



An Agency within the Department of the

Environment

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EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Citation for Special Protection Area (SPA)

Name: Outer Ards Special Protection Area

Unitary Authority/County: North Down Borough Council,
Ards Borough Council
County Down

Consultation proposal: Outer Ards Area of Special Scientific Interest has been selected for classification as a Special Protection Area because of its important breeding and wintering populations of waterfowl.

Site description: the Outer Ards site extends from Grey Point on the north Down coast, to Ballyquintin Point in the south. The site mainly encompasses the inter-tidal areas, but with some additional adjoining areas of notable habitat. It includes sand and mud dominated shores, cobble and boulder beaches together with rocky shores. Off shore islands are also present. Adjoining habitat includes areas of maritime grassland and heath. The principal interests are the breeding colony of Arctic Tern, together with the wintering populations of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Golden Plover, Turnstone and Ringed Plover. The boundary of the Special Protection Area site is entirely coincident with the Outer Ards Area of Special Scientific Interest together with the Ballymacormick Point Area of Special Scientific Interest. It also includes the open marine area as indicated on the map.

Size of SPA: The SPA covers an area of 1410.41 ha.

Qualifying species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting nationally important populations of the following species:

| Annex 1 species | Count and Season | Period | % population GB |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> | 207 pairs – breeding | 5 year mean (period not specified) | 4.7 % Irish population |
| Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> | 2109 individuals – wintering | 5 year peak mean for 1991/92 – 1995/96 | 1.1% all-Ireland population |

Bird figures from: WeBS database and Seabird 2000 census

The site also qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting internationally important populations of the following species:

| Species | Count and Season | Period | % of population |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> | 209 individuals – wintering | 5 year peak mean for 1991/92 – 1995/96 | 1.1% world population |
| Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | 516 individuals – wintering | 5 year peak mean for 1991/92 – 1995/96 | 1.2 % Eastern Atlantic Flyway population |
| Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | 1210 individuals – wintering | 5 year peak mean for 1991/92 – 1995/96 | 1.7 % Eastern Atlantic Flyway population |

Bird figures from: WeBS database

Non-qualifying species of interest

In addition, the site supports nationally important numbers of Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (5 year average of 221, 4.4 % of the Irish wintering population), Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (82, 2.7%) and Eider *Somateria mollissima* (475, 23.8 %) occur offshore. Wading species of significance are Curlew *Numenius arquata* (917, 1.1 %), Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (2239, 1.8 %), Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (5379, 2.2 %), Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* (1623, 3.3 %), Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* (78, 7.8 %) and Redshank *Tringa totanus* (904, 3.7 %).

Status of SPA

Outer Ards Special Protection Area was classified as a Special Protection Area on date (Day, Month, Year).