SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DUNMORE EAST CLIFFS

SITE CODE: 000664

Sandstone cliffs surround Dunmore East harbour in Co. Waterford rising to 20-30m in places. There are cliffs including an offshore stack at the Black Knob below the Port Authority building, another shorter section about the waterside road in the harbour and a further series below the Park and Kelly's Rocks.

The cliffs have a limited vegetation cover with typical lichens (*Xanthoria* spp., *Ramalina* spp.) on the rock surfaces and plants such as Rock Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia rupicola*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*) and Thrift (*Armeria maritima*) where they can get a foothold. These run into Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) as the ground levels out. Where the cliff top soil has been disturbed Sea Mayweed (*Tripleurospermum maritimum*) and oraches (*Atriplex hastata, A. littoralis*) enter the community. The latter is scarce everywhere on the south coast and this is one of its only stations in Waterford. North of the harbour the cliffs are more sheltered and Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Hemp-agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Wild Madder (*Rubia peregrina*) and Tree-mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) grow in places.

All these cliffs are listed because they are the nesting colony of a large population of Kittiwake. There are between 1000-2000 nests grouped closely on vertical parts of the cliffs and this (in 1970) formed 5% of the Irish total. In 1983/84 there was an average of 1200 pairs present. The colony is very accessible and the birds are accustomed to people and boats in close proximity. This has made research easy to carry out and annual counts of the nests have shown that their breeding numbers fluctuate in line with the herring catch brought in to the port.

11.11.2009