

Site 15 – Gweedore

Site description

Gweedore is a large-sized saltmarsh and sand dunes site covering 450.5 ha. The site is part of the Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC (SAC 001141) (NPWS, 2013). Most of the site is inside the SAC with a few exceptions.

Based on the currently available mapping, twelve coastal Annex I habitats occur within West of Ardara/Maas Road SAC, and ten of them are listed as Qualifying Interests ([Table 1](#)).

Table 1. Annex I habitats present at Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC, the area they occupy (based on the most recent mapped available) and status as a Qualifying Interest of the SAC. An asterisk denotes a priority Annex I habitat and habitat that were not the target of this survey are excluded.

Habitat Code	Area (ha)	Qualifying Interest?
1210 Drift line vegetation	0.555	No
1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks	0.067	Yes
1310 <i>Salicornia</i> flats	0.129	No
1330 Atlantic salt meadows	26.449	Yes
1410 Mediterranean saltmarsh	9.949	Yes
2110 Embryonic shifting dunes	3.245	Yes
2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)	6.889	Yes
*2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)	193.137	Yes
*2140 Decalcified <i>Empetrum</i> dunes	0.126	Yes
2170 Dunes with creeping willow	0.963	Yes
2190 Humid dune slacks	1.563	Yes
*21A0 Machairs	38.397	Yes

Habitat losses were recorded due to the presence of some rock armour along the coast ([Table 2](#) **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Table 2. Habitat loss recorded during the desk and field surveys in hectares and % of total habitat area in the site.

Habitat	Within SAC?	Loss (ha)	Impact code	New habitat
*2130	Yes	0.767	PF01	Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
*2130	Yes	0.050	PI02	Ornamental/non-native shrub (WS3)
1410	Yes	0.024	PM07	Reed and large sedge swamps (FS1)
1330	Yes	0.067	PE01	Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
1330	Yes	0.004	PF05	Flower beds and borders (BC4)
1410	Yes	0.067	PE01	Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
1410	Yes	0.004	PF05	Flower beds and borders (BC4)
*2130	No	0.020	PA10	Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
*2130	No	0.056	PF01	Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

Field data were recorded from two sub-sites:

- Kincaslough (85.34 ha)
- Keadew (11.21 ha)

Conservation assessments were carried out within sub-site 1 and 2 occupying a total area of 96.55 ha ([Table 3](#)). The habitat condition of the area within the SAC was similar to that outside of the SAC.

Table 3. Summary of Conservation Status for all habitats assessed at Gweedore.

Subsite	Habitat	Area	Structure and Functions	Future Prospects	Overall assessment
15.01 Kincaslough	1210	Unfavourable - Bad (Decreasing)	Unfavourable - Inadequate (Stable)	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Unfavourable - Inadequate (Stable)
15.01 Kincaslough	1220	Favourable (NA)	NA (NA)	Favourable	NA (NA)
15.01 Kincaslough	2110	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable	Favourable (Stable)
15.01 Kincaslough	2120	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable	Favourable (Improving)
15.01 Kincaslough	*2130	Unfavourable – Inadequate (Decreasing)	Favourable (Increasing)	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Unfavourable - Inadequate (Stable)
15.01 Kincaslough	2170	Favourable (NA)	NA (NA)	Favourable	NA (NA)
15.01 Kincaslough	2190	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable	Favourable (Stable)
15.02 Keadew	1310	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable	Favourable (Stable)
15.02 Keadew	1330	Unfavourable – Inadequate (Decreasing)	Favourable (Increasing)	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Unfavourable - Inadequate (Stable)
15.02 Keadew	1410	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable (Stable)	Favourable	Favourable (Stable)

Sub-site 1 Kincaslough

Kincaslough is a medium-sized site located 9 km north of Dunglow, on the north-west coast of Donegal. It comprises a series of small coves scattered around Drumnacart headland, as well as a sheltered sandy bay where Mullaghderg beach is situated, between the rocky headlands at Mullaghderg and Drumnacart.

