

Appendix 7.2
BirdWatch Ireland and Ramsar Descriptions



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BirdLife IBA Factsheet

IE041 Broadhaven, Blacksod and Tullaghan Bays and parts of the Mullet peninsula

Country/Territory	Ireland
Administrative region(s)	West
Central coordinates	54° 15' North 9° 52' West Map
Area	10852 ha
Altitude	0 - 30m
Criteria	A4i, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C6



Site description A very large coastal complex, next to Belmullet in County Mayo. This site includes the intertidal mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh of several bays as well as parts of the Mullet peninsula and mainland, with machair, lake, marsh and non-intensive farmland. This site is an amalgamation of three sites which were listed as separate IBAs in the previous European inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989): Broadhaven Bay (formerly IE028), Termoncarragh Lake (formerly IE029) and Blacksod Bay (formerly IE033).

Habitats and percentage cover

Coastline	70
Grassland	30

Land-use and percentage cover

agriculture	30
fisheries/aquaculture	20
hunting	70

Birds The bays and other coastal, lake and intertidal habitats support a wide diversity of wintering and breeding birds. In winter, there are internationally important numbers of several waterbirds. In addition, there are nationally important numbers of *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, *Mergus serrator* (43 birds, 1996), *Pluvialis squatarola* (61 birds, 1995), *Charadrius hiaticula*, *Calidris alba* (65 birds, 1995), *Calidris alpina* (2,465 birds, 1996) and *Limosa limosa* (136 birds, 1996).

Species	Season	Year	Min	Max	Quality	Criteria
Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>)	winter	1996	230	780	good	B1i, B2, C2
Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>)	winter	1996	194	277	good	B1i, C3
Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)	winter	1996	107	124	medium	B3
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	winter	1996	37	65	good	A4i, B1i, C2
Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>)	breeding	1996	10	10	good	C6
Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)	winter	1996	241	563	good	B2
Red-necked Phalarope (<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>)	breeding	1966	0	2	good	C6
Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>)	breeding	1995	81	81	good	B2, C6

Protection status **National** None **International** Partial 683 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Blacksod/Broadhaven Bay, 683 ha). 7,493 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Blacksod and Broadhaven Bays, 7,493 ha). 109 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Cross Lough (The Mullet), 109 ha). 377 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Termoncarragh Lake, 377 ha).

Conservation issues Onshore, the site is threatened by overgrazing, increased fencing and increased use of

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fertilizer, while pressure to develop intertidal shellfish cultivation is increasing within the bays. The breeding habitat of *Crex crex*, in particular, is threatened by changes in agricultural practice, with earlier cutting of hay and silage, and the replacement of meadow with sheep-grazing pasture. Farming practices that favour *Crex crex* are being encouraged within the area through a grant scheme. There are plans to attract *Phalaropus lobatus* back to Annagh marsh on the Mullet peninsula, through habitat-restoration measures. A 24 ha reserve owned by BirdWatch Ireland lies within the site. The IBA overlaps with a proposed candidate Special Area for Conservation (Blacksod/Mullet; area not known).

Threats and importance

agricultural intensification/expansion

medium

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Ramsar Description

Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven. *11/06/96*; Mayo; 683 ha; 54°03'N 010°00'W. A composite of diverse marine and coastal habitats that includes vast dune systems and extensive areas of dune grassland with saltmarshes occurring in sheltered bays and inlets. The grasslands are of considerable botanical importance. The site also includes several brackish lakes important to various species of breeding waders, large numbers of wintering waterbirds of various species, and internationally important numbers of Brent geese. Ramsar site no. 844. Most recent RIS information: 1995.