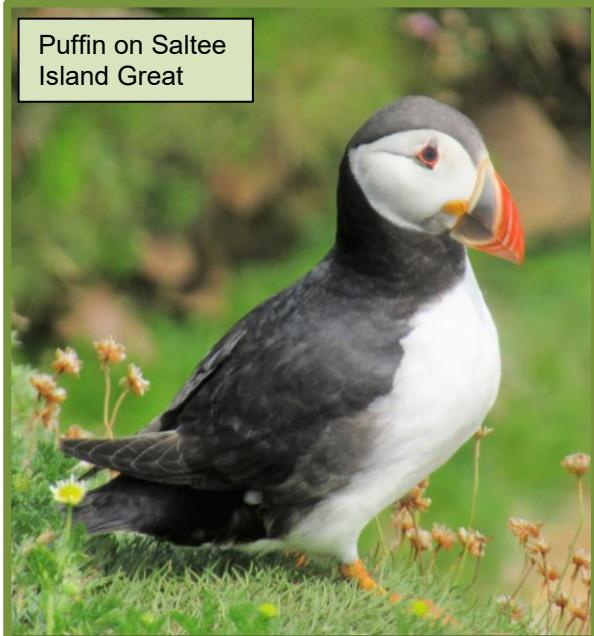


Puffin on Saltee  
Island Great



# Forty-one qualifying species of wild bird

Forty-one named species of wild birds are qualifying interests of the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) on the South Wexford Coast. The forty-one species of wild birds (Table 1 below) comprise thirty-seven named species that are qualifying interests of the six existing designated SPAs, together with four named species, all seabirds, (highlighted orange in Table 1 below) awaiting formal designation (see page 3 below). Fifteen of the aforementioned 37 are also seabirds bringing the total number of seabirds to 19 (46%) (highlighted yellow and orange in Table 1 below).

LOONS	SWANS	DIVING DUCKS	GULLS
1 Red-throated Diver	8 Bewick's Swan	17 Tufted Duck	30 Black-headed Gull
	9 Whooper Swan	18 Common Scoter	31 Mediterranean Gull
GREBES			32 Lesser Black-backed Gull
2 Little Grebe	GEESE	19 Coot	33 Herring Gull
SHEARWATERS, PETRELS, etc	10 Light-bellied Brent Goose	RAILS & CRAKES	34 Kittiwake
3 Fulmar	11 Shelduck	WADERS	TERNS
4 Manx Shearwater	DABBING DUCKS	20 Oystercatcher	35 Sandwich Tern
	12 Wigeon	21 Golden Plover	36 Roseate Tern
GANNETS	13 Gadwall	22 Grey Plover	37 Common Tern
5 Gannet	14 Teal	23 Lapwing	38 Arctic Tern
CORMORANTS	15 Pintail	24 Knot	AUKS
6 Cormorant	16 Shoveler	25 Dunlin	39 Guillemot
7 Shag		26 Black-tailed Godwit	40 Razorbill
		27 Bar-tailed Godwit	41 Puffin
		28 Curlew	
		29 Redshank	

Table 1. Forty-one qualifying species of wild bird in the SPAs on the South Wexford Coast.

# Qualifying interests of the six Special Protection Areas (SPAs) on the South Wexford Coast

Thirty-seven named species of wild birds, together with wetland and waterbirds in general, are the qualifying interests of the six Special Protection Areas (SPAs) on the South Wexford Coast.

- The twelve numbered bird groups (first column below) are: 1. Grebes. 2. Shearwaters, Petrels, etc. 3. Gannets. 4. Cormorants. 5. Swans. 6. Geese. 7. Ducks. 8. Rails & Crakes. 9. Waders. 10. Gulls. 11. Terns. 12. Auks.
- The six initialled SPA sites from left to right are: BY (Bannow Bay), KI (Keeragh Islands), BW (Ballyteige Burrow), SI (Saltee Islands), TL (Tacumshin Lake), and LIL (Lady's Island Lake).
- Qualifying interests are indicated thus ■.
- The Birds Directive (2009 amended version) is at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147&from=EN>.

