Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Ireland

45 Ramsar Site(s) covering 66,994 ha

**Baldoyle Bay**

Site number: 413  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Dublin
Area: 203 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°24'23"N 06°07'40"W  |  Designation dates: 25-10-1988

View Site details in RSIS

This estuarine system fed by two small rivers, the Mayne and the Sluice, is separated from the sea by a major sand dune peninsula. It is part of the Dublin Bay wetlands complex. In the inner estuary there are extensive beds of common cord-grass, while seawards vast mudflats are exposed at low tide. These characteristic habitats provide good quality feeding areas and roost sites for a wide range of birds such as the regionally threatened pale-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), which winters there, and the nationally threatened Eurasian oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*). The area surrounding Baldoyle Bay is densely populated, and most of the dunes sheltering the Site are now used as a golf course. The main threats to the Site include the disturbance to wildfowl by the high number of visitors, and the dumping of spoil onto the foreshore. Besides recreation and research, the Site is important for erosion protection and flood control.

**Ballyalla Lough**

Site number: 845  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Clare
Area: 308 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°52'59"N 08°55'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996

View Site details in RSIS

Ballyalla Lough. 11/06/96; 308 ha; 52°53'N 008°55'W. Wildfowl Sanctuary. Two small lakes set amongst heavily farmed land, with a low-lying floodplain of wet grassland and rough grazing. Vegetation consists of emergent plants, rushes, reeds, a fen-like community and a well-established hazel woodland. The site supports internationally and nationally important numbers of various species of waterbirds. Ramsar site no. 845.

**Ballycotton Bay**

Site number: 830  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: South West (NUTS 3)
Area: 92 ha  |  Coordinates: 51°50'33"N 08°00'58"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996

View Site details in RSIS

Ballycotton Bay comprises a stretch of coastline with shallow marine areas and two sheltered inlets which receive water from several small rivers. The main habitats are intertidal mudflats with fringing saltwater and freshwater marshes. These provide important roosting sites and foraging resources for waterbirds, notably wintering birds such as the common loon (*Gavia immer*) and the bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*). The Site is a well-known location for waders, especially during their autumn passage. The estuarine and coastal habitats are important for coastal erosion control and storm protection, and provide a natural filtration service which is important for coastal water quality. Human activities include livestock grazing. Monitoring is implemented, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Rangers regularly inspect the Site.
Ballymacoda
Site number: 831  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: South West (NUTS 3)
Area: 375 ha  |  Coordinates: 51°54'20"N 07°53'56"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

This estuary of intertidal sand and mud flats is sheltered by a stabilized shingle bar and an extensive sandy beach flanked by reclaimed marshy fields and saltmarshes. The abundance of macroinvertebrates in the intertidal flats provides an important feeding resource for waterbirds including Ireland's national bird, the northern lapwing (Vanellus vanellus). Internationally important numbers of waterbirds winter at the Site, including more than one percent of the regional population of the black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa). The estuary is important for storm protection and provides natural filtration services which are important for coastal water quality. The spread of the invasive common cordgrass (Spartina anglica) has negatively impacted the ecological character of the mudflats and saltmarshes.

Bannow Bay
Site number: 840  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Wexford
Area: 958 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°13'49"N 06°48'11"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Bannow Bay. 11/06/96; Wexford; 958 ha; 52°27'N 006°17'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. A sea bay with extensive mud and sand flats, saltmarsh, and sand dunes. The site supports an important range of wintering waterbird species, including Anas acuta, Calidris canutus, Pluvialis squatarola. It is a habitat for internationally important numbers (938) of Brent geese Branta bernicla hrota. Ramsar site no. 840.

Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven
Site number: 844  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Mayo
Area: 683 ha  |  Coordinates: 54°03'N 10°00'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven. 11/06/96; Mayo; 683 ha; 54°03'N 010°00'W. A composite of diverse marine and coastal habitats that includes vast dune systems and extensive areas of dune grassland with saltmarshes occurring in sheltered bays and inlets. The grasslands are of considerable botanical importance. The site also includes several brackish lakes important to various species of breeding waders, large numbers of wintering waterbirds of various species, and internationally important numbers of Brent geese. Ramsar site no. 844. Most recent RIS information: 1995.