It is a popular amenity area, with a car park and access road provided for visitors. The site is also used for agriculture, with cattle grazing and some cultivation still taking place in fenced parts of the ***2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)**. There is a long history of this type of management on the site.

Summary Information

Survey Date: 16 July 2022

Water Framework Directive Waterbody:

Previous survey identifiers: CMP155

Current survey details:

Table 4: Current survey details for Annex I habitats at Kincaslough

Habitat Code	Area	Monitoring stops
1210 Drift line vegetation	0.023	2
1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks	0.045	0
2110 Embryonic shifting dunes	0.101	2
2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)	1.216	8
*2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)	79.342	12
2170 Dunes with creeping willow	0.023	0
2190 Humid dune slacks	0.843	5

1210 Drift line vegetation

Area

The habitat **1210 Drift line vegetation** has decreased over the most recent reporting cycle from 0.090 ha to 0.023 ha. However, the habitat had disappeared from its previous location and nowadays it has been recorded on the beach west of Ballymanus monument, as a result of a reworking of sediments of **2110 Embryonic shifting dunes**. 0.005 ha of the habitat has been lost since the baseline survey, when rock armour was put in place to improve access to the beach. The area loss hadn't recovered yet during CHNW21, therefore the Area was assessed as Unfavourable – Bad, because the area lost was greater than 10% of the favourable Reference Area. The trend was therefore assessed as decreasing compared to SDM.

Structure and Functions

Two monitoring stops have been recorded in **1210 Drift line vegetation**. The vegetation types which have been found were the *Atriplex prostrata* - *Tripleurospermum maritimum* strandline community, and the *Cakile maritima* - *Salsola kali* strandline community. Due to the presence of a rock armour in front of one of the rocky inlets located to the west of Mullaghdergh beach, the sediment dynamic was disturbed and given that, a single criteria failed in the Structure and Functions assessment, so Structure and Functions were assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate. During SDM, the rock armour was not taken into account in the evaluation of the monitoring stops, but it was already present in the site: therefore, the reason for the different assessment between SDM and CHNW21 was totally due to interpretation. The trend was therefore assessed as stable, even if Structure and Functions were assessed as Favourable during SDM.

Future Prospects

Rock armour was recorded as a negative impact affecting a small portion of the habitat. The rock armour has been occupying part of the site which was previously composed of **1210 Drift line vegetation**. Because of the presence of rock armour, the area previously occupied by **1210 Drift line vegetation** will be unable to recover. For this reason Future Prospects of **1210 Drift line vegetation** were assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate and the trend was considered stable compared to the SDM report assessment.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Unfavourable-Bad (decreasing)
- Structure and Functions: Unfavourable - Inadequate (stable)
- Future Prospects: Unfavourable - Inadequate (stable)

Since at least one of the three parameters was assessed as Unfavourable - Bad, the overall conservation assessment for **1210 Drift line vegetation** at Kincaslough was Unfavourable - Bad and the trend is deteriorating compared to SDM.

Overall Conservation Status: Unfavourable - Bad (deteriorating)

Condition of the habitat by area

Because of the rock armour that was impacting a considerable portion of the habitat, 25% of the habitat was considered to be in poor condition, while the remaining 75% was in good condition.

1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks

Area

1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks covered 0.045 ha during CHNW21 and it was located on the west part of the site, at the north of Mullaghderg beach. The habitat had never been recorded in the previous reports. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend is unknown because it was never assessed before.

Structure and Functions

No monitoring stops were recorded. The vegetation type found was a pioneer community with *Rumex crispus*, characterized by a species composition quite similar to **1210 Drift line vegetation** communities, however it was growing on a different substrate. Structure and Functions of the habitat weren't assessed during CHNW21.

