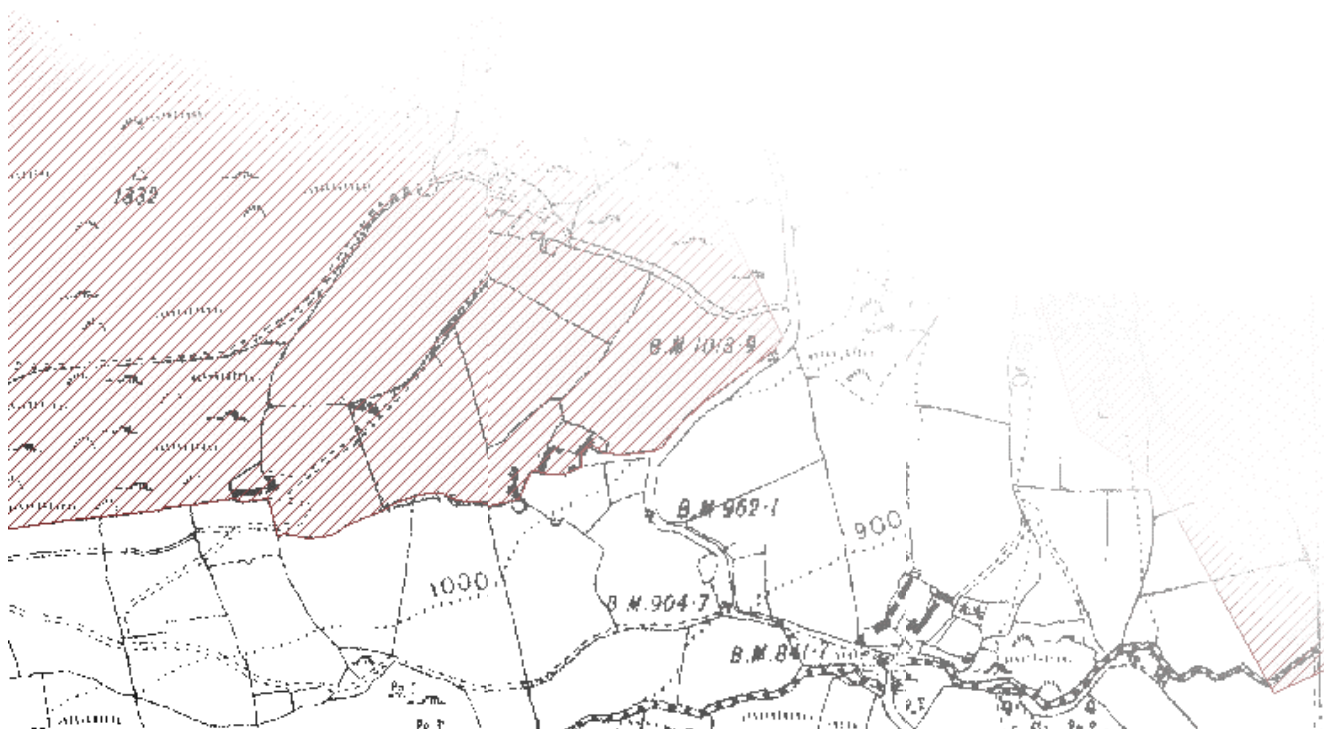




# National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Plan for 2005-2010

## Meenaguse Scragh cSAC

Site Code 1880  
Co. Donegal





# SUMMARY

## Site Description

Meenaguse Scragh candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) encloses the catchment area of Lough Anarget in Co. Donegal, including the slopes and summits of Silver Hill, Binnacally and Lavagh Beg in its northern half. It is bounded to the south by a line of cliffs.

Lough Anarget is overgrown by an extensive floating mat of bog mosses (scragh) and is situated in the centre of the site. Mountains covered in acid grassland, dominated by Purple Moor-Grass and Mat-Grass, and heath surround it on three sides.

Approximately half of the site comprises northern Atlantic wet heath (an Annex I habitat listed under the EU Habitats Directive) in a mosaic with blanket bog. The areas of wet heath within the site are of good quality, with the presence of Cowberry indicating low grazing pressure in some areas. Areas of blanket bog, both active and eroded, occur on the lower slopes and valley bottom, although the active blanket bog present on the site is not of a quality that conforms with the priority habitat as listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The blanket bog is characterised by peat hags topped by Ling Heather and huge hummocks of Silver-haired moss, while in the wettest areas lawns of Blanched Bog Moss, Recurved Bog Moss and Red Bog Moss occur. Areas of active blanket bog are small in extent, locally degraded and low in scientific importance. Flush, heath, acid grassland and cliff vegetation provide more habitat diversity. The site also contains many streams, with associated flushes, and small lakes.

The Otter, listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive and also in the Irish Red Data Book as internationally important, is known to frequent the site. Common Frog and Irish Hare, both species listed in the Red Data Book as internationally important, are present on the site. The Eany Beg Water is also listed by the Northern Region Fisheries Board (NRFB) as being one of the most important rivers regionally for the spawning of Atlantic Salmon, a species listed under Annex II of the Habitats Directive. The Peregrine, an Annex I EU Birds Directive species, breeds at the site.

The main area of interest on the site is Lough Anarget, which supports an extensive floating mat, or scragh, of Recurved Bog Moss accompanied by Bottle Sedge and several other species. This is of considerable ecological interest because of the intact and extensive nature of the scragh, which is an uncommon habitat in north-west Ireland.

## Land Use

The site is in multiple private ownership and commonage. The main land use on the site is grazing by Scottish Blackface sheep. The Eany Beg Water is managed by the NRFB as a sport fishery and conducts bank maintenance and poaching patrols on the river. There is a small reservoir outside the southern site boundary that holds back water for the hydroelectric scheme to the south of the boundary. A fish bypass on the reservoir facilitates the passage of fish upstream.

## **Main conservation issues**

Natural succession

Degradation of habitats

Localised erosion

## **Main management objectives**

To maintain and, if possible, enhance the extent and quality of the Annex I habitat northern Atlantic wet heath

To maintain and, if possible, enhance the breeding success of the Peregrine

To maintain and, if possible, enhance the presence of Atlantic Salmon

To maintain and, if possible, enhance other habitats of ecological interest on the site

To maintain effective liaison between NPW and interested parties (e.g. landowners, commonage right holders, the NRFB and the public) regarding the management of the site

## **Main strategies to achieve objectives**

Achieve sustainable stocking densities

Monitor the Annex I habitat ,scragh and Peregrine population

Liaise with landowners and commonage rights holders to achieve sustainable stocking densities

Liaise with NRFB regarding water quality and Salmon populations

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks is due to all NPW staff and stakeholders who participated in the compilation of this plan, in particular to the plan facilitator, Mr. Paul Duffy.

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# MAPS

Map 1 Location and Boundary Map (Version 1.0)

Map 2 Ownership Map

Map 3 Indicative Habitat Map

Map 4 Management Zoning Map

# READER'S GUIDE

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), has produced this plan to provide ecological information about the site and to outline the main objectives for the conservation of the special features of the site.

The **Introduction** outlines the **policy background** to the site's designation and the relevant legislation.

The **Site description** contains **general information** on the site's boundaries, ownership and organisations involved. It also contains sections on the **physical aspects** of the site such as geology and hydrology as well as the **biological features**, in particular, the habitats and species found there. **Land use** and cultural features are also described.

The **Ecological Assessment** assesses the main ecological attributes of the site.

The **Objectives, Strategies and Zoning section** outlines the management necessary for the conservation of the site. It starts with a set of specific **conservation objectives**. These are followed by the main **management issues** that may impact on the conservation of the site and the **strategies** that will be used to achieve the objectives as outlined. In cases where more information is required, general strategies are usually applied. Where sufficient data and knowledge is available, specific management prescriptions are outlined for the timescale of the plan. In the final section, the site is divided into management **zones** to indicate where each strategy applies.

The appendices include a **glossary** where scientific and technical terms are explained, a list of **notifiable actions** relevant to each habitat within the site, and additional information on the site.



# INTRODUCTION

## Legal Background for Conservation Plans

The legal basis for selection and designation of **Special Areas of Conservation** (SACs) is the **EU Habitats Directive**, which was adopted in 1992. Focusing on the conservation of natural and semi-natural habitats and species of flora and fauna, the Habitats Directive seeks to establish “Natura 2000”, a network of protected areas throughout the European Community. The Habitats Directive includes a list of habitats that require SAC designation and specific conservation measures. This list is known as Annex I and the habitats are referred to as Annex I habitats. On this list, habitats that require special attention because they are in danger of disappearance, are termed ‘priority habitats’. A second list, Annex II in the Habitats Directive comprises species that must be afforded special protection.

In Ireland, the habitats and species that must be afforded protection under the Habitats Directive include:

16 Annex I priority habitats that require particular attention – including raised bogs, active blanket bogs, turloughs and machair,

45 other Annex I habitats – such as certain types of heaths, lakes and woodlands,

25 Annex II species – including Otter, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Killarney Fern.

It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect the Annex I habitats and Annex II species. These sites, together with the **Special Protection Areas** (SPAs) designated under the **EU Birds Directive** (1979), form the European “Natura 2000” network.

The Birds Directive contains annexes, which are lists of birds that require particular conservation measures (Annex I), and also species that may be hunted, and species that may be sold. There are 28 Annex I species regularly occurring in Ireland including Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Peregrine Falcon, Corncrake and Terns. Member states are also required to protect sites that are important for migratory species such as ducks, geese and waders.

The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law through the **European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997**. The **Wildlife Act 1976** is the main statute governing the protection of wildlife in Ireland and was amended in 2000 to take account of European law, particularly the Habitats and Birds Directives. The **Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000** also makes legal provision for the designation and protection of a national network of **Natural Heritage Areas** (NHAs). Over 1,100 proposed NHAs were published in 1995 and almost 400 of these are also selected as candidate SACs.

The European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 include the following points:

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government must transmit a candidate list of sites to the European Commission for consideration.

Following adoption of this list by the Commission, the Minister will formally designate the sites as SACs.

Sites are legally protected once they are publicly advertised.

Landowners and other users with a legal entitlement should be notified of designation, and the Minister must make all reasonable efforts to do so. Notification also includes a list of activities that may alter, damage, destroy or interfere with the integrity of the site. A person who illegally damages a site may be prosecuted or required to repair damage.

Landowners and other users with a legal entitlement may appeal the designation of lands on scientific grounds.

Landowners and other users with a legal entitlement will be compensated for actual loss of income arising from restrictions imposed as a result of designation.

DEHLG is the government department with responsibility for the designation and protection of wildlife habitats, species and areas of conservation interest. As part of their responsibility in relation to biodiversity and wildlife under the Wildlife Acts (1976 and 2000), the Minister's brief extends far beyond the habitats and species listed in the annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives. For this reason, cSAC conservation plans may deal with species that are not mentioned in these annexes.

## Reasons for Site Designation

The reason for the proposal to designate this site as a SAC is the presence of:

HABITATS LISTED IN ANNEX I OF THE E.U. HABITATS DIRECTIVE	
<b>Habitat No. 4010 - Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></b>	This habitat occurs in a mosaic with blanket bog and is found on the lower slopes and valley bottom, both above and below Lough Anarget. Cowberry ( <i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i> ), an indicator of low grazing pressure, is also found in these areas.

As part of his responsibility in relation to biodiversity and wildlife under the Wildlife Acts, the Minister's objective is to protect important habitats and species even though they may not appear in the Annexes of the Habitats Directive. This may mean that they are included in SAC conservation plans.

## General Conservation Objectives

Under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, DEHLG is required to ensure the favourable conservation status of all Annex I habitats and Annex II species within cSACs. By preparing, implementing and reviewing this plan on a five year basis, DEHLG aims to achieve the objectives of the Habitats Directive in relation to this site. The general objectives DEHLG will apply to achieve this are:

to maintain the Annex I habitat for which the cSAC is selected

to liaise with the landowners, relevant authorities and interested parties

to increase the scientific knowledge of the site through further scientific research and development of monitoring programmes

Specific conservation objectives and strategies are outlined in the section, **Objectives, Strategies and Zoning**.

## Implications for landowners and other site users

In most areas designated as cSACs, current practices will not have to change significantly.

In cases where users are required to change practices or restrict activities to protect the wildlife interest of the site, compensation will be payable based on actual loss of income.

If an owner, occupier or user of a site wishes to carry out certain activities within the designated area (that are not covered by licence or consent from another statutory body), they must consult with, and get consent from, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. These activities are listed as “Notifiable Actions” for each habitat (see Appendix IV). Local Authorities are obliged to ensure appropriate assessment of the implications of any development permission sought that may have an impact on a designated area.

The designation of the site or any conservation actions can be appealed by landowners or right-owners on a scientific basis. Details of the appeals procedure are also given in Appendix V.

