

# National Parks and Wildlife Service

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## *Conservation Objectives Series*

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### Durnesh Lough SAC 000138



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,  
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

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Department of Arts, Heritage,  
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs



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## Introduction

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

A site-specific conservation objective aims to define favourable conservation condition for a particular habitat or species at that site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

### Notes/Guidelines:

1. The targets given in these conservation objectives are based on best available information at the time of writing. As more information becomes available, targets for attributes may change. These will be updated periodically, as necessary.
2. An appropriate assessment based on these conservation objectives will remain valid even if the targets are subsequently updated, providing they were the most recent objectives available when the assessment was carried out. It is essential that the date and version are included when objectives are cited.
3. Assessments cannot consider an attribute in isolation from the others listed for that habitat or species, or for other habitats and species listed for that site. A plan or project with an apparently small impact on one attribute may have a significant impact on another.
4. Please note that the maps included in this document do not necessarily show the entire extent of the habitats and species for which the site is listed. This should be borne in mind when appropriate assessments are being carried out.
5. When using these objectives, it is essential that the relevant backing/supporting documents are consulted, particularly where instructed in the targets or notes for a particular attribute.

## Qualifying Interests

*\* indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive*

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000138	Durnesh Lough SAC
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1150	Coastal lagoonsE
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6410	<i>Tall herb</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)
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**Please note that this SAC overlaps Durnesh Lough SPA (004145) and Donegal Bay SPA (004151). See map 2. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for the overlapping sites as appropriate.**

## Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

*Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: [www.npws.ie/Publications](http://www.npws.ie/Publications)*

### NPWS Documents

<b>Year :</b>	2007
<b>Title :</b>	Inventory of Irish coastal lagoons (version 2)
<b>Author :</b>	Oliver, G.
<b>Series :</b>	Unpublished report to NPWS
<b>Year :</b>	2013
<b>Title :</b>	Irish semi-natural grasslands survey 2007-2012
<b>Author :</b>	O'Neill, F.H.; Martin, J.R.; Devaney, F.M.; Perrin, P.M.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 78
<b>Year :</b>	2016
<b>Title :</b>	Durnesh Lough SAC (site code: 138) Conservation objectives supporting document- coastal lagoons V1
<b>Author :</b>	NPWS
<b>Series :</b>	Conservation objectives supporting document

### Other References

<b>Year :</b>	2013
<b>Title :</b>	Monitoring and assessment of Irish lagoons for the purposes of the EU Water Framework Directive, 2009-2011. Parts 1 and 2
<b>Author :</b>	Roden, C.M; Oliver, G.A.
<b>Series :</b>	Unpublished report to the Environmental Protection Agency

## Spatial data sources

<b>Year :</b>	Revision 2011
<b>Title :</b>	Inventory of Irish Coastal Lagoons. Version 3
<b>GIS Operations :</b>	Clipped to SAC boundary
<b>Used For :</b>	1150 (map 3)
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<b>Year :</b>	2013
<b>Title :</b>	Irish Semi-Natural Grassland Survey
<b>GIS Operations :</b>	Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
<b>Used For :</b>	6410 (map 4)
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## Conservation Objectives for : Durnesh Lough SAC [000138]

