

## **SITE SYNOPSIS**

**SITE NAME: STAGS OF BROAD HAVEN SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004072**

The Stags of Broad Haven are a group of four precipitous rocky islets, totalling 4 ha, rising to almost 100 m, located about 2 km north of Benwee Head, Co. Mayo. The surrounding seas to a distance of 500 m are included in the site.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Storm Petrel and Leach's Petrel.

The Stags are of particular note as they comprise the only site in Ireland where Leach's Petrel has been proved breeding in recent times. Breeding was first suspected but not proved on Chakbeg during expeditions in 1946 and 1947. No further attempts were made to census Leach's Petrel until 1982, when the Stags were visited by two ornithologists. Using nets and tapes, breeding was considered to be still taking place on Chakbeg, with an estimate of 200 + pairs. A further expedition to the Stags in 2001 used the tape playback method to prove breeding and estimate population size. An estimate of 310 pairs was made. The Stags also support a nationally important colony of Storm Petrel, with 1,912 pairs estimated in 2001. Other seabirds which breed include Fulmar (275 pairs), Kittiwake (110 pairs), Puffin (1,160 pairs), Herring Gull (4 pairs) and Great Black-backed Gull (10 pairs).

The Stags of Broad Haven SPA is a site of ornithological importance owing to the presence of the only known colony of Leach's Petrel in Ireland, as well as an important population of Storm Petrel. Both Leach's Petrel and Storm Petrel are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

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