



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 IE0000216
SITENAME River Shannon Callows SAC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [1. SITE IDENTIFICATION](#)
- [2. SITE LOCATION](#)
- [3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION](#)
- [4. SITE DESCRIPTION](#)
- [6. SITE MANAGEMENT](#)
- [7. MAP OF THE SITE](#)

1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Type	1.2 Site code	Back to top
B	IE0000216	

1.3 Site name

River Shannon Callows SAC

1.4 First Compilation date	1.5 Update date
2000-10	2014-09

1.6 Respondent:

Name/Organisation:	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Address:	7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ireland
Email:	datadelivery@ahg.gov.ie

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

2. SITE LOCATION

2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

[Back to top](#)

Longitude
-8.020866416

Latitude
53.25326103

2.2 Area [ha]:
5856.48

2.3 Marine area [%]
2.58

2.4 Sitelength [km]:
0.0

2.5 Administrative region code and name

NUTS level 2 code **Region Name**

IE02	Southern and Eastern
IE01	Border, Midland and Western
IE01	Border, Midland and Western





2.6 Biogeographical Region(s)

Atlantic (%)

3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

[Back to top](#)

3.1 Habitat types present on the site and assessment for them

Annex I Habitat types						Site assessment			
Code	PF	NP	Cover [ha]	Cave [number]	Data quality	A B C D	A B C		
						Representativity	Relative Surface	Conservation	Global
6410 			117.13		M	A	C	A	A
6510 			117.13		M	A	B	A	A
8240 			58.56		M	B	C	B	B
91E0 			58.56		M	B	C	B	C

- **PF:** for the habitat types that can have a non-priority as well as a priority form (6210, 7130, 9430) enter "X" in the column PF to indicate the priority form.
- **NP:** in case that a habitat type no longer exists in the site enter: x (optional)
- **Cover:** decimal values can be entered
- **Caves:** for habitat types 8310, 8330 (caves) enter the number of caves if estimated surface is not available.
- **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)

3.2 Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive

92/43/EEC and site evaluation for them

Species					Population in the site						Site assessment			
G	Code	Scientific Name	S	NP	T	Size		Unit	Cat.	D.qual.	A B C D	A B C		
						Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Glo.
B	A056	Anas clypeata			p	12	12	p		G	D			
B	A052	Anas crecca			w	288	288	i		G	C	A	C	C
B	A050	Anas penelope			w	2830	2830	i		G	B	A	C	B
B	A395	Anser albifrons flavirostris			w	21	21	i		G	C	C	C	C
B	A149	Calidris alpina			w	675	675	i		G	B	A	C	B
B	A082	Circus cyaneus			w	1	5	i		G	C	B	C	C
B	A082	Circus cyaneus			c	1	5	i		G	C	B	C	C
B	A113	Coturnix coturnix			r	1	15	i		G	A	A	B	A
B	A122	Crex crex			r	66	66	p		G	A	A	B	C
B	A037	Cygnus columbianus bewickii			w	22	22	i		G	A	B	C	C
B	A038	Cygnus cygnus			w	627	627	i		G	B	A	C	B
B	A098	Falco columbarius			p	1	1	p		G	C	C	C	C
B	A153	Gallinago gallinago			r	323	323	p		G	C	B	C	A
B	A156	Limosa limosa			r	2	2	p		G	A	A	C	A
B	A156	Limosa limosa			w	664	664	i		G	A	A	C	A
B	A290	Locustella naevia			r	10	10	p		G	C	B	C	C
M	1355	Lutra lutra			p				P	M	C	B	C	B
B	A160	Numenius arquata			r	45	45	p		G	C	B	C	A
B	A160	Numenius arquata			w	129	129	i		G	C	B	C	A
B	A140	Pluvialis apricaria			w	7265	7265	i		G	B	A	C	B
B	A162	Tringa totanus			r	308	308	p		G	B	B	C	A
B	A142	Vanellus vanellus			w	11126	11126	i		G	B	A	C	A

