

# National Tourism and Environmental Monitoring Programme Hook Head 2024



**Fáilte  
Ireland**

Turasóireacht Náisiúnta  
An tÚdara Eorbartha  
National Tourism  
Development Authority

# National Tourism and Environmental Monitoring Programme

## Report for Hook Head 2024

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## HOOK HEAD – INTERESTING FINDS

### Interesting Finds

Hook Head is one of Ireland's most important fossil sites. These fossils are preserved in the limestone cliffs at Hook Head. Fossilised species include crinoids, gastropods, shells and corals. Fossils are protected under both the Wildlife Acts and the Foreshore Acts.



### Habitats

The following habitats were recorded on site:

- Rocky sea cliffs (CS1)
- Exposed rocky shores (LR1)
- Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)
- Improved amenity grassland (GA2)
- Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)
- Sea stacks and islets (CS2)
- Sea caves (LR5)
- Mixed sediment shores (LS5)
- Stone walls and other stonework (BL1)
- Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
- Exposed sand, gravel or till (ED1)

### Features of the Site

- Hook Lighthouse is the world's oldest functioning lighthouse. Tours of the Lighthouse are available for visitors.
- On the grounds of Hook Lighthouse, there is car, bus and bicycle parking, an amenity area, rubbish bins, informative signage, and toilet facilities and a cafe within the visitor centre.
- Life buoys are present throughout the site.
- The site is surrounded by rocky cliffs and agricultural fields.

### Key Recommendations

- The construction of a formal path from the lighthouse to lead visitors along already established coastal walking route should be considered as this would help reduce braiding and habitat degradation. This would require consultation and agreement with landowners along the route.
- The bare pathways leading to the cliffs from the lighthouse should be formalised. The measures could include ramps or steps to rationalise the level changes, barriers and signage.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD) was appointed by Fáilte Ireland to conduct Visitor and Environmental Surveys as part of the National Environmental Surveying & Monitoring Programme. Fáilte Ireland regularly engages with environmental research that is used to make informed management decisions and produce robust guidelines to facilitate the protection of the environment. From its inception in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) Operational Monitoring Programme has been conducting research into the impacts of recreation on the receiving environment.

Building on the success of the WAW environmental monitoring programme which ran from 2015-2019, Fáilte Ireland expanded the programme to a national level. From 2021 to 2022 the programme monitored 19 individual sites located in all of Fáilte Ireland's regional areas: The Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, and Dublin. This 2024 National Monitoring report builds on environmental surveying and monitoring undertaken on behalf of Fáilte Ireland as far back as 2015, To date (excluding the 2024 data), the surveys have monitored a total of 57 sites and recorded the activities and effects of over 30,000 visitors at a range of popular sites including inland, urban, coastal and WAW discovery points.

The environmental surveys and monitoring in 2023 followed the methodologies used in previous years. Following the completion of the 2023 surveys, a review of the methodology was undertaken. In developing the 2024 survey methodology, ROD considered the methodology for gathering the data, the presentation of the data, and the usefulness of the data gathered. The review also considered the time required to gather the data.

Ten sites were surveyed in 2024. Figure 1.1 below shows the locations of these sites. This report is for Hook Head, Co. Wexford.

