

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Ballinafad SAC 002081



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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Introduction

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

A site-specific conservation objective aims to define favourable conservation condition for a particular habitat or species at that site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Notes/Guidelines:

1. The targets given in these conservation objectives are based on best available information at the time of writing. As more information becomes available, targets for attributes may change. These will be updated periodically, as necessary.
2. An appropriate assessment based on these conservation objectives will remain valid even if the targets are subsequently updated, providing they were the most recent objectives available when the assessment was carried out. It is essential that the date and version are included when objectives are cited.
3. Assessments cannot consider an attribute in isolation from the others listed for that habitat or species, or for other habitats and species listed for that site. A plan or project with an apparently small impact on one attribute may have a significant impact on another.
4. Please note that the maps included in this document do not necessarily show the entire extent of the habitats and species for which the site is listed. This should be borne in mind when appropriate assessments are being carried out.
5. When using these objectives, it is essential that the relevant backing/supporting documents are consulted, particularly where instructed in the targets or notes for a particular attribute.

Qualifying Interests

** indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive*

002081 Ballinafad SAC

1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: www.npws.ie/Publications

NPWS Documents

Year :	2006
Title :	Bat mitigation guidelines for Ireland
Author :	Kelleher, C.; Marnell, F.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manual No. 25
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Year :	2018
Title :	Conservation objectives supporting document – lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document
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Other References

Year :	2008
Title :	The lesser horseshoe bat conservation handbook
Author :	Schofield, H.W.
Series :	The Vincent Wildlife Trust
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Spatial data sources

Year : 2018
Title : NPWS lesser horseshoe bat database
GIS Operations : Roost identified, clipped to SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For : 1303 (map 2)

Year : 2007
Title : Forest Inventory and Planning System (FIPS)
GIS Operations : Dataset clipped to 2.5km buffer centred on roost location
Used For : 1303 (map 2)

