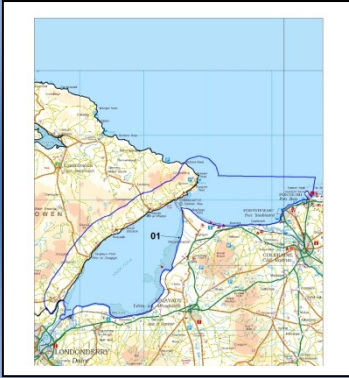


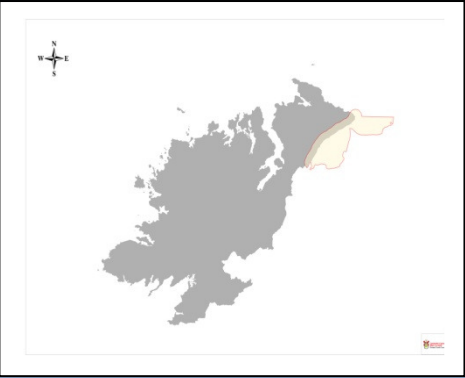
3.0 Seascape Units





Seascape Unit 1

Lough Foyle



Lough Foyle SCA encompasses a vast area including all of Lough Foyle; beginning near the village of Muff south of the Lough and stretching as far as Inishowen Head to the north of the Lough. It also extends across the international border toward the eastern shore of Northern Ireland, and into the mouth of the River Foyle towards Derry City. Lough Foyle is a large (3,700 km²) tidal, shallow estuary that sits within the (cross-border) North Western River Basin Management Area as developed under the EU Water Framework Directive, 2000. Lough Foyle has an extensive catchment basin and includes rivers that drain much of the mountains of Donegal and the Sperrins in Northern Ireland. This particular seascape unit affords a very strong visual and physical connection to Northern Ireland.

There are two discovery points on the Wild Atlantic Way within this seascape unit located in Stroove and Magilligan Point viewing area. Part of the Inishowen 100 coastal drive also runs through this area.

Landscape Character Types

The landscape character types within this seascape unit are illustrated in the map below and clearly show the river valleys that flow further higher ground in the west towards Lough Foyle.



Figure 2: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascape Unit 1 overlaps with Lough Foyle Coast LCA7, South Inishowen Farmland LCA10, and a small area of East Inishowen Mountains and Valleys LCA6.

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Land cover-** Fertile agricultural lands slope to the waters edge where they meet a silty edge along the majority of this seascape unit along the shoreline of Lough Foyle. Past Greencastle (and Magilligan Point in Northern Ireland) where the shoreline is onto the Atlantic Ocean, the coastal edge is characterized by exposed rock and sandy beaches. At Inishowen Head the coastline is completely different where it consists of high vegetated sea cliffs that fall sharply directly into the ocean below.
- **Intertidal area-** The expansive inter-tidal area consists of silty and sandy beaches with exposed rock in parts; the large silty mudflats exposed at low tide are feeding ground for a number of internationally and nationally important bird species with large areas designated as SPA and SAC.
- **Characteristics of sea-** Lough Swilly is a coastal estuary that forms part of a large drainage basin covering counties Donegal, Derry and Tyrone. The coast is more sheltered here than in other parts of Donegal that face directly onto the Atlantic.
- **Hinterland landform and land cover-** A spine of upland peat and bog traversed by small river valleys define the western fringe of the seascape unit and these gently slope into a fertile agricultural land extending towards the shore of Lough Foyle. There is a good road network within this area and a Regional county road runs almost parallel with the entire coast at this location. The five settlements of Muff, Quigley's Point, Redcastle, Merville and Greencastle are located on the waters edge

and a dispersed pattern of rural residential and holiday home development is scattered throughout the entire area.

- **Intervisibility-** There is a degree of overlap seawards to the north out into Malin Waters across Seascape Unit (2) and across into Northern Ireland on the eastern side of Lough Foyle. Northern Ireland's Regional Seascape Character Assessment was published as Draft in August 2013 and identifies 2 seascape character areas on the eastern shore of the Lough; SCA 2 Lough Foyle and SCA 3 Portstewart Coast and one further along the north coast, LCA 4 Portrush Coast and the Skerries. Lough Foyle and the Northern Ireland coastline are inherently integral within the character of the Lough Foyle seascape unit and vice versa.
- **Lighting-** Stroove lighthouse is located at the tip of this seascape unit; this in conjunction with the settlements and the scattering of rural development along the landward side of the Foyle give a subtle lighting to the unit as a whole.



Key Uses

- **Coast-** Greencastle is the second largest port in the county and a fleet of fishing vessels are moored both here and at Moville; there are 2 piers at Moville and a large pier and harbour at Greencastle. A car ferry service 'Magilligan Ferry' connects Greencastle to Magilligan, across the Lough at its narrowest point. Recreation is also a dominant use within this area; there are two established golf courses at Redcastle and Greencastle, a scattering of beaches used by tourists and numerous holiday homes, hotels and guesthouses.
- **Sea-** An established fishing industry operates from Greencastle and Moville as well as oyster and mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) harvesting from the Lough. A deep bouyed channel on the western side of the Lough allows large freight ships and other craft access to the commercial port of Lisahally in Northern Ireland and cruise ships to dock. The sea is also a prime tourism and leisure attraction within this seascape unit with Muff village marking the beginning of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- **Land-** The dominant land use within this unit is agricultural, with associated residential and agricultural buildings. There is also a high proportion of holiday home development within the 5 settlements and in the rural area and in particular around Moville, Greencastle and Stroove.

Biodiversity

- A large area of Lough Foyle is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive. 2204ha of the eastern shore of the Lough within Northern Ireland is a SPA (EC site code UK9020031) and 585 ha of the Lough with the Donegal side of the Lough is a SPA (site code 004087). These SPA sites (cross-border) are of high ornithological importance that regularly support in excess of 20,000 wintering waterbirds, including internationally important Whooper Swans, Light-bellied Brent Goose and Bar-tailed Goodwit as well as a further 18 species of National importance.
- Lough Foyle Basin is an important source of Atlantic Salmon, an appendix 1 species as listed in the EU habitats Directive.
- The numerous rivers and tributaries that flow through this seascape unit host fertile and ecologically important biodiversity corridors.

Cultural influences

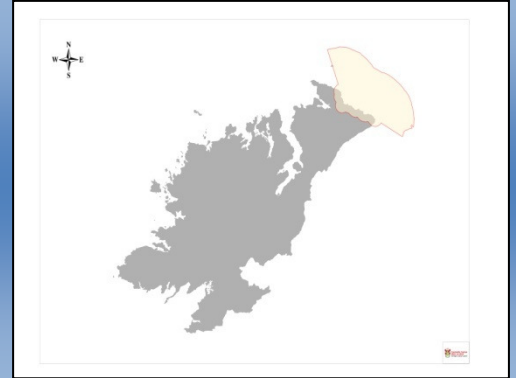
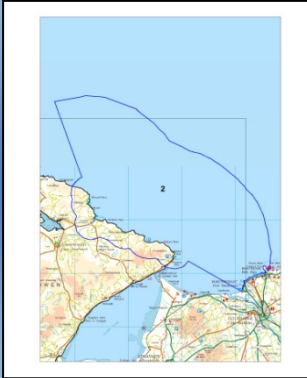
- Long strong history of settlement of the Foyle valley with recorded monuments stretching back to the Neolithic and early Bronze Age.
- Iconic visible remains of Maritime and defensive structures include the Norman castle at Greencastle (c1305) and the matching Mortello towers at Greencastle and Magilligan at the mouth of Lough Foyle.
- Shipwrecks including German U-boats and sunken WW2 aircraft off Inishowen head.
- Other important archaeological structures evident include evidence of early Christianity in Ireland such as Cooley cross at Moville.
- Tourism tradition stretching back to the 18th and 19th centuries as evidenced at Moville where villas and bathing lodges remain along the coast.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility**-The seascape unit is easily accessible by land and sea, and its location and topography make it very visible from the sea and from Northern Ireland on the opposite shore of Lough Foyle.
- **Key views to sea and coast**- Extensive unobstructed view to sea and towards NI and beyond from long stretches along the regional road network both along the coast and due to the sloping nature of the land from the county road network laced throughout the area. There are important views to the north of the seascape unit across the Foyle and there is a viewing area at Magilligan Point.
- **Key views to land**- Lough Foyle is a relatively heavily trafficked water body including many tourism, recreation and event craft, such as the recent 'Clipper Festival' that took place on the banks of the Foyle in 2012 and 2014. The topography is generally mirrored on the NI side of Lough Foyle with a low coastal edge rising to higher ground behind that lends itself to extensive and unobstructed views over the Lough Foyle Coast LCA and beyond into County Donegal. The views from the sea into and within the seascape unit are therefore of significant importance.

Seascape Unit 2

Kinnagoe Bay



Kinnagoe Bay SCA extends from Inishowen Head on the East of the Inishowen peninsula to Glengad Head along the northeast coast and faces out onto the Malin Waters. This unit varies greatly in character along its length due to the complex underlying geology, topography and landcover. The eastern shore is characterized by high, inaccessible mountain bog that falls sharply as sea cliffs meet the ocean below; this is punctuated by the two picturesque river valleys of Mossy Glen and Glenagiveny that lead out to the sandy beaches of Kinnagoe Bay and Glenagiveny. Further west the land gradually falls into a predominantly agricultural area characterized by a unique pattern of linear fields bound by low stone walls that extend to the rocky shoreline; a few small sandy inlets including Tremone Strand are dotted along the coastline towards Culdaff where the seascape again dramatically changes to a mature dune system and large sandy beaches.

There are four discovery points on the Wild Atlantic Way within this seascape unit at Stroove beach, Magilligan point viewing area, Kinnagoe Bay and Culdaff beach. Part of the Inishowen 100 coastal drive runs through this area.

