



Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 7 March 2023

Update version, previously published on : 11 June 1996

Ireland

Cummeen Strand



Designation date	7 June 1996
Site number	842
Coordinates	54°17'19"N 08°32'36"W
Area	1 491,00 ha

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

Cummeen Strand is a large shallow bay stretching from Sligo Town westwards to Coney Island. It is one of three estuarine bays within the larger Sligo Bay wetland complex and is situated between Drumcliff Bay to the north and Ballysadare Bay to the south. The Garavogue River flows into the bay and forms a permanent channel. At low tide, extensive sand and mud flats are exposed. These support a diverse macro-invertebrate fauna which provides the main food supply for the wintering waterbirds. Invertebrate species such as Lugworm (*Arenicola marina*), Ragworm (*Hediste diversicolor*), Cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*), Sand Mason (*Lanice conchilega*), Baltic Tellin (*Macoma balthica*), Spire Shell (*Hydrobia ulvae*) and Mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) are frequent. Of particular note is the presence of eelgrass (*Zostera noltii* and *Z. angustifolia*) beds, which provide a valuable food stock for herbivorous wildfowl. The estuarine and intertidal mud and sand flat habitats are of conservation significance and are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Areas of saltmarsh fringe the bay in places and provide roosting sites for birds during high tide. Sand dunes occur at Killaspug Point and Coney Island, with a shingle spit at Standalone Point near Sligo Town. Cummeen Strand is a designated Special Protection Area for birds. Drumcliff Bay to the north and Ballysadare Bay to the south are also designated Special Protection Areas. All three Bays are also protected as Special Areas of Conservation (Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay SAC and Ballysadare Bay SAC). The Sligo Bay Complex is important for wintering birds and for estuarine and coastal habitats.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Responsible compiler

Institution/agency	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Postal address	National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin, Ireland D07 N7CV

National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Institution/agency	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Postal address	National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin, Ireland D07 N7CV

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year

To year

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)

2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary Yes No

(Update) B. Changes to Site area No change to area

(Update) For secretariat only: This update is an extension

2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS? Not evaluated

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image

<3 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps

Boundaries description

The boundary of Cummeen Strand Ramsar site was delineated as the same boundary as the original Special Protection Area in 1995 (but the latter was subsequently enlarged). Cummeen Strand Ramsar site extends from Sligo Town west to Coney Island and includes the expansive intertidal mud and sandflat habitat in between. The Ramsar site lies within the slightly larger Cummeen Strand Special Protection Area (SPA) and within the much larger Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay Special Area of Conservation. Cummeen Strand is an important component of the Sligo Bay Complex which includes Drumcliff Bay SPA and Ballysadare Bay SPA, Ballysadare SAC and Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo) Bay SAC. Details of the SAC/SPA can be found on the NPWS website at: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>.

Within the Cummeen Strand Ramsar Site a number of GIS data layers were used to define the Ramsar habitats. These included:

- CORINE (Co-Ordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data sets (2012).
- Bing Maps Aerial - © Harris Corp, Earthstar Geographics LLC © 2017 Intermap Earthstar Geographics SIO © 2017 Microsoft Corporation.
- Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland Rivers and Lakes layers data layers.

Habitat areas were subsequently estimated by reference to the available imagery and layers and should be considered representative but approximate.

Discrepancies between the original boundary for the Ramsar site and the current boundary are likely as a result of mapping projection anomalies.

2.2.2 - General location

- a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?
- b) What is the nearest town or population centre?

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

- a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes No
- b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes No

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

- Official area, in hectares (ha):
- Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW)	Atlantic
EU biogeographic regionalization	Atlantic

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Hydrological services provided

The extensive intertidal and estuarine habitats of Cummeen Strand are important for storm protection (mitigation of flooding and coastal erosion). The habitats of Cummeen Strand and the communities (plant and invertebrate) which they support are important for nutrient cycling, carbon sequestration and sediment trapping. With the cycling of carbon and nutrients estuarine systems have a role in climate regulation. The estuary provides natural filtration services which are important for coastal water quality, however where input levels (e.g. chemicals, organic waste) are excessive the natural character of the estuary can be greatly affected. The freshwater, estuarine and coastal complex is important within the context of coastal dynamics with implications for erosion processes, storm and flood protection.

