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Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333

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National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta

Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



**National Parks and Wildlife Service,
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht,
7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Web: www.npws.ie
E-mail: nature.conservation@ahg.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*

| | |
|--------|--|
| 002333 | Knockacoller Bog SAC |
| 7110 | Active raised bogs* |
| 7120 | Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration |
| 7150 | Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion |

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

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

NPWS Documents

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Year : | 2014 |
| Title : | Raised Bog Monitoring and Assessment Survey 2013 |
| Author : | Fernandez, F.; Connolly K.; Crowley W.; Denyer J.; Duff K.; Smith G. |
| Series : | Irish Wildlife Manual No. 81 |
| <hr/> | |
| Year : | 2014 |
| Title : | National raised bog SAC management plan |
| Author : | Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht |
| Series : | Draft for consultation. 15 January 2014 |
| <hr/> | |
| Year : | 2014 |
| Title : | Knockacoller Bog (SAC 002333), Co. Laois, Site Report |
| Author : | Fernandez, F.; Connolly, K.; Crowley, W.; Denyer J.; Duff K.; Smith G. |
| Series : | Raised bog monitoring and assessment survey 2013 |
| <hr/> | |
| Year : | 2016 |
| Title : | Knockacoller Bog SAC (site code: 2333) Conservation objectives supporting document- raised bog habitats V1 |
| Author : | NPWS |
| Series : | Conservation objectives supporting document |

Other References

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Year : | 2011 |
| Title : | Review and revision of empirical critical loads and dose-response relationships. Proceedings of an expert workshop, Noordwijkerhout, 23-25 June 2010 |
| Author : | Bobbink, R.; Hettelingh, J.P. |
| Series : | RIVM report 680359002, Coordination Centre for Effects, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) |
| <hr/> | |
| Year : | 2014 |
| Title : | Nitrogen deposition and exceedance of critical loads for nutrient nitrogen in Irish grasslands |
| Author : | Henry, J.; Aherne, J. |
| Series : | Science of the Total Environment 470–471: 216–223 |

Spatial data sources

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Year : | 2014 |
| Title : | Scientific Basis for Raised Bog Conservation in Ireland |
| GIS Operations : | RBSB13_SACs_ARB_DRB dataset, RBSB13_SACs_2012_HB dataset, RBSB13_SACs_DrainagePatterns_5k dataset and RBSB13_SAC_LIDAR_DTMs dataset clipped to SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising |
| Used For : | potential 7110; digital elevation model; drainage patterns (maps 2 and 4) |
| <hr/> | |
| Year : | 2013 |
| Title : | Raised Bog Monitoring and Assessment Survey 2013 |
| GIS Operations : | RBMA13_ecotope_map dataset clipped to SAC boundary. Appropriate ecotopes selected and exported to new dataset. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising |
| Used For : | 7110 ecotopes (map 3) |
| <hr/> | |

Conservation Objectives for : Knockacoller Bog SAC [002333]

7110 Active raised bogs

To restore the favourable conservation condition of Active raised bogs in Knockacoller Bog SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

