

# National Parks and Wildlife Service

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## *Conservation Objectives Series*

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Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA 004037



*An Roinn*  
*Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta*  

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*Department of*  
*Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*



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## Introduction

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

A site-specific conservation objective aims to define favourable conservation condition for a particular habitat or species at that site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area 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.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

### **Notes/Guidelines:**

1. The targets given in these conservation objectives are based on best available information at the time of writing. As more information becomes available, targets for attributes may change. These will be updated periodically, as necessary.
2. An appropriate assessment based on these conservation objectives will remain valid even if the targets are subsequently updated, providing they were the most recent objectives available when the assessment was carried out. It is essential that the date and version are included when objectives are cited.
3. Assessments cannot consider an attribute in isolation from the others listed for that habitat or species, or for other habitats and species listed for that site. A plan or project with an apparently small impact on one attribute may have a significant impact on another.
4. Please note that the maps included in this document do not necessarily show the entire extent of the habitats and species for which the site is listed. This should be borne in mind when appropriate assessments are being carried out.
5. When using these objectives, it is essential that the relevant backing/supporting documents are consulted, particularly where instructed in the targets or notes for a particular attribute.

## Qualifying Interests

\* indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive

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004037      Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA

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A003	Great Northern Diver <i>Gavia immer</i>
A046	Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>
A065	Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>
A069	Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>
A137	Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
A144	Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>
A149	Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>
A157	Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>
A160	Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>
A191	Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
A466	Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>
A999	Wetlands

**Please note that this SPA overlaps with Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC (000470), Broadhaven Bay SAC (000472) and Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC (000500). It adjoins Mullet Peninsula SPA (004227). See map 2. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for overlapping and adjacent sites as appropriate.**

## Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: [www.npws.ie/Publications](http://www.npws.ie/Publications)

### NPWS Documents

<b>Year :</b>	2010
<b>Title :</b>	Resurvey of breeding wader populations of machair and associated wet grasslands in north-west Ireland
<b>Author :</b>	Suddaby, D.; Nelson, T.; Veldman, J.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 44
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	2014
<b>Title :</b>	Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA (site code: 4037) Conservation objectives supporting document V1
<b>Author :</b>	NPWS
<b>Series :</b>	Conservation objectives supporting document

### Other References

<b>Year :</b>	1984
<b>Title :</b>	The 1984 all Ireland tern survey
<b>Author :</b>	Whilde, A.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Birds 3: 1-32
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	1985
<b>Title :</b>	The birds of the Western Palearctic- Volume IV
<b>Author :</b>	Cramp, S.
<b>Series :</b>	Oxford University Press, Oxford
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	1985
<b>Title :</b>	Breeding waders of sand dune machair in north-west Ireland
<b>Author :</b>	Nairn, R.G.W.; Sheppard, J.R.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Birds 3: 53-70
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	1995
<b>Title :</b>	Seabird monitoring handbook for Britain and Ireland: a compilation of methods for survey and monitoring of breeding seabirds
<b>Author :</b>	Walsh, P.; Halley, D.J.; Harris, M.P.; del Nevo, A.; Sim, I.M.W.; Tasker, M.L.
<b>Series :</b>	JNCC, Peterborough
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	1997
<b>Title :</b>	The status and distribution of breeding sandwich, roseate, common, arctic and little terns in Ireland in 1995
<b>Author :</b>	Hannon, C.; Berrow, S.D.; Newton, S.F.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Birds, 6: 1-22
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	1998
<b>Title :</b>	Breeding waders of machair systems in Ireland in 1996
<b>Author :</b>	Madden, B.; Cooney, T.; O'Donoghue, A.; Norriss, D.W.; Merne, O.J.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Birds 6: 177-191
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	2004
<b>Title :</b>	Seabird Populations of Britain and Ireland
<b>Author :</b>	Mitchell, P.I.; Newton, S.F.; Ratcliffe, N.; Dunn, T.E.
<b>Series :</b>	Poyser, London

**Year :** 2006  
**Title :** Breeding parameters of selected wader species at machair sites and adjacent areas associated with the Mullet/Blacksod Bay and offshore islands complex, NW Mayo, 2006  
**Author :** Thompson, L.J.; Suddaby, D.; Newton, S.  
**Series :** BirdWatch Ireland Conservation Report No. 06/6

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**Year :** 2014  
**Title :** Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) Database  
**Author :** JNCC  
**Series :** <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/smp/Default.aspx>

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**Year :** 2014  
**Title :** BirdLife International Seabird Ecology and Foraging Range Database  
**Author :** BirdLife International  
**Series :** <http://seabird.wikispaces.com>