Future Prospects

No pressures have been recorded in 2022 survey. Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Favourable, and the trend was unknown.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (NA)
- Structure and Functions: NA (NA)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (NA)

No monitoring stops were recorded for **1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks** at Kincaslough, therefore Structure and Functions were not assessable nor the overall conservation assessment for the site.

Overall Conservation Status: NA

Condition of the habitat by area

The conditions by area couldn't be assessed, since Structure and Functions of the habitat couldn't be assessed.

2110 Embryonic shifting dunes

Area

2110 Embryonic shifting dunes has decreased over the most recent reporting cycle from 0.14 ha to 0.10 ha due to natural processes such as erosion of **2110 Embryonic shifting dunes**, **1210 Perennial vegetation of stony banks** and ***2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)** and reworking of sediments. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend is considered stable, compared to SDM.

Structure and Functions

Two monitoring stops were recorded and no indicator failed in the Structure and Functions assessment, so the Structure and Functions were Favourable and the trend is considered stable compared to SDM.

Future Prospects

Erosion was the only impact that has been recorded and it was considered a natural neutral impact. In the last report, the rock armour was recorded as a neutral impact for the habitat because, unlike the habitat **1210 Perennial vegetation of stony banks**, affected by the impact because of its location just behind the artifact, **2110 Embryonic shifting dunes** was not directly fronted by that if we consider the direction of the waves and the extension of the shore compared to the size and position of the rock armour. Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Favourable and the trend is stable.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (stable)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (stable)

Since all parameters were assessed as Favourable, the overall conservation assessment for **2110 Embryonic shifting dunes** at Kincaslough was Favourable and the trend was considered stable compared to SDM.

Overall Conservation Status: Favourable (stable)

Condition of the habitat by area

100% of the habitat was considered to be in good condition.

2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)

Area

The area of **2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)** has decreased from 1.59 ha to 1.22 ha since SDM. In the last report Area had increased as a result of accretion and succession at Mullaghderg beach, and may have represented a recovery after the end of sand extraction. During CHNW21, part of the white dunes that have formed in the recent years decreased consequently to natural erosion. This is a normal trend for this type of habitats. However, the rock armour could have played a role on the sediment dynamics, but this is hard to prove and because of the small size and location of the artefact, it wasn't considered for the Area assessment. This is therefore consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend was stable compared to SDM.

Structure and Functions

Eight monitoring stops were recorded and no indicator failed in the Structure and Functions assessment, so the Structure and Functions were Favourable and the trend was considered stable compared to SDM.

Future Prospects

During previous reporting cycles, rock armour has been placed close to the north-eastern tip of the **2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)** as part of a plan to improve the access point and this interfered with sediment dynamics. However, no negative effect on the **2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)** were observed during CHNW21. The boardwalk was not considered a threat for the habitat because, on the basis of field survey, it didn't lead to a significant interference with sediment dynamics because it is located behind a cliff that is a natural obstruction. For this reason, Future Prospects were assessed as Favourable. SDM had assessed Future Prospects as Unfavourable - Inadequate due to the negative impact of the rock armour. The difference between the two assessment is entirely due to differences in interpretation, the trend was therefore assessed as stable despite the different results.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (stable)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (stable)

Since all parameters were assessed as Favourable, the overall conservation assessment for **2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)** at Kincaslough was Favourable and the trend is improving compared to SDM.

Overall Conservation Status: Favourable (improving)

Condition of the habitat by area

Because no negative effect due to rock armour was observed during CHNW21, 100% of the habitat was considered to be in good condition.

*2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)

Area

The area of ***2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)** had decreased from 82.1 ha to 79.3 ha between SDM and CHNW21. This decrease was attributed mainly to the mapping of an area of bare rocks that has been split off from the main ***2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)** polygon. A small portion of the habitat was lost for housing and planting of ornamental non-native shrubs. This kind of pressures have already been assessed in the last report but further mapping changes proved to be necessary. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Unfavourable - Inadequate and the trend was stable compared to SDM.

