

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

St. John's Point SAC 000191



*An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta*

*Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*



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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*

000191 St. John's Point SAC

- 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays
- 1170 Reefs
- 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)
- 6410 *Tall herb* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)
- 7230 Alkaline fens
- 8240 Limestone pavementsE
- 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: www.npws.ie/Publications

NPWS Documents

Year :	2013
Title :	Irish semi-natural grasslands survey 2007-2012
Author :	O'Neill, F.H.; Martin, J.R.; Devaney, F.M.; Perrin, P.M.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 78
Year :	2013
Title :	National survey of limestone pavement and associated habitats in Ireland
Author :	Wilson, F.; Fernandez, F.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 73
Year :	2014
Title :	Guidelines for a national survey and conservation assessment of upland vegetation and habitats in Ireland, Version 2.0
Author :	Perrin, P.M.; Barron, S.J.; Roche, J.R.; O'Hanrahan, B.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 79
Year :	2015
Title :	St. John's Point SAC (site code: 191) Conservation objectives supporting document- marine habitats V1
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document

Other References

Year :	1988
Title :	The Irish red data book 1. Vascular plants
Author :	Curtis, T.G.F; McGough, H.N.
Series :	Wildlife Service, Dublin
Year :	1997
Title :	The BioMar biotope viewer: a guide to marine habitats, fauna and flora in Britain and Ireland
Author :	Picton, B.E.; Costello, M.J.
Series :	Environmental Science Unit, Trinity College Dublin
Year :	2012
Title :	Intertidal benthic survey and intertidal reef survey of St John's Point SAC
Author :	MERC
Series :	Unpublished report to the Marine Institute and NPWS
Year :	2012
Title :	Subtidal sediment, maerl and subtidal reef survey of St John's Point SAC
Author :	MERC
Series :	Unpublished report to the Marine Institute and NPWS

Spatial data sources

Year :	2005
Title :	OSi Discovery series vector data
GIS Operations :	High Water Mark (HWM) polyline feature class converted into polygon feature class; clipped to SAC boundary. EPA WFD transitional waterbody data erased from extent. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For :	1160 (map 2)
Year :	Derived 2014
Title :	Coast of Ireland Oblique Imagery Survey 2003
GIS Operations :	Point dataset created from visual inspection of survey
Used For :	8330 (map 2)
Year :	Interpolated 2014
Title :	1994 BioMar Survey; 2012 intertidal and subtidal surveys
GIS Operations :	Polygon feature classes from marine community types base data sub-divided based on interpolation of marine survey data. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For :	1170, marine community types (maps 3 and 4)
Year :	2005
Title :	OSi Discovery series vector data
GIS Operations :	High water mark (HWM) and low water mark (LWM) polyline feature classes converted into polygon feature classes and combined; EU Annex I Saltmarsh and Coastal data erased out if present
Used For :	Marine community types base data (map 4)
Year :	2013
Title :	Irish Semi-Natural Grassland Survey
GIS Operations :	Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For :	6210, 6410 (map 5)
Year :	2013
Title :	National Survey of Limestone Pavement and Associated Habitats in Ireland distribution data
GIS Operations :	Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. EU Annex I grassland data erased out. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For :	8240 (map 6)

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

1160 Large shallow inlets and bays

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in St. John's Point SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 2	Habitat area was estimated as 228ha using OSi data and the Transitional Water Body area as defined under the Water Framework Directive
Community extent	Hectares	Maintain the extent of the Maërl-dominated community, subject to natural processes. See map 4	Based on a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and subtidal survey undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012). See marine supporting document for further details
Community structure	Biological composition	Conserve the high quality of the Maërl-dominated community, subject to natural processes	Based on a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and subtidal survey undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012). See marine supporting document for further details
Community distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Intertidal coarse sediment with enchytraeid oligochaetes and <i>Scolecopsis squamata</i> community complex; Sand to mixed sediment with polychaetes and <i>Edwardsia</i> spp. community complex; Intertidal reef community complex; <i>Laminaria</i> -dominated community complex; Subtidal reef with echinoderms and sponges community complex. See map 4	Based on a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and intertidal and subtidal surveys undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012). See marine supporting document for further information

