Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (site code 2070)

Conservation objectives supporting document- woodland habitats

Version 1

November 2013

Introduction

Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula contains very little woodland, the SAC being principally designated for marine and coastal habitats but including some peripheral habitats on the southern (landward) side. The land is low-lying and the soils are deep, relatively fertile but generally poorly drained. As a consequence, the few woodlands present are alluvial or alluvial-like. There is one area of old oak woodland near Camp on the sides of a steep-sided valley of a stream flowing northwards from the Slieve Mish Mountains.

The total area of native woodland and mixed deciduous woodland within the SAC is calculated as 18.93ha, based on FIPS. Of the four sites within the SAC surveyed by Perrin *et al*. (2008) alluvial woodland occurs in two and covers 3.7ha (appendix 1). These figures slightly underestimate the total area as there are small woodlands that were not identified by FIPS.

Woodland types

There are three principal woodland types present within the SAC: alluvial woodland; old oak woodland; birch woodland.

This SAC has been selected for the Annex I habitat:

- 91EO Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*)

<u>91EO Alluvial woodland</u>

This is a generic term for a number of different woodland types. The principal communities within the SAC are:

- Wet willow-birch woodland
- Wet willow-alder woodland

Area

The alluvial woodlands are small isolated stands less than 3ha in size. Ideally, these should increase in area to 3ha or more, based on the recommendations of Peterken (1993). However, the topography, land ownership and surrounding land use and conservation value may mitigate against this target.

Ancient woodland

None of the surveyed woodland sites within the SAC are recorded as having been present in part or full on the 1st edition OS maps (1840s).

Structure and functions

These woodlands consist of low-growing but dense stands of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), willow (*Salix* spp.) and birch (*Betula* spp.) < 12m high, conforming with the likelihood that they are largely of recent origin. Occasional ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) also occur. The field layer in ungrazed locations consists of tall herbs characteristic of wet ground, e.g. yellow flag (*Iris pseudacorus*) and meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*); however, in heavily-grazed sites it is low growing and dominated by creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*).

Dead wood
There are no figures for the amount of dead wood present within the woodlands in the SAC. However, most of the sites surveyed (by Perrin *et al*., 2008) contain occasional to frequent amounts of dead wood of all types and sizes, although snags were rare. Guidelines as to the amount that is desirable vary according to sources (e.g. Cavalli and Mason (2003)) but a minimum of $30m^3$/ha of fallen timber > 10cm diameter and 30 snags/ ha should be considered; both categories should include stems greater than 20cm diameter.

Species composition
Details of the characteristic species composition can be found in Perrin *et al*. (2008).

Future Prospects

Hydrology
Periodic flooding is essential for the maintenance of alluvial woodland and the two sites appear to be frequently flooded.

Invasive alien species
Sycamore occurs in small quantities in one site. This has the potential to spread, although it does not appear to be present in large numbers at present.

Grazing
Grazing animals are a normal part of a woodland ecosystem and appropriate grazing pressure is beneficial, promoting biodiversity. Where grazing pressure is too high it can damage the herb layer and prevent regeneration; where too low it allows vigorous species to dominate the herb layer, reducing biodiversity and sometimes preventing regeneration. One of the sites is very heavily grazed by sheep; the other is ungrazed.

Forest management
The woodland stands are privately owned. They have limited potential for timber production, although some trees are felled for firewood. Conservation and timber production are not mutually exclusive and felling on a sustainable basis could be a useful management tool in these small woodlands, which could also ensure their long-term survival. The principal constraint is that clear-felling is undesirable. Ideally, continuous canopy forestry should be practised but coupe felling would be acceptable.

Impact of agriculture
Threats from agriculture may be direct or indirect. The principal direct threat is overgrazing, clearance and uprooting. Although alluvial woodlands subject to frequent flooding are probably not attractive for agricultural reclamation, nonetheless the paucity of woodland in the area indicates that agriculture is a strong driving force restricting the development of woodland. Herbicide drift may kill vegetation on the woodland edge and fertiliser application can have a subtle effect on species composition.

Urban development
This is a threat principally around towns. Alluvial woodland is more likely to be damaged by infilling, although new planning legislation will hopefully make this less of a threat. Infrastructural development is likely to be localised and restricted in its impact and appears unlikely in these woodlands in the near future.

Discharges
Discharge of sewage effluent and slurry will pollute the water and have an indirect impact on the woodlands. Rubbish washed downstream is mostly aesthetically unattractive, although it may impact on animal life. Garden refuse may lead to the introduction of non-native and potentially invasive species.

References

Cavalli, R. and Mason, F. (Eds) (2003) Techniques for re-establishment of dead wood for saproxylic fauna conservation. National Centre for the Study and Conservation of Forest Biodiversity. Verona - Bosco della Fontana

Peterken, G. (1993) Woodland conservation and management. Chapman and Hall. London.

