

# **SHEEP ISLAND**

## **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 Sheep Island 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**

##### **Breeding Great Cormorant**

Sheep Island ASSI holds more than 5% of the all-Ireland breeding population of Great Cormorant. Breeding cormorants are highly social. They require undisturbed nest sites, secure from predators and close to abundant fish stocks. The Great Cormorant colony on Sheep Island is dependant on the island remaining free from human activity and predatory mammals during the nesting season and on the continuing abundance of local marine and freshwater fish resources. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the colony through appropriate management of the island environment.

Specific objectives include:

Management should aim to maintain the island in a condition that provides abundant nesting opportunities for Great Cormorants.

Human access to Sheep Island during the Cormorant breeding season should be restricted to the minimum required for monitoring of the colony. Landing on the island should be discouraged by appropriate signage.

The island should be checked regularly for the presence of potentially predatory mammals, especially rats. If these are found to be present, attempts should be made to eradicate them as soon as possible.

#### **GENERAL MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

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.



**E Diane Stevenson**  
Authorised Officer

Dated the 16<sup>th</sup> of *JANUARY* 2008