Landscape Character Types



Figure 2.1: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCA

- Seascape Unit 2 overlaps the Lough Foyle Coast LCA7, North Inishowen Farmland and coast LCA3, East Inishowen Mountains and Valleys LCA6 and Malin Coast LCA1

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Landform and Land cover-** Elevated peat landscape that falls into the Atlantic as vegetated sea cliffs, defines the south eastern end of this stretch of coast, dissected by the two river valleys of Mossy Glen and Glenagiveny that flow to sea via Glenagiveny beach and Kinnagoe Bay. Further west the landcover within this seascape unit is primarily bog consisting of Atlantic blanket bog nearer the coast and Mountain blanket bog further inland. There are 3 distinct smaller areas of agricultural land within this area, and these also fall sharply from a height towards the sea as vegetated sea cliffs. Kinnagoe Bay and Glenagiveny beach sit side by side creating a large bay formation. A county 'bog' road runs parallel along the coastal edge from the east, approximately ½ km inland, and comes to a 'dead end' on the boglands, there are no dwellings within this seascape unit accessed from this road. Another more developed county road serves the west of this seascape unit, running along Glenagiveny and leading to Kinnagoe bay. There is a dispersed pattern of rural dwellings within this agricultural landscape with access primarily onto the county road network.
- **Intertidal area-** the intertidal area is defined by schist outcrops that slope into the sea and the large sandy beaches of Kinnagoe Bay and Glenagiveny beach and the smaller sandy beaches to the northwest and southeast of this seascape unit. There is a large sea cave on the promontory rocks at the very north-west edge of this seascape unit.
- **Characteristics of sea-** this area of coast is exposed to the full wrath of the Atlantic Ocean and is subject to strong winds.
- **Hinterland landform and land cover-** this area is primarily characterised by upland bog, fertile river valleys and agricultural farmlands.
- **Inter-visibility-** there is a degree of overlap with Seascape Unit 3 and a small section of Seascape Unit 1
- **Lighting-** The only lighting along this stretch of coast would emanate from the scattered rural dwellings and farm buildings. There is also a lighthouse on Inshtrahull, island visible from this seascape unit.

Key Uses

- **Coast** – large sections of this coast is upland bog. These areas have little development with some areas are worked for turf; there are however stretches of coastal agricultural land and valleys in between have dispersed residential development including holiday homes.

- **Sea-** The sea is a tourism and leisure attraction with Kinnegoe Bay and Glenagivney beach popular with day trippers and culdaff beach and village a popular destination for holiday makers.
- **Land-** The dominant land use within this unit is agricultural, with associated residential and agricultural buildings. There is a high proportion of holiday home development within the rural area and village of Culdaff as well as a mobile home holiday park on the outskirts of Culdaff.

Biodiversity

- North Inishowen Coast SAC 002012 stretches along this coastline. This northern site is of high conservation value because of the extensive area of relatively unspoilt coastal and heath habitats and the range of plant and animal species. It encompasses an excellent variety of coastal habitats including high rocky cliffs, rocky, shingle and sand beaches. There are excellent raised beaches along the east coast including the oldest and best preserved late-glacial fossil coast in Ireland (between Ineuran Bay and Esky Bay) and is of international importance. Very good examples of several other Annex I habitats are found, notably sea cliffs, vegetated shingle banks and dry heath. There are two protected plant species and a range of scarce species. The diversity of bird species is of particular note, with wintering waterfowl, breeding seabirds and breeding waders.

Cultural influences

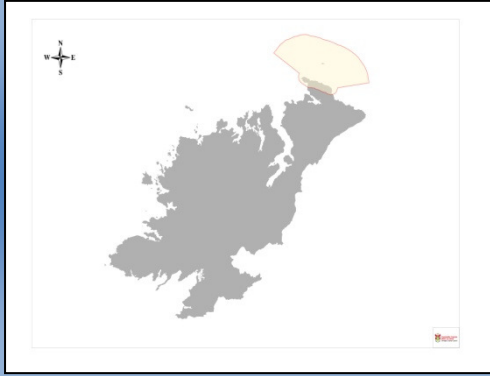
- Multiple shipwrecks lie off this area of coast including a wreck from the Spanish Armada off Kinnagoe Bay.
- There are a number of substantial clachan remains within this seascape unit
- Significant built heritage in this area includes Culdaff House.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility-**The western section of this seascape unit is served by the R238 with the rest of the seascape unit served by a necklace of local roads. The eastern part of this coastline is difficult and potentially treacherous to access due to the elevated and exposed terrain, particularly along the south-east.
- **Key views to sea and coast-**Extensive unobstructed view to sea. There are oblique views towards Northern Ireland and views towards the island of Inishtrahull. Long stretches of the county road network provide views at Culdaff, Kinnagoe Bay, Glengad Bay, Kinnagoe Bay, Glennagivney Bay and Inishowen Head that proffer excellent views over the sea and coast, as does some of the secondary road network.
- **Key views to land-** Due to the steep topography around this seascape unit, the degree of inter-visibility is limited to the area surrounding Culdaff, Kinnagoe and Glennagivney Bays, most of the remaining views to land consist of high vegetated cliffs. Views are limited to occasional leisure craft and fishing boats.



Seascope Unit 3 North Inishowen



North Inishowen SCA stretches from Glengad Head along the very northern coastline of Inishowen west towards Dunaldragh which is Ireland’s most northerly point and divided from the mainland by a narrow channel predominantly a hard rock coastline with the east consisting of high, rocky and vegetated sea cliffs characterised by caves that extend from elevated upland bog areas adjacent the coast. The seascope then changes to low vegetated sea cliffs to the west and a generally lower agricultural coastal landscape characterised by distinctive low rocky outcrops of quartzite and shale bedrock exposed along stretches of the coast and extend someway out to the ocean and is interspersed with stone, shingle and sand beaches. This coastline contains some of the oldest and best preserved late-glacial fossil coast in Ireland including the ancient unique raised beach at Ballyhillin where sea level change and glacial activity can be clearly observed. There is also a sandy beach at Malin pier and the seascope unit contains the offshore island of Inishtrahull.

The Wild Atlantic Way traverses this area and a Wild Atlantic Way signature point located at Malin Head And part of the Inishowen 100 Coastal Drive runs through this area.

Landscape Character Types



Figure 2.3: Map of LCTs within this seascope unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascape Unit 3 is contained entirely within LCA Malin Coast 1

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Land cover-** The land cover within this seascape unit is a mixture between worked bog to the east and coastal agricultural pasture land to the west. There are some small pockets of forestry to the east set back from the coastal edge. There is a dispersed settlement pattern of rural dwellings dotted throughout the agricultural areas.
- **Intertidal area-** The intertidal area is defined by rocky outcrops and multiple stony beaches to the east and a mixture of sandy and stony beaches to the west including an ancient raised beach at Ballyhillion. The exceptionally distinctive shorelines illustrate, somewhat dramatically, the changing connection between the sea and the land from the period the glaciers began to melt, some 15,000 years ago.
- **Characteristics of sea-** This area of the coast is exposed to the Atlantic Ocean and is subject to strong winds, and also by Inishtrahull, island off the North East Coast.
- **Hinterland landform and land cover-** the hinterland land form is undulating and land cover is primarily agricultural land, with areas of low-lying bog forestry and a strip of upland bog.
- **Inter-visibility-** Inter-visibility between this unit, Seascape Unit 2 and Seascape Unit 4, further visibility westwards is weather dependent.
- **Lighting-** Lighting would emanate predominantly from one-off dwellings and the light house on Inishtrahull. The 'Northern Lights' or Aurora Borealis have been regularly witnessed from this area.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** There are very few uses along the east of the coast, whilst the western end of the coastline has an agricultural use. There is a dispersed residential use along the coastline with the settlement of Malin which has a large caravan park adjacent the beach. The area has a strong tourism use based on the areas natural landscape features and the coast. There is a scattering of one off residential and holiday homes in the area as well as a caravan park near the beach and pier at Port Ronan. This area is also the location of the Malin Head Coast Guard Station and Malin Head Meteorological Station.
- **Sea-** There are 2 small piers within this seascape unit, one at Bunagee and one at Portaleen. There are proposed improvement works to Bunagee Pier as part of the 'Sail West Project'. There is also commercial fishing within this area with the fisherman's co-op and opportunities for tourism based fishing.
- **Land-** Predominant land uses within this seascape unit are agriculture and tourism, and there are a scattering of associated rural one-off houses and a few one-off holiday homes in the area and coastal walkways.

Biodiversity

- This area has an SAC along this entire coastline, part of the larger North Inishowen Coast 002012 SAC that stretches from Crummies Bay in the west up to Malin Head and back down to Inishowen Head to the east. It encompasses an excellent variety of coastal habitats including high rocky cliffs, offshore islands, a large intertidal bay, and rocky, shingle and sand beaches. There are exceptional raised beaches along the east coast including the oldest and best preserved late-glacial fossil coast in Ireland (between Ineuran Bay and Esky Bay). It is the only well preserved such coast in

Europe and so is of international importance. Also of geomorphological interest is the small area of stone polygons near Malin Tower.

- The Malin Head 004146 SPA comprises areas of agricultural grassland around the village of Ballygorman near Malin Head at the northern end of the Inishowen Peninsula. The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive for the Corncrake. The northern section of the site is very exposed and comprises gently undulating land used mostly for grazing. The southern section of the site, centred along the Coolort River, is low-lying and consists of mixed agricultural land, with meadow and grazing pasture.
- A wide variety of whales, dolphins and sharks have been recorded in this area as well as the Atlantic Grey Seal and Common Seal.
- There are good bird watching spots at Dunaldragh, Ballyhillin and Inishtrahull.

Cultural influences

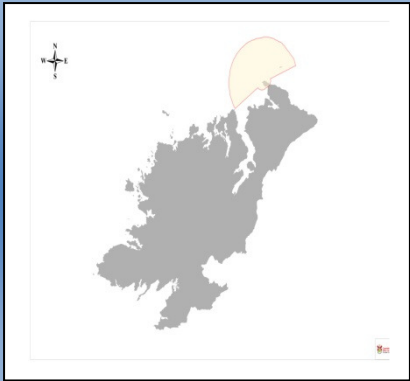
- Old clachan settlement patterns remain in the landscape today.
- Inishtrahull is home to Ireland's most northerly lighthouse. The island had a resident community until 1929 and the lighthouse was manned until 1987. This island also contains Ireland's oldest rocks.
- Malin Head is a good place to view the Northern Lights.
- This area has been a strategic military and communications site, with a Napoleon Signal Tower at Banbas Crown.
- Over 400 ship wrecks recorded in Malin Head.
- Fishing is an important industry today and historically.
- Built heritage in this area includes the signal tower which is Ireland's most northerly building on the mainland. It was named 'Banba' after the mythological patron goddess of Ireland. It was built by the British in 1805 as a Napoleonic lookout tower to help defend against a possible French invasion. In 1902 the Marconi Company succeeded in sending the first commercial message by wireless from Malin Head to the ship S.S. Lake Ontario thus establishing Malin Head as an important staging post for future trans-Atlantic communication.
- Malin Head Meteorological Station.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility-** There is reasonable access to the east of this area from the R247 and a network of local roads. The west of the seascape unit is difficult to access owing to its high elevated bog vegetated sea cliffs with only one local road set back from the coast.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** The key views to sea are pre-dominantly to the east from along the coastal road, and west at the settlement of Malin, beaches and piers in the area. The key view of the sea includes the view of Inishtrahull. Unobstructed views to the sea and coast can be had from the Malin Head Viewing Point.
- **Key views to land-** Key views to land are from the island Inishtrahull and from fishing boats and leisure craft in the area. To the west of the unit views are of steep elevated vegetated cliffs with occasional glimpses of tops of mountains in distance. The eastern views to land are of Malin Head and the other peninsulas in the distance. The Malin Head viewing point also offers landward views of Malin and further afield.