B	A142	Vanellus vanellus		r	289	289	p		G	B	A	C	A
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- **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
B		Cygnus olor			537	537								X
P		Groenlandia densa						R			X			
P		Hordeum secalinum						R			X			
P		Lathyrus palustris						C						X
M		Lepus timidus hibernicus						P			X			
M		Lepus timidus hibernicus						P				X		
M		Lepus timidus hibernicus						P					X	
P		Orchis morio						R			X			
A		Rana temporaria						P			X			
A		Rana temporaria						P					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

[Back to top](#)

4.1 General site character

Habitat class	% Cover
N07	3.0
N16	1.0
N23	1.0
N10	80.0
N09	1.0
N06	13.0
N14	1.0
Total Habitat Cover	100

Other Site Characteristics

The River Shannon is the largest river in Ireland, and its central route drains a large percentage of the whole country. It has proved too powerful to be tamed by drainage schemes in the past, and this central section is still free to flood the surrounding lowlands in winter. It is a well-used agricultural resource of low intensity during the summer. This floodplain functions as a semi-natural meadow/marsh habitat (used for grazing or hay-making). There is an extensive system of surface drains. The site is linear, running for about 50 km, at an average width of about 0.75 km (but reaching 1.5 km in several places). For about half its length it borders raised bogs, most of which are in the process of large-scale peat harvesting. Esker ridges lie adjacent to the callows in some places. There are areas of both relict and active levees. A weir at Meelick divides the flooding regime. Ecological diversity is caused and maintained by multiple ownership, variation in the flooding regime due to the topography of the callows, hundreds of kilometres of drainage ditches, differences in the amount of peat and alluvium in the soils and by the extensive nature of the site. The main habitat on the site is humid grassland managed for hay and pasture and these areas have the same management regime as the lowland hay meadows and *Molinia* meadows.

4.2 Quality and importance

This site is the largest area of semi-natural floodplain grassland in Ireland and Britain and has very many features of a natural ecosystem. It has been placed among the most 'natural' floodplains in western Europe. It is subject to regular and prolonged annual winter flooding. Wooded alluvial islands which flood regularly occur at one location. A number of Red Data Book and scarce plant species occur on the site, the scarce species including *Leucojum aestivum*, *Sium latifolium*, *Botrychium lunaria* and *Lemna gibba*. In addition, the site contains a very wide variety of native plant species. A small area of limestone pavement at Clorhane is of particular importance as it is the only example of this habitat in the region. Along with its tributary the Little Brosna (designated separately) this is one of the great waterfowl sites in Ireland, with huge numbers of a wide range of species occurring in winter, with a mean peak of 34,985 waterbirds recorded from 1995/96 to 1999/00. This is the third highest for an inland site in Ireland. The highest is the Little Brosna, which is an extension to the Middle Shannon Callows. Only three estuarine sites are higher. In 1996/97 one species was of International Importance (Whooper Swan) and six species were of National Importance. A small flock of *Anser albifrons flavirostris* regularly use a few locations on the site and these are part of the Internationally Important flocks of both the Little Brosna and the River Suck. It is one of very few significant inland sites in Britain or Ireland for *Calidris alpina*. It is the top site in the country for *Cygnus olor* and close to that for *Cygnus cygnus*, *Vanellus vanellus* and *Pluvialis apricaria*. The E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, *Circus cyaneus*, regularly uses the site for hunting in autumn and winter. Perhaps even more important are its nesting *Crex crex*, *Coturnix coturnix* and breeding waders. In 1987, 1204 pairs of breeding waders were recorded (including adjacent parts of the Shannon), mainly *Vanellus vanellus*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Numenius arquata* and *Tringa totanus*. *Crex crex* has one of its last strongholds here with 70 and 66 calling birds present in 1998 and 1999 respectively. The Shannon Callows is one of the few areas in Ireland where *Coturnix coturnix* breeds. Numbers vary between years but up to 14 males have been heard. There are high populations of ground-nesting passerines, such as *Alauda arvensis*, *Anthus pratensis*, *Locustella naevia* and *Emberiza schoeniclus* on the site. The River Shannon Callows is a breeding site for two Red Data Book waterbird species: *Limosa limosa islandica* and *Anas clypeata*. The Red Data Book species *Anas acuta* has

