# NPWS

# Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (site code: 000625)

## Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats

## Version 1 - supplement 1

**May 2026**

**IMPORTANT:** This supplement, published in 2026, includes details relating to the EU habitat **2190 Humid dune slacks** which was added as a Qualifying Interest 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), and with the Conservation objectives supporting document - Coastal habitats Version 1 (NPWS, 2015). Any references to this habitat 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Conservation Objectives (SSCO), or SSCO supporting documents, including the mapping, are to be considered **superseded** by these updates.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) Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (site code 000625) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats V1 - supplement 1. Conservation Objectives Supporting Document Series. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin, Ireland.

# 1. Introduction

2190 Humid dune slacks was added as a Qualifying Interest to Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (site code: 000625) 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 and acts as a supplement to the original SSCO Supporting Document.

Information on the condition of the habitats was primarily derived from surveys of Trawalua and Bunduff, which are located close to the town of Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo.

# 2. Coastal habitats

## 2.1 2190 Humid dune slacks

### 2.1.1 Site description of habitat

The Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC is an extensive coastal site located south of the village of Mullaghmore, approximately 18km north of Sligo. The site supports a wide range of Annex I sand dune habitats, including the 2190 Humid dune slacks habitat.

The habitat is subject to grazing by both sheep and cattle and grades into machair in places (Ryle *et al*., 2009). The vegetation is characterised by low-growing Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) and other wetland species including *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge), *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge), *Carex nigra* (Common Sedge), *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (Marsh Pennywort), *Mentha aquatica* (Water Mint), *Ranunculus flammula* (Lesser Spearwort), *Salix repens* (Creeping Willow), *Juncus* spp. (Rush spp.), *Galium palustre* (Common Marsh-bedstraw), *Potentilla anserina* (Silverweed), *Leontodon autumnalis* (Autumn Hawkbit), *Prunella vulgaris* (Selfheal) and *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog).

### 2.1.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for *'Humid dune slacks'* in Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (site code: 000625) 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 the mapped areas of this habitat.

### 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 recorded area for the habitat is 5.47ha.

No loss of habitat attributable to human activity has been observed at this site.

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

### 2.1.4 Range

Habitat distribution

The 2190 Humid dune slacks habitat is located at the southwestern extremity of the site and comprises one small and one larger dune slack bordered by low, fixed dune ridges towards its rear, (Ryle *et al*., 2009). This is considered to represent the natural extent of the range.

Target: No decline in the distribution of this habitat, unless it is the result of natural processes.

### 2.1.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for Humid dune slacks 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.

**Physical structure: hydrological and flooding regime**

Target: Hydrological regime supports typical seasonal fluctuations.

**Bare ground**

Target: Bare ground should be present but should not exceed 5% of dune slack habitat, with the exception of pioneer slacks which can have up to 20% bare ground.

**Vegetation composition: typical species (positive indicators)**

Target: At least four of the positive species occur with a frequency of more than 40% of stops and another two species occur with a frequency of more than 20% of stops and every stop contains at least three positive species.

**Vegetation composition: bryophytes**

Target: Present in more than 20% of stops.

**Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species**

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

**Vegetation composition: trees/scrub**

Target: Present at no more than 40% of stops and combined cover of 5% or less.

**Vegetation composition: forb:grass ratio**

Target: Forb (herbaceous flowering plant) cover over 30% and grass cover below 70%.

**Vegetation composition: cover of *Salix repens***

Target: Less than 40% cover of *Salix repens.*

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

Target: No evidence of decline since designation.

The Structure and Functions of 2190 Humid dune slacks at Trawalua were assessed and found to be in good condition. (Ryle *et al*., 2009).

## 3. References


Brophy, J.T., Perrin, P.M., Penk, M.R., Devaney, F.M. and Leyden, K.J. (2019) Saltmarsh Monitoring Project 2017-2018. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 108. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland.

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Martin, J.R., Daly, O.H. and Devaney F.M. (2017) Survey and assessment of vegetated shingle and associated habitats at 30 coastal sites. Volume 1: Main report. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 98. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Dublin.

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NPWS (2015) Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (site code 000625) 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.

Perrin, P.M., Waldren, S., Penk, M.R. and O'Neill, F.H. (2017) Saltmarsh Function and Human Impacts in Relation to Ecological Status (SAMFHIRES). EPA Research Report, Wexford, Ireland.

Ryle, T., Murray, A., Connolly, K. and Swann, M. (2009) Coastal Monitoring Project 2004-2006. Unpublished report to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.

## Appendix 1 – Distribution map of Humid dune slacks in Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC (000625)