### 1150 Coastal lagoons

**To restore the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Durnesh Lough SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable, subject to slight natural variation. Favourable reference area 73.8ha. See map 3	Area calculated from spatial data derived from Oliver (2007). Site code IL079 (Durnesh Lough). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Site IL079 in Oliver (2007). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Salinity regime	Practical salinity units (psu)	Median annual salinity and temporal variation within natural ranges	Durnesh Lough is recorded as an oligohaline lagoon. See lagoons supporting document for further details
Hydrological regime	Metres	Annual water level fluctuations and minima within natural ranges	Maximum depth of Durnesh Lough is recorded as less than 2m. See lagoons supporting document for further details
Barrier: connectivity between lagoon and sea	Permeability	Appropriate hydrological connections between lagoon and sea, including where necessary, appropriate management	Drongawn Lough is a natural sedimentary lagoon with a sand dune barrier and artificial outlet. See lagoons supporting document for further details
Water quality: Chlorophyll <i>a</i>	µg/L	Annual median chlorophyll <i>a</i> within natural range and less than 5µg/L	Target based on Roden and Oliver (2013). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Water quality: Molybdate Reactive Phosphorus (MRP)	mg/L	Annual median MRP within natural ranges 0.1mg/L	Target based on Roden and Oliver (2013). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Water quality: Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN)	mg/L	Annual median DIN within natural ranges and less than 0.15mg/L.	Target based on Roden and Oliver (2013). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Depth of macrophyte colonisation	Metres	Macrophyte colonisation to full depth of lagoon	As the lagoon is less than 2m deep, it is expected that macrophyte colonisation would extend to its full depth. See lagoons supporting document for further details
Typical plant species	Number and m <sup>2</sup>	Maintain number and extent of listed lagoonal specialists, subject to natural variation	Species listed in Oliver (2007). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Typical animal species	Number	Maintain listed lagoon specialists, subject to natural variation	Species listed in Oliver (2007). See lagoons supporting document for further details
Negative indicator species	Number and percentage cover	Negative indicator species absent or under control	Low salinity, shallow water and elevated nutrient levels increase the threat of unnatural encroachment by reedbeds. See lagoons supporting document for further details

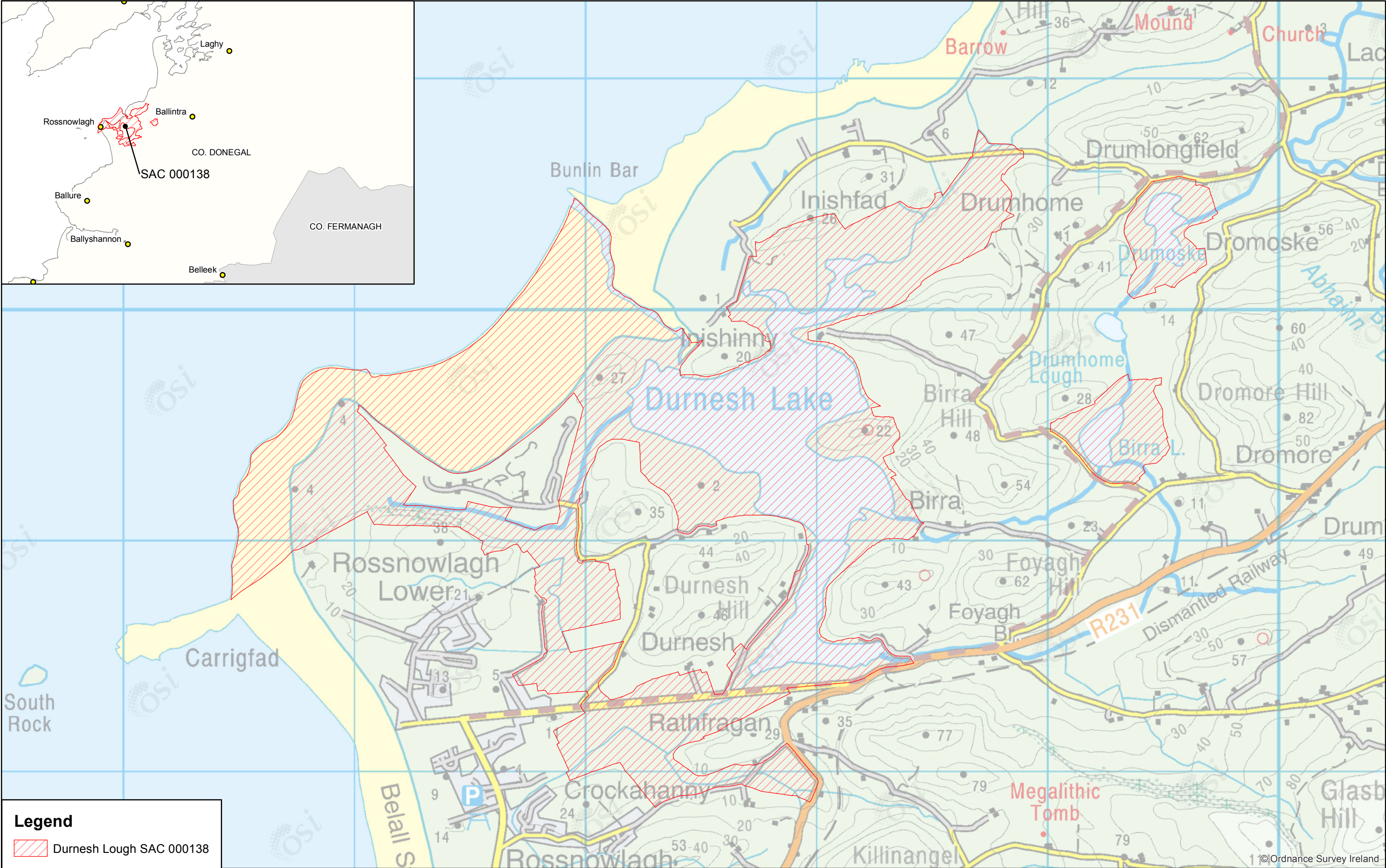
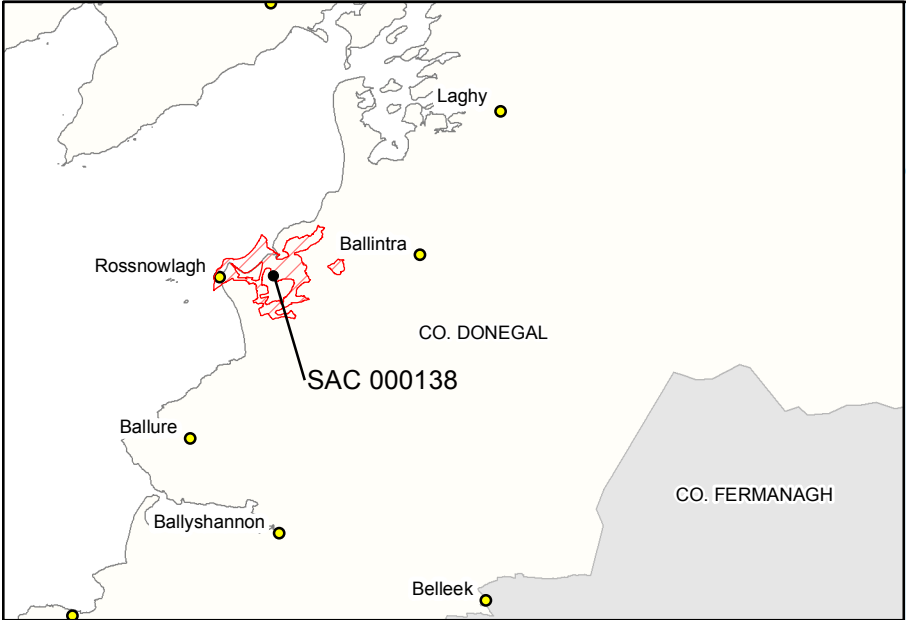
## Conservation Objectives for : Durnesh Lough SAC [000138]