Blackwater Estuary
Site number: 836  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Waterford
Area: 468 ha  |  Coordinates: 51°58'03"N 07°50'25"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

This Site comprises a section of the Blackwater River's main channel from Youghal New Bridge to the Ferry Point peninsula, close to where the River enters the sea. At low tide, intertidal sand and mud flats are exposed. These rare habitats support eel grass, worms and molluscs, all of which are important feeding resources for wintering waterbirds including endangered species such as the northern lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) and the great northern loon (Gavia immer). The Estuary is a passage for a range of nationally endangered migratory fish species such as the Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) and the European eel (Anguilla anguilla). A stable population of otters (Lutra lutra) can also be found. The Site is ideal for recreation, nature observation, scientific species monitoring and research. It is also important for coastal flood protection, shoreline stabilisation, and sediment and nutrient retention. One of the biggest threats is pollution through inflow of insufficiently treated sewage.
Castlemaine Harbour
Site number: 470  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: South West (NUTS 3)
Area: 2,973 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°07'37"N 09°51'50"W  |  Designation dates: 30-05-1990
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Castlemaine Harbour is an estuary of two rivers at the head of Dingle Bay, protected from the sea by extensive dunes. The complex of saltmarshes, mudflats and sandbanks provides habitats for various wintering waterbirds, including internationally important numbers of the pale-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* that feed on the Site's eelgrass beds. The sea lamprey, river lamprey and Atlantic salmon, all protected under the EU Habitats directive, rely on the Site as important spawning habitat; it also hosts European otter. Castlemaine Harbour is used extensively for oyster, mussel and clam aquaculture and holds the largest natural mussel bed in Ireland. It is also a popular recreational area. The biggest threats are erosion, eutrophication and invasive species. Human activities such as digging for bait on the mudflats, horseback riding and dog walking disturb feeding and roosting birds. In 1999 the boundary of the Site was extended to match the Special Protection Area designated in 1994.

Clara Bog
Site number: 415  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Midlands Region (NUTS 3)
Area: 460 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°19'18"N 07°37'45"W  |  Designation dates: 06-12-1988
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

One of the largest remaining examples in Ireland of a “midland” raised bog. The Site comprises hummocks, hollows, pools and sphagnum lawns. The bog is unique in the degree of its development and variety of “soak systems” – mineral-rich pools and small lakes that are fed from groundwater as well as rain, and support alkaline plant life. The Site also supports bog woodland species, rare butterflies, a rare click beetle and a rare moss. It is a breeding site for the merlin (*Falco columbarius*) and a habitat for the European otter (*Lutra lutra*), both species protected under the EU Habitats Directive. Clara Bog has been subject to detailed hydrological and ecological studies and is one of the best studied bogs in Europe. It is part of the EU Life raised bog restoration project “The Living Bog”. There is a visitor centre with a boardwalk and education services. Numerous other raised bogs occur in the surrounding areas, though most of these have been subjected to extensive cutting of peat and drainage, and thus are no longer considered to be active.

Coole Lough & Garryland Wood
Site number: 473  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Galway
Area: 364 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°04'59"N 08°51'W  |  Designation dates: 30-05-1990
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Coole Lough & Garryland Wood. 30/05/90; Galway; 364 ha; 53°05'N 008°51'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. Part of a low-lying karstic limestone area characterized by a subterranean drainage system and seasonal lakes, known as turloughs, set in a matrix of woodland, limestone heath and grassland. The site and adjacent nutrient-poor lakes are the most important turlough complex in Ireland. Many rare species of flora and fauna and communities associated with the turlough to woodland transition are supported. Water levels fluctuate widely. The lakes are fringed by aquatic vegetation grading into grassland, tall grass and herb communities and, beyond the level of summer flooding, into scrub and high forest. Ramsar site no. 473.
Cork Harbour
Site number: 837  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: South West (NUTS 3)
Area: 1,436 ha  |  Coordinates: 51°52'36"N 08°16'47"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Cork Harbour is part of a sheltered bay system with several river estuaries. The Site consists of four separated intertidal mud and sand flats. The tidal regime is complex, as the mudflats flood and empty rapidly rather than following a normal twelve-hour tidal cycle. These habitats regularly support 20,000 wintering waterbirds, making it one of the top five waterbird sites in Ireland. More than one percent of the regional population of black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa) can be found. The Site provides feeding and roosting habitat for the vulnerable common pochard (Aythya ferina) and horned grebe (Podiceps auritus). Pollution is one of the biggest threats: Cork Harbour is an important seaport and the headquarters of the Irish Navy; while pharmaceutical, electrochemical and petrochemical industries are established on the foreshore, making it the most heavily industrialized estuary in Ireland. Plans are underway to enhance sewage facilities in the lower part of the Harbour to improve water quality.

Cummeen Strand
Site number: 842  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Sligo
Area: 1,491 ha  |  Coordinates: 54°16'59"N 08°30'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Cummeen Strand. 11/06/96; Sligo; 1,491 ha; 54°17'N 008°30'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. An estuarine arm of Sligo bay, made famous by poet W. B. Yeats, with mudflats and sandflats. Important arrival point for Brent geese Branta bernicla and also has internationally important numbers of Charadrius hiaticula. Ramsar site no. 842.

Dundalk Bay
Site number: 834  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Border Region (NUTS 3)
Area: 4,768 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°57'14"N 06°20'07"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

A characteristic example of a marine and coastal wetland, this open sea bay includes sand and shingle shores, extensive saltmarshes, eelgrass beds, intertidal sand and mud flats encompassing the estuaries of the rivers. The intertidal flats support a rich fauna of bivalve molluscs, marine worms and crustaceans. These are the main food source for tens of thousands of birds, predominantly waders, gulls and waterfowl: the Site regularly hosts more than 50,000 wintering waterbirds, the largest concentration on Ireland's east coast. The saltmarshes provide important habitat for waterbirds to build high-tide roosts. The Site supports more than one percent of the Northwest European/East Atlantic Flyway populations of the protected black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa). The Site is important for erosion protection and flood control and a popular area for recreation. Dredging for cockles (Cerastoderma edule) poses a threat, especially to benthic habitats.

Dungarvan Harbour
Site number: 839  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Waterford
Area: 1,041 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°03'N 07°34'59"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Dungarvan Harbour. 11/06/96; 1,041 ha; 52°03’N 007°35’W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. A coastal bay sheltered by a spit, exposing extensive mud and sand flats at low tide. The site includes beach and dune systems, salt and freshwater marsh. Internationally important numbers of wintering waterbirds use the site and nationally or locally important numbers of numerous other species are supported. The sand flats support extensive oyster farming. Ramsar site no. 839.
Easky Bog
Site number: 471 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Sligo
Area: 607 ha | Coordinates: 54°11'19"N 08°48'46"W | Designation dates: 30-05-1990
View Site details in RSIS

This Site forms the headwaters of the Cowagh River and consists of a plateau covered with highland blanket bogs, and the steep slopes of the Ox Mountains, covered by peatland. The diversity of habitats is high, with it being one of the few places in Ireland where lowland and mountain blanket bogs are juxtaposed. These bogs are important for regulation of water quality and river flow and provide habitat for the Greenland greater white-fronted goose (Anser albifrons) and the European golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria). The Owenduff and Lugnavreaghoge Rivers form a border between the Site and conifer plantations.

Gearagh, The
Site number: 472 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Cork
Area: 307 ha | Coordinates: 51°52'N 09°01'W | Designation dates: 30-05-1990
View Site details in RSIS

Gearagh, The. 30/05/90; Cork; 307 ha; 51°52'N 009°01'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. The site contains the best example in Ireland of an alluvial forest ecosystem. The area is characterized by numerous wooded islands, separated by a network of stream channels. Vegetation includes rich growths of submerged aquatic plants and alluvial grasslands supporting a nationally important wintering flock of Cygnus cygnus. Ramsar site no. 472.

