

WHITE PARK BAY

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 White Park Bay 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 4-6 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

Geological and physiographical series

Earth science features provide information about a region's geological history and can also aid interpretation of geological processes in the past and present

The earth science interest at White Park Bay occurs as cliff exposures of Cretaceous age rocks and also as the beach, associated dunes and the offshore sediments within the adjoining bay. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of the ASSI and its Earth Science interest.

Provided no damaging activities, as set out in the Schedule (pages 4-6), are undertaken without consent, the needs of owners, occupiers and the Department can be met.



An Agency within the Department of the
Environment
www.doeri.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**Environment &
Heritage Service**
www.ehsni.gov.uk

Earth science features such as those at White Park Bay may require occasional management intervention, in order to maintain access to, and exposure of, the geology and to allow continued operation of the contemporary sedimentary processes on which the beach and dunes depend. This could include, for example, selective removal of vegetation or any major build up of debris or loose rock. Environment and Heritage Service would seek to maintain the coastline in as natural a state as possible. Sites such as White Park Bay are particularly susceptible to damage through extraction of sediment (sand, gravel or other grade material) from anywhere within the site or the offshore area and to any alteration of the coastline.

Specific objectives include:

Maintain the geological and physiographical series in an undamaged state.

Maintain access to the geological and physiographical series.

Sand dunes

Sand dunes are an important habitat for wildlife. They develop where sand is blown landwards from the beach and is deposited above the high water mark. A process of succession takes place as vegetation colonises the bare sand, creating a diverse range of communities, each with their own characteristic species. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the dunes through the conservation of all stages in the succession and their associated native plants and animals. The former includes plants of limited distribution within Northern Ireland and the latter includes important invertebrate communities.

Coastal processes are complex and the management of sand dunes should take into account the need to maintain or restore where necessary, the natural processes and dynamics of dune development and succession.

Many of the more sensitive sand dune species can be lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. Although sand dunes generally need some management to retain their interest, occasional patches of scrub and Bracken can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates. However in the absence of management, Bracken and coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species and helping to maintain open areas and a diverse sward structure. In the absence of grazing, other methods, such as cutting or mowing to create open areas and reduce the dominance of Bracken, coarse grasses and woody species, may be desirable.

Many of the vegetation types on sand dunes are fragile, and heavy disturbance can lead to loss of cover and soil erosion. However, where recreational and other pressures are not severe, the impact of activities such as light trampling can be beneficial. For example, tracks through dunes may open up areas where vegetation cover has become rank and provide small areas of bare sand, thus increasing the diversity of habitats available.

Specific objectives include:

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage low intensity grazing to conserve and enhance the features of interest. The effects of non-domestic grazing animals, such as rabbits, should also be taken into account as these can contribute greatly to the maintenance of a short, species-rich sward.

In general, the control of scrub and Bracken within sand dune communities can be achieved most effectively through the appropriate grazing regime. However, where there has been a prolonged absence of grazing, additional scrub and Bracken control may be required using mechanical cutting and/or the careful application of herbicides as agreed with Environment and Heritage Service.

Maintain the diversity and quality of the sand dunes by ensuring that there is no application of fertiliser, slurry or herbicide.

Management of amenity beaches can affect the early stages of dune formation by removing the strandline that helps to trap blown sand and to develop new dune ridges. Where appropriate, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage management practices which allow the development of a natural strandline.

Where recreational pressures are significant enough to result in the loss of vegetation cover and prevent recovery, Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the restoration of the vegetation through the sensitive management of access.

Maritime Cliff and Slopes

Maritime grasslands and heaths are important habitats for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the grassland and heathland through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. The former include plants of limited distribution within Northern Ireland and the latter include important invertebrate communities.

Many of the more sensitive species can be quickly lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. However, coastal habitats generally benefit from some management to retain their interest. Although occasional small patches of scrub can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates, in the absence of management, coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species, helping to maintain a diverse sward structure which continues to support species-rich grassland and heath. In the absence of grazing, cutting and removal of the vegetation to create open areas and reduce the dominance of coarse grasses is desirable.

Specific objectives include:

Low intensity grazing has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation of this practice where feasible. Where grazing is not feasible, other management practices such as cutting may be used.

Prevent the loss of more sensitive grassland species through the control of scrub, bracken and rushes. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases other methods of control, such as cutting, may be required.

Maintain the diversity and quality of the species-rich grassland by encouraging the maintenance of good water quality through the control of pollution and ensuring there is no application of fertiliser, slurry or herbicide to the site.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent the grasslands from drying out.

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 habitats associated with the main habitats, such as fen, scrub and woodland through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife, especially invertebrates and rare plants.



E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer

Dated the 16TH of JANUARY 2008