No	English name	Taxonomic name	Code	BY	KI	BW	SI	TL	LIL
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	A004					■	
2	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	A009				■		
3	Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	A016				■		
4	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	A017		■		■		
	Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	A018				■		
5	Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	A037					■	
	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	A038					■	
6	Light-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	A046	■		■			
	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna</i>	A048	■		■			
7	Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	A050					■	
	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	A051					■	■
	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	A052					■	
	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	A054	■				■	
	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	A056					■	
	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	A061					■	
8	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	A125					■	
9	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	A130	■					
	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	A140	■		■		■	
	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	A141	■		■		■	
	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	A142	■		■		■	
	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	A143	■					
	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	A149	■					
	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa</i>	A156	■		■		■	
	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	A157	■		■			
	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	A160	■					
	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	A162	■					
10	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	A179						■
	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	A183				■		
	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	A184				■		
	Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	A188				■		
11	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	A191						■
	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	A192						■
	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	A193						■
	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	A194						■
12	Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	A199				■		
	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	A200				■		
	Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	A204				■		
	Wetland and Waterbirds		A999	■		■		■	■

Table 2. Qualifying interests of the six Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

# Qualifying interests of the proposed Seas off Wexford SPA

On 11 January 2024, Minister for Heritage Malcolm Noonan T. D., in a government press release gave public notice that he was considering designating a large coastal area off Co Wexford (Site Code 004237 (<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004237>)) a marine Special Protection Area (SPA) for 20 named species of wild birds (Source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/6837d-minister-noonan-announces-seas-off-wexford-irelands-largest-special-protection-area-for-seabirds/#:~:text=Speaking%20today%2C%20Minister%20Noonan%20said,particularly%20for%20marine%20seabirds>). Public notice followed in the local press (*Wexford People*, issue dated 17 January 2024, page 8; copy below) and submissions were invited before 9 April 2024.

 An Roinn Tábhachtála,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

 Natura 2000

**GOVERNMENT NOTICE**  
**FOR THE ATTENTION OF MARINE USERS OF THE  
SEAS OFF COUNTY WEXFORD**

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, T. D. is considering classifying, under Regulation 15 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), the Seas off Wexford 004237, as indicated on the map below, as a candidate Special Protection Area (SPA) in accordance with Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, known as "The Birds Directive".

The Minister has issued a Direction, under Regulation 28, in respect of certain activities (Activities Requiring Consent) which must not be undertaken within or close to the site without permission having first been obtained from the Minister. The proposed classification will be taken into account when assessing any future development proposals within or close to the site.

A map showing the area of the candidate SPA may be viewed in the offices of the following in the locality or is available on request from the email/address below:

- Teagasc • National Parks & Wildlife Service • Local Authority
- Garda Stations • Social Protection • County Libraries

Any person, with a sufficient interest in the area being considered for classification, can submit an observation to the Minister, which must be supported by scientifically-based ornithological criteria pursuant to the Birds Directive. Submissions must be received at the address below by 9th April 2024.

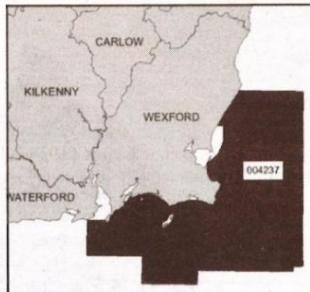
In the event that the process moves to the next stage, the Minister will issue a further public notification under Regulation 16. At that point, any person with a legal interest in the area proposed for classification can lodge an objection to the proposal and to the Ministerial Direction, which must be supported by scientifically-based ornithological criteria pursuant to the Birds Directive. Details of the procedures for lodging objections will be included in that notification.

The co-ordinates listed below identify the proposed boundaries of the Special Protection Area (Geographic Co-ordinate System: WGS84).

Further information can be requested by emailing [sitedesignations@npws.gov.ie](mailto:sitedesignations@npws.gov.ie) or by writing to Designations Unit, National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 King Street North, Dublin 7, D07N7CV.