Structure and Functions

Twelve monitoring stops were recorded and no indicators have failed the assessment, this is consistent with a Structure and Functions assessment of Favourable. In the last report the proportion of tall vegetation in the sward was too big, but during CHNW21 this criterion seemed to be back to normal. The trend was therefore assessed as increasing.

Future Prospects

The main negative impacts on the habitat were offroad driving, that was considered to be a medium intensity impact on a small proportion of the habitat; undergrazing, that was a low intensity impact, and the spreading of *Pteridium aquilinum* and *Hippophae rhamnoides* that were respectively, a high intensity impact and a low intensity impact on a small portion of the habitat. Other negative impacts recorded for

the habitat included overgrazing and supplementary feeding that covered less than 1% of the habitat area. In the last report the main impacts recorded were undergrazing, dumping, driving on the habitat, invasive *Hippophae rhamnoides* and rock armour. Due to the several impacts recorded, particularly offroad driving and undergrazing, Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate, and the trend was assessed as stable compared to SDM.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (increasing)
- Future Prospects: Unfavourable - Inadequate(stable)

Since at least one of the three parameters was assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate, the overall conservation assessment for ***2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)** at Kincaslough was Unfavourable - Inadequate and the trend was assessed as stable compared to SDM.

Overall Conservation Status: Unfavourable - Inadequate (stable)

Condition of the habitat by area

Given that only a small portion of the habitat was affected by a severe impact (offroad driving), and that the result of Structure and Functions assessment was positive, only 5% of the habitat was considered to be in poor condition, while the remaining 95% was in good condition.

2170 Dunes with creeping willow

The area of **2170 Dunes with creeping willow** was below the minimum monitoring area, and no assessment was carried out. The area has decreased since SDM but this was probably due to a difference in interpretation: in fact, the polygon of **2170 Dunes with creeping willow** is now mapped in a different location compared to the last report. Further assessments are needed to state the right location and extension of the habitat. No negative impacts were recorded during CHNW21. The Area and Future Prospect assessment have nevertheless been achieved on the basis of field inspections and pressure and threats assessments and were both considered as Favourable.

2190 Humid dune slacks

Area

The area of **2190 Humid dune slacks** has decreased from 1.09 ha to 0.84 ha since SDM due to differences in interpretation and mapping method. The westernmost dune slacks of the site were not recorded during CHNW21 and further survey will be needed to confirm the actual presence. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend is considered stable compared to SDM.

Structure and Functions

No criteria failed in the Structure and Functions assessment, so the Structure and Functions were assessed as Favourable. Since **2190 Humid dune slacks** was assessed as Favourable in the SDM report, the trend is therefore stable.

Future Prospects

Drying out was considered a neutral pressure for the habitat, because it's a natural process. Non-intensive grazing was considered a low intensity positive impact on more than 50% of the habitat area. Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Favourable, and the trend was assessed as stable.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (stable)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (stable)

Since all three parameters were assessed as Favourable, the overall conservation assessment for **2190 Humid dune slacks** at Kincaslough was Favourable. Since **2190 Humid dune slacks** was assessed as Favourable during SDM, the trend is therefore stable.

Overall Conservation Status: Favourable (stable)

Condition of the habitat by area

Due to the widespread presence of shrubs in the monitoring stops, 10% of the habitat was considered to be in poor condition, while the remaining 90% was in good condition.

Site 15 Subsite 1- Kincaslough: Appendices

Appendix 1 Area

Total habitat area recorded during reporting cycles to date.

Habitat	2007	2013	2019	2025
1210	0.030	0.090	NS	0.023
1220	0.000	0.000	NS	0.045
2110	0.060	0.140	NS	0.101
2120	0.810	1.590	NS	1.216
2130	81.590	82.110	NS	79.342
2170	0.030	0.030	NS	0.023
2190	1.090	1.090	NS	0.842

Favourable Reference Area and cumulative changes in area due to human activities (restoration and loss) recorded during reporting cycles to date. Natural fluctuations are not taken into account.

