west from Ballycastle Harbour to Port Calliagh. Northern Ireland Environment Agency would encourage the maintenance of the ASSI and its earth science interest.

The geological series

Northern Ireland Environment Agency would encourage the continued use of the site for current activities. Provided no damaging activities, as set out in the Schedule (page 2), are undertaken without consent, the needs of owners, occupiers and the Department can be met. Earth science features such as those at Castle Point may require occasional management intervention in order 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.

Intertidal Rock

Rocky shores are an important habitat for wildlife. The littoral zone is composed of a variety of different habitats and communities, including rock pools, bedrock ledges and platforms, gullies, crevices and boulder fields. A diverse range of seaweeds and marine animals are associated with these habitats and most are specially adapted to periods of emersion. Northern Ireland Environment Agency would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of littoral rock, through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Active management of rocky shores is usually minimal as these are naturally occurring habitats dominated by tidal processes and wave exposure. Natural processes, such as erosion and collapse of cliffs, should be allowed to proceed freely. It is important that management aims to maintain good water quality and sediment quality.

Direct damage to rocky habitats can be caused by activities such as dredging and construction. In addition, anthropogenic structures may have an impact by deflecting wave energy away from the foreshore and may also restrict the sediment budget within coastal system.

Specific objectives include:

Management should aim to minimize the damage caused by recreation activities on rocky shores and in the subtidal area as these may affect the biota due to disturbance, i.e. trampling or shellfish and/or invertebrate collection or by recreational sub aqua diving.

Water quality should be managed as sewage discharge or oil pollution may affect reef communities, particularly due to increased turbidity, reducing algal communities, or siltation, smothering animal communities.

Minimise the extraction of marine aggregates from near-shore gravel beds.

Management should aim to minimise the removal of species through unregulated bait digging, shellfish gathering and seaweed collection which can lead to damage or loss of communities and substratum.

Modification of natural or man-made features, such as the clearance of boulders, large stones and algae should be discouraged.

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

Encourage sustainable fishing practices and the development of possible non disturbance zones.

Aim to minimize the impact of the construction and operation of long sea outfalls.

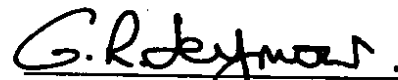
Discourage the accidental or deliberate introduction of non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the intertidal rock, such as sediment shores and mudflats through sensitive management.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency would encourage the maintenance of good water quality through the control of pollution and artificial enrichment.

Encourage the production and implementation of coastal zone management plans, including nature conservation objectives.

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



G R SEYMOUR
Senior Officer of the
Department of the Environment

Dated the 15TH of JANUARY 2009