

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Blackwater Bank SAC 002953



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

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Citation:

**NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Blackwater Bank SAC 002953. Version 3.
National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government
and Heritage.**

**Series Editors: Maria Long and Colin Heaslip
ISSN 2009-4086**

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*

002953	Blackwater Bank SAC
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1110	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
1351	Harbour Porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>

Please note that this SAC is adjacent to Long Bank SAC (002161) and Carnsore Point SAC (002269) and overlaps with Seas off Wexford SPA (004237). See map 2. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for adjacent and overlapping sites as appropriate. IMPORTANT: This 'Version 3' document includes 1 additional QI (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 :	2007
Title :	Benthic surveys of sandbanks in the Irish Sea
Author :	Roche, C.; Lyons, D.O.; Farinas Franco, J.; O'Connor, B.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 29
Year :	2023
Title :	Blackwater Bank SAC (site code 2953) Conservation objectives supporting document- marine habitat V2
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document
Year :	2024
Title :	Blackwater Bank SAC (site code 002953) Conservation objectives supporting document - Harbour Porpoise V1
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document

Other References

Year :	2012
Title :	Subtidal benthic investigations of the Blackwater Sandbank
Author :	Aquafact
Series :	Unpublished document for the Marine Institute and NPWS

Spatial data sources

Year :	Interpolated 2013
Title :	2005, 2012 sandbank 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. Clipped to SAC boundary
Used For :	1110, Marine community types (maps 3 and 4)

Conservation Objectives for : Blackwater Bank SAC [002953]

1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time in Blackwater Bank SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

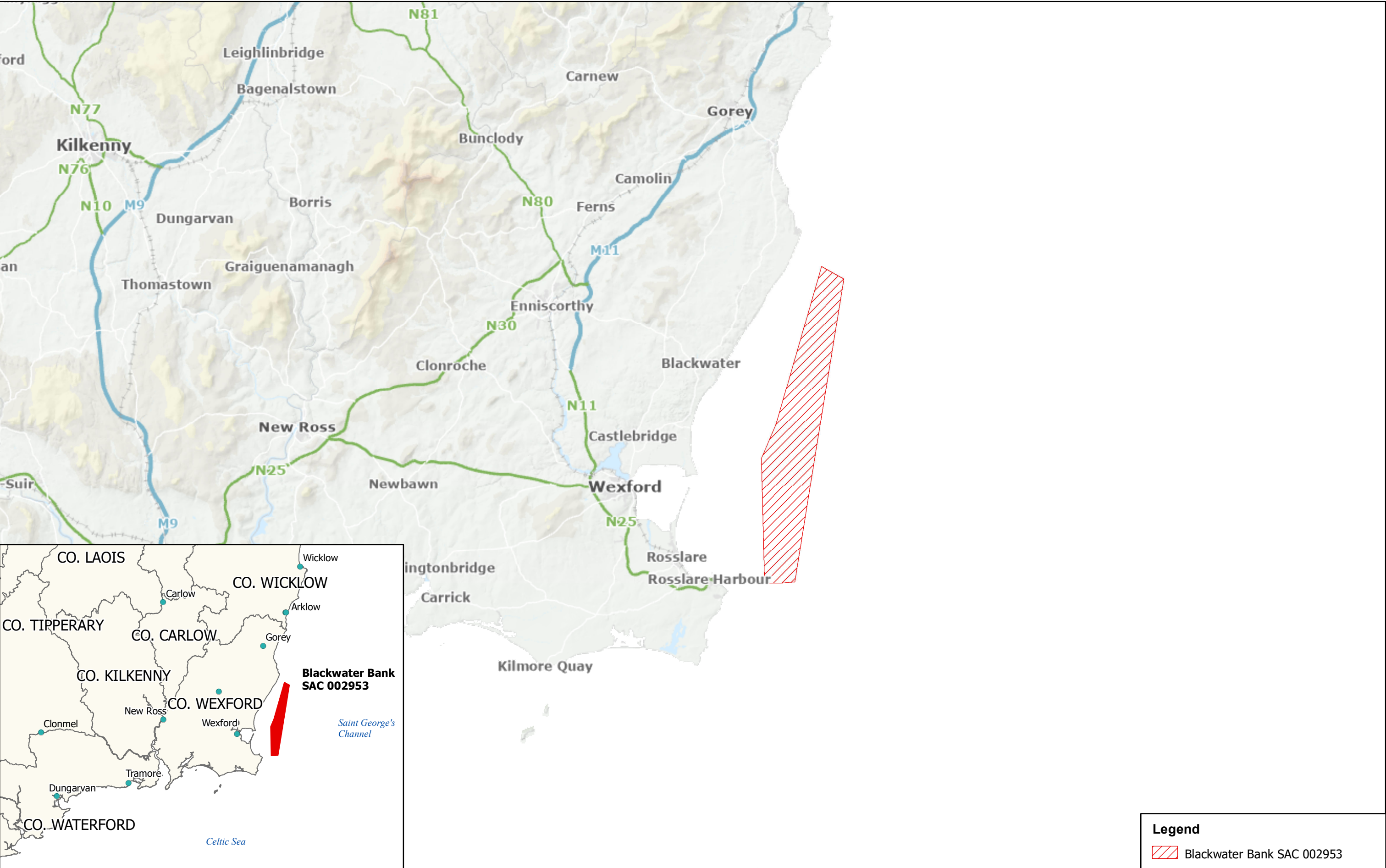
Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Habitat area was estimated as 7310ha using the Carnsore Point to Wicklow Head Admiralty Chart (no. 1787-0)
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	The distribution of sandbanks is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Distribution established using the Carnsore Point to Wicklow Head Admiralty Chart (no. 1787-0)
Community distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community type in a natural condition: Sand with <i>Nephtys cirrosa</i> and <i>Bathyporeia elegans</i> community complex. See map 4	The likely area of the community was derived from benthic surveys undertaken in 2005 (Roche et al., 2007) and in 2012 (Aquafact, 2012). See marine supporting document for further details

