

**Wetlands designated, pursuant to Article 2(5) of the
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
especially as Waterfowl Habitat, by Ireland, to be included
in the list of Wetlands of International Importance,
established under the terms of the Convention**

The North Bull Island, Co. Dublin, and adjoining foreshore which will soon be afforded statutory protection under the Wildlife Act, 1976, and shown hatched in black on attached maps is hereby designated by Ireland for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance under Article 2(5) of the Convention. The North Bull Island is owned by Dublin Corporation and the surrounding foreshore is State-owned.

North Bull Island which comprises 118 hectares is of international scientific importance. The island is almost unique in Ireland in containing well developed salt-marsh and dune systems which display all stages of development from the earliest stages of colonisation to the mature, stable phases. Consequently there is a fine range of plant communities present ranging from the algal mudflats, to saltflats populated mostly by Glasswort Salicornia spp., through Sea Lavender Limonium spp. and Sea Aster Aster tripolium zones to a Sea Rush Juncus maritimus zone marking the upper limit of the HWM. In the dunes all stages from the embryo Sea Couch Elymus farctus colonised areas to a mature Marram Ammophila arenaria zone to dune grassland zones are present. This makes the island especially valuable from an educational viewpoint.

The dune system and beach is composed of sea/tide borne and wind blown sand particles, while the substrate of the salt-marsh and intertidal mudflats is composed mainly of very fine silt particles, probably originating from materials discharged into Dublin Bay by the Rivers Liffey, Tolka and Dodder. There are coarse gravels and stones in the Kilbarrack-Sutton area which are probably remnants of glacial till.

The island has populations of hares Lepus timidus hibernicus, rabbits Oryctolagus cuniculus, and a pale variant of the house

mouse Mus musculus. The field mouse Apodemus sylvaticus also occurs. The fox Vulpes vulpes makes occasional sorties to the island from the mainland, especially since the completion of the causeway.

About 200 bird species have been recorded on the North Bull Island, the most important of which are the wintering and passage waterfowl - Brent Geese Branta bernicla hrota, ducks and waders. The area is internationally important for Brent Geese, Knot Calidris canutus, Sanderling C. alba, Curlew Numenius arquata, and for its numbers of other waders, especially Dunlin C. alpina, Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica, Redshank Tringa totanus, Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus, Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola, etc. Large numbers of duck also occur, especially Shelduck Tadorna tadorna, Wigeon Anas penelope, Teal A. crecca, Pintail A. acuta and Shoveler A. clypeata. In 1987 80 pairs of Little Terns Sterna albifrons (nearly 1/3 of the Irish population) bred on the island.

In recognition of the great diversity of flora and fauna and its ecological richness the North Bull Island was recognised in 1981 as a U.N.E.S.C.O. Biosphere Reserve - one of only two in Ireland.

The Island is the habitat of certain species of birds included in Annex 1 of E.E.C. Council Directive 409/79 on the conservation of wild birds (Bird Directive) and as such is the subject of special conservation measures concerning its habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. Accordingly it was designated as a special protection area under Article 4 of that Directive in 1986.

In the same year, because of its international importance for Brent geese, it was designated a sister reserve by the Canadian Wildlife Service and linked with Polar Bear Pass, National Wildlife Area, Canada.