# SITE DESCRIPTION

## Location including site boundaries

The site is located approximately 8km north of Frosses, in southern County Donegal (see Map 1).

<b>Grid Ref.:</b>	G 91 90
<b>Latitude:</b>	N 54° 45' 47"
<b>Longitude:</b>	W 08° 08' 13"
<b>Area:</b>	666 ha
<b>Altitude:</b>	to 650 m

*(Map references are provided in Appendix II).*

## Site Boundaries

There are no clearly defined boundaries at the north-western or south-western sides of the site. As such, it is a priority to define boundaries and to map the reservoir and the private, unpaved road that runs along the eastern slopes of Meenacloghspar. This information will be included, as the map becomes available from Donegal County Council. The boundary running between the summits of Meenacloghspar and Silver Hill are not of concern as they form a contiguous boundary with Lough Nillian Bog cSAC (Site Code 0165).

## Site Infrastructure

There is a private, un-surfaced track, only suitable for vehicles with four-wheel drive, running from the hydroelectric scheme at the base of Meenacloghspar onto the site. This road will be included in the site maps once the information becomes available from Donegal County Council. The road does not appear to enter the site (CGR Aerial Photos, 1995).

There is also a small reservoir, part of the hydroelectric scheme, which also appears to be just outside the southern boundary. The reservoir includes a fish bypass in order to facilitate the passage of salmonids upstream.

## Legal Status

### Ownership

Approximately half of the site is held in commonage, with the other half under multiple private ownership. There are eight private landowners and four commonage rights holders (Mr. J.

Hennigan, *pers. comm.*, 1996). See Map 2 for details of areas under commonage and multiple private ownership.

## Designations of the Site

The site is in an EU designated “Severely Handicapped Area” and farmers within the site are due extra headage and premium payments.

**Candidate Special Area of Conservation** Site Code IE0001880

**Proposed Natural Heritage Area** Site Code 1880

## Rights Pertaining To The Site

**Commonage** Much of the site is held in commonage, with four commonage rights holders.

**Fishing** The Eany Beg Water is managed by the NRFB as a sport fishery, where the NRFB sells fishing permits and conducts bank maintenance and poaching patrols on the river.

# Management Infrastructure

## Individuals and Organisations Involved

**Landowners** Multiple private ownership with eight private landowners and four commonage holders manage the site for the grazing of sheep.

**National Parks & Wildlife (NPW) of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG)** NPW is responsible for maintaining the nature conservation value of the site. The site is patrolled by the Local Conservation Ranger, with input from other staff as necessary (see Appendix VII for further details of NPW regional staff).

**Northern Regional Fisheries Board** The NRFB manages the Eany Water as a sport fishery.

**Planning Authorities** Donegal County Council is the relevant planning authority for the site.

## Local Authority Policy in relation to the Site

The County Donegal Development Plan (2000) indicates that the Council recognises the value of Natural Heritage Areas, including SACs and are committed to fulfilling obligations with regard to planning applications and SACs as set out in the ‘European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997’. Furthermore, “*The Council will work with relevant authorities, voluntary and community groups, to optimise the contribution of these and other heritage resources to the sustainable development of the country*”.

# Physical Features

## Climate

No meteorological measurements have been made on Meenaguse Scragh. Rainfall data from the nearby Brockahy Mountain weather station for the years 1961-1990 indicate that the area receives approximately 2809mm of precipitation annually.

The closest synoptic weather station to the site is at Malin Head, and 30-Year Average information for this weather station was obtained from the Met Eireann website (see Appendix III for full details). In summary, the mean daily air temperature at the station is 9.3°C, ranging from an average low of 5.2°C in February to an average high of 14.0°C in July. The average daily duration of sunshine is 3.4 hours per day. Winds are predominantly from the south and the west, with an average wind speed of 16.3 knots (1 knot = 1.15mph). There is an annual average of 25.8 days with snow or sleet recorded, and only 3.3 days where snow is still lying on the ground by 9am.

## Geology & Geomorphology

Specific information on the geology and geomorphology of County Donegal will be incorporated into the plan once the information becomes available from the Geological Survey of Ireland.

# Biological Features

## Habitats and Vegetation

**Note:** Throughout the conservation plan, habitats are named and described under two different systems: the Annex I habitat is as listed in the EU Habitats Interpretation Manual, while all other habitats are as listed according to the NPW NHA classification system.

The following table lists the habitats within the site. The Annex I habitat of the Habitats Directive for which the site was selected is listed, with the relevant NHA category also shown. Annex I priority habitats are marked with an asterisk (\*). The Gross Habitat map for the site is presented in Map 3. The percentage presented for each habitat type is based on the approximate geographic area of each habitat, as shown in Map 3.

### Habitats Found within Meenaguse Scragh cSAC

ANNEX I HABITAT TYPE	CORRESPONDING NHA CATEGORY	% AREA
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>	Wet heath	48%
-	Blanket bog <sup>1</sup> (including scragh)	In mosaic with wet heath (scragh comprises 8%)
-	Acid grassland	30%
-	Heath	15%
-	Inland water bodies (lakes and streams)	5%
-	Inland rocks and screes	2%

## Annex I Habitat:

**Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* in mosaic with blanket bog/ scragh (48% of total site area)**

This mosaic of habitats is found on the lower slopes and valley bottom and consists of peat hags, both above and below Lough Anarget. Many of the hags have bare peat sides topped with typically heathland vegetation, dominated by Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) along with Silver-haired moss (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) and Hare's-tail Cotton Sedge (*Eriophorum vaginatum*). There are also some hummocks almost entirely composed of Silver-haired Moss. The damp areas between the hags and hummocks are colonised by Common Cotton Sedge (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Heath Rush, Deergrass (*Trichophorum caespitosum*) and *Sphagnum* species, including Red Bog Moss (*Sphagnum capillifolium*). Cowberry, an indicator of low grazing pressure, is also found in these areas.

An extensive area of overgrown lake with lawns of Recurved Bog Moss (*Sphagnum recurvum*) forms the scragh, which is an extremely wet area. Large stands of Soft Rush and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) occur. Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*), Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and Aquatic Bog Moss (*Sphagnum auriculatum*) are also reported to be present in this area.

<sup>1</sup> While active blanket bog is an Annex I habitat, the active blanket bog on the site is not of the quality that qualifies it as the priority habitat due to its small size, degraded nature and low conservation value.

## Other Habitats

### Acid grassland

This area consists of acid grassland occurring in a mosaic with heathland vegetation, in places, and active blanket bog in the wetter areas. It is dominated by Mat-Grass (*Nardus stricta*), Heath Rush and Ling Heather with some Hare's-tail Cotton Sedge, Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), Silver-haired Moss, other moss species and club mosses. In wetter patches, or flushes, *Sphagnum* species occur along with clumps of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and *Polytrichum* (Hair-moss) species. There is some sheep grazing, but stocking levels are low, although there is evidence of localised erosion. This habitat is typical of the hillsides over most of the site. There are also areas on peaty soils that are dominated by Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Papillose Bog Moss (*Sphagnum papillosum*), Bank Hair Moss (*Polytrichum commune*), Schreber's Feather Moss (*Pleurozium schreberi*) and Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) also occur in the sward.

### Heath

This heath area has vegetation very similar to acid grassland (see above), but the dominant vegetation is Ling Heather. Other heather species also occur, including Cross-leaved Heather (*Erica tetralix*) and a small amount of Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) also occurs in small quantities. On the summit of Lavagh Beg is a matrix of bryophyte dominated areas and Heath Rush dominated areas. The bryophyte areas have abundant Schreber's Feather Moss, Bank Hair Moss and *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*.

### Inland water bodies

These comprise a relatively small proportion of the site. They consist of small streams and small lochans near the summit of Silver Hill. The streams are small and fast-flowing, with rocks covered in mosses. The lochans have a thin peaty substrate overlying quartzite bedrock, with the only visible vegetation being green filamentous algae. These are used by the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) as spawning pools. Another aquatic feature is Lough Asgorha, which is a shallow lake with a peaty substrate. Bottle Sedge and Bog Bean, are abundant over large areas of the lake. Carpets of Recurved Bog Moss and Soft Rush occur on the margins. Lough Nabrackbautia is one of a series of Loughs at the western end of the site. These Loughs have stony and peaty substrates.

### Inland rocks and screes

This area consists of screes on the eastern slopes of Silver Hill, stabilised by vegetation, and also exposed cliffs. On the scree area, Silver-haired Moss dominates and club mosses frequently occur. The surrounding turf is heavily grazed and has a high moss content with *Hypnum cupressiforme*, Silver-haired Moss and *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* common. The areas of exposed rock, which are inland cliffs that form the boundary of the site, have a sparse vegetation of Ling Heather, Mat-Grass, Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*), Heath Bedstraw, Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Hard Fern, and the mosses *Breutelia chrysocoma* and *Hypnum cupressiforme*.



## Fauna:

### Fish

The Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*), an Annex II EU Habitats Directive species and listed as internationally important in the Irish Red Data Book (Whilde, A. 1993), is present in the Eany Beg Water. It does not, however, spawn within the site boundaries, but uses areas downstream of the site. Also present in the river is a population of Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*).



*Atlantic Salmon (Salmo salar)*

## Amphibians and Reptiles

The Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), a species listed in Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive and as an internationally important Red Data Book species (Whilde, A. 1993), is breeding on the site.

## Birds

A pair of Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*), a species listed under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, nest on the cliffs near the Grey Mare's Tail Waterfall. They are known to breed on the site in most years (Mr. J. Hennigan, *pers. comm.*, 1996), but breeding success is not known.

The area was also a traditional site for wintering Greenland White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*), an EU Birds Directive Annex I species, but they have not been reported on the site in several years (Mr. J. Gatins, *pers. comm.*, 1996).

There is also a population of Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*), a nationally declining species, present on the site, but no data for this population is available.

Other birds occurring on the site include Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and Raven (*Corvus corax*). During field visits in December 1996, several Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) were seen.

## Mammals

The Otter (*Lutra lutra*), an EU Habitats Directive Annex II species, is known to frequent the site, but is not known to breed there (Mr. J. Gatins, *pers. comm.*, 1997).

The Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), an Internationally Important Irish Red Data Book species (Whilde, A. 1993), is found on the site. Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is also present on the site. The American Mink (*Mustela vison*) is present on the Eany Beg Water and the presence of Salmonids on the river within the site almost certainly indicates that they utilise the site as a feeding territory.

# Cultural Features

## Land use and impacts on the site

<b>Grazing</b>	<p>The area is a traditional commonage and is under multiple private ownership.</p> <p>The major agricultural use of the site is grazing by Scottish Blackface sheep. The site is not heavily grazed by sheep during the winter months, as weather conditions on the site are too harsh to permit it. According to the Commonage Framework Plans relevant to the site, stocking levels have caused some overgrazing in the commonage areas.</p> <p>The impacts of grazing on the commonage areas of this site have been assessed by the Commonage Framework Planning Project. The relevant framework plans are DG19 and DG22. The findings of these plans are reflected in the management strategies and zoning sections of this conservation plan.</p> <p>A substantial amount of fencing has occurred within the site during the mid-90s, possibly in accordance with the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS).</p> <p>The site lies within an EU designated “Severely Handicapped Area” and farmers within the site are due extra headage and premium payments.</p>
<b>Fishing</b>	<p>The Eany Beg Water is managed by the NRFB as a sport fishery and conducts bank maintenance and poaching patrols on the river.</p>

## Land use adjacent to the site

<b>Grazing</b>	<p>Sheep graze on the adjacent mountains</p>
<b>Electricity generation</b>	<p>There is a small reservoir just outside the southern site boundary that holds back water for the hydroelectric scheme to the south of the boundary. There is a fish bypass on the reservoir in order to facilitate the passage of fish upstream.</p>
<b>Nature conservation</b>	<p>Lough Nillan Bog cSAC (Site Code 165) occurs to the west of the site, and forms a contiguous boundary with this site stretching from Meenacloghspar to the summit of Silver Hill.</p>

## Past human use

<b>Grazing</b>	<p>The area has been traditionally used for sheep grazing</p>
<b>Recreation</b>	<p>The area around the Grey Mare’s tail Waterfall was formerly a popular route for hill-walkers to gain access to the mountains, although it seems to have fallen out of use (Mr. J. Gatins, <i>pers. comm.</i>, 1996).</p>

## Recorded Monuments and Other Features

There are no recorded monuments listed for this site.

# ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Note: The following is an assessment of the ecological features of the site. It is largely based on information given in the explanatory notes which accompany the Natura 2000 form. Additional information, obtained since these notes were written may also have been used to make the assessment.