### 6410 **Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)**


**To restore the favourable conservation condition of *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) in Durnesh Lough SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**


Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	<i>Molinia</i> meadows occurs in close association with other grassland habitats as well as wetland habitats including swamp and fen. The Irish semi-natural grasslands survey (ISGS) (O'Neill et al., 2013) recorded 1.02ha of this Annex I habitat at site 1249 (see map 3). Other semi-natural grassland types occur in the SAC and there may be more, as yet unmapped, areas of the Annex I habitat type present
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 3 for mapped area	See note for area above
Vegetation composition: typical species	Number at a representative number of monitoring stops	At least seven positive indicator species present, including one "high quality" species as listed in O'Neill et al. (2013)	List of positive indicator species, including high quality species, identified by O'Neill et al. (2013). Note that purple moor-grass ( <i>Molinia caerulea</i> ) is a positive indicator species, but not necessarily an essential component of the habitat
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Negative indicator species collectively not more than 20% cover, with cover by an individual species less than 10%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Cover of non-native species not more than 1%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation composition: moss species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Hair mosses ( <i>Polytrichum</i> spp.) not more than 25% cover	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation structure: woody species and bracken	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Cover of woody species and bracken ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> ) not more than 5% cover	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2010)
Vegetation structure: broadleaf herb: grass ratio	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 40 and 90%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation structure: sward height	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	At least 30% of sward between 10 and 80cm tall	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Physical structure: bare soil	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Not more than 10% bare soil	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)





**Legend**

 Durnesh Lough SAC 000138

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Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

**MAP 1:  
DURNESH LOUGH SAC  
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES  
SAC DESIGNATION**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

