

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Hook Head SAC 000764



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

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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*

000764	Hook Head SAC
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1160	Large shallow inlets and bays
1170	Reefs
1230	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
1349	Common Bottlenose Dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
1351	Harbour Porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>

Please note that this SAC overlaps with Bannow Bay SPA (004033) and Seas off Wexford SPA (004237). See map 1a. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for the overlapping sites as appropriate. IMPORTANT: This 'Version 2' document includes 2 additional QIs (1349/1351). The conservation objectives for pre-existing QIs have generally not been updated.

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

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

NPWS Documents

Year :	2011
Title :	Hook Head SAC (000764) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats [Version 1]
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document
Year :	2011
Title :	Hook Head SAC (000764). Conservation objectives supporting document - marine habitats [Version 1]
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document
Year :	2011
Title :	National survey and assessment of the conservation status of Irish sea cliffs
Author :	Barron, S.J.; Delaney, A.; Perrin, P.M.; Martin, J.; O'Neill, F.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 53
Year :	2024
Title :	Hook Head SAC (site code 000764). Conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise V1
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document series

Other References

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 :	2011
Title :	Reef Investigations in Hook Head cSAC (000764), Co. Wexford
Author :	Aquafact
Series :	Unpublished Report to Marine Institute & NPWS
Year :	2011
Title :	Subtidal Investigations in Hook Head cSAC (000764), Co. Wexford
Author :	Aquafact
Series :	Unpublished Report to Marine Institute & 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. Seaward boundary defined by expert judgement

Used For : 1160 (map 2)

Year :

Title : Subtidal soft sediment survey 2010; reef survey 2010; 1994 BioMar Survey

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 : Marine community types, 1170 (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

Used For : Marine community types base data (map 4)

Year : 2011

Title : National survey and assessment of the conservation status of Irish sea cliffs

GIS Operations : Clipped to SAC boundary

Used For : 1230 (map 5)

Conservation Objectives for : Hook Head SAC [000764]

1160 Large shallow inlets and bays

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in Hook Head 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 using OSI data as 5,244ha. See marine supporting document for further details
Community extent	Hectares	The following communities should be maintained in a natural condition: Sand with <i>Chaetozone christiei</i> and <i>Tellina</i> sp. community; and Coarse sediment with <i>Pisidia longicornis</i> and epibenthic fauna community complex. See map 4	Based on information from a subtidal survey (Aquafact, 2011). See marine supporting document for further details

1170 Reefs

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Hook Head SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Distribution	Occurrence	The distribution of reefs should remain stable, subject to natural processes. See map 3 for mapped distribution	Reef mapping based on information from a subtidal survey (Aquafact, 2011) and from 1994 BioMar Survey (Picton and Costello, 1997). See marine supporting document for further details
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent area is stable, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Habitat area was estimated using 2010 survey data as 10,534ha. See marine supporting document for further details
Community structure	Biological composition	The following reef community complexes should be maintained in a natural condition: Exposed to moderately exposed intertidal reef community complex; and Echinoderm and sponge dominated community complex. See map 4	Based on information from a subtidal survey (Aquafact, 2011) and from 1994 BioMar Survey (Picton and Costello, 1997). See marine supporting document for further details
Community extent	Hectares	The extent of <i>Laminaria</i> dominated community should be conserved, subject to natural processes. See map 4	Based on information from a subtidal survey (Aquafact, 2011) and from 1994 BioMar Survey (Picton and Costello, 1997). See marine supporting document for further details
Community structure	Biological composition	The biology of <i>Laminaria</i> dominated community should be conserved, subject to natural processes	Based on information from a subtidal survey (Aquafact, 2011). See marine supporting document for further details

Conservation Objectives for : Hook Head SAC [000764]

