

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: GREERS ISLE SPA

SITE CODE: 004082

Greers Isle SPA is a very small island in the enclosed and highly sheltered marine waters of Mulroy Bay, Co. Donegal. The island is approximately 500 m from the mainland. The underlying bedrock is probably part of a metadolerite intrusion. The surrounding water to a distance of 200 m is 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: Sandwich Tern, Black-headed Gull and Common Gull.

The site is of ornithological importance for breeding terns and gulls. In 1984, Greers Isle had 180 pairs of Sandwich Tern and 20 pairs of Arctic Tern. The birds then deserted the site and none were present when the island was censused as part of the 1995 national tern survey. Since then, Greers Isle has been re-occupied – in 2002 there were 63 pairs of Sandwich Tern in three sub-colonies and a total of 23 young were reared. This population subsequently increased to 217 pairs in 2004. Also present was a mixed Common Tern/Arctic Tern colony of 27 pairs, which produced 66 eggs. The Sandwich Tern colony is of national importance.

The site also supports nationally important colonies of Common Gull (30 pairs in 2002) and Black-headed Gull (*c.* 200 pairs in 2002). Several pairs each of Tufted Duck and Red-breasted Merganser breed at the site.

Greers Isle SPA is of ornithological importance because of its nationally important breeding tern and gull populations. All three species of tern recorded on the island are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.