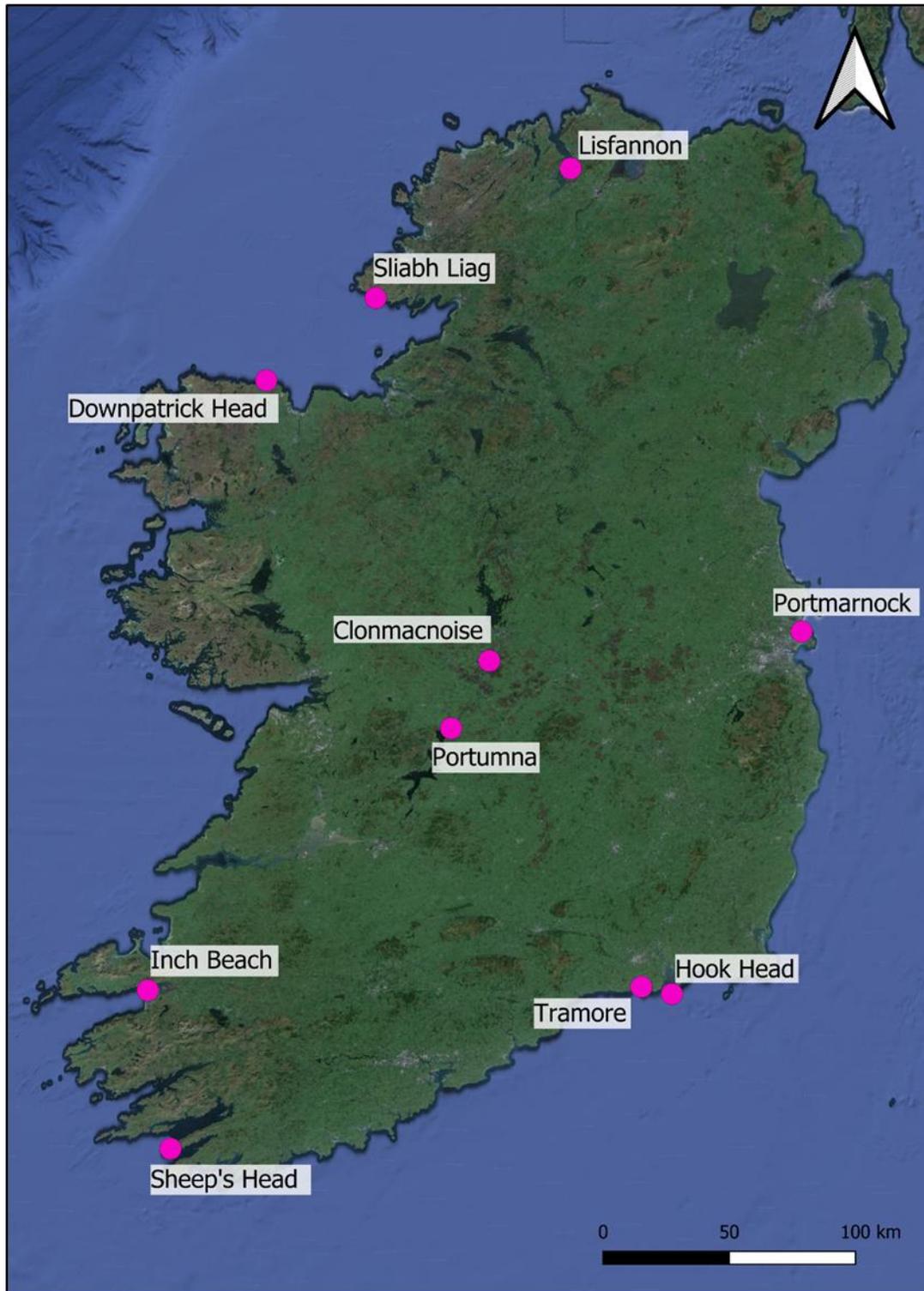


Figure 1.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme 2024 locations. Basemap provided by Google.

## 1.2 Aim of the Report

The purpose of the monitoring programme is as follows:

- To gain insight from an environmental perspective at popular amenity and recreation sites across Ireland;
- To obtain data on path and trail conditions etc. for each site;
- To obtain data relating to habitats, flora, and fauna for each site;
- To identify observable trends or variations among the sites;
- To make recommendations where appropriate for site management for the benefit of the site, the visitor, and the natural environment.

## 1.3 Site Description of Hook Head

Hook Head is located in the southwest of Co. Wexford and is accessible via the R734. The area being surveyed for this report (“the site”) consists of the grounds of Hook Lighthouse, the R734 west of these grounds, the agricultural fields east of the lighthouse including the informal paths, and the cliffs and exposed rocks surrounding these areas. The site boundary is presented in Figure 1.2.

Hook Lighthouse is the world’s oldest functioning lighthouse. The site is one of the most significant draws for tourism in County Wexford. Tours of the lighthouse are available for visitors and there is car, bus and bicycle parking available, informative signage regarding the history and cultural heritage of the site, and a visitor centre with toilets. Parking areas are also available at the cliffs to the south and west of the lighthouse. The site features frequently in the Tourism Development chapter of the Wexford County Development Plan (Wexford County Council, 2022), with plans outlined to enhance the visitor experience at the site and to develop connections between the site and other tourist attractions in the county via the development of greenways/active travel routes.

The site overlaps with Hook Head SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and the Seas off Wexford SPA (Special Protection Area).



**Figure 1.1** Site boundary outlined in red. Basemap provided by Google.

## 1.4 Critical Infrastructure

Tables 1.1 - 1.3 below provide information on the infrastructure at Hook Head. Uisce Éireann’s website was used to access information on the Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Capacity Registers for County Wexford (Uisce Éireann 2023a, b).

**Table 1.1** Hook Head Wastewater Infrastructure

Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)	Uisce Éireann Indication of Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toilet facilities are available on this site in the Hook Lighthouse visitor centre.</li> <li>Wastewater treatment is provided by Fethard-on-Sea WWTP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No capacity available.</li> </ul>

**Table 1.2** Summary of Drinking Water Infrastructure at Hook Head

Drinking Water	Water Resource Name (WRZ)	Uisce Éireann Indication of Capacity
The nearest settlement to Hook Head is Fethard-On-Sea.	South Regional	Potential Capacity Available - Level of service improvement required

**Table 1.3 Summary of Transport Infrastructure at Hook Head**

Nearest Settlement	Current Transport Infrastructure	Comment
Fethard-On-Sea	Hook Head is accessed by the R734. There a car park at Hook Lighthouse with bus and bicycle parking, as well as other parking areas on the R734.	The site is served by the 399 local link bus from New Ross town.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The following surveys were undertaken:

- Habitat survey
- Pathway condition survey
- Survey of the features, signage and hazards

The survey at Hook Head was undertaken on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. The weather conditions were clear and dry. The sub-sections below present the methodology used.

### 2.1 Habitat Condition Assessment Methodology

The habitats within the site, as defined in Figure 1.1, were classified and mapped in accordance with *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000) and *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Surveying and Mapping* (Smith et al. 2011). Notes were taken on species composition and habitat condition. Fossitt habitats corresponding to Annex I habitats were noted using the *Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats* (EC, 2013). A desktop study was also undertaken to identify designated sites and rare and protected species in the vicinity of each site. Incidental sightings of birds, mammals, reptiles, etc. were also recorded during the site surveys.