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## Spatial data sources

<b>Year :</b>	2014
<b>Title :</b>	NPWS SPA boundary data
<b>GIS Operations :</b>	SPA boundary polygons divided into two classifications (wetlands, coastal grasslands) based on line identified by expert judgement. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
<b>Used For :</b>	Wetlands (map 3)

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## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A003 Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Great Northern Diver in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by great northern diver, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document



**A046**                      **Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota***

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Light-bellied Brent Goose in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by light-bellied brent goose, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A065 Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Scoter in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by common scoter, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A069 Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Red-breasted Merganser in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by red-breasted merganser, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

**A137 Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Ringed Plover in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by ringed plover, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of conservation objectives supporting document

## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A144 Sanderling *Calidris alba*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Sanderling in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Waterbird population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by sanderling, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

**A149**                      **Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina***

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Dunlin in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by dunlin, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

**A157 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Bar-tailed Godwit in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by bar-tailed godwit, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document

**A160** *Curlew **Numenius arquata***

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Curlew in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing	Population trends are presented in part four of the conservation objectives supporting document
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by curlew, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Waterbird distribution from the 2009/2010 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the conservation objectives supporting document



## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A191 Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Sandwich Tern in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs)	Number	No significant decline	Measure based on standard tern survey methods (see Walsh et al., 1995). Hannon et al. (1997) recorded 81 breeding pairs on Inishderry as part of the 1995 All-Ireland Tern Survey. Recent data is lacking for this colony
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline	Measure based on standard tern survey methods (see Walsh et al., 1995). The Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) online database (JNCC, 2014) provides population data for this species
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (Hectares)	No significant decline	Typical sandwich tern breeding sites are located on low-lying offshore islands or islets in bays or brackish lagoons on spits or remote mainland dunes (Cramp, 1985). Wide fluctuations between years in both breeding numbers and colony locations are known to occur for this species (Mitchell et al., 2004). However, a sandwich tern colony has been recorded on Inishderry in the 1990s and on several occasions in the 1980s (see Hannon et al., 1997 and Whilde, 1985)
Prey biomass available	Kilogrammes	No significant decline	Key prey items: Mostly energy-rich fish, some crustaceans and occasionally insects and rag worms. Key habitats: sandwich tern forage in/over shallow marine waters such as bays, inlets and outflows, gullies, shoals, inshore waters, reefs, and sandbanks; also more open waters nearshore and offshore, including open sea. Foraging range: max. 70km, mean max. 42.3km, mean 14.7km (BirdLife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2014))
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (hectares)	No significant increase	Foraging range: Max 70km, mean max 42.3km, mean 14.7km (Birdlife International Seabird Database (Birdlife International, 2014))
Disturbance at the breeding stage	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding sandwich tern population	Colonies are typically situated on low-lying offshore islands or islets, in bays or brackish lagoons, on spits or remote mainland dunes (Cramp, 1985). The sandwich tern colony on Inishderry has been recorded in the 1990s and on several occasions in the 1980s (see Hannon et al., 1997 and Whilde, 1984)

## Conservation Objectives for : Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA [004037]

### A466 Dunlin *Calidris alpina schinzii*

**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Dunlin in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets**

