

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: MID-WATERFORD COAST SPA

SITE CODE: 004193

The Mid-Waterford Coast SPA encompasses the areas of high coast and sea cliffs in Co. Waterford between Newtown Cove to the east and Ballyvoyle to the west. The site includes the sea cliffs and the land adjacent to the cliff edge. The high water mark forms the seaward boundary. The site is underlain by Devonian sandstones, siltstones, mudstones and conglomerates as well as a variety of volcanic rocks of Ordovician age. 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, and woodland occur.

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

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; 24 breeding pairs were recorded from the site in the 1992 survey and 20 pairs in the 2002/03 survey. In addition, five flocks totalling 59 birds were noted in the 1992 survey and a flock of 24 birds in the 2002/03 survey. Along this coast flocks occur between Annestown and Stradbally.

The site supports a nationally important Peregrine population (10 pairs in 2002). The site also holds nationally important populations of Cormorant (79 pairs) and Herring Gull (147 pairs), as well as smaller populations of other breeding seabirds: Fulmar (246 pairs), Shag (14 pairs), Guillemot (27 pairs), Razorbill (4 pairs) and Black Guillemot (15 individuals) – all seabird data from 1999-2000.

The Mid-Waterford Coast SPA is an important site for Chough and Peregrine, both species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. It also supports a range of breeding seabirds, including nationally important populations of Cormorant and Herring Gull.