

**NPWS**

**Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane  
SAC  
(site code: 002070)**

**Conservation objectives supporting document -  
coastal habitats**

**Version 1 - supplement 1**

**June 2026**

**IMPORTANT:** This supplement, published in 2026, includes details relating to the EU habitats **1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts 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), and with the Conservation objectives supporting document - Coastal habitats Version 1 (NPWS, 2013). Any references to 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Conservation Objectives (SSCO), or SSCO supporting documents, including the mapping, are to be considered **superseded** by these updates.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

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Coastal habitats .....	1
2.1 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts.....	1
2.1.1 Site description of habitat .....	1
2.1.2 Overall objective.....	1
2.1.3 Area (extent) .....	1
2.1.4 Range .....	1
2.1.5 Structure and Functions .....	1
2.2 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes.....	2
2.2.1 Site description of habitat .....	2
2.2.2 Overall objective.....	2
2.2.3 Area .....	3
2.2.4 Range .....	3
2.2.5 Structure and Functions .....	3
3. References .....	5
Appendix 1 – Distribution map of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (002070) .....	6
Appendix 2 – Distribution map of Embryonic shifting dunes in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (002070).....	7

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# 1. Introduction

1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts and 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes were added as Qualifying Interests to Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (site code: 002070) 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.

## 2. Coastal habitats

### 2.1 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts

#### 2.1.1 Site description of habitat

The cliffs in Tralee Bay, as identified during the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron *et al.*, 2011), are entirely composed of soft geological materials. All cliff habitats identified within the bay were classified as soft cliff environments. They rise to about 7m above the level of the beach and in places, embryonic and shifting dunes have developed at their base (Delaney *et al.*, 2013).

#### 2.1.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for '*Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts*' in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (site code: 002070) 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 (extent)

##### Habitat length

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.

As cliffs are linear features on maps, their extent is measured in kilometres rather than hectares, as for other habitats.

The total area (length) of cliff habitat that has been mapped within the SAC boundary is 4.68km. No loss due to human activities has been recorded.

Target: Area (length) stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion.

#### 2.1.4 Range

##### Habitat Distribution

Two distinct cliff sections were recorded along the northern shoreline and a further two along the southern shoreline.

Target: No decline, subject to natural processes.

#### 2.1.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for Vegetated sea cliffs are assessed on the basis of:

### **Physical structure: functionality and hydrological regime**

Target: No alteration to natural functioning of geomorphological and hydrological processes, including groundwater quality, due to artificial structures.

For this target to be met, the natural geomorphological processes should be functioning without impediment, including erosion and slumping. Hydrological regime and groundwater quality should be unimpaired and natural hydrological features should be intact, including seepages, springs and flushes.

### **Vegetation structure: zonation**

Target: Unimpaired natural range of sea cliff habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.

The range of sea cliff zonations for the site should be intact, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. Transitions to other habitats at the cliff-top and cliff-base should also be intact.

### **Vegetation structure: vegetation height**

Target: Naturally occurring structural variation within sward.

Vegetation height should be varied to support a wide range of biodiversity, and grazing can be part of the management used to achieve this.

### **Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities**

Target: Unimpaired natural range of sub-communities with typical species listed in the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron *et al.*, 2011).

Typical flora of vegetated sea cliffs should be present, as are the range of sub-communities within the different zones.

### **Vegetation composition: negative indicator species**

Target: Negative indicator species (including non-natives) represent less than 5% cover.

### **Vegetation composition: Bracken and woody species**

Target: Cover of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) on grassland and/or heath less than 10%. Cover of woody species on grassland and or heath less than 20%

The Structure and Functions of the habitat 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts were found to be good. The Future prospects were also good.

## **2.2 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes**

### **2.2.1 Site description of habitat**

The 2110 habitat Embryonic shifting dunes at Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC that were surveyed include the sites Castlegregory, Derrymore Island and Fermoy. Annex I 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes habitat was found here at all three locations; the Derrymore Island site contained the largest area.

### **2.2.2 Overall objective**

The overall objective for 'Embryonic shifting dunes' in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (site code: 002070) is to 'restore 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.

### 2.2.3 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.

The area of 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes recorded at this site is 3.96ha. (Ryle *et al.*, 2009; Martin *et al.*, 2017). No loss due to human activities has been recorded.

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

### 2.2.4 Range

#### Habitat distribution

Embryonic shifting dunes are found in at the northern tip of Derrymore Island and in a few patches at Castlegregory (Ryle *et al.*, 2009). In Fermoy, the 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes habitat was recorded in a sheltered cove at the back of the tombolo.

