

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC 001776



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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Citation:

**NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC 001776.
Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage
and the Gaeltacht.**

**Series Editor: Rebecca Jeffrey
ISSN 2009-4086**

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*

001776 Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)

Please note that this SAC is adjacent to River Shannon Callows SAC (000216), Mongan Bog SAC (000580), Mongan Bog SPA (004017) and Middle Shannon Callows SPA (004096). See map 2. The conservation objectives for this site should be used in conjunction with those for the adjacent sites as appropriate.

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: www.npws.ie/Publications

NPWS Documents

Year : 2013

Title : Irish semi-natural grasslands survey 2007-2012

Author : O'Neill, F.H.; Martin, J.R.; Devaney, F.M.; Perrin, P.M.

Series : Irish Wildlife Manual No. 78

Year : 2016

Title : Ireland Red List No. 10: Vascular Plants

Author : Wyse Jackson, M.; FitzPatrick, Ú.; Cole, E.; Jebb, M.; McFerran, D.; Sheehy Skeffington, M.; Wright, M.

Series : Ireland Red Lists series, NPWS

Spatial data sources

Year : 2013

Title : Irish Semi-Natural Grassland Survey

GIS Operations : Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising

Used For : 6210 (map 3)

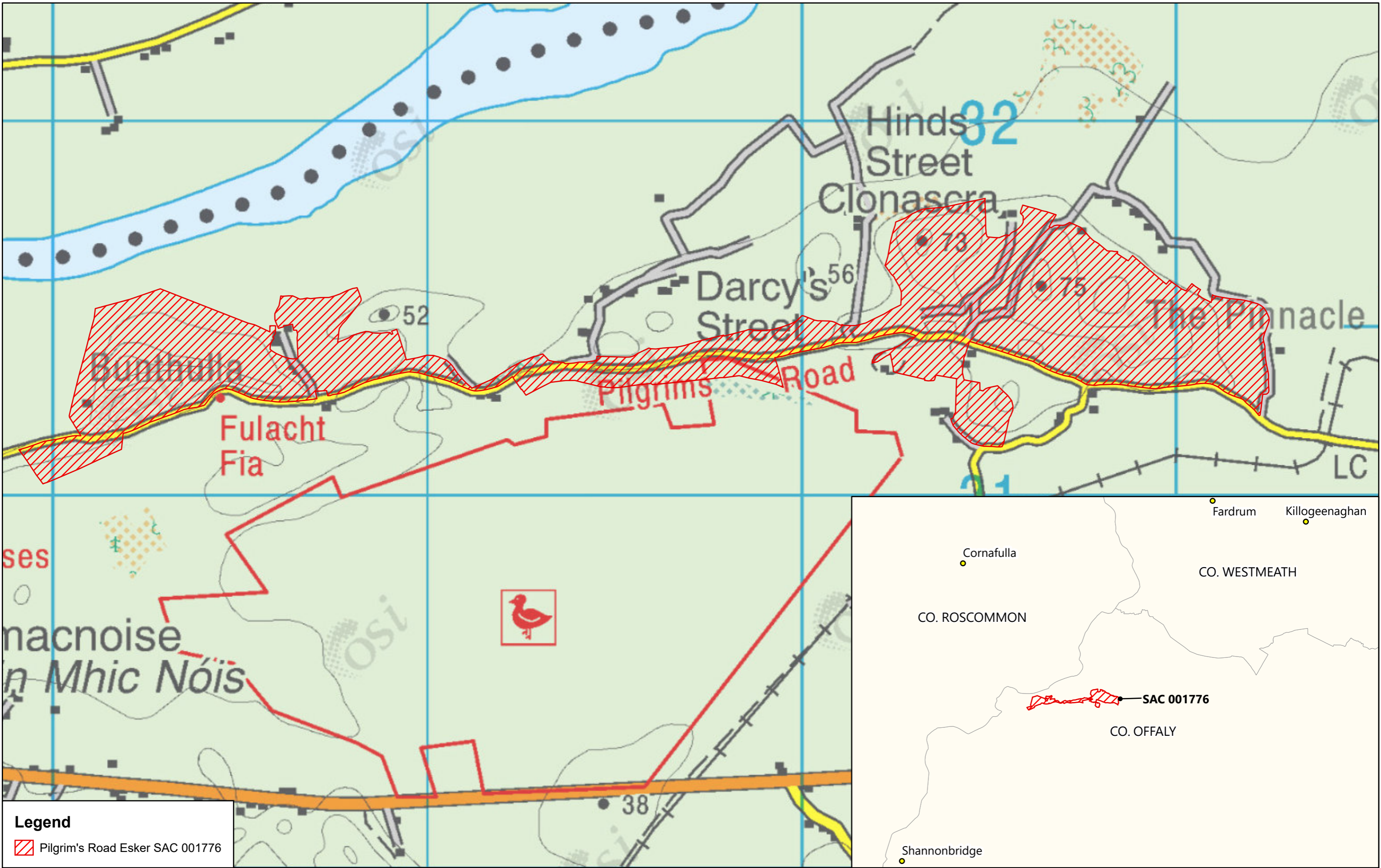
Conservation Objectives for : Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC [001776]