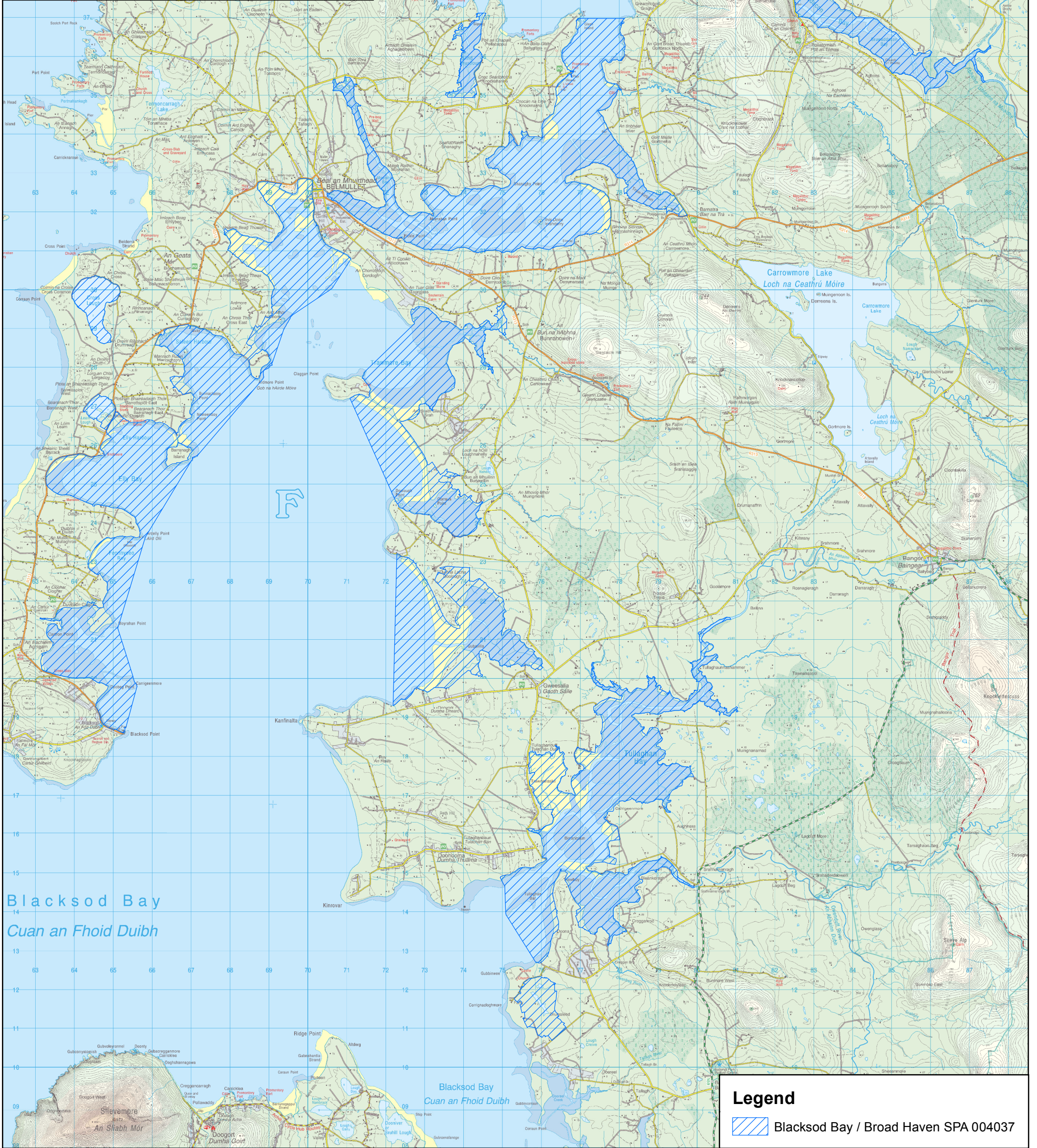
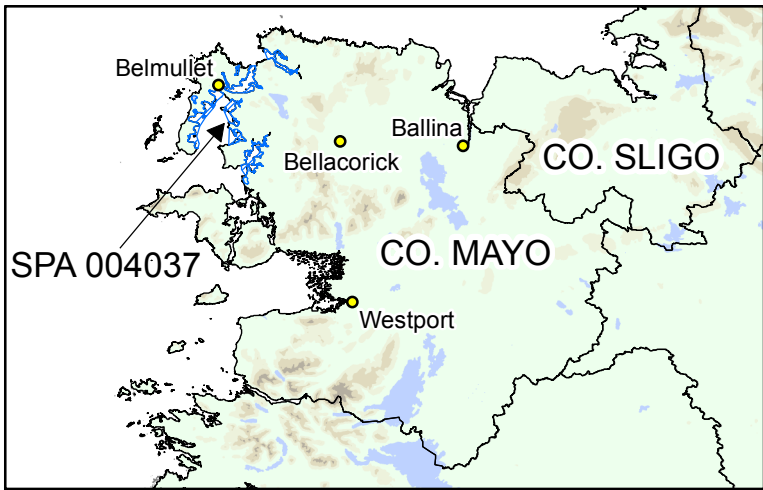
Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied territories (AOTs)	Number	Stable or increasing, subject to natural variation	Measure based on standard survey methods (see Suddaby et al. (2010))
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline	Measure based on standard survey methods (see Thompson et al. (2007))
Distribution	Number; location	Stable or increasing, subject to natural variation	The distribution of breeding dunlin has contracted since initial surveys were undertaken (Nairn and Shephard, 1985; Madden et al., 1998; Suddaby et al., 2010)
Availability of suitable habitat: area and distribution	Hectares; location	Stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Ideally, suitable habitat should be at, or close to, existing breeding pairs. Factors that are negatively affecting potentially suitable habitat include fencing, drainage, inappropriate grazing regimes, fertilisation and overgrazing by rabbits ( <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> )
Disturbance at the breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding dunlin population	Unsuitable livestock grazing regimes can result in nest trampling and destruction of suitable nesting sites. Agri-environment schemes in Ireland specify less than 1.0 livestock units per hectare during the breeding wader nesting period