Habitat	Favourable Reference area (ha)	2007 change (ha)	2013 change (ha)	2019 change (ha)	2025 change (ha)
1210	0.030	0	0,006	NS	0.006
1220	0.045	NR	NR	NS	0
2110	0.060	<1% per year	0	NS	0
2120	0.810	<1% per year	0	NS	0
*2130	81.590	<1% per year	2007 loss	NS	2007 loss
2170	0.030	0	NA	NS	0
2190	1.090	0	0	NS	0

Appendix 2. Structure and functions

Negative indicator species and non-native invasive species

Habitat	Species name	Cover (%)
2120	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	1.0
2120	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	0.7
2120	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	10.0
*2130	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	0.1
*2130	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	10.0
*2130	<i>Rosa species</i>	15.0
*2130	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	2.1

Positive indicator species and notable species

Habitat	Species name	Cover (%) (if recorded)
1210	<i>Beta maritima</i>	
1210	<i>Honckenya peploides</i>	
2110	<i>Elytrigia juncea</i>	
2120	<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	
2120	<i>Elytrigia juncea</i>	
*2130	<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	
*2130	<i>Carex arenaria</i>	
*2130	<i>Carex flacca</i>	
*2130	<i>Cladonia species</i>	
*2130	<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	
*2130	<i>Daucus carota</i>	
*2130	<i>Euphrasia officinalis ag.</i>	
*2130	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	
*2130	<i>Galium verum</i>	
*2130	<i>Homalothecium lutescens</i>	
*2130	<i>Hypnum cupressiforme s.s.</i>	
*2130	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	
*2130	<i>Linum catharticum</i>	
*2130	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	
*2130	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	
*2130	<i>Peltigera species</i>	
*2130	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	
*2130	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	
*2130	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	
*2130	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	
*2130	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	
*2130	<i>Rhytidadelphus squarrosus</i>	
*2130	<i>Rhytidadelphus triquetrus</i>	
*2130	<i>Scleropodium purum</i>	
*2130	<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	
*2130	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	
*2130	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	
2190	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	
2190	<i>Bryum pseudotriquetrum</i>	
2190	<i>Calliargon cuspidatum</i>	
2190	<i>Carex flacca</i>	
2190	<i>Carex nigra</i>	

2190	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	
2190	<i>Galium palustre</i>	
2190	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	
2190	<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	
2190	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	
2190	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	
2190	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	
2190	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	
2190	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	
2190	<i>Salix repens</i> v. <i>argentea</i>	

Structure and Functions Assessment Criteria

Habitat	Indicator	Pass/Fail
1210	Positive indicator species	Pass
1210	Negative indicator species	Pass
1210	Non-native species	Pass
1210	Notable/rare species	Pass
1210	Interference with the sediment dynamics	Fail
1210	Damage due to disturbance	Pass
2110	Positive indicator species	Pass
2110	Negative indicator species	Pass
2110	Non-native species	Pass
2110	Flowering or fruiting of positive indicator species	Pass
2110	Notable/rare species	Pass
2110	Interference with the sediment dynamics	Pass
2110	Damage due to disturbance	Pass
2120	Positive indicator species	Pass
2120	Negative indicator species	Pass
2120	Non-native species	Pass
2120	Flowering or fruiting of positive indicator species	Pass
2120	Notable/rare species	Pass
2120	Interference with the sediment dynamics	Pass
2120	Damage due to disturbance	Pass
*2130	Positive indicator species	Pass
*2130	Negative indicator species	Pass
*2130	Non-native species	Pass
*2130	Cover of trees and scrub other than <i>Juniperus communis</i>	Pass
*2130	Trees or saplings from adjacent plantations	Pass
*2130	Height of vegetation	Pass
*2130	Flowering or fruiting of positive indicator species	Pass
*2130	Bare sand	Pass
*2130	Notable/rare species	Pass
*2130	Interference with the sediment dynamics	Pass
*2130	Damage due to disturbance	Pass
2190	Positive indicator species	Pass
2190	Bryophytes	Pass
2190	Cover of <i>Salix repens</i>	Pass
2190	Negative indicator species	Pass
2190	Non-native species	Pass
2190	Cover of scrub	Pass
2190	Forb:grass ratio (mean)	Pass