1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Hook Head SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat length	Kilometres	Area stable, subject to natural processes, including erosion. For sub-sites mapped: Loftushall - 0.55km; Hook Head - 2.36km; and Baginbun Head - 9.20km. See map 5	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). Three sub-sites were identified using a combination of aerial photos and the DCENR helicopter viewer giving a total estimated area of 12.11km within the SAC. Cliffs are linear features and are therefore measured in kilometres. Length of cliff likely to be underestimated. See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 5	See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Physical structure: functionality and hydrological regime	Occurrence of artificial barriers	No alteration to natural functioning of geomorphological and hydrological processes due to artificial structures	Maintaining natural geomorphological processes including natural erosion is important for the health of a vegetated sea cliff. Hydrological processes maintain flushes and in some cases tufa formations that can be associated with sea cliffs. See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Vegetation structure: zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of sea cliff habitat zonation including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Vegetation structure: vegetation height	Centimeters	Maintain structural variation within sward	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub-communities with typical species listed in the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011)	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Percentage	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). See coastal habitats supporting document for further details
Vegetation composition: bracken and woody species	Percentage	Cover of bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) on grassland and/or heath less than 10%. Cover of woody species on grassland and/or heath less than 20%	Based on data from the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al., 2011). See coastal habitats supporting document for further details

Conservation Objectives for : Hook Head SAC [000764]

1349 Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Hook Head SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

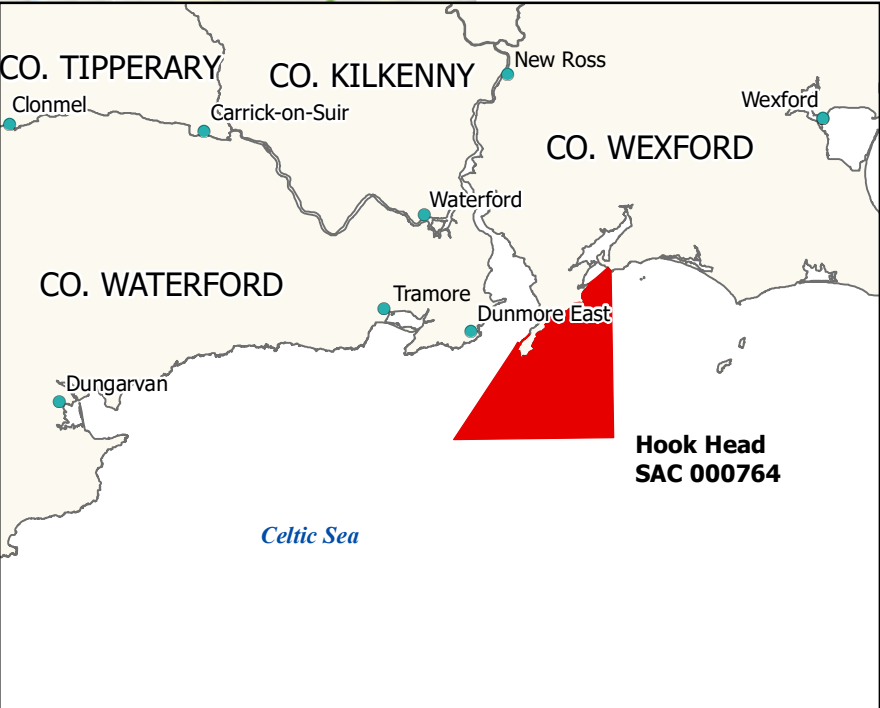
Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Access to suitable habitat	Number of artificial barriers	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use. See map 1	See the Hook Head SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)
Disturbance	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the Bottlenose Dolphin population at the site	See the Hook Head SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)

Conservation Objectives for : Hook Head SAC [000764]


