

## **SITE SYNOPSIS**

**SITE NAME: SEVEN HEADS SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004191**

Seven Heads SPA is situated to the south-west of the town of Courtmacsherry, Co. Cork. It encompasses the sea cliffs of the Seven Heads peninsula north-east to Barry's Point and also the cliffs of Dunworly Bay and Barry's Cove. The site includes the sea cliffs, which rise to over 50 m, notably south of Barry's Point, and the land adjacent to the cliff edge. The high water mark forms the seaward boundary. Most of the site is underlain by Devonian sandstones, siltstones and mudstones; similar rocks of Carboniferous age also occur at the eastern and western ends of the site.

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

Sea cliffs are the predominant habitat of the site; these occur along its length and are generally well-vegetated by a suite of typical sea cliff species. Above the cliffs areas of heath, improved grassland, unimproved wet and dry grassland, freshwater marsh and arable land occur.

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; 11 breeding pairs were recorded from the site in the 1992 survey and 15 in the 2002/03 survey. In addition, flocks of up to 47 birds were noted in the 1992 survey and up to 25 in the 2002/03 survey.

A survey in 2002 recorded a number of breeding seabirds at the site, including Fulmar (18 pairs), Herring Gull (23 pairs), Great Black-backed Gull (12 pairs) and Cormorant (45 pairs). The site is also used by Peregrine (2 pairs in 2002).

Seven Heads SPA is of particular importance for Chough; it also supports a population of Peregrine and a suite of breeding seabird species. The presence of Chough and Peregrine, both species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, is of particular significance