Seascape Unit 4 Banba's Crown



Banba's Crown seascape unit contains the most northerly point in Ireland and is a popular tourist location for day trippers, ramblers, historians and geologists among others who visit to experience the many qualities of this area. The Wild Atlantic loops around the west here and one of the main discovery points on the Wild Atlantic Way is located within this seascape unit at Malin Head. Part of the Inishowen 100 coastal drive runs through this area.

Banba's Crown SCA has a small landward area owing to the nature of this isolated and exposed headland which contains the most northerly point in Ireland which has a 360 degree panoramic view of the ocean, the adjacent peninsulas of Dunaff Head, Fanad Head and Tory Island in the distance and a raised beach and Inishtrahull Island to the east. This is a rugged and rocky coastline consisting of high sea cliffs jagged, rocky, outcrops and the sea stacks of Scheidrén Mór and Scheidrén Beg to the north-western tip of the headland. Unique natural features such as Hell's Hole and Devil's Bridge have been eroded by the harsh strong and open Atlantic Ocean. This strategic location with uninterrupted ocean views was the location of the Napoleonic Fort, a World War 2 Army lookout, many of the structures remain. There is also a walkway along the edge of the cliffs along this seascape unit and a weather station located at Bulbinbeg, 2km east of the head.

Landscape Character Types

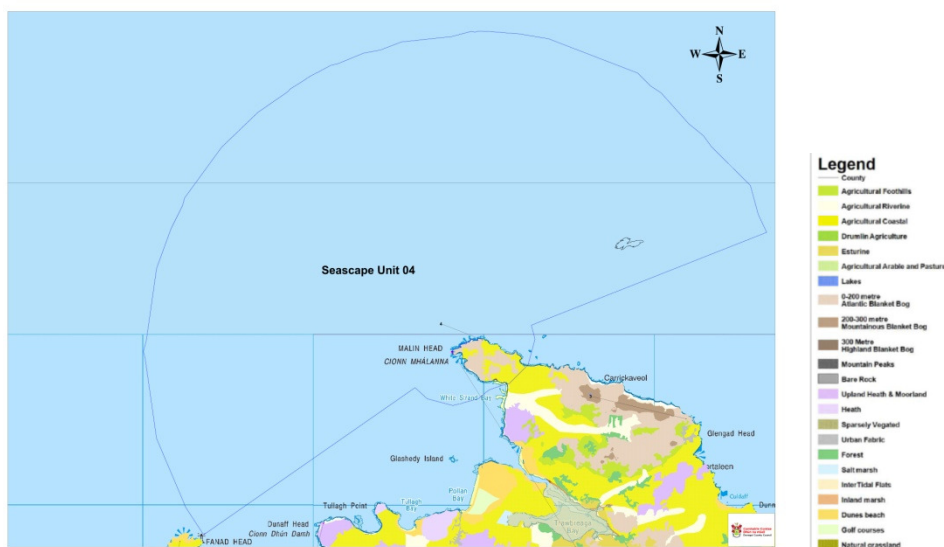


Figure 2.4: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Due to the northern and exposed location of Seascape Unit 4 it overlaps with only a small section of Malin Coast LCA1

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Landcover-** Mountain bog and agricultural land are the primary landcover and there is also a small area of marsh and isolated buildings.
- **Intertidal area-** The majority of this coastline consists of high sea cliffs which dramatically meet the ocean. There are a few narrow stony beaches along the foot of the cliffs and the remaining intertidal areas are characterized by sandy beaches, lower rocky headlands and stony bays.
- **Characteristics of sea-** This area is the most northerly point in Ireland and as such is exposed to the full force of the Atlantic Ocean. The Island of Inishtrahull is approximately 10km offshore and falls within this seascape unit and the oldest rocks in Ireland occur as a small outcrop on this island.
- **Hinterland landform and landcover-**
The majority of this coastal hinterland landform consists of undulating farmland with mountains of Urris and Slieve Snaght which are mainly covered in blanket bog and heather.
- **Inter-visibility-** There is a degree of inter-visibility between Seascape Unit 3 and Seascape Unit 5.
- **Lighting-** There is a lighthouse on the Island of Inishtrahull and the light houses at Fanad and Tory Island are visible in the distance. The long cliff face along of this coast would be in darkness both on the land and sea, however a small degree of lighting would emanate from the isolated rural dwellings and from the small cluster of development at Bulbinbeg.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** Coastal uses include coastal farming, beaches, used for leisure and recreation and a coastal walkway that runs along the cliff edge. Malin Head is an iconic area having Ireland's most northerly point and important tourism product in this area. The pier infrastructure is used for both commercial and recreational fishing. Sharks and dolphins are regularly sighted in the area.
- **Sea-** Bulbinbeg pier is used for fishing and leisure craft including tourist boat trips for shark and dolphin spotting and to Inishtrahull. The treacherous conditions off the coast are home to a large number of charted and uncharted wrecks plotted.
- **Land-** The dominant land use in this area is farming and agricultural with isolated residential dwellings. There is also an area of worked bog located in this seascape unit. This area is renowned for its tourism and there are a number of holiday homes scattered throughout an established caravan park.

Biodiversity

- This seascape unit includes a small section of the North Inishowen Coast SAC 002012. The high rocky cliffs are intercepted by rocky and shingle beaches are an important coastal habitat. There are important raised beaches along the east coast including the oldest and best preserved late-glacial fossil coast in Ireland (between Ineuran Bay and Esky Bay) of international importance.
- SPA 004146 falls within the south of this seascape unit. This area is of special conservation interest as it supports a nationally important population of Corncrake.
- Grey seals, basking sharks whales, dolphins and sunfish are occasionally reported in these waters.

Visual and Sensory qualities

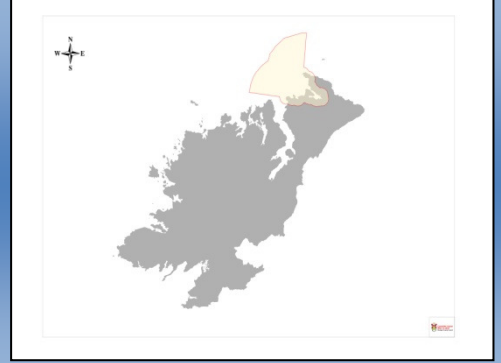
- **Accessibility-** This area is circumnavigated by a country road; also the route of WAW and a walking trail around skirts the headland.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** This seascape unit offers panoramic views of the sea and views of Inishrahull to the east and Tory Island to the west and on a clear day the hills of Western Scotland and the Island of Islay can be seen far in the distance; visible from the coastal road network have clear unobstructed views of the sea and the viewing point adjacent to the signal tower.
- **Key views to land-** There are key views over Malin towards Glengad Head and over the Inishowen mountains to Dunaff Head and beyond to Fanad Head and Hornhead.

Cultural Influences

- There are 6 recorded monuments in this unit including two on Inishtrahull Island. The four on the mainland are located along the coast.
- Military and Maritime history is evident in the landscape with the remains of WW2 structures and the EIRE sign embedded by rocks on the headland to show Irelands neutrality during WW2 air raids.
- Napoleonic fort (part of a chain around the coast).
- There are a number of architecturally important isolated structures and clusters of structures within this seascape unit are on the RPS and a number on the NIAH which contribute significantly to the character of the area.
- The first weather station was established in this area by the British in 1885 and an important weather station has been used since then for terrestrial and shipping reports.
- The signal tower adjacent to the Napoleonic tower was an important communications point for ships and a sister signal tower was located on the coast of Inishtrahull. The first commercial wireless message was sent from Malin Head to the ship S.S. Lake Ontario. In turn, this established Malin as an important post for future transatlantic communication.



Seascape Unit 5 Trawbreaga Bay



Trawbreaga Bay SCA extends from Malin in the north east to Dunaff Head and the north west coast of Inishowen, at the mouth Lough Swilly. This unit has a varied, indented and undulating coastline that includes the sheltered, silty, Trawbreaga Bay and the Isle of Doagh, and the coastal settlements of Carndonagh, Malin Town, Clonmany and Ballyliffen.

This dramatic coastline includes sea cliffs, rocky edges at Malin and Dunaff, silty and sandy estuary at Trawbreaga Bay, the large sand dune complex at Isle of Doagh and along the coast at Ballyliffen, Tullagh Bay and Five Finger Strand, the largest of its kind in Europe.

The diverse and complex coast has evidence of settlement from the earliest times and there is a wealth of archaeological monuments. The Isle of Doagh contains some of the best examples of rock art in Ireland and Europe dating from the late Mesolithic period, whilst Carndonagh houses St Patrick's Cross, an early Christian carved stone cross dating from the 7th century AD.

Ecologically important with large areas within this coastal area designated as an SPA and SPC and there is an important quifer at Carndonagh.

A number of elements of this landscape and seascape combine to attract tourists in high numbers, there are a number of hotels at Ballyliffen, two golf courses and walking trails.

The WAW follows the local network and this scenic historic coast, passing two golf courses at Ballyliffen, and a number of tourist facilities.

This seascape unit is also geologically important boasting large expansive dunes systems, a tombola, and fine examples of raised beaches.

Landscape Character Types

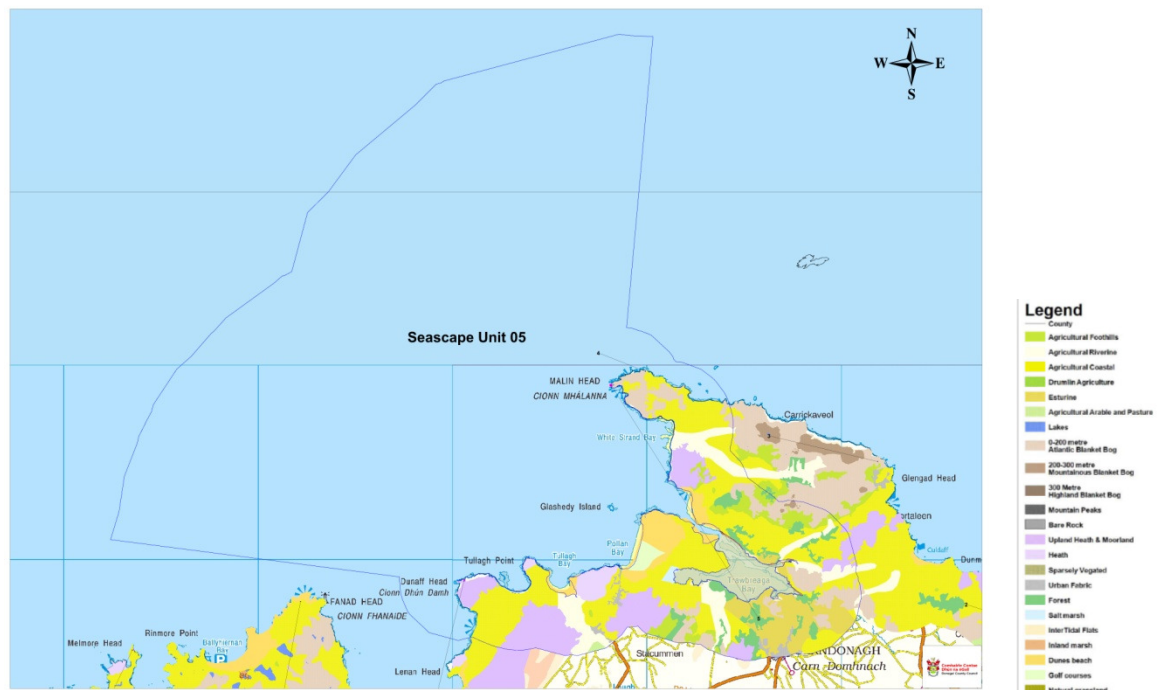


Figure 2.5: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascape Unit 5 overlaps with Malin Coast LCA 1 and Dunaff Coast LCA2 with a small section of North Inishowen Farmland and Coast LCA3.