| Attribute | Measure | Target | Notes |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| Habitat area | Hectares | Restore area of active raised bog to 13.5ha, subject to natural processes | Active Raised Bog (ARB) habitat was mapped at 4.8ha by Fernandez et al. (2014). Area of Degraded Raised Bog (DRB) on the High Bog (HB) has been modelled as 24.9ha. See map 2. However, it is estimated that only 7.5ha is potentially restorable to ARB by drain blocking. The total potential ARB on the HB is therefore estimated to be 12.3ha. Eco-hydrological assessments of the cutover estimates that an additional 1.2ha of bog forming habitats could be restored. The long term target for ARB is therefore 13.5ha. See raised bog supporting document for further details on this and following attributes |
| Habitat distribution | Occurrence | Restore the distribution and variability of active raised bog across the SAC. See map 3 for distribution in 2012 | ARB habitat at Knockacoller is central and sub-central ecotopes. ARB currently occurs mainly on the north-western part of Knockacoller bog. DRB will require restoration measures. There is also potential for ARB restoration on cutover areas of the bog (see area target above) |
| High bog area | Hectares | No decline in extent of high bog necessary to support the development and maintenance of active raised bog. See map 2 | The area of high bog within Knockacoller Bog SAC in 2012 (latest figure available) was 53.3ha (DAHG 2014) |
| Hydrological regime: water levels | Centimetres | Restore appropriate water levels throughout the site | For ARB, mean water level needs to be near or above the surface of the bog lawns for most of the year. Seasonal fluctuations should not exceed 20cm, and should only be 10cm below the surface, except for very short periods of time. Open water is often characteristic of soak systems |
| Hydrological regime: flow patterns | Flow direction; slope | Restore, where possible, appropriate high bog topography, flow directions and slopes. See map 4 for current situation | ARB depends on mean water levels being near or above the surface of bog lawns for most of the year. Long and gentle slopes are the most favourable to achieve these conditions. Changes to flow directions due to subsidence of bogs can radically change water regimes and cause drying out of high quality ARB areas and soak systems |
| Transitional areas between high bog and adjacent mineral soils (including cutover areas) | Hectares; distribution | Restore adequate transitional areas to support/protect active raised bog and the services it provides | Studies suggest that the ARB is threatened due to water loss from past drainage and turf cutting around the entire margin of Knockacoller Bog. No natural marginal habitats exist. Eco-hydrological assessments have evaluated the potential for ARB restoration on cutover areas (see note for habitat area attribute above) |
| Vegetation quality: central ecotope, active flush, soaks, bog woodland | Hectares | Restore 6.8ha of central ecotope/active flush/soaks/bog woodland as appropriate | At least 50% of ARB habitat should be high quality (i.e. central ecotope, active flush, soaks, bog woodland). Target area of active raised bog for the site has been set at 13.5ha (see area target above) |
| Vegetation quality: microtopographical features | Hectares | Restore adequate cover of high quality microtopographical features | High quality microtopography (hummocks, hollows and pools) is well developed in the north-western part of Knockacoller Bog |
| Vegetation quality: bog moss (<i>Sphagnum</i>) species | Percentage cover | Restore adequate cover of bog moss (<i>Sphagnum</i>) species to ensure peat-forming capacity | <i>Sphagnum</i> cover varies naturally across Ireland with relatively high cover in the east to lower cover in the west. Hummock forming species such as <i>Sphagnum austinii</i> are particularly good peat formers. <i>Sphagnum</i> cover and distribution also varies naturally across a site |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Typical ARB species: flora | Occurrence | Restore, where appropriate, typical active raised bog flora | Typical flora species include widespread species, as well as those with more restricted distributions but typical of the habitat's subtypes or geographical range |
| Typical ARB species: fauna | Occurrence | Restore, where appropriate, typical active raised bog fauna | Typical fauna species include widespread species, as well as those with more restricted distributions but typical of the habitat's subtypes or geographical range |
| Elements of local distinctiveness | Occurrence | Maintain features of local distinctiveness, subject to natural processes | These include features of geological, topographical, archaeological and hydrological interest as well as noteworthy species of flora and fauna |
| Negative physical indicators | Percentage cover | Negative physical features absent or insignificant | Negative physical indicators include: bare peat, algae dominated pools and hollows, marginal cracks, tear patterns, subsidence features such as dry mineral mounds /ridges emerging or expanding and evidence of burning |
| Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species | Percentage cover | Native negative indicator species at insignificant levels | Disturbance indicators include species indicative of conditions drying out such as abundant bog asphodel (<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>), deergrass (<i>Trichophorum germanicum</i>) and harestail cotton-grass (<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>) forming tussocks; abundant magellanic bog-moss (<i>Sphagnum magellanicum</i>) in pools previously dominated by <i>Sphagnum</i> species typical of very wet conditions (e.g. feathery bog-moss (<i>S. cuspidatum</i>)); and indicators of frequent burning events such as abundant <i>Cladonia floerkeana</i> and high cover of carnation sedge (<i>Carex panicea</i>) (particularly in true midlands raised bogs) |
| Vegetation composition: non-native invasive species | Percentage cover | Non-native invasive species at insignificant levels and not more than 1% cover | Most common non-native invasive species include lodgepole pine (<i>Pinus contorta</i>), rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>) and pitcherplant (<i>Sarracenia purpurea</i>) |
| Air quality: nitrogen deposition | kg N/ha/year | Air quality surrounding bog close to natural reference conditions. The total N deposition should not exceed 5kg N/ha/yr | Change in air quality can result from fertiliser drift; adjacent quarry activities; or other atmospheric inputs. The critical load range for ombrotrophic bogs has been set as between 5 and 10kg N/ha/yr (Bobbink and Hettelingh, 2011). The latest N deposition figures for the area around Knockacoller Bog suggests that the current level is approximately 15.7kg N/ha/yr (Henry and Aherne, 2014) |
| Water quality | Hydrochemical measures | Water quality on the high bog and in transitional areas close to natural reference conditions | Water chemistry within raised bogs is influenced by atmospheric inputs (rainwater). However, within soak systems, water chemistry is influenced by other inputs such as focused flow or interaction with underlying substrates. Water chemistry in areas surrounding the high bog varies due to influences of different water types (bog water, regional groundwater, and run-off from surrounding mineral lands) |