1351 Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

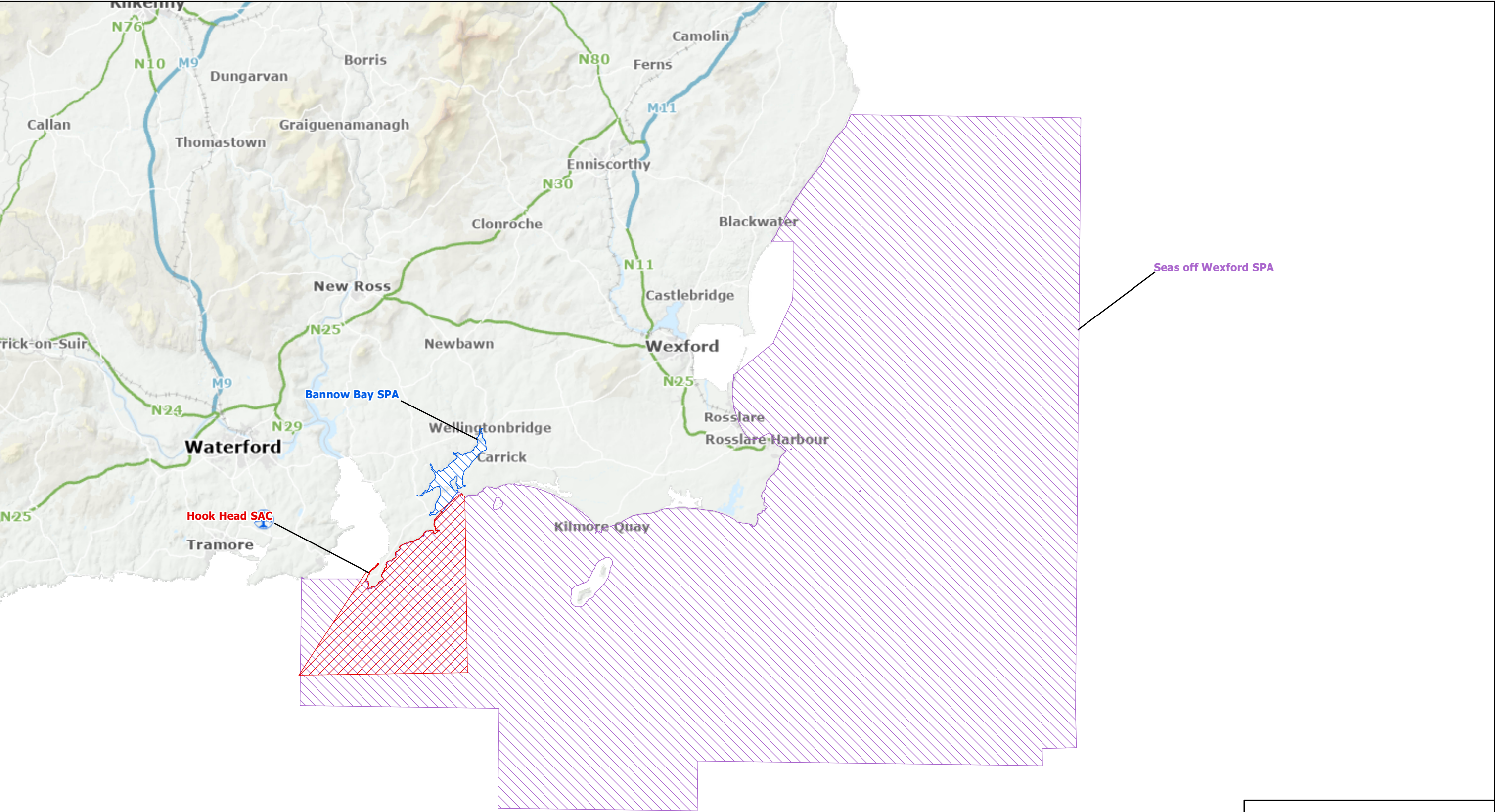
To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in Hook Head SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Access to suitable habitat	Number of artificial barriers	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use. See map 1	See the Hook Head SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)
Disturbance	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the Harbour Porpoise community at the site	See the Hook Head SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)