Key Characteristics

- Coastal Landcover-** The varied coastal land cover consists of elevated bog at Malin Head, agricultural land with areas of heath, forest and pockets of bog around Trawbreaga Bay, and agricultural land with pockets of heath on the headlands. The four settlements of Malin, Ballyliffen, Clonmany and Carndonagh are among a landscape with a dispersed rural settlement pattern. The large sand dune systems at five fingers strand and on the Isle of Doagh are a formative feature in this area.
- Intertidal area-** The intertidal area consists of rocks, slabs and rocky outcrops together with long stretches of shingle, stony and sandy beaches, high vegetated sea cliffs and silty mudflats, sand beds and areas of marsh around Trawbreaga Bay. At the headlands the ocean meets the hard rock and cliff edges whilst the bays are generally sandy and soft.
- Characteristics of sea-** Most of this coast interfaces directly with the Atlantic Ocean. Trawbreaga Bay has a narrow inlet opening onto a large silty bay. Sea stacks and the small Glashedy Island also characterise this seascape.

- **Hinterland landform and landcover-** The south and eastern hinterland is mainly elevated bog land and low-lying agricultural land. The western edge is notably different with a high elevated mountainous backdrop of predominantly bog.
- **Inter-visibility-** There is good degree of inter-visibility over the landscape and seascape throughout this unit and over the adjoining units to both the west and east.
- **Lighting-** The scatter of residential properties, holiday homes and hotels along this coastline and within the settlements. There are areas however which due to the topography have no dwellings such as Dunaff and Binion and also along the sand dunes at Ballyliffin and at Knocknamany, where there would be little night lighting.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** Key coastal uses include farming, fishing, tourism, residential and recreational usage of beaches. The recreational focus is around the coast, beaches and golf courses at Ballyliffin. Other main uses include forestry.
- **Sea-** The sea within this seascape unit is used for recreation and tourism and mainly on the beaches as well as the piers from where fishing vessels operate. Whilst the more sheltered Trawbreaga Bay is used for aquaculture.
- **Land-** Coastal agriculture is the primary land use with areas of scattered forestry. a number of caravan parks are also located on the coast outside Clonmany at Tullagh Bay, and holiday home developments for the most part is dispersed and are of a scale and design that it sits well along side residential properties. There is an element of Plantation estate landscape of Malin Hall, Malin Town Tirnaleague Demesne and Dresden Demesne spread along the coast. There are also quarries dotted throughout this seascape unit and areas of worked bog.

Biodiversity

- The entire coast line is covered by the larger North Inishowen Coast SAC 002012 which stretches around the coastline of Inishowen. It is of high conservation value because of the extensive area of relatively unspoilt coastal and heath habitats and the range of plant and animal species that these habitats support. There are excellent examples of two E.U. Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitats for both fixed dunes and machair. There are also examples of several other Annex I habitats in this area such as sea cliffs, vegetated shingle banks, dry heath and intertidal sand and mudflats. There are two legally protected plant species and a range of scarce species. The diversity of bird species is of particular note, with wintering waterfowl, breeding seabirds and breeding waders. Important populations of the Barnacle Goose, Peregrine and Chough use this seascape unit.
- There is also a small area designated as its own SPA 004146 at Malin Head which is specifically for the protection of the Corncrake.
- Trawbreaga Bay SPA covers the entire bay. It is the most northerly wetland in Ireland and has extensive intertidal sand and mud flats. This area is of international ornithological importance owing to the Barnacle and Brent Goose populations and is also designated as a Wildfowl Sanctuary. The bay is mostly surrounded by agricultural land of low to moderate intensity. An estimated 80% of the bay area empties at low tide to expose a mixture of mudflats, sandbanks and stony and rocky substrates. The intertidal flats provide the main feeding area for the majority of wintering waterfowl.
- Otters are regularly seen along the shoreline and may breed within the site. The tiny whorl snail *Vertigo Angustior* can also be found on the large sand dunes at Lagg.

Cultural influences

- Evidence of Clachans and the Rundale system of farming in this rural landscape.
- Important multiple examples of Mesolithic rock art on Doagh Island.
- Doagh Island Famine Village is a tourism enterprise which portrays life in Ireland from the 1840s until the present day.
- Carrickbracky castle on a rocky outcrop on the shore of the Isle of Doagh, an O' Doherty Castle', one of five in Inishowen, dating from the 16th century, is of historical, architectural and cultural importance.
- Saint Patrick's high cross in Carndonagh date back from the 7th century, one of many early Christian monuments in the area.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility-** This area is accessed from the regional road R242 to the east and the R238 for most part to the west. A series of county roads permeate through this area and around Doagh Island, Binnion Mountain and Dunaff Head. One only accessible by foot due to the difficult topography and terrain.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** Designated viewing areas at Malin Head and at points along the coastal road network including panoramic views from Mamore Gap.
- **Key views to land-** The views to land from sea would be intermittent but good over low lands and cliff edge including open undulating landscape at Malin Head. There are spectacular views from the top of Knocknamany over the Five Fingers Strand and from Mamore Gap over Dunaff.



Seascape Unit 6

Lough Swilly



Lough Swilly SCA is one of the largest seascape units in the county extending from Dunaff Head to Fanad Head encompassing all of the entire Lough Swilly. Lough Swilly is a large inland glacial fjord that separates the Inishowen and Fanad peninsulas with granite headlands onto the ocean and predominant geology of quartzite and schist along the shores of the Lough with areas of shale and patches of limestone outside Letterkenny.

Inishowen and Fanad coastlines have strong connecting geological landscapes that link across Lough Swilly such as the Knockalla Fault that runs southwest northeast across Fanad and Inishowen's Urris Hills.

The Swilly coastline boasts a diverse landform and can be divided into three distinct areas consisting of the Fanad Peninsula on the west, the Inishowen Peninsula on the east and the low-lying agricultural land around Letterkenny to the south. The area has dramatic sea cliffs at Fanad Head, Inishowen's Urris Hills and neat low-lying fertile agricultural lands in the south.



The northern coastline of the Lough is characterised by sea caves, and sea stacks punctuated by rocky and sandy coves. The lands below Buncrana towards Letterkenny (excluding Inch Island) are mostly low-lying and fall to a soft silt shoreline continuing north along the western shore of the Lough towards Rathmullan. A large area of

reclaimed farmland is within the southern portion of the Swilly and an extensive foreshore to the south of Inch Island was reclaimed into agricultural land in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The settlements of Bunrana, Burt, Manorcunningham, Newtoncunningham, Letterkenny, Ramelton, Rathmullan and Portsalon fall within this area.

The Wild Atlantic Way follows the coast around the entire unit and there are 6 discovery points at Mamore Gap, Dunree Head, Lisfanon Beach, Inch Island, Ballymastocker Strand and the signature discovery Point at Fanad Head. In addition, part of the Inishowen 100 coastal drive and the Fanad Drive run through this area.

Landscape Character Types

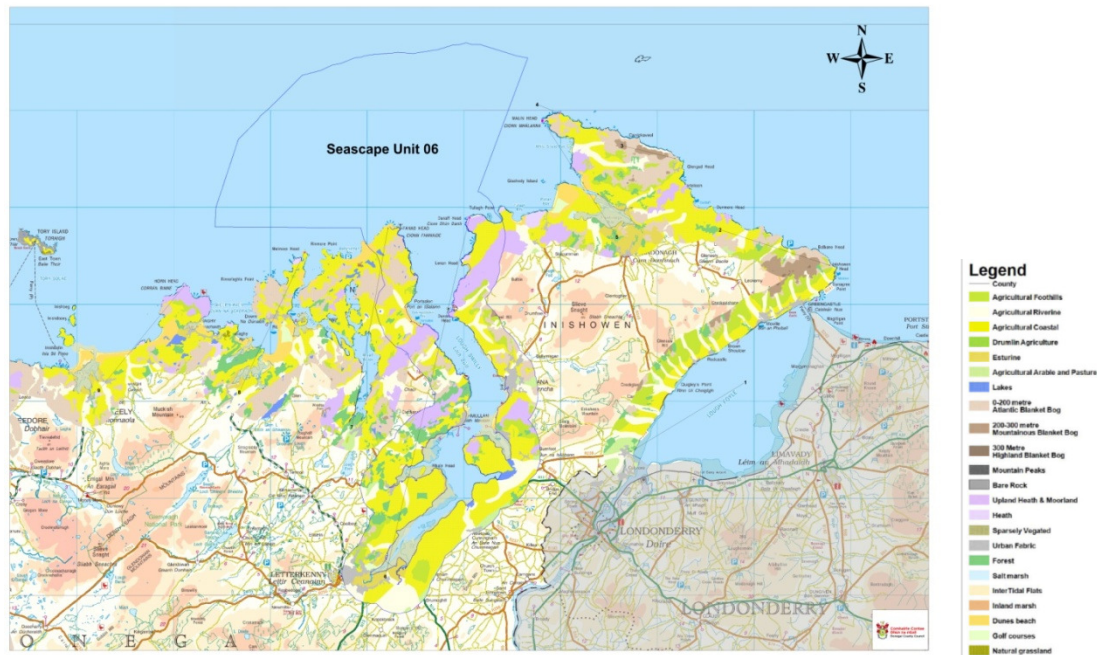


Figure 2.6: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- This long inland Seascape Unit overlaps with eleven Landscape Character Areas of: Dunaff Coast LCA2, Urris LCA4, Bunrana Coast LCA8, South Inishowen Farmland LCA10, Grianan Slopes and Lowlands LCA11, Lagan Valley LCA12, Cark Mountain Uplands LCA16, Letterkenny Estuary and Farmland LCA15, Ramelton Swilly Coast LCA19, South Fanad Uplands & Coast LCA20 and Fanad Coast & Lakes LCA21.