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

1170 Reefs

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in St. John's Point SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Habitat area estimated as 869ha from a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and subtidal and intertidal surveys undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012)
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	The distribution of reefs remains stable, subject to natural processes. See map 3 for mapped distribution	Based on information from a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and subtidal and intertidal surveys undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012). See marine supporting document for further details
Community structure	Biological composition	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: intertidal reef community complex; <i>Laminaria</i> -dominated community complex; Subtidal reef with echinoderms and sponges community complex. See map 4	Reef mapping based on information from a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997) and subtidal and intertidal surveys undertaken in 2012 (MERC, 2012). See marine supporting document for further details

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)

To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) in St. John's Point SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habital area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates occurs in intimate association with other habitats including limestone pavements and other grassland habitats. The Irish semi-natural grasslands survey (O'Neill et al., 2013) surveyed semi-natural grasslands at St. John's Point and mapped 16.7ha of this habitat within the SAC. See map 5
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 5 for known distribution	See notes for area above
Vegetation composition: typical species	Number at a representative number of monitoring stops	At least seven positive indicator species present, including two "high quality" species	List of positive indicator species, including high quality species, identified by the Irish semi-natural grasslands survey (O'Neill et al., 2013). This document should be consulted for further details
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 not more than 10%	List of negative indicator species identified by 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: woody species and bracken	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Cover of woody species (except certain listed species) and bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) not more than 5% cover	Woody species that can occur above 5% cover include juniper (<i>Juniperus communis</i>) and burnet rose (<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>). Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
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 5cm and 40cm tall	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation structure: litter	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Litter cover not more than 25%	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)
Physical structure: disturbance	Square metres	Area showing signs of serious grazing or other disturbance less than 20m ²	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

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 St. John's Point 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 on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils occurs in intimate association with other habitats including other grassland habitats and fens. The Irish semi-natural grasslands survey (O'Neill et al., 2013) surveyed semi-natural grasslands at St. John's Point and mapped 13.6ha of this habitat within the SAC. See map 5
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 5 for known distribution	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%	List of negative indicator species identified by 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%	List of negative indicator species identified by 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 composition: 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. (2013)
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. (2010)
Vegetation structure: litter	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Litter cover not more than 25%	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)
Physical structure: disturbance	Square metres	Area showing signs of serious grazing or other disturbance less than 20m ²	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

7230

Alkaline fens

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in St. John's Point 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	The extent of this habitat within the SAC is currently unknown. It occurs in association with wet grasslands (O'Neill et al., 2013) and at lake margins (NPWS internal files)
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	Full distribution of this habitat in this SAC is currently unknown- see note above
Hydrological regime	Metres	Appropriate natural hydrological regimes necessary to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat	Maintenance of groundwater, surface water flows and water table levels within natural ranges is essential for this wetland habitat
Peat formation	Flood duration	Active peat formation, where appropriate	In order for peat to form, water levels need to be slightly below or above the soil surface for c.90% of the time (Jim Ryan, pers. comm.)
Water quality: nutrients	Water chemistry measures	Appropriate water quality to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat	Fens receive natural levels of nutrients (e.g. iron, magnesium and calcium) from water sources. However, they are generally poor in nitrogen and phosphorus with the latter tending to be the limiting nutrient
Vegetation structure: typical species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Maintain vegetation cover of typical species including brown mosses and vascular plants	
Vegetation composition: trees and shrubs	Percentage in local vicinity	Cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 10%	Scrub and trees will tend to invade if fen conditions become drier. Attribute and target based on alkaline fen conservation assessment criteria in Perrin et al. (2014)
Physical structure: disturbed bare ground	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops and in local vicinity	Cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%. Where tufa is present, disturbed bare ground less than 1%	While grazing may be appropriate in this habitat, excessive area of disturbed bare ground may develop due to unsuitable grazing regimes. Attribute and target based on alkaline fen conservation assessment criteria in Perrin et al. (2014)
Physical structure: drainage	Percentage in local vicinity	Area showing signs of drainage as a result of drainage ditches or heavy trampling less than 10%	Attribute and target based on alkaline fen conservation assessment criteria in Perrin et al. (2014)

Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

8240 Limestone pavements

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in St. John's Point SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