Meenaguse Scragh was selected as a cSAC due to the presence of Annex I habitat northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*, which occurs in a mosaic with areas of poor quality active blanket bog. The cSAC is of further ecological interest as it supports an area of scragh, which is an unusual habitat in Ireland, is particularly rare in this area in Co. Donegal and is of outstanding conservation value.

Meenaguse Scragh cSAC provides habitat for the Peregrine (an Annex I EU Birds Directive species), Otter and Atlantic Salmon (both Annex I EU Habitats Directive species). The population of Peregrines is not fragile as it is fairly safe from disturbance and the nesting site is fairly inaccessible. The Otter is present on the lower reaches of the Eany Beg Water and probably uses the site as feeding territory. The Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) does not breed within the site boundaries but the Eany Beg Water is considered to be of regional importance to spawning Atlantic Salmon.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ZONING

## Conservation Objectives

The nature conservation objectives for this site are:

- |                     |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 1:</b> | To maintain and, where possible, enhance the quality and extent of the mosaic of northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i> and blanket bog (c.266 ha). |
| <b>Objective 2:</b> | To maintain and, where possible, enhance the breeding of the Annex I species - the Peregrine.                                                                       |
| <b>Objective 3:</b> | To maintain and, where possible, increase the Annex II species - the Atlantic Salmon within the site.                                                               |
| <b>Objective 4:</b> | To maintain and, where possible, increase the extent and quality of the ecological value of all other habitats within the site (in particular the scragh).          |
| <b>Objective 5:</b> | To survey the scragh in order to compile an inventory of invertebrate species present.                                                                              |
| <b>Objective 6:</b> | To accurately define and mark the site boundaries.                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Objective 7:</b> | To maintain effective liaison between NPW and interested parties as to the management of the site.                                                                  |

## Management Issues

Note: The main issues that may impact on the conservation of the site are outlined below. The constraints that these may pose and the management potential for the site are discussed.

- **Natural succession**
- **Degradation of habitats**
- **Localised erosion**
- **Scientific knowledge of the site**
- **Recreation**
- **Hydroelectric development**

- **Site boundaries**
- **Ownership**

## **Natural succession**

The scragh on Lough Anarget is infilling naturally and is in the process of becoming an area of blanket bog. The cessation of natural succession is impossible. Due to the exposed nature of the site, it is possible that winter storms may disrupt the nature of the scragh enough that it prevents the eventual infilling of Lough Anarget by vegetation. Nevertheless, the scragh provides a good opportunity to study natural succession on the site.

## **Degradation of habitats**

The site contains a mosaic of northern Atlantic wet heath with *Erica tetralix* and active blanket bog, both relatively fragile habitat types. Unfortunately, one of the constraints on the site is localised overgrazing, an action that can damage the site irreparably if continued at high stocking densities. However, it is possible to reduce stocking densities on the site. If the damaged areas are grazed at suggested levels they will, in time, revert to natural upland vegetation. Commonage Framework Plans have been drawn up that include the commonage within the site and recommend sustainable stocking densities.

## **Localised erosion**

Overgrazing is causing some localised erosion on the slopes of Silver Hill and the western slopes of Binnasruell. Fencing throughout the site interferes with the aesthetic and landscape quality of the site and also creates the potential for damage by sheep grazing being concentrated in certain areas and also for track erosion along fence-lines.

## **Scientific knowledge of the site**

The scragh habitat type is normally known to be a rich source of invertebrate life. However, the scragh within the site has had no survey of invertebrates carried out on it.

## **Recreation**

Walkers use the area around the Grey Mare's Tail Waterfall as an access point for the site.

## **Hydroelectric development**

The development of the Eany Beg Water as a small-scale hydroelectric scheme may cause changes to the hydrology of the site and lead to increased human disturbance.

Further development of the Eany Beg Water, which runs through the site, is unlikely. The NRFB manages the Eany Beg Water as a sport fishery for Atlantic Salmon, and liaison with the NRFB will be vital in order to maintain the continued presence of the species on the site. The road on the eastern slope of Meenacloghspar is a useful route on to the mountainside from the point of view of management and monitoring. However, it may also become a future threat by interfering with the hydrology of the notable habitat and by providing easy access to individuals who may wish to carry out activities which could damage the site.

## **Site boundaries**

One of the major constraints on the site is the lack of any clear boundary on the southern edge of the site. However, the boundaries can be marked on the ground with pegs by using the Global Positioning System (GPS).

## Ownership

The NPW does not own any part of the site. Land acquisition is not a major priority as long as agreement on stocking densities can be reached with the landowners. However, if areas of the site become available for purchase on the open market, consideration will be given to their purchase.

## General Strategies

Specific strategies that relate to the above objectives are outlined below. However, there are a number of strategies that relate to the site as a whole. These are as follows:

### Implement plan

DEHLG will seek to ensure that the aims of this conservation plan are achieved through:

liaison with the landowners, relevant authorities and interested parties

implementation of REPS or DEHLG farm plans, which will use this document as a guideline for prescribing management on a farm by farm basis, and also will ensure that the agreed prescriptions for the relevant habitats are adhered to (Appendix VI)

enforcement of Regulations under the Habitats/Birds Directives and the Wildlife Act

enforcement of other relevant legislation such as the Water Framework Directive

### Establish a monitoring regime

The monitoring regime for the site will comprise:

#### **Water quality monitoring**

Water quality is monitored at regular intervals by the local authorities. NPW staff liaise with Donegal County Council, and will collate and review this information on a regular basis. NPW will also liaise with relevant bodies (n.b. the EPA and local authority) in relation to compliance with the EU Water Framework. In particular:

- To establish reference conditions necessary for monitoring the status of the qualifying habitat
- To ensure that the sampling regime is adequate to detect changes in the conservation status of the designated area

NPW will liaise with the local authority and other relevant agencies in ensuring that the full ecological importance and sensitivity of the site is taken into account during the production of the River Basin District Management plan. In addition, NPW will liaise with the Local Authority in ensuring that sewerage disposal systems for all new (and existing) dwellings within the lake catchment area are of appropriate standards.

#### **Scientific monitoring**

Monitoring of the favourable conservation status of the northern Atlantic wet heath and scragh will be done by, or on behalf of, the staff of the Monitoring Section of the NPW or staff working to NPW in accordance with the procedures laid down by that section. The work, if any, to be done on this site in that respect will be prescribed by that section.

#### **Site surveillance**

Patrolling of the site by the Conservation Ranger, with special attention to the northern Atlantic wet heath, scragh and notable species will identify any major changes, damaging operations, or threats should they arise.

### Enforce notifiable actions

Certain activities may be restricted in SACs. Notifiable Actions for particular habitats are listed in Appendix IV of this plan. Permission from the Minister is required before these actions may be carried out within the designated area. For example, the grazing of livestock above a sustainable density or stock type and creation of new tracks or paths are notifiable actions for heath habitats.



## Specific Strategies

### Objective 1.

To maintain and, where possible, enhance the extent of the mosaic of northern Atlantic wet heath with *Erica tetralix* and blanket bog (c.266 ha.).

### Strategies:

- 1.1. Manage grazing on commonages** The impacts of grazing on commonage areas of the site have been assessed by the Commonage Framework Planning Project (Commonage Framework Plans (CFPs) DG19 and DG22). These plans recommend de-stocking rates in areas that have been damaged by over-grazing. These rates will be incorporated into REPS plans and /or farm plans produced by DEHLG for each farm and must be achieved within an agreed timescale from the beginning of the REPS/farm planning period.

No farmer's stock will be reduced to less than 25 ewes. If the CFP specifies a de-stocking level of less than 10%, then no de-stocking is required. If the CFP specifies a de-stocking of more than 10%, then de-stocking should occur as indicated. The relevant CFPs (i.e. DG19 and DG22) recommend de-stocking levels between 15 and 23%, depending on the agricultural unit (i.e. the single stockproof area of land) concerned. The individual CFPs should be consulted for further details.

The zoning map (Map 4) reflects the findings of the CFP assessments, and these are specified in the prescriptions for each individual zone.

On commonages in six western counties, a stock reduction of 30% was implemented in December 1998 for farmers not already in REPS. This is taken into account when applying Commonage Framework Plans.

- 1.2. Manage grazing on privately owned land** For non-commonage land, NPW will seek to ensure that sustainable grazing levels are established via REPS and DEHLG farm plans, using a similar methodology applied to commonage areas.

### Objective 2.

To maintain and, where possible, enhance the breeding success of the Annex I species - the Peregrine.

### Strategies:

- 2.1. Monitor breeding success** The local Conservation Ranger will, as resources permit, carry out annual monitoring of the breeding success of the Peregrines on the site, including annual monitoring of fledging rate, any disturbance and success of the breeding on the site.

### Objective 3.

To maintain and, where possible, increase the Annex II species - the Atlantic Salmon within the site.

### Strategies:

- 3.1. Maintain Atlantic Salmon populations** NPW will continue liaison with the NRFB regarding the maintenance of the Salmon population in the headwaters of the Eany Beg Water.

## Objective 4.

To maintain and, where possible, enhance the extent and quality of the habitats within the site (in particular the scragh).

### Strategies:

- |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4.1. Maintain other habitats</b> | Maintenance of the ecological value of other habitats within the site must be carried out, which will be done by keeping to the stocking densities indicated under Objective 1, and ongoing reviews of whether this practice is effective. Also, the scragh needs to be monitored and its growth (or reduction) documented. |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Objective 5.

To survey the scragh in order to compile an inventory of invertebrate species present.

### Strategies:

- |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5.1. Survey scragh for invertebrates</b> | Scragh areas, as a habitat type, are known to hold a variety of invertebrate species. The scragh on this site needs to be surveyed in order to compile an inventory of invertebrate species present. These invertebrates are also thought to be good indicators of the health of the habitat, and as such, may give indications as to the quality and stability of the habitat in the future. |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Objective 6.

To accurately define and mark site boundaries.

### Strategies:

- |                                        |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6.1. Define and mark boundaries</b> | This will be done by a survey of the present boundaries. When the boundaries are set, possibly using GPS, they will be accurately marked out by the use of marked posts. |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Objective 7.

To continue effective liaison between NPW and interested parties as to the management of the site.

### Strategies:

- |                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>7.1. Liaise with interested parties</b>   | NPW will strive to maintain effective liaison with landowners (particularly through the Liaison Committee), relevant authorities, NRFB and interested parties on achieving the objectives for conservation of the site.                                              |
| <b>7.2. Monitor development applications</b> | NPW will continue to monitor applications, including current applications, for planning permission and licenses for lands within and adjacent to the site. Appropriate bodies will be notified if developments are thought to conflict with conservation objectives. |
| <b>7.3. Liaise with REPS planners</b>        | REPS planners are required to consult with NPW staff when they are developing plans for land within the site.                                                                                                                                                        |

# Zoning

Note: Zoning is the division of a nature conservation site and neighbouring lands into a number of sub-units. There are four types of zones identified (not necessarily all occurring within a site): A, B and C within the site and D outside the site but impacting on it. The relevant strategies are listed for each site.

## Zone A: A Natural Zone

Areas of high conservation value, which require no or little intervention (Map 4).

### **1A: NON-INTERVENTION AREAS**

#### **1A1: Scragh, upland lakes, streams, inland cliffs and scree**

Strategies 3.1, 4.1, 5.1 and the general monitoring strategies apply.

## Zone B: Active Management

Areas of high conservation value where high management input is needed to maintain, rehabilitate, restore to a more desirable state (Map 4).

### **B1: Northern Atlantic wet heath, blanket bog and grassland (privately owned)**

Grazing assessments are required for these privately owned areas. See Strategy 1.2.

### **B2: Northern Atlantic wet heath, blanket bog and grassland (commonage, agricultural units DG19k, DG19n and DG22h)**

These areas have been identified in the Commonage Framework Plans (DG19 and DG22) as being moderately overgrazed (category MU) and requiring stock reductions (refer Strategy 1.1). See Commonage Framework Plans for full details.

## Zone D: Impact Zone

Areas outside the site, which may have an impact on the site (Map 4).

### **D1: Threat source area**

The hydroelectric scheme at the base of Meenacloghspar and the road running up the side of the hill may develop into a serious hydrological threat to the site. Also the unpaved road provides easy access to the site and could put increased pressure on the site.

### **D2: Threat source area**

The area around the Grey Mare's Tail Waterfall was previously a popular hill-walking route on to the mountainside, and this could develop into a threat to the breeding of the Peregrines on the site.



## Summary of Specific Strategies

Note: It is implicit with all the strategies presented that their implementation is dependent on availability of adequate resources in terms of staff, expertise and financial resources. Also, that cooperation with landowners and other key stakeholders is key to achieving the stated objectives.