2190	Bare ground	Pass
2190	Notable/rare species	Pass
2190	Interference with the sediment dynamics	Pass
2190	Damage due to disturbance	Pass

Appendix 3. Impacts and Activities

Impacts recorded

Habitat code	Impact code	Impact description	Relative importance	Influence	Source	Timing	Trend	Area
1210	PF03	Boardwalk	High	Negative	Outside	Past/suspended	Stable	Unknown
1210	PF15	Rock armour	High	Negative	Outside	Ongoing	Stable	Unknown
1220	PX04							
2110	PF15	Rock armour	Low	Neutral	Outside	Ongoing	Stable	Unknown
2110	PM07	Natural erosion	Medium	Neutral	Inside	Ongoing	Decreasing	20.0
2120	PF03	Boardwalk	Low	Neutral	Outside	Ongoing	Stable	Unknown
2120	PM07	Natural erosion	Medium	Neutral	Inside	Ongoing	Decreasing	40.0
*2130	PA01	Former agricultural land	Medium	Neutral	Inside	Past/suspended	Increasing	1.0
*2130	PA05	Undergrazing	Low	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Increasing	10.0
*2130	PA07	Overgrazing and fencing	Medium	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	1.0
*2130	PA10	Supplementary feeding	High	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	0.1
*2130	PF03	Boardwalk	High	Neutral	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	1.0
*2130	PF05	Offroad driving	Medium	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	5.0
*2130	PI02	Hippophae rhamnoides	High	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	1.0
*2130	PI03	Pteridium aquilinum	Low	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Decreasing	2.0
*2130	PM07	Natural erosion and encroachment (Rosa spp)	Medium	Neutral	Inside	Ongoing	Decreasing	5.0
2170	PX04							
2190	PA08	Low-intensity grazing	Medium	Positive	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	70.0
2190	PM07	Drying	Low	Neutral	Inside	Ongoing	Decreasing	25.0

Appendix 4. Condition of the habitat by area

Summary of habitat condition

Habitat code	% remaining habitat in poor condition	% remaining habitat in good condition
1210	25	75
2110	0	100
2120	0	100
*2130	5	95
2190	10	90

Sub-site 2 Keadew

Keadew is a medium-sized saltmarsh site. The saltmarsh habitat is distributed within the north-west facing inlet in Keadue and Belcruit townlands, Co. Donegal.

Summary Information

Survey Date: 19 July 2022

Water Framework Directive Waterbody: Northwestern Atlantic Seaboard (HAs 37;38)

Previous survey identifiers: CMP153, SMP0129

Current survey details:

Table 5: Current survey details for Annex I habitats at Keadew

Habitat Code	Area	Monitoring stops
1310 <i>Salicornia</i> flats	0.129	2
1330 Atlantic salt meadows	8.552	9
1410 Mediterranean saltmarsh	1.042	2
2120 Marram dunes (white dunes)	0.021	0

1310 *Salicornia* flats

Area

1310 *Salicornia* flats has increased over the most recent reporting cycle from 0.042 ha to 0.129 ha due to differences in interpretation or mapping method and natural processes of erosion. Two new areas previously recorded as **1330 Atlantic salt meadows** were mapped on the western part of the site. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend is stable compared to SMP II.

Structure and Functions

Two monitoring stops were recorded and no indicator failed the assessment. Structure and Functions were therefore assessed as Favourable. During SMP, the habitat was not recorded. During SMP II Structure and Functions were assessed as Favourable, the trend is therefore stable.