Other ecosystem services provided

Cummeen Strand is part of the wider Sligo Bay wetland complex. This complex of coastal and marine habitat supports a diversity of habitats and species. The intertidal, open water and coastal habitats provide important habitat for feeding, roosting and loafing waterbirds, especially during the winter months.

Other reasons

Cummeen Strand is important for shellfish cultivation, tourism and recreation. The site provides a location for scientific and educational study and research. Biological monitoring at this site informs local and national habitat and species conservation assessment and waterbird monitoring provides data on long term population trends.

Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information

Rare (high conservation concern) wintering bird species are defined as:
 Regularly occurring species (occurring in at least 3 out of 10 seasons of monitoring or 30% of seasons; based on I-Webs data from 2006/07 to 2015/16) and that are:
 - Red Listed in Ireland's national Red List (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI) published by Colhoun and Cummins (2013)
 - Classified as VU in IUCN Global and/or European regional list
 - Listed in Annex I of the European Union Birds Directive

Several species of high conservation concern at local, European and/or global level are part of the wintering waterbird assemblage at this site e.g. Wigeon, Great Northern and Red Throated Diver, Curlew, Redshank

Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

The assemblage of wintering birds including those of high (Red Listed in Ireland, Vulnerable in Europe and/or Globally) and medium (Amber Listed species in Ireland) conservation status contributes to biodiversity within the biogeographical region.

Criterion 4 : Support during critical life cycle stage or in adverse conditions

Optional text box to provide further information

The extensive intertidal habitats at this site remain ice free over the winter and provide a key feeding resource for important populations of staging and over wintering waterbirds. As well as providing a key foraging resource, the intertidal mud and sandflat habitats, together with saltmarsh, dune, and inshore waters provide important resting and roosting habitat for waterfowl and waders.

Criterion 6 : >1% waterbird population

Optional text box to provide further information

This site supports internationally important numbers of Light-bellied Brent Geese *Branta bernicla hrota*. There are eight populations of Brent Goose including three populations of the Light-bellied *hrota* subspecies. The Light-bellied Brent goose population that breeds in Canada's eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands, winters mostly in Ireland, with small numbers in Britain, France, the Channel Islands and Spain (Lewis et al, 2019).

Criterion 8 : Fish spawning grounds, etc.

Justification

River and Sea Lamprey are native to Ireland and have been recorded in the Garavogue River. To reach the Garavogue River the lamprey migrate through the Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour) Ramsar site. Both species are listed on Annex I species of the Habitats Directive and are Red Listed species in Ireland (King et al, 2011).

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Others																	
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II (Habitats Directive).	Annex II (Habitats Directive)
Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea																	
CHORDATA / CEPHALASPIDOMORPHI	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II (Habitats Directive) Red Listed Species in Ireland (Least Concern)	Annex II (Habitats Directive) and Red Listed in Ireland.
CHORDATA / CEPHALASPIDOMORPHI	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annex II (Habitats Directive). Red Listed Species in Ireland (Near Threatened)	Annex II (Habitats Directive) and Red Listed in Ireland.
Birds																	
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Anas crecca</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	62	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Anas penelope</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	85	2011-2015			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	National (BoCCI) classification, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	610	2011-2015	1.69		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Internationally important numbers of the <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> population of Brent Goose, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	National (BoCCI) classification, part of wintering assemblage

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion			Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7								
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	344	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	National (BoCCI) classification, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	206	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.	Annex I listing, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia immer</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013), and Vulnerable classification IUCN Europe region)	Annex I listing and IUCN classifications, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Annex I listing, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	792	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013), and Vulnerable classification IUCN Europe region)	IUCN classification, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	244	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Annex I (Birds Directive), Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Annex I listing, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	415	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013), and Vulnerable classification IUCN Europe region)	National (BoCCI) and IUCN classifications, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	283	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Annex I (Birds Directive), Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Annex I listing, and National (BoCCI) classification, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	36	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013), and Vulnerable classification IUCN Europe region)	IUCN classifications, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	93			LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	Part of wintering assemblage, maintaining biodiversity
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	326	2011-2015		LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013)	National (BoCCI) classification, part of wintering assemblage
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	198	2011-2015		NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-listed in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (Colhoun and Cummins 2013), and Vulnerable classification IUCN Europe region)	National (BoCCI) and IUCN classifications, part of wintering assemblage