Inner Galway Bay
Site number: 838 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Galway
Area: 11,905 ha | Coordinates: 53°12'N 09°10'W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Inner Galway Bay. 11/06/96; 11,905 ha; 53°12'N 009°10'W. The shallow sheltered part of a large sea bay with numerous intertidal inlets and small low islands composed of glacial deposits. The area provides important habitat for marine life along Ireland's west coast. The site supports the richest seaweed flora on the Irish Coast (500+ species) and 65% of the Irish marine algal flora occur in the area. The site supports internationally and nationally important numbers of numerous species of waterbirds. There is a large cormorant colony on Teer Island. Human activities include aquaculture. Ramsar site no. 838. Most recent RIS information: 1995.

Killala Bay/Moy Estuary
Site number: 843 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Mayo, Sligo
Area: 1,061 ha | Coordinates: 54°15'N 09°10'W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Killala Bay/Moy Estuary. 11/06/96; Mayo, Sligo; 1,061 ha; 54°15'N 009°10'W. An estuary and intertidal bay separated from the sea by a long sandy island. The site includes a well-developed dune system, saltmarsh, sand and shingle beaches backed by sea-cliffs, and extensive sand and mudflats exposed at low tide. The dunes support a rich and diverse flora that includes several rare or threatened plants. The intertidal flats provide important feeding sites for birds. Brent geese overwinter in the bay in internationally important numbers, and regionally or locally important numbers of several species of waterbirds use the site. Human activities include beach activities, salmon fishing and livestock grazing. There is a golf course situated on the dune complex. Ramsar site no. 843.
Knockmoyle/Sheskin
Site number: 372 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Mayo
Area: 1,198 ha | Coordinates: 54°10'46"N 09°33'11"W | Designation dates: 01-06-1987
View Site details in RSIS

The Site is part of an extensive area of lowland blanket bog with a remarkably dense network of pools and small acidic lakes. The peat is relatively dry between the water bodies and has a well-developed cover, and the Site is rich in flora owing to an absence of burning and grazing. Boreal relict mosses, liverworts and the rare marsh saxifrage (Saxifraga hirculus) are characteristic. Willow ptarmigan (Lagopus lagopus) depend on the Site's heather for feeding, while the golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria) benefits from the open blanket bogs with pool systems as feeding grounds. Habitat loss in the surrounding area, drainage and the hydrological changes associated with activities such as afforestation and peat extraction affect the condition of the blanket bog and its ability to retain water. The boundaries of the Site were defined using the boundaries of the Knockmoyle/Sheskin Nature Reserve which was designated in 1986 and enlarged in 1990.

Lough Barra Bog
Site number: 373 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Donegal
Area: 176 ha | Coordinates: 54°56'47"N 08°06'43"W | Designation dates: 01-06-1987
View Site details in RSIS

This Site, adjacent to the Meenachullion Bog (Site no.475), is part of the most extensive and intact area of lowland blanket bog in north west Ireland. It includes numerous small pool complexes, heath, grassland, river and lake habitats. It is an important breeding ground for the golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria) and for foraging merlin (Falco columbarius). The European otter (Lutra lutra) is also found. The bog is important for carbon storage, regulation of stream flow and water quality. The invasive Rhododendron ponticum is a threat to the Site, which is monitored by the National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Rangers.

Lough Corrib
Site number: 846 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Galway
Area: 17,728 ha | Coordinates: 53°30'N 09°15'W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Corrib. 11/06/96; 17,728 ha; 53°30'N 009°15'W. The second largest lake in Ireland supports one of the largest areas of wetland vegetation consisting of reed, sedge and rush communities in the country. Other habitats include Sessile Oak (Quercus petraea) woodland, calcareous fen, callows grassland, marsh and raised bog with a soak system. The site provides important feeding grounds for waterbirds and supports internationally important numbers of several breeding and wintering waterbirds and nationally important numbers of numerous other waterbird species. The site supports the otter and numerous rare and threatened plant and fish species. Human activities include fishing and hunting. Ramsar site no. 846.

Lough Derravaragh
Site number: 847 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Wastmeath
Area: 1,120 ha | Coordinates: 53°40'N 07°19'59"W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Derravaragh. 11/06/96; West Meath; 1,120 ha; 53°40'N 007°20'W. A raised or cutaway bog with a shallow, alkaline lake and extensive reedbeds and swamps. Vegetation includes various aquatic plants dominated by reeds and sedges, several of which have a restricted distribution in Ireland, and deciduous woodland composed of native species. The site supports nationally important numbers of several species of waterbirds and provides valuable habitat for otter. Human activities include fishing, hunting, canoeing and water sports. Ramsar site no. 847.
Lough Ennell
Site number: 848 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Westmeath
Area: 1,404 ha | Coordinates: 53°27'N 07°22'59"W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Ennell. 11/06/96; West Meath; 1,404 ha; 53°27'N 007°23'W. A large, steep-sided lake fringed by calcareous grassland, wet marshy areas, reedbeds and mixed woodland. The site is of significance as a highly productive lake rich in its range of lower plants and invertebrate species. Its lakeshore habitats provide important refuges for waterbirds, as well as supporting rare or endemic flora. Ramsar site no. 848.

Lough Gara
Site number: 852 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Sligo, Roscommon
Area: 1,742 ha | Coordinates: 53°56'N 008°25'W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Gara. 11/06/96; Sligo, Roscommon; 1,742 ha; 53°56'N 008°25'W. The site includes a shallow limestone lake fed by two rivers, low-lying islands, peatland and raised bog. Vegetation consists of extensive reed and sedge swamps, scrub, and small stands of birch (Betula pubescens) woodland. Internationally important numbers of Greenland White-fronted geese overwinter at the site and several other species of waterbirds can be found. Ramsar site no. 852.

Lough Glen
Site number: 849 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Westmeath
Area: 81 ha | Coordinates: 53°25'N 07°22'59"W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Glen. 11/06/96; West Meath; 81 ha; 53°25'N 007°23'W. A lake dominated by freshwater marsh and including reedswamp, wet and dry grassland vegetation, cutaway bog colonized by heath vegetation, scrub, wet willow woodland, exposed rock and fen. The site supports large numbers of Dabbling ducks and internationally significant numbers of Whooper swan. Ramsar site no. 849.

Lough Iron
Site number: 850 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Westmeath
Area: 182 ha | Coordinates: 53°37'N 07°16'59"W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Iron. 11/06/96; West Meath; 182 ha; 53°37'N 007°17'W. The site, a long narrow lake with fringing marsh and woodlands surrounded by intensively farmed agricultural land, is one of the most important waterbird sites in the midlands. In addition to supporting large numbers of snipe and duck, there are internationally important numbers of Greenland White-fronted geese and Whooper swans wintering at the site that feed on the surrounding farmland. The marsh areas support numerous rare plant species. Ramsar site no. 850.

Lough Oughter
Site number: 853 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Cavan
Area: 1,464 ha | Coordinates: 54°02'N 007°25'W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Oughter. 11/06/96; 1,464 ha; 54°02'N 007°25'W. Set in a lowland drumlin, the site is a complicated system including 70 interdrumlin lakes and numerous basins along the Erne River. The site includes open water, adjacent floodplain and drumlin slopes on islands, and isolated headlands. Vegetation includes well-developed swamp and marsh communities and deciduous woodland. Regularly flooded areas support various rare and specialist plant species. Substantial populations of waterbirds, including internationally important numbers of Whooper swan and nationally important numbers of tufted duck and cormorant, are supported. The wintering Whooper swan population represents 3% of the total European population. Ramsar site no. 853.
Lough Owel
Site number: 851 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Westmeath
Area: 1,032 ha | Coordinates: 53°34'59"N 07°22'59"W | Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Lough Owel. 11/06/96; West Meath; 1,032 ha; 53°35'N 007°23'W. One of the best examples of a large, spring-fed calcareous lake in Ireland. The lake and fringing wetlands support an outstanding array of rare plant species as well as bird and fish populations of considerable interest. Adjacent farmland are feeding grounds for internationally important numbers of the Greenland White-fronted goose. Human activities include intense fishing pressure and boating. Ramsar site no. 851.

