

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT BALLYGILL NORTH, RATHLIN
ISLAND, COUNTY ANTRIM. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area delineated by the solid black line on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Ballygill North area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of the complex pattern of heath and associated habitats, which form a mosaic of vegetation within a varied topography of plateaux and valleys.

The plateaux contain a dry dwarf-heath community on shallow peat soils and are dominated by Ling Calluna vulgaris, Bell Heather Erica cinerea and Western Gorse Ulex gallii. This distinctive type of heath is restricted in its distribution within the British Isles and Rathlin is the most northerly site known for it. Surface depressions have impeded drainage and are covered by a mixture of wet heath, where Cross-leaved Heather Erica tetralix is prominent, and acid grassland with species such as Mat Grass Nardus stricta and Purple Moor Grass Molinia caerulea.

Many of the slopes are flushed by mineral rich waters and are dominated by sedges eg Carnation Sedge Carex panicea, Common Sedge Carex nigra, Common Yellow Sedge Carex demissa and Black Bog-rush Schoenus nigricans. Troughs and valley bottoms contain a range of wetland communities with a large number of wetland species, including Bogbean Menyanthes trifoliata, Bog Pondweed Potamogeton polygonifolius, Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata and Marsh Cinquefoil Potentilla palustris.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and fauna of the area:

1. Any activity which involves the damage or disturbance, by mechanical means or otherwise, of the surface or sub-surface of the land, or of any wild vegetation growing on that land.
2. Any change in the grazing regime, including any change in stock feeding practice.
3. Any application to the surface, sub-surface, or vegetation, of any manure, fertiliser, lime, pesticide, herbicide, fungicide or other chemical.
4. Any change in the practice of burning.
5. Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials or objects.
6. Killing, destruction, damage, displacement or removal of any wild animal or wild plant, save for:-

- i. any birds which are listed in Schedule 2 Part II of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985;
 - ii. any mammals not listed in Schedule 5 of the same Order; and
 - iii. plants listed as noxious weeds in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.
7. The introduction or release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice and control of grazing animals), plant or seed.
 8. Use of vehicles or craft (but excluding farm vehicles and machinery being used in normal farming practices) in a manner likely to damage the vegetation.
 9. Recreational, educational or research activities other than those which have been regularly undertaken in the past.

Sealed with the Official Seal of
The Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 16 September, 1991


R W ROGERS

Assistant Secretary

Lester Boyd
CIVIL SERVANT
ROOM OF STORMONT
BELFAST

BALLYGILL NORTH

Views About Management The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)

A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Ballygill North Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the schedule on pages 1 and 2 of the attached Document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Heathlands are an important habitat for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the heath through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Most heathland communities need some management to retain their interest. Small patches of scrub within heathland are valuable in providing additional habitat niches but, in the absence of management, woody species can quickly take over. On the other hand, too much grazing, especially through the winter, can cause heathers to be replaced by coarse grasses.

Specific objectives include:

Low intensity grazing has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation and extension of this practice.

Ensure that disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent wet heath from drying out.

Prevent the loss of light-demanding heathland species through the control of scrub and bracken. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases other methods of control, such as cutting, may be required.

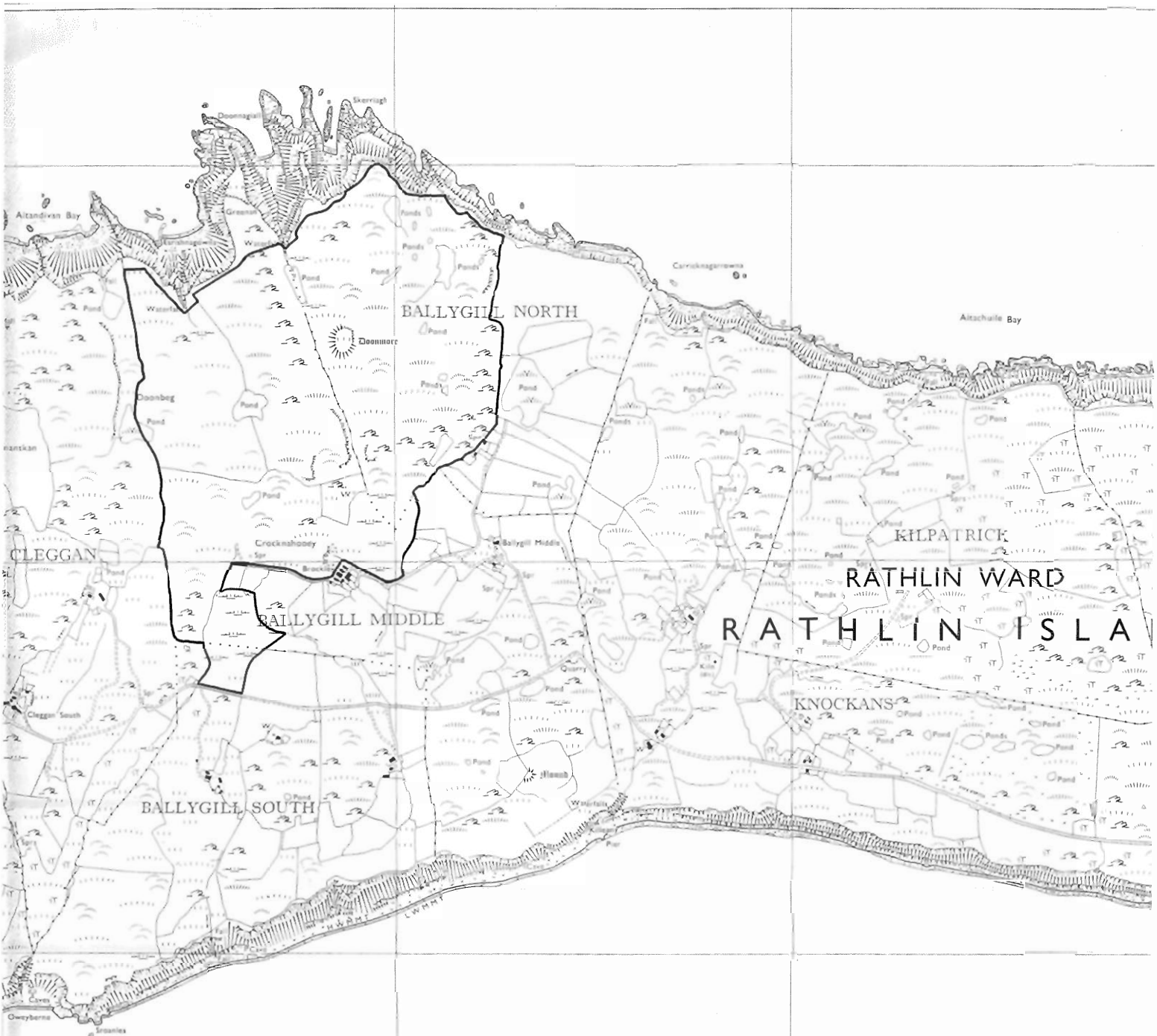
Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the heath, such as bog, scrub and grassland through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.



E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer


Dated the *28TH* of *JANUARY* 2008



NOTE: RATHLIN ISLAND is part of CO ANTRIM
and part of MOYLE LGD

Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland
Ballygill North Area of Special Scientific Interest
Rathlin Island

Map referred to in the
declaration dated 16 September, 1991

Site boundary thus: 
Area of site: 78 ha
Scale: 1:10,000 Sheet No 3
Irish Grid Reference: D118525

District Council Area: Moyle
County: Antrim