

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH FOYLE SPA

SITE CODE: 004087

The site comprises a section of the western shore of Lough Foyle from Muff to north of Vances Point in Co. Donegal. The site is part of the larger cross-border Lough Foyle complex which regularly supports in excess of 20,000 wintering waterbirds. The majority of the wintering waterbirds that utilise this site occur along the southern and eastern shoreline of Lough Foyle in Derry, which is also designated as an SPA in Northern Ireland.

The site is selected as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, as it is part of an internationally important wetland site that regularly supports in excess of 20,000 wintering waterbirds. The assemblage of birds that utilise Lough Foyle includes internationally important populations of Whooper Swan (917), Light-bellied Brent Goose (3,765) and Bar-tailed Godwit (2,059), and nationally important populations of a further 20 species: Red-throated Diver (28), Great Crested Grebe (148), Bewick's Swan (43), Greylag Goose (391), Shelduck (468), Wigeon (9,011), Teal (660), Mallard (1,635), Eider (143), Red-breasted Merganser (82), Oystercatcher (3,101), Golden Plover (4,562), Lapwing (4,024), Knot (499), Dunlin (4,991), Curlew (2,265), Redshank (988), Black-headed Gull (2,212), Common Gull (2,846) and Herring Gull (1,261) – all counts are five year mean peaks for the entire Lough Foyle complex during the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000. 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.

Lough Foyle SPA is of high ornithological importance as it is part of an internationally important wetland site that regularly supports internationally important populations of Whooper Swan, Light-bellied Brent Goose and Bar-tailed Godwit, and nationally important populations of a further 20 species. Of note is that five of the species which occur regularly, i.e. Red-throated Diver, Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

30.5.2015