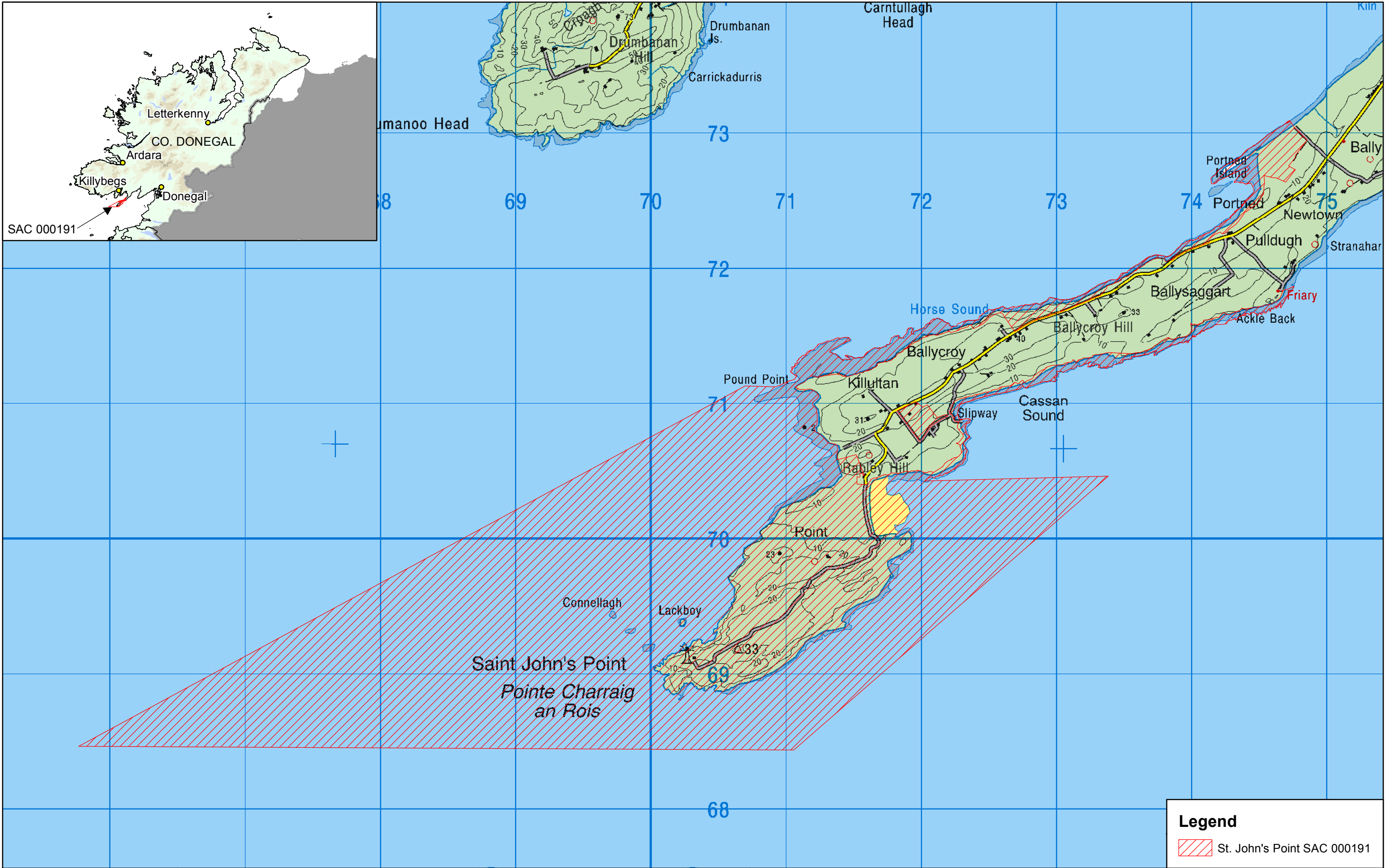
Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Limestone pavements occurs in intimate association with other habitats in this SAC, particularly grassland habitats (O'Neill et al., 2013). Wilson and Fernandez (2013) mapped the indicative area of limestone pavement, including mosaics with other habitats as 12.7ha (map 6)
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline. Map 6 shows indicative distribution, including mosaics with other habitats	See notes for area above. This SAC is one of the most north-westerly locations for limestone pavements in Ireland
Vegetation composition: typical species	Number at a representative number of monitoring stops	At least seven positive indicator species present	Positive indicator species for exposed and wooded pavement listed in Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation composition: bryophyte layer	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Bryophyte cover at least 50% on wooded pavement	Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Collective cover of negative indicator species on exposed pavement not more than 1%	Negative indicator species listed in Wilson and Fernandez (2013). Negative indicator species for wooded pavement overlap with non-native species (below)
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Cover of non-native species not more than 1% on exposed pavement; on wooded pavement not more than 10% with no regeneration	Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation composition: scrub	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Scrub cover no more than 25% on exposed pavement	Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation composition: bracken cover	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) cover no more than 10% on exposed pavement	Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation structure: woodland canopy	Percentage at a representative number of monitoring stops	Canopy cover on wooded pavement at least 30%	Wooded limestone pavement is usually low-growing hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) woodland. Atlantic hazel woodland is an internationally rare woodland type. Despite its low stature it is nonetheless an important habitat for woodland species. Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Vegetation structure: dead wood	Occurrence in a representative number of monitoring stops	Sufficient quantity of dead wood on wooded pavement to provide habitat for saproxylic organisms	Dead wood is a valuable resource and an integral part of a healthy, functioning woodland ecosystem
Physical structure: disturbance	Occurrence in a representative number of monitoring stops	No evidence of grazing pressure on wooded pavement	Attribute and target based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013)
Indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	Indicators of local distinctiveness are maintained	Includes red-data (Curtis and McGough, 1988) and other rare or localised species as well as archaeological and geological features, which often support distinctive species

