

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: SHESKINMORE LOUGH SPA

SITE CODE: 004090

Sheskinmore Lough is a shallow lake located approximately 5 km north-west of Ardara in Co. Donegal. The site comprises an intricate complex of coastal and freshwater habitats. The solid geology is largely obscured by sand, but the fringe of a granitic intrusion forms the higher ground to the north-east of the lake. Calcareous sands blow across the site and there is seepage of basic water from the dunes to the lake.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Greenland White-fronted Goose.

Sheskinmore Lough SPA is a traditional Greenland White-fronted Goose site with 103 birds recorded as a 5 year mean peak in the winters between 1994/95 and 1998/99. This population also utilises a nearby bogland feeding site and is significant as it is one of the few Greenland White-fronted Goose flocks still utilising traditional habitats. In the 1980s Sheskinmore Lough was a feeding site for a Barnacle Goose population that utilises the islands of Inishkeel and Roaninish, but this species has not been recorded at the site in recent years. Other waterfowl species which occur include Whooper Swan (14), Teal (14), Mallard (10) and Lapwing (34) - all figures are peak counts for the winter 1996/97.

Chough frequent the area throughout the year and especially in winter. These birds, which nest elsewhere on the coast, feed and socialise within the site. Breeding waders recorded at the site include Lapwing (16 pairs in 1996 and 3 pairs in 2009) and Snipe (2 pairs in 1996 and 12 pairs in 2009). Dunlin bred in the past but no birds were recorded during the 1996 or 2009 surveys.

This site is of ornithological importance for its Greenland White-fronted Goose population. Greenland White-fronted Goose and two other species which occur at the site, Chough and Whooper Swan, are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the Sheskinmore Lough SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

31.10.2014