	Strategy	Action required	Who to implement	When/Duration/Frequency	Estimated Total Cost	Additional Resources needed
1.1.	Manage grazing on commonages	Destock as per Commonage Framework Plans DG19 and DG22.	NPW/ Landowners/ Dept. of Ag			
1.2	Manage grazing on privately owned land	Grazing assessment required.	NPW/ Landowners			
2.1.	Monitor breeding success	Annual monitoring of the breeding success of the Peregrines on the site.	NPW			
3.1.	Maintain Atlantic Salmon populations	Liaise with the NRFB regarding the continued presence of the Salmon in the Eany Beg Water headwaters.	NPW/ NRFB			
4.1.	Maintain other habitats	Implementation of Strategies 1.1, 1.2 and ongoing reviews of the effectiveness of the practice. Monitor and document growth (or reduction) of scragh.	NPW/ Landowners			
5.1.	Survey scragh for invertebrates	The scragh on this site needs to be surveyed in order to compile an inventory of invertebrate species present.	NPW			
6.1.	Define and mark boundaries	Survey boundaries and when boundaries are set, possibly using GPS, accurately mark out with posts.	NPW			
7.1.	Liaise with interested parties	Maintain effective liaison with relevant parties on achieving the objectives for conservation of the site.	NPW/ Relevant Parties			
7.2.	Monitor development applications	Monitor applications for planning permission and licenses for lands within and adjacent to the site.	NPW			
7.3.	Liaise with REPS planners	REPS planners must consult with NPW staff when developing plans for land within the site.	NPW/ REPS planners			

# APPENDIX I:

## GLOSSARY

**ACIDIC** - When applied to soils, refers to soils which are of a low pH i.e. below 7. The term is often used in relation to the plant communities that an acid soil may support e.g. acidic grassland.

**ALTITUDE** - Vertical height above sea level.

**AMPHIBIANS** – A vertebrate group whose members spend part of their life cycle in water and part on land e.g. Frog.

**ANNEX I** - of the EU Birds Directive, lists birds that are strictly protected so that they cannot be killed, captured, disturbed or traded.

**ANNEX I** - of the EU Habitats Directive, lists habitats including priority habitats for which SACs have to be designated.

**ANNEX II** - of the EU Birds Directive lists birds which may be hunted.

**ANNEX II** - of the EU Habitats Directive is a list of species for which SACs have to be designated.

**ANNEX III** - of the EU Habitats Directive gives the criteria for selecting sites to be designated as SACs.

**ANNEX IV** - of the EU Habitats Directive lists animal and plant species of Community interest in need of strict protection.

**ANNEX V** - of the EU Habitats Directive lists animal and plant species of Community interest whose taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures.

**AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT** – Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, springs and features that depend on natural waters e.g. marsh, bogs and wetlands.

**BASIN** - A depressed area of the Earth's surface, in which sediments accumulate.

**BIODIVERSITY** – A general term used to describe all aspects of biological diversity, including: the number of species present in a given environment; the genetic diversity present within a species; the number of different ecosystems present within a given environment.

**BIOTIC FACTORS** – The influence of living components of the environment on organisms.

**BIRDS DIRECTIVE** (Council Directive 79/ 409/ 2nd April 1979) - Under this Directive Ireland is required to conserve the habitats of two categories of wild birds: 1) Listed rare and vulnerable species and 2) Regularly occurring migratory species. The Directive also obliges Ireland to conserve wetlands, especially those of international importance and regulates the hunting and trading of wildbirds. It was transposed into Irish legislation by the EU (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997.

**BLANKET BOG** - An NPW habitat classification which refers to bogs which carpet the landscape, following the underlying topography. They can cover extensive areas along the west coast and on uplands throughout the country.

**BRYOLOGY** - The branch of botany that deals with mosses and liverworts.

**BRYOPHYTES** - A group of simple non-vascular spore-bearing green plants comprising the mosses, liverworts and hornworts.

**CATCHMENT** - An area of land draining to a defined point. The term river catchment refers to the area of land that drains into a particular river system.

**COMMONAGE** – An area of land which are undivided but are owned by more than one person / or the rights to use the land are owned by more than one person.

**COMMUNITY** - a well-defined assemblage of plants and/or animals, clearly distinguishable from other such assemblages.

**CONSERVATION STATUS** - The sum of the influences acting on a habitat and its typical species that may affect its long term distribution, structure and functions. Also refers to the long-term survival of its typical species within the European territory of the Member States.

**DEHLG** - Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

**DEVELOPMENT PLANS** - Local Authorities (Co. Councils & Corporations) are obliged under statute to produce a document which sets out the planned development of their areas for a given number of years. In the future Local Authorities will be asked to incorporate designated NHAs, SACs and SPAs classifications into their development plans.

**DIVERSITY** - see biodiversity.

**ECOLOGY** - The study of the interactions between organisms, and their physical, chemical and biological environment.

**ELEVATION** - The height of something above a given place, usually above sea level.

**ENVIRONMENT** – The biological and physical conditions in which an organism lives.

**EROSION** - The processes whereby the materials of the Earth's crust are dissolved, or worn away and simultaneously moved from one place to another by natural agencies which include weathering, solution, corrosion and transportation.

**EUROPEAN BIRDS DIRECTIVE (79/ 409/ 2nd April 1979)** - See Birds Directive.

**EXPOSED ROCK** – An NPW habitat classification describing bedrock surfaces, including inland cliffs and crags. These may support a variety of different plants on soil accumulations, but greater than 50% of the rock surface is without vascular plant cover.

**FAUNA** - Animal life.

**FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS** - The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as “favourable” when: its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

**FLORA** - plant life.

**FRAGILITY** - Refers to how robust a site/habitat/species is.

**GEOMORPHOLOGY** – The study of the form and structure of the landscape, which is shaped by the underlying geology.

**HABITAT** - Refers to the environment defined by specific abiotic and biotic factors, in which a species lives at any stage of its biological cycle. In general terms it is a species home. In the Habitats Directive this term is used more loosely to mean plant communities and areas to be given protection.

**HABITATS DIRECTIVE** - (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). The Directive on the conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna. This Directive seeks to legally protect wildlife and

its habitats. . It was transposed into Irish legislation by the EU (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997.

HAGGS – Remaining small blocks of original bog.

HEATH – An NPW habitat classification comprises of vegetation on relatively dry acidic mineral or peat soil usually dominated by Ericaceous shrubs, which include *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather), all Heathers (*Erica* spp.), *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry), *Empetrum nigrum* (Crowberry), *Arctostaphylos uva-ursea* (Bearberry), *Daboecia cantabrica* (St Dabioc's Heath), or dwarf, cushion forming *Ulex* spp. These shrubs must form a minimum cover of 25% to fall into the heath category. This habitat is frequently found in mosaic with other upland habitats.

HERBICIDE - A chemical or biological preparation which kills plants.

HUMMOCK - A small hillock/mound. Often used to describe the surface of active bogs where the ground forms a pattern of mounds, hollows and pools. Such hummocks commonly comprise bog mosses.

HYDROLOGY - The movement of water through a catchment area including freshwater and seawater inputs, water level changes and drainage mechanisms which are all influenced by the underlying geology.

INVERTEBRATES - Animals without backbones.

LAKES AND PONDS - An NPW habitat classification describing enclosed bodies of fresh water, or semi-enclosed bays of larger bodies of fresh water. Only the open water body itself is included, so areas of standing with tall emergent vegetation are not included here but should be assigned to reedbeds and other swamps.

LIAISON COMMITTEE - This is a special group set up to discuss the contents of a conservation management plan and the implementation of the plan. The committee will include representation of landowners, right-holders and other interest groups. It shall be the function of the committee to advise NPW managers on the interaction between site conservation management and local interests. The Liaison Committee will nominate a member to the official Appeals Board which will consider appeals against site designation and other issues. The Liaison Committee will be independent from the NPW.

LOCAL – A term used in ecology which is applied to distribution of species when assessed on a national grid reference system. The assessment is made on the basis of the number of occupied 10 km National Grid squares. Local applies to 26-75, 10 km squares in this context.

LOCHANS - An aquatic feature which comprises a thin peaty substrate overlying quartzite bedrock, with the only visible vegetation being filamentous green algae. These are commonly used by frogs for spawning.

MANAGEMENT - a) Controlling processes within a site (this can be actively carrying out work or can be doing nothing), preferably in accordance with a conservation plan. - b) The practical implementation of the management plan. - c) Undertaking any task or project identified in the management plan, including the identification of new opportunities.

MONITORING – A repeat or repeats of a survey using the same methodology. Designed to look for or measure specific changes and the rate or extent of change. Used to check the “health” quantity or quality of a habitat or species.

MOSAIC - Used to describe habitats that occur together and cannot easily be mapped separately.

MULTIPLE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP- Lands that are divided into areas which are privately owned. There must be more than one private landowner under this heading. (lands in commonage are not described under this heading).

NATIONAL PARKS and WILDLIFE (NPW) – the section of the Environment Infrastructure and Services division of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with responsibility for nature conservation and implementation of Government conservation policy as enunciated by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.



**NATURA 2000** - A network of sites across the European Community, selected for the purpose of conserving natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community. SACs and SPAs form the Natura 2000 network.

**NATURAL HABITAT** - Can be aquatic or terrestrial areas distinguished by geographic, abiotic and biotic features, whether entirely natural or semi-natural.

**NHAs** - Proposed Natural Heritage Areas. These are areas that are important for wildlife conservation. Some of these sites are small, such as roosting areas for rare bats; others can be large such as a blanket bog or a sand dune system.

**NOTABLE SPECIES** - Plants or animals which are worthy of mentioning either because they are particularly typical of a habitat, or because they are rare/ scarce/ atypical.

**NOTIFIABLE ACTIONS** - Actions specified under the cSAC regulations and are listed in the appendices of a conservation plan. These are actions which could cause damage to the site, and for which prior approval is required before they can be carried out.

**NPW** - National Parks and Wildlife

**NRFB** - Northern Region Fisheries Board.

**ORGANISM** - Any living thing.

**OS** – Ordnance Survey

**PATROL MONITORING** - Regular monitoring of a site usually carried out by the Conservation Ranger to check for damaging activities and to carry out other activities such as to assess the vegetation, to assess the effectiveness of the management regime on the condition of the site, etc.

**pH** - A quantitative expression for the acidity or alkalinity of a solution or soil. The scale ranges from 0-14: pH 7 is neutral, less than 7 is acidic and greater than 7 is alkaline.

**POACHING** - Damage caused to the vegetation by excessive numbers of large grazers.

**PRECIPITATION** - Water moving from the atmosphere to the ground in the form of rain, fog, mist, snow or hail.

**PRIORITY HABITAT** - A subset of the habitats listed in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. These are habitats which are in danger of disappearance and whose natural range mainly falls within the territory of the European Union. These habitats are of the highest conservation status and require measures to ensure that their favourable conservation status is maintained.

**RARE** - An ecological term applied to distribution of species when assessed on a national grid reference system. The assessment is made on the basis of the number of occupied 10 km National Grid squares. A species is described as rare if has been recorded in to 3-10, 10 km squares.

**RARITY** - Refers to how common or scarce a site/habitat/species is.

**RED DATA BOOK** – A register of threatened species that includes definitions of degrees of threat.

**RED DATA BOOK (lower plants)** - This Red Data Book deals with Stoneworts which are recognised as a separate class, Characea, of the Green Algae Chlorophyta). Many of these species are threatened by loss of habitat or pollution.

**RED DATA BOOK 1 (vascular plants)** This Red Data Book deals with rare and threatened flowering plants and ferns of Ireland with an account of their present distributions and conservation status.

**RED DATA BOOK 2 (mammals, birds, amphibians and fish)** - identifies those species threatened in Ireland or those species whose populations are considered to be of international importance, though not necessarily threatened in Ireland. It details the current state of Irish vertebrates and provides a concise summary of the various legislation for each species.

**REPS** - Rural Environmental Protection Scheme. This is an Agri-Environmental programme which seeks to draw up agreements with farmers, according to the type of farming, landscape and features

on the land. The overall objectives of REPS are to achieve: the use of farming practices which reduce the polluting effects of agriculture by minimising nutrient loss- an environmentally favourable extensification of crop farming, and sheep farming and cattle farming; - ways of using agricultural land which are compatible with protection and improvement of the environment, the countryside, the landscape, natural resources the soil and genetic diversity; - long-term set-aside of agricultural land for reasons connected with the environment; - land management for public access;- education and training for farmers in types of farming compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and upkeep of the countryside.

**RIVERS AND STREAMS** - An NPW habitat classification describing linear channels of moving water. These are natural features that distinguish them from ditches and drainage channels.

**SACs** - Special Areas of Conservation have been selected from the prime examples of wildlife conservation areas in Ireland. Their legal basis from which selection is derived is The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC of the 21st May 1992). SAC's have also been known as cSAC's which stands for "candidate Special Areas of Conservation", and pcSAC's which stands for "proposed candidate Special Areas of Conservation."

