

## **SITE SYNOPSIS**

**SITE NAME: TERMONCARRAGH LAKE AND ANNAGH MACHAIR SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004093**

Termoncarragh Lake is a shallow, coastal lake situated on the north-west side of the Mullet peninsula, Co. Mayo. It is fringed by swamp vegetation and edged in parts by freshwater marsh and fen. The lake habitats merge into a machair plain which is now mostly divided into strip fields. Some low sand hills occur between the machair and the sea. The innermost part of Portnafrankagh Bay is included in the site. The site is underlain by Moinian schists.

In 2006 the site was designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Barnacle Goose, Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Corncrake, Chough, Lapwing and Dunlin. 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.

Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh machair is utilised by both wintering and breeding birds. It is part of the wintering ground for one of the largest Barnacle Goose population in the country (140 – 4 survey mean between 1993 and 2003). The centre of the population is the Inishkea Islands and, as well as the Mullet, the birds use Duvillaun More and Inishkerragh/Inishglora. The site is utilised by passage Whooper Swan, with up to 300 individuals visiting the site in autumn and spring. The site supports a range of other wintering species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose (48), Golden Plover (405), Teal (38), Mallard (48) and Ringed Plover (20), as well as the resident Mute Swan (39) – all figures are 4 year mean peaks for four of the winters between 1995/96 and 1999/2000.

The marginal wetland habitats and the machair are prime habitats for breeding waders. A survey in 1996 recorded the following: Lapwing (22 pairs), Dunlin (14 pairs) and Snipe (5 pairs). The area was well known as the main breeding site for Red-necked Phalarope but breeding has not been recorded in recent years. During the breeding season Corncrake have been recorded here, albeit in low numbers. Post-fledgling Chough flocks of up to 30 individuals occur at the site between August and October.

Part of site is owned by BirdWatch Ireland who have commenced a management programme to improve habitat conditions for breeding waders, including Red-necked Phalarope and Corncrake.

The site is of ornithological importance as it is utilised by nationally important populations of both wintering and breeding birds. Of note is that several of the species which occur regularly are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e.

Barnacle Goose, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Golden Plover,  
Dunlin, Corncrake and Chough.

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