NPWS

Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC
(site code: 001957)

Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats

Version 1 - supplement 1

July 2026

IMPORTANT: This supplement, published in 2026, includes details relating to the EU habitat **1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines** which was added as a Qualifying Interest (QI) and **1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)** which was removed as a QI for the site after the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (Version 1) were published. This document should be read in conjunction with the Version 2 Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2026), and with the Conservation objectives supporting document - Coastal habitats Version 1 (NPWS, 2012). Any references to these habitats in previously published Site-specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO), or SSCO supporting documents, including the mapping, are to be considered **superseded** by these updates.

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Citation: NPWS (2026) Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (site code 001957) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats V1 - supplement 1. Conservation Objectives Supporting Document Series. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin, Ireland.

1. Introduction

1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines was added as a Qualifying Interest to Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (site code: 001957) after the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (Version 1) were published. This document sets out the SSCO for the newly listed Qualifying Interest for the site and acts as a supplement to the original SSCO Supporting Document.

2. Coastal habitats

2.1 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines

2.1.1 Site description of habitat

The 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines habitat has been recorded along the length of the beach at Baltray. The typical species of annual strandline recorded at Baltray include Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*), Sea Sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*) and Prickly Saltwort (*Salsola kali*) (Ryle *et al*., 2009).

2.1.2 Overall objective

The overall objective for '*Annual vegetation of drift lines'* in Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (site code: 001957) is to '*maintain the Favourable conservation condition*'.

This objective is based on an assessment of the recorded condition of the habitat(s) under a range of attributes and targets. The assessment is divided into three main headings: (a) Area (b) Range and (c) Structure and Functions. This conservation objective applies to the total extent of this habitat within the SAC, including but not limited to the mapped areas of this habitat.

2.1.3 Area

Habitat area

Coastal habitats are generally dynamic and increase and decrease in area due to natural processes. These natural changes are not taken into account in conservation status assessments. Changes associated with human activities including destruction and restoration do contribute to the assessment of conservation status.

The total area of 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines within the SAC boundary is 1.09ha.

No loss of habitat due to human activities has been observed on the site.

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

2.1.4 Range

Habitat distribution

The largest and most developed area of 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines occurs at the north side of the Boyne Estuary mouth. It can redistribute due to storm events annually.

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

2.1.5 Structure and Functions

Structure and Functions for Annual vegetation of drift lines are assessed on the basis of:

Physical structure: functionality and sediment supply

Target: Natural circulation of sediment and organic matter, absence of any physical obstructions or evidence of sediment extraction from the beach and its environs. Physical obstructions that have been in place and are unchanged since prior to 1994 are excluded from this target, unless they have a current adverse impact on sediment circulation.

Disturbance

Target: No more than 20% of the habitat is subject to disturbance *e.g*. trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate.

Vegetation composition: typical species (positive indicators)

Target: At least one species occurs with a frequency of at least 40% of stops and another species occurs with a frequency of more than 20% of stops.

Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species

Target: No negative species occurs at a frequency of more than 60% of stops and combined cover of all negative species across the habitat is 5% or less and highest % cover of any negative species within any stop is 25% or less.

Vegetation composition: non-native species

Target: No individual species occurs at a frequency of more than 20% of stops and no evidence that % cover is increasing.

Indicators of local distinctiveness: site-specific target features (including rare and notable species)

Target: No evidence of decline since designation.

The habitat was assessed and found to be in good condition in the most recent survey. The Future prospects were considered good and the overall conservation status was Favourable for the 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines habitat at Baltray (NPWS internal files).

3. QI Removals

1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi): Due to improved knowledge of the habitats present at this site, 1410 habitat has been removed as a QI. Consequently, conservation objectives for the habitat **1410 Mediterranean salt meadows** have not been set for this site.

4. References

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Appendix 1 – Distribution map of Annual vegetation of drift lines in Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)

