

# National Parks and Wildlife Service

## *Conservation Objectives Series*

### Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC 000849



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

**National Parks and Wildlife Service,  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,  
90 King Street North, Dublin 7, D07 N7CV, Ireland.  
Web: [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)  
E-mail: [natureconservation@housing.gov.ie](mailto:natureconservation@housing.gov.ie)**

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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*

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6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates  
(Festuco-Brometalia) (\* important orchid sites)

## Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: [www.npws.ie/Publications](http://www.npws.ie/Publications)

### NPWS Documents

<b>Year :</b>	2007
<b>Title :</b>	Grasslands monitoring project 2006
<b>Author :</b>	Dwyer, R.; Crowley, W.; Wilson, F.
<b>Series :</b>	Unpublished report to NPWS
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	2013
<b>Title :</b>	Irish semi-natural grasslands survey 2007-2012
<b>Author :</b>	O'Neill, F.H.; Martin, J.R.; Devaney, F.M.; Perrin, P.M.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 78
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	2018
<b>Title :</b>	The monitoring and assessment of three EU Habitats Directive Annex I grassland habitats
<b>Author :</b>	Martin, J.R.; O'Neill, F.H.; Daly, O.H.
<b>Series :</b>	Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 102
<hr/>	
<b>Year :</b>	2021
<b>Title :</b>	Assessment and monitoring of Annex I grassland on NPWS Farm Plan sites
<b>Author :</b>	Delaney, E.; Owens, J.
<b>Series :</b>	Unpublished report to NPWS
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## Spatial data sources

**Year :** 2006  
**Title :** Grassland Monitoring Project 2006  
**GIS Operations :** Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising  
**Used For :** 6210 (map 2)

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**Year :** 2013  
**Title :** Irish Semi-Natural Grassland Survey  
**GIS Operations :** Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising  
**Used For :** 6210 (map 2)

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**Year :** 2021  
**Title :** Delaney and Owens (2021) Assessment and monitoring of Annex I grassland on NPWS Farm Plan sites  
**GIS Operations :** Dataset clipped to the SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising  
**Used For :** 6210 (map 2)

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## Conservation Objectives for : Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC [000849]

