



Site Name: Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC

Site Code: 000030

This site consists of a small fossil cave in the banks of the Ahaclare River situated within a wood approximately 4 km west of Broadford, Co. Clare. It is a winter hibernation site and also a mating site of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. A nearby summer roost for the bat and the commuting routes between the two are also included.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[8310] Caves
[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands
[1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)

The entrance to the cave is relatively small and leads into a chamber approximately 2 m wide and less than 2 m high. All the bats hang from the roof of this chamber. The entrance to the cave is sheltered by thick vegetation. Total length of the cave is approximately 50 m. The cave ends in a sump, though there is no sign that the water floods other parts of the cave.

The cave is located within Poulnalecka Wood, which is a broadleaved wood consisting of Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Birch (*Betula* sp.) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). This woodland provides important foraging habitat and shelter for the bats. Felling in Poulnalecka Wood would be a cause of concern.

In November 1998, 250 Lesser Horseshoe Bats were counted at the cave, making the site one of international importance. In the national context this site is considered important because it is one of the most eastern points in the distribution of this bat in Ireland.