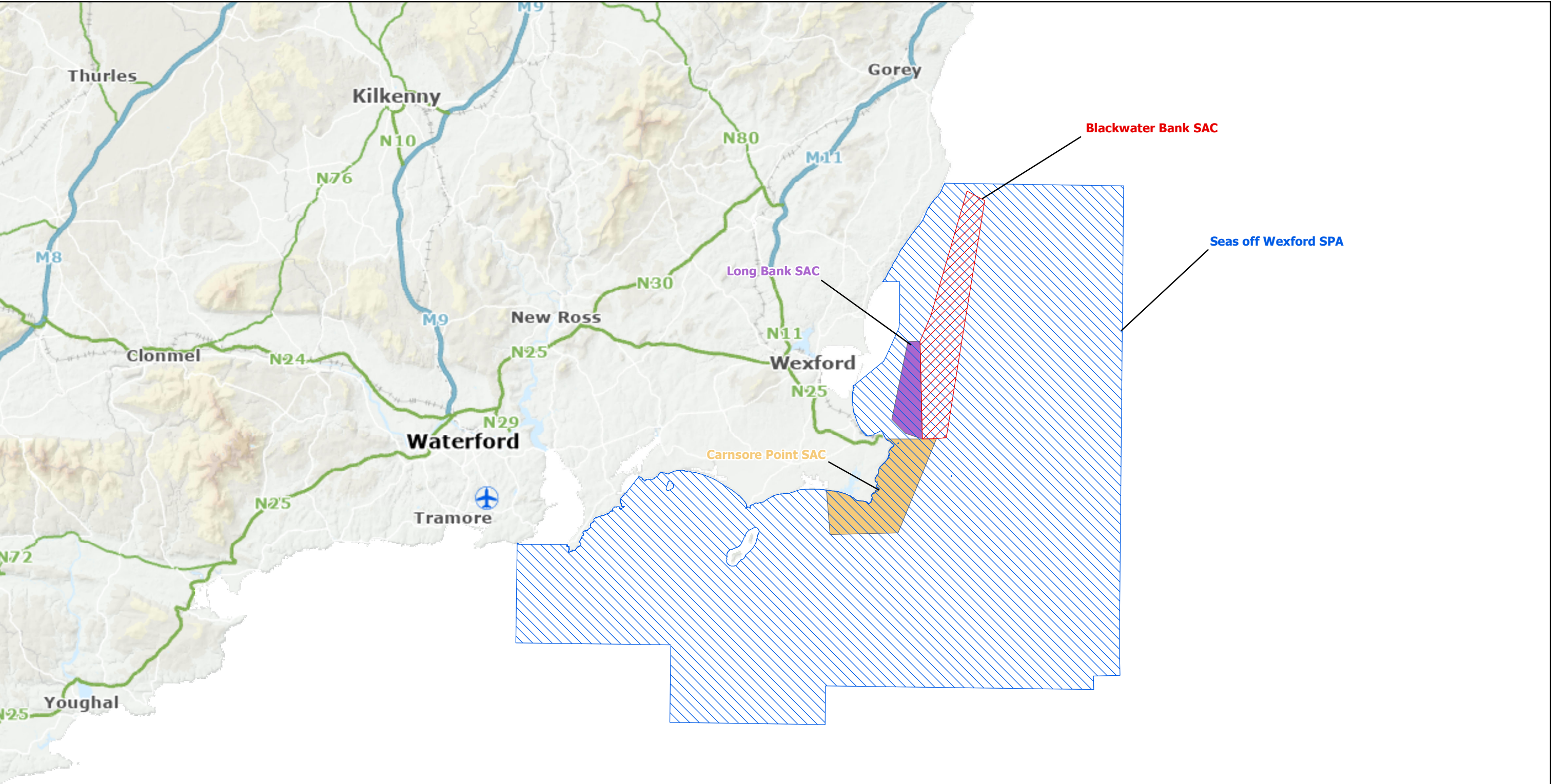
Conservation Objectives for : Blackwater Bank SAC [002953]