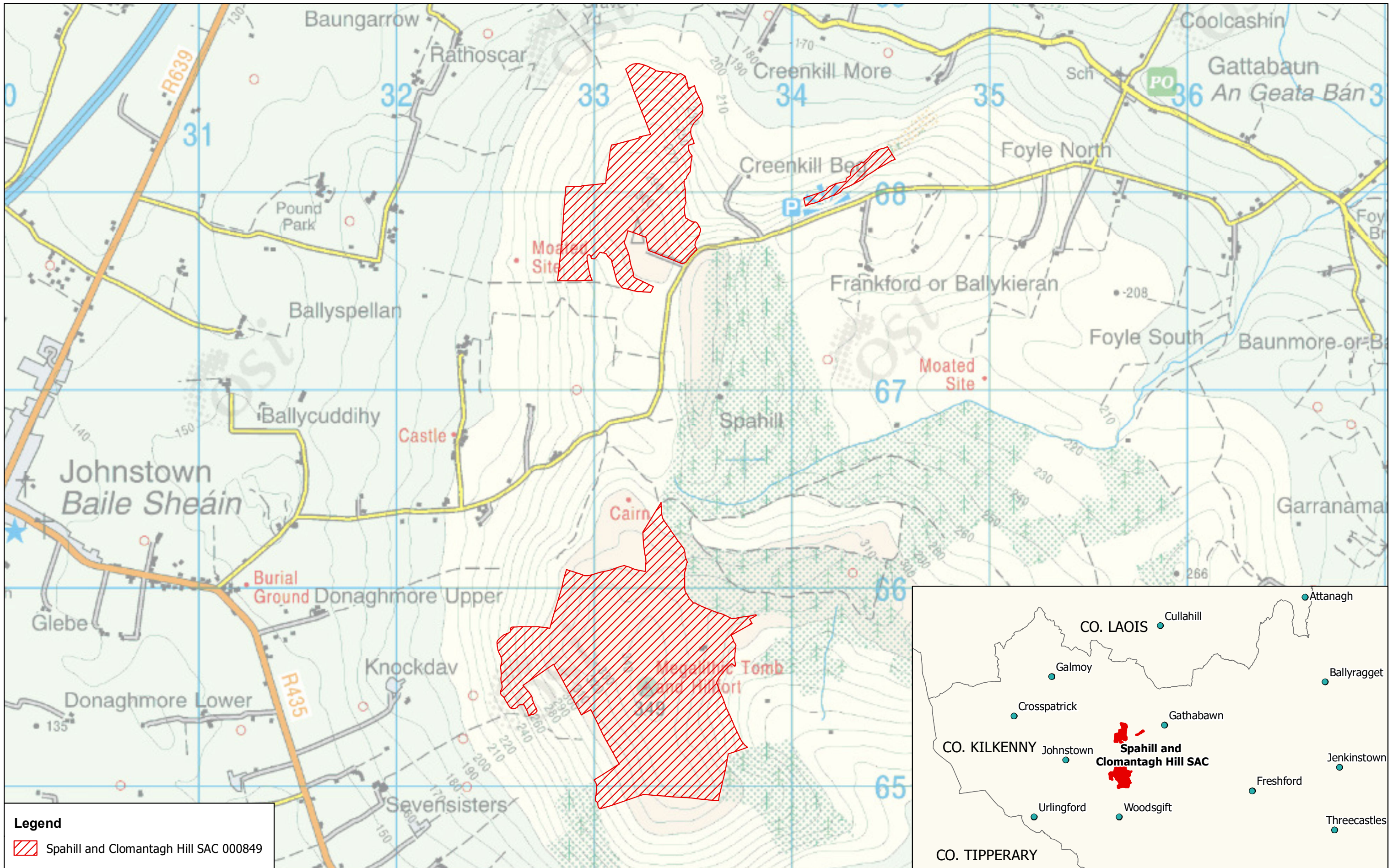
### 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (\* important orchid sites)

To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (\* important orchid sites) in Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes:


Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Parts of Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC have been surveyed by the Grassland Monitoring Project 2006 (GMP; Dwyer et al., 2007), the Irish Semi-natural Grasslands Survey (ISGS; O'Neill et al., 2013), and also the project 'Assessment and monitoring of Annex I grassland on NPWS Farm Plan sites' (Delaney and Owens, 2021). At Spahill, the north-western polygon of the SAC, the GMP 2006 mapped three areas of species-rich calcareous grassland, and the ISGS mapped 0.74ha of species-rich calcareous grassland, with some overlap in the areas visited, totalling 7.04ha. At Clomantagh Hill (the southern SAC polygon), Delaney and Owens (2021) mapped 1.67ha of 6210, but did not survey the southern half of this polygon. This results in a recorded area of c.8.7ha of the habitat in the SAC. It is important to note that further unsurveyed areas of the habitat may be present within the SAC, and in particular in the southern half of Clomantagh Hill
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 2	Distribution based on Dwyer et al. (2007), O'Neill et al. (2013) and Delaney and Owens (2021). It is important to note that further unsurveyed areas of the habitat may be present within the SAC, and in particular in the southern half of Clomantagh Hill (the southern SAC polygon)
Vegetation composition: positive indicator species	Number at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops; within 20m surrounding area of monitoring stops	At least 7 positive indicator species present in monitoring stop or, if 5–6 present in stop, additional species within 20m of stop; this includes at least two 'high quality' positive indicator species present in stop or within 20m of stop	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018), where the lists of positive indicator species, including high quality indicators, are also presented. These documents should be consulted for further details
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Negative indicator species collectively not more than 20% cover, with cover of an individual species not more than 10%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018), where the list of negative indicator species is presented
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of non-native species not more than 1%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)
Vegetation composition: woody species and bracken	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Cover of woody species (except certain listed species) and bracken ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> ) not more than 5%	Woody species that can occur above 5% cover are juniper ( <i>Juniperus communis</i> ), burnet rose ( <i>Rosa spinosissima</i> ), mountain avens ( <i>Dryas octopetala</i> ) and hoary rock-rose ( <i>Helianthemum oelandicum</i> ). However, cover of these species above 25% may indicate transition to another Annex I habitat such as Alpine and Boreal heaths (4060) or <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations (5130). Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)
Vegetation structure: broadleaf herb:grass ratio	Percentage at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 40% and 90%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018). Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 30% and 40% may be allowed to pass on expert judgement (Martin et al., 2018)