Legend

 Hook Head SAC 000764

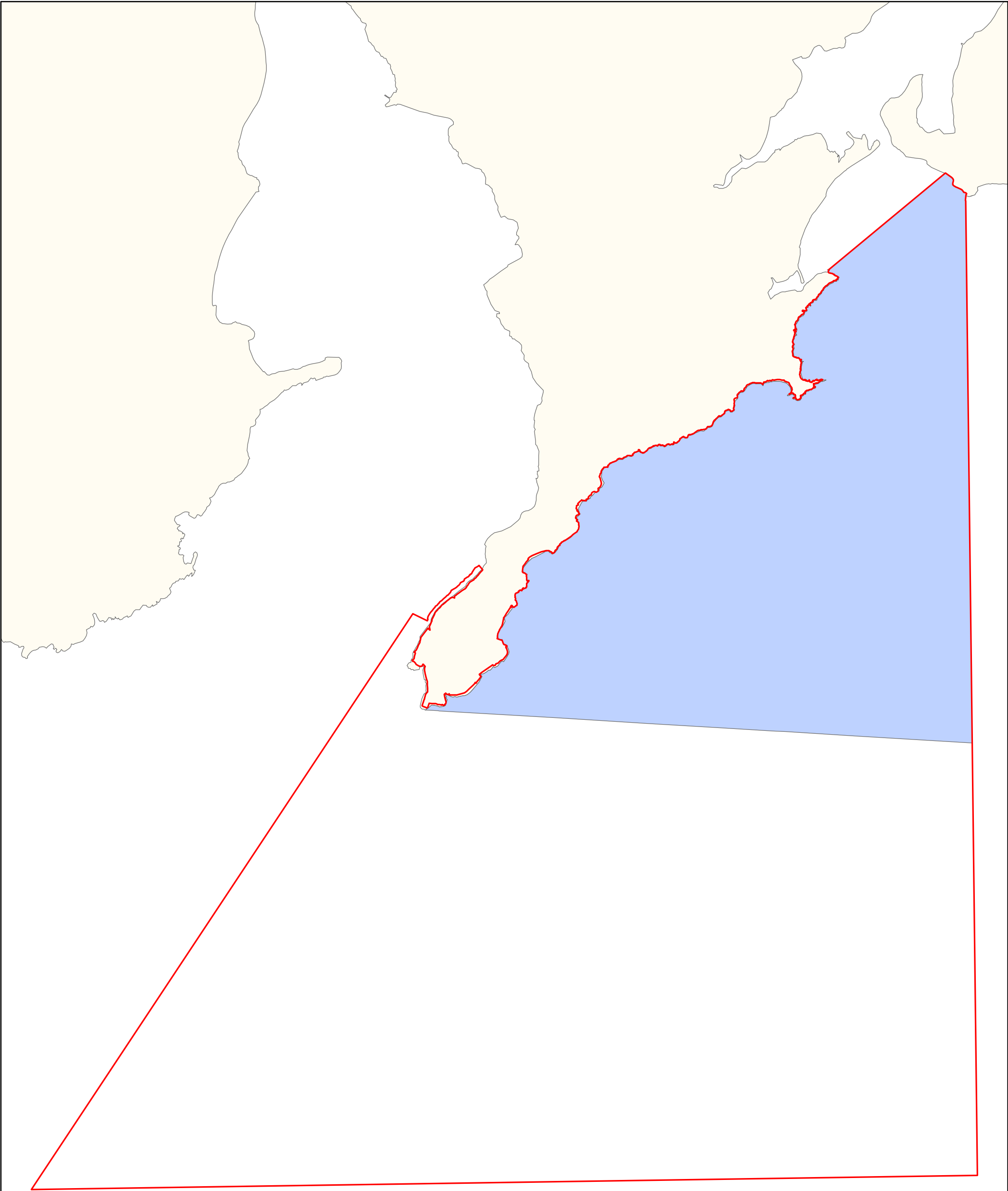


Legend




Hook Head SAC 000764

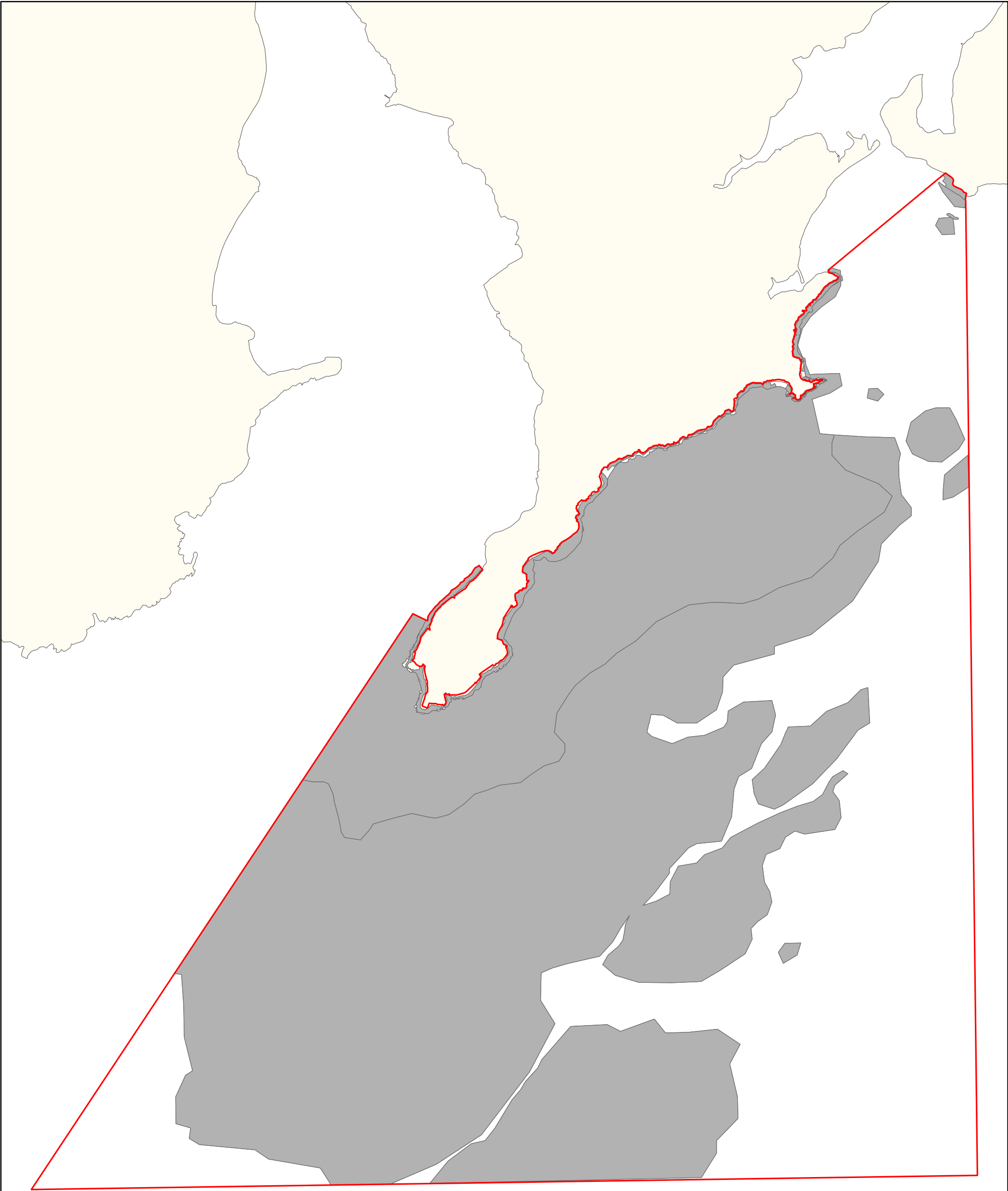
Bannow Bay SPA 004033

Seas off Wexford SPA 004237



Legend

-  SAC 000764
-  1160 Large shallow inlets and bays
-  OSi Discovery Series County Boundary



Legend

- SAC 000764
- 1170 Reefs
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary

Legend

- SAC 000764
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary
- Marine Community Types

Coarse sediment with *Pisidia longicornis* and epibenthic fauna community complex

