



NATURA 2000 - STANDARD DATA FORM

For Special Protection Areas (SPA),
Proposed Sites for Community Importance (pSCI),
Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and
for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SITE IE0000181
SITENAME Rathlin O'Birne Island SAC

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1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Type B	1.2 Site code IE0000181	Back to top
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1.3 Site name

Rathlin O'Birne Island SAC

1.4 First Compilation date 2001-03	1.5 Update date 2020-10
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1.6 Respondent:

Name/Organisation: National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Address: 90 King Street North, Dublin 7, D07 N7CV, Ireland
Email: datadelivery@chg.gov.ie

Date site proposed as SCI:	2002-01
Date site confirmed as SCI:	No data
Date site designated as SAC:	2017-10
National legal reference of SAC designation:	444/2017

2. SITE LOCATION

2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

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					Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Glo.
B	A045	Branta leucopsis		w	300	300	i		G	B	A	C	A
B	A014	Hydrobates pelagicus		r	1000	1000	p		G	C	A	C	A
B	A183	Larus fuscus		r	7	7	p		G	C	B	C	C
B	A015	Oceanodroma leucorhoa		r	10	10	i		G	C	B	B	B

- **Group:** A = Amphibians, B = Birds, F = Fish, I = Invertebrates, M = Mammals, P = Plants, R = Reptiles
- **S:** in case that the data on species are sensitive and therefore have to be blocked for any public access enter: yes
- **NP:** in case that a species is no longer present in the site enter: x (optional)
- **Type:** p = permanent, r = reproducing, c = concentration, w = wintering (for plant and non-migratory species use permanent)
- **Unit:** i = individuals, p = pairs or other units according to the Standard list of population units and codes in accordance with Article 12 and 17 reporting (see [reference portal](#))
- **Abundance categories (Cat.):** C = common, R = rare, V = very rare, P = present - to fill if data are deficient (DD) or in addition to population size information
- **Data quality:** G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation); VP = 'Very poor' (use this category only, if not even a rough estimation of the population size can be made, in this case the fields for population size can remain empty, but the field "Abundance categories" has to be filled in)

3.3 Other important species of flora and fauna (optional)

Species					Population in the site				Motivation					
Group	CODE	Scientific Name	S	NP	Size		Unit	Cat.	Species Annex		Other categories			
					Min	Max		C R V P	IV	V	A	B	C	D
I		Alcyonium glomeratum						C						X
I		Aldisa zetlandica						R						X
P		Carpomitra costata						R						X
B		Cepphus grylle			16	16	i					X		
I		Cuthona pustulata						V						X
I		Diazona violacea						C						X
I		Eunicella verrucosa						C						X
I		Halecium muricatum						R						X
B		Larus argentatus			460	550	p							X
B		Larus marinus			45	60	p							X
I		Molgula occulata						R						X
I		Phakellia ventrilarum						C						X

B	Phalacrocorax aristotelis			10	10	p						X	
I	Phellia gausapata						R						X
P	Schmitzia hiscockiana						R						X
I	Spongionella pulchella						C						X
I	Tritonia nilsodhneri						C						X

- **Group:** A = Amphibians, B = Birds, F = Fish, Fu = Fungi, I = Invertebrates, L = Lichens, M = Mammals, P = Plants, R = Reptiles
- **CODE:** for Birds, Annex IV and V species the code as provided in the reference portal should be used in addition to the scientific name
- **S:** in case that the data on species are sensitive and therefore have to be blocked for any public access enter: yes
- **NP:** in case that a species is no longer present in the site enter: x (optional)
- **Unit:** i = individuals, p = pairs or other units according to the standard list of population units and codes in accordance with Article 12 and 17 reporting, (see [reference portal](#))
- **Cat.:** Abundance categories: C = common, R = rare, V = very rare, P = present
- **Motivation categories:** **IV, V:** Annex Species (Habitats Directive), **A:** National Red List data; **B:** Endemics; **C:** International Conventions; **D:** other reasons

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

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4.1 General site character

Habitat class	% Cover
N01	92.0
N10	5.0
N05	3.0
Total Habitat Cover	100

Other Site Characteristics

Rathlin O'Birne Island is a small, uninhabited island situated on the north-west coast of Ireland off Malin Beg Head, north of Donegal Bay. It is fully exposed to extremely powerful wave action from the Atlantic on its south and west coasts. Bedrock is igneous intrusive granite and other rocks rich in silica, which rise steeply off the deep ocean floor (charted as 50 - 80 m just offshore). Main habitat on island is maritime grassland. Low cliffs occur on the southern side of the island. The site includes a substantial area of surrounding seas. The island has an automated lighthouse.