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

Wintering bird species listed under 3.3 have been selected based on an assessment of Irish Wetland Bird Survey data from the period 2006/07 to 2015/16. Cummeen Strand is an SPA for birds, however not all species listed for the SPA may be listed under 3.3 (or vice versa) as the SPA designation is based on other data and criteria.

Cummeen Strand is a designated Special Protection Area due to the presence of the following species listed on Annex I of EU Birds Directive and/or regularly occurring migratory species: Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and Redshank (*Tringa totanus*). The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

The intertidal, estuarine and saltmarsh habitats of Cummeen Strand are part of the wider wetland complex of Sligo Bay which includes Ballysadare Bay and Drumcliff Bay.

The Garavogue River which flows from Lough Gill, flows into the estuary at the upper reaches of Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour). Sea and River Lamprey have been recorded in the Garavogue River. Both species spawn in freshwater rivers and migrate to estuarine and marine waters as adults. Both are native to Ireland and are Red Listed (King et al, 2011)

Cummeen Strand and the wider Sligo Bay complex is important for Harbour seal. Harbour Seals are listed under Annex II of the Habitats Directive and are strictly protected in the Republic of Ireland under the 1976 and 2000 Wildlife Act (Cronin et al, 2004).

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
[1130] Estuaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Annex I (EU Habitats Directive)
[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Annex I (EU Habitats Directive)

Optional text box to provide further information

The Annex I habitats: [2110] Embryonic Shifting Dunes, [2120] Marram Dunes (White Dunes), [2130] Fixed Dunes (Grey Dunes)* and [7220] Petrifying Springs* lie within the wider Sligo Bay wetland complex and are qualifying interest of the Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC. A number of marine community types are present within the wider Sligo Bay complex but are not present in Cummeen Strand. These include *Zostera*-dominated community, fine sand with crustaceans and *Scolecopsis squamata* community complex. While these habitat and community types are not within the Ramsar site boundary they are an integral part of the wider wetland complex.

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour) is a large shallow bay stretching from Sligo Town westwards to Coney Island. The site is located on the west coast of Ireland. It is estuarine at its upper reaches, where the Garavogue River enters the Bay at Sligo Town. The Bay is largely comprised of an extensive area of intertidal mud and sand flat with fringing saltmarsh in places. The Bay is largely sheltered from the Atlantic Ocean by Coney Island, and the smaller Oyster Island and Maguins Island, at its mouth. These islands provide shelter to the extensive intertidal habitats. The upper reaches of the Bay were modified (1800's) with the construction of a retaining wall which channels the Garavogue River and provides deep water access to the Port in Sligo Town. The Bay is an integral part of a wider wetland complex which includes bays to the north and south, nearby islands and coastal habitats. The Bay is also linked to freshwater habitats; the Garvogue River, which is connected to Lough Gill. The site provides feeding, roosting and loafing habitat for wintering waterbirds. The presence of eelgrass in the wider wetland complex is important and provides a key foraging resource for Light-Bellied Brent Geese which occur here in internationally important numbers. The site is also used by two native Lamprey fish species which spawn in the Garavogue River. Aquaculture is an important industry within the site and the wider wetland complex. Sligo Port (Harbour) lies in Sligo town and is the only working harbour between Galway and Derry. It has two working jetties and a pontoon for leisure craft. The site is important for recreation and supports the passage of boats to and from Sligo Harbour.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Marine or coastal wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
F: Estuarine waters	Estuary	2	260	Representative
G: Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats	Intertidal mud and sandflat	1	1160	Representative
H: Intertidal marshes	saltmarsh	3	70	Representative

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Position in range / endemism / other
TRACHEOPHYTALILIOPSIDA	<i>Zostera angustifolia</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTALILIOPSIDA	<i>Zostera noltii</i>	

Optional text box to provide further information

Eelgrass is present on the intertidal mud and sandflat habitats and is a key resource for foraging Light-bellied Brent Geese. The eelgrass beds lie within the wider wetland complex and are outside of the Ramsar site boundary.

