NPWS

South Dublin Bay SAC
(site code: 000210)

Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats

Version 1

April 2026

IMPORTANT: This supporting document includes details relating to the EU habitat(s) **1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines, 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand and 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes** which were added as Qualifying Interests for the site after the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (Version 1) were published. This document should be read in conjunction with the Version 2 Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2026). Any references to this/these habitats in previously published Site-specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO), or SSCO supporting documents, including the mapping, are to be considered **superseded** by these updates.

Contents

Citation: NPWS (2026) South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats V1. Conservation Objectives Supporting Document Series. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin, Ireland.

1. Introduction

1210 Annual Vegetation of drift lines, 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand and 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes were added as a Qualifying Interest(s) to South Dublin Bay SAC (site code: 000210) after the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (Version 1) were published. This document sets out the SSCO(s) for the newly listed Qualifying Interest(s) for the site.

2. Coastal habitats

2.1 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines

2.1.1 Site description of habitat

In recent years, a small area of coastal habitat has developed along Sandymount Strand on the seaward side of Booterstown Marsh in South Dublin Bay SAC. 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines is among the habitats that have developed.

2.1.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for '*Annual vegetation of drift lines'* in South Dublin Bay (site code: 000210) is to '*maintain the Favourable conservation condition*'.

This objective is based on an assessment of the recorded condition of the habitat(s) under a range of attributes and targets. The assessment is divided into three main headings: (a) Area (b) Range and (c) Structure and Functions. This conservation objective applies to the total extent of this habitat within the SAC, including but not limited to any mapped areas of this habitat.

No field surveys of 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines have yet been carried out at this site.

2.1.3 Area

Habitat area

Coastal habitats are generally dynamic and increase and decrease in area due to natural processes. These natural changes are not taken into account in conservation status assessments. Changes associated with human activities including destruction and restoration do contribute to the assessment of conservation status.

The 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines arose recently and has not yet been mapped at the site. There is no evidence of habitat loss to date.

Target: Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.

2.1.4 Range

Habitat distribution

This habitat has developed in recent years. Evidence from aerial photograph analysis indicates that dune habitats have arisen naturally in the north and south western portions of the SAC.

Target: No decline, subject to natural processes.

2.1.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for Annual vegetation of drift lines are assessed on the basis of:

Physical structure: functionality and sediment supply

Target: Natural circulation of sediment and organic matter, absence of any physical obstructions or evidence of sediment extraction from the beach and its environs. Physical obstructions that have been in place and are unchanged since prior to 1994 are excluded from this target, unless they have a current adverse impact on sediment circulation.

Disturbance

Target: No more than 20% of the habitat is subject to disturbance *e.g*. trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate.

Vegetation composition: typical species (positive indicators)

Target: At least one species occurs with a frequency of at least 40% of stops and another species occurs with a frequency of more than 20% of stops.

Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species

Target: No negative species occurs at a frequency of more than 60% of stops and combined cover of all negative species across the habitat is 5% or less and highest % cover of any negative species within any stop is 25% or less.

Vegetation composition: non-native species

Target: No individual species occurs at a frequency of more than 20% of stops and no evidence that % cover is increasing.

Indicators of local distinctiveness: site-specific target features (including rare and notable species)

Target: No evidence of decline since designation.

There has been no Structure and Functions assessment of this habitat type at South Dublin Bay SAC to date.

2.2 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand

2.2.1 Site description of habitat

1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand is a sparsely vegetated habitat of intertidal mudflats.

2.2.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for '*Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand'* in South Dublin Bay SAC (site code: 000210) is to *maintain the Favourable conservation condition*'.

This objective is based on an assessment of the recorded condition of the habitat(s) under a range of attributes and targets. The assessment is divided into three main headings: (a) Area (b) Range and (c) Structure and Functions. This conservation objective applies to the total extent of this habitat within the SAC, including but not limited to any mapped areas of this habitat.

No field surveys of 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand have yet been carried out at this site.