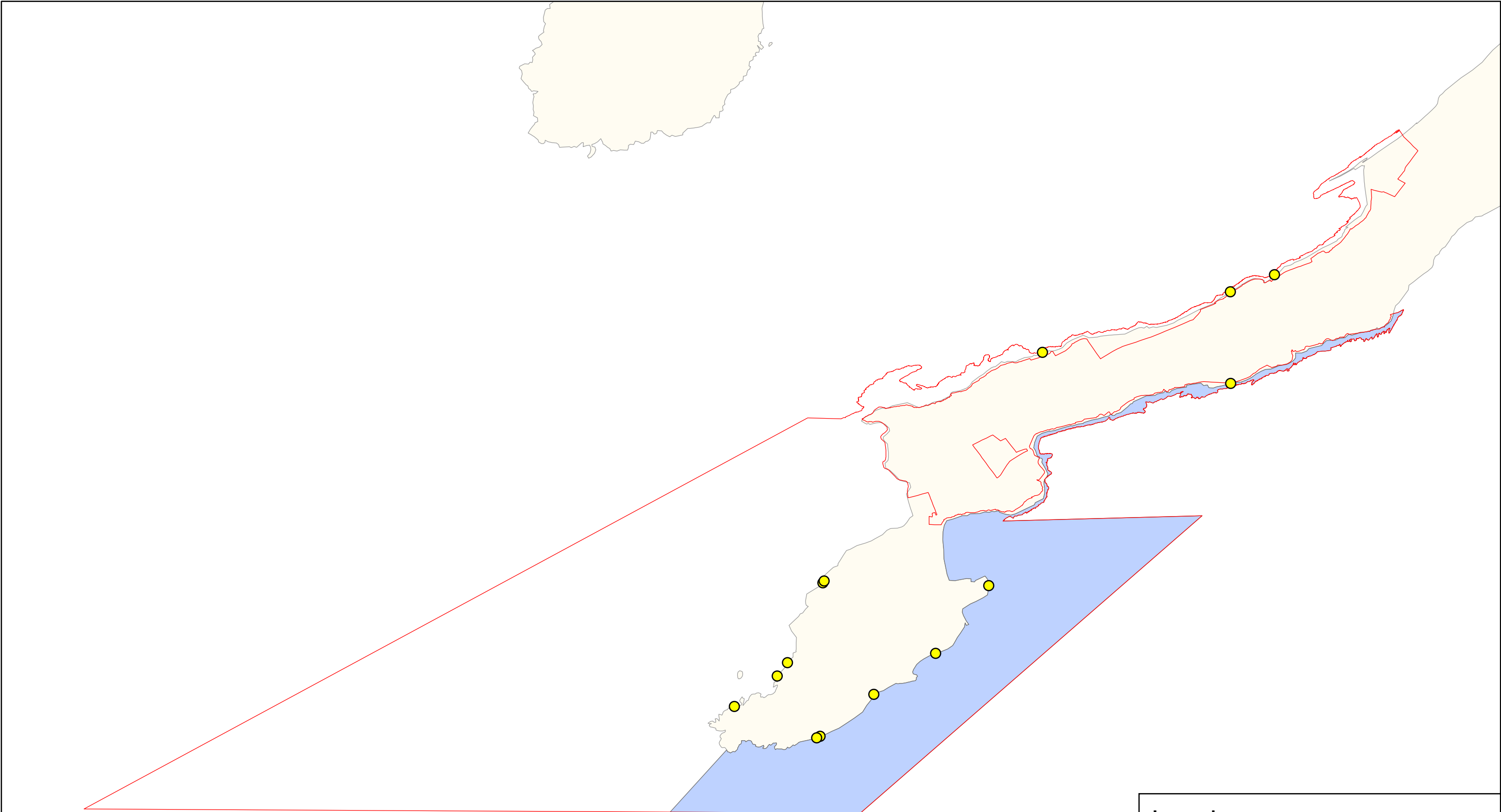
Conservation Objectives for : St. John's Point SAC [000191]

