



Site Name: Termon Strand SAC

Site Code: 001195

This small coastal site is situated around the village of Maghery, about 5 km south-west of Dunglow in west Co. Donegal. It contains a coastal lagoon, sand dunes, wet grassland, mudflats and saltmarsh.

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):

[1150] Coastal Lagoons*

Maghery Lough is a good example of a moderate sized, shallow, meso-polyhaline lagoon. There is a narrow, modified tidal inlet separated from the sea by low sandy ground and a sand dune system. Seawater enters the lagoon on most tides but the salinity is lowered by several small streams which flow into the lagoon from surrounding hills. Floristically, the most notable feature of the lagoon is the presence of the Red Data Book species Foxtail Stonewort (*Lamprothamnion papulosum*). This is a very rare plant in Ireland, being known only from Counties Clare, Wexford and Donegal. Both species of Tasselweed (*Ruppia maritima* and *R. cirrhosa*) occur in the lagoon, along with Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*). Marginal vegetation is well developed and includes the Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardi*), Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) grading into freshwater marsh.

During recent surveys, a total of 32 aquatic faunal taxa were recorded at this site, of which four species are regarded as lagoonal specialists in Britain. These are *Cerastoderma glaucum* (a mollusc), *Idotea chelipes* (Order Isopoda), *Palaemonetes varians* (Order Decapoda) and *Conopeum seurati* (a bryozoan), along with three additional species are proposed lagoonal specialists for Ireland (*Jaera ischiosetosa* and *J. nordmanni* - both Order Isopoda, and *Neomysis integer* - Order Mysida). Two of these species (*Jaera ischiosetosa* and *Conopeum seurati*) appear to be rare or are under-recorded in Ireland. Of note is a thriving population of Soft Clam (*Mya arenaria*) of various age classes.

At the back of Maghery Strand sand dunes occur, the dominant species being Marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) and Sand Sedge (*Carex arenaria*), with Sea Couch (*Elymus farctus*) found closer to the beach. Further from the sea the dunes have been fertilised, thus altering the habitat. In the north of the site areas of wet grassland are found, with herbs such as Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) occurring. The site includes a small area of mudflats in the extreme north, fringed in parts by saltmarsh.

Maghery Lough is of local value for wintering waterfowl, including Mute Swan, Wigeon, Goldeneye and occasional Whooper Swan. The beach and mudflats are used by other birds such as Shelduck, Curlew and Ringed Plover.

The site is of particular importance for the presence of a lagoon, a much threatened habitat in western Europe. The occurrence of the very rare Foxtail Stonewort further adds to its conservation significance.