

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: DRUMCLIFF BAY SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004013**

Drumcliff Bay, Co. Sligo is the most northerly of Sligo Bay's three estuarine inlets. The bay comprises an inner area of sheltered estuarine habitat and an outer area of shallow seawater. It extends 9 km east to west from Drumcliff village to Raghly Point. Drumcliff Bay is the estuary of the Drumcliff River, a substantial river flowing from Glencar Lough to the east. The inner part of Drumcliff Bay is sheltered by a sandy/grassy peninsula extending north from Rosses Point. The northern part of the bay is fringed by fine sandy beaches - Ballygilgan Strand, Lissadell Strand and Ardtermon Strand. Salt marsh occurs in the most sheltered areas and at low tide, extensive inter-tidal flats are exposed. A bed of Dwarf Eelgrass (*Zostera noltii*) occurs near the south-eastern corner of the bay.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Drumcliff Bay SPA is of importance as it supports nationally important populations of two species of wintering waterfowl: Sanderling (237) and Bar-tailed Godwit (336) – all figures are four year mean peaks for four of the five winters between 1995/96 and 1999/2000.

Other species that occur regularly include Whooper Swan (45), Light-bellied Brent Goose (74), Shelduck (75), Wigeon (138), Teal (57), Long-tailed Duck (14), Red-breasted Merganser (20), Great Northern Diver (13), Oystercatcher (356), Ringed Plover (139), Lapwing (155), Knot (107), Dunlin (559), Curlew (177) and Redshank (138).

Drumcliff Bay SPA is of national importance for its winter populations of Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit, and the site supports a good diversity of other waterfowl species. Of note is that three of the species which occur regularly (Whooper Swan, Great Northern Diver and Bar-tailed Godwit) are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of Drumcliff Bay SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

25.3.2014