

## SITE SYNOPSIS

**SITE NAME: DUVILLAUN ISLANDS SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004111**

Duvillaun Islands SPA comprises a group of marine islands, rocks and reefs, located between 1 and 5 km off the southern tip of the Mullet Peninsula in Co. Mayo. The surrounding seas to a distance of 200 m and the area of water between the islands are included in the site.

Duvillaun More is the largest of the islands, rising to 63 m, with cliffs on the north-west, west and south-west sides. About two-thirds of the island is covered by a maritime grassland sward. There is a small area of dry heath, with some Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), at the west end of the island near the summit. Duvillaun Beg, which rises to 14 m, also has a grassy sward and an extensive intertidal shore. The other islands, while having some permanent land above the high tide mark, are largely rocky islets and knolls. From west to east, the lesser islands are Turduvillaun, Shiraghy Island, Drumacappul Island, Orrageon Island, Keely Island, Gaghta Island and Leamareha Island.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Fulmar, Storm Petrel and Barnacle Goose.

In winter, the Duvillaun Islands support Barnacle Goose (93 – 4 survey mean between 1993 and 2003). The geese are part of the population which is centred on the Inishkea Islands and which also utilise Inishglora and Inishkeeragh, further to the north, and parts of the Mullet Peninsula. In spring 1999, this internationally important population, and the largest in Ireland, numbered 3,128 birds out of a total Irish population of 8,800. A survey in 2008 recorded 221 geese on the Duvillaun Islands but up to 500 can be recorded at times.

The Duvillaun Islands are also of ornithological importance for their colonies of breeding seabirds. The Seabird 2000 survey recorded Fulmar (638 pairs in 2000), Cormorant (20 pairs in 2000) and Black Guillemot (25 pairs in 2000) on Duvillaun More. A previous census of all the islands in 1985, recorded up to 150 pairs of Cormorant and up to 80 Black Guillemot. Storm Petrel breeds on Duvillaun Beg (950 pairs estimated in 2001); breeding has also been recorded on Duvillaun More in the past (100-200 pairs estimated in 2002). The populations of Fulmar and Storm Petrel are of national importance. Other breeding seabirds recorded in 2000 include Shag (5 pairs), Herring Gull (5 pairs), Great Black-backed Gull (144 pairs) and Common Gull (25 pairs). The breeding population of Great Black-backed Gull, a resident species, is also of national importance.

Peregrine (1 pair) and Chough (1-2 pairs) breed - both are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Other species which have been recorded breeding on Duvillaun

More include Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Rock Pipit, Skylark, Wheatear, Raven and Manx Shearwater.

Duvillaun Islands SPA is of high ornithological importance as it forms part of the range of an internationally important population of Barnacle Goose, an E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species. The site also has nationally important breeding populations of Fulmar, Storm Petrel (also an Annex I species) and Great Black-backed Gull. Two additional Annex I species, Peregrine and Chough, breed here in small numbers.

31.10.2014