

PARIS ISLAND BIG

A SPECIAL PLACE...



Paris Island Big

Paris Island Big has been declared as an ASSI because of its breeding colony of Grey Herons.

Heronries are usually located in areas of undisturbed mature woodland close to wetlands which support a reliable food supply.

Paris Island Big is a steep-sided, drumlin island in Lower Lough Erne. The vegetation on the island is dominated by semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, with the summit supporting a grove of exotic conifers. The woodland consists mainly of

Sessile Oak and also contains Sycamore, Holly, Birch and Ash. Mature trees within both woodland types provide nest sites for herons.



Grey Heron

The steep slopes of Paris Island Big made it less suitable for agriculture than many of its neighbours, hence its present woodland cover. The island's isolation provides an undisturbed environment attractive to breeding herons while Lower Lough Erne and its neighbouring wetlands hold a plentiful supply of their preferred foods: fish and frogs.

Paris Island Big has, in the recent past, been a very important locality for breeding Grey Herons in a Northern Ireland context. During the period 2000 – 2003 the island held an average of 33 pairs of herons. At least 86 pairs of herons were present on the site in 2006, representing more than 2% of the estimated all-Ireland population.

The island therefore continues to be one of the most important heronries in the Northern Ireland.

Correct management is essential for special places like Paris Island Big. Nesting Grey Herons are very sensitive to disturbance. If, for example, the

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL AND EARTH SCIENCE IMPORTANCE HAVE BEEN SURVEYED BY 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 SAFEGUARD THESE IMPORTANT SITES FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.



Grey Heron with nestlings

woodland on Paris Island Big was managed intensively, or if the island were inhabited, its heronry would probably be abandoned. Maintenance of the current low-intensity usage of the site will ensure the survival of the heronry at Paris Island Big. The Environment and Heritage Service is keen to work closely with landowners to maintain and enhance Paris Island Big ASSI.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT PARIS ISLAND BIG, 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 delineated and described 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 'Paris Island Big Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

This area is of special scientific interest because of its heronry. Paris Island Big is a steep-sided, wooded drumlin island in Lower Lough Erne. The topography of the island made it less suitable for agriculture than many of its neighbours, hence its present woodland cover. Paris Island Big has, in the recent past, been a highly significant locality for breeding Grey Herons in a Northern Ireland context, with more than 80 pairs having been recorded. During the period 2000 – 2003 Paris Island Big held an average of 33 pairs of herons. At least 86 pairs of herons were present on the site in 2006, representing more than 2% of the estimated all-Ireland population. The island therefore continues to be one of the most important heronries in the Northern Ireland.

The vegetation on the island is dominated by semi-natural deciduous woodland, with the summit supporting a grove of exotic conifers. The deciduous element of the woodland is dominated by Sessile Oak and also includes significant amounts of Sycamore, Holly, Birch and Ash. Mature trees within both woodland types provide suitable nest sites for herons.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the heronry:

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. Introduction of grazing.



3. 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.
4. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Burning.
8. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.
9. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
10. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.
14. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

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.

PARIS ISLAND BIG

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 Paris Island Big 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 – 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

The continued presence of the heronry at Paris Island Big is entirely dependant on the appropriate management of the woodland that hosts it. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the heronry, through the conservation of the associated woodland.

Heronry

Grey Herons nest in groups, known as heronries, high in the crowns of mature trees. This species requires suitable woodland structure (essentially mature trees either native or non-native species), quiet and undisturbed places in which to nest, usually preferring a commanding position over the surrounding open landscape together with adjoining or nearby wetlands in which to feed.

Specific objectives for the heronry and woodland include:

Management should aim to maintain areas of woodland with a high proportion of tall mature trees (typically between 15-30m high) to provide suitable roosting and nesting sites for the species.

Nesting Grey Herons are vulnerable to human disturbance and the disturbance of woodland in the immediate vicinity of nesting birds should be kept to a minimum during the breeding season mid-March to July. Recreational use of


the woodland should be discouraged, whilst shooting for game or vermin species should be avoided completely in areas where Grey Herons are nesting.

