

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: RIVER SUCK CALLOWS SPA

SITE CODE: 004097

The River Suck Callows SPA is a linear, sinuous site comprising a section of the River Suck from Castlecoote, Co. Roscommon to its confluence with the River Shannon close to Shannonbridge, a distance of approximately 70 km along the course of the river. The river forms part of the boundary between Counties Galway and Roscommon. The site includes the River Suck itself and the adjacent areas of seasonally-flooded semi-natural lowland wet callow grassland. The River Suck is the largest tributary of the River Shannon.

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

The River Suck Callows SPA is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Of particular note is the nationally important Greenland White-fronted Goose flock (293 – five year mean peak for the period 1994/95 to 1998/99) which congregates mainly in the middle reaches of the river. Four other species occur in populations of national importance, i.e. Whooper Swan (164), Wigeon (3,232), Golden Plover (2,241) and Lapwing (3,906) – all figures are five year mean peaks from aerial surveys between 2001/02 and 2005/06. Other species present include Mute Swan (122), Teal (402), Mallard (70), Black-tailed Godwit (24), Curlew (22) and Black-headed Gull (86).

The River Suck Callows SPA is of considerable ornithological importance, in particular for the presence of nationally important populations of five species. Of note is that three of the species that occur regularly, i.e. Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Golden Plover, are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the River Suck Callows SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.