Deep coarse sediment

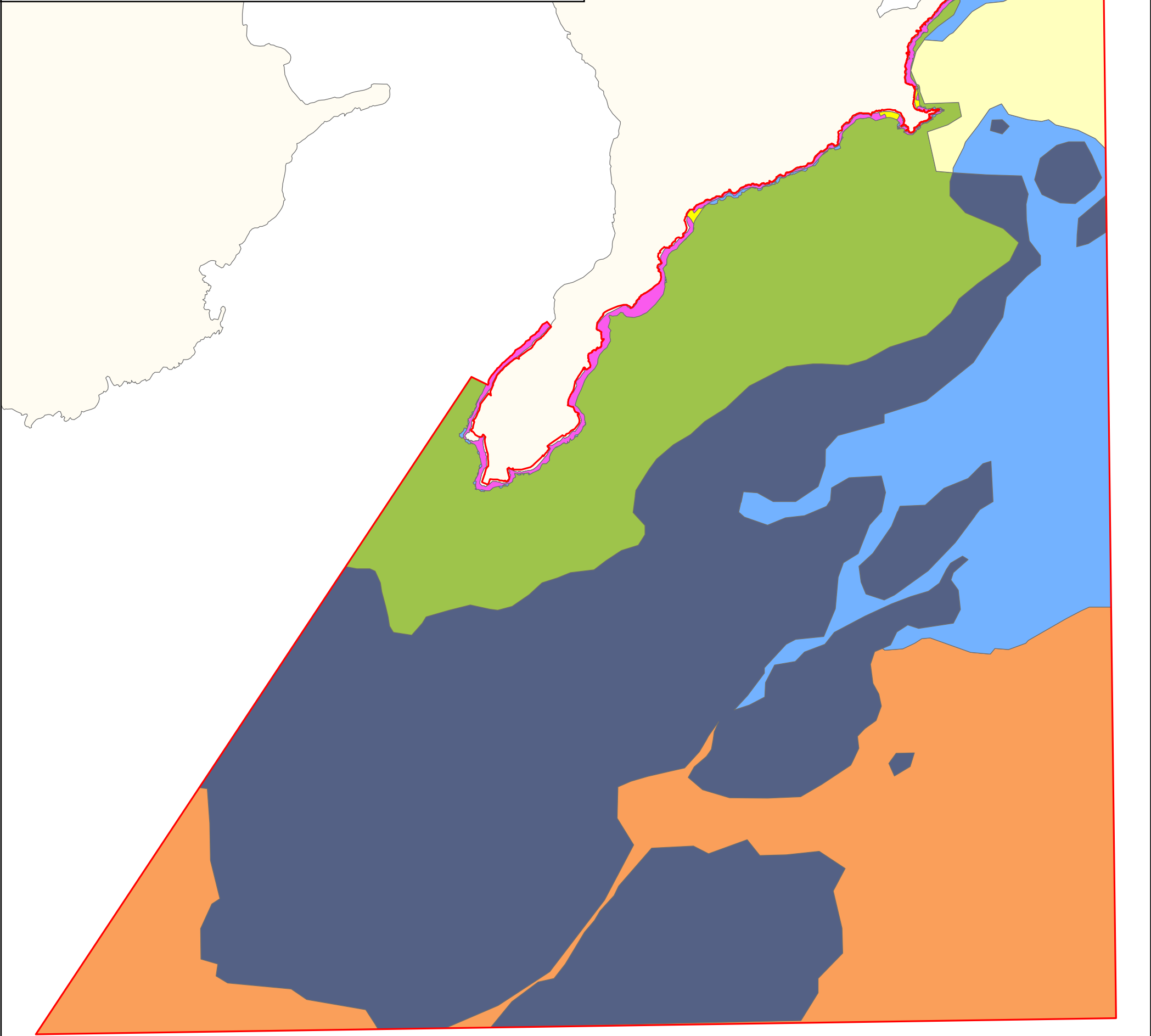
Echinoderm and sponge dominated community complex