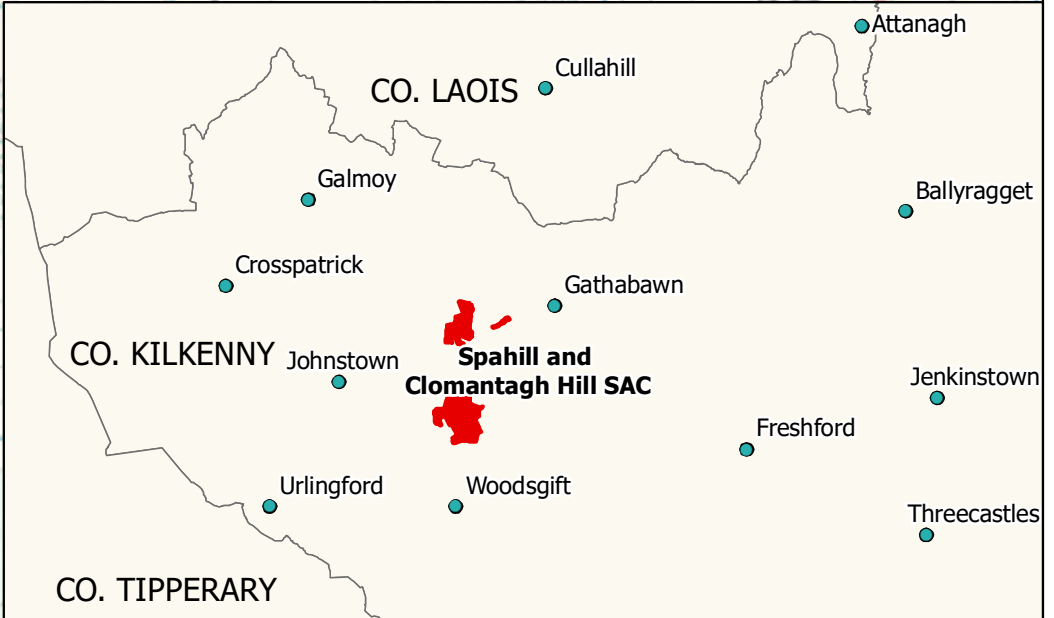
Vegetation structure: sward height	Percentage at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	At least 30% of sward between 5cm and 40cm tall	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)
Vegetation structure: litter	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Litter cover not more than 25%	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)
Physical structure: bare soil	Percentage cover at a representative number of 2m x 2m monitoring stops	Not more than 10% bare soil	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)
Physical structure: grazing or disturbance	Area in local vicinity of a representative number of monitoring stops	Area of the habitat showing signs of serious grazing or disturbance less than 20m <sup>2</sup>	Attribute and target based on O'Neill et al. (2013) and Martin et al. (2018)