1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

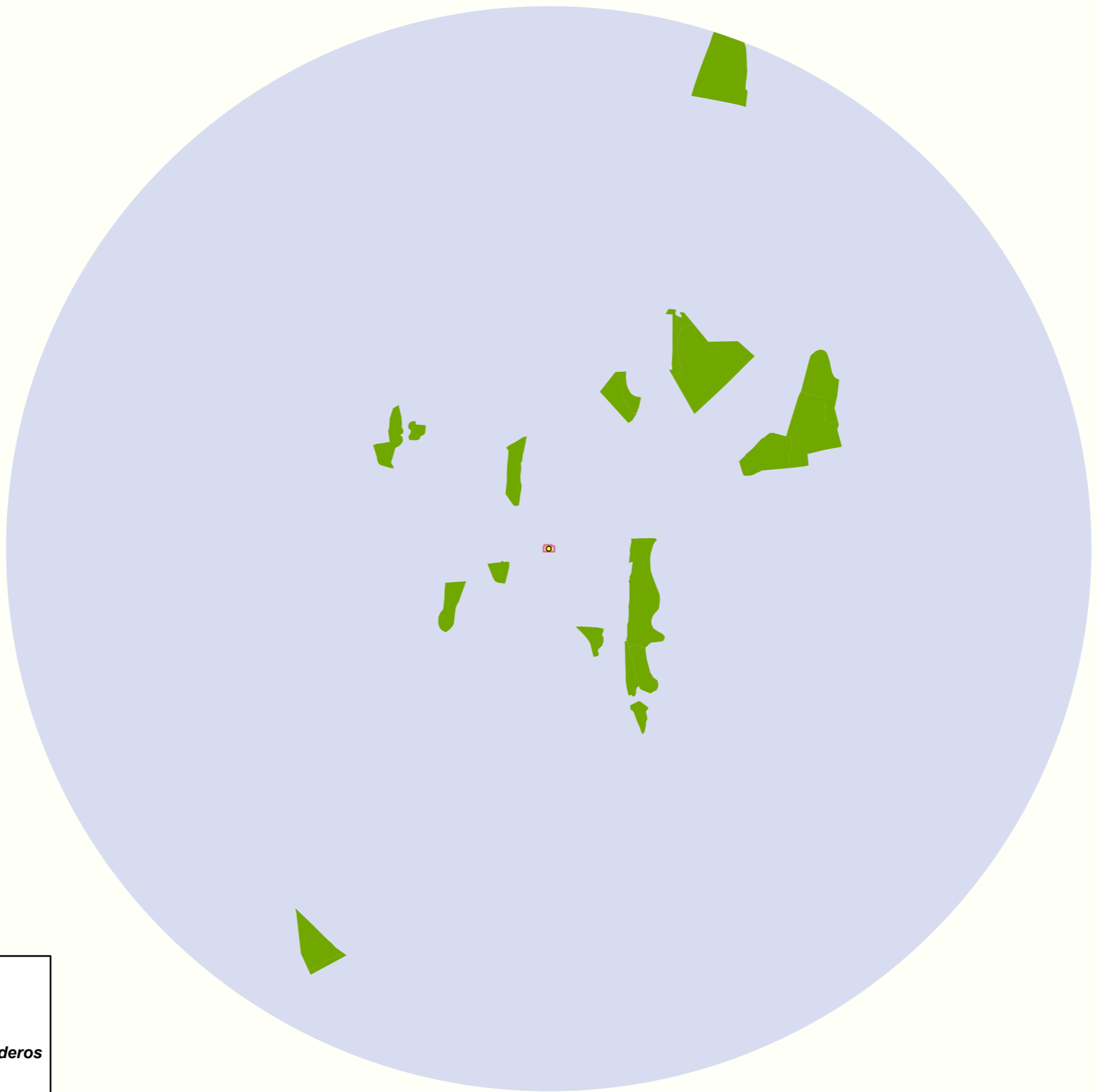
To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Ballinafad SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Population per roost	Number	Minimum number of 62 bats for the summer roost (roost id. 683 in NPWS database). See map 2	A figure of 100 bats for summer roosts and 50 bats for winter roosts was set as a minimum qualifying standard (MQS) when SACs were being selected for lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>). Where possible, NPWS conduct annual counts at each qualifying roost. For most summer roosts, qualified means from the 2012-2016 data have been calculated whereby the year with the highest maximum count and the year with the lowest maximum count were removed and the mean of the remaining years was calculated. This mean is usually set as the target figure for the roost. However, very limited counts have been taken at the summer roost (roost id. 683) in Ballinafad SAC. Also, this roost is situated at the northern extreme of the species' distribution in Ireland, and indeed Europe; thus, in this case, a figure below the MQS is justified and the most recent available count from 2014 is set as the target, i.e. 62 bats. See NPWS (2018) for further information on all attributes and targets
Summer roosts	Condition	No decline	Ballinafad SAC has been selected for lesser horseshoe bat because of the presence of one internationally important summer roost (roost id. 683 in NPWS database). Damage or disturbance to the roost or to the habitat immediately surrounding it will lead to a decline in its condition (Kelleher and Marnell, 2006). See the conservation objectives supporting document for lesser horseshoe bat (NPWS, 2018) for further information on all attributes and targets
Extent of potential foraging habitat	Hectares	No significant decline within 2.5km of qualifying roost	Lesser horseshoe bats normally forage in woodlands/scrub within 2.5km of their roosts (Schofield, 2008). See map 2 which shows a 2.5km zone around the above roost and identifies potential foraging grounds
Linear features	Kilometres	No significant loss within 2.5km of qualifying roost. See map 2	This species follows commuting routes from its roost to its foraging grounds. Lesser horseshoe bats will not cross open ground. Consequently, linear features such as hedgerows, treelines and stone walls provide vital connectivity for this species within 2.5km around each roost (Schofield, 2008)
Light pollution	Lux	No significant increase in artificial light intensity adjacent to named roost or along commuting routes within 2.5km of the roost. See map 2	Lesser horseshoe bats are very sensitive to light pollution and will avoid brightly lit areas. Inappropriate lighting around roosts may cause abandonment; lighting along commuting routes may cause preferred foraging areas to be abandoned, thus increasing energetic costs for bats (Schofield, 2008)



Legend

 Ballinafad SAC 002081



Legend

- OSi Discovery Series County Boundary
- Ballinafad SAC 002081
- 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros***
- Roost Location
- Roost ID 683 Foraging Range
- Potential Foraging Grounds