2.2.3 Area

Habitat area

Coastal habitats are generally dynamic and increase and decrease in area due to natural processes. These natural changes are not taken into account in conservation status assessments. Changes associated with human activities including destruction and restoration do contribute to the assessment of conservation status.

Field surveys have not yet been carried out to establish the area of 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand. Aerial photograph analysis indicates no evidence of habitat loss.

Target: Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.

2.2.4 Range

Habitat distribution

Field surveys have not yet been carried out to establish the area of 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand. The habitat is understood to have arisen naturally at the site without known impact of human activity on distribution.

Target: No decline, subject to natural processes.

2.2.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand are assessed on the basis of:

Physical structure: hydrology

Target: Natural hydrology and processes of erosion and succession intact, no disturbance to creek and pan structure, as compared to baseline data.

Signs of negative activities *e.g.* infilling, reclamation, turf-cutting, pollution

Target: None recorded

Vegetation composition: typical species (positive indicators)

Target: There should be a combined density of more than 10 plants per sq. metre at 75% of stops or more.

Vegetation composition: negative indicator species

Target: Percentage *Spartina* spp. cover, or other negative species, within 5m radius of stop less than/equal to baseline at 75% of stops or more.

Vegetation composition: negative indicator species: presence of *Spartina* spp. within vicinity of habitat

Target: Not present where not recorded by baseline.

Indicators of local distinctiveness: site-specific target features (including rare and notable species)

Target: No evidence of decline or loss of target species.

No habitat assessments have been carried out to date. There is no known evidence of impeded Structure and Functions.

2.3 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes

2.3.1 Site description of habitat

There is a small area of coastal habitat along Sandymount Strand on the seaward side of Booterstown Marsh.

2.3.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for '*Embryonic shifting dunes'* in South Dublin Bay SAC (site code: 000210) is to '*maintain the Favourable conservation condition*'.

This objective is based on an assessment of the recorded condition of the habitat(s) under a range of attributes and targets. The assessment is divided into three main headings: (a) Area (b) Range and (c) Structure and Functions. This conservation objective applies to the total extent of this habitat within the SAC, including but not limited to any mapped areas of this habitat.

No field surveys of 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes have yet been carried out at this site for NPWS.

2.3.3 Area

Habitat area

Coastal habitats are generally dynamic and increase and decrease in area due to natural processes. These natural changes are not taken into account in conservation status assessments. Changes associated with human activities including destruction and restoration do contribute to the assessment of conservation status.

A small area of 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes are known to occur in the south-west of the site, near Booterstown. There is no evidence of habitat loss or impaired functioning.

Target: Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.

2.3.4 Range

Habitat distribution

A small area of dune vegetation is developing on a new accumulating sandbank along the shoreline of Sandymount Strand, north of Booterstown Marsh. It is dominated by immature sand dune vegetation.

Target: No decline, subject to natural processes.

2.3.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for Embryonic shifting dunes are assessed on the basis of:

Physical structure: functionality and sediment supply

Target: Natural circulation of sediment and organic matter, absence of any physical obstructions or evidence of sediment extraction from the beach and its environs. Physical obstructions that have been in place and are unchanged since prior to 1994 are excluded from this target, unless they have a current adverse impact on sediment circulation.

Disturbance

Target: No more than 20% of the habitat should be subject to disturbance *e.g*. trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate.

Flowering and fruiting of any positive indicator species

Target: Present in 40% or more of stops.

Vegetation composition: typical species (positive indicators)

Target: At least one species occurs with a frequency of more than 40% of stops.

Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species

Target: No negative species occurs at a frequency of more than 60% of stops and combined cover of all negative species across the habitat is 5% or less and highest % cover of any negative species within any stop is 25% or less.

Vegetation composition: non-native species

Target: No non-native species occurs at a frequency of more than 20% of stops and no evidence that % cover is increasing.

Indicators of local distinctiveness: site-specific target features (including rare and notable species)

Target: No evidence of decline since designation.

Structure and Functions have not been assessed for this habitat at this site and we do not have evidence of decline in its condition.

3. References

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