Future Prospects

No pressures were recorded for this habitat. Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Favourable, and the trend, compared to SMP II, was assessed as stable.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (stable)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (stable)

Since all parameters were assessed as Favourable, the overall conservation assessment for **1310 *Salicornia* flats** at Keadew was Favourable. Considering SMP II, the overall trend is stable.

Overall Conservation Status: Favourable (stable)

Condition of the habitat by area

100% of area was considered to be in good condition.

1330 Atlantic salt meadows

Area

1330 Atlantic salt meadows has decreased from 8.6 ha to 8.5 since SMPII due to erosion driven by the use of motorcycles, which is also supported by the last report. A considerable portion of habitat was lost but, at the same time, other new polygons were added over the site. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Unfavourable - Inadequate. Compared to SMP, the trend is decreasing.

Structure and Functions

Nine monitoring stops were recorded, and no indicator failed the assessment. However, the vegetation was deemed to be a bit high. In fact, 44% of stops had an average height greater than 15 cm. During SMPII, the disturbance in the plots were too high and this had caused the assessment to fail, but during CHNW21 the disturbance in the plots decreased in intensity. For this reason, Structure and Functions were assessed as Favourable and, compared to SMP, the trend is therefore increasing.

Community types that have been found were SM2, SM3, SM4, SM6 and SM7.

Future Prospects

A medium intensity negative impact corresponded to vehicle driving outside the roads. This kind of impact affected about 5% of the habitat area. Future Prospects were therefore assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate, and the trend was assessed as stable compared to SMP.

Conservation assessment

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Unfavourable - Inadequate (decreasing)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (increasing)
- Future Prospects: Unfavourable - Inadequate (stable)

Since at least one of the parameters was assessed as Unfavourable - Inadequate, the overall conservation assessment for **1330 Atlantic salt meadows** at Keadew was Unfavourable - Inadequate. Compared to SMP, the overall trend is therefore stable.

Overall Conservation Status: Unfavourable - Inadequate (stable)

Condition of the habitat by area

Considering the pressure of motorcycles, 5% of the habitat was considered to be in poor condition, while the remaining 95% was in good condition.

1410 Mediterranean saltmarsh

Area

1410 Mediterranean saltmarsh has expanded over the most recent reporting cycle from 0.47 ha to 1.04 ha due to differences in interpretation and mapping method. Several new polygons were added over the site. This is consistent with an Area assessment of Favourable and the trend is stable compared to SMP.

Structure and Functions

Two monitoring stops have been recorded, and one indicator has passed the assessment on expert judgement. The number of species recorded in the stops were 5 rather than 6, but the number of stops recorded were less than needed, because the extension of the habitat has increased but no additional stops have been added. This is consistent with a Structure and Functions assessment of Favourable. Compared to SMP, the trend is stable.

[Future Prospects](#)

Some small portions of the habitat have been lost due to the increase of reeds and large sedge swamp (Heritage Council Habitat FS1), but this was considered a natural neutral process in the site. Therefore, Future Prospects were assessed as Favourable, and the trend was assessed as stable compared to SMP.

[Conservation assessment](#)

The conservation status assessments of the three parameters are as follows:

- Area: Favourable (stable)
- Structure and Functions: Favourable (stable)
- Future Prospects: Favourable (stable)

Since all parameters were assessed as Favourable, the overall conservation assessment for **1410 Mediterranean saltmarsh** at Keadew was Favourable. Compared to SMP, the overall trend is therefore stable.

Overall Conservation Status: Favourable (stable)

[Condition of the habitat by area](#)

100% of area was considered to be in good condition.

Site 15 Subsite 2 Keadew Appendices

Appendix 1 Area

Total habitat area recorded during reporting cycles to date.