Key Characteristics

- Coastal Land cover-** In the north of the seascape unit coastal agricultural land containing areas of commonage within elevated heath and bog. The coastal edge contains scrub and forestry and there are areas of woodland including ancient woodlands. Bunrana, Fahan and Rathmullan are adjacent to sandy beaches and

dunes systems. Land cover in the south of the seascape unit is predominantly fertile agricultural land and the settlements of Letterkenny, Newtoncunningham and Manorcunningham are located here.

- **Intertidal area-** The intertidal area varies greatly along this seascape unit. The north is characterised by high vegetated sea cliffs with rocky outcrops punctuated with caves, small stony bays and a few sandy beaches. The south of the unit consists of both sand and mudflats which are edged in part by salt marsh, salt meadows and areas of spartina and areas of intertidal peat on the foreshore north of Rathmullan.
- **Characteristics of sea-** The Lough is tidal with a deep channel and strong currents. The mouth of the Lough north of Portsalon is open to the Atlantic Ocean where as further south is sheltered past Buncrana and Inch Island to towards Letterkenny.
- **Hinterland landform and land cover-**The diverse hinterland landform consists of mountainous areas to the north transected by river valleys and undulating lower-lying lands. The predominant land cover in the north is bog and heath with patches of agricultural land and forestry and the landform to the south is generally low-lying fertile agricultural land with higher bog covered mountains in the distance and large conifer forest plantations. There are further smaller settlements located within the wider hinterland generally found in the agricultural landscape to the south.
- **Inter-visibility-** Limited inter-visibility with other seascape units from this inverted seascape unit. There is however some inter-visibility along the north coast of Seascape Unit 5 and Seascape Unit 4 to the east and with Seascape Unit 7, Seascape Unit 8 and Seascape Unit 9 to the west.
- **Lighting-** There are 3 lighthouses at Fanad Head, Dunree Head and Buncrana. Light emanates from the settlements within this area and in particular from the large low density towns of Letterkenny and Buncrana that spill into the rural surrounds. The dispersed rural dwelling pattern and the National Primary road network would also illuminate this area at night. There are areas within this seascape unit that would receive little light most notably the elevated areas to the north of the unit at Dunaff Head, Fanad Head, Knockalla and Urris Hills.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** Agricultural and farming uses are dominant in this unit and this scenic coast together with its history contributes to and generates an important tourism industry. A plethora of piers are scattered along the coast including those that facilitate the seasonal Buncrana and Rathmullan ferry. The RNLI lifeboat and slipway are just north of Buncrana at Ned's Point. A large marina is located at the beach at Fahan where ancillary facilities and amenities are also located.

Lisfannon and Portsalon are blue flag beaches and Rathmullan has received a Green Coast award. Bird watching, walking and cycling are popular activities along this coast.

- **Sea-** Lough Swilly is in constant use for fishing, game angling, aquaculture, sailing and swimming. There are Aquaculture licences in the Lough for Bottom Mussel, Gigas Oyster, Osters, Rope Mussel and Salmon and this has grown dramatically over the last 50 years. Covered and uncovered Salmon Cages are visible along the Lough. There are commercial fishing boats in these waters and Rathmullan is an important deep water port in this area. Sailing and boating are popular along the Lough and there is a yacht club in Fahan. Water sports are another popular activity; there is a sub aqua

club at Sheephaven. There a number of ship wrecks in the waters of this seascape unit.

- **Land-** Coastal agricultural is a dominant LCT in this unit. There is a scatter of rural dwellings in the area and the coastal settlements of Bunrana, Fahan Letterkenny, Ramelton and Rathmullan. There are tourist routes including Inishowen 100, Fanad Drive and the Wild Atlantic Way. This area has a high percentage of Coastal forested areas.

Biodiversity

- SAC and SPA with over 2/3 of this seascape unit are designated.
- Lough Swilly 004075 SPA comprises the inner part of Lough Swilly from east of Letterkenny northwards to Killygarvan (c. 2 km north of Rathmullan) on the west side and to c. 2 km south of Bunrana on the east side; it includes the adjacent Inch Lough. Also forming part of the site is a series of improved pasture and arable fields on the south of Lough Swilly between Farsetmore and Inch Levels which are of importance to geese and swans. It includes sections of the estuaries of the River Swilly, the River Leannan and the Isle Burn and the predominant habitat is a series of extensive sand and mud flats which are exposed at low tide - both estuaries and sand/mud flats are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Other habitats represented in the site are salt marshes, lagoons (at Inch Lough and Blanket Nook), rivers and streams, sand and shingle beaches, lowland wet and dry grasslands, drainage ditches, reed beds and scrub. Inch Lough, whilst artificial in origin, is one of the largest and best examples of a shallow, low salinity lagoon in the country and there is a small sandy island, used by nesting terns, swans and gulls, which occurs in the southern part of the lagoon.
- Lough Swilly SPA 004075 is of major ornithological importance for wintering water birds, with three species occurring in numbers of international importance and 18 occurring regularly in numbers of national importance. The site is regularly used by more than 20,000 waterfowl.
- Lough Swilly SAC 002287 extends from below Letterkenny to north of Bunrana. The site is estuarine in character, with shallow water and intertidal sand and mudflats being the dominant habitats. This site is of conservation importance as it contains good examples of estuaries, lagoons, Atlantic salt meadows and old oak woods and supports a population of Otter. It is of high ornithological importance for wintering waterfowl.
- Fanad SPA 004194 comprises a number of separate sections of the north Co. Donegal coastline stretching some 70 km eastwards from Dooros Point, south-west of Horn Head to just south of Saldanha Head, south of Fanad Head. The site includes the high coast areas and sea cliffs, as well as the land adjacent to the cliff edge (inland for 300 m)
- Ballyhoorisky Point to Fanad Head SAC 00197 is a large coastal site that lies approximately 20 km north of Millford in north Donegal. Vegetated sea-cliffs are well represented at the site and are best developed to the south of Fanad Head where they reach a maximum height of 120 m. Shannagh Lough is also an important example of a lowland oligotrophic lake of sandy plains in an extreme northern location. This site is of ecological and conservation importance for the occurrence of examples of four habitat types that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and for the large populations of several bird species that use it.

- North Inishowen Coast SAC 002021 stretches from Crummies Bay in the west up to Malin Head and back down to Inishowen Head to the east. It encompasses an excellent variety of coastal habitats including high rocky cliffs, offshore islands, sand dunes, salt marsh, a large intertidal bay, and rocky, shingle and sand beaches. Sea cliffs are a feature of the site, with the best examples found in the west of the site (Dunree to Leenan Head and Dunaff Head). In many parts of the site sea cliff areas support dry heath and grassland vegetation. Shingle beaches are well represented at the site, with the best examples at Rockstown harbour/Tullagh Point. Significant areas of dry heath occur in the site at both low and high altitudes. The site is also used by Otter, Frog and the Irish Hare.
- There are three salmon fisheries in this seascape unit and basking sharks have regularly been noted in this area.

Cultural influences

- This area is an important historic seascape; it has a rich naval history with a plethora of ship wrecks including the wreck of the SS Laurentic, sunk by a German mine in 1917 situated outside the mouth of the Swilly, and the wreck of a Royal Navy Frigate, HMS Saldanha which was sunk in 1811 during a Gale.
- There are three archaeological complexes within this unit including Rathmullan 53.51 acres, Ramelton 28.13 acres and Ballybegley 15.48 acres.
- This area has a rich military history evident in the landscape today as forts and signals towers located along the coast line. The flight of the earls in 1607 from Rathmullan is an important historical cultural event within this area.
- There is a number of estate landscapes located on good agricultural land around the Swilly Coast.

Visual and Sensory qualities

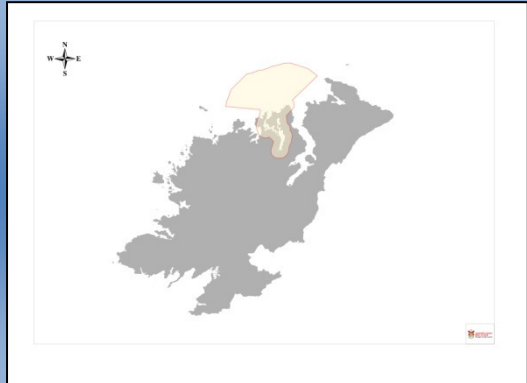
- **Accessibility-** The R238, R245 and R247 and the National N13 roads serve the south of the unit whilst a network of local roads permeate the remaining seascape unit. There are a few elevated areas in the north including Dunaff Head, Lennan Head and Urris Hills and along sections of Fanad Head and Inch Island that are only accessible on foot.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** The east and west coasts of the Swilly overlook each other and informs the end view; the topography is such that there are key points within. This unit from where panoramic views can be seen over the sea and land within this seascape unit and others further east and west.
- **Key views to land-** There are panoramic views of large sections of the coastline from the Inishowen and Fanad Coastal roads and also from Mamore Gap over Dunaff Head and looking south at Mamore Gap towards Bulbin.



Seascape Unit 7

Fanad

Gaeltacht



Fanad SCA is a long coastal edge that extends along the North of Fanad and West in and around Mulroy Bay and Broadwater the eastern and northerly shore of Rosguil Peninsula.

Characterised by rocky, rugged headlands long the north Atlantic Coast and the low lying silty edge in around Mulroy Bay. Previously these two peninsulas were physically separated but the opening of the 'Harry Blaney Bridge' (the longest in Donegal) in 2009 has created a direct link across the bay, and is a striking and dominant feature in this otherwise rural landscape.

Coastal aquaculture covers large areas of this coast crossed by rivers running through riverine agricultural lands of quality. There are notable sand dune systems as the Rosguill Peninsula and deciduous woodlands south of Mulroy Bay. The settlements of Kerrykeel and Milford are on the east of Mulroy Bay and Carrigart and Downings as Rosguill Peninsula to the west.

This area has a strong tourism and leisure focus and the Wild Atlantic Way skirts around it following the county road network, Fanad Drive and the Atlantic Drive, a looped tourist scenic road around Rosguill Peninsula. There are five discovery points on the WAW.