The condition of the habitat in each polygon or line will be noted, including any damage and the likely cause of the damage. The areas along pathways are outlined by the pathway condition assessment in Section 2.2 below. The following criteria were used to assess habitat condition:

- Extent of habitat degradation;
- Impact of habitat degradation (localised or widespread);
- Potential for the habitat to recover; and
- Whether or not intervention is required.

### 2.2 Pathway Condition Assessment Methodology

The main pathways were defined during the site visit and a desk study which included a review of the Strava heat maps ([www.strava.com/heatmap](http://www.strava.com/heatmap)), and a review of the previous site monitoring reports, if available. Typically, the main paths are formalised waymarked trails or heavily trafficked pathways that are not formalised. These paths usually link the site entry points and car parks to a destination or feature of interest. The pathways were categorised into sections by type and composition. The different types of pathway are described in Table 2.1 below. Each path section is described as 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory' based on the condition of the path and whether or not it could accommodate the current levels of use. Indicators that a path was not suitable for the current levels of use included the presence of wet areas, erosion, trip hazards, damaged pavement, braiding, path widening and habitat loss along the path. Paths that generally facilitated unobstructed movement between locations were deemed as 'satisfactory'.

**Table 2.1 Pathway Types**

Pathway Type	Description
Paved Car Park	An area used for parking, wider than the road, that is paved, usually with tarmacadam.
Gravel Car Park	An area used for parking, wider than the road, that is gravel or crushed stone.
Paved Road	A road that is paved with tarmacadam or similar hard material.
Gravel Road	A road consisting of gravel or crushed stone, with no grass in the middle.
Gravel Track	A single vehicle pathway used by small numbers of vehicles. Tracks are normally paved with gravel and can have grass in the middle
Grassy Track	A single vehicle pathway used by small numbers of vehicles. These tracks are not paved and are used primarily by tractors, quads or small numbers of private vehicles.
Paved Path	A path is primarily for foot traffic. Paved paths are found in more developed areas, to cater for higher levels of traffic.
Gravel Path	A path is primarily for foot traffic and can be a single track or a track wide enough for several people to walk abreast. Gravel paths are found in more developed areas, to cater for higher levels of traffic.
Grassy Path	A path is primarily for foot traffic and can be a single track or a track wide enough for several people to walk abreast. Grassy paths are found in less developed areas, often beyond feature of interest, and are used less frequently.
Bare Ground Path	These paths occur where the vegetation had been eroded by foot traffic and is bare ground, or damages vegetation. These paths are often widespread on sites where formal waymarked trails are not provided.

### 2.3 Features, Signage and Hazards

Signage, features of interest, and hazards were recorded, photographed and mapped. Features includes built heritage, sculptures as well as toilets and bins. Hazards including unstable walls, broken fences or unprotected cliff tops.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### 3.1 Habitat Condition Assessment

Habitats were surveyed during the optimum habitat survey season i.e., April to September (Smith et al., 2011). Habitats were classified according to *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000). Table 3.1 lists the habitats identified in Hook Head along with their corresponding Annex I habitats. A habitat map is presented in Figure 3.3. Some of the habitats present at Hook Head are displayed in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below. It should be noted that having a corresponding Annex I habitat does not mean the Annex I habitat is automatically present in a given area.

**Table 3.1 Fossitt (2000) habitats and links to Annex I habitats.**

Fossitt 2000 Habitat	Corresponding Annex I habitats (Natura 2000 code)
Rocky sea cliffs (CS1)	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts (1230)
Exposed rocky shores (LR1)	Reefs (1170)
Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)	None
Improved amenity grassland (GA2)	None
Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)	Lowland hay meadows ( <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> ) (6510)
Sea stacks and islets (CS2)	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts (1230)
Sea caves (LR5)	Submerged or partially submerged sea caves (8330)
Mixed sediment shores (LS5)	None
Stone walls and other stonework (BL1)	None
Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)	None
Exposed sand, gravel or till (ED1)	None

#### Rocky sea cliffs (CS1)

This habitat is present throughout the study area. No visitor impacts were noted on the cliffs, likely due to them being difficult to traverse and dangerous in much of the study area. Grasses and thrift (*Armeria maritima*) were present in very small pockets and on the cliff tops. In the more accessible areas of the cliffs by the lighthouse, fossils are visible within the rocks. Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) were also observed foraging on the rocks west of the lighthouse.

#### Exposed rocky shores (LR1)

This habitat was found in some areas of the study area, acting as a transitional habitat between the cliffs and the ocean. As with the cliffs, no visitor impacts were noted on the rocks, likely due to them being difficult to traverse and dangerous in some areas. Lichens, limpets, and barnacles were recorded throughout this habitat. As well as the fossils discussed above, there were tide pools of various sizes noted throughout the rocks. Many of the larger tide pools were vegetated, and contained sea anemones, small crustaceans, and small fish. Small terrestrial and marine invertebrates were also noted in this habitat.



