SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SMERWICK HARBOUR SANDHILLS AND MARSHES

SITE CODE: 001958

This site is situated on the west side of Brandon Mountain on the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry, between the villages of Murreagh, Ballyferriter and Gortadoo on the southern shores of Smerwick Harbour.

The site comprises a complex of fixed sand dune plain and dune slacks, fringed by young sand dunes on the seaward side and a series of freshwater marshes on the landward side.

Many vascular plant species and hybrids that are rare on the Dingle Peninsula have been recorded from within the site. The fixed dune plain and dune slacks have Frog Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), Hybrid Ragwort (*Senecio* x *ostenfeldii*), Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), Rayless Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea* var. *flosculosus*) and Squinancywort (*Asperula cynanchica*), while on the young sand dunes Frosted Orache (*Atriplex laciniata*), Pink Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata*) and Ray's Knotgrass (*Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii*) occur. Bladderwort (*Utricularia australis*), Blunt-flowered Rush (*Juncus subnodulosus*), Lesser Pondweed (*Potamogeton pusillus*), Lesser Water-parsnip (*Berula erecta*), Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*), Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*), Small Pondweed (*Potamogeton berchtoldii*) and Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*) occur in the areas of freshwater marshe.

Areas of flooded cutaway bog and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) swamp occur and add diversity to the site.

Chough occur regularly on the dunes in the site; this is a rare species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

The conservation interest of the site lies in the variety of habitat types it contains, in the rich diversity of locally uncommon plant species that it supports and for its use by a population of Chough.

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