



## Location

## Management

The property is managed by NPWS to maximise its biodiversity. The area is rich in marsh and dune plants and supports a wide variety of invertebrates and birds. The cereal plot at the Mullyvea entrance was first planted in 2004 to feed finches and buntings during the winter months. Another plot is planned for Sandfield.

The site is winter grazed to encourage floral diversity and cow pats are also a source of food for foraging cough. Stocking rates are periodically reviewed and horses may at times be grazed on the site.

Various methods have been tried to control bracken. A sluice is in place to control water levels at the lough in order to protect the slender naiad population. In 2007 Mc Glinchey's House at Sandfield was fully restored and is now used as a field studies centre.

## Access & Safety

There are three signed access points. The main entrance is at the Mullyvea gate opposite Kiltorris Lough. There is access from the east side at both Murveaghveagh and Sandfield off the R261. Walkers should be cautious of grazing animals between October and May and dogs should be kept on a lead and under control at all times. Some of the land within the site is still privately owned so be careful to close gates and not to damage walls or fences.

Appropriate walking clothing and a map and compass are recommended. Any damaging activities should be reported to the NPWS at Glenveagh National Park 074-9137090 or NPWS at Ballinacorney, Sligo 071 9666700.

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# Sheskinmore Nature Reserve

Sheskinmore, Ardara, Co. Donegal



Contact Emer Magee on 087 - 6468439

National Parks & Wildlife Service Conservation Ranger, with any queries

National Parks & Wildlife Service



Comhshaol, Oidhreachta agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



# Sheskinmore Nature Reserve

Sheskinmore refers to a large area of sand dunes, lake and marsh that lies between Kiltorris and Ballinreavy Strand, north west of Ardara, Co. Donegal. The area is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Wildfowl Sanctuary. The area is easily accessed from the gate at Mullyvea opposite Kiltorris Lough.

## Habitats

The area is mostly a fixed sand dune system, which includes machair grassland, dune slacks, Sheskinmore Lough and the surrounding marsh, fen and reedbed. There is some oak and hazel scrub with heath on the drier northern slopes behind the lough and there is also coastal heath on the Carrickalahagh headland.

Sescenn Mór literally means 'big marsh' and the marshy plain contains much of the areas' interesting flora and fauna. South and west of the flat marshy plain there are sandy machair grasslands which evolve into high undulating sand dunes along Trawmore Strand and Ballinreavy Strand.

## Birds

A visit at any time of year is always interesting for birdlife. During the winter a small flock of Greenland White Fronted Geese feed undisturbed here. Chough and Twite also feed here in winter. Brent Goose, Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye and Golden Plover are other winter visitors. Lapwing, Mallard, Teal, Snipe and Mute Swan are found all year round as are Linnet, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat and Reed Bunting. Summer visitors include the Grasshopper, Sedge and Willow Warblers and Wheatear, Swallow and Cuckoo. Birds of prey species use this vast open undisturbed site to hunt.



## Plants

The fixed dune and machair are managed to enhance their species richness. Cattle graze extensively during the winter months only. Orchid species include the Marsh Helleborine, Bee Orchid, Frog Orchid and the rare Irish Orchid. There is a succession of colour through out the summer months in the dunes and on the marsh, from yellows and whites in spring through to the pinks and purples of the late summer.

Rarities recorded in the area include the aquatic slender naiad and pipewort, the tiny petalwort, also quillwort, hoary whitlow grass and many stonewort species.

## Animals

Rabbit, badger and fox are the most common mammals recorded at Sheskinmore. Otter have been seen in the lough. Frog and newt breed in and around the dune slacks and the common lizard breeds on the drier slopes. The protected tiny marsh snail species *Vertigo geyeri* is found in the fen habitat west of the lough.

The area is also noteworthy for the variety of butterflies and dragonflies that breed here. Marsh fritillary and dingy skipper both breed at Sheskinmore along with 18 other butterfly species. Sheskinmore lough and associated wetlands is the most species rich site in Donegal for dragonflies and damselflies. Fifteen species have been recorded, the most interesting being the Black-tailed Skimmer and the Small Bluetip.