**Figure 3.1** Rocky sea cliff (CS1) and exposed rocky shore (LR1) habitats at Hook Head.

#### Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)

Two agricultural fields are present in the study area east of the lighthouse. The first field leading from the lighthouse has two main informal pathways running through it, both of which have smaller pathways and braiding between them as a result of visitor traffic. The vegetation here was roughly 30cm tall where visitors were not walking. Brambles and nettles were present at the northern boundary of this field. The second, easternmost field, was cut-off from the first with a stone wall. The stone wall was attached to a water trough and had barbed wire and a sign indicating it was private land which contained a bull. At the time of the survey, a bull was not present in the field, and visitors were observed climbing the wall and proceeding into the field. The field had areas of bare ground where the cattle congregated, such as at the water trough. It was unclear whether pathways were formed exclusively from visitors, or if cattle also created the informal pathways. Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) were active in this field. White clover (*Trifolium repens*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), thistle (*Cirsium* spp.), along with grasses were recorded in both agricultural fields.

#### Improved amenity grassland (GA2)

Within the grounds of the lighthouse, there is an area of amenity grassland with benches and a children's play area. In the south of this habitat directly in front of the lighthouse, a small area was concealed within a rope boundary, and was not mown. Red clover, white clover, daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum majus*), curled dock, thistle, and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) were among the species recorded here.

### Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)

This habitat was present to the west of the lighthouse and is used as a car parking area. It is also present in a small pocket east of the lighthouse. Trampling from visitor movements and cars was severe throughout this habitat, with various informal paths running through it. This habitat was vegetated with thrift, ribwort plantain, creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), daisy, dandelion, kidney vetch, and grasses.

### Sea stacks and islets (CS2)

Some sea stacks were recorded off the cliffs south of the agricultural fields. These were unvegetated, however given the nature of sea stacks, there was areas which were not visible from land.



**Figure 3.2** Rocky sea cliff (CS1) and sea stacks and islets (CS2) habitats at Hook Head.

### Sea caves (LR5)

These habitats were observed from accessible areas of the cliffs. Given that much of the areas of the cliffs were inaccessible, the extent of this habitat in the study area is unknown.

### Mixed sediment shores (LS5)

This habitat occurred in small, sheltered pockets among the sea cliffs. They were not accessible and therefore it was not possible to note the species composition or prevalent features of this habitat.

Stone walls and other stonework (BL1)

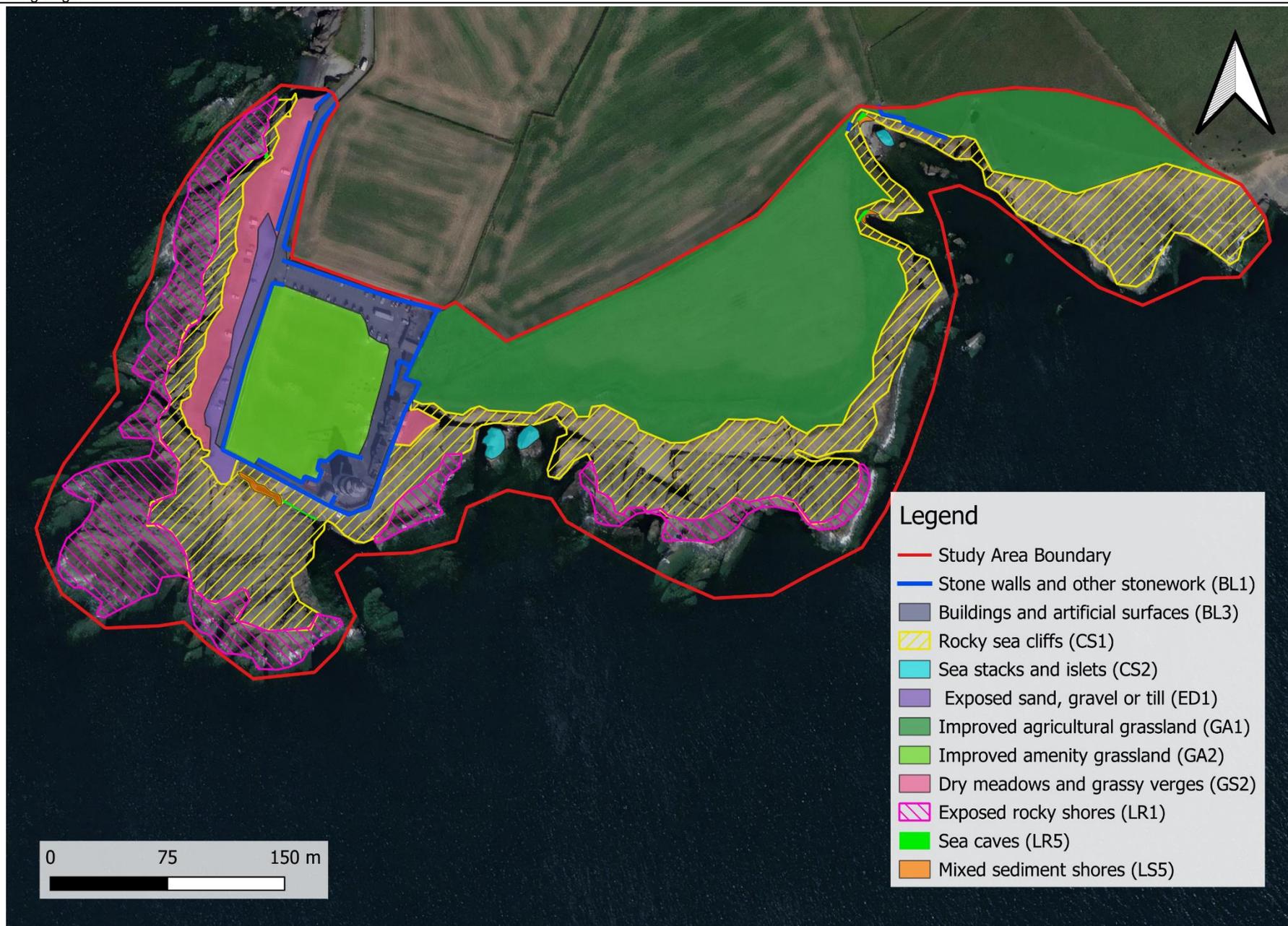
Stone walls surround the grounds of Hook Lighthouse. Vegetation from the surrounding environment, such as thrift, is dotted throughout the wall. A stone wall is also present separating the two agricultural fields from each other.

Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

This habitat is found on the grounds of Hook Lighthouse and on the R724.

Exposed sand, gravel or till (ED1)

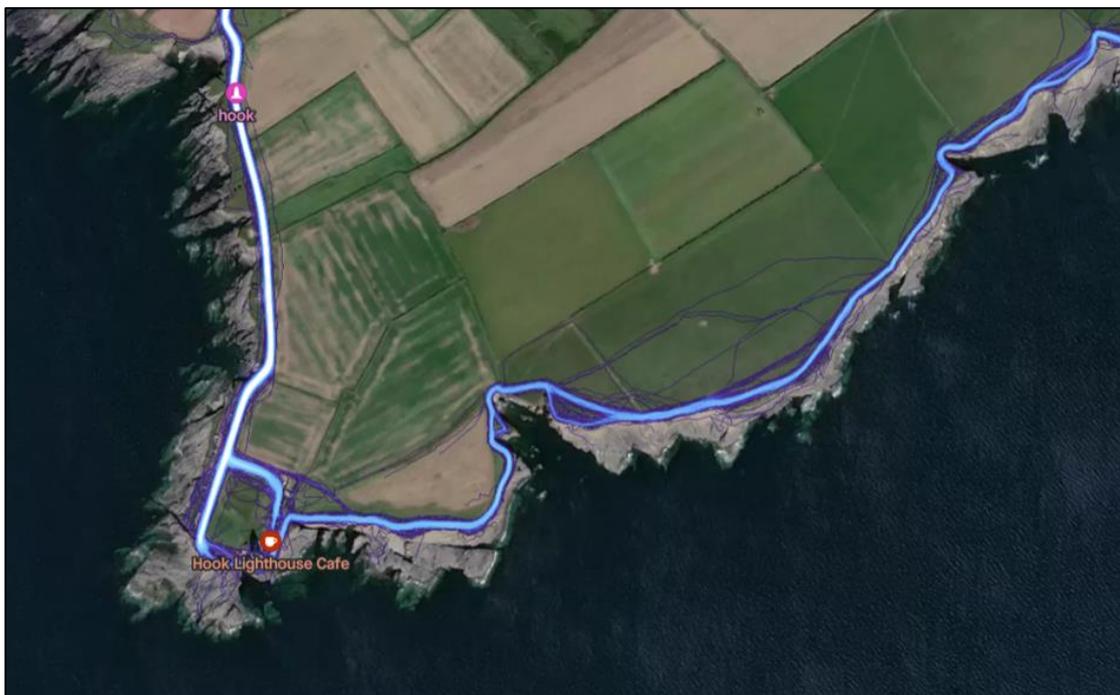
Leading from the lighthouse grounds entrance and extending south beside the R734, a narrow stretch of exposed gravel is present on the western side of the road. This area is used for parking. This habitat is not of biodiversity value.