**SCIENTIFIC MONITORING** - this is carried out by the monitoring section of the NPW, whose function here is to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the site is maintained and where possible improved.

**SCRAGH** - a floating mat of vegetation.

**SCREE** - An NPW habitat classification which refers to unconsolidated rocky or stony material on a hillside.

**SEVERELY HANDICAPPED AREA** - An EU designation which allows farmers within these areas to avail of extra headage payments and premium payments.

**SPAs** - Special Protection Areas for Birds are areas which have been designated to ensure the conservation of certain categories of birds. Ireland is required to conserve the habitats of two categories of wild birds under the European Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/ 409/ 2nd April 1979). The NPW is responsible for ensuring that such areas are protected from significant damage.

**SPECIES** - the lowest unit of classification normally used for plants and animals.

**STRATEGY** - A course of action or a broad approach towards achieving an objective . It is the general thrust of management towards achieving an objective. It is a description of how the objective is to be achieved.

**SUCCESSION** - The non-seasonal, directional continuous pattern of colonisation and extinction on a site by populations.

**SURVEY** - a) Study/visit to produce an inventory of what is present / record a situation.- b) Establishing a baseline (study).

**SUSTAINABLE** - The highest rate at which a renewable resource can be used without reducing its supply (without causing damage to the resource).

**UPLAND GRASSLAND ON MINERAL SOIL** - An NPW habitat classification describing usually species rich grasslands on mineral soils, normally at altitudes exceeding 100m. Often the vegetation is dominated by calcicolous (lime loving) grasses. Ericaceous scrubs such as Ling, Heather, are scarce or absent, although Gorse, Blackthorn or Hawthorn can occur.

**UPLAND GRASSLAND ON PEATY SOIL** - An NPW habitat classification describing species poor grassland which develops over, dark, acidic, peaty soils, normally at altitudes which exceed 100m. Common acidic upland grassland types in Ireland include those dominated by *Nardus stricta* (Mat grass), the narrow leaved *Agrostis* spp. (Bent grasses) and *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor Grass).

**VERTEBRATES** - Animals with backbones.

**WETLAND** - An area habitually saturated with water, and which may be partially or wholly covered permanently, occasionally, or periodically by fresh or salt water up to a depth of 6 m, and which includes bogs, fens, marsh, shallow ponds, river estuaries, and intertidal mud flats.

**ZONING** - The division of a nature conservation site (& neighbouring lands) into a number of sub-units. Within each zone the management prescriptions will be reasonably uniform and will differ in type or intensity from the other zones in the plan.

# APPENDIX II: REFERENCES

## Map References:

- O.S. 1/2 inch (1:126,720) map: Sheet 3  
O.S. Discovery (1:50,000) map: No. 11  
O.S. 6 inch (1: 10,560) map: Donegal 75 & 84

## Data Bases :

NHA database, NPW, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2.

Natura 2000 database, NPW, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2.

## Photographic Coverage:

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, HQ Ely Place. Aerial photo No. 3035, Flight Line 11. Date: CGR 1995 (B & W).

## Relevant Legislation:

S.I. No. 94/1997: European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997.

Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations, 2000.

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# APPENDIX III: PHYSICAL PROCESSES AFFECTING THE SITE

## Climate

<b>MALIN HEAD</b>													
<b>monthly and annual mean and extreme values</b>													
<b>1961-1990</b>													
<b>TEMPERATURE (degrees Celsius)</b>	<b>jan</b>	<b>feb</b>	<b>mar</b>	<b>apr</b>	<b>may</b>	<b>jun</b>	<b>jul</b>	<b>aug</b>	<b>sep</b>	<b>oct</b>	<b>nov</b>	<b>dec</b>	<b>year</b>
<i>mean daily max.</i>	7.6	7.5	8.7	10.3	12.7	15	16.2	16.6	15.3	13	9.8	8.4	<b>11.8</b>
<i>mean daily min.</i>	3.2	2.9	3.7	5	7.1	9.6	11.4	11.4	10.1	8.3	5.2	4.2	<b>6.8</b>
<i>mean</i>	5.4	5.2	6.2	7.6	9.9	12.3	13.8	14	12.7	10.7	7.5	6.3	<b>9.3</b>
<i>absolute max.</i>	13.9	13.8	19	19.5	24.7	25	27	25.3	23.2	19.6	16	15.1	<b>27</b>
<i>absolute min.</i>	-6.2	-6.2	-4.4	-1.8	-0.5	2.6	5.6	5.2	2	1	-2.5	-5.5	<b>-6.2</b>
<i>mean no. of days with air frost</i>	3.4	3.3	1.6	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4	1.8	<b>11</b>
<i>mean no. of days with ground frost</i>	9.6	9.8	7.4	4.3	1	0	0	0	0.1	0.3	3.7	6.7	<b>42.9</b>
<b>RELATIVE HUMIDITY (%)</b>													
<i>mean at 0900UTC</i>	83	82	81	79	79	81	84	84	83	83	82	83	<b>82</b>
<i>mean at 1500UTC</i>	80	77	76	76	76	78	80	79	78	78	79	81	<b>78</b>
<b>SUNSHINE (hours)</b>													
<i>mean daily duration</i>	1.2	2.2	3.1	5.1	6.2	5.7	4.3	4.3	3.5	2.4	1.5	0.9	<b>3.4</b>
<i>greatest daily duration</i>	7.5	9.2	11.1	14.1	15.5	16.2	16.1	14.8	11.9	9.4	7.6	6.7	<b>16.2</b>
<i>mean no. of days with no sun</i>	11	7	6	3	2	2	3	3	4	6	8	12	<b>67</b>
<b>RAINFALL (mm)</b>													
<i>mean monthly total</i>	114.4	76.3	85.9	58.4	59.2	64.4	72.4	91.3	102.1	118	114.9	103.2	<b>1060.6</b>
<i>greatest daily total</i>	36.9	24.1	26.3	36.1	29.8	32.5	26.2	41.5	53.5	63.2	56.1	33.5	<b>63.2</b>
<i>mean no. of days with <math>\geq 0.2\text{mm}</math></i>	22	17	21	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	<b>237</b>
<i>mean no. of days with <math>\geq 1.0\text{mm}</math></i>	19	13	16	12	12	13	13	15	16	18	18	18	<b>182</b>
<i>mean no. of days with <math>\geq 5.0\text{mm}</math></i>	9	6	7	4	4	4	5	6	7	8	8	7	<b>76</b>
<b>WIND (knots)</b>													
<i>mean monthly speed</i>	19	18.4	17.9	15.1	14.2	13.2	13.2	13.2	15.7	17.5	18.3	19	<b>16.3</b>
<i>max. gust</i>	91	86	90	69	71	74	74	67	98	76	76	88	<b>98</b>
<i>max. mean 10-minute speed</i>	64	57	67	47	49	52	55	45	66	57	56	59	<b>67</b>
<i>mean no. of days with gales</i>	11.2	8.6	8	3.4	2.3	1.3	0.8	1.5	3.8	6.7	8.7	9.7	<b>66</b>
<b>WEATHER (mean no. of days with...)</b>													
<i>snow or sleet</i>	6.6	6	4.6	2.4	0.2	0	0	0	0	0.1	1.9	3.9	<b>25.8</b>
<i>snow lying at 0900UTC</i>	0.9	1	0.5	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	<b>3.3</b>
<i>hail</i>	8.6	5.8	7.9	4.7	1.9	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.6	3.1	7.9	7.3	<b>48.4</b>
<i>thunder</i>	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	<b>5.9</b>
<i>fog</i>	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.9	1	2	2.2	1.3	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	<b>11.8</b>

# APPENDIX IV: NOTIFIABLE ACTIONS

The notifiable actions relating to the habitats that occur within the site are listed below:

Notifiable Actions 2.1 - Upland Grassland, Scree and Inland Cliff

Notifiable Actions 3.1 - Blanket Bog

Notifiable Actions 3.2 - Heath (including Juniper Scrub)

Notifiable Actions 6.2 - Lakes, Ponds and Canals

## HABITAT TYPE 2.1

### UPLAND GRASSLAND, SCREE, AND INLAND CLIFF

Under STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 94 of 1997, made under the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES ACT 1972 and in accordance with the obligations inherent in the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 (the Habitats Directive) on the conservation of the natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, all persons must obtain the written consent, (in circumstances prescribed at section A and B below) of the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government before performing any of the operations on, or affecting, the following habitats where they occur on lands / waters within the candidate Special Area of Conservation.

Please note that where a landowner has a current approved plan under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme or any scheme which the Minister considers to be equivalent s/he need only notify the Minister of activities not covered in the plan.

#### **SECTION A**

Please note that the activities listed in Section A overleaf are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government and should not be undertaken before consent.

#### **SECTION B**

Please note that the activities listed in Section B overleaf may, and in most cases do, require a license or consent from another statutory authority (e.g. the local planning authority, the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, or the Minister for Agriculture and Food).

If so, these notifiable actions do not apply.

However, if such activities are not regulated by another statutory authority, the said activities are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

## HABITAT TYPE 2.1

### UPLAND GRASSLAND, SCREE, AND INLAND CLIFF

<u>Section A</u>	<u>Section B</u>
<p>THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE NOTIFIED IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND SUCH ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT PROCEED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT</p> <p>grazing of livestock above a sustainable density (as defined in approved farm plans)/grazing by livestock treated within the previous week with a pesticide which leaves persistent residues in the dung</p> <p>changing of traditional use from hay meadow (to either grazing or silage making), or from grazing to silage cutting/adding lime</p> <p>adding fertiliser of any sort to areas not previously fertilised applying fertiliser which would increase the level of nitrogen in the soil/ applying fertiliser which would increase the level of phosphorous in the soil applying phosphorous to soils which already have in excess of the REPS index 2 levels</p> <p>using fertiliser on slopes over 25 degrees</p> <p>creation of new tracks or paths</p> <p>burning of vegetation</p> <p>reclamation, infilling, ploughing or land drainage</p> <p>reseeding, planting of trees or any other species</p> <p>rock removal/use of any pesticide or herbicide</p> <p>dumping, burning or storing any materials</p> <p>alteration of the banks, bed or flow of watercourses</p> <p>operation of commercial recreation facilities (e.g. pony trekking)/ introduction (or re-introduction) into the wild of plants or animals of species not currently found in the area</p> <p>any other activity of which notice may be given by the Minister from time to time</p>	<p>(NO REQUIREMENT TO NOTIFY IF ALREADY LICENSED BY ANOTHER MINISTER/BODY)</p> <p>developing leisure facilities including golf courses, sports pitches, caravan or camping facilities.</p> <p>removal of soil, mud, gravel, sand or minerals</p> <p>developing roads or car parks</p> <p>construction of fences, buildings or embankments</p> <p>afforestation</p> <p>commercial turf cutting</p> <p>erecting or operating a windfarm</p>

In a very limited number of cases it may be necessary for the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government to restrict existing activities. In these cases compensation will be payable for actual losses arising out of any such restriction. In the event of restrictions being imposed by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government, an appropriate appeals procedure will be put in place.



## HABITAT TYPE 3.1

### BLANKET BOG

Under STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 94 of 1997, made under the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES ACT 1972 and in accordance with the obligations inherent in the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 (the Habitats Directive) on the conservation of the natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, all persons must obtain the written consent, (in circumstances prescribed at section A and B below) of the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government before performing any of the operations on, or affecting, the following habitats where they occur on lands / waters within the candidate Special Area of Conservation.

Please note that where a landowner has a current approved plan under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme or any scheme which the Minister considers to be equivalent s/he need only notify the Minister of activities not covered in the plan.

#### **SECTION A**

Please note that the activities listed in *Section A overleaf* are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government and should not be undertaken before consent.

#### **SECTION B**

Please note that the activities listed in *Section B overleaf* may, and in most cases do, require a license or consent from another statutory authority (e.g. the local planning authority, the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, or the Minister for Agriculture and Food).

If so, these notifiable actions do not apply.

