

## EC DIRECTIVE 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds

### CARLINGFORD LOUGH SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE MARINE AREA

**Area:** 11143.10 Ha                      **Geographic co-ordinates (land area):** 54 03 00 N  
06 07 00 W  
**Geographic co-ordinates (marine area):** 54 03 42N  
05 55 24W

**Unitary Authority** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
**County:** County Down

#### Site description:

The Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area lies between Killowen Point and Soldiers Point on the northern shores of Carlingford Lough and the landward boundary is entirely coincident with that of the Carlingford Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest. The terrestrial area within the SPA boundary is also entirely coincident with that of the Carlingford Lough Ramsar Site.

The terrestrial section of the SPA includes all lands and intertidal areas as shown on the designation map. It also includes the offshore islands of Green Island and Blockhouse, together with their associated islets.

The marine section of the site includes areas of open water within the Lough itself and in the area of the Lough mouth seawards to the limits of territorial waters as well as coastal waters northwards to the Bloody Bridge area on the Mourne Coast. The landward boundary for this area is the low water mark, medium tide.

Within Carlingford Lough the seabed is dominated by muds and gravelly muddy sands in shallow waters, grading into cobbles and boulderfields towards the mouth of the Lough which is a topographically and hydrodynamically complex area.

Bedrock outcrops, boulders and cobbles characterise the seabed immediately offshore of the mouth of Carlingford Lough, with such reef extending up to 4km offshore of the Lough mouth. Extensive fringing bedrock and stony reef is found along much of the coastline adjacent to Kilkeel and Ardglass, with gravels, sands and mixed coarse sediments found further offshore, towards the offshore limit of the SPA. This region includes a notable area of gravels known as the “herring gravels”, which is an important site for herring (*Clupea harengus*) spawning. The seabed slopes to approximately 25m depth at the Irish Sea offshore boundary of the SPA.

The principal interests are the breeding colonies of Sandwich and Common Tern and the wintering population of Light-bellied Brent Goose.

## Qualifying species:

At the time of classification in 1998 the site qualified for the following species:

The site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) by supporting internationally important populations of the following species:

<b>Annex I species</b>	<b>Count and Season</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>% of population</b>
Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	575 pairs Breeding	5 year mean (1993 – 1997)	13.1 % of the all-Ireland population
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	339 pairs Breeding	5 year mean (1993 – 1997)	10.9 % of the all-Ireland population

Data from annual site monitoring by RSPB and national seabird surveys coordinated by JNCC

The site also qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (2009/147/EC) by supporting internationally important populations of the following species:

<b>Species relevant to Article 4.2</b>	<b>Count and Season</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>% of population</b>
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	319 individuals Non-breeding	5yr peak mean 1990/01 – 1994/95	1.6 % of the international biogeographical population

Waterbird data from annual WeBS programme coordinated by BTO

More recently the populations of the above species have been as follows:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Count and Season</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>% of population</b>
Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	51 pairs Breeding	5 year mean (2010–2014)	1.4 % of the all-Ireland population
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	117 pairs Breeding	5 year mean (2010–2014)	2.8 % of the all-Ireland population
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	435 individuals Non-breeding	5yr peak mean 2007/08 – 2011/12	1.1 % of the international biogeographical population

Seabird data from annual site monitoring by RSPB and national seabird surveys coordinated by JNCC

Waterbird data from annual WeBS programme coordinated by BTO

Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area complements the equivalent designation on the Republic of Ireland side of the Carlingford Lough, the latter designation made for the internationally important wintering population of Light-bellied Brent Goose.

The marine area included in the renotified site has been shown to provide foraging habitat for both Sandwich and Common Tern originating from the breeding colony at this site.