

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT HORSE ISLAND,
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 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 'Horse Island - area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of the numbers of breeding waders which it supports.

Horse Island is a lightly-grazed drumlin island in Lower Lough Erne. The Erne Basin generally is one of the prime locations for breeding waders in the British Isles. Over 60 pairs of waders - including Snipe Gallinago gallinago, Curlew Numenius arquata, Redshank Tringa totanus and Lapwing Vanellus vanellus - have been recorded breeding on the island, making it one of the most important areas in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the density of nests, at over 3 per hectare, is one of the highest recorded. Other breeding birds include Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos, Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus, Great Crested Grebe Podiceps cristatus and Tufted Duck Aythya fuligula.

The vegetation on the island is dominated by Sharp-flowered Rush Juncus acutiflorus, with a variety of grasses and sedges and in places is quite species rich. This provides cover for nests and young birds. Other important factors for breeding birds are the heavy nature of the soils, which remain wet even in summer; with the adjoining lough shoreline, there is an abundance of food for adults and young birds. The island is also relatively free from disturbance and predation.

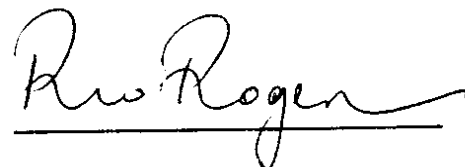
SCHEDULE

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

1. Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing, including any change in the type of livestock used, or changes in livestock feeding practice.
2. The disturbance or modification of the vegetation, land surface, sub-surface or water levels, whether by engineering works, drainage works, the application, spreading or storage of any material whatsoever, including fertiliser or manure, on or to the vegetation or land surface, or by any other means.
3. Burning.
4. The introduction or release into the area of any wild, feral, or domestic animal, plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate (except livestock).
5. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains.

6. The introduction of tree or woodland management, including afforestation or planting.
7. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage the vegetation or disturb the wildlife.
8. Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation or disturb the wildlife.
9. Changes in game, fish or waterfowl management.

Sealed with the Official Seal of
the Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland on 5 December, 1991



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