

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT SLIEVE BEAGH, COUNTIES TYRONE AND 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 and described on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Slieve Beagh Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its geology, physiography and peatland flora and fauna. In geological terms, the area lies within an ancient depositional syncline, extending through much of the Upper Palaeozoic. Physiographical interest is related to contemporary geomorphological processes within the peat mass. Biological interest is associated with the presence of the third largest intact expanse of upland peatland in Northern Ireland. The peatland complex includes a number of oligotrophic water bodies as well as a number of raised and soligenous bog units, all within an enveloping bog mantle. Together these support an array of associated plant and animal communities.

The stratigraphy includes a limited inlier of Upper Limestone - part of the Dartry Limestone Formation. These consist of D2, coral and brachiopod zone, series sediments, representing clear water marine shelf conditions. As the water became more shallow, a major phase of deltaic sedimentation resulted in the Slieve Beagh Formation of the Leitrim Group. These are mainly fine to coarse grained sandstones, notable at Shane Barnagh's Stables, with a high proportion of black shaly goniatite-bearing mudstones in the lower beds, outcropping south of Crockbane. These 580 m of Yoredale type rocks do not pre-date P1 or post-date P2 goniatite stages.

Contemporary geomorphological processes include limited piping, sinks and collapsed hollows in the peat and a number of substantial bog bursts.

The peatland exhibits a number of notable structural features, which include occasional well developed hummock and lawn complexes, a few small localised pool complexes, as well as soakways and flushes. The general vegetation is characterised by Sphagnum mosses, ericoid dwarf-shrubs and sedges, with the composition and abundance of these components dependent on local edaphic conditions, in particular the water table and relief.

Flat, water-logged ground is characterised by the presence of such species as Cross-leaved Heath Erica tetralix, Cranberry Vaccinium oxycoccus, Bog Asphodel Narthecium ossifragum and Common Cottongrass Eriophorum angustifolium, over a lush Sphagnum moss mat of predominantly S. papillosum with occasional S. magellanicum. On more freely draining slopes Heather Calluna vulgaris, Bilberry Vaccinium myrtillus, and Hare's-tail Cottongrass Eriophorum vaginatum are more typical, over a more mixed bryophyte mat. The presence of weak flushing of acidic water through the surface peat layer is indicated by the occurrence of scattered Purple Moor-grass Molinia caerulea or Sharp-flowered Rush Juncus acutiflorus. Where flushing is concentrated over thinner peats or on peaty gley soils, the vegetation is characterised by a small sedge community where Yellow-sedge Carex viridula, Carnation Sedge C. panicea and Star Sedge C. echinata predominate, while the presence of more mesotrophic water is indicated by the presence of Tawny Sedge C. hostiana, Dioecious Sedge C. dioica and Flea Sedge C. pulicaris.

The peatland flora includes a number of rare and unusual species including Cowberry Vaccinium vitis-idaea and the mosses Sphagnum fuscum and S. imbricatum.

Several upland, base-poor lakes occur within the complex. The most common type is characterised by the aquatic mosses Sphagnum cuspidatum, S. auriculatum, Drepanocladus spp. and the liverwort Jungermannia spp. The floating and marginal vegetation associated with these water bodies tends to be sparse and restricted, and consists of a scattered swamp and poor acid fen fringe.

The area supports a breeding population of Red Grouse Lagopus lagopus. In addition, it is regularly used throughout the year by Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria and Hen Harrier Circus cyaneus.

The upland lakes support a species-poor but notable upland insect fauna. The characteristic upland water beetle Agabus arcticus and the water bug Callicorixa wollastoni are common in the lakes and pools and the concentration of records of both species is the greatest recorded in Northern Ireland. Acidophile species and those typical of oligotrophic waters are also common, reflecting the prevailing conditions including Hydroporus gyllenhali, H. obscurus and Sigara scotti. The most notable species are found in the highest lake, Lough Sallagh, where the rare upland beetle Potamonectes griseostriatus and corixid Glaenocorisa propinqua are found. The natural acid flushes and the shallow pools associated with the many bog-bursts support a different suite of species including the local water beetles Agabus guttatus, Stictonectes lepidus and the corixid Sigara nigrolineata.

SCHEDULE

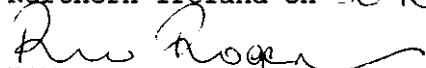
The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features of the area:-

1. Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating or re-seeding.
2. Increase in grazing intensity or change either in the type of livestock used or in feeding practices.
3. Introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.
4. Application of manure, slurry, fertiliser or lime.
5. Application of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill, selectively or non-selectively, any form of animal, plant or other living organism.
6. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any matter.
7. Burning.
8. The release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal, plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, but excludes livestock and animals used in controlling livestock.
9. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, or the disturbance, killing or removal of any wild animal

in a manner likely to affect the continued existence of the species within the area except as provided for under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

10. The introduction of tree or woodland management, including afforestation or planting.
11. Drainage, including peat drainage or the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains.
12. Modification of the structure of water courses, including their banks and beds as by realignment, regrading or dredging.
13. Management of aquatic and bank vegetation.
14. The alteration of water levels or water tables or the utilisation of water including storage or extraction, but excluding water used for domestic requirements.
15. Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or lakes.
16. Reclamation of land from bog, marsh, river or lake.
17. Extraction of minerals including peat, sand, gravel, topsoil or subsoil.
18. Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hard-standings, banks, ditches and other earth works or the laying or removal of pipelines or cables, above or below ground.
19. Storage of materials.
20. Use of craft or vehicles likely to damage the vegetation.
21. Erection of permanent or temporary structures or the undertaking of building, engineering or other operations, including drilling.
22. Recreational, education or research activities likely to damage the vegetation.
23. Changes in game management.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 30 November, 1994



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ASI94181/CWB

/AON

FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the above operations or activities does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. Operations or activities covered by planning permission are not normally covered in the list of Notifiable Operations.

- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed above are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.