Meenachullion Bog
Site number: 475 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Donegal
Area: 194 ha | Coordinates: 54°54'N 08°07'W | Designation dates: 30-05-1990
View Site details in RSIS

Meenachullion Bog. 30/05/90; Donegal; 194 ha; 54°54'N 008°07'W. Nature Reserve. An area of lowland blanket bog and part of the headwaters of a major tributary of the Gweebarra River. The blanket bog grades into wet grassy heath and includes fenland and several small pool and lake complexes. Various breeding birds use the site and a small flock of the globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris occurs in winter. Ramsar site no. 475.

Mongan Bog
Site number: 416 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Offaly
Area: 127 ha | Coordinates: 53°19'N 07°58'W | Designation dates: 06-12-1988
View Site details in RSIS

Mongan Bog. 06/12/88; Offaly; 127 ha; 53°19'N 007°58'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. An excellent example of a Midland raised bog with several special features. The central part is unusually wet and has a particularly pronounced pattern of hummocks, pools and lawns, suggesting that this area is still growing. The bog supports various rare plants or plants with a limited distribution in Ireland. The site is internationally important for wintering the globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris. Ramsar site no. 416.

North Bull Island
Site number: 406 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Dublin
Area: 1,436 ha | Coordinates: 53°22'N 06°07'59"W | Designation dates: 06-09-1988
View Site details in RSIS

North Bull Island. 06/09/88; Dublin; 1,436 ha; 53°22'N 006°08'W. Biosphere Reserve; Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. A small island built up over 200 years against a harbour wall and the adjoining foreshore of sandy beaches, saltmarshes and mudflats. The site is unique in Ireland because it supports well-developed saltmarsh and dune systems displaying all stages of development from the earliest phase of colonization to full maturity. The site supports five protected or threatened plant species and nationally important populations of three insect species. The area is important for nesting Sterna albifrons (80 pairs, or about 30% of the Irish population) and for numerous species of wintering waterbirds. Human activities include bait digging. Ramsar site no. 406.

Owenboy
Site number: 371 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Mayo
Area: 397 ha | Coordinates: 54°06'N 09°28'W | Designation dates: 01-06-1987
View Site details in RSIS

Owenboy. 01/06/87; Mayo; 397 ha; 54°06'N 009°28'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. Part of an extensive area of undulating lowland blanket bog consisting of domes, pool complexes, flushes, spring-fed fens, swallowholes and subterranean and surface streams. Vegetation includes Sphagnum species and many species of sedges and mosses. The wetter domes and flushes are a feeding site for the wintering globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris. Ramsar site no. 371.
Owenduff catchment
Site number: 336 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Mayo
Area: 1,382 ha | Coordinates: 54°03'N 09°40'W | Designation dates: 31-07-1986
View Site details in RSIS

Owenduff catchment. 31/07/86; Mayo; 1,382 ha; 54°03'N 009°40'W. Part of the most extensive remaining blanket bog complex in Ireland, the site includes lowland and mountain blanket bog, wet heath and cliffs in the surrounding lowlands. There are several mountain valley lakes and rock basin lakes with many pool complexes. Unimproved grassland and numerous wetland vegetation types occur along watercourses. The site supports a small wintering flock of the globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris and a nesting population of Pluvialis apricaria. Ramsar site no. 336.

Pettigo Plateau
Site number: 334 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Donegal
Area: 900 ha | Coordinates: 54°37'N 07°57'W | Designation dates: 31-07-1986
View Site details in RSIS

Pettigo Plateau. 31/07/86; Donegal; 900 ha; 54°37'N 007°57'W. Council of Europe Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. An excellent example of highland blanket bog, a nationally rare bog type, covering low hills and broad basins and containing numerous nutrient poor and acidic lakes and pools. The site is a traditional feeding and roosting site for a wintering flock of the globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris and a breeding site for Pluvialis apricaria. Summer sheep grazing is controlled. Ramsar site no. 334.