Landscape Character Types

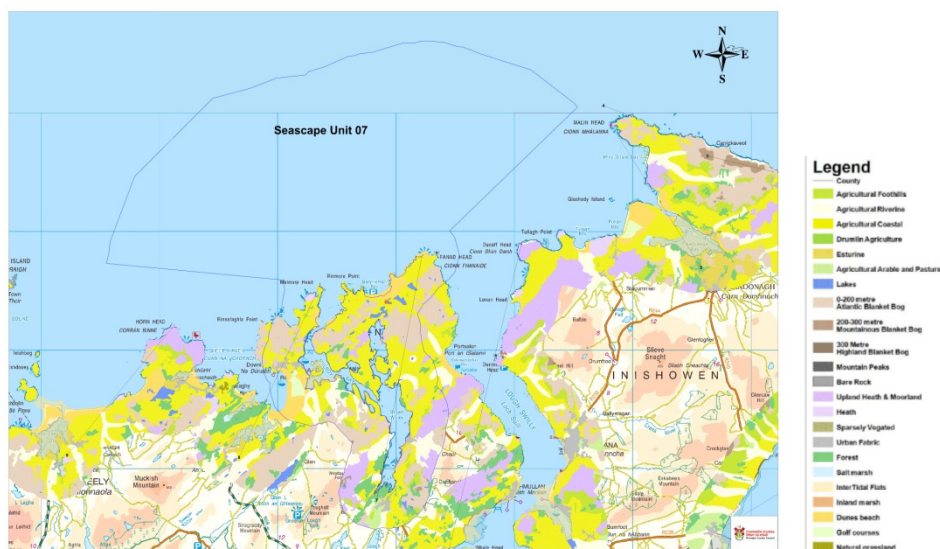


Figure 2.7: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Fanad seascape Unit 7 overlaps a substantial area of Fanad Coast and Lakes LCA21 , Rossguill Peninsula LCA22, and part of Lough Fern LCA18. There is minor overlaps with Glen Lough Uplands LCA24 Ramelton Swilly Coast LCA19 and South Fanad Uplands and Coast LCA20.

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Landcover-** Coastal landcover consists mainly of low-lying agricultural land around the coast, Mulroy Bay and Broadwater together with intermittent sections of elevated bog land mainly to the north and centre of the unit. There are a string of lakes adjacent to the dunes north Fanad and forestry and woodland along Mulroy Bay.
- **Intertidal area-** The north of Fanad is characterised by magnificent rocky outcrops, cliffs and textured stony beaches. There is a significant sandy beach at Ballyhieman Bay and a collection of sandy beaches and rocky outcrops along the eastern peninsula of Fanad. Rosguill's intertidal area rotates between a mixture of cliffs, rocky outcrops and sandy beaches. The intertidal area of Mulroy Bay is predominantly sand with outcrops to the northern mouth of the inlet, the intertidal area changes as it winds through the landscape to mudflat and stony water edges with pockets of marsh.
- **Characteristics of sea-** The northern coast is open and exposed to the rough Atlantic Ocean and Melmore Head and along the Fanad peninsula becoming more sheltered along Mulroy Bay and into the Broadwater.
- **Hinterland landform and landcover-** Bog and heath covered mountains and uplands form a backdrop to north of this seascape unit with patches of forestry and agricultural land to the south.
- **Inter-visibility-** There is a considerable degree of inter-visibility between this seascape unit and also the adjacent seascape units of Lough Swilly Seascape Unit 6, Seascape Unit 5, Banba's Crown Seascape Unit 4 and a small section of Seascape Unit 4 and Seascape Unit 3.
- **Lighting-** The iconic Fanad Lighthouse sits at the edge of this seascape unit north of Fanad. There are also some areas of concentrated light in the coastal settlements of Downings, Carrigart, Milford and Kerrykeel. However generally there is a widely dispersed settlement pattern throughout this seascape unit which gives a degree of lighting all over this area with only a restricted number of elevated bog and sand dunes that would have relatively little or no light.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** Strong tourism and coastal recreational use of the beaches and sand dunes and also golf courses and caravan parks.
- **Sea-** There is a major fishing industry within this area which is serviced by 11 piers. Mulroy Bay is one of the main areas for aquaculture in Donegal, particularly salmon farming and is important for scallop spat collection. One of the oldest salmon farms

in Ireland, Fanad Fisheries, has its headquarters located on the northern shore of the North Water. This area is also popular for recreational fishing. Mulroy Bridge opened in 2009 and spans Mulroy Bay connecting the northern end of Fanad peninsula onto the west of Donegal. It is the longest bridge in Donegal.

- **Land-** There is mainly an agricultural use concentrated around both Mulroy Bay and Broad Water together with intermittent agricultural areas along the coast. There is a dispersed settlement pattern with a percentage of holiday homes particularly concentrated in the Rosguill area. There are also high concentrations of caravan parks in the Downings, two to the north and east of Fanad and one in the fishing village of Kerrykeel. Kilmacrennan is the main settlement in the area supported by villages of Carrigart, Kerrykeel and Downings. There is a quarry in this area and section of forestry plantations are situated around the estuary.

Biodiversity

- The entire coast line of this seascape unit including Mulroy Bay and Broad Water are designated as SAC's. A large amount of Annex 1 habitats such as coastal vegetated sea cliffs, stony banks, dunes and oligotrophic waters within the SAC's contain Annex II species such as the otter, grey seal and Irish hare. Mulroy Bay is protected for the otter and the White-Clawed Crayfish and the Leannan River has Annex II species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon and the Slender Naiad.
- There are multiple SPA's designations within this seascape unit, most of Rosguill and Fanad peninsulas are protected for sea birds and some inland SPA's are designated for wetland and water birds.

Cultural influences

- North Fanad, all of Rosguill and an area adjacent Carrigart are within the Donegal Gaeltacht.
- Strong fishing culture within this area.
- Clachans remain in the north of the seascape unit.
- Carrigart was originally a cluster settlement 'improved' as an estate village, as part of lands owned by Lord Leitrim that also included the fertile garicultural lands in the hinterland of Carrigart.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility-** This area is accessed by a number of regional roads that feed a network of county roads providing good permeability throughout the area.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** The views to sea vary greatly throughout the seascape unit, there are long distance views over the Atlantic from north Fanad and Rosguill. There is a strong visual coastal connection between each peninsula and long distance views across the Inishowen coast, Ballyhieman bay and Island Roy.
- **Key views to land-** Views to land from the sea to the north consist mainly of cliffs and outcrops and views to land from Mulroy Bay is of low-lying alluvial agricultural land.



Seascape Unit 8 Sheephaven Bay Gaeltacht



Sheephaven Bay SCA stretches from Melmore Head in Rosguill to Hornhead two prominent and rugged peninsulas which slope down to a generally low-lying coastal landscape centred around Sheephaven Bay. Sheephaven Bay is open to the Atlantic and characterised by long stretches of curved sandy blue flag beaches at Dunfanaghy, Marble Hill and Downings and long winding sandy estuaries at Dunfanaghy, the Back Strand, Ards Strand, and Doe Castle Strand, which sit among rocky quartzite edges.

Ards forest park, home to Ards Friary, sits on the middle of three promontories that extend into Sheephaven Bay, it is an area in deciduous woodland in contrast to the adjoining 2 promontories that are devoid of vegetation.

Doe castle is located on the shores of the Bay, dating from the 16th century; the castle is an iconic and historic feature on these shores and is one of many important historical structures and sites along this coast.

The settlements of Downings, Caaickart, Creslough, Dunfanaghy and Portnablagh are dotted around this unit and all are on the Wild Atlantic Way that skirts this area.

Tory Island falls within this (and other) seascape units and is visible from many locations within this area, forming an identifiable and focal landmark on the sea view.

Landscape Character Types

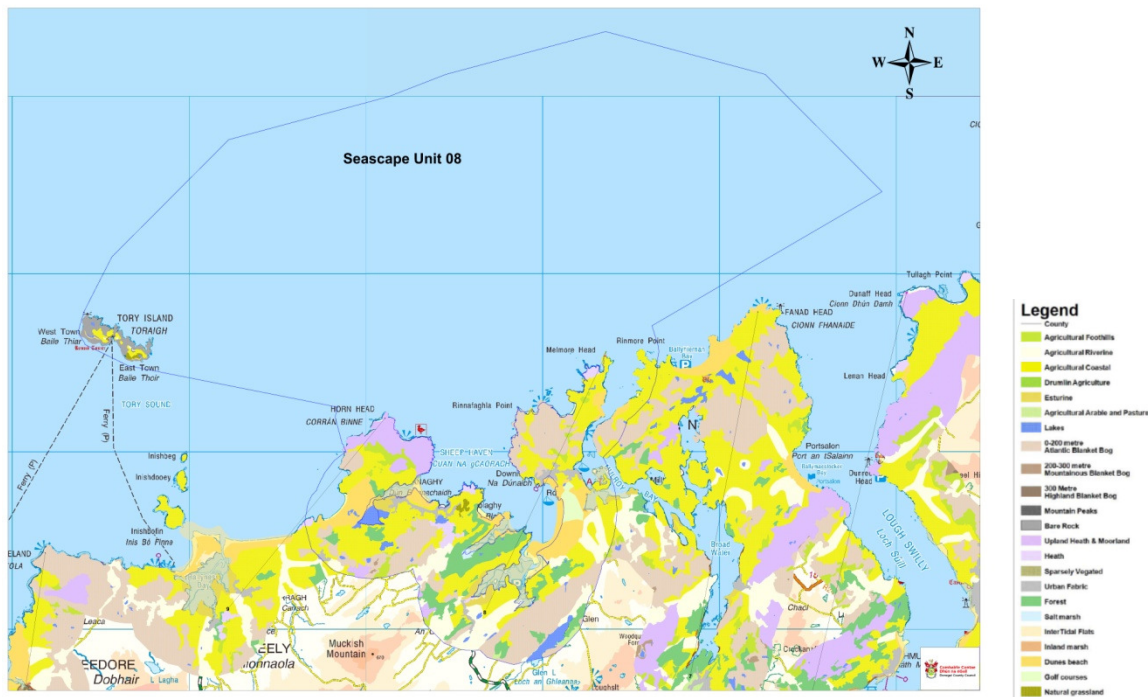


Figure 2.8: Map of LCTs within this seascope unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascope Unit 8 covers most of a majority of the Rosguill Peninsula LCA22 a small section of the western side of Fanad Coast and Lakes LCA21, almost half of the Glen Lough Uplands LCA24, most of Ards Coast LCA23 and overlaps a small eastern section of Tory Sound LCA26.

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Landcover-** Figure 2.8 illustrates the complexity and range of LCT's in this area including woodland, beaches, dunes, bog and salt marsh.
- **Intertidal area-** The intertidal area in Sheephaven Bay mainly consists of long sandy beaches and that integrate with winding estuaries at Ards, Doe Castle and a salt marsh at Ards.
- **Characteristics of sea-** The north of Horn Head and Rosguill are exposed to the full force of the strong Atlantic Ocean whilst Sheephaven Bay offers a degree of shelter in the north at Dunfunaghy and further south a series of branched inlets are more sheltered.
- **Hinterland landform and landcover-** The granite Derryveagh Mountains are south of this area inland from coast and Muckish Mountain provides a back drop to most of this area.