Conservation Objectives for : Knockacoller Bog SAC [002333]

7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs (7110) and a separate conservation objective has not been set in Knockacoller Bog SAC

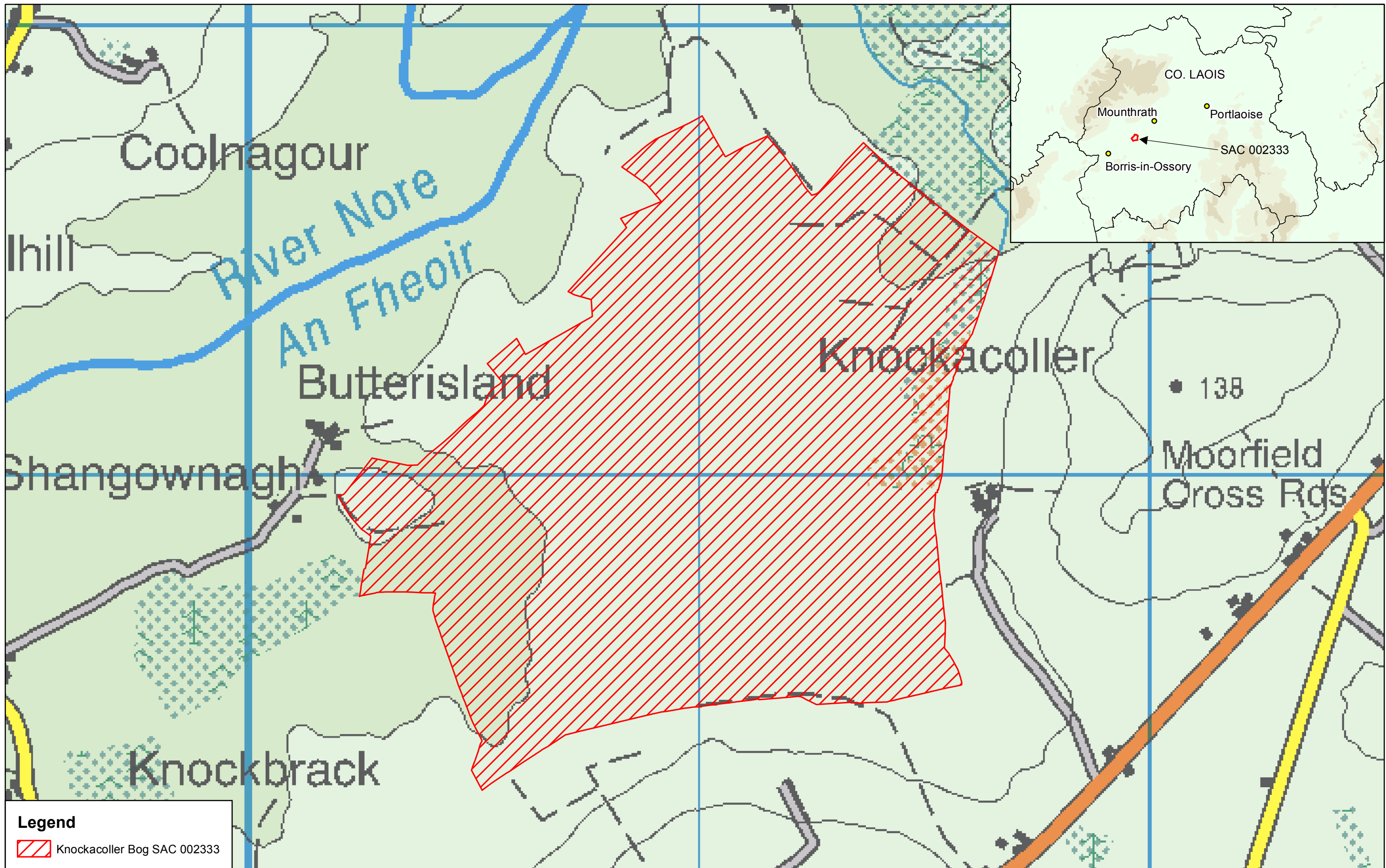
| Attribute | Measure | Target | Notes |
|-----------|---------|--------|-------|
| | | | |

