

APPENDIX NO. 14

NATURA 2000 SITE SYNOPSIS

*For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.*

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BALLYMACODA (CLONPRIEST AND PILLMORE)

SITE CODE: 000077

This coastal site stretches north-east from Ballymacoda to within about 6 km of Youghal, Co. Cork. Though moderate in size, it has a good diversity of coastal habitats, including several listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The site comprises the estuary of the Womanagh River, a substantial river which drains a large agricultural catchment. Part of the tidal section of the river is included in the site and on the seaward side the boundary extends to the low tide mark. The inner part of the estuary is well sheltered by a stabilised sandy peninsula (Ring peninsula). Sediment types vary from muds to muddy sands in the inner part to fine rippled sands in the outer exposed part. The macro-invