

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Macorha Lough SAC 001536



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
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

001536 Mocarha Lough SAC

7210 Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae*

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

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

NPWS Documents

Year :	1979
Title :	A Preliminary Report on Areas of Scientific Interest in County Mayo
Author :	Goodwillie, R.N.
Series :	Unpublished Report
Year :	2009
Title :	Ireland Red List No. 2: Non-marine molluscs
Author :	Byrne, A.; Moorkens, E.A.; Anderson, R.; Killeen, I.J.; Regan, E.C.
Series :	Ireland Red List series, NPWS
Year :	2010
Title :	Ireland Red List No. 4: Butterflies
Author :	Regan, E.C.; Nelson, B.; Aldwell, B.; Bertrand, C.; Bond, K.; Harding, J.; Nash, D.; Nixon, D.; Wilson, C.J.
Series :	Ireland Red List series, NPWS
Year :	2012
Title :	Ireland Red List No. 8: Bryophytes
Author :	Lockhart, N.; Hodgetts, N.; Holyoak, D.
Series :	Ireland Red List series, NPWS
Year :	2013
Title :	Conservation status assessments for three fen habitat types - 7230 – Alkaline fens, 7210 – Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of <i>Caricion davallianae</i> and 7140 – Transition mires and quaking bogs
Author :	Kimberley, S.
Series :	Unpublished report to NPWS
Year :	2014
Title :	Guidelines for a national survey and conservation assessment of upland vegetation and habitats in Ireland, Version 2.0
Author :	Perrin, P.M.; Barron, S.J.; Roche, J.R.; O'Hanrahan, B.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 79
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 List Series, NPWS
Year :	2018
Title :	Backing document – National Conservation Status Assessments (NCAs) for three fen habitat types: 7140 – Transition mires and quaking bogs, 7210 – Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of <i>Caricion davallianae</i> , 7230 – Alkaline fens
Author :	Long, M.P.; Crowe, O.; Kimberley, S.; Denyer, J.
Series :	Unpublished report to NPWS
Year :	2019
Title :	The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation assessments

Other References

Year : 2004
Title : Common Standards Monitoring guidance for lowland wetland habitats
Author : JNCC
Series : Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

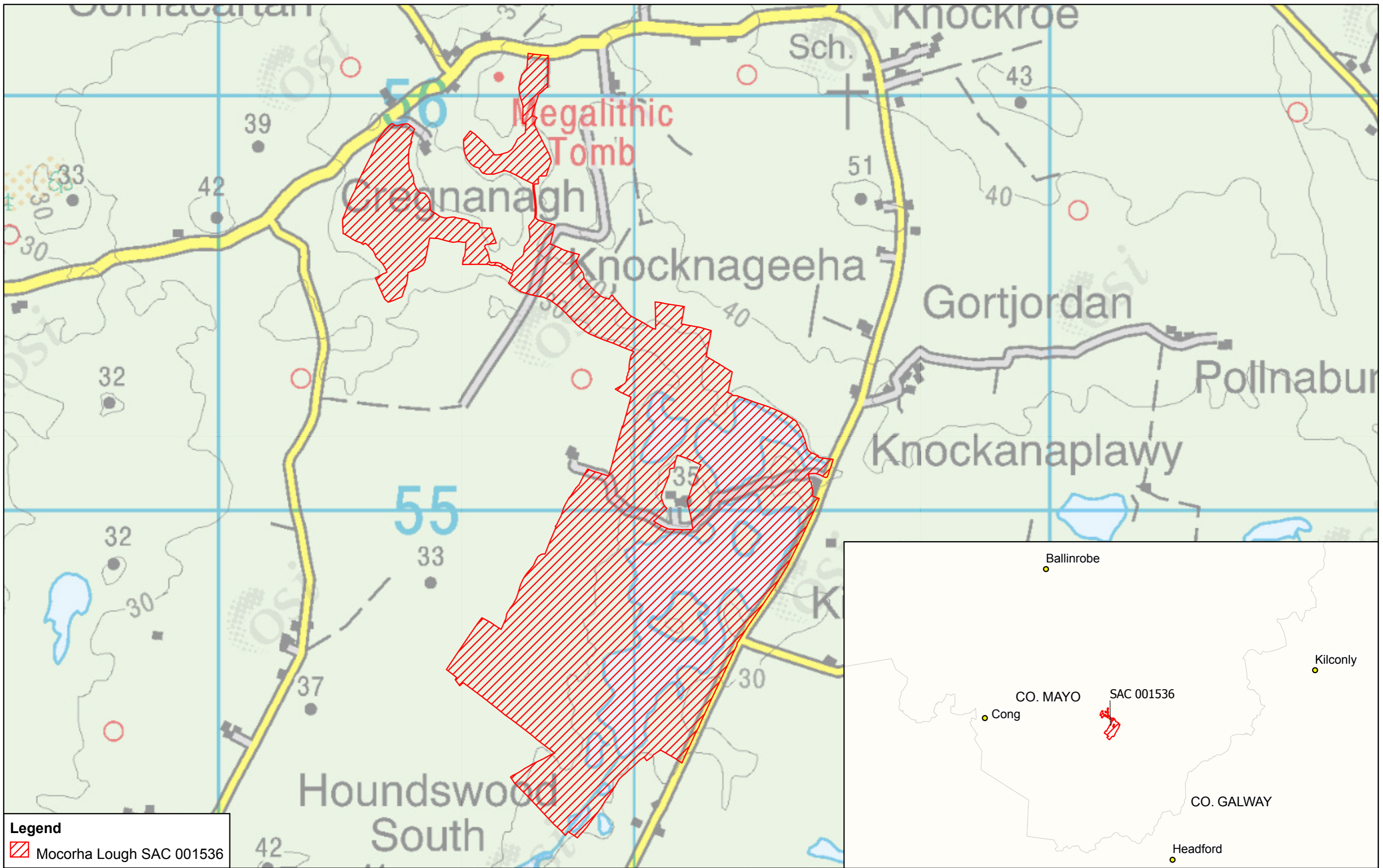
Conservation Objectives for : Macorha Lough SAC [001536]

7210 Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae**

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae in Macorha Lough 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	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> * has not been mapped in detail for Macorha Lough SAC and thus the total current area of the priority qualifying habitat in the SAC is unknown. The SAC supports a good example of <i>Cladium</i> fen in a calcareous lake basin which is considered one of the largest stands in the west of Ireland. It occurs in association with common reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>) swamp, black bog-rush (<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>) dominated fen and other wetland vegetation. Wet grassland, which floods at times, is found adjacent to the wetland habitats. The lake basin is mostly overgrown with the swamp and fen vegetation, with very little open water remaining (Goodwillie, 1979; NPWS internal files)
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	See the notes for Habitat area above
Ecosystem function: peat formation	Percentage cover of peat-forming vegetation and water table levels	Maintain active peat formation, where appropriate	In order for peat to form, water levels need to be slightly below or above the soil surface for c.90% of the time
Ecosystem function: hydrology - groundwater levels	Water levels (centimetres); duration of levels; hydraulic gradients	Maintain, or where necessary restore, appropriate natural hydrological regimes necessary to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat	Fen habitats require high groundwater levels (i.e. water levels at or above the ground surface) for a large proportion of the calendar year (i.e. duration of mean groundwater level). Fen groundwater levels are controlled by regional groundwater levels in the contributing catchment area (which sustain the hydraulic gradients of the fen groundwater table). Regional abstraction of groundwater may affect fen groundwater levels
Ecosystem function: hydrology - surface water flow	Drain density and form	Maintain, or where necessary restore, as close as possible to natural or semi-natural, drainage conditions	Drainage, either within or surrounding the fen habitat, can result in the drawdown of the alkaline fen groundwater table. The depth, geometry and density of drainage (hydromorphology) will indicate the scale and impact on fen hydrology. Drainage can result in loss of characteristic species and transition to drier habitats
Ecosystem function: water quality	Water chemistry measures	Maintain appropriate water quality, particularly pH and nutrient levels, to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat	Fens receive natural levels of nutrients (e.g. iron, magnesium and calcium) from water sources. However, they are generally poor in nitrogen and phosphorus, with the latter tending to be the limiting nutrient under natural conditions. Water supply should be also relatively calcium-rich
Vegetation composition: typical species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Maintain adequate cover of typical species including brown mosses and vascular plants	For lists of typical vascular plant and bryophyte species, including high quality indicator species, see the Article 17 conservation status assessment for <i>Cladium</i> fens (NPWS, 2019) and the fen habitats supporting document (Long et al., 2018)
Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of native negative indicator species at insignificant levels	Negative indicators include species not characteristic of the habitat and species indicative of undesirable activities such as overgrazing, undergrazing, nutrient enrichment, agricultural improvement or impacts on hydrology. See JNCC (2004) and Kimberley (2013)
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage cover at, and in local vicinity of, a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of non-native species less than 1%	Attribute and target based on Perrin et al. (2014). Non-native species can be invasive and have deleterious effects on native vegetation. A low target is set as non-native species can spread rapidly and are most easily dealt with when still at lower abundances

Vegetation composition: trees and shrubs	Percentage cover in local vicinity of a representative number of monitoring stops	Cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 10%	Attribute and target based on Perrin et al. (2014). Scrub and trees will tend to invade if fen conditions become drier
Physical structure: disturbed bare ground	Percentage cover at, and in local vicinity of, a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of disturbed bare ground not more than 10%. Where tufa is present, disturbed bare ground not more than 1%	Attribute and target based on Perrin et al. (2014). While grazing may be appropriate in this habitat, excessive areas of disturbed bare ground may develop due to unsuitable grazing regimes. Disturbance can include hoof marks, wallows, human footprints, vehicle and machinery tracks. Excessive disturbance can result in loss of characteristic species and presage erosion for peatlands
Indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence and population size	No decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat; maintain features of local distinctiveness, subject to natural processes	This includes species on the Flora (Protection) Order, 2015 and/or Red Lists (Byrne et al., 2009; Regan et al., 2010; Lockhart et al., 2012; Wyse Jackson et al., 2016, etc.)



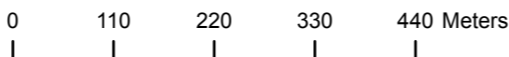
Legend
 Macorha Lough SAC 001536

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**MAP 1:
 MOCORHA LOUGH SAC
 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
 SAC DESIGNATION**
 Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

**SITE CODE:
 SAC 001536; version 3.01. CO. MAYO**

0 110 220 330 440 Meters



The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
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Níl sna teorainneacha ar na léarscáileanna ach nod garshuíomhach ginearálta. Féadfar athbheithnithe a déanamh ar theorainneacha na gceantar comharthaíthe. Suirbhéarachtá Ordonáis na hÉireann Ceadúnas Uimh OSI-NMA-014. © Suirbhéarachtá Ordonáis na hÉireann Rialtas na hÉireann


Map Version 1
 Date: Feb 2019