also bred on the site though its current status is unknown. The E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species *Falco columbarius*, bred on the site in 1996. Large rivers flowing unfettered through lowland floodplains are now rare anywhere in Europe. This river, and its associated habitats, are of the highest conservation importance.

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]
M	D06		i
M	F03.01		i
L	A04.03		i
L	D01.01		i
L	F02.03		i
L	A08		i
L	D01.05		i
L	J02.05.02		i
L	E03		i

Positive Impacts			
Rank	Activities, management [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
L	D01.01		i
L	A08		i
M	D06		i
L	D01.05		i
L	J02.05.02		i
H	A03		i
L	F02.03		i
H	A04		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

Bernaldez, F.G. (1991). Vegetation of the Clonmacnoise and Little Brosna Sites, Central Ireland. Internal report to the FAEWA EU-STEP project. Borggreve, C. and de Groot, C. (1996). Vegetation of the Shannon Callows at Bullock Island, Ireland. MSc thesis, Wageningen Agricultural University, Netherlands. Bron, W.A. and de Heer, M. (1996). Synecology of the Shannon Callows. MSc thesis, Wageningen Agricultural University, Netherlands. Cabot, D. (1999). Ireland. A Natural History. Harper Collins, New Naturalist Series. Casey, C. (1993). Corncrake Fieldwork on the Shannon Callows, (1993). BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Casey, C. (1996). Corncrakes increase again. Wings 3: 12-13. Casey, C. (1997). Corncrakes survive wet summer. Wings 7: 13. Colhoun, K. (2001) I-WeBS Report 1998-99. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Cranswick, P.A., Bowler, J.M., Einarsson, O., Gardarsson, A., McElwaine, J.G., Merne, O.J., Rees, E.C. and Wells, J.H. (1996). Numbers of Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* in Iceland, Ireland, and Britain in January 1995: results of the international Whooper Swan census. Wildfowl 47: 23-36. Coveney, J., Merne, O.J., Wilson, H.J., Allen, D. and Thomas, G. (1993). A Conservation Strategy for Birds in Ireland. Unpublished report. Irish Wildbird Conservancy. Curtis, T.G.F. and McGough, H.N. (1988). The Irish Red Data Book. I Vascular Plants. Stationery office, Dublin. Curtis, T.G.F. and Neff, J. (1997). Provisional Scarce Plants List. Unpublished report, National Parks and Wildlife, Dublin. Delany, S. (1997). I-WeBS Reports, 1995-96. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Delany, S. (1998). I-WeBS Reports 1996-97. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Derwin, J. (1997). Corncrake Fieldworking North Donegal 1997. Internal report to IWC BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Fox, A.D., Norriss, D.W., Stroud, D.A. and Wilson, H.J. (1994). Greenland White-fronted Geese in Ireland and Britain 1982/83 - 1993/94. Greenland White-fronted Goose Study Research Report, no. 8. The Irish National Parks and Wildlife Service. Fuller, R.M. (1987). The changing extent and conservation status of lowland grasslands in England and Wales: a review of grassland surveys, 1930 - 1984. Biological Conservation 40: 281-300. Heery, S. (1991). The plant communities of the grazed and mown grasslands of River Shannon Callows. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 91B(1): 1-19. Heery, S. (1993). The Shannon Floodlands - a Natural History of the Shannon Callows. Tir Eolas, Kinvara. Heery, S. (1994). Corncrake Map of Options Project - North Donegal, Shannon Callows and Moy Valley. Unpublished report to Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin. Heery, S. (1996). Birds in Central Ireland. Mid Shannon Bird Report, 1992-1995. BirdWatch Ireland. Heery, S. (2000). Birds in Central Ireland. Mid-Shannon Bird Report 1996-1999. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Heery, S. and Cooney, T. (1997). Part Re-survey Breeding Waders on the River Shannon/Little Brosna Callows. Unpublished report to Dúchas - The Heritage Service and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Belfast. Heery, S. (1998). Rare and Scarce Plants on the Shannon Callows. Unpublished report to Dúchas, The Heritage Service, Dublin. Hooijer, A. (1996). Floodplain Hydrology. An Ecologically Oriented Study of the Shannon Callows. PhD thesis, Free University, Amsterdam. Hutchinson, C. (1979). Ireland's Wetlands and their Birds. IWC, Dublin. Hunt, J., Derwin, J., Coveney, J. and