Habitat	2007	2013	2019	2025
1310	NS	0.000	0.042	0.129
1330	NS	9.229	8.605	8.552
1410	NS	0.089	0.474	1.042
2120	NS	NS	NS	0.021

Favourable Reference Area and cumulative changes in area due to human activities (restoration and loss) recorded during reporting cycles to date. Natural fluctuations are not taken into account.

Habitat	Favourable Reference area (ha)	2007 change (ha)	2013 change (ha)	2019 change (ha)	2025 change (ha)
1310	0.042	NS	NR	0	0
1330	9.229	NS	0	<1% per year	2019 loss
1410	0.089	NS	0	0	0
2120	NA	NS	NS	NS	NA

Appendix 2. Structure and functions

Positive indicator species and notable species

Habitat	Species name	Cover (%) (if recorded)
1310	<i>Salicornia species</i>	
1310	<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	
1330	<i>Armeria maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Aster tripolium</i>	
1330	<i>Atriplex littoralis</i>	
1330	<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	
1330	<i>Carex extensa</i>	
1330	<i>Cochlearia species</i>	
1330	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	
1330	<i>Glaux maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Juncus gerardii</i>	
1330	<i>Plantago maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Salicornia species</i>	
1330	<i>Spergularia media</i>	
1330	<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	
1330	<i>Triglochin maritimum</i>	
1410	<i>Cochlearia species</i>	
1410	<i>Glaux maritima</i>	
1410	<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	
1410	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	
1410	<i>Plantago maritima</i>	

Structure and Functions Assessment Criteria

Habitat	Indicator	Pass/Fail
1310	Positive indicator species	Pass
1310	Negative indicator species	Pass
1310	Signs of negative activities, e.g. infilling, reclamation, turf-cutting, pollution	Pass
1310	Occurrence of human disturbance to hydrology	Pass
1310	Presence of site-specific target species	Pass
1310	Presence of <i>Spartina</i> spp. within vicinity of habitat	Pass
1330	Positive indicator species	Pass
1330	Vegetation height – Standard deviation	Pass
1330	Vegetation height – Average height	Fail
1330	Negative indicator species	Pass
1330	Disturbed ground	Pass
1330	Signs of negative activities, e.g. infilling, reclamation, turf-cutting, pollution	Pass
1330	Human disturbance to hydrology	Pass
1330	Natural transitions to semi-natural terrestrial habitats on landward margin	Pass
1330	Presence of <i>Spartina</i> spp. within vicinity of habitat	Pass
1330	Presence of site-specific target species	Pass
1330	Number of zones (SM2, SM3, SM4, SM6BCD, SM7/driftline) covering 1% or more of 1330 area	Pass
1410	Positive indicator species	Pass
1410	Negative indicator species	Pass
1410	Disturbed ground	Pass
1410	Signs of negative activities, e.g. infilling, reclamation, turf-cutting, pollution	Pass

1410	Human disturbance to hydrology	Pass
1410	Natural transitions to semi-natural terrestrial habitats on landward margin	Pass
1410	Presence of site-specific target species (indicators of local distinctiveness)	Pass
1410	Presence of <i>Spartina</i> spp. within vicinity of habitat	Pass

Appendix 3. Impacts and Activities

Impacts recorded

Habitat code	Impact code	Impact description	Relative importance	Influence	Source	Timing	Trend	Area
1310	PX04							
1330	PF05	Offroad driving and walking	High	Negative	Inside	Ongoing	Stable	5.0

Conservation Measures required

Habitat code	Measure code	Measure description	Area (ha)	Status (in place/partial/Absent/unidentified)	Response timeframe	Purpose	Location (inside and or Outside SAC)
1330	CF03	Measure required to regulate offroad driving	0.4276	Absent	Short-term results	Restore the structure & functions, including the status of typical species	Inside

Appendix 4. Condition of the habitat by area

Summary of habitat condition

Habitat code	% remaining habitat in poor condition	% remaining habitat in good condition
1310	0	100
1330	5	95
1410	0	100