8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Submerged or partially submerged sea caves in St. John's Point SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Distribution	Occurrence	The distribution of sea caves occurring in the SAC should remain stable, subject to natural processes. See map 2 for known caves	Sea cave distribution at this site was derived from an oblique aerial survey and therefore only detects the presence of sea caves visible intertidally in the flight path. NB other sea caves may occur within the SAC
Community structure	Biological composition	Conserve the following community type in a natural condition: <i>Laminaria</i> -dominated community complex	The presence of this community in some sea caves in the SAC was confirmed during a 1994 BioMar survey (Picton and Costello, 1997)
Community structure	Biological composition	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the ecology of sea caves in the SAC	See marine supporting document for further details





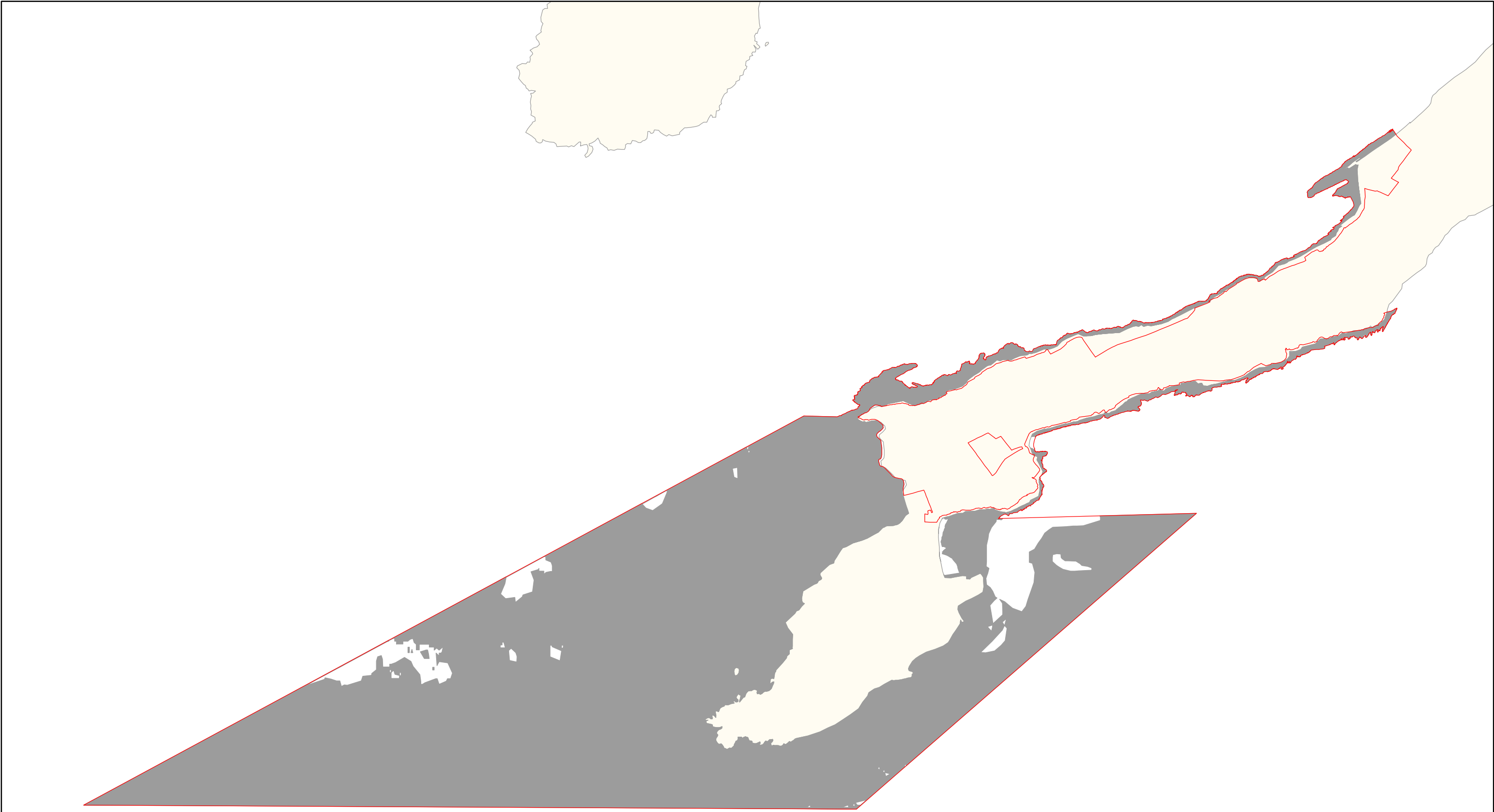
Legend

St. John's Point SAC 000191

1160 Large shallow inlets and bays

8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

OSi Discovery Series County Boundary



Legend

St. John's Point SAC 000191

1170 Reefs

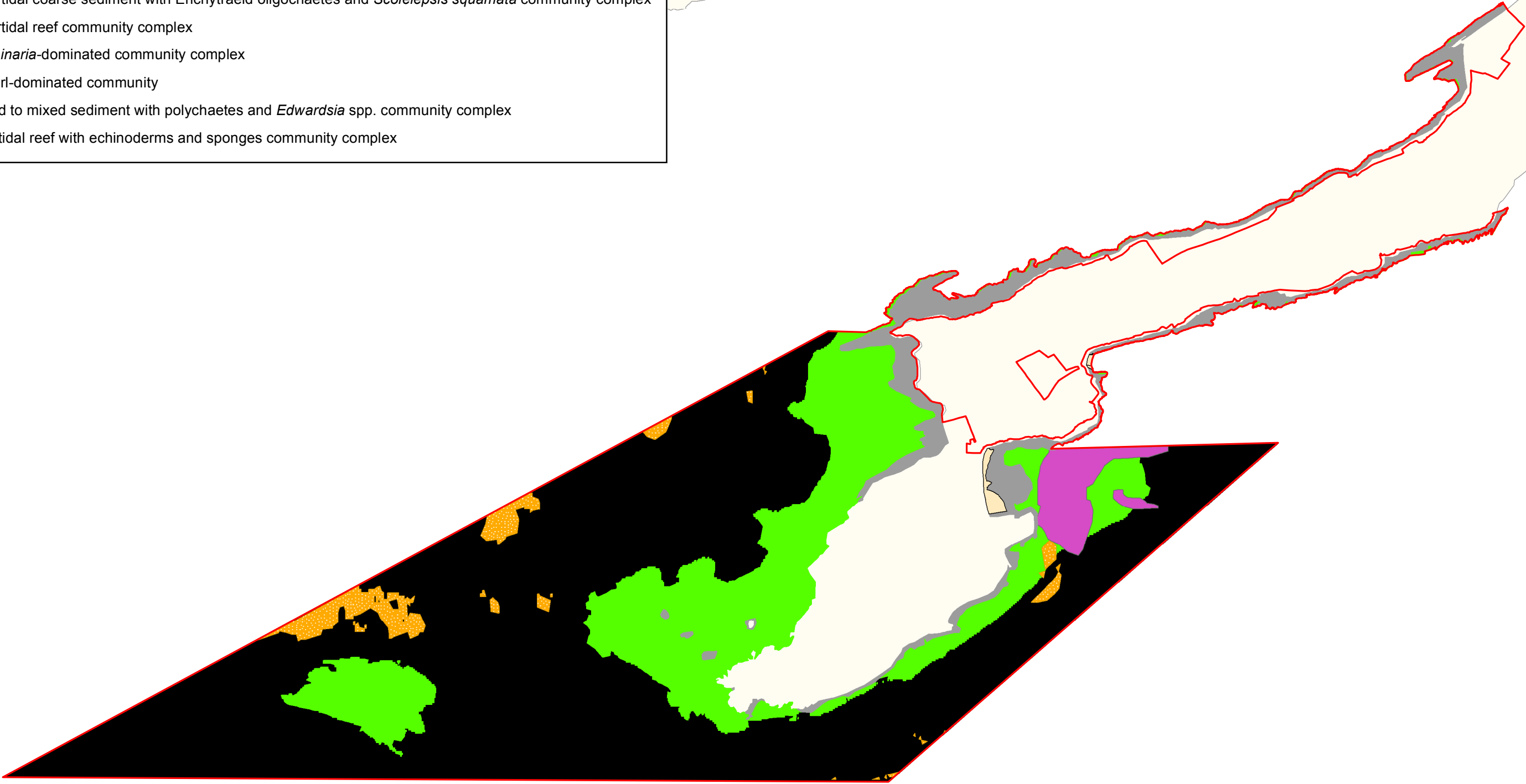
OSi Discovery Series County Boundary

Legend

- St. John's Point SAC 000191
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary

Marine Community Types

- Intertidal coarse sediment with Enchytraeid oligochaetes and *Scolecopsis squamata* community complex
- Intertidal reef community complex
- Laminaria*-dominated community complex
- Maerl-dominated community
- Sand to mixed sediment with polychaetes and *Edwardsia* spp. community complex
- Subtidal reef with echinoderms and sponges community complex

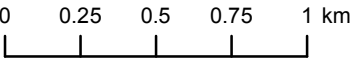
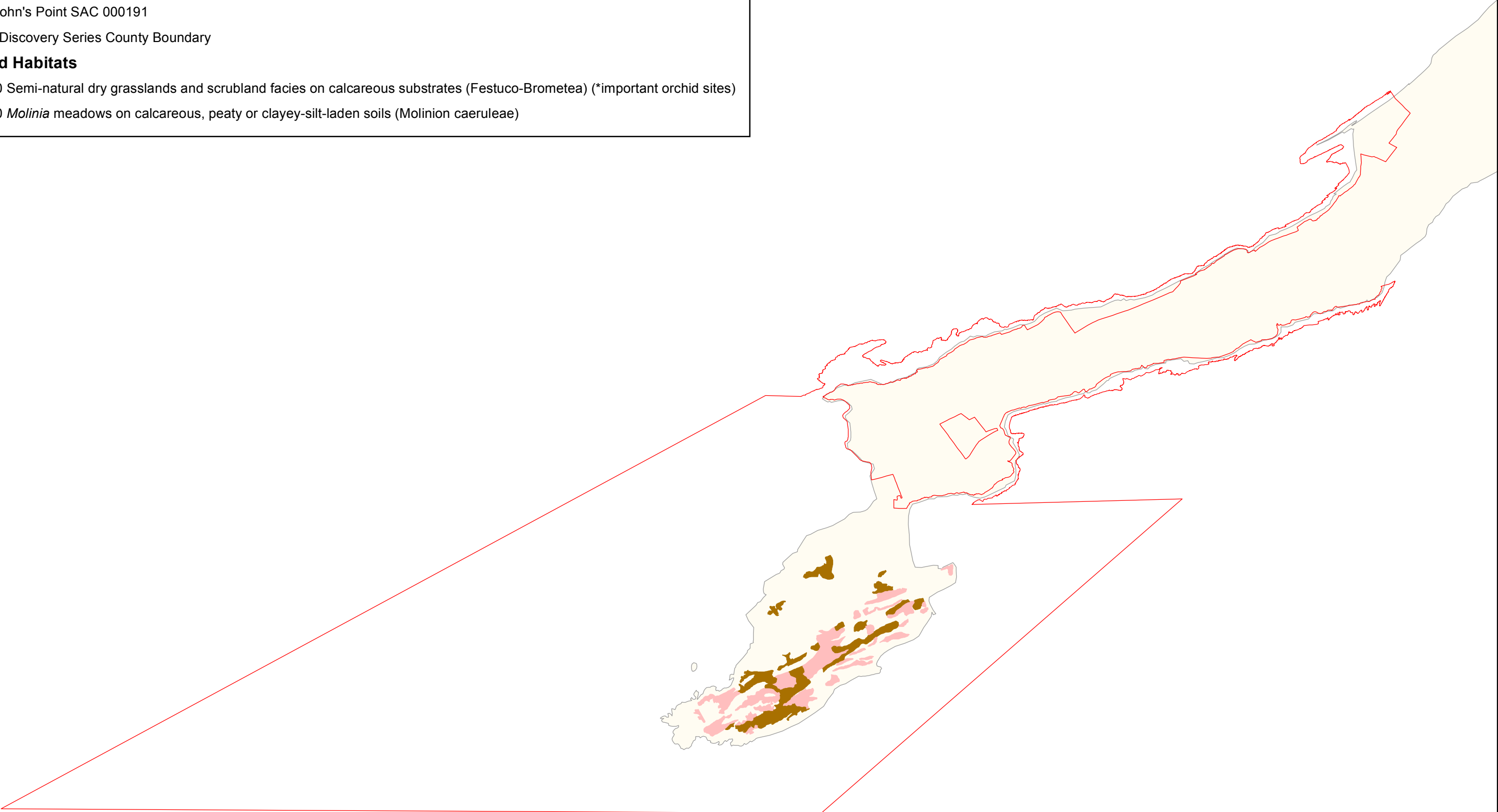