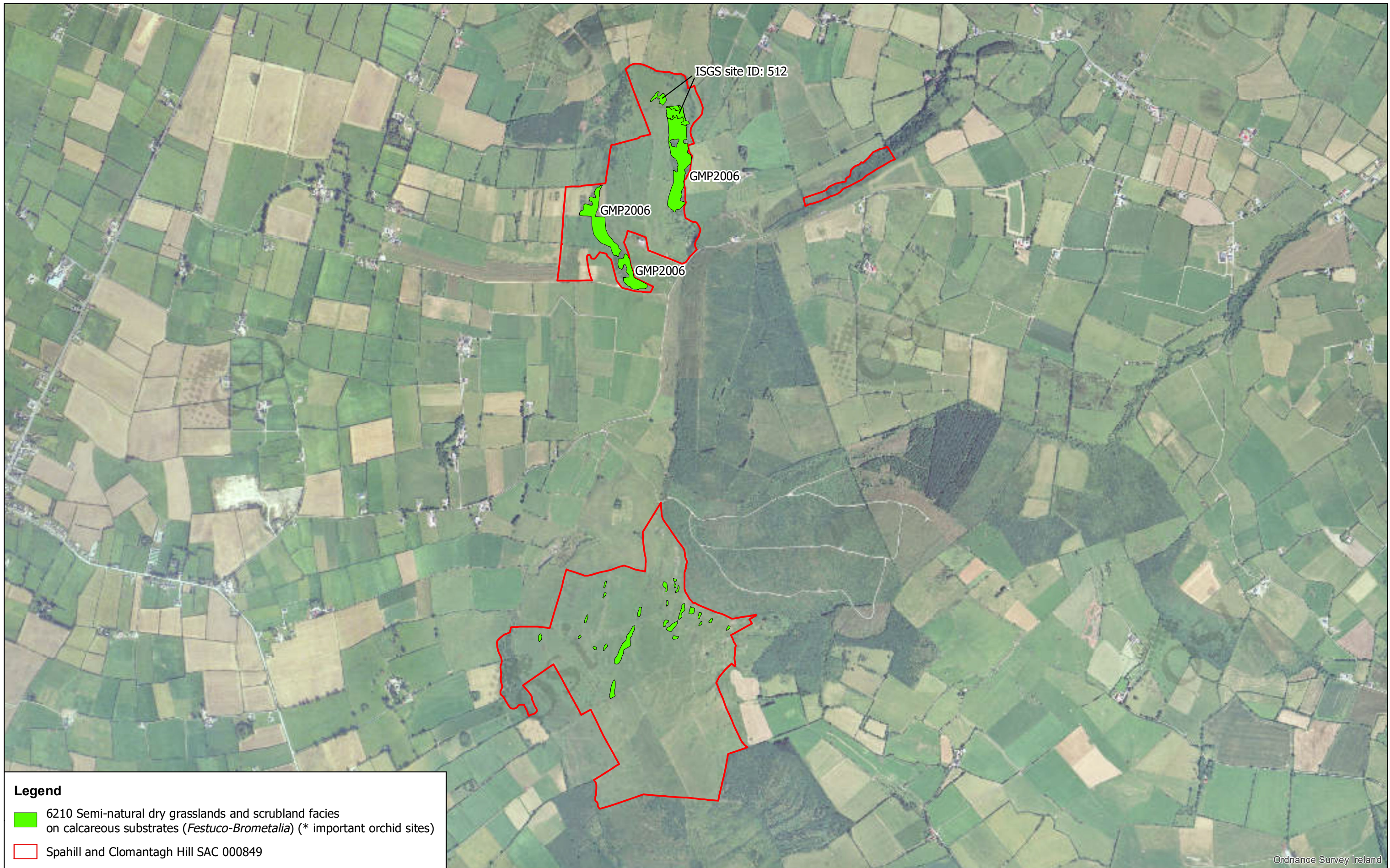


**Legend**

 Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC 000849







**Legend**

- 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (\* important orchid sites)
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Ordnance Survey Ireland

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Department of Housing,  
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**MAP 2:  
SPAHILL AND CLOMANTAGH HILL SAC  
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES  
GRASSLAND HABITATS**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document

**SITE CODE:  
SAC 000849; version 3.01.  
CO. KILKENNY**

0    0.25    0.5 Kilometres

The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.  
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Níl sna teorainneacha ar na léarscáileanna ach nod garshuíomhach ginearálta. Féadfar athbhreithnithe a déanamh ar theorainneacha na gceantar comharthaíthe. Suirbhéarachta Ordoanáis na hÉireann Ceadúnas Uimh OSI-NMA-014. © Suirbhéarachta Ordoanáis na hÉireann Rialtas na hÉireann

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**Date: October 2021**