

Site Name: Dunbeacon Shingle SAC

Site Code: 002280

This coastal site is located at the head of Dunmanus Bay in Dunbeacon townland, 5 km south-west of Durrus village, Co. Cork. The site comprises a diverse and complex mosaic of habitat types in a relatively small area. As well as supporting an example of 'perennial vegetation of stony banks', Dunbeacon Shingle SAC also contains areas of saltmarsh, rush pasture, lake, freshwater marsh, tidal estuarine creeks, scrub woodland, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willow (*Salix* spp.) dominated wet woodland, wet heath and dry heath.

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):

[1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks
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The different habitats at this site support diverse plant communities. The stony bank or shingle beach habitat is well developed and supports species such as Sea Mayweed (*Matricaria maritima*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*).

Characteristic species of saltmarsh at the site include Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) and Sharp-flowered Rush (*J. acutiflorus*) in the higher marsh areas, and in the lower marsh areas Saltmarsh Rush (*J. gerardi*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Glasswort (*Salicornia europaea* agg.) and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*).

Areas of dry heath are dominated by dwarf shrubs such as Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), with Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*) and the lichen *Cladonia portentosa* more frequent in wetter areas.

The lake area is fringed with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), and wet woodland within the site supports species such as Alder and willows, with some Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) in drier areas.

The site provides useful feeding habitat for several bird species including the uncommon Little Egret, Curlew, Snipe, Oystercatcher, Cormorant and Mallard.

The site is used by Otter, a species listed in the Irish Red Data Book and also in the E.U. Habitats Directive.

Present land use comprises a relatively low-level agricultural management, which appears to be favourable to the continued conservation of the important ecological features.

Dunbeacon Shingle contains an important example of perennial vegetation of stony banks, a habitat that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is otherwise of conservation value for the diversity of habitats it contains and for the variety of plant and animal species it supports.