

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: WICKLOW HEAD SPA

SITE CODE: 004127

Wicklow Head is a rocky headland with extensive exposures of mica-schist. It is situated approximately 3 kilometres south of Wicklow town. A lighthouse is located near the base of the cliffs. The cliffs are highest immediately south of the lighthouse where they rise to about 60 m and it is here that most of the seabirds breed. The site comprises the cliffs and cliff-top vegetation, as well as some heath vegetation. The marine area to a distance of 500 m from the base of the cliffs is included in the site.

At the time this site was identified for Special Protection Area (SPA) designation it was utilised by a nationally important population of Kittiwake and this species is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA.

A survey in 2002 recorded a nationally important population of breeding Kittiwake (956 pairs) and other breeding seabirds including Fulmar (62 pairs), Shag (11 pairs), Herring Gull (20 pairs), Guillemot (281 pairs) and Razorbill (125 pairs). A survey of Black Guillemot in April 1998 recorded 70 individual birds within the SPA.

The site also supports a pair of breeding Peregrine. Ravens nest annually on the cliffs, and the heath supports such species as Stonechat, Whitethroat and Linnet.

The occurrence of Peregrine, a species that is listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, is of note.

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