

## Reasons for designation as a Special Area of Conservation

Area name:	<b>Binevenagh</b>
Administrative area:	<b>Londonderry</b>
Component ASSI:	<b>Binevenagh</b>

This area has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it contains habitat types and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context. The ASSI citation describes the special interests for which the site was notified in the Northern Ireland context. The interests for which the site was selected as ASSI may differ from the interests selected in a European context.

The habitats and/or species for which this area has been designated as a SAC are listed below. The reasons for their selection are listed, together with a brief description of the habitats and species as they typically occur across the UK. This area contains the interests described although it may not contain all the typical features.

### European priority interest(s):

#### 1. Species-rich *Nardus* grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)

- for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas. Swards of mat-grass *Nardus stricta* are frequently found in upland areas on acid soils, but on mildly base-rich soils the sward can be particularly species-rich with mixtures of grasses, small herbs, mosses and liverworts. At high altitude, arctic-alpine species are frequently found, and alpine lady's-mantle *Alchemilla alpina* and thyme *Thymus praecox* may be abundant. Within the European Union species-rich *Nardus* grasslands are rare outside the UK and Ireland.

### European interest(s):

#### 2. Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (*Thlaspietea rotundifolii*)

- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.
- for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

Base-rich scree. These are steep scree slopes in the uplands, largely derived from base-rich rock including limestone, calcareous schists and basalt. The vegetation is usually characterised by various lime-loving species commonly including the ferns green spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes-ramosum*, limestone fern *Gymnocarpium robertianum*, and holly fern *Polystichum lonchitis*. Many examples contain rare arctic-alpine plant species.

### 3. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

- which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.
- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks. These are plant communities growing in the crevices or fissures of calcareous rocks such as limestone, calcareous schists and basalt. The vegetation may include the ferns maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*, green spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes-ramosum* and brittle bladder-fern *Cystopteris fragilis*, and various mosses. This type of crevice vegetation at high altitude often contains rare arctic-alpine plant species.

<b>The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland</b>
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Register reference number:	UK0030089
Date of Registration	23 March 2007
Signed by: G R Seymour	
on behalf of the Department of the Environment	