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) in Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	The habitat semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) at Bunthulla Hill and Hanging Hill in the west of Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC was surveyed as part of the Irish Semi-natural Grassland Survey (ISGS) (O'Neill et al., 2013) within the sub-site Clonmacnoise Esker (ISGS site code 120) to give a minimum area of 2.24ha. It is important to note that further areas of the Annex I habitat may be present within the SAC
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 3 for the habitat area surveyed by the ISGS	Distribution based on O'Neill et al. (2013). It is important to note that further areas of the Annex I habitat may be present within the SAC
Vegetation composition: positive indicator species	Number at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	At least seven positive indicator species present, including two "high quality" species	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013), where the list of positive indicator species, including high quality species, identified by the ISGS is also presented. This document should be consulted for further details. High quality positive indicator species recorded in the habitat in the SAC include spring sedge (<i>Carex caryophyllea</i>), yellow-wort (<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>), carline thistle (<i>Carlina vulgaris</i>) and the Near Threatened autumn gentian (<i>Gentianella amarella</i>) (Wyse Jackson et al., 2016) (NPWS internal files). Orchids recorded include the Vulnerable green-winged orchid (<i>Anacamptis morio</i>) (Wyse Jackson et al., 2016), pyramidal orchid (<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>), fragrant orchid (<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>) and common spotted-orchid (<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>) (NPWS internal files)
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Negative indicator species collectively not more than 20% cover, with cover by an individual species not more than 10%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013), where the list of negative indicator species identified by the ISGS is also presented
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of non-native species not more than 1%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation composition: woody species and bracken	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of woody species (except certain listed species) and bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) not more than 5% cover	Woody species that can occur above 5% cover are juniper (<i>Juniperus communis</i>), burnet rose (<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>), mountain avens (<i>Dryas octopetala</i>) and hoary rock-rose (<i>Helianthemum oelandicum</i>). However, cover of these species above 25% may indicate transition to another Annex I habitat such as Alpine and Boreal heaths (4060) or <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations (5130). Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation structure: broadleaf herb:grass ratio	Percentage at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 40% and 90%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Vegetation structure: sward height	Percentage at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	At least 30% of sward between 5cm and 40cm tall	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)

Vegetation structure: litter	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Litter cover not more than 25%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Physical structure: bare soil	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Not more than 10% bare soil	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)
Physical structure: disturbance	Area in local vicinity of a representative number of monitoring stops	Area of the habitat showing signs of serious grazing or other disturbance less than 20m ²	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013)



Legend
 Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC 001776

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**MAP 1:
 PILGRIM'S ROAD ESKER SAC
 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
 SAC DESIGNATION**
 Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