**SITE CODE:  
SAC 000138; version 3.  
CO. DONEGAL**

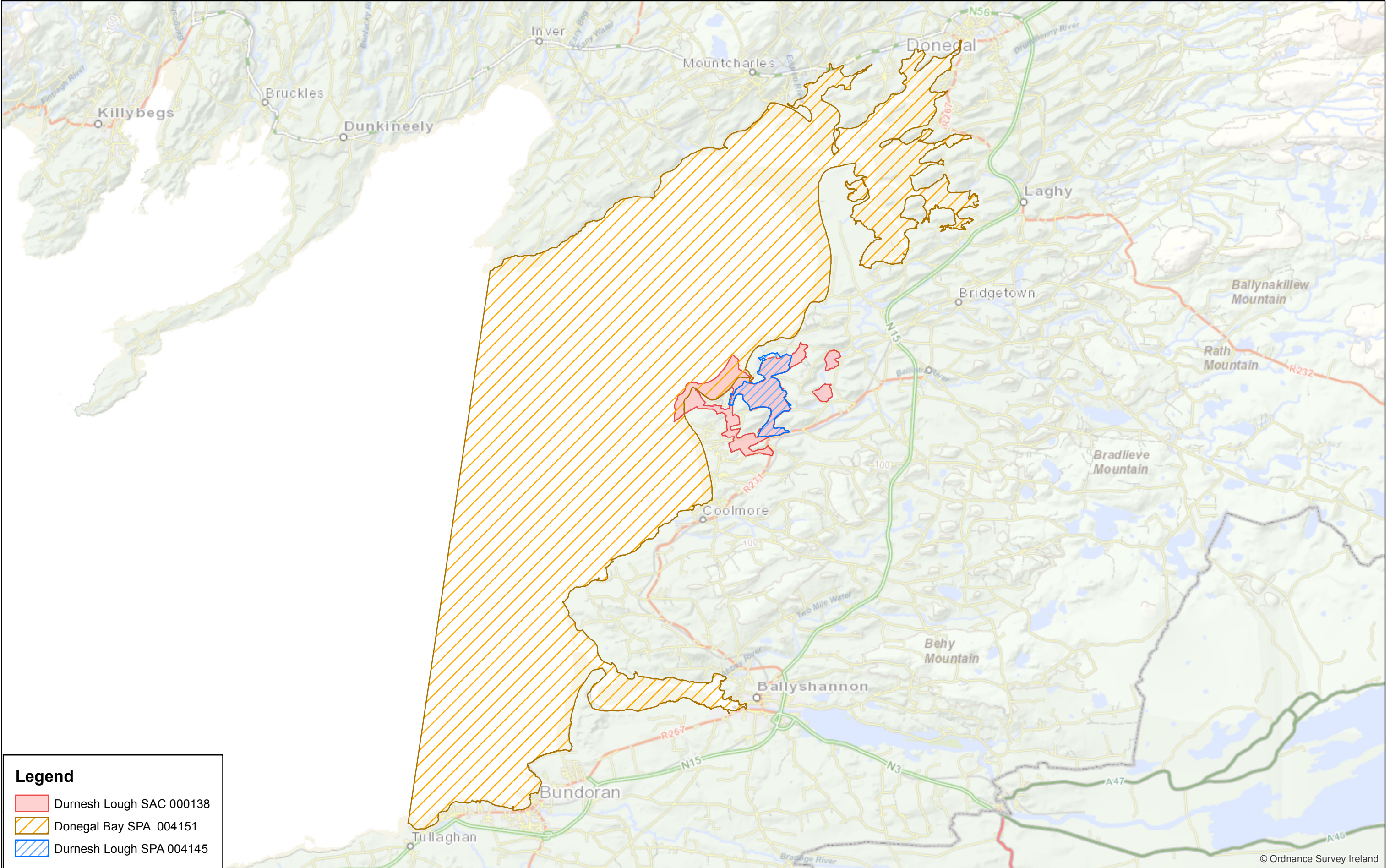
0 0.15 0.3 0.45 0.6 0.75 km

The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.  
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Níl sna teorainneacha ar na léarscáileanna ach nod garshuíomhach ginearálta. Féadfar athbheithníthe a déanamh ar theorainneacha na gceantar comharthaithe. Suirbhéarachta Ordonáis na hÉireann Ceadúnas

