

Dublin City Council Biodiversity

Location

Dublin Bay is bisected by the shipping lane of Dublin Port. Its natural shallow harbour brought about the genesis of Dublin City as a major international port, first as a centre of trade controlled by the Vikings and then as the 'second city' of the British empire. The Bay has always been challenging for navigation due to its numerous shallows and contains over 400 shipwrecks classed now as national monuments.

(<https://dahg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=89e50518e5f4437abfa6284ff39fd640>)

Protected Habitats and Species

The North Bull Island is the most designated site in the Republic of Ireland and has been officially recognised for its important biodiversity for a century. North Bull Island was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1981 and was extended and re-designated in 2015 as **Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve** (DBBR) to create a model for managing biodiversity at an ecosystem level in an urban area (<http://www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie/about>). It presents a concept which is more identifiable to the public and fosters greater awareness and wider engagement in active management by citizens. The Biosphere will be composed of a core area of wetland areas designated as part of the EU's Natura 2000 network. Each of the core zones contains unusual flora and fauna communities found in many remnant pockets of vegetation which exemplify the landscape history of the Dublin region prior to its development as a capital city. North Bull Island has two Natura 2000 sites: Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds under the Birds Directive and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. Additionally, South Dublin Bay also has both an SPA and SAC. The core is supported by terrestrial buffer zones of parklands, greenbelts, golf courses and greenspace along watercourses that directly supply the protected wetlands and a marine buffer. A transition zone surrounds the core and buffer and is where people live and work sustainably to manage the Bay.

Dublin Bay comprises a wetlands complex of international importance for its coastal and estuarine habitats and its overwintering migratory bird populations. The DBBR has recorded 180 species of birds. It provides habitat for 30 species of water birds, with in excess of 37,000 water birds spending the winter in the bay complexes (30,000 in Dublin Bay and 7,000 in Baldoyle Bay) each year (Birdwatch Ireland). It is internationally important for Light-bellied Brent Goose, Knot, Black-tailed Godwit and Bar-tailed Godwit, and supports nationally important numbers of a further 18 species. These birds are protected under Ireland's international treaties with the Irish government's ratification in a number of conventions and agreements, including the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, the Convention on Biological Diversity and, since 1999, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) of the Bonn Convention. There are two wetland complexes designated under the RAMSAR Convention - North Bull Island and Sandymount Strand - in Dublin Bay.

North Bull Island alone has five Red Data Book vascular plant species, four rare bryophyte species, and is nationally important for three insect species (McCorry and Ryle, 2009). Many plants in the DBBR are known to show great adaptation to extreme coastal conditions and variations of microclimate, and significant genetic variation and hybridisation can occur (Doogue, et al 1999; Curtis and Wilson, 2013). The North Bull Island and parts of the DBBR buffer zone in north Dublin include populations of Irish Mountain Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), a uniquely Irish sub-species of a species of national and international importance, but under severe pressure from recreational disturbance and illegal poaching (Nulty and Hayden, 2012).

Useful links

Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 – 2020

http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Press/Documents/Draft%20Dublin%20City%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%202015-2020%20_November%202015_.pdf

EuroMAB Conference for all UNESCO Biospheres in Europe and North America will take place from 2-5 April 2019 at Dublin Castle. <http://euromabdublin2019.ie>