However, if such activities are not regulated by another statutory authority, the said activities are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

## HABITAT TYPE 3.1

### BLANKET BOG

<u>Section A</u>	<u>Section B</u>
<p>THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE NOTIFIED IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND SUCH ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT PROCEED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT</p> <p>grazing of livestock above a sustainable density or type of stock (as defined in approved farm plans)</p> <p>grazing by livestock treated within the previous week with a pesticide which leaves persistent residues in the dung</p> <p>supplementary feeding of stock, except as defined in REPS guidelines/ introduction of stock to formerly ungrazed areas</p> <p>adding lime/adding fertiliser of any sort</p> <p>creation of new tracks or paths/burning of vegetation/ reclamation, infilling, ploughing or land drainage</p> <p>reseeding, planting of trees or any other species</p> <p>rock removal/cutting turf except from existing banks; no cutting from intact (uncut) areas</p> <p>commercial peat moss or turf extraction</p> <p>use of any pesticide or herbicide, including sheep dip/ dumping, burning or storing any materials</p> <p>alteration of the banks, bed or flow of watercourses</p> <p>operation of commercial recreation facilities (e.g. pony trekking)</p> <p>introduction (or re-introduction) into the wild of plants or animals of species not currently found in the area</p> <p>any other activity of which notice may be given by the Minister from time to time</p>	<p>(NO REQUIREMENT TO NOTIFY IF ALREADY LICENSED BY ANOTHER MINISTER/BODY)</p> <p>developing leisure facilities including golf courses, sports pitches, caravan or camping facilities.</p> <p>removal of soil, mud, gravel, sand or minerals</p> <p>developing roads or car parks</p> <p>construction of fences, buildings or embankments</p> <p>afforestation</p> <p>erecting or operating a windfarm</p>

In a very limited number of cases it may be necessary for the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government to restrict existing activities. In these cases compensation will be payable for actual losses arising out of any such restriction. In the event of restrictions being imposed by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government, an appropriate appeals procedure will be put in place.

## HABITAT TYPE 3.2

### HEATH (INCLUDING JUNIPER SCRUB)

Under STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 94 of 1997, made under the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES ACT 1972 and in accordance with the obligations inherent in the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 (the Habitats Directive) on the conservation of the natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, all persons must obtain the written consent, (in circumstances prescribed at section A and B below) of the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government before performing any of the operations on, or affecting, the following habitats where they occur on lands / waters within the candidate Special Area of Conservation.

Please note that where a landowner has a current approved plan under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme or any scheme which the Minister considers to be equivalent s/he need only notify the Minister of activities not covered in the plan.

<b><u>SECTION A</u></b>	<b><u>SECTION B</u></b>
<p>Please note that the activities listed in <i>Section A overleaf</i> are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government and should not be undertaken before consent.</p>	<p>Please note that the activities listed in <i>Section B overleaf</i> may, and in most cases do, require a license or consent from another statutory authority (e.g. the local planning authority, the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, or the Minister for Agriculture and Food).</p> <p>If so, these notifiable actions do not apply.</p> <p>However, if such activities are not regulated by another statutory authority, the said activities are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government.</p>

## HABITAT TYPE 3.2

### HEATH (INCLUDING JUNIPER SCRUB)

<u>Section A</u>	<u>Section B</u>
<p>THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE NOTIFIED IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND SUCH ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT PROCEED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT</p> <p>grazing of livestock above a sustainable density or type of stock (as defined in approved farm plans)/grazing by livestock treated within the previous week with a pesticide which leaves persistent residues in the dung</p> <p>supplementary feeding of stock, except as defined in REPS guidelines</p> <p>introduction of stock to formerly ungrazed areas</p> <p>adding lime/ adding fertiliser of any sort</p> <p>Creation of new tracks or paths</p> <p>burning areas of vegetation over 5 ha, or burning any area more often than once every 15 years</p> <p>reclamation, infilling, ploughing or land drainage</p> <p>reseeding, planting of trees or any other species</p> <p>rock removal/cutting turf except from existing banks; no cutting from intact (uncut) areas</p> <p>commercial peat moss or turf extraction</p> <p>use of any pesticide or herbicide, including sheep dip</p> <p>dumping, burning or storing any materials</p> <p>alteration of the banks, bed or flow of watercourses</p> <p>operation of commercial recreation facilities (e.g. pony trekking)</p> <p>introduction (or re-introduction) into the wild of plants or animals of species not currently found in the area/any other activity of which notice may be given by the Minister from time to time</p>	<p>(NO REQUIREMENT TO NOTIFY IF ALREADY LICENSED BY ANOTHER MINISTER/BODY)</p> <p>developing leisure facilities including golf courses, sports pitches, caravan or camping facilities.</p> <p>removal of soil, mud, gravel, sand or minerals</p> <p>developing roads or car parks</p> <p>construction of fences, buildings or embankments</p> <p>afforestation</p> <p>erecting or operating a windfarm</p>

In a very limited number of cases it may be necessary for the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government to restrict existing activities. In these cases compensation will be payable for actual losses arising out of any such restriction. In the event of restrictions being imposed by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government, an appropriate appeals procedure will be put in place.

## HABITAT TYPE 6.2

### LAKES, PONDS AND CANALS

Under STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 94 of 1997, made under the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES ACT 1972 and in accordance with the obligations inherent in the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 (the Habitats Directive) on the conservation of the natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, all persons must obtain the written consent, (in circumstances prescribed at section A and B below) of the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government before performing any of the operations on, or affecting, the following habitats where they occur on lands / waters within the candidate Special Area of Conservation.

Please note that where a landowner has a current approved plan under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme or any scheme which the Minister considers to be equivalent s/he need only notify the Minister of activities not covered in the plan.

#### **SECTION A**

Please note that the activities listed in *Section A overleaf* are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government and should not be undertaken before consent.

#### **SECTION B**

Please note that the activities listed in *Section B overleaf* may, and in most cases do, require a license or consent from another statutory authority (e.g. the local planning authority, the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, or the Minister for Agriculture and Food).

If so, these notifiable actions do not apply.

However, if such activities are not regulated by another statutory authority, the said activities are required to be notified to the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

## HABITAT TYPE 6.2

### LAKES, PONDS AND CANALS

<u>Section A</u>	<u>Section B</u>
<p>THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE NOTIFIED IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND SUCH ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT PROCEED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT</p> <p>grazing of livestock above a sustainable density as defined in approved farm plans) within 50m of the lake, pond or canal</p> <p>grazing by livestock treated within the previous week with a pesticide which leaves persistent residues in the dung</p> <p>supplementary feeding of stock within 50m of the lake, pond or canal</p> <p>adding lime within 50m of the lake, pond or canal /adding fertiliser of any sort within 50m of the lake, pond or canal</p> <p>extracting water for irrigation or other purposes</p> <p>operation of boat angling or shore angling business/restocking with fish.</p> <p>within 50m of the lake, pond or canal: reclamation, infilling, ploughing or land drainage</p> <p>reseeding, planting of trees or any other species /removal of trees or any aquatic vegetation/use of any pesticide or herbicide in the lake, pond or canal or within 50m of the lake, pond or canal</p> <p>dumping rubbish or other materials or disposing of any chemicals or wastes in streams/rivers or into water-courses running into them.</p> <p>dumping, burning or storing any materials within 50m of the lake pond or canal including the land spreading of used pesticides (e.g. sheep dip).</p> <p>alteration of the banks, channel, bed or flow of the lake, pond or canal or of watercourses running into or out of it</p> <p>harvesting or burning of reed or willow.</p> <p>causing siltation</p> <p>operation of commercial recreation facilities (e.g. bird watching tours)</p> <p>introduction (or re-introduction) into the wild of plants or animals of species not currently found in the area</p> <p>any other activity of which notice may be given by the Minister from time to time</p>	<p>(NO REQUIREMENT TO NOTIFY IF ALREADY LICENSED BY ANOTHER MINISTER/BODY)</p> <p>developing leisure facilities including golf courses, sports pitches, caravan or camping facilities.</p> <p>any activity which might cause pollution of the lake, pond or canal</p> <p>removal of soil, mud, gravel, sand or minerals</p> <p>developing roads or car parks</p> <p>construction of fences, buildings or embankments</p> <p>construction or operation of an aquaculture Facility.</p> <p>fishing for eels or salmon</p> <p>bank maintenance and grading</p> <p>creation of weirs and dams</p>

In a very limited number of cases it may be necessary for the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government to restrict existing activities. In these cases compensation will be payable for actual losses arising out of any such restriction. In the event of restrictions being imposed by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government, an appropriate appeals procedure will be put in place.

# APPENDIX V: COMPENSATION AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

## Compensation

The Government is committed, as part of the social partnership process, to the payment of a fair and proper level of compensation to landowners who have lands proposed as part of an SAC or SPA and to other users who have a legal entitlement in the site.

A landowner or user with a legal entitlement may seek compensation for actual losses incurred due to restrictions imposed as a result of designation. Eligible persons should submit to NPWS details of the losses incurred as a result of the inclusion of lands in an SAC/SPA and outlining the basis for the calculations. Documentary evidence of past earnings and the activities that produced these should be included with the claim. Should the applicant be dissatisfied with a compensation offer, the case may be referred to an independent arbitrator who will review the matter and make a final decision.

Where a landowner or user with a legal entitlement is restricted in carrying out an activity on their land or licensed area, the compensation due will exclude any payments that have been attracted under grant schemes.

For farmers, there are two options available for receiving compensation for possible restrictions to their farming practices. Farmers may also receive payments for carrying out actions that enhance a nature conservation area.

## Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)

Lands within SACs, SPAs, NHAs or commonages are defined as 'Target Areas' under this scheme. A REPS plan usually covers an entire farm, but a farmer with land in a target area receives a higher payment for that area. Farmers with small areas of land in a designated area can get REPS payments for that part of their farm. In either case, the farmer is subject to certain conditions regarding farming and land use practices, set out in the REPS plan for the farm. REPS is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

## NPWS Farm Plan Scheme

Where a farmer chooses not to participate in REPS, and NPWS seeks to change the farm operation in some way or to restrict a particular activity, NPWS will pay for preparation of a farm plan. This scheme also applies to land within SACs, SPAs, NHAs and commonages.

An NPWS farm plan will normally be confined just to the designated land and will address the conservation requirements, as well as any costs arising. Payment may also be made for work carried out that enhances the nature conservation value of the designated area. The farmer will have a substantial input into the plan.

A list of trained and approved farm planners is available for farmers to choose from. For further information, contact NPWS.

## Appeals Procedure

Objection or appeal can be made against the inclusion of a piece of land in a cSAC or SPA. A person can only make objections if they have a legal interest in the site (i.e. an owner or legal user). They must be made on scientific grounds, e.g. a landowner would show that the relevant habitats/species/geological features were not present in such a condition as to warrant designation. Appeals can also be made for the inclusion of lands. Appeals should be accompanied by a map of the area of concern and be as informative as possible. There are two stages to the appeals process:

**Internal Appeals** are initially dealt with by regional staff. If necessary, they may refer the case to other NPWS staff. If there is no agreement following the internal appeal, the case becomes an external appeal.

The option of an **External Appeal** is available only where an internal appeal is unsuccessful. If so, the appellant may have the case referred to an Appeals Advisory Board, which is independent of NPWS. A grant to defray the cost of an expert scientific report is available to the appellant. The Board is comprised of equal representation of landowners/users and conservationists, with an independent chairperson. The Board makes a recommendation on each appeal to the Minister who then decides on the outcome of the appeal.



# APPENDIX VI: SUMMARY OF FARMING CONDITIONS UNDER REPS

## Conditions for the conservation of blanket bogs, heaths and upland grasslands to be applied under REPS

### General Provisions

The conditions for specific habitat types are supplementary to the agri-environmental plan requirements of the general REPS programmes. The conditions for the target areas under Supplementary Measure A apply. Planners may seek a derogation from the Regional Inspector to vary these conditions in individual cases. All REPS plans in respect of NHAs must be approved and signed by the Planning Agency's environmentalist/ecologist.

### Detailed Conditions

The conditions applicable to Supplementary Measure A apply; the guidelines set out below are complementary to these conditions.

#### Stocking Density

In all cases an environmentally sustainable plan must be prepared and adhered to for the total area of the farm. Sustainable optimum stocking rates must be set down by the REPS planner following careful assessment of the environmental conservation needs of the lands.

Where the stocking levels set down by the planner require a reduction in stock, this must be achieved within one year of the commencement of the plan.

There can be no increase in stocking levels, no introduction of stock to new areas and no changes in stock type during the period of the REPS plan without the prior approval of DAF.

The maximum number of sheep that may be kept on the farm as a whole must be set down in the REPS plan. The conditions set out for Supplementary Measure A areas must be followed. The following parameters apply:

- Where there is no damage, the current stocking levels are acceptable.
- If the level of damage is moderate, a stocking reduction must be prescribed by the planner at a level related to the damage and sufficient for the vegetation to recover
- If the level of damage is severe, a stocking reduction of between 70 % and 100 % of ewe numbers on the damaged area must be prescribed for a specified period.
- At the review of the REPS plan, the conservation status of the areas will be reviewed. A change in the stocking levels (increase or decrease) may be appropriate depending on progress.

Stocking levels apply to Scottish Blackface sheep or similar medium sized sheep breeds. Stocking levels for cattle or other stock should be at livestock unit applicable rates taking account of DAF conversion rates for the various stock types. The stocking levels recommended in this document are maximum sustainable rates for year round grazing. If shorter periods of grazing are used, the number of animals may be increased, though not necessarily pro rata.