Newton, S. (2000). Republic of Ireland. Pp. 365-416 in Heath, M.F. and Evans, M.I. (eds.). Important Bird Areas in Europe: Priority Sites for Conservation 1: Northern Europe. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 8). Irish Wetland Birds Survey (I-WeBS) Database, 1994/95-2000/01. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. McDevitt, A.M. (1998 and 1999). Corncrake Fieldwork on the Shannon Callows, 1998 and 1999. BirdWatch Ireland, Dublin. Mayes, E. and Stowe, T. (1989). The status and distribution of the Corncrake in Ireland, 1988. Irish Birds 4: 1-12. Nairn, R.G.W., Heery, S. and Herbert, I.J. (1988). Shannon Callows 1987: Report of a Survey of Breeding Birds and Plant Communities in the River Shannon Floodplain. Unpublished report to the Irish Wildbird Conservancy, Dublin. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (1991). Corncrakes and Grassland Management in Britain and Ireland. R.S.P.B., Sandy. Salmon, D.G. and Black, J.M. (1986). The January Whooper Swan census in Britain, Iceland and Ireland. Wildfowl 37: 172-174. Sheppard, R. (1991). The Irish Wigeon population - distribution and changes. In: Harradine, J. Wigeon in Ireland, 17-29. British Association for Shooting and conservation, Rossett. Sheppard, R. (1993). Ireland's Wetland Wealth. IWC, Dublin. Sheppard, R. and Green, R.E. (1994). Status of the Corncrake in Ireland in 1993. Irish Birds 5: 125-138. Smiddy, P. and O'Sullivan, O. (1995). Forty-second Irish Bird Report 1994. Irish Birds 5: 325-351. Smiddy, P. and O'Sullivan, O. (1996). Forty-third Irish Bird Report, 1995. Irish Birds 5: 445-474. Tubridy, M. (1984) (ed.). Creation and Management of a Heritage Zone at Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, Ireland. Final Report, EEC Contract No. 6611/12. Environmental Sciences Unit, Trinity College. Dublin. Tubridy, M. (1987) (ed.). The Heritage of Clonmacnoise. Environmental Sciences Unit, Trinity College. Dublin. Tubridy, M. (1988). Clonmacnoise Heritage Zone project: a Portfolio of Management Plans. Final report to EC, project no. 6611/85/08/1. Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. (1994). Birds in Europe: Their Conservation Status. Birdlife Conservation Series no. 3. Birdlife International, Cambridge. Waters, R.J. and Cranswick, P.A., Evans, J. and Pollitt, M.S. (1996). The Wetland Bird Survey 1994-1995: Wildfowl and Wader Counts. BTO/WWT/RSPB/NCC, Slimbridge. White, J. and Doyle, G. (1982). The vegetation of Ireland. A catalogue raisonne. Journal of Life Sciences, Royal Dublin Society 3: 289-368.

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

[Back to top](#)

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

[Back to top](#)

INSPIRE ID:

IE.NPWS.PS.NATURA2000.SAC.IE0000216

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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