

PORTMORE LOUGH

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 Portmore Lough 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 1 and 2 of the attached Document B 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

Wintering Waterbirds

Portmore Lough ASSI is a wintering site for large numbers of migratory waterbirds. As part of the wider Lough Neagh system it supports populations of Little Grebe, Great crested Grebe, Great Cormorant, Whooper Swan, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye, Coot, Lapwing and Golden Plover that are significant in an all-Ireland context.

Swans, geese, ducks and waders are attracted by a rich food supply and secure roost sites. Wildfowl make use of both open water and surrounding open habitats, particularly wet grassland, for feeding. Aquatic vegetation and invertebrates are important food sources for many ducks while swans, geese and some ducks obtain a proportion of their food on land. Waders such as Lapwing and Golden Plover feed predominantly on worms, insects and other invertebrates in wet grasslands. The quality of feeding areas is, however, susceptible to the influence of operations undertaken both within and outside the ASSI that may result in pollution or changes in water quality or



An Agency within the Department of the
Environment

www.doeni.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**Environment &
Heritage Service**

www.ehsni.gov.uk

unacceptable levels of disturbance to feeding birds. It is therefore important that damaging practices are minimised around the ASSI.

Secure roost sites, free from disturbance, are essential to allow the birds to conserve energy when not feeding. Some of these roosts may lie outside the ASSI. Undisturbed roosts are particularly important during severe winter weather. Wildfowl usually roost on open water, while waders tend to use islands or isolated headlands. The variety of habitats present within the ASSI should be managed in order to safeguard the wintering waterbird population.

Specific objectives include:

Feeding habitats – it is important to maintain the quality and extent of the habitats used for feeding by the birds, in particular the open water and surrounding reedbed, fen and grassland, where present.

Disturbance around known roost sites and frequently used feeding areas should be minimised. Access by walkers, vehicles, boats and other persons or activities which may cause disturbance should be restricted, where possible.

Management principles applicable to all habitats throughout the site

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 the wetland habitats associated with the open waters of Portmore Lough, such as swamp, fen, wet grassland and wet woodland, through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats are very important for wildlife, in particular breeding birds and invertebrates.



E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer

Dated the 16TH of JANUARY 2008