

# BANAGHER

## A SPECIAL PLACE...



*Banagher ASSI*

Banagher ASSI is a complex mosaic of wetland communities, within an area of wet grassland centred around a small basin fen with associated swamp. It is situated just Southwest of Ely Lodge, 5 Km Northwest of Enniskillen. Banagher is botanically rich and it is particularly important as it contains the rare and threatened orchid Marsh Helleborine. This species is scarce in Northern Ireland and is restricted to just a handful of sites across the region



*Marsh Helleborine flower*

Marsh Helleborine is our only orchid with purplish-brown and white flowers. It is a plant of lowland marshy ground, is 10 – 40 cm in height and has one-sided flower spikes of between 4 and 20 attractive flowers. At Banagher the population of Marsh Helleborine is frequent, and found locally in a small area of base-rich (rich in alkaline nutrients) wet grassland to the west of the site where up to 100 flowering and non-flowering spikes can usually be seen. Associated species to be found

within Banagher reflect the elevated base (alkaline) status and include Grass-of-Parnassus, Broad-leaved Cottongrass and Yellow Sedge.



*Grass of Parnassus*

Banagher is very botanically rich, and this is a result of the unique range of plant communities being found in such a confined area, resulting in a rich assemblage of species. There is an area of fen meadow present which is characterised by Meadow Thistle, Purple Moor-grass and Devil's-bit Scabious. There is also an area of fen dominated by Bogbean, and swamp dominated by Sedge, where Marsh Cinquefoil and Water Horsetail are common. Cowbane, Greater Spearwort and Fen Pondweed which are much less common in Ireland are also present. The range of vegetation types provides food and shelter for a range of animals including birds and invertebrates.

SITES OF GEOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE HAVE BEEN SURVEYED BY THE ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE SERVICE TO ASSESS THEIR SCIENTIFIC INTEREST. THE BEST SITES ARE NOW BEING DECLARED AS AREAS OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (ASSIs). IN DOING SO WE AIM TO GUARANTEE THE SURVIVAL OF THESE IMPORTANT SITES FOR THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.



*Bogbean*

All of the habitats and species which make Banagher such a special place depend upon the ASSI being kept in good condition. They can only be maintained by sympathetic management. Activities such as drainage, inappropriate stocking rates and the application of fertilisers can damage these sensitive habitats and species. Environment and Heritage Service is keen to work closely with all landowners/occupiers to maintain and enhance Banagher ASSI.





## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

### DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT BANAGHER, COUNTY FERMANAGH. ARTICLE 28 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002.

The Department of the Environment (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area described and delineated 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 “Banagher Area of Special Scientific Interest”.

The area is of special scientific interest as it contains a significant population of the Schedule 8 and Irish Red Data Book species Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*. In addition, the area supports a range of associated semi-natural vegetation types, including wet grassland, fen and swamp, which also contain a number of notable vascular plant species. Banagher is just south west of Ely Lodge, 5 km north west of Enniskillen. It is centred round a small basin fen with swamp, which is largely fed from a spring in the north west corner of the site. There is no obvious outflow.

The population of Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris* is restricted to an area of base-rich flushed grassland in the west of the site. The orchid is frequent here with over 100 flowering and non-flowering spikes usually seen. Associated species here, reflecting the elevated base status, include Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, Broad-leaved Cottongrass *Eriophorum latifolium*, Few-flowered Spike-rush *Eleocharis quinqueflora*, Yellow Sedge *Carex viridula* ssp. *brachyrrhyncha*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum* and Quaking-grass *Briza media*. Down slope this flushed grassland is best described as a fen meadow which is characterised by Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Devil’s-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*. Other orchids in this area include Common Twayblade *Listera ovata*, Early Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*.

The fen and swamp areas of Banagher form a complex mosaic of wetland communities, including a Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata* dominated fen and Sedge *Carex* spp. swamp. A range of species predominate in these areas including Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Marsh Cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris*, Water Horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, Common Sedge *Carex nigra* and Pointed Spear-moss *Calliergon cuspidatum*. Other more notable species with a more restricted distribution in Ireland

are Cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, Greater Spearwort *Ranunculus lingua* and Fen Pondweed *Potamogeton coloratus*.

Banagher is very botanically rich. Over 175 vascular plants have been recorded from the site and the unique range of plant communities in such a confined area results in a very rich assemblage of species. The range of vegetation types provides food and shelter for a range of animals including birds and invertebrates.

## 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 or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including sand, gravel and peat.
2. Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing, including any change in the type of livestock used or in supplementary feeding practice.
3. Any change in the established method or frequency of rolling, mowing or cutting.
4. The application of manure, slurry or artificial fertiliser.
5. The application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
6. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material not specified under paragraph 5 above.
7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for:
  - (i) plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977;
  - (ii) normal cutting or mowing regimes for which consent is not required under paragraph 3 above.
8. The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.
9. Burning.
10. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.

11. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
12. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.
13. Operations or activities, which would affect wetlands (include marsh, fen, bog, rivers, streams and open water), e.g.
  - (i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;
  - (ii) modification of the structure of any watercourse;
  - (iii) lowering of the water table, permanently or temporarily;
  - (iv) change in the management of bank-side vegetation.
14. The killing or taking of any wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 6, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.
15. The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:
  - (i) Educational activities;
  - (ii) Research activities;
  - (iii) Recreational activities;
  - (iv) Exercising of animals.
16. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.

#### FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.
- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed in the Schedule are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would normally give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.

## BANAGHER

### 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 Banagher 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 2-3 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

Rare plant sites are reliant on the maintenance of the habitat in which the particular rare species grows. Often this is a mosaic of habitats with the particular species often associated with habitat edge or transitional communities. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of these habitats and habitat transitions through the conservation of their associated native plants and animals.

Many rare plants are sensitive species and can quickly be lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. However, most rare plants have survived because of traditional land management and so these practices generally need to continue to retain the interest.

At Banagher the Schedule 8 species Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris* occurs in a wet grassland complex in the west of the site. Specific objectives include:

Grassland generally needs some management to retain its interest. Although occasional small patches of scrub can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates, in the absence of management, coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing by cattle is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species and helping to maintain open areas and a diverse sward structure, although overgrazing should be avoided as the wet soils are particularly susceptible to poaching. In the absence of grazing, cutting of the vegetation to create open areas and reduce the dominance of coarse grasses is desirable.

Prevent the loss of more sensitive grassland species through the control of scrub, bracken and rushes. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases, other methods of control such as cutting, may be required.

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

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 grassland, such as fen, swamp and old hedgebanks through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife and at Banagher contain several other notable plants.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the  
Department of the Environment  
hereunto affixed is authenticated  
by



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**Dr JS Faulkner**  
Senior Officer of the  
Department of the Environment