The wider wetland complex within which the Cummeen Strand Ramsar site lies has a very rich and diverse flora, on account of the wide variety of habitats found, and the presence of both basic and acidic substrates. Several rare, Red Data Book species have been recorded from the site, including Rough Poppy (*Papaverhybridum*) (Critically Endangered and also listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2015), Hoary Whitlowgrass (*Draba incana*) (Vulnerable) and Yellow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) (Vulnerable).

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range / endemism / other
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Calidris alba</i>	93			Occurs in nationally important numbers
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	108			Occurs in nationally important numbers
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	32			Occurs in nationally important numbers
MOLLUSCA/GASTROPODA	<i>Vertigo angustior</i>				

Optional text box to provide further information

The rare Narrow mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* (Annex II Habitats Directive and IUCN Near Threatened) has recently been recorded from sand dunes at Killaspugbrone adjacent to the Ramsar site and part of the wider wetland complex. The site is important for a diversity of wintering waterbirds including Ringed Plover, Sanderling and Red Breasted Merganser.

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
C: Moist Mid-Latitude climate with mild winters	Cfb: Marine west coast (Mild with no dry season, warm summer)

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres)

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

- Entire river basin
- Upper part of river basin
- Middle part of river basin
- Lower part of river basin
- More than one river basin
- Not in river basin
- Coastal

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

The Garavogue River drains in this site at its eastern end. The site is located on the west coast of Ireland; the bay opens out to the Atlantic Ocean, though is sheltered by islands at its mouth.

4.4.3 - Soil

Mineral

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

No available information

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes No

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	No change

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from surface water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Marine water	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Marine	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime unknown

4.4.6 - Water pH

Alkaline (pH>7.4)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Unknown

4.4.7 - Water salinity

Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l)

(Update) Changes at RIS update No change Increase Decrease Unknown

Unknown

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

Unknown

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ii) significantly different

Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development

Surrounding area has higher human population density

Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

The eastern end of the bay is urbanised owing to the presence of Sligo Town. There are small towns and villages along this stretch of coastline, though Sligo Town would have the highest population density.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Erosion protection	Soil, sediment and nutrient retention	High
Pollution control and detoxification	Water purification/waste treatment or dilution	Low

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Water sports and activities	Medium
Scientific and educational	Educational activities and opportunities	Medium

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	High

Within the site:

Outside the site:

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes No Unknown

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland

ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples

iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland

<no data available>

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Other types of private/individual owner(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional):

All of the foreshore of Ireland is deemed owned by the State, unless a valid alternative title is provided. The foreshore of Ireland is classed as the land and seabed between the high water of ordinary or medium tides (shown HWM on Ordnance Survey maps) and the twelve-mile limit (12 nautical miles equals approximately 22.24 kilometers). Foreshore also covers tidal areas of rivers particularly estuaries (Housing.gov.ie).

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:

National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Sligo County Council.
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.
Marine Institute.

Provide the name and/or title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:

Maurice Eakin

Postal address:

National Parks and Wildlife Service,
90 North King Street,
Smithfield, Dublin,
Ireland
D07 N7CV

E-mail address:

maurice.eakin@housing.gov.ie

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Human settlements (non agricultural)

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Housing and urban areas	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change
Commercial and industrial areas	Low impact	Low impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Tourism and recreation areas	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Water regulation

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Dredging	Low impact	Low impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Agriculture and aquaculture

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Marine and freshwater aquaculture	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Energy production and mining

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Renewable energy	Low impact	Medium impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Transportation and service corridors

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Aircraft flight paths	Low impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Biological resource use