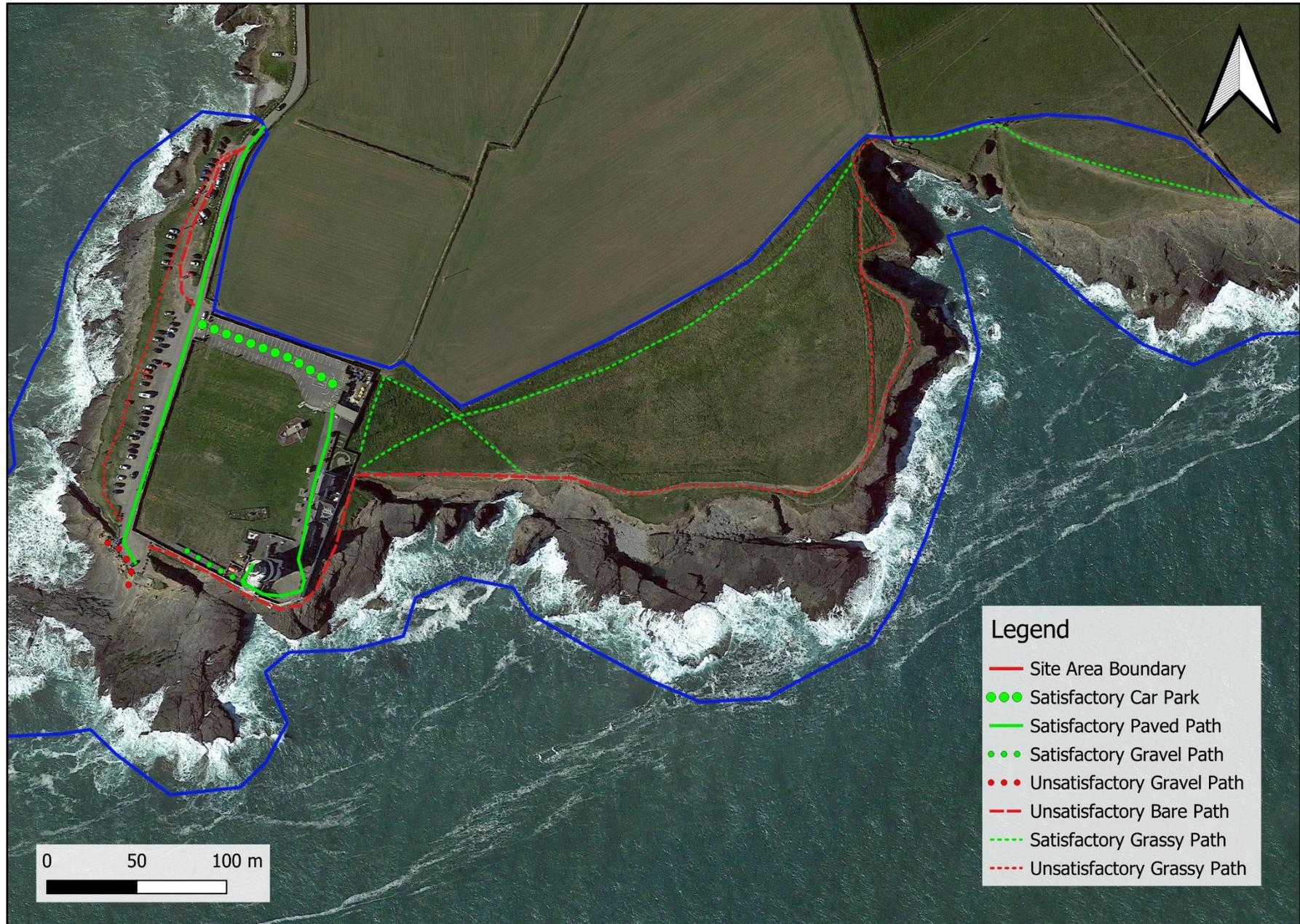
**Figure 3.3** Habitat map of Hook Head. Basemap provided by Bing.

### 3.2 Pathway Condition Assessment

The grounds of Hook Lighthouse have paved surfaces including a car park, and also have a raised wooden platform which serves as a viewpoint for visitors. A short gravel path is present beside the amenity grassland, though the purpose of this is unclear. All of the pathways within the grounds of Hook Lighthouse are well-maintained and in good condition. The R734 is also in good condition. There is a bare path and a grassy path present directly west of the R734, both of which are in poor condition. Visitor movements along with vehicle parking has led to pathway braiding and vegetation regression on these pathways. Where the R734 leads south, two small gravel paths leading onto the cliffs are highly eroded and in poor condition. A bare pathway leads around the lighthouse over the rocks and into the agricultural field, where it turns into a grassy path. Both the bare and grassy portions of this pathways are in poor condition, with pathway braiding occurring at several points. An additional grassy path is present north of this pathway. Braiding occurs between the two pathways. Given its uniformity and lack of impacts on the surrounding habitat, the northernmost grassy path is considered satisfactory, though it was noted that having multiple pathways is unnecessary, as they lead to and from the same locations. A grassy path is present in the easternmost agricultural field. The pathways itself is in satisfactory condition, but as discussed in section 3.1, the surrounding habitat is heavily trampled as a result of both visitor and cattle movements. There are additional informal paths in this field, however it is unclear if these are a result of visitors or cattle. The most dominant and clear pathway in this field was mapped. Figure 3.4 presents a Strava heat map for the site. Strava aggregates data from users on its app who opt-in to share their activities and locations. The pathway condition assessment map is presented in Figure 3.5 below. Plate 3.1 displays some of the pathways found at Hook Head.



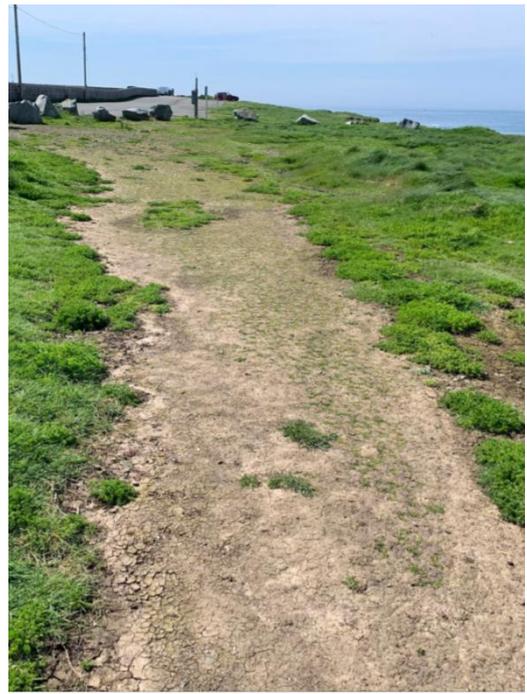
**Figure 3.4** Heat map of visitor movements in Hook Head (Strava, 2024).