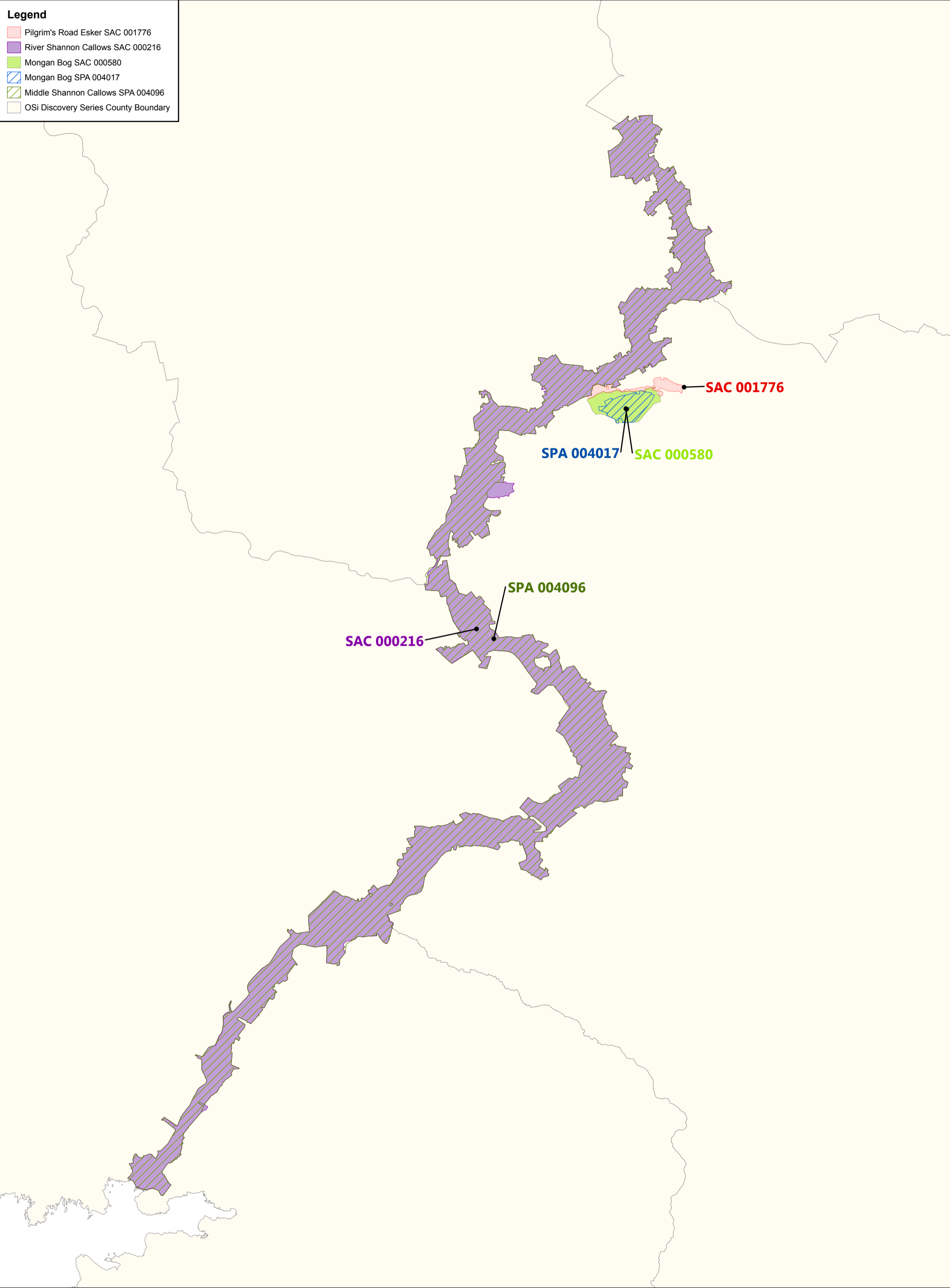
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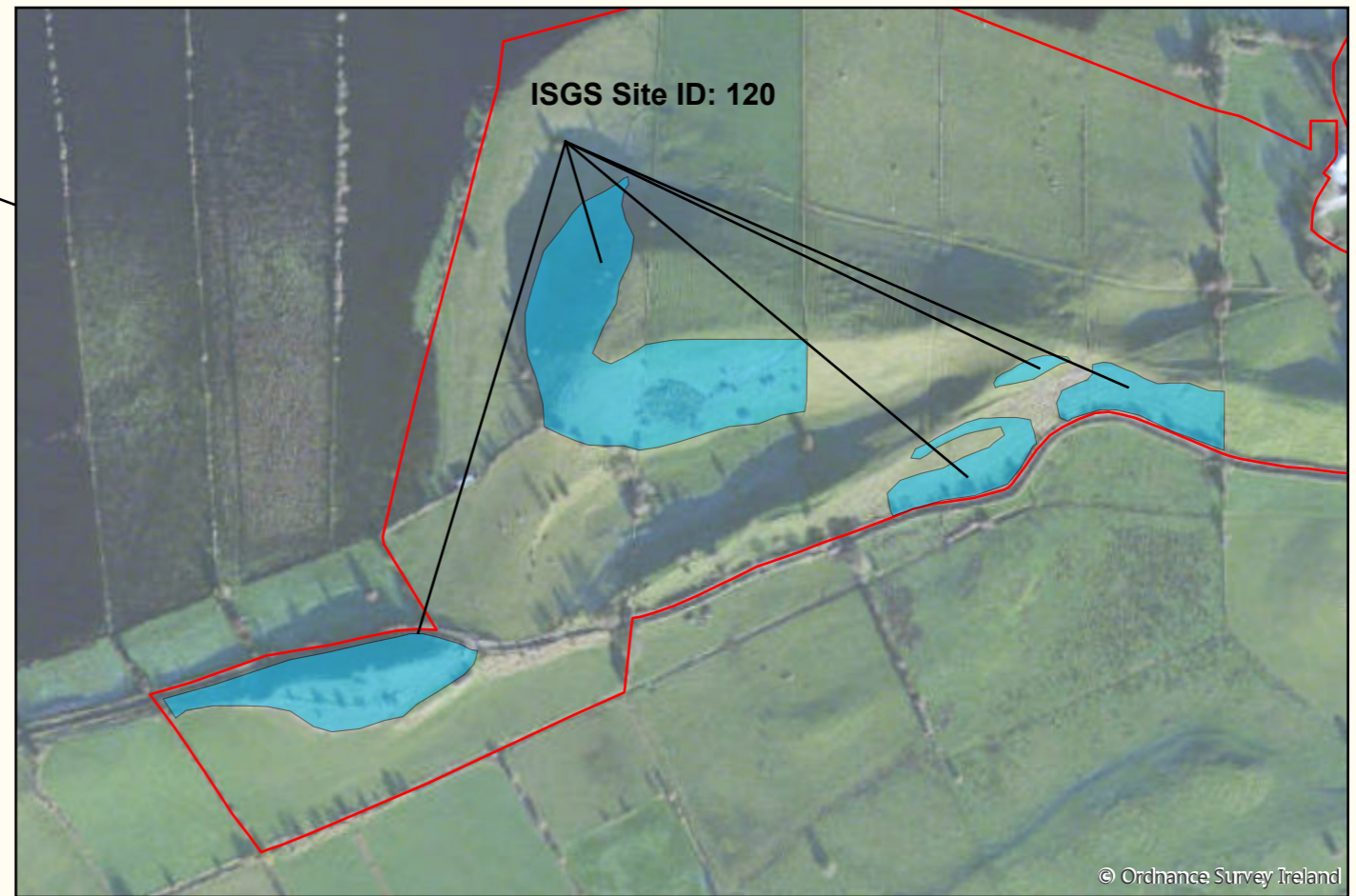
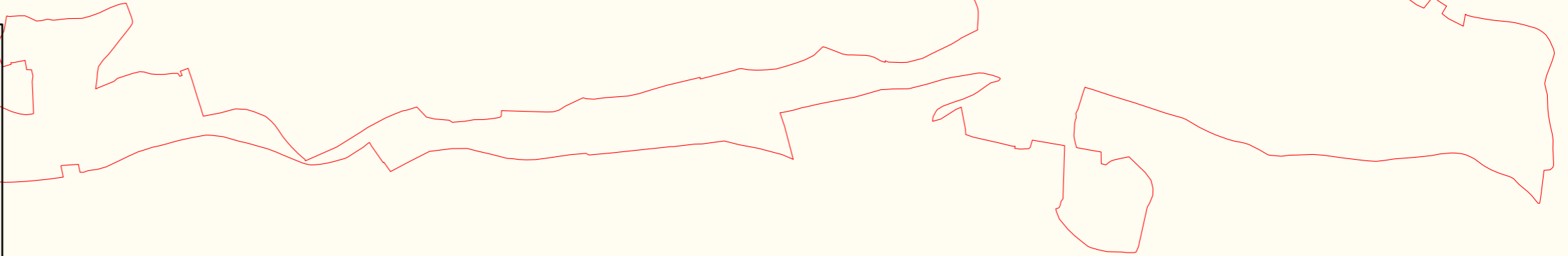
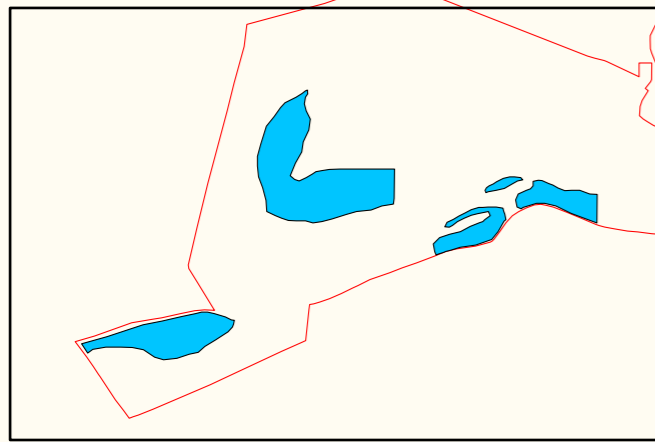
The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
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**Map Version 1
 Date: June 2018**

Legend

- Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC 001776
- River Shannon Callows SAC 000216
- Mongan Bog SAC 000580
- Mongan Bog SPA 004017
- Middle Shannon Callows SPA 004096
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary





Legend

- Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC 001776
- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary
- Annex I Qualifying Interest**
- 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)

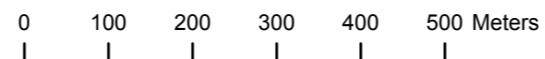


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**MAP 3:
PILGRIM'S ROAD ESKER SAC
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
GRASSLAND HABITATS**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

**SITE CODE:
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**Map Version 1
Date: June 2018**