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Agricultural and forestry effluents	Low impact	Low impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Industrial and military effluents	Low impact	Low impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
Household sewage, urban waste water	Low impact	Low impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Climate change and severe weather

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Storms and flooding	Low impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

Regional (international) legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
EU Natura 2000	Cummeen Strand SPA 004035	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004035	whole
EU Natura 2000	Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC Site Details 000627	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000627	partly

Non-statutory designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Important Bird Area	Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour)	http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/cummeen-strand-(sligo-harbour)-iba-ireland	whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

- Ia Strict Nature Reserve
- Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
- II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
- III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
- IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
- V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
- VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Harvest controls/poaching enforcement	Implemented
Research	Implemented
Communication, education, and participation and awareness activities	Implemented
Fisheries management/regulation	Implemented

Other:

The Cummeen Ramsar site lies within the Cummeen Strand SPA (004035) and is part of the Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay SAC (000627). Under European and national legislation, Ireland must maintain at favourable conservation status areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites. Conservation objectives of this site have been set for the SAC and SPA. The broad objectives are listed below (further detail at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000627> and at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004035>). It should be noted that only the habitat types that occur within the Ramsar site are listed here, other habitat types occur within the SAC but these are outside of the Ramsar site boundary,

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected: estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140].
- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA; and Wetlands [A999].

Legislation in the Republic of Ireland affords protection to bird species outside of designated sites e.g. all wild bird species are afforded protection by The Wildlife Act 1976. Waterfowl shooting is under license only, managed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. Cummeen Strand is routinely surveyed as part of I-WeBS which provides comprehensive counts of the bird species using the site. The 1976 and 2000 Wildlife Act protects Harbour Seal.

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? No

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes No

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes No

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No need identified

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Water regime monitoring	Implemented
Water quality	Implemented
Birds	Implemented
Plant species	Implemented
Plant community	Implemented

A requirement of the Water Framework Directive is that benthic macro-invertebrates must be sampled from coastal and transitional waters at least twice within a river basin cycle (6 years) in order to classify these water bodies. Cummeen Strand is sampled and monitored under this programme.

A significant section of this site is a Special Area of Conservation. In this regard sampling and analysis of the marine Annex I habitats within the site are monitored and reported on under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive.

The site is monitored under the I-WEBS scheme.

The site is regularly inspected by the National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Rangers for the area.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

Cronin, M., Duck, C., Ó Cadhla, O., Nairn, R., Strong, D. & O' Keeffe, C. (2004). Harbour seal population assessment in the Republic of Ireland: August 2003. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 11. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin, Ireland.

Colhoun, K. and Cummins, S. 2013. Birds of conservation concern in Ireland 2014-2019. Irish Birds 9: 523-544

ICES (2002) Draft OSPAR List of threatened and declining species and habitats. Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Ecosystems 2002. p42-46 and Annex 1.

IUCN 2014. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2014.2. . Downloaded on August 2017.

King, J.L., Marnell, F., Kingston, N., Rosell, R., Boylan, P., Caffrey, J.M., FitzPatrick, Ú., Gargan, P.G., Kelly, F.L., O'Grady, M.F., Poole, R., Roche, W.K. & Cassidy, D. (2011) Ireland Red List No. 5: Amphibians, Reptiles & Freshwater Fish. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland.

Lewis, L. J., Burke, B., Fitzgerald, N., Tierney, T. D. & Kelly, S. 2019. Irish Wetland Bird Survey: Waterbird Status and Distribution 2009/10-2015/16. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 106. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland.

NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC 000627. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Cummeen Strand SPA 004035. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

BirdwatchIreland.ie
<http://www.ramsar.org>
<http://eunis.eea.europa.eu>< br> The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (IWeBS).

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)

<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)

<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory

<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports

<no file available>

v. site management plan

<no file available>

vi. other published literature

<no file available>

<no data available>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



Cummeen Strand (Michael Bell, 23-09-2021)



Cummeen Strand (Michael Bell, 23-09-2021)



Cummeen Strand (Michael Bell, 23-09-2021)



Cummeen Strand (Michael Bell, 23-09-2021)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation 1996-06-07