Pollardstown Fen
Site number: 474 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Kildare
Area: 130 ha | Coordinates: 53°10'59"N 06°51'W | Designation dates: 30-05-1990
View Site details in RSIS

Pollardstown Fen. 30/05/90; Kildare; 130 ha; 53°11'N 006°51'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. The largest remaining spring-fed fen in Ireland. Habitats include semi-natural fen, damp grassland, woodland, and open water. The open water attracts waterbirds in regionally important numbers. The fen supports an important assemblage of invertebrate fauna and contains a complete palaeoecological record dating back to the last glaciation. Interpretive material and an observation hide are available. Ramsar site no. 474.

Raheenmore Bog
Site number: 417 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Offaly
Area: 162 ha | Coordinates: 53°19'59"N 07°21'W | Designation dates: 06-12-1988
View Site details in RSIS

Raheenmore Bog. 06/12/88; Offaly; 162 ha; 53°20'N 007°21'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. This classic example of a Midland raised bog developed in a small basin on the catchment divide between two major river systems. The peat, 15m in places, makes it the deepest known raised bog in Ireland. Vegetation is typical, with a good cover of Sphagnum mosses, but the formerly extensive hummock and hollow system is reduced due to conversion to agricultural land. Ramsar site no. 417.
Raven, The
Site number: 333  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Wexford
Area: 589 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°19'59"N 06°19'W  |  Designation dates: 31-07-1986
View Site details in RSIS

Raven, The. 31/07/86; Wexford; 589 ha; 52°20'00"N 006°19'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. A sand-dune spit protecting Wexford Harbour from the sea. The tip is highly mobile, with constantly changing patterns of recurves, lagoons and sand bars. The unforested foredunes support a well-developed native vegetation, including various nationally rare species. The site provides important roosting sites for passage terns and supports a small nesting colony of the tern Sterna albifrons. Internationally important numbers of the globally vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris winter at the site and large numbers of waders roost at high tide. The site is managed for timber. Ramsar site no. 333.

Rogerstown Estuary
Site number: 412  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Dublin
Area: 195 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°30'00"N 006°08'W  |  Designation dates: 25-10-1988
View Site details in RSIS

Rogerstown Estuary. 25/10/88; Dublin; 195 ha; 53°30'N 006°08'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. A small tidal embayment sheltered from the sea by a broad sand and shingle spit. Extensive areas of mud, sand and gravel are exposed at low tide. The mudflats support beds of green algae (Enteromorpha) and Spartina anglica. Numerous species of large numbers of wintering waterbirds use the tidal flats and the site is internationally important for Branta bernicla hrota. Human activities include bait-digging and shellfish collection. Ramsar site no. 412.

Sandymount Strand/Tolka Estuary
Site number: 832  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Dublin
Area: 654 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°19'59"N 006°12'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Sandymount Strand/Tolka Estuary. 11/06/96; 654 ha; 53°20'00"N 006°12'W. Special Protection Area under EC Directive. An intertidal system supporting a large bed of eelgrass (Zostera noltii) with extensive areas of sandflats. The site is important for various species of waterbirds, supporting internationally important numbers of Brent Geese and large numbers of roosting gulls and terns. Various species of annalids, bivalves and small gastropods occur. Bait-digging is a regular activity on the sandy flats. Ramsar site no. 832. Most recent RIS information: 1996.