Seas off Wexford 004237 – Candidate Special Protection Area

	Latitude	Longitude
A	52° 32' 1" N	5° 52' 0" W
B	52° 0' 0" N	5° 54' 0" W
C	51° 58' 0" N	5° 54' 0" W
D	51° 58' 0" N	5° 57' 0" W
E	51° 57' 4" N	5° 57' 0" W
F	51° 57' 47" N	6° 27' 10" W
G	51° 55' 6" N	6° 27' 19" W
H	51° 55' 27" N	6° 44' 45" W
I	52° 0' 50" N	6° 44' 29" W
J	52° 1' 9" N	7° 1' 57" W



## Qualifying Interests (20 species)

- **Red-throated Diver** (*Gavia stellata*) [A001]
- **Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) [A009]
- **Manx Shearwater** (*Puffinus puffinus*) [A013]
- **Gannet** (*Morus bassanus*) [A016]
- **Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017]
- **Shag** (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) [A018]
- **Common Scoter** (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065]
- **Mediterranean Gull** (*Larus melanocephalus*) [A176]
- **Black-headed Gull** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]
- **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]
- **Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*) [A184]
- **Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) [A188]
- **Sandwich Tern** (*Sterna sandvicensis*) [A191]
- **Roseate Tern** (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192]
- **Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]
- **Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194]
- **Little Tern** (*Sterna albifrons*) [A195]
- **Guillemot** (*Uria aalge*) [A199]
- **Razorbill** (*Alca torda*) [A200]
- **Puffin** (*Fratercula arctica*) [A204]

The proposed SPA (Site Code 004237) covers over 305,000 hectares of marine waters off the coast of Wexford extending from Rathmoylan Cove, south-west of Dunmore East in Co Waterford, across Waterford Harbour to Hook Head and along the shore, circumventing existing SPAs, to Ballinoulart, south of Cahore Point in Co Wexford. From there, the boundary runs out to the 12-mile limit and extends south and west to a point south of Rathmoylan. The proposed SPA straddles both the boundary between the Irish Sea and the Celtic Sea, and its associated Celtic Sea Front, an important feeding, breeding and wintering area for seabirds. The proposed SPA is also the largest SPA in the history of the State.

Of the twenty named species that are qualifying interests of the Seas off Wexford candidate SPA, fifteen are already qualifying interests of the existing SPAs on the South Wexford Coast. The remaining five species are:- **Manx Shearwater** (breeds on the Saltee Islands), **Mediterranean Gull** (breeds at Lady's Island Lake), **Little Tern** (formerly bred at a number of sites and bred at Lady's Island Lake in 2025), and the **Red-throated Diver** and **Common Scoter** that both winter in the coastal waters.

## Sites on the South Wexford Coast supporting wetland bird numbers of international and national importance (Lewis *et al.*, 2019).

Bird species (24)	Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) sites			
	Bannow Bay	The Cull & Killag (Ballyteige)	Tacumshin Lake	Lady's Island Lake
Little Grebe	-	-	National	-
Little Egret	-	-	National	National
Mute Swan	-	-	Inter/National	Inter/National
Whooper Swan	-	-	Inter/National	-
Light-bellied Brent Goose	International	International	-	-
Shelduck	National	-	National	-
Wigeon	-	-	National	National
Gadwall	-	-	National	National
Teal	-	National	National	-
Pintail	-	-	National	-
Shoveler	-	-	National	-
Coot	-	-	National	-
Oystercatcher	National	-	-	-
Golden Plover	National	National	National	-
Grey Plover	National	National	-	-
Lapwing	National	National	National	-
Knot	National	-	-	-
Dunlin	National	National	National	-
Black-tailed Godwit	National	National	National	National
Bar-tailed Godwit	National	National	-	-
Curlew	National	-	-	-
Greenshank	-	National	-	-
Redshank	-	National	-	-
Black-headed Gull	-	-	-	National

### Reference

Lewis, L. J., Burke, B., Fitzgerald, N., Tierney, T. D. and Kelly, S. 2019. Irish Wetland Bird Survey: Waterbird Status and Distribution 2009/10-2015/16. *Irish Wildlife Manuals*, No 106. Dublin: National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

# The status of birds of conservation concern

The fourth review of the status of birds of conservation concern on the island of Ireland was published in April 2021 covering the period 2020-2026 (Gilbert *et al.*, 2021). Two hundred and eleven species were assessed and assigned to Red, Amber or Green lists following standard assessment criteria. The following changes were noted regarding the 37 species that are qualifying interests of designated Special Protection Areas (SPAs) on the South Wexford Coast:-

- six increased their status since the preceding assessment (BoCCI3) (Little Grebe: Amber to Green; the remaining five from Red to Amber: Wigeon, Pintail, Tufted Duck, Black-headed Gull, and Herring Gull),
- nine decreased (Fulmar: Green to Amber; the remaining eight from Amber to Red: Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Knot, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Kittiwake, Razorbill, and Puffin), and
- 22 stayed the same (15 staying at Amber and 7 staying at Red) (Table 3).