**Figure 3.5** Pathway types and conditions present on the site. Basemap provided by Google.



**Paved Car Park**



**Unsatisfactory Bare Path West of Lighthouse**



**Unsatisfactory Bare Path East of Lighthouse**



**Unsatisfactory Bare Path in Field**

**Plate 3.1 The main pathway types recorded in Hook Head.**

### 3.3 Features, Signage and Hazards

#### 3.3.1 Features and Signage

The car park on the grounds of Hook Lighthouse has over 60 parking spaces, as well as parking areas for buses and bicycles. There are also some parking spaces at the cliffs to the south and west of the lighthouse. Toilet facilities are available in the Hook Lighthouse visitor centre, which also has a café, and various displays for history and cultural heritage. Additionally, informative signage regarding the history and cultural heritage of the site, and wildlife in the area was present on the lighthouse grounds. Some of the signage pertaining to wildlife had become damaged by damp/condensation making the sign difficult to read in places. A wooden platform accessed via stairs is present in the southeast of the lighthouse grounds, which provides visitors with a view of the sea. There is an amenity area within the grounds which has seating areas, rubbish bins, and a play area for children. Plates 3.2 and 3.3 display some of the features at the site.



Plate 3.2 An amenity area (L) and a wooden platform (R) at Hook Lighthouse.



Plate 3.3 Signage

#### 3.3.2 Hazards

The cliffs at Hook Head are hazardous. The uneven footing, blow holes, sudden gaps in the rocks, and the general height of the cliffs create the risk of visitors falling. Furthermore, the unsatisfactory pathways, particularly those surrounding the lighthouse, were uneven and create the risk of visitors falling onto the dangerous rocky areas. It was noted on the surveys that in areas with little room between the pathway and the cliff edge, barriers such as wire fencing were in place.

On the bare pathway at the eastern wall of the lighthouse, where the pathway enters the cliffs, erosion has led to uneven ground. In addition to this, there is a steel cable sticking out of the ground. Given this, and that the cliffs themselves are dangerous, this feature is hazardous to visitors. Signage is present to the south and east of the lighthouse grounds to warn visitors of the dangers of the cliffs, and life buoys are available throughout the site.

The easternmost agricultural fields contained cattle at the time of the survey. These fields are contained by a stone wall with barbed wire, which must be climbed over to enter the field. This area poses the risk of visitors being injured both while trying to climb the wall, and by cattle. A sign informing visitors that they are entering private property and that a bull may be present, and also instructing them to keep their dogs on leads. A dog off the lead was recorded in this field. The hazards discussed here and signage relating to them are displayed below in Plate 3.4. The locations of the hazards on Hook Head are presented in Figure 3.5.





Plate 3.4 Hazards at Hook Head.



Figure 3.5 Hazards present on the site. Basemap provided by Google.

### 3.4 Ecological Constraints

#### 3.4.1 Protected Sites

As discussed in Section 2.1, a desk study was undertaken to identify designated sites and rare and protected species in the vicinity of the site. There are two European (SACs and SPAs) and one nationally designated site (NHAs and pNHAs) within the site. Information on these sites was obtained from the NPWS website and their respective Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms. These sites are described in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2 Designated sites within 2 km of the Hook Head site.**

Site Name [Site Code]	Qualifying Interests	Distance (km) from Site	Pressures and Threats (those related to recreation are in bold)
<b>European Designated Sites</b>			
Hook Head SAC [000764]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>• Reefs [1170]</li> <li>• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>• Common Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) [1349]</li> <li>• Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) [1351]</li> </ul>	Within site boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Scuba diving, snorkelling</b></li> <li>• Dumping, depositing of dredged deposits</li> <li>• Erosion</li> </ul>
Seas off Wexford SPA [004237]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001]</li> <li>• Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]</li> <li>• Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013]</li> <li>• Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) [A016]</li> <li>• Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</li> <li>• Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018]</li> <li>• Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]</li> <li>• Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>) [A176]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> <li>• Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]</li> </ul>	Within site boundary	On the 11 <sup>th</sup> of January 2024, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended (S.I. No.477 of 2011), the Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform published a notice of intention to designate the Seas off Wexford cSPA. Site-specific Conservation Objectives were published on the 7 <sup>th</sup> of February 2024. SPAs are designated by each Member State, with no direct input from the EC. In Ireland, the Habitats Regulations set out the process for designating SPAs which includes the proposal of the SPA, a 'candidate SPA' and a public consultation. Following the public consultation, the SPA is formally designated by Statutory Instrument no less

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]</li> <li>• Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]</li> <li>• Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191]</li> <li>• Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougalli</i>) [A192]</li> <li>• Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]</li> <li>• Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]</li> <li>• Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195]</li> <li>• Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]</li> <li>• Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200]</li> <li>• Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]</li> </ul>		<p>than three months and no more than 18 months from the date it was proposed as a cSPA. Until the Statutory Instrument is published, the site is not designated. In anticipation of the formal designation of this European site Seas off Wexford SPA cSPA has been included in this report, though threats are pressures on the site have not been published.</p>
<b>Nationally Designated Sites</b>			
Hook Head pNHA [000764]	No site description available. Refer to Hook Head SAC above.	Within site boundary	No site description available. Refer to Hook Head SAC above.