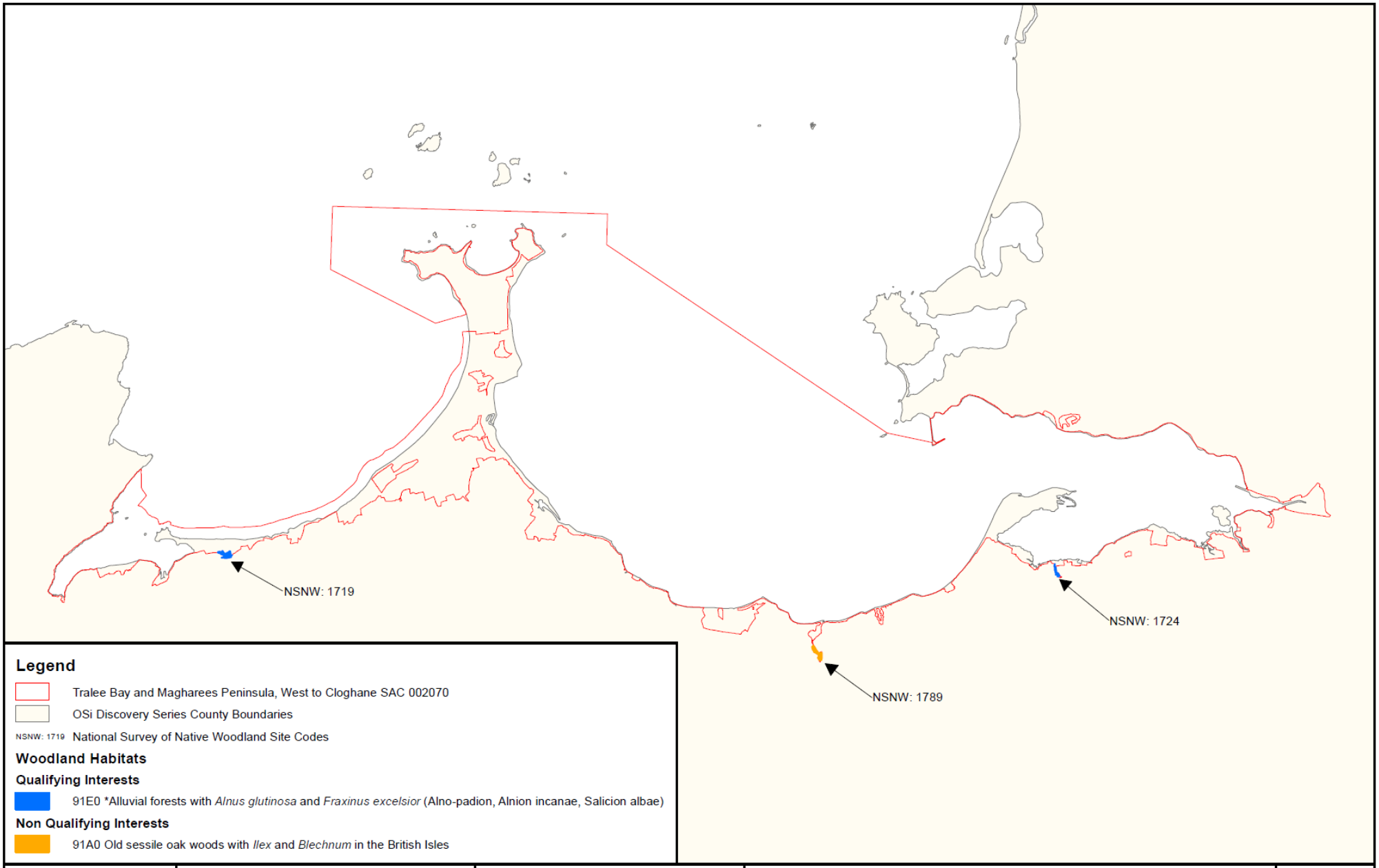
Perrin, P., Martin, J., Barron, S., O'Neill, F., McNutt, K. & Delaney, A. (2008) National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003 – 2008. A report submitted to the National Parks & Wildlife Service. Botanical, Environmental & Conservation Consultants Ltd. Dublin.

Perrin, P.M. and Daly, O.H. (2010) A provisional inventory of ancient and long-established woodland in Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manual No. 46. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

Appendix 1

Sites included in the National Survey of Native Woodlands (Perrin *et al*., 2008), which contain the Annex I woodland habitat: Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) and are entirely or partly within Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (site code 2070). See overleaf for map.

NSNW Site Code	County	Name	Area (ha) within SAC
1724	Kerry	Farrandalouge	0.78
1719	Kerry	Derrymore East	2.91
		Total area	**3.69**



Legend

Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC 002070

OSi Discovery Series County Boundaries

NSNW: 1719 National Survey of Native Woodland Site Codes

Woodland Habitats

Qualifying Interests

91E0 *Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

Non Qualifying Interests

91A0 Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles

An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

TRALEE BAY AND MAGHAREES PENINSULA, WEST TO CLOGHANE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES WOODLAND HABITATS

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Woodland Supporting Document.

SITE CODE:
SAC 002070; version 3. CO. KERRY

0 1 2 3 4 5 km

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Map Version 1
Date: Nov 2013