

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: KERRY HEAD SPA

SITE CODE: 004189

Kerry Head SPA is situated on the south side of the mouth of the River Shannon in north Co. Kerry. It encompasses the sea cliffs from just west of Ballyheigue, around the end of Kerry Head to the west and north-eastwards as far as Kilmore. The site includes the sea cliffs and land adjacent to the cliff edge. The high water mark forms the seaward boundary. Most of the site is underlain by Devonian siltstones, sandstones and mudstones; a small section of the site has rocks of Carboniferous age.

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

The site supports an internationally important population of breeding Chough, a Red Data Book species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive; 32 breeding pairs were recorded from the site in the 1992 survey and 30 in the 2002/03 survey. In addition, a flock of 20 birds was noted on the northern coast of the site during the latter survey. The site is of particular note for the density of breeding pairs found.

The site also supports a nationally important population of Fulmar (421 pairs), as well as a small population of Shag (8 pairs) – all seabird data from 2000. The site is also used by Peregrine (2 pairs in 2002).

Kerry Head SPA is one of the most important sites in the country for Chough. It also supports a population of Fulmar of national importance. The presence of Chough and Peregrine, both species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, is of particular significance