

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT INNER BELFAST LOUGH,
COUNTIES DOWN AND 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 Committee for Nature Conservation and being satisfied that the area including all land and intertidal foreshores down to low water spring tides either entirely surrounded by a solid black line or surrounded by a solid black line on land and a broken black line over water on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the 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 "Inner Belfast Lough area of special scientific interest".

The area is of special scientific interest because of its fauna. It includes areas of intertidal mudflats, which when exposed are used as feeding grounds by wildfowl and waders, and when inundated are used by wildfowl.

It also includes lagoons and land, both reclaimed and being reclaimed, which are important roosting localities for wildfowl and waders, and the freshwater ponds of Victoria Park used both for feeding and roosting, primarily by waders.

Despite considerable alteration from the original ecosystem, largely as the result of land reclamation, the area of special scientific interest still retains significant numbers of migrant and over-wintering wildfowl and waders. The intertidal mudflats and roosting lagoons hold major concentrations of Redshank (Tringa totanus) and Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus), with numbers of each being in excess of 1% of the British Isles overwintering population. Of similar proportional significance are the offshore feeding population of Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula) and Scaup (Aythya marila) which feed in the area of special scientific interest at high tide. Several other species of wildfowl - including Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos), Teal (Anas crecca) and Wigeon (Anas penelope) and waders - eg Curlew (Numenius arquata), Dunlin (Calidris alpina), Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) and Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) are also found in large numbers throughout much of the area of special scientific interest.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the fauna of the area and require prior notification to and permission from the Department:-

- Changes in the mowing or cutting regime, or cessation of mowing.
- Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.
- Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter

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- Burning of vegetation or waste material.
- The killing or removal of any wild animal. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, with the exception of birds listed in Schedule II Part 2 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, rats, mice and rabbits. (This includes the removal of bait for fishing).
- The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains.
- Drainage, including the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.
- Modification of the structure of water courses (for example, rivers, ditches, drains), including their banks and beds such as by realignment, regrading or dredging.
- Management of aquatic or bank vegetation.
- The alteration of water levels or water tables or utilisation of water (including irrigation, storage or abstraction).
- Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
- The introduction of coastal fishing or fisheries management or sea food or marine life collection including the use of traps or fish cages.
- Reclamation of land from sea, estuary, marsh, lake or river.
- Erection of sea defences or coast protection works including landslip drainage or stabilisation measures.
- Extraction of minerals including shingle, sand, gravel or shells.
- Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches or other earthworks or the laying or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.
- Storage of materials.
- Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling.
- Alteration or modification of natural or man-made features, clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock or scree, battering, buttressing or grading of rock faces or cuttings.
- Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife.
- Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the wildlife.

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- Changes in game or waterfowl management or hunting practices.
- Exercising of animals in areas where they are likely to disturb or kill other animals or disturb the wildlife.



Sealed with the Official Seal of
the Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 17 November, 1987

J C L PHILLIPS
Assistant Secretary