1351 Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

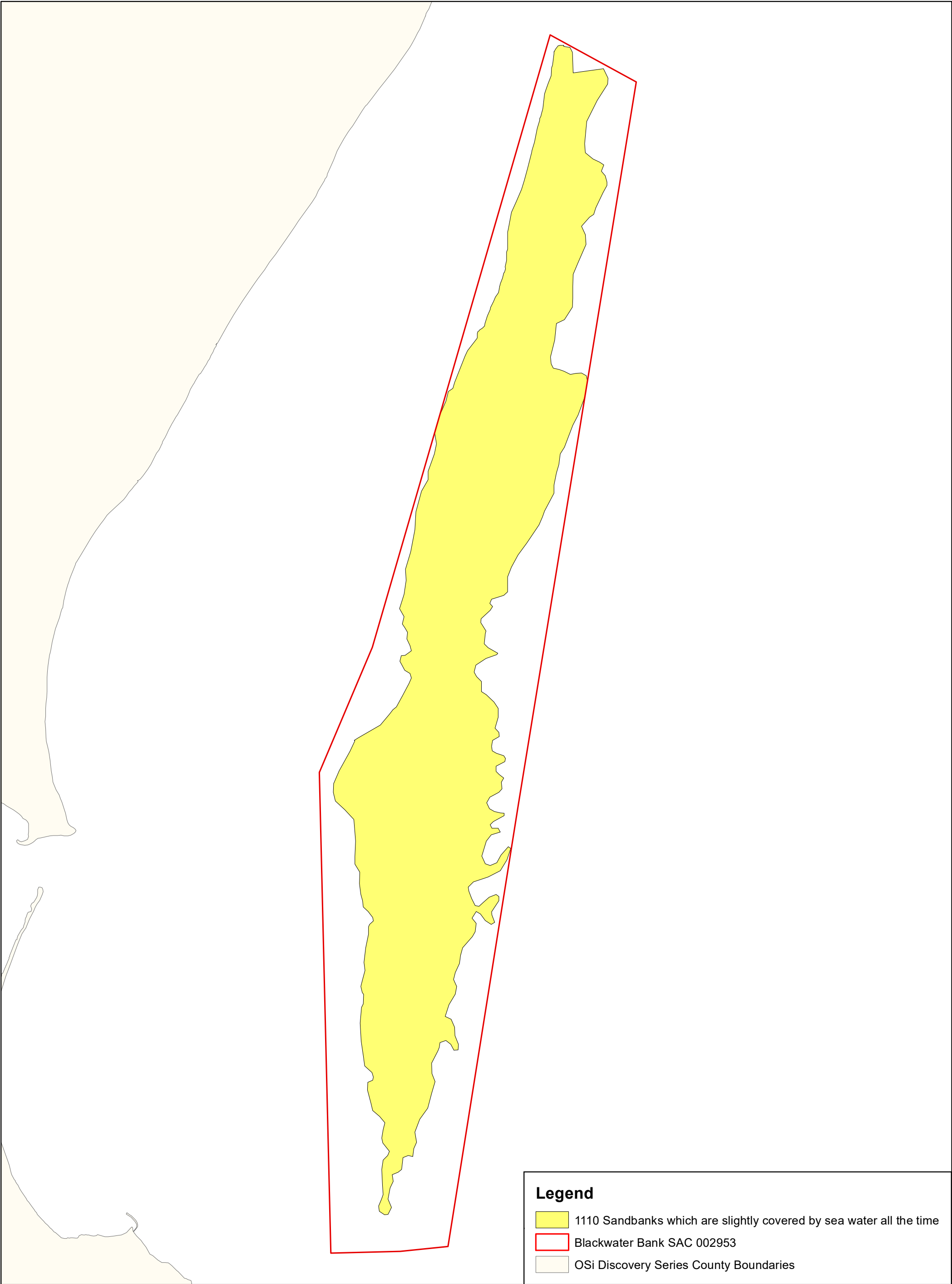
To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in Blackwater Bank SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