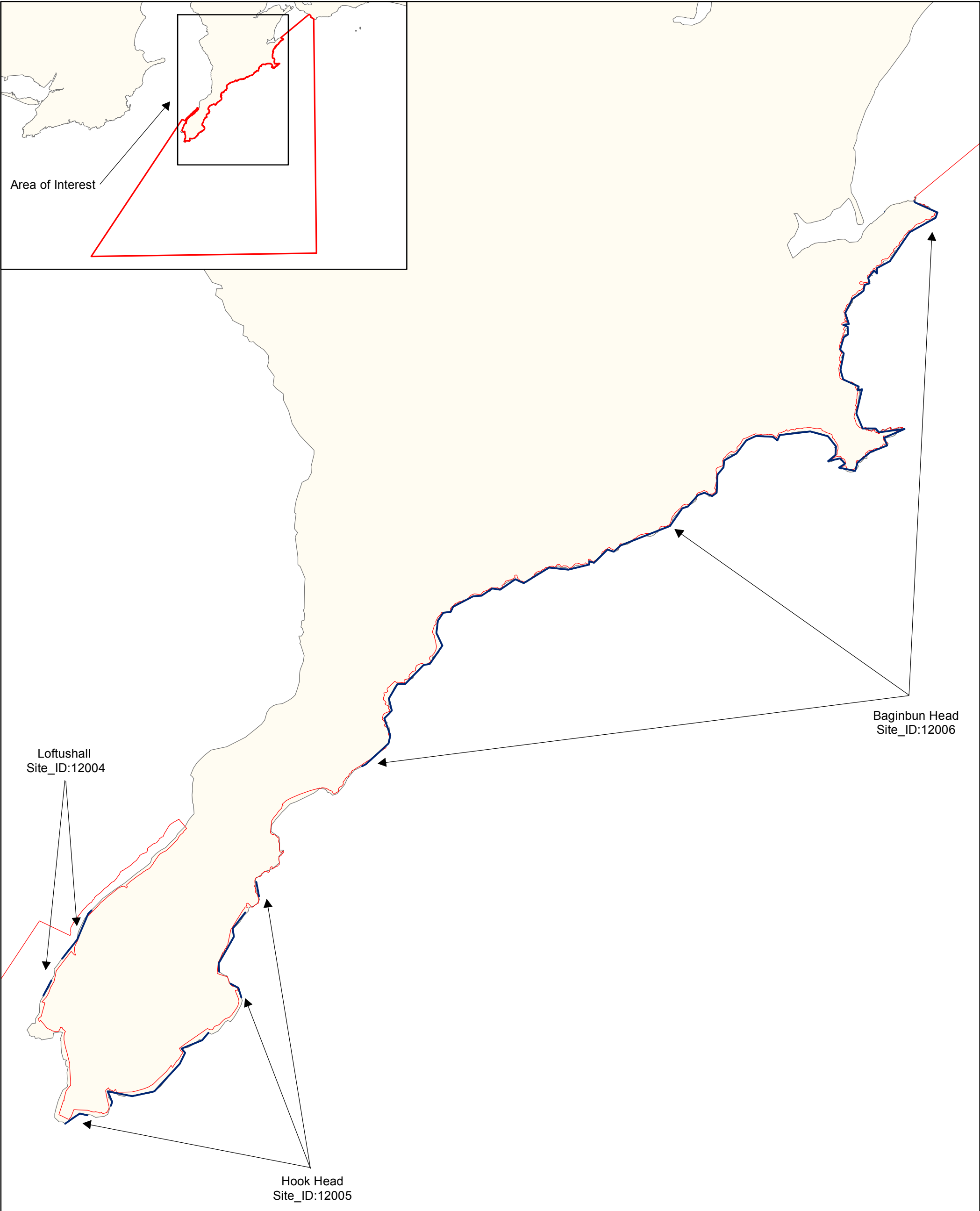
Exposed to moderately exposed intertidal reef community complex

Laminaria dominated community

Sand with *Chaetezone christei* and *Tellina* sp. community

Sediment





Legend

- SAC 000764
- 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary