

## Reasons for Designation as a Special Area of Conservation

Area name:	<b>Upper Lough Erne</b>
Administrative area:	<b>Fermanagh</b>
Component ASSI:	<b>Corraslough Point Dernish Island Inishroosk Killymackan Lough Mill Lough Upper Lough Erne - Belleisle Upper Lough Erne - Crom Upper Lough Erne - Galloon Upper Lough Erne - Trannish</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. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion alvae*)**

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Alder woodland on floodplains. These forests, characteristic of the floodplains of lowland rivers, are now rare throughout Europe. Alder *Alnus glutinosa* is usually the dominant tree but willows *Salix* species, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, downy birch *Betula pubescens* or elder *Sambucus nigra* may also be common. This habitat can range from alder stands on the braided channels of fast-flowing rivers, to stands on former peat cuttings along fenland rivers.

### European interest(s):

**2. *Lutra lutra***

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Otter. Otters are semi-aquatic mammals, requiring both good fishing grounds for food and suitable shelter on land for resting and breeding. Once widespread in Europe, the otter population declined sharply during the 1960s and 1970s. It is now showing signs of recovery in the UK and is spreading to repopulate its former areas. The UK, and in particular Scotland, supports some of the largest concentrations of otters in Europe, with both freshwater and coastal populations.

**3. Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation**

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs which are often dominated by pondweed. Normally low-lying, shallow lakes or ponds which are naturally rich in nutrients and support a diverse range of aquatic plants. In the UK, these plant communities are often dominated by pondweed *Potamogeton* species. Many lakes of this type have been affected by artificial nutrient enrichment.

**4. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles**

- **for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.**

Western acidic oak woodland. The western oak woods in the UK include a range of woodland types, some with much heather *Calluna vulgaris* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, others more grassy. They typically have rich assemblages of Atlantic mosses and liverworts, distinctive birds, lichen communities, and ferns such as hard fern *Blechnum spicant*, lemon-scented fern *Oreopteris limbosperma* and various species of male- and buckler-fern *Dryopteris* species. Holly *Ilex aquifolium* is common in the understorey. Such woodland is most abundant in the western parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**The Register of European Sites in Northern Ireland**

Register reference number: UK0016614

Date of Registration 13 May 2008

Signed by: G R Seymour

on behalf of the Department of the Environment