### 3.4.2 Incidental Species Recorded

Hook Head supports a range of habitats and species. Table 3.3 below presents the bird species recorded during the ecological surveys at Hook Head, along with their Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCCI) status (2020–2026).

**Table 3.3 Incidental Species Records**

Scientific Name	Common Name
<b>Red Status</b>	
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit
<b>Amber</b>	
<i>Pyrhacorax pyrrhacorax</i>	Chough <sup>1</sup>
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Cormorant
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Gannet
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow
<b>Green</b>	
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird
<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Jackdaw
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Goldfinch
<i>Motacilla alba yarrelli</i>	Pied Wagtail
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Turnstone

### 3.4.3 Records of Rare, Protected and Invasive Species

Records of rare, protected, and invasive species from the past ten years from Hectads X79I, X79N, X79P and X79J were obtained the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) online database. These records are presented in Table 3.3 below.

<sup>1</sup> Chough (*Pyrhacorax pyrrhacorax*) are protected under Annex I of the Birds Directive.

**Table 3.3 Rare, protected, and invasive species recorded in the past decade from Hectads X79I, X79N, X79P and X79J from NBDC database.**

Scientific name	Common Name	Date of last record	Status*
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Uria aalge</i>	Guillemot	19/04/2018	WA; Amber List
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Kestrel	27/10/2014	WA; Red List
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Redshank	27/10/2024	WA; Red List
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Pheasant	18/07/2020	WA
<i>Tadrona tadorna</i>	Shelduck	19/04/2018	WA; Amber List
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern	19/04/2018	Annex I BD; WA; Amber List
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon	01/04/2023	WA;
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Curlew	14/07/2020	WA; Red List
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Oystercatcher	13/07/2020	WA; Amber List
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Golden Plover	27/10/2014	Annex I BD; WA; Red List
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	Shag	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Gannet	13/07/2020	WA; Amber List
<i>Larus marinus</i>	Great Black-backed Gull	01/04/2023	WA
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Cormorant	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Great Skua	28/10/2014	WA; Amber List
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Great Northern Diver	01/04/2023	Annex I BD; WA; Amber List
<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Greenland White-fronted Goose	02/11/2016	WA; Amber List
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Herring Gull	01/04/2023	WA; Red List

Scientific name	Common Name	Date of last record	Status*
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	01/04/2023	WA; Amber List
<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	House Martin	08/08/2017	WA; Amber List
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	27/10/2014	WA; Amber List
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	18/07/2020	Annex I BD; WA; Amber List
<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	Manx Shearwater	09/08/2017	WA; Amber List
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit	01/04/2023	WA; Red List
<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Merlin	20/10/2016	Annex I; WA; Amber List
<i>Larus canus</i>	Mew Gull	27/01/2019	WA; Amber List
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	27/10/2014	WA; Red List
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Wheatear	16/07/2020	WA; Amber List
<i>Columba livia</i>	Rock Dove	13/07/2020	WA
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	15/07/2020	Annex I BD; WA
<i>Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i>	Red-billed Chough	01/04/2023	Annex I BD; WA; Amber List
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Red-throated Diver	27/10/2014	Annex I BD; WA; Amber List
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	27/06/2017	WA; Amber List
<b>Cartilaginous Fish</b>			
<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	Basking Shark	24/08/2020	OSPAR Convention
<i>Raja clavata</i>	Thornback Ray	04/07/2015	OSPAR Convention
<b>Marine Mammals</b>			
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Common Dolphin	20/10/2015	Annex IV HD; WA
<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	Common Porpoise	29/10/2017	Annex II & V HD; WA; OSPAR Convention
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Common Seal	27/10/2014	Annex II & V HD; WA
<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Fin Whale	19/11/2020	Annex IV HD; WA

Scientific name	Common Name	Date of last record	Status*
<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	Grey Seal	01/08/2020	Annex II & V HD; WA
<b>Invasive Species</b>			
<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Brown Rat	19/04/2015	High Impact Invasive Species; S.I. 477/2011
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	European Rabbit	19/04/2015	Medium Impact Invasive Species

\*Abbreviations: Annex II/IV/V (non-avian species) = Habitats Directive (HD); Annex I = Birds Directive (BD); Red/Amber List = Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026 (BOCCI) (Gilbert et al., 2021).

## 4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information discussed and displayed above, the following recommendations are made:

- Part of the Slí Charman Coastal Trail, a 220km trail launched in the 1990's, and several informal pathways in the agricultural fields to the east of Hook Lighthouse are being used by visitors, and based on satellite imagery, lead to Slade village. Part of the Slí Charman Coastal Trail has fallen into disrepair and currently some sections are undergoing or are proposed for rehabilitation works. The construction of a formal path from the lighthouse to lead visitors along an already established coastal walking route should be considered as this would help reduce braiding and habitat degradation. This would require agreement with landowners along the route.
- The bare pathways to the cliffs are eroded and hazardous. Measures to restore and formalize some of these areas should be considered. The measures could include creating ramps or steps from the gravel parking area down onto the cliffs and towards the agricultural fields, which should be accompanied by barriers to ensure visitor safety.
- Where signage is being implemented, teleological signage (signage with instruction and justification for the instruction) should be used.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

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