Comments regarding individual species are quoted below.

**Little Grebe.** “some question marks against the availability of data to confidently confirm their improved status. We had difficulty assessing the breeding status” (*ibid*, pages 14 and 20).

**Fulmar.** “increased in priority status across Europe” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Light-bellied Brent Goose.** “The Irish populations almost entirely consist of recognised subspecies, however all assessments are made for full species to ensure that all criteria including global and European importance can be considered.” (*ibid*, page 3).

**Wigeon.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Pintail.** “not known to have had probable or confirmed breeding for a minimum of ten consecutive years since about 1800” (*ibid*, page 7).

**Tufted Duck.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Shelduck.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Whooper Swan.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Light-bellied Brent Goose.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Shoveler.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Tufted Duck.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Teal.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Wigeon.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Gadwall.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Teal.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Pintail.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Shoveler.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Tufted Duck.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Coot.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Oystercatcher.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Golden Plover.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Grey Plover.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Lapwing.** “have populations with less severe declines.” (*ibid*, page 14).

**Knot.** “notable declines in the wintering populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Dunlin.** “notable declines in the wintering populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Black-tailed Godwit.** “not known to have had probable or confirmed breeding for a minimum of ten consecutive years since about 1800” (*ibid*, page 7).

**Bar-tailed Godwit.** “notable declines in the wintering populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Curlew.** “notable declines in the wintering populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Redshank.** “notable declines in the wintering populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Black-headed Gull.** “some recovery in the populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Herring Gull.** “some recovery in the populations” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Kittiwake.** “now classed as globally Vulnerable” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Roseate Tern.** “Ireland hosts up to an estimated 40% of Europe’s breeding Roseate Terns” (*ibid*, page 18).

**Razorbill and Puffin.** “for their European status.” (*ibid*, page 17).

**Puffin.** “There are still species gaps and further work is required to provide up-to-date estimates of our burrow nesting seabirds including Puffin.” (*ibid*, page 19).

Species with change in status from 2013 to 2021	Change	BoCCI3	BoCCI4
Little Grebe	↑	Yellow	Green
Fulmar	↓	Green	Yellow
Gannet	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Cormorant	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Shag	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Bewick’s Swan	↔	Red	Red
Whooper Swan	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Light-bellied Brent Goose	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Shelduck	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Wigeon	↑	Red	Yellow
Gadwall	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Teal	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Pintail	↑	Red	Yellow
Shoveler	↔	Red	Red
Tufted Duck	↑	Yellow	Red
Coot	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Oystercatcher	↓	Yellow	Red
Golden Plover	↔	Red	Red
Grey Plover	↓	Yellow	Red
Lapwing	↔	Red	Red
Knot	↓	Yellow	Red
Dunlin	↔	Red	Red
Black-tailed Godwit	↓	Yellow	Red
Bar-tailed Godwit	↓	Yellow	Red
Curlew	↔	Red	Red
Redshank	↔	Red	Red
Black-headed Gull	↑	Yellow	Yellow
Lesser Black-backed Gull	↔	Red	Yellow
Herring Gull	↑	Red	Yellow
Kittiwake	↓	Yellow	Red
Sandwich Tern	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Roseate Tern	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Common Tern	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Arctic Tern	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Guillemot	↔	Yellow	Yellow
Razorbill	↓	Yellow	Red
Puffin	↓	Yellow	Red

Table 3. Changes in assessed status from 2013 to 2021.

## Reference.

Gilbert, G., Stanbury, A., and Lewis, L. 2021. Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 4: 2020-2026. *Irish Birds*, Number 46, pages 1-22.