

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: HIGH ISLAND, INISHSHARK AND DAVILLAUN SPA

SITE CODE: 004144

High Island, Inishshark and Davillaun are small, uninhabited islands lying some 3-5 km north and west of Aughrus Point on the Co. Galway coast. Grassland is the main vegetation type found, with vegetated sea cliffs, dry heath, exposed rock and some freshwater marsh also present. A well-developed Plantain (*Plantago*) sward occurs on cliff tops on the exposed western side of Inishshark. The surrounding sea to a distance of 200 m from each island is included within the site. High Island is the site of an important ancient ecclesiastical settlement.

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

High Island, Inishshark and Davillaun are utilised in winter by a nationally important population of Barnacle Goose (371 – mean of four surveys conducted between 1993 and 2003).

High Island, Inishshark and Davillaun also hold important breeding seabird sites. The Seabird 2000 survey recorded nationally important numbers of Fulmar (830 pairs) and smaller numbers of other breeding birds including Kittiwake (230 pairs), Manx Shearwater (73 pairs), Shag (30 pairs), Herring Gull (18 pairs) and Common Gull (13 pairs). Storm Petrel breeds on High Island (estimate of 60 pairs in 2001). In 1995 a survey recorded nationally important numbers of Arctic Tern (64 pairs).

High Island, Inishshark and Davillaun SPA is of ornithological importance for its wintering Barnacle Goose and breeding seabird populations. The presence of Barnacle Goose and Arctic Tern is of note as both species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.