

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: TRAMORE BACK STRAND SPA

SITE CODE: 004027

Tramore Back Strand SPA is located approximately 2 km east of Tramore town in County Waterford. It comprises a medium-sized estuary sheltered from the open sea by a long shingle spit, with high dunes. The area known as the Back Strand empties almost completely at low tide; it is connected to the outer bay and sea by narrows at Rinnashark.

The intertidal mud flats and sand flats are an important habitat and the macrofauna is well-developed, with Lugworm (*Arenicola marina*), Furrow Shell (*Scrobicularia plana*), Ragworm (*Hediste diversicolor*) and Common Cockle (*Cerastoderma edule*) occurring commonly, and with large patches of Common Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and Edible Periwinkle (*Littorina littoralis*) also present. A feature of this habitat is the presence of Eelgrass (*Zostera noltii* and *Z. angustifolia*), an important food item for herbivorous wildfowl. Salt marsh is well-developed and fairly extensive in the sheltered inner part of the site.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Light-bellied Brent Goose, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew. 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.

Tramore Back Strand is an important site for wintering waterfowl, providing both feeding and roosting areas. The site supports an internationally important population of Light-bellied Brent Goose (398) - all figures are mean peaks for the 5 winters 1995/96-1999/2000. A further seven species occur in nationally important numbers: Golden Plover (2,924), Grey Plover (299), Lapwing (3,308), Dunlin (1,723), Black-tailed Godwit (297), Bar-tailed Godwit (367) and Curlew (620). A number of other species also occur, including Wigeon (77), Teal (135), Red-breasted Merganser (18), Oystercatcher (348), Ringed Plover (55), Knot (75), Sanderling (46), Snipe (83), Redshank (223), Greenshank (12) and Turnstone (24). Little Egret, a species that has recently colonised Ireland, is a regular visitor (6).

Tramore Back Strand SPA is of high ornithological importance for wintering waterfowl, with one species occurring in internationally important numbers and a further seven species having populations of national importance. The regular occurrence of Little Egret, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit is of particular note as these three species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Tramore Back Strand is also a Ramsar Convention site.

7.7.2014