

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: TRAWBREAGA BAY SPA

SITE CODE: 004034

Trawbreaga Bay is a well-sheltered sea bay situated on the north-western coast of the Inishowen Peninsula, Co. Donegal. Doagh Isle, a low-lying, sandy promontory, stretches across the mouth of the bay, leaving only a narrow strait to the open sea. The bay is fed by a number of small rivers and streams, chiefly the Ballyboe, Donagh and Glennagannon rivers. The site includes Glashedy Island which lies approximately 1 km offshore. The village of Malin is situated on the eastern shore of the bay.

An estimated 80% of the bay area empties at low tide to expose a mixture of mudflats, sandbanks and stony/rocky substrates. Mats of green algae occur on the open flats and brown algae (*Fucus* spp.) on the stones. Some areas of saltmarsh fringe the bay. The intertidal flats provide the main feeding area for the majority of the wintering waterfowl.

This site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Barnacle Goose, Light-bellied Brent Goose and Chough. 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.

Trawbreaga Bay supports a good diversity of wintering waterfowl though numbers of most species are relatively low. The main importance of the site lies in the Barnacle Goose (236 – 4 survey mean between 1993 and 2004) and Light-bellied Brent Goose (362 - five year mean peak count for the winters 1995/96 to 1999/2000) populations. The Light-bellied Brent Goose population is internationally important. The site is also an important feeding and roosting area for Chough. In 2005 a total of 55 birds were recorded at the coastal roost at Five Fingers. Flocks of up to 100 birds have also been recorded foraging within the site. Other species which occur include Whooper Swan (10), Wigeon (14), Mallard (161), Oystercatcher (163), Ringed Plover (89), Lapwing (247), Dunlin (288), Bar-tailed Godwit (37), Curlew (190), Redshank (34), Black-headed Gull (206), Common Gull (75) and Herring Gull (325).

Trawbreaga Bay SPA, is of international importance for its Light-bellied Brent Goose population and also supports a nationally important population of Barnacle Goose. The regular occurrence of Barnacle Goose, Chough, Whooper Swan and Bar-tailed Godwit, which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, is of note. Trawbreaga Bay is a Ramsar Convention site and part of the Trawbreaga Bay SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

30.5.2015