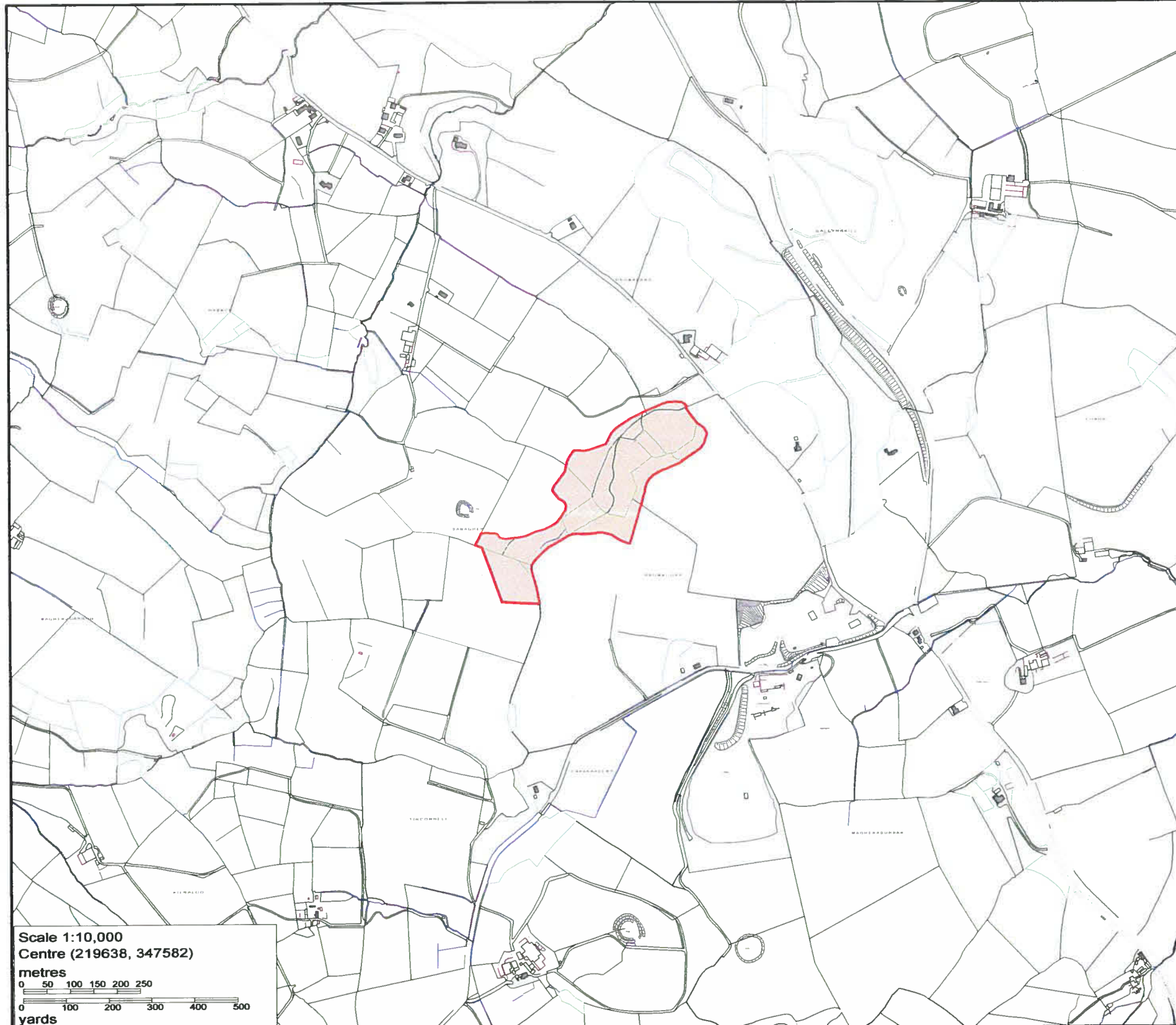
Dated the 21st of March 2005



# BANAGHER ASSI



An Agency within the Department of the Environment  
**Environment**  
www.doeni.gov.uk



Scale 1:10,000  
Centre (219638, 347582)  
metres  
0 50 100 150 200 250  
yards  
0 100 200 300 400 500

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT BANAGHER AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Map referred to in the Declaration dated: 21st March 2005

**SITE BOUNDARY:** The Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) includes all the lands highlighted within the solid coloured line.

**AREA OF SITE:** 5.11 hectares

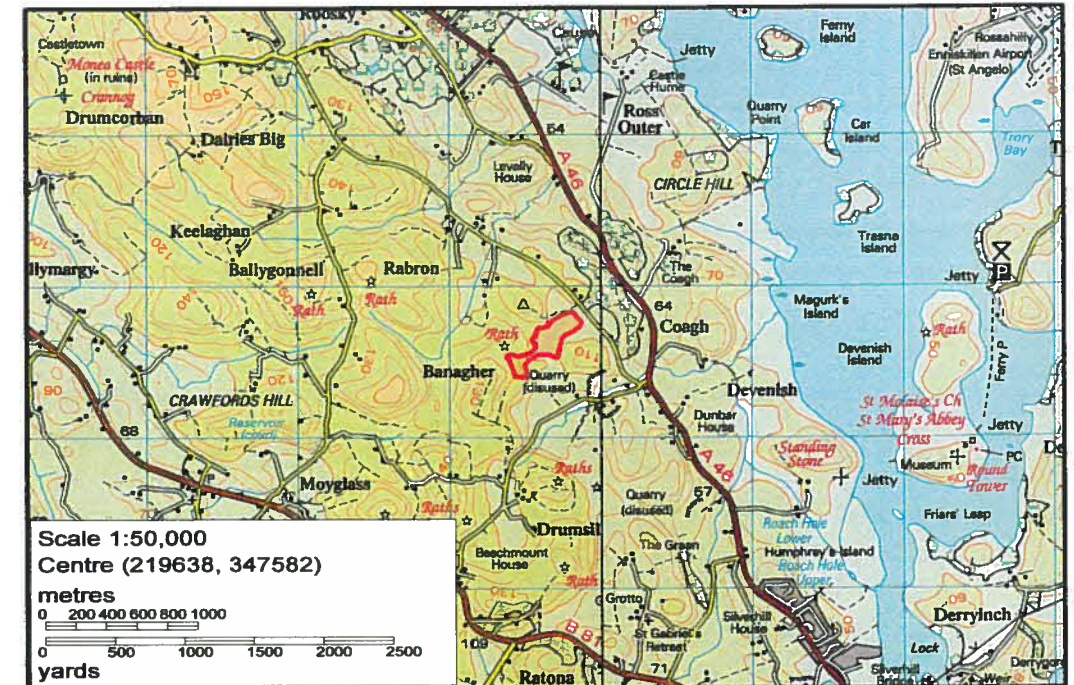
**OS MAPS** 1:50,000: Sheet No. 17  
1:10,000: Sheet No. 211

**IRISH GRID REFERENCE:** H 196 476

**COUNCIL AREA:** FERMANAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNTY:** FERMANAGH

DR J S FAULKNER  
SENIOR OFFICER OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Scale 1:50,000  
Centre (219638, 347582)  
metres  
0 200 400 600 800 1000  
yards  
0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500