Slieve Bloom Mountains
Site number: 335  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Offaly, Laois
Area: 2,230 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°03'00"N 007°37'59"W  |  Designation dates: 31-07-1986
View Site details in RSIS

Slieve Bloom Mountains. 31/07/86; Offaly, Laois; 2,230 ha; 53°03'N 007°38'W. Biogenetic Reserve; Nature Reserve. The largest and most intact area of mountain blanket bog known in Ireland. Features include areas of well-developed hummock, hollow and pool systems. Vegetation consists of a dwarf shrub and herb layer and extensive cover of Sphagnum moss. An absence of rock outcrops limits species and habitat diversity, except in valleys where seepage areas and streams provide increased nutrients. Ramsar site no. 335.
The Broadmeadow Estuary
Site number: 833  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Dublin
Area: 546 ha  |  Coordinates: 53°27'46"N 06°09'41"W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

This estuary is cut off from the sea by a large sand spit and includes saltmarshes, salt meadows, rocky shores, a well-developed dune ridge and sand mudflats. There are beds of blue mussels and eelgrass and extensive mats of green algae. A railway viaduct built in the 19th century crosses right through the Site, influencing the tidal regime as the estuary does not fully empty at low tide but remains as a permanent lagoon. The estuary is an important wintering site for numerous species of waterbird including the globally threatened common loon (Gavia immer). The Site supports more than one percent of the flyway population of the light-bellied brent goose (Branta bernicla hrota). It regulates water quality and flooding and mitigates the effects of storms. The inner part of the estuary is used for water sports. A section of the outer estuary has been infilled for a marina and housing development and the invasive ascidian (Didemnum vexillum) which is known to occur at the marina could pose a threat to several habitats. Monitoring is implemented and National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Rangers regularly inspect the Site.

Tralee Bay
Site number: 440  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Kerry
Area: 861 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°16'N 09°48'W  |  Designation dates: 10-07-1989
View Site details in RSIS

Tralee Bay. 10/07/89; Kerry; 861 ha; 52°16'N 009°48'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. A shallow embayment fringed by sandy beaches and protected from the sea by a rocky promontory and sand spits. The site includes a compound spit of a series of pebble beaches and sand dunes and extensive saltmarsh and mudflats. This complex of habitats is of considerable geomorphological and botanical interest. The mudflats support one of the four largest areas of Zostera (Z. noltii and Z. angustifolia) in Ireland. In winter the reserve supports internationally important numbers of the goose Branta bernicola hrota and various other waterbirds. Ramsar site no. 440.

Tramore Backstrand
Site number: 835  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Waterford
Area: 367 ha  |  Coordinates: 52°10'N 07°07'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Tramore Backstrand. 11/06/96; Waterford; 367 ha; 52°10'N 007°07'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. A shingle spit across a shallow bay with well-developed dunes and back strands that dry out at low tide. All major vegetation types are found from strand flora, through mobile dunes to stable grassland and saltmarsh. The flora is particularly rich, consisting of various protected species. The site supports nationally and internationally important numbers of shorebirds. Human activities include cockle collection. Ramsar site no. 835.

Trawbreaga Bay
Site number: 841  |  Country: Ireland  |  Administrative region: Donegal
Area: 1,003 ha  |  Coordinates: 55°16'59"N 07°15'W  |  Designation dates: 07-06-1996
View Site details in RSIS

Trawbreaga Bay. 11/06/96; Donegal; 1,003 ha; 55°17'N 007°15'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. A sheltered sea bay with no large rivers entering it. The sandy mud supports relatively small numbers of birds but there is a large variety in species including (518) Barnacle geese Branta leucopsis, (210) Brent geese B. bernicola hrota, and Charadrius hiaticula. Ramsar site no. 841.
Wexford Wildfowl Reserve
Site number: 291 | Country: Ireland | Administrative region: Wexford
Area: 194 ha | Coordinates: 52°30'N 06°19'59"W | Designation dates: 15-11-1984
View Site details in RSIS

Wexford Wildfowl Reserve. 15/11/84; Wexford; 194 ha; 52°30'N 006°20'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. Low-lying areas of empoldered farmland dissected by numerous drainage ditches created by draining an estuarine embayment. Water levels are controlled for irrigation and flood prevention. The site forms part of the world's most important wintering site for the vulnerable goose Anser albifrons flavirostris (world population about 30,000), which nests in Greenland, stages in Iceland and winters in Ireland and the UK. The average count of A. a. flavirostris wintering at the site is 32% of the world population. Several other passage and wintering waterbirds use the site. Ramsar site no. 291.