

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Rockabill SPA 004014



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

004014	Rockabill SPA
A148	Purple Sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i>
A192	Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>
A193	Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>
A194	Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>

Please note that this SPA overlaps with Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (003000). See map 2. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for the overlapping site as appropriate.

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

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

References

- Year :** 2005
Title : Ireland's wetlands and their waterbirds: status and distribution
Author : Crowe, O.
Series : BirdWatch Ireland. Newcastle, Co Wicklow
-
- Year :** 2008
Title : Rockabill tern manual
Author : Newton, S.F.; Glenister, L.J.
Series : BirdWatch Ireland
-
- Year :** 2012
Title : Irish Wetland Bird Survey: results of waterbird monitoring in Ireland in 2010/11
Author : Crowe, O.; Boland, H.; Walsh A.
Series : Irish Birds 9(3): 397 - 410
-
- Year :** 2012
Title : Rockabill tern report 2012
Author : Burke, A.; Bowgen, K.; Newton S.F.
Series : BirdWatch Ireland
-
- Year :** 2013
Title : BirdLife International Seabird Ecology and Foraging Range Database
Author : BirdLife International
Series : <http://seabird.wikispaces.com>
-

Conservation Objectives for : Rockabill SPA [004014]

A148 Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Purple Sandpiper in Rockabill SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Numbers occurring at the site are monitored by the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (see Crowe et al., 2012). Numbers appear to have declined but survey effort may have had an influence on latest estimates. A nationally important estimate of 48 individuals (3-year mean peak 1997/98 - 1999/00) was recorded at this site (Crowe, 2005)
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by purple sandpiper other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	During the non-breeding season purple sandpipers show a strong preference for tidal rocky shores, often utilising artificial structures such as piers or breakwaters for roosting. They have been found to be highly faithful to their wintering sites

Conservation Objectives for : Rockabill SPA [004014]

A192 Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Roseate Tern in Rockabill SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs)	Number	No significant decline	For census methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). 1,207 roseate tern nests were recorded during the 2012 breeding season (for more information see Burke et al., 2012)
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline	For productivity estimation methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). A 5-year mean (2008-2012) productivity rate of 1.2 fledglings per nest was outlined in Burke et al., 2012
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (hectares)	No significant decline	For details of the sections and enclosures delineated for Rockabill SPA, consult Newton and Glenister (2008). For the most recent information on how roseate tern nest sites are distributed within the SPA, see Burke et al. (2012)
Prey biomass available	Kilogrammes	No significant decline	Key prey items: small schooling marine fish, very rarely small crustaceans. Key habitats: shallow and upwelling areas, including tide rips and shoals, over sandy bottoms. Foraging range: max. 30km, mean max. 18.28km, mean 12.3km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)). In 2012, the main prey items recorded during nest provisioning on Rockabill SPA were clupeids and sandeels (62.5% and 35.1% respectively- for more information see Burke et al., 2012)
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (hectares)	No significant increase	Seabird species make extensive use of the marine waters adjacent to their breeding colonies. Foraging range: max. 30km, mean max. 18.28km, mean 12.3km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)). For more site specific information consult Burke et al. (2012)
Disturbance at breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding roseate tern population	For recent information on disturbance levels during the breeding season refer to Burke et al. (2012)

Conservation Objectives for : Rockabill SPA [004014]

A193 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Tern in Rockabill SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs)	Number	No significant decline	For census methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). 2,031 common tern nests were recorded during the 2012 breeding season (for more information see Burke et al., 2012)
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline	For productivity estimation methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). In 2012, a productivity rate of 0.30 (range 0.21 - 0.44) fledglings per nest was estimated (Burke et al., 2012)
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (Hectares)	No significant decline	For details of the sections and enclosures delineated for Rockabill SPA, consult Newton and Glenister (2008). For the most recent information on how common tern nest sites are distributed within the SPA, see Burke et al. (2012)
Prey biomass available	Kilogrammes	No significant decline	Key prey items: Small fish, crustaceans, insects and occasionally squid. Key habitats: common tern forage in/over shallow coastal waters, bays, inlets, shoals, tidal rips, drift lines, beaches, saltmarsh creeks, lakes, ponds or rivers. Foraging range: max. 37km, mean max. 33.81km, mean 8.67km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)). In 2012, the main prey items recorded during nest provisioning on Rockabill SPA were clupeids and gadoids (73.3% and 22.9% respectively - for more information see Burke et al., 2012)
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (hectares)	No significant increase	Seabird species make extensive use of the marine waters adjacent to their breeding colonies. Foraging range: max. 37km, mean max. 33.81km, mean 8.67km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)). For more site specific information consult Burke et al. (2012)
Disturbance at breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding common tern population	For recent information on disturbance levels during the breeding season refer to Burke et al. (2012)

Conservation Objectives for : Rockabill SPA [004014]

A194 Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Arctic Tern in Rockabill SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs)	Number	No significant decline	For census methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). 165 Arctic tern nests were recorded during the 2012 breeding season (for more information see Burke et al., 2012)
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline	For productivity estimation methodology see Newton and Glenister (2008). In 2012, a productivity rate of 0.14 - 0.22 fledglings per nest was estimated (Burke et al., 2012)
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (hectares)	No significant decline	For details of the sections and enclosures delineated for Rockabill SPA consult Newton and Glenister (2008). For the most recent information on how Arctic tern nest sites are distributed within the SPA, see Burke et al. (2012)
Prey biomass available	Kilogrammes	No significant decline	Key prey items: Small fish, crustaceans and other invertebrates. Key habitats: include open waters and shallow bays, rocky shores, tidal flats, shoals, tide rips, ocean fronts and upwellings. Foraging range: max. 20.6km, mean max. 12.24km, mean 11.75km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)). For more site-specific information, consult Burke et al. (2012)
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (hectares)	No significant increase	Seabird species make extensive use of the marine waters adjacent to their breeding colonies. Foraging range: max. 20.6km, mean max. 12.24km, mean 11.75km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2013)) For more site-specific information, consult Burke et al. (2012)
Disturbance at breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding Arctic tern population	For recent information on disturbance levels during the breeding season, refer to Burke et al. (2012)