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 Blackwater Bank SAC conservation objectives supporting document - 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 Blackwater Bank SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)



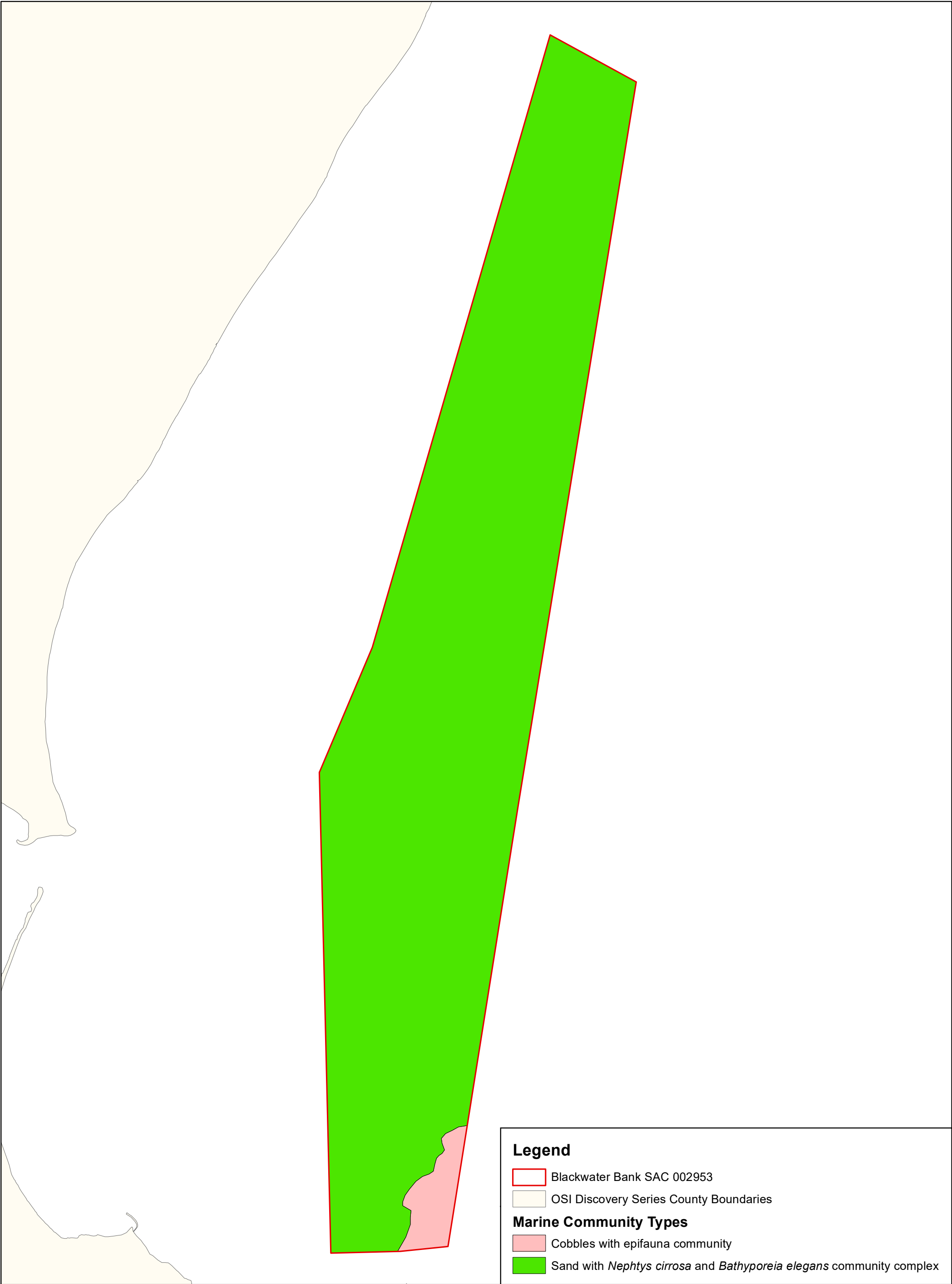


- Legend**
-  Blackwater Bank SAC 002953
 -  Seas off Wexford SPA 004237
 -  Long Bank SAC 002161
 -  Carnsore Point SAC 002269







Legend

- 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- Blackwater Bank SAC 002953
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundaries



Legend

-  Blackwater Bank SAC 002953
-  OSI Discovery Series County Boundaries
- Marine Community Types**
-  Cobbles with epifauna community
-  Sand with *Nephtys cirrosa* and *Bathyporeia elegans* community complex