GENERIC MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

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

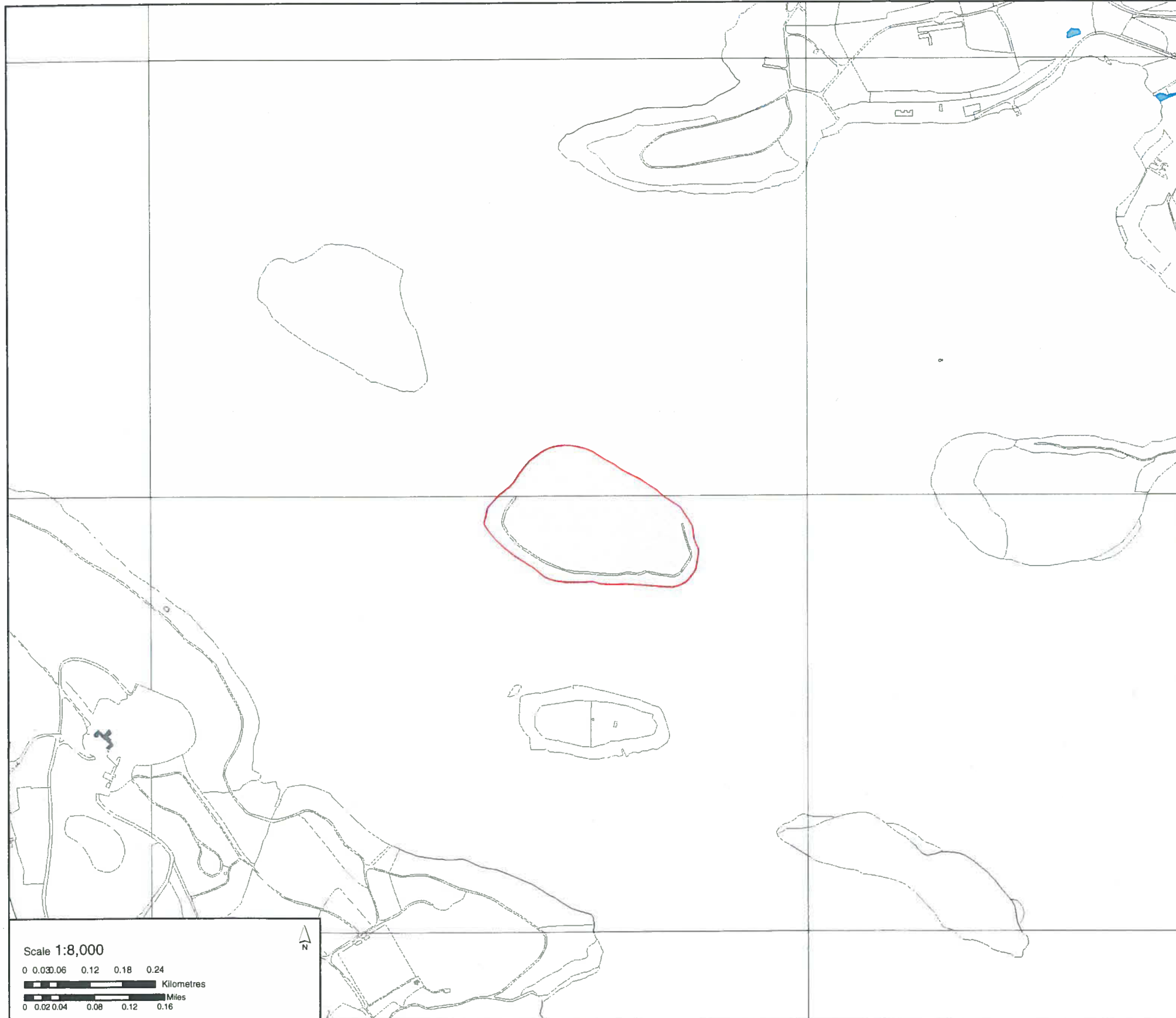
Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

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


Mr G R Seymour
Senior Officer of the
Department of the Environment

Dated the 28TH of SEPTEMBER 2007

PARIS ISLAND BIG ASSI



PARIS ISLAND BIG AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Map referred to in the Declaration dated: 28 SEPTEMBER 2007

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

AREA OF SITE: 7.10 hectares

OS MAPS 1:50,000: Sheet No. 17,18
1:10,000: Sheet Nos. 192

IRISH GRID REFERENCE: H200 519

COUNCIL AREA: FERMANAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNTY: FERMANAGH

G.R. Seymour
MR G R SEYMOUR
SENIOR OFFICER OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