- **Inter-visibility-** There is a good degree of inter-visibility within this Seascape Unit between Horn Head and Rosguill peninsulas and includes almost the whole of Tory Sound Seascape Unit 9 and a small section of Gweedore Bay Seascape Unit 10 from the Hornhead peninsula. It also overlaps with almost half of Fanad Seascape Unit 7, part of Lough Swilly Seascape Unit 6 and a small section of Trawbeaga Bay Seascape Unit 5.
- **Lighting-** The dispersed rural settlement pattern throughout this seascape and the coastal settlements emanate light. There are lighted navigation beacons throughout the bay to guide water crafts.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** The Sheephaven coastline with its long sandy shores boasts three blue flag beaches and its estuaries facilitate many recreational pursuits such as walking, horse riding, surfing, fishing and golf. There is also coastal agricultural land use and the recreational use of Ards Forest Park. There are various residential uses such as hotels, residential properties and caravans.
- **Sea-** There are four piers in this area used for recreational and small scale commercial fishing. In addition, there are multiple caves and sea arches and recreational pursuits such as scuba diving, surfing and snorkling are pursued in this area especially around Portnablagh. The coastguards are located in this seascape unit in Rosnapenna peninsula.
- **Land-** This working agricultural landscape has a dispersed scatter of residential dwellings along the coastline including a percentage of holiday homes and caravans concentrated within the Dunfanaghy, Portnablagh and Downings areas. This area has a host of recreational amenities including the large Ards Forest Park, popular golf courses at Dunfanaghy and Downings and walking and cycling are also popular in this area with a number of marked walking routes. This area is well known for its quarries especially its distinctive stone slate quarries.

Biodiversity

- The diverse coastline provides a swathe of habitats for protected species and sections of this area are designated SPA and SAC.
- Horn Head to Fanad Head SPA is of special conservation interest for the following species: Chough, Peregrine, Fulmar, Cormorant, Shag, Kittiwake, Guillemot, Razorbill, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Barnacle Goose. The site is also of special conservation interest for holding an assemblage of over 20,000 breeding seabirds and also wetland & water bird located at New Lake adjacent Dunfanaghy. The Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA are also of special conservation interest for the Red-throated Diver, Merlin, Peregrine, Golden Plover and Dunlin.
- Tranarossan and Melmore Lough provides the important Annex I Habitats of mudflats, sandflats, stony banks, vegetated sea cliffs, machairs and dunes. The Horn Head and Rinclevan coastal area is a diverse coastal site containing a wide range of habitats from high rocky quartzite cliffs in the north to mud flats, sand flats, dunes and a brackish lake in the south. Lough Nagreany Dunes comprises a complex of sand dune habitats, including dune heath and machair.
- A Freshwater pearl mussel catchment is adjacent to this area.
- Seals, whales and dolphins are regularly spotted within the seascape unit.
- Duntally wood in Creeslough is designated as a nature reserve and is a habitat for otters.

Cultural influences

- The seascape unit is one of the safest anchorages on the northwest Irish coast and has a rich maritime cultural heritage.
- An area on Hornhead is located within the Gaeltacht.
- There are many cultural archaeological sites within this area including the crannog in Sessiagh Lough, Doe Castle, the workhouse in Dunfanaghy and Ards Friary.

Visual and Sensory qualities

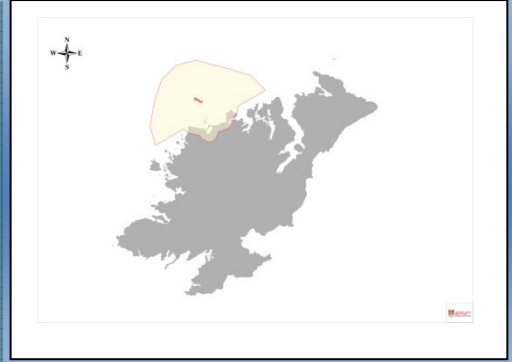
- **Accessibility-** There is good degree of accessibility throughout this seascape unit by the N56, the R248 and a network of county roads that branch from these. West of Horn Head and the area adjacent to Tromore beach is more difficult to access.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** Unobstructed ocean views from Rosguill and Horn Head peninsulas are of the open Atlantic Ocean, and of Tory Island, Inishbofin and Inisdooney from the western area of Horn Head. The views around Sheephaven Bay are more sheltered with some framed views of the Atlantic Ocean to the north of the bay. There are varying coastal views across Sheephaven Bay of open stretches of sandy beaches, coastal woodland and limited views along coastal estuaries. Doe Castle and Marble Hill Beach are also key viewing points from which to view to the sea and coast.
- **Key views to land-** Excellent inter-visibility across the bay between the headlands of Horn Head and Rosguill as the land generally slopes from the bay inland over variety of landcover to higher upland ground and mountains. Recreational and commercial fishing vessels would have inland views of a considerable distance over the low shore towards the uplands and mountains in the distance



Seascape Unit 9

Tory Sound

Gaeltacht



Tory Sound SCA extends west from the elevated promontory of Horn Head along the indented and complex coastline towards the bog headland of Ranaghroe Point at Bloody Foreland, and seawards into the Atlantic Ocean claiming the islands of Inishbofin, Inishdooney, Inishbeg and Tory that preside over the seascape.

The Derryveagh Mountains to the south overlook this area and inform many of the landward views, this is also where the many rivers and streams rise before flowing north towards the ocean through fertile agricultural valleys, the rivers Owentully, Gleanna and Tullaghobegley converge on the large, shallow estuarine inlet of Ballyness Bay in the centre of this seascape unit. This estuary complex has extensive areas of sandflats exposed at low tide and is sheltered from the ocean by two large sand dune spits, the western edge is the long curved sandy beach of Magheroarty and to the east Falcarragh.

The west of this seascape unit is dominated by an open and elevated bog landscape with a distinctive shoreline of gravel beaches.

This entire seascape unit is associated with An Gaeltacht and has considerable cultural and social qualities.

Landscape Character Types

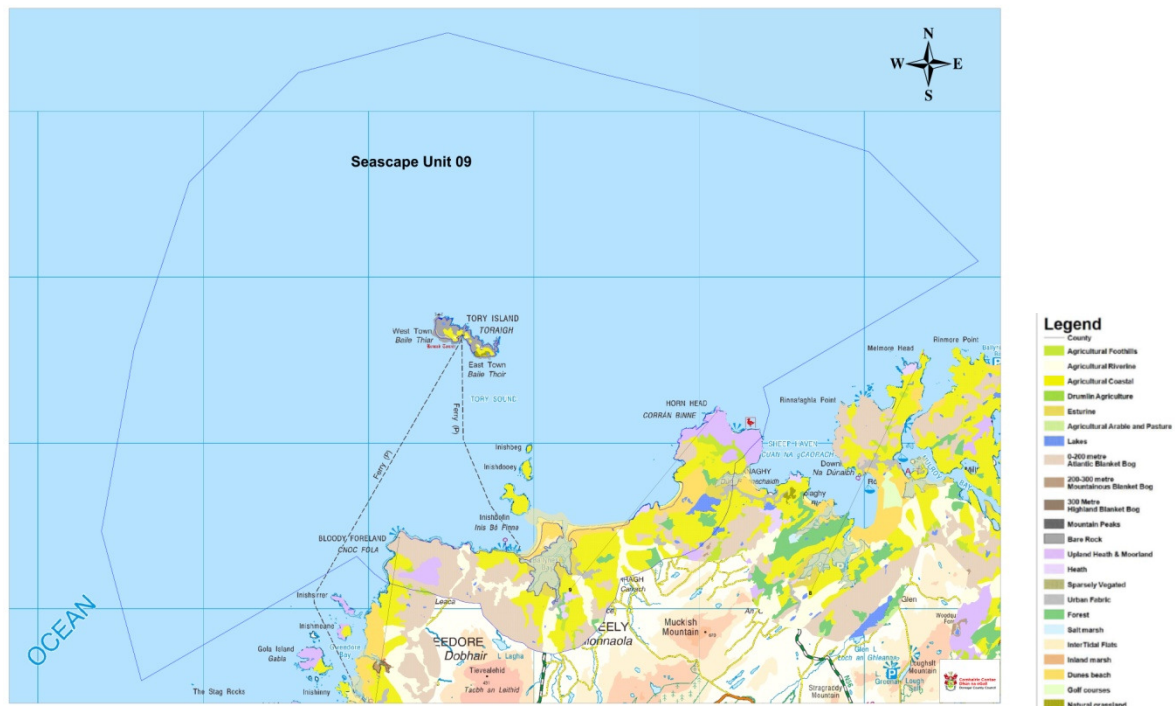


Figure 2.9: Map of LCTs within this seascope unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascope Unit 9 overlaps with almost half of Tory Sound LCA26 and the northern section of Bloody Foreland Uplands and coast LCA27

Key Characteristics

- Coastal Land cover-** This seascope unit has a varied landscape cover ranging from elevated worked bog in the mountainous west dotted with patches of poorer agricultural land, low-lying improved agricultural land around Gortahork and Falcarragh and heath and bog at Hornhead. Three long sandy beaches and significant dune systems edge most of the coast and a few lowland and upland lakes are situated inland to the east. There are also small isolated pockets of forestry within this area. The landscape has a distinctive extensive of cut bog cut in straight lines throughout the seascope unit.
- Intertidal area-** the dramatic and varied intertidal area includes high and low cliffs, long sandy beaches and spits, the large shallow tidal estuary of Ballyness Bay, and long distinctive gravel beaches.

Characteristics of sea- The seascope within this area is dominated by the islands of Tory, Inishbofin, Inishdooney and Inishbeg. Open to the Atlantic, there is a wild and rough aspect to the sea from the mainland with the islands providing both a degree of enclosure and contributing to a distinctive horizon.

- **Hinterland landform and landcover-** To south and eastern hinterland is predominantly low-lying agricultural land framed by the elevated Derryveagh Mountains, Muckish and to the west by elevated Atlantic blanket bog.
- **Inter-visibility-** There is a considerable degree of inter-visibility within this seascape unit in particular from land to sea and islands and vice versa. Views across Ballyness Bay are extensive and complex as are views from locations throughout this unit. There is inter-visibility from the east of Horn Head to almost all of Seascape Unit 8, the north of Seascape Unit 7, Seascape Unit 5 and Seascape Unit 4.
- **Lighting-** Tory lighthouse is an important and iconic structure on the high cliff edged island of Tory that otherwise would have clusters of light at An Baile Thoir and An Baile Thiar amongst an otherwise dark sea.
- A highly dispersed settlement pattern along the centre and east of seascape unit results in a proliferation of light. The small undeveloped elevated bog areas to the west of Bloody Foreland and on Horn head less so save on isolated points.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** The sandy beaches and dunes to the east are used for a variety of recreational uses including walking and climbing. This area has a large percentage of coastal agricultural land dotted with residential and holiday home properties. A section of the coast to the west is not easily accessible.
- **Sea-** A ferry service at Maharoarty services the inhabited Tory Island, sea fishing for commercial and recreational purposes in this area as well as a strong tourism and recreational use including swimming and sailing among others.
- **Land-** Mainly coastal agricultural use in the centre and east of the seascape unit around Gortahork, Falcarragh and Horn Head, large patterned areas of worked bog to the west at Bloody Foreland, and a number of quarries including a large quarry outside Falcarragh. There is a dispersed scatter of residential properties along the coast including a number of holiday homes.

Biodiversity

- This unit has a high biodiversity value with many protected habitats and species, most of the coastline is designated as SAC and areas of Horn Head, Ballyness Bay and the off shore Islands are designated SPA.
- Horn Head to Fanad Head SPA (004194) covers areas around Horn Head together with dunes and the 'New Lake' of importance for waterfowl. There are also smaller pockets of SPA around Ballyness Bay covered by the Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA (004149), specifically designated for the Corncrake. The entire Islands of Inishboffin, Inishdooney are covered by Islands SPA (004083) for Barnacle Goose, Corncrake, Common Gull and the Artic Tern and on Tory Island SPA (004083) for the Corncrake, Razorbill, Fulmur, Black-Headed Gull, Common Gull and Puffin.
- Horn Head Rinclevan SAC (000147) covers Ballyness Bay, Falcarragh and Hornhead. It is a diverse coastal site containing a wide range of habitats from high rocky quartzite cliffs in the north to mud flats, sand flats, dunes and a brackish lake in the south. It is selected for a variety of important different types of dune systems and Machairs and also contains species such as the Whorl Snail and the Grey Seal and important plants including the petalwort and the slender Naiad.

- Ballyness Bay SAC (001090) contains several important coastal habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, including the priority habitat fixed dunes. The site is also an important for wildfowl including the Ringed Plover, Brent Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, Golden Plover, Wigeon, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Sanderling and Greenshank. The populations of Ringed Plover and Sanderling are of national importance. The Golden Plover, Lapwing and Chough have also been noted in this area. The area also contains the rare Whorl Snail.
- Tory Island Coast SAC (002259) is of conservation interest for its range of coastal and marine habitats, particularly for its important lagoon, sea cliffs, boulder beaches, submarine reefs and also important for sea breeding colonies. The Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC (0001141) contain Annex 1 habitats such as coastal lagoons, reefs, stony banks, salt meadows and sand dunes, Machair, oligotrophic waters, heaths and grasslands.

Cultural influences

- This unit is strongly rooted within the Donegal Gaeltacht.
- A deep association with fishing, the area is served by 5 piers on the mainland as well as piers on Inishbofin and Tory. Historically there was a herring fishing industry in this area.
- Tory has a rich cultural history and a community of artists living on the island.
- The legacy of the famine times are still evident in the landscape today in the historic fabric of the workhouses in Falcarragh and Dunfanaghy
- Donegal Railway came to Falcarragh and closed in the 1940's.
- There are a number of Ship wrecks off this seascape unit, off the mainland and islands.

Visual and Sensory qualities

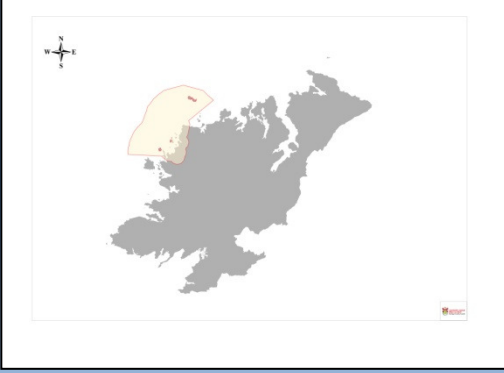
- **Accessibility-** The east of this seascape is served by the N56 to Gortahork and by the coastal regional road R257 to the west that connect a network of county roads throughout the area.
- **Key views to sea and coast-** Views out over the Atlantic from the coastal road at Bloody Foreland to the north are unobstructed and there is a strong visual connection to the Islands. There are key views of the coast and Ballyness Bay from Maharoatry and Ballyness Bay near Falcarragh, all informing this unique coastal landscape.
- **Key views to land-** Key views to land are obtained from the Islands, from the ferry crossing, and from fishing and recreational sea vehicles. The views to land are mainly of low-lying coastal agricultural land which rises towards and is framed by rise and fall of the Derryveagh Mountain Range.



Seascape Unit 10

Gweedore Bay

Gaeltacht



Gweedore Bay SCA extends from Bloody Foreland south-west along an indented and varied hard and soft coast of projections and bays towards Cruit Island, and includes the intrinsically linked islands of Tory, Owey, Inishfree, Innisiny, Gola, Inishmeane and Inisirer that contribute significantly to the character of this area.

The coast is well served by a network of county roads radiating from a coastal regional road that permeate this coastal pastoral, agricultural landscape. The settlement pattern in this Gaeltacht area is scattered and dispersed throughout the rural landscape. Inland Atlantic Bog areas within this unit are peppered with bog lakes, the source of many of the rivers that flow out to Gweedore Bay creating channels through the salt marsh. Much of the sandy coastline forms the fringe of complex dune systems and Machair grassland; Carrickfinn Airport is situated on a long straight tombola at Inishfree Bay.

The area is a popular tourist location based on the strength of the Gaeltacht language and culture and on the unique landscape and seascape and their user; the Wild Atlantic Way follows weaves along the entire coast of this area and there are four 'discovery points' at Cnoc Fola, Bunbeg Harbour, Gola Island and Carrickfinn beach.

Landscape Character Types



Figure 2.10: Map of LCTs within this seascape unit

Landscape Character Areas

Map/list LCAs

- Seascape Unit 10 overlaps half of Bloody Foreland Uplands and Coast LCA27 and a small northern section of The Roses knock and Lochan Islands and Coast LCA28

Key Characteristics

- **Coastal Landcover-** This seascape unit has a varied landcover of sandy beaches, fixed and mobile dune systems and large areas of machair grassland and coastal grassland. Large areas of low-lying worked Atlantic Blanket Bog adjacent to the north coast continue inland behind a narrow band of pastoral grassland along the coast that has a distinctive pattern of stone wall bound small fields woven around knolls of exposed rock. There is a distinctive dispersed settlement along most of the coast, between the settlements of Bunbeg and Derrybeg, and surrounding Annagry and Kincasslagh. There are also areas of dry and wet heath, a section of dense bracken and scrub, and a network of streams and oligotrophic lakes along the coast.
- **Intertidal area-** Exposed sea cliffs to the north transition south into rocky shore lines of boulders, shingle and coarse sand. Small dispersed sections of cliffs along the seascape intercept sandy estuaries and beaches with large areas of mud flats, and intermittent areas of salt marsh. Two lagoons at Kinsalough and Cruit Island inform the uniqueness of this seascape as do the many islets.
- **Characteristics of sea-** The unique seascape in this area is characterised and instantly identifiable by the islands of Tory, Owey, Inishfree, Inisinn, Gola, Inismeane and Inisirrer that merge seamlessly with the mainland coast giving shelter and enclosure to stretches along the coast. Significant reef communities are located in the area.
- **Hinterland landform and landcover-** The area is framed by bog covered Derryveagh Mountain ranges that preside over this generally low lying coast.
- **Inter-visibility-** Intervisibility within this seascape unit is interesting due to the indented coast and nearby islands that inform each other. There is a degree of intervisibility with other seascape units; Tory Island informs this and adjoining seascape unit 9 to the east, and the coast and islands within this unit substantially inform seascape unit 11 to the west.
- **Lighting-** This highly populated coastal fringe produces a trail of light along the coast and only very isolated pockets to the extreme north have some element of darkness. The light houses of Aranmore and Tory and the numerous light buoys and navigation beacons in the water between the islands and shore light up this Atlantic Coast.

Key Uses

- **Coast-** Fishing and related industries are a dominant use in this unit with the main port and coast guard station located in the sheltered Bunbeg Harbour, also the departure for the ferry service to the islands of Tory and Aranmore. Carrickfinn

Airport is located within this seascape unit offering domestic and overseas flights. Recreational uses mainly focused the south of the seascape unit on the coast, Gaeltacht language and culture. A dominant agricultural use of the coastal grasslands is small local farming and pasture.

- **Sea-** Commercial fishing is the primary activity within the seascape unit, served by 13 piers. There are regular ferry services to the larger islands of Tory and Aranmore from this coastline as well as more irregular services to the smaller islands. Popular for recreational sailing with views of the sea cliffs, cliff arches and the island coast.
- **Land-** Coastal Agriculture is a dominant type consisting mostly of grazing an pastoral land; this is interrupted by a dispersed scatter of residential rural development and an element of rural one-off holiday home development. This is a popular tourist area with considerable recreational use of the beaches, golf courses and angling among others. The main settlement of Bunbeg Derrybeg supports a large industrial estate whilst scattered small scale fishing related industries are dotted along this coastline.

Biodiversity

- This area has significant biodiversity value; the entire coastline is designated as SAC whilst pockets of islands and a section of the main coastline is designated as SPA.
- West Donegal SPA 004150 is of special conservation interest for the Chough, Peregrine, Fulmar, Cormorant, Shag, Herring Gull, Kittiwake and Razorbill.
- West Donegal Islands SPA 004230 consist predominantly of grassland and include small areas of dune grassland. Small lakes occur on Inishsirr and Gola. The rocky shorelines have areas of boulders, shingle, coarse sand, and grade into submarine reefs, which are common in the shallow surrounding seas. The islands are uninhabited other than some summer dwellings on Gola and Inishmeane. A small area of the 004039 Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountain SPA extends into this area.
- The Gweedore Bays and Island SAC 001141 is of high ecological value for the occurrence of a wide range of coastal habitats, including areas of well-developed machair, sand dunes and shingle banks. It contains sixteen habitats that are listed, (five with priority status) on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and are therefore of considerable conservation significance. The presence of populations of three E.U. Habitats Directive Annex II species and of several E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species adds significantly to the overall importance of the site.
- The numerous rivers and tributaries that flow through this seascape unit host fertile and ecologically important biodiversity corridors.

Cultural influences

- This seascape unit is located within the Donegal Gaeltacht and has the largest Irish speaking population in Ireland. Hundreds of students from all over Ireland attend summer schools in Colmcille's College.
- This area is rich in Irish culture and customs, and synonymous with many famous writers and musicians.
- HMAS Boniface Cargo vessel was torpedoed and sank off this coast in 1917, one of a number of wrecks in these waters.

Visual and Sensory qualities

- **Accessibility-** The national road N56 serves a network of county roads allowing access to the wider coastal landscape. There is informal sea access to most of the

neighbouring islands whilst the main islands of Tory and Aranmore have daily ferry crossings.

- **Key views to sea and coast-** There are clear uninterrupted views of the open sea along the coastal road to the north, from Bloody Foreland, and from piers and beaches in the area with a few coastal roads having clear views of the sea.

Key views to land- There are long distance views from the islands and sea towards the mainland over the low-lying coast land which is then framed by the Derryveagh Mountain range.