Conservation Objectives for : Knockacoller Bog SAC [002333]


7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion


Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs (7110) and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set for the habitat in Knockacoller Bog SAC

| Attribute | Measure | Target | Notes |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
|------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|



Legend

 Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333

 *An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta*
 Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

**MAP 1:
 KNOCKACOLLER BOG SAC
 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
 SAC DESIGNATION**

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

**SITE CODE:
 SAC 002333; version 3.01. Co. Laois**

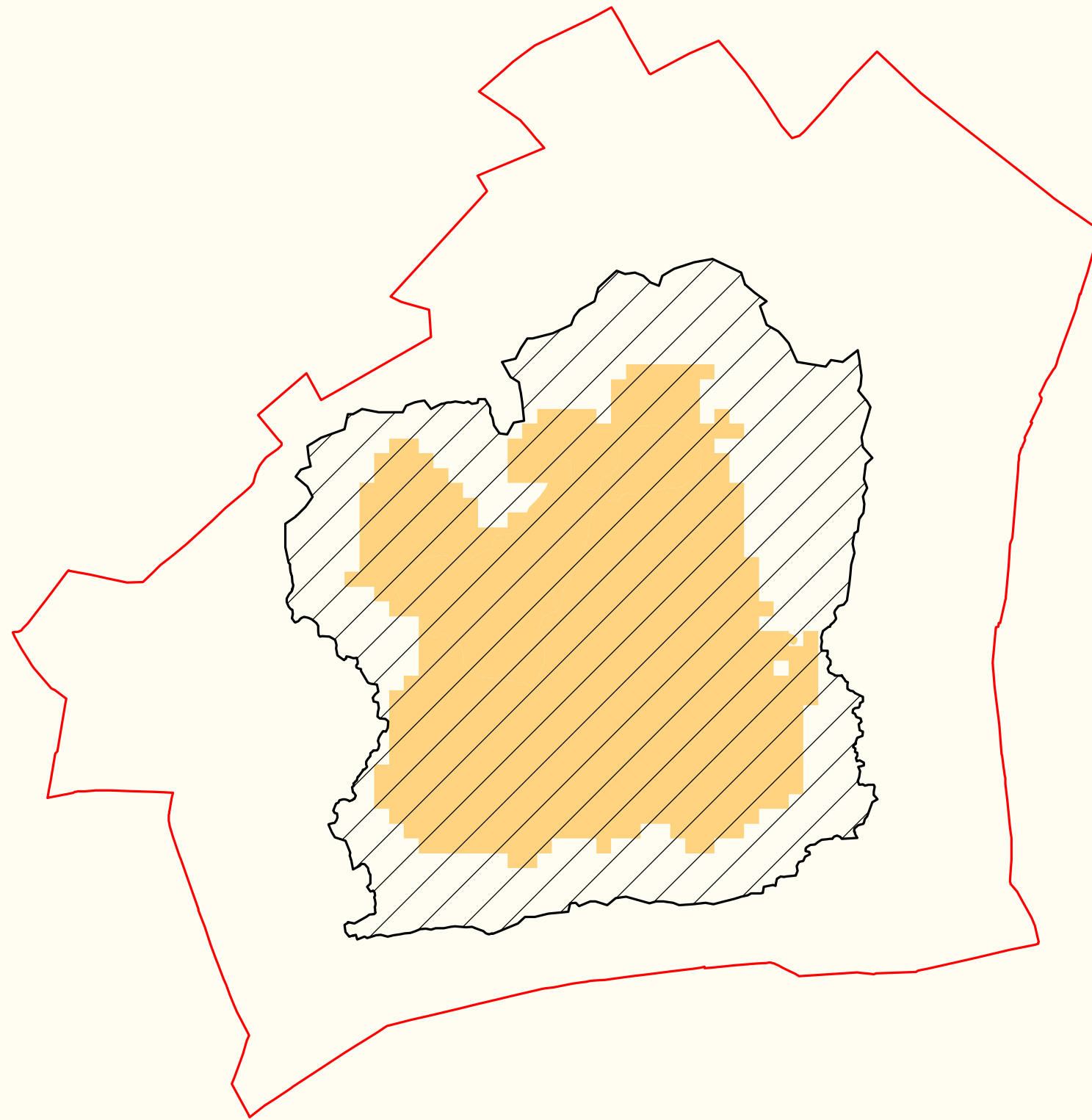
0 100 200 300 400 500 m

The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
 Ordnance Survey of Ireland Licence No EN 0059216. © Ordnance Survey of Ireland Government of Ireland.