4.2 Quality and importance

Rathlin O'Birne has many good examples of submerged reef communities that are extremely exposed to wave action. It supports a rich flora and fauna that is characterized by several rare and notable species. The kelp forest is also representative, most notably for being characterized by the anemone, *Phellia gausapata*, which is characteristic of exposed communities. Species richness is particularly high (79 species) at the north-west tip of the island. Rare species are present in the infralittoral reef community, including two algal species, *Carpomitra costata* and *Schmitzia hiscockiana*. In deeper water, there are many unusual and fragile circalittoral reef communities. Communities that are characterized by the rare sea fan, *Eunicella verrucosa*, are widespread despite their fragility. *Eunicella verrucosa*, and its associated opisthobranch mollusc, *Tritonia nilsodhneri*, are at the northern limit of their range at Rathlin O'Birne. A number of other notable and rare circalittoral species are found, including sponges, hydroids, nudibranchs, soft corals and ascidians. The site is important for breeding seabirds, notably *Hydrobatas pelagicus* with probably the largest colony in the north-west region. Possible breeding site of *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The site supports a nationally important wintering population of *Branta leucopsis*.

4.3 Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site

The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and pressures [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
L	F02.01.01		i
M	A04.03		i

Positive Impacts			
Rank	Activities, management [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
L	X		i

Rank: H = high, M = medium, L = low

Pollution: N = Nitrogen input, P = Phosphor/Phosphate input, A = Acid input/acidification,

T = toxic inorganic chemicals, O = toxic organic chemicals, X = Mixed pollutions

i = inside, o = outside, b = both

4.5 Documentation

Cramp, S., Bourne, W.R.P., Saunders, D. (1974). The Seabirds of Britain and Ireland. Collins, London. Hunt, J., Derwin, J., Coveney, J. & Newton, S. (2000). Republic of Ireland. Pp. 365-416 in M.F. Heath & M.I. Evans, eds. Important Bird Areas in Europe: Priority sites for conservation 1: Northern Europe. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 8). Hutchinson, C.D. (1989). Birds in Ireland. Poyser, London. Lloyd, C. (1982). Inventory of seabird breeding colonies in Republic of Ireland, Unpublished report, Forestry and Wildlife Service, Dublin. Merne, O.J. (1989). Important Bird Areas in The Republic of Ireland. In: Grimmett, R.F.A. and Jones, T.A. (eds) Important Bird Areas in Europe. ICBP Technical Publication No. 9. Cambridge Merne, O.J. and Walsh, A. (1994). Barnacle Geese in Ireland, Spring 1993 and 1994. Irish Birds 5: 151-156. Picton, B.E. (1985). Anthozoans (Coelenterata: Anthozoa) new to Ireland and new records of some rarely recorded species. Irish Naturalists' Journal, 21: 484-488 Picton, B.E and Costello M.J. eds. (1997). BioMar Biotope Viewer: a Guide to Marine Habitats, Fauna and Flora of Britain and Ireland (Ver. 2.0) Environmental Sciences Unit, Trinity College, Dublin.(Compact Disc). Sheppard, R. (1993). Ireland's Wetland Wealth. IWC, Dublin. Whilde, A. (1985). The All Ireland Tern Survey 1984. Unpublished report for the Irish Wildbird Conservancy, Dublin.

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

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6.2 Management Plan(s):

An actual management plan does exist:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, but in preparation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No

7. MAP OF THE SITES

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INSPIRE ID:

IE.NPWS.PS.NATURA2000.SAC.IE0000181

Map delivered as PDF in electronic format (optional)

Yes No

Reference(s) to the original map used for the digitalisation of the electronic boundaries (optional).

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