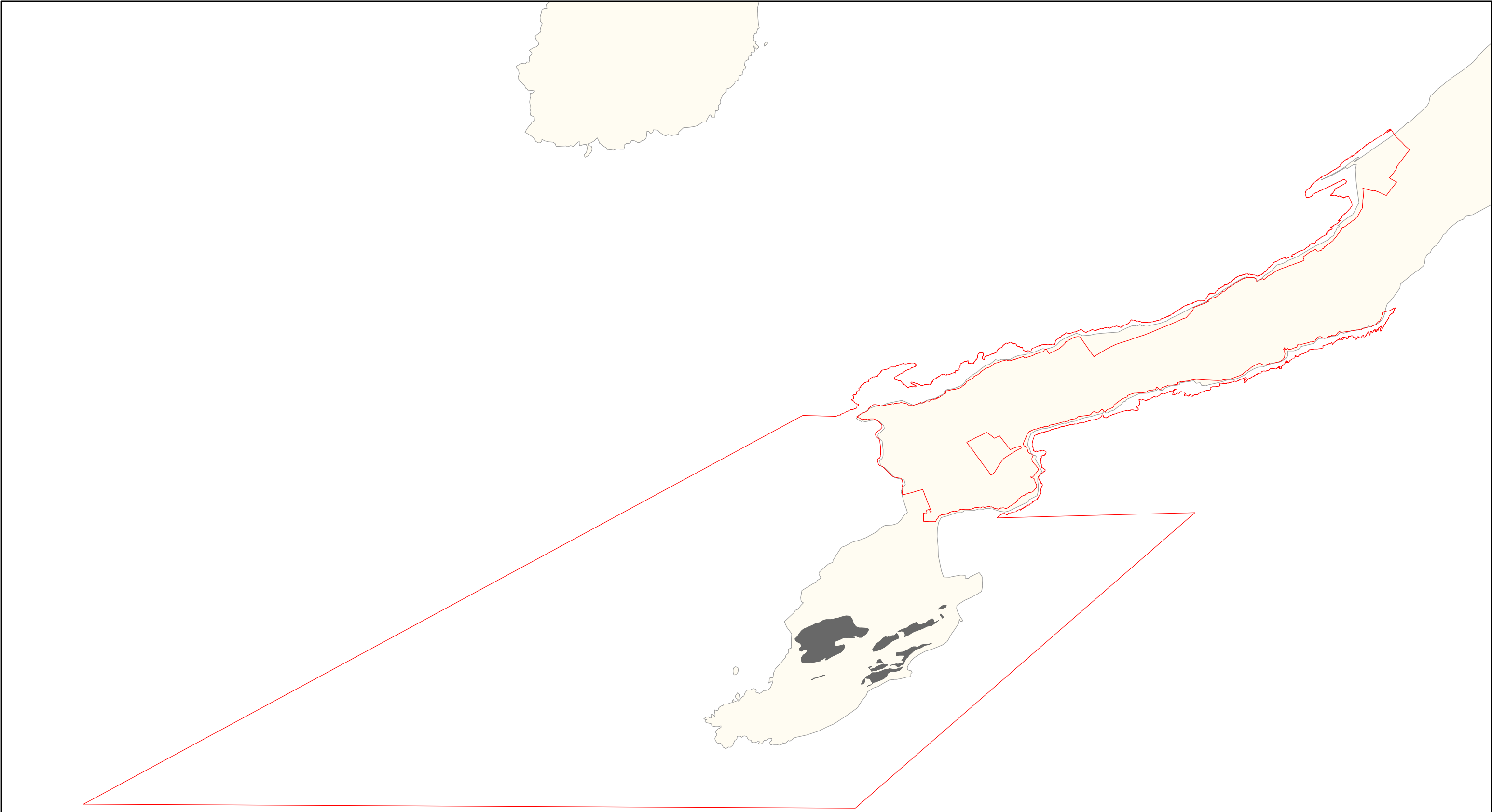
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- St. John's Point SAC 000191
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary

Grassland Habitats

- 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometea) (*important orchid sites)
- 6410 *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)





Legend

St. John's Point SAC 000191

Potential 8240 *Limestone pavements including associated habitats

OSi Discovery Series County Boundary