Níl sna teorainneacha ar na léarscáileanna ach nod garshuíomhach ginearálta. Féadfar athbheithnithe a déanamh ar theorainneacha na gceantar comharthaite. Suirbhéarachtá Ordonáis na hÉireann Ceadúnas Uimh EN 0059216. © Suirbhéarachtá Ordonáis na hÉireann Rialtas na hÉireann.

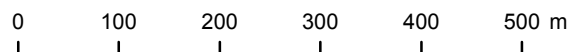


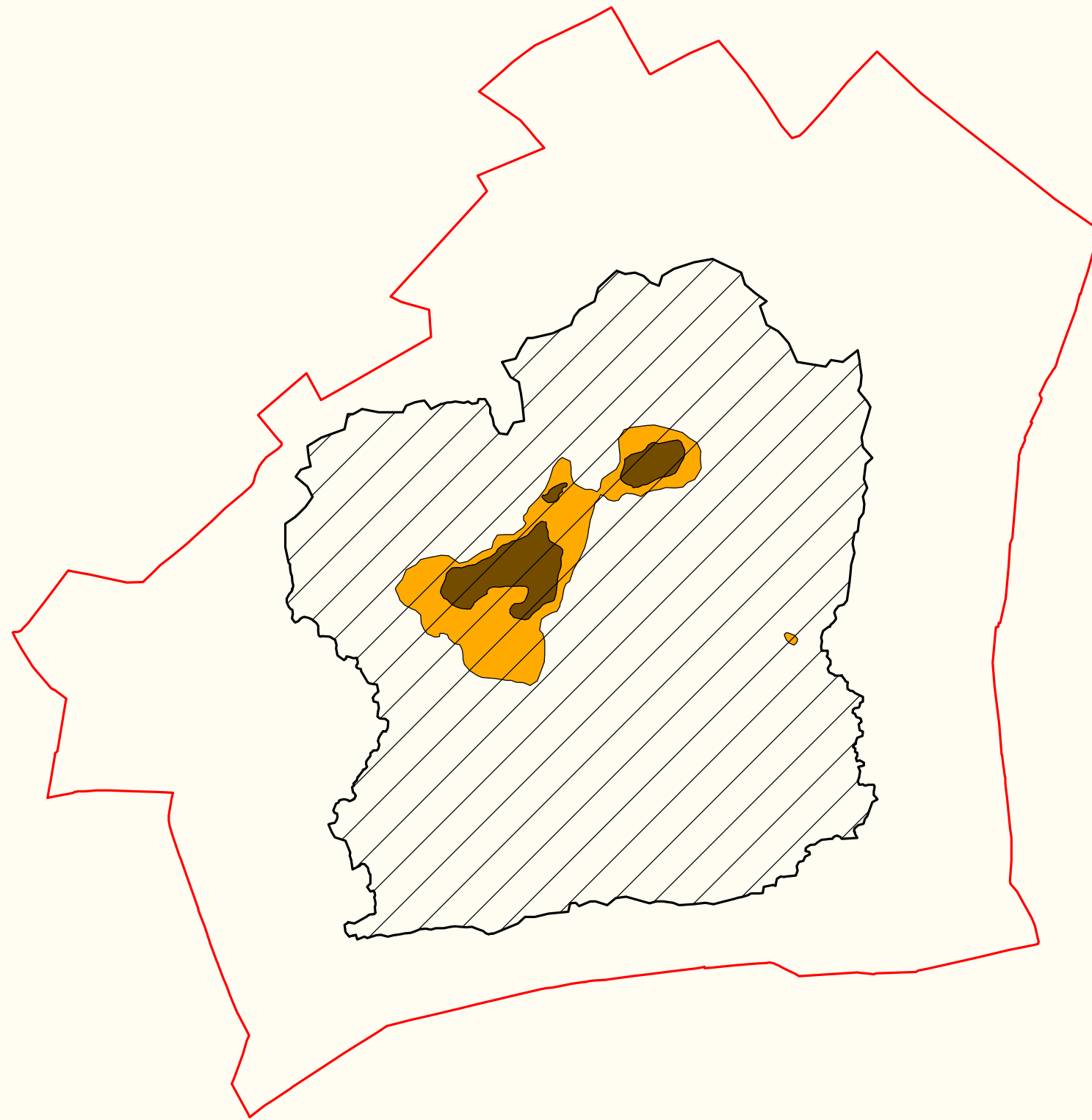
**Map Version 1
 Date: Feb 2016**



Legend