**A999 Wetlands**


**To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it. This is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 8,539 hectares, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation. See map 3	The wetland habitat area was estimated as 8,539ha using OSi data and relevant orthophotographs. For further information see part three of the conservation objectives supporting document

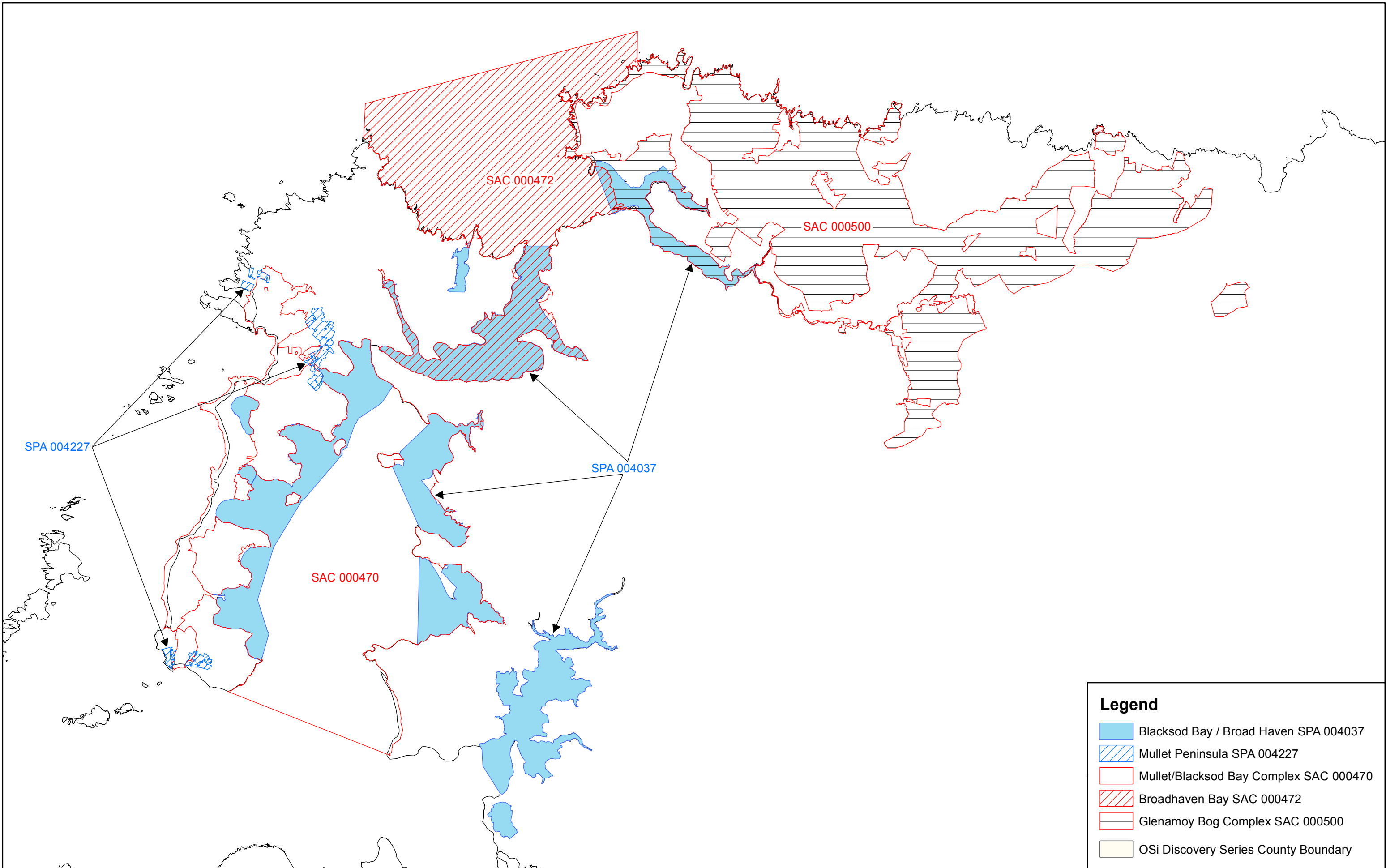




**Legend**

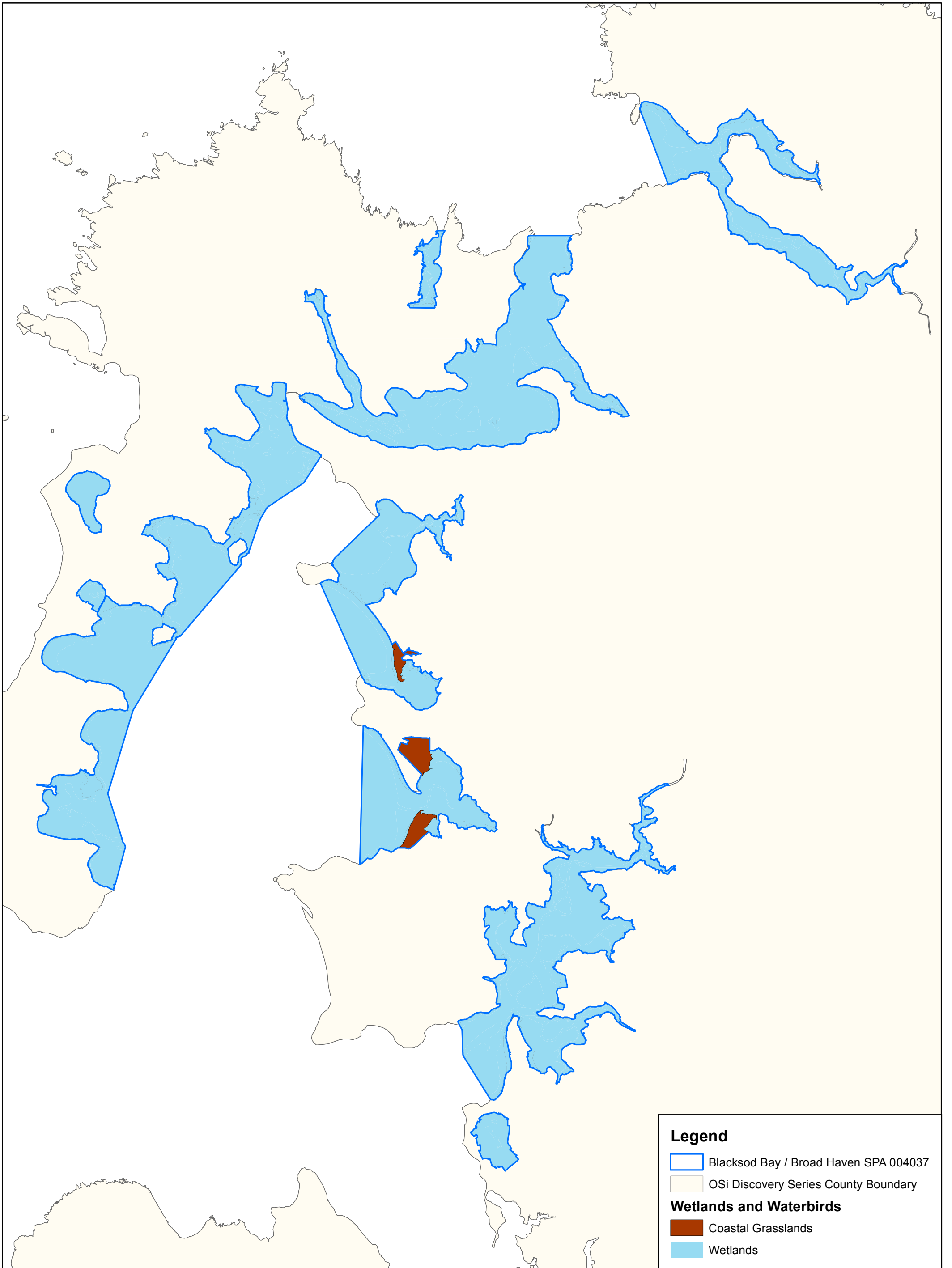
 Blacksod Bay / Broad Haven SPA 004037





**Legend**

- Blacksod Bay / Broad Haven SPA 004037
- Mullet Peninsula SPA 004227
- Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC 000470
- Broadhaven Bay SAC 000472
- Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC 000500
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary



**Legend**

- Blacksod Bay / Broad Haven SPA 004037
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary

**Wetlands and Waterbirds**

- Coastal Grasslands
- Wetlands