### **Supplementary Feeding**

Supplementary feeding is permitted only on areas where it is currently practised. Locations of feeding points must be specified. To reduce heavy grazing, trampling, poaching and erosion problems, 'feeding points' should be moved every three weeks and sited on ground with least habitat and wildlife value, preferably on grassland well away from stands of heather. Feeding on steep slopes and on peaty soils should be avoided where possible. The total amount of feed used must not be increased.

### **Use of Fertilisers and Herbicides**

Neither organic nor inorganic fertilisers or lime can be applied on bogs, heaths or upland grasslands where they have not been used before. Fertilisers must not be used as a means of regenerating eroded areas. In the case of upland grasslands, fertilisers can only be applied on the basis of the results of a soil test. Where fertilisers are being applied, the initial soil sampling should be relatively intensive, with at least one sample per 2-4 ha. Target soil phosphate levels must not exceed the Index 2 level set out in the REPS specification.

Spraying or broadcast application of herbicides must be avoided. Spot application and wipe-on treatments to eradicate docks, thistles, ragwort and similar noxious weeds may be used. Rhododendron may be removed by cutting and herbicide treatment. Bracken control may be by rolling, cutting and/or by controlled cattle trampling in early summer. In exceptional circumstances, control of bracken by herbicides may be permitted.

### **Water Pollution**

The greatest care should be taken to observe the statutory requirements on water pollution. The hydrology of bogland areas is characterised by extremely nutrient poor surface waters which contain flora and fauna adapted to these conditions. These species would be adversely affected by nutrient enrichment. New sheep dip sites must be listed and located away from streams and flushes to reduce the possibility of water pollution and damage to flora and fauna.

## **Restricted and Prohibited Practices**

- The following practices must not be carried out on blanket bogs, heaths or upland grasslands
- The areas must not be drained, ploughed, cultivated or reseeded.
- There must be no infilling or rock removal.
- Turf cutting on unexploited bogs is not permitted. Turf cutting for domestic use is permitted on existing banks.
- Planting of trees or other crops is not permitted.
- No new tracks or paths can be created.
- Burning is only allowed as a planned management practice.
- Gorse may be controlled by cutting, spot spraying or exceptionally by burning outside of the bird nesting season (March 1st to August 31st).

## **Complementary Action**

### **(a) Measures to prevent damage by non REPS participants**

DAF should take measures to ensure that the environmental benefits achieved in degraded areas under REPS are not negated or diminished by non-participants in the Scheme

### **(b) Evaluating and Monitoring**

Monitoring and evaluating the effects of REPS on blanket bogs, heaths and upland and unimproved grassland is essential in determining the environmental impact of REPS on these habitats so that appropriate modifications can be identified and effected where necessary. The effect of the grazing regime on vegetation and wildlife should be monitored to assess recovery as well as any damage being caused by animals. To this end, DAF and NPWS of DEHLG, in consultation with Teagasc and private planners, will monitor the environmental impact of REPS on these habitats on an ongoing basis. Progress in this regard will be reported to the Consultative Committee on REPS.

### **(c) Farmer Education /Advice**

A REPS promotional campaign will be undertaken as soon as is practicable to inform farmers of the conservation needs of these areas and of the provisions of REPS. This campaign will be undertaken by DAF. Farming and environmental organisations will also be invited to assist in this promotional campaign.

### **(d) Seminars for Planners**

Seminars for REPS planners shall be held to advise on the interpretation of these conditions at ground level.

### **(e) Demonstration Farms**

A number of REPS participant demonstration farms will be set up in selected areas. Research work could also be carried out at these farms to assess the ability/rate of recovery of an area under different stocking conditions.

### **(f) Quota Rights**

Any REPS participant farmer is guaranteed that their quota rights are protected and in the event of a possibility of increasing numbers arising, such farmers would be allowed to do so, subject to the environmental condition of the participant farm.

### **(g) Scheme Extension**

The application of REPS in the target areas will apply for periods of five years renewable for 15 years.

### **(h) Local Co-ordination**

DAF will encourage co-ordination, at local level, of efforts to rejuvenate damaged areas.

# APPENDIX VII: NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STAFF

## **Conservation Ranger**

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**Divisional Manager**

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Co. Sligo

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**Divisional Ecologist**

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Galeybaley

Knockroghery

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Email: [channon@duchas.ie](mailto:channon@duchas.ie)

**National Parks and Wildlife**

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government,

7 Ely Place,

Dublin 2

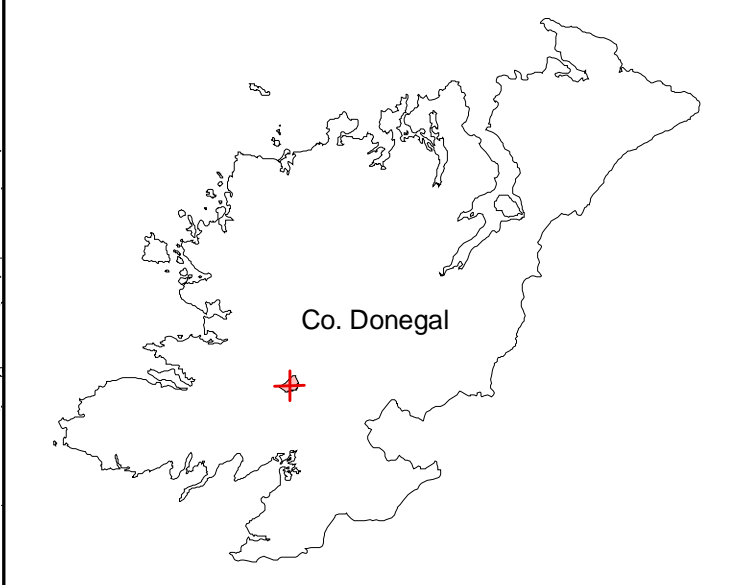
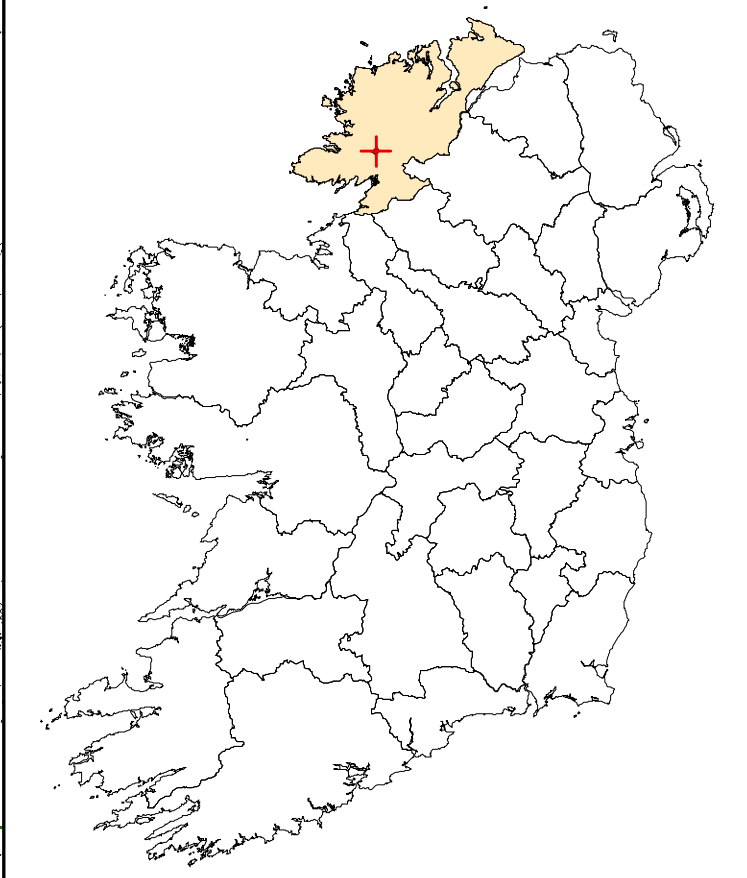
Phone Lo Call 1890 202021, (01) 8882000

Fax (01) 8883272

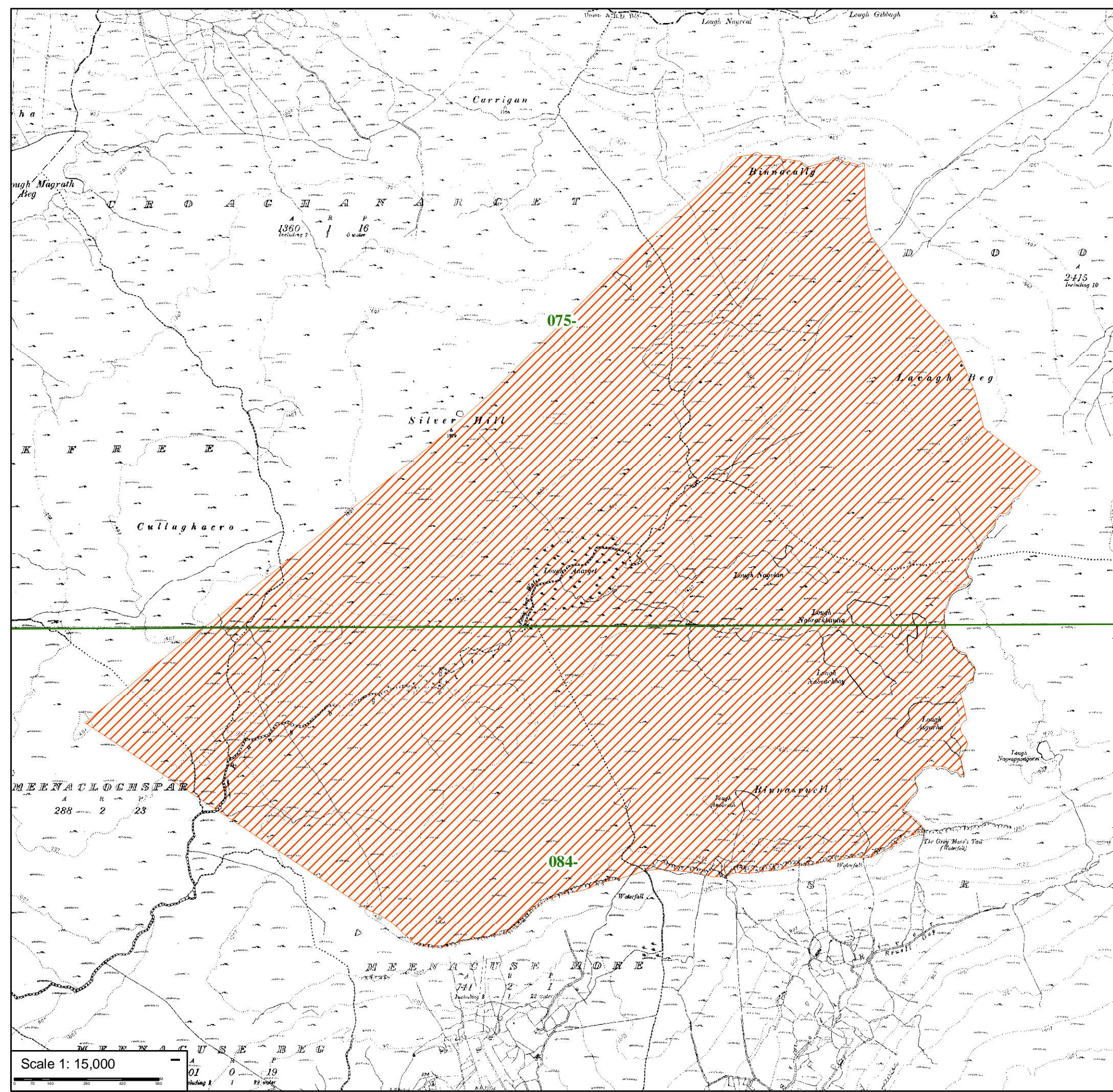
[www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)

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CANDIDATE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION  
MEENAGUSE SCRAGH 001880  
Version 1.00