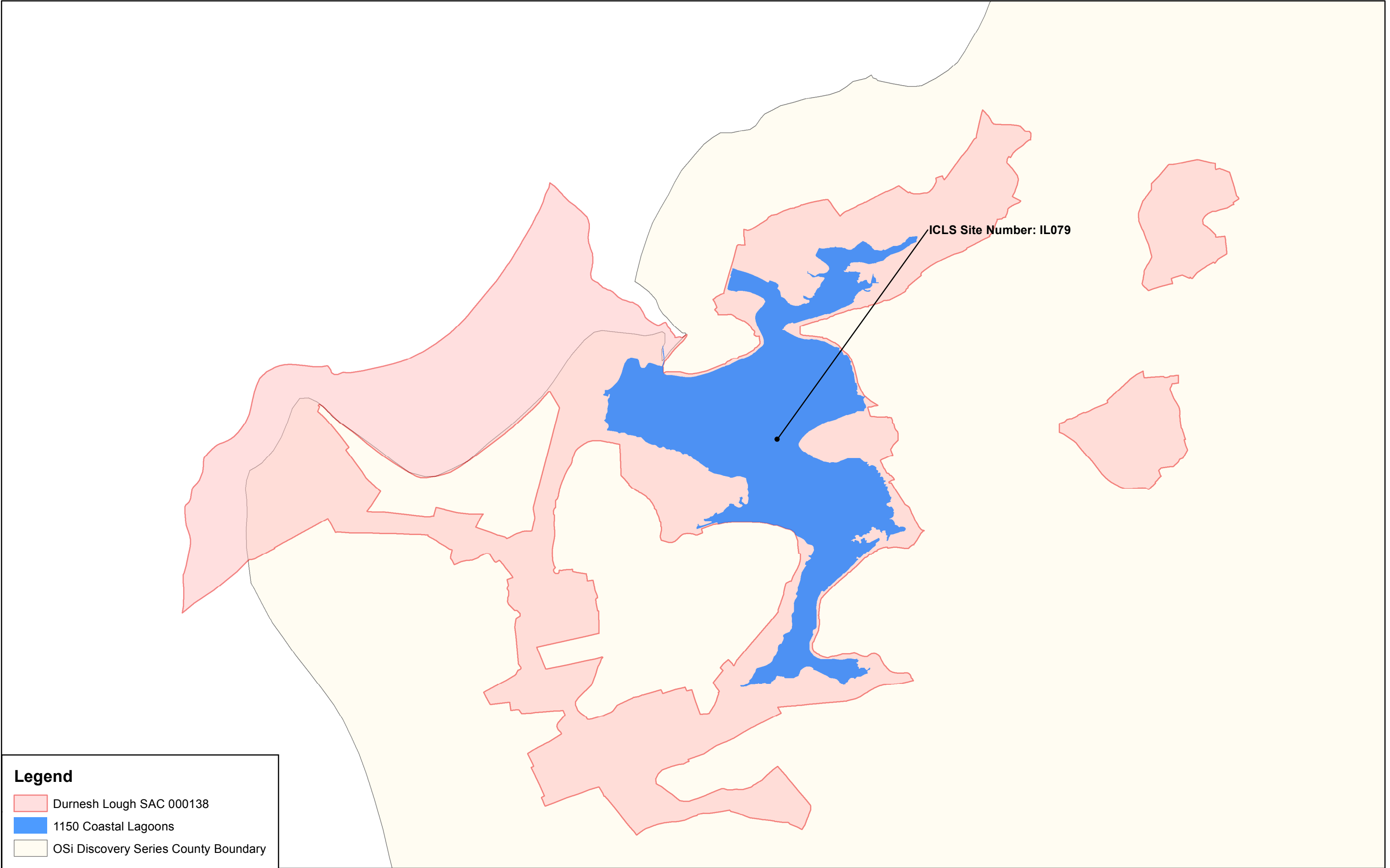
  
**Map Version 1  
Date: Aug 2016**





**Legend**

- Durnesh Lough SAC 000138
- Donegal Bay SPA 004151
- Durnesh Lough SPA 004145







**Legend**

Durnesh Lough SAC 000138

**Annex I Grassland Habitats**

6410 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*)