

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: INISHDUFF SPA

SITE CODE: 004115

Inishduff is a small, uninhabited, rocky island lying approximately 2 km off the south coast of Co. Donegal. It is a low-lying island which rises to a maximum height of about 10 m and which is vegetated by a short, maritime grassy sward. The site includes the island and the surrounding seas to a distance of 200 m.

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

The island is an important site for breeding seabirds. A survey in 1985 recorded a nationally important Shag colony (116 pairs) as well as 135 pairs of Great Black-backed Gull. Significant numbers of Herring Gull (200 pairs) were also recorded in 1985 but since there has been a national decline in this species it is likely that the current population is considerably smaller than this. Storm Petrel has been proved to breed here (estimated in the 1980s as between 100 and 400 pairs). In 1989 it was estimated that up to 10 pairs of Black Guillemot used the site. Eider, a very localised breeding species in Ireland, has been recorded breeding on the island, with a population probably numbering between 10 and 20 pairs.

Barnacle Goose often uses the site in winter for feeding and refuge. The birds are considered to be part of a flock that frequents the various islands along this stretch of the Donegal coast. The population size is usually not more than about 50 individuals, reflecting the small size of the island; counts of 20 and 55 birds were made in spring 1993 and 1994 respectively.

Inishduff SPA is of conservation significance as it supports a Shag population of national importance. The site is also utilised by a number of breeding seabirds and a Barnacle Goose flock in winter. Of note is the presence of two species, Barnacle Goose and Storm Petrel, that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

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