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

### 2.2.5 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)**

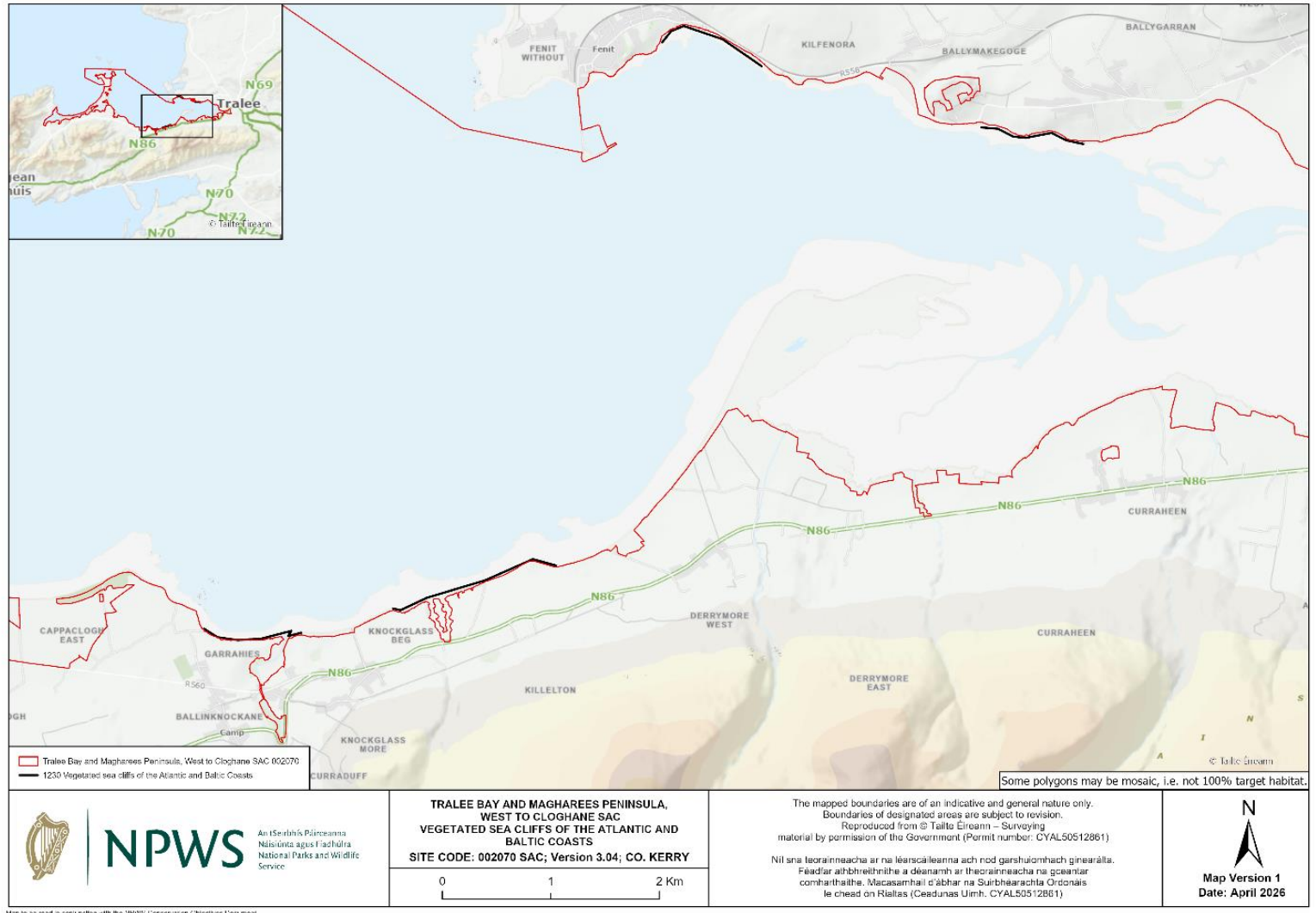
Target: No evidence of decline since designation.

The 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes habitat in Fermoy, was found to be disturbed and negative indicators were present (Ryle *et al.*, 2009). In Castlegregory, the habitat was recorded as too small and fragmented to assess for Structure and Functions and the habitat at the Derrymore Island site was recorded as good. Litter, off road driving and rock armour were pressures on the site. The Future prospects were not considered to be good and the overall assessment found that the habitat was in Unfavourable conservation status (Ryle *et al.*, 2009; Martin *et al.*, 2017).

### 3. References

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# Appendix 1 – Distribution map of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (002070)



## Appendix 2 – Distribution map of Embryonic shifting dunes in Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (002070)