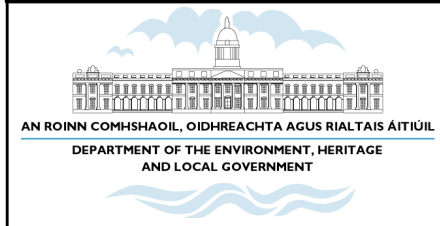
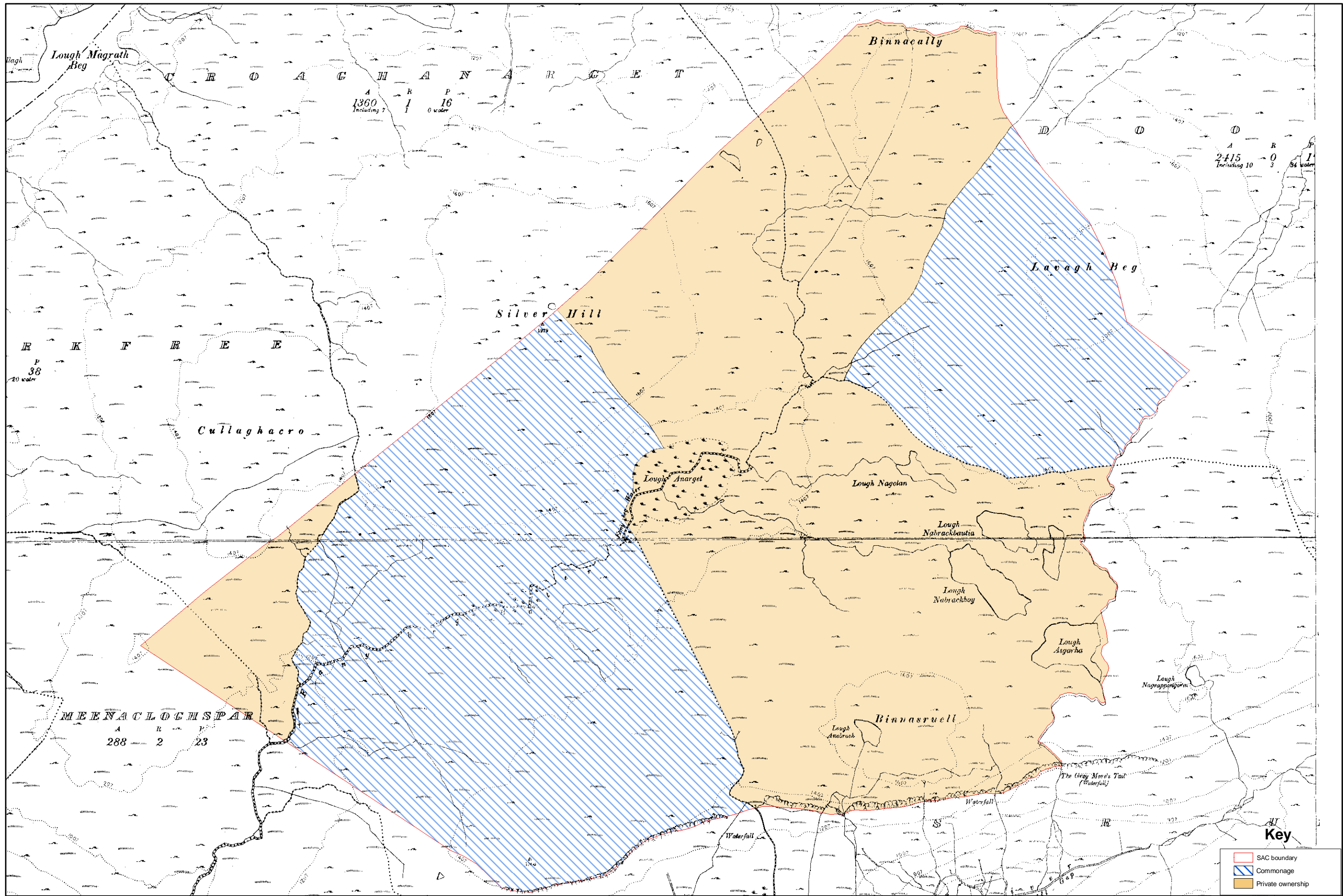
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Map 1  
LOCATION MAP: MEENAGUSE SCRAGH cSAC 001880







CEANTAR SPEISIALTA CAOMHNATHÉ  
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MEENAGUSE SCRAGH  
DG 6" SHEETS 075,084

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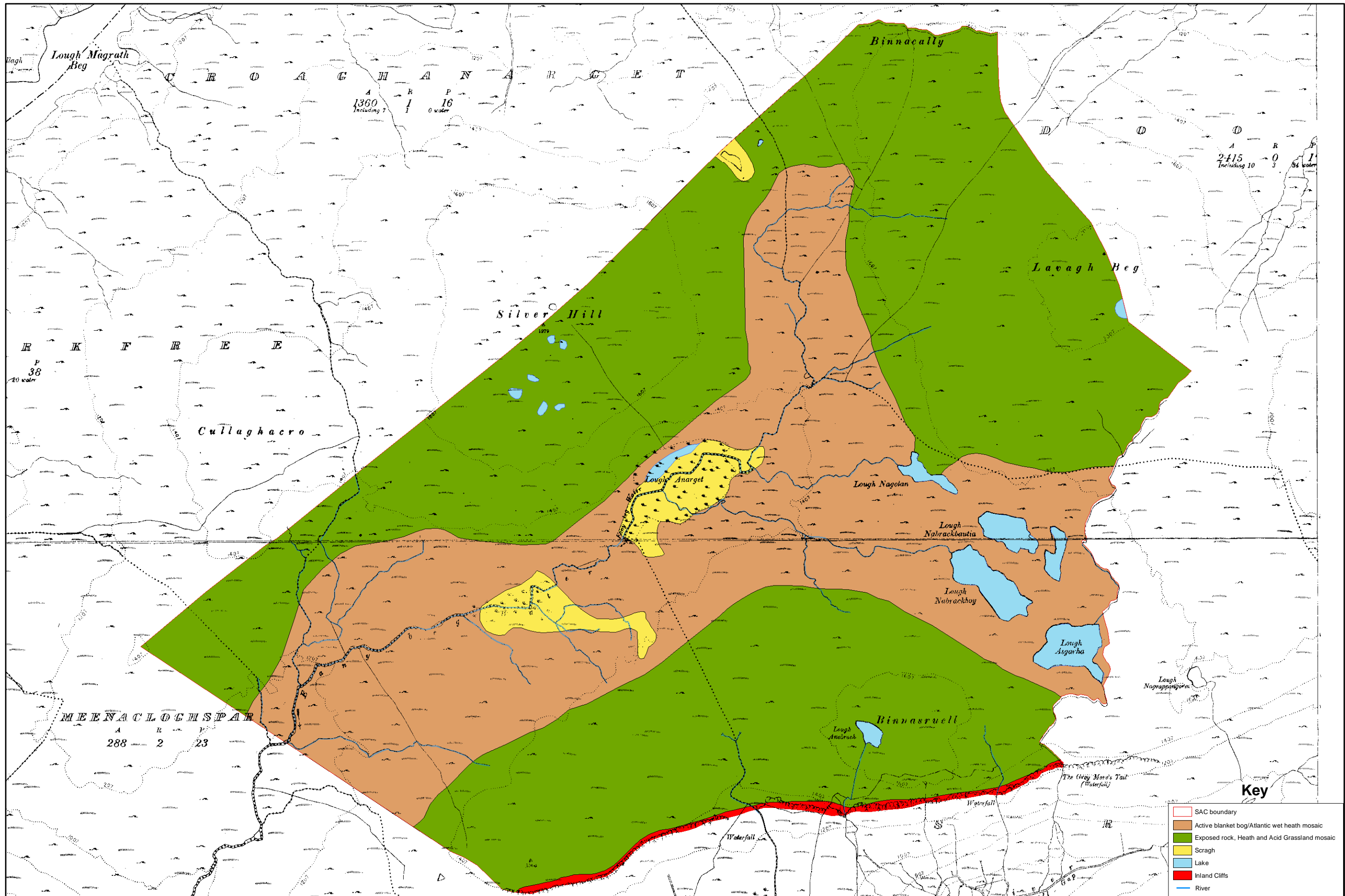
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Map 2  
**OWNERSHIP MAP**

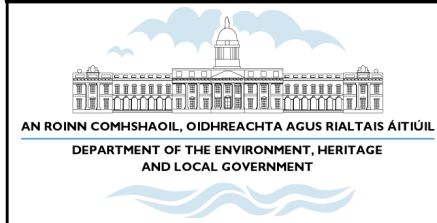
Map to be read in conjunction with conservation plan.

SITE CODE  
001880  
Version 1.00





- Key**
- SAC boundary
  - Active blanket bog/Atlantic wet heath mosaic
  - Exposed rock, Heath and Acid Grassland mosaic
  - Scragh
  - Lake
  - Inland Cliffs
  - River



CEANTAR SPEISIALTA CAOMHNATHE  
CANDIDATE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

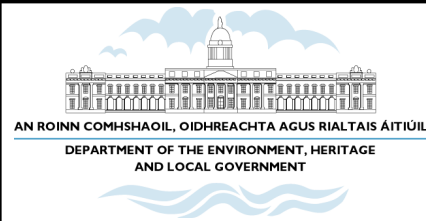
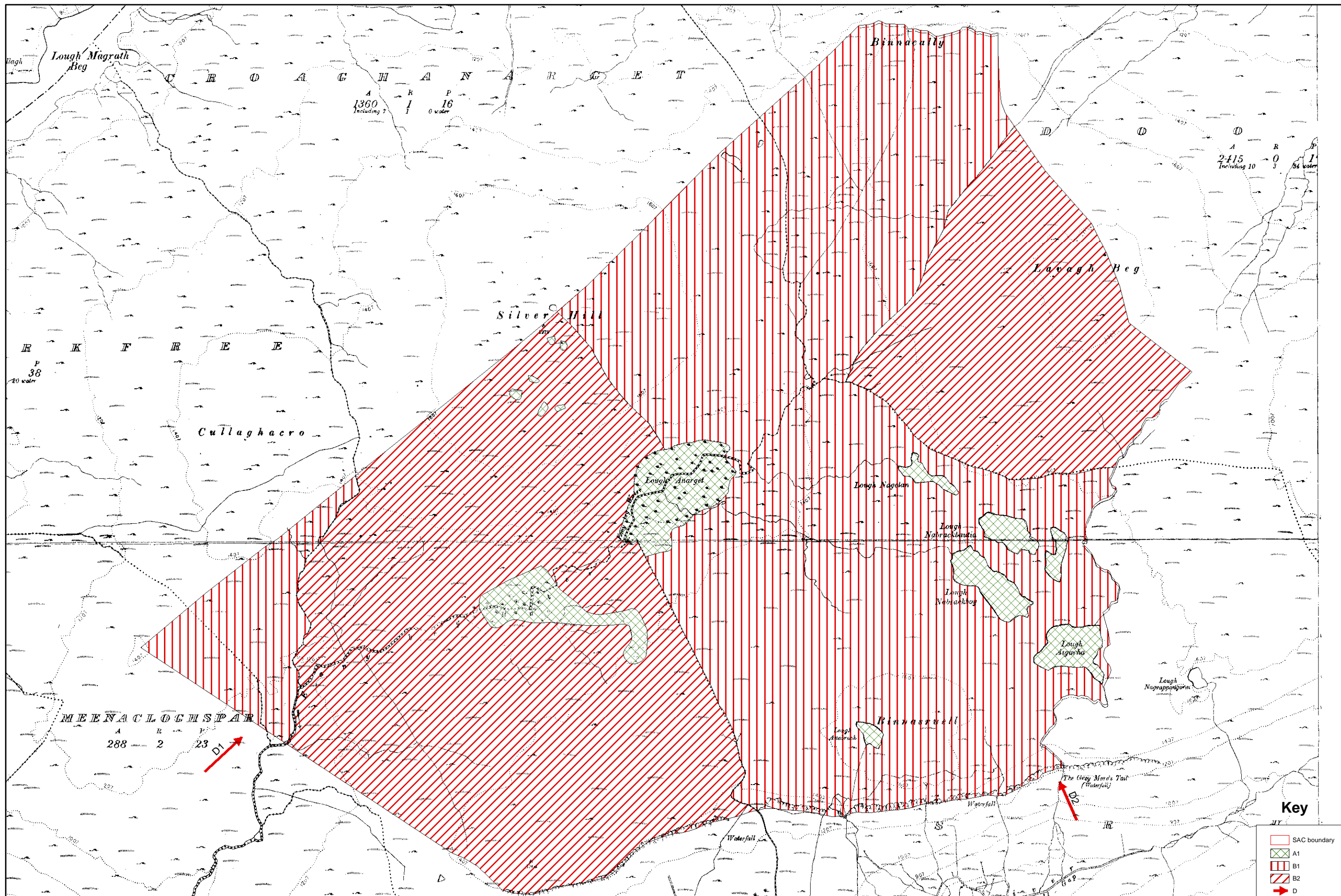
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**Map 3**  
**GROSS HABITAT MAP**  
Map to be read in conjunction with conservation plan.

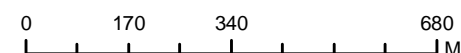
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Map 4  
**MANAGEMENT ZONING MAP**  
Map to be read in conjunction with conservation plan.

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