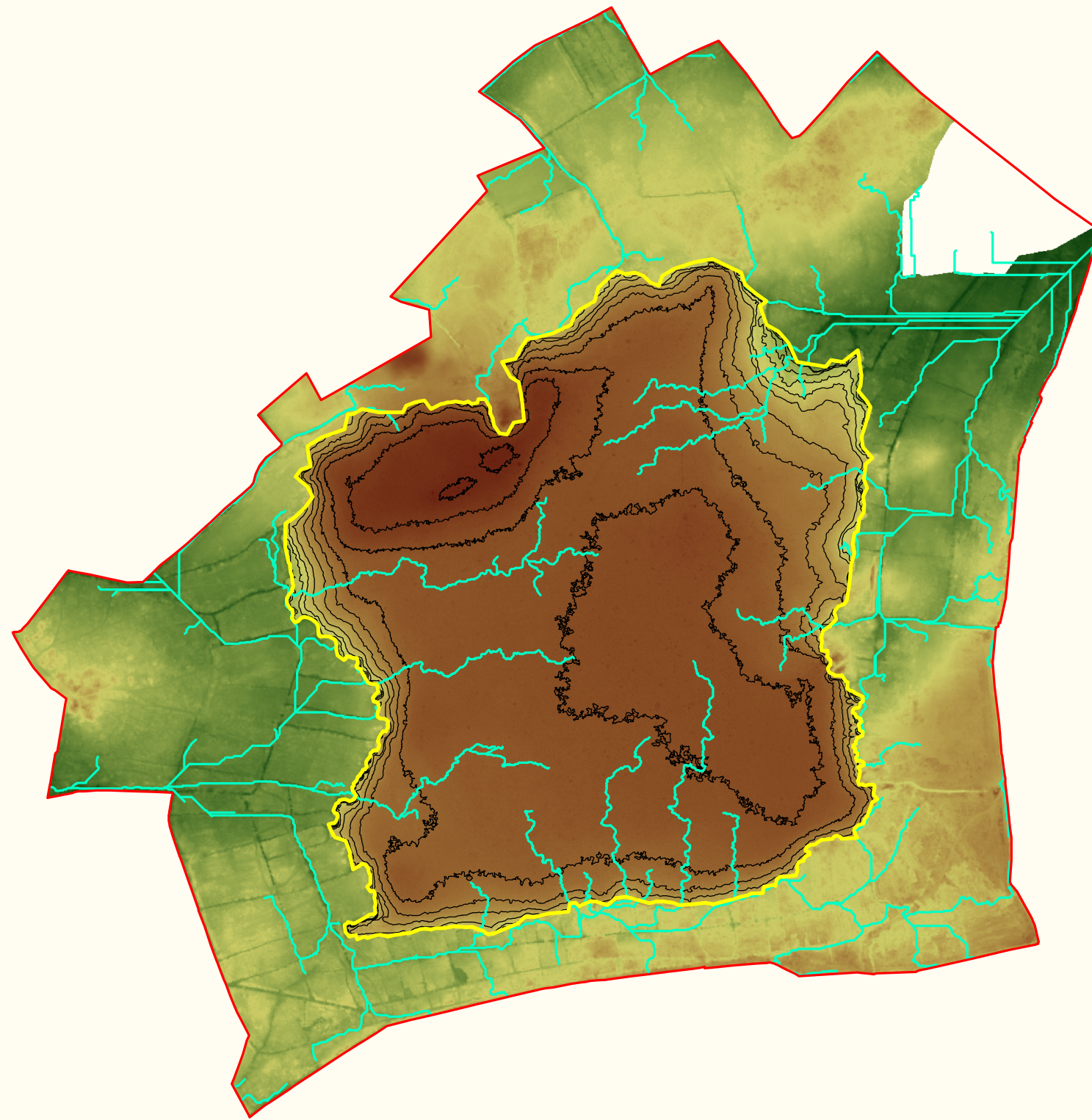
- Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333
- High Bog Boundary
- Potential 7110 *Active Raised Bogs





Legend

- Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333
- High Bog Boundary
- Active Raised Bogs Ecotopes**
- Central ecotope
- Sub-central ecotope



Legend

- Knockacoller Bog SAC 002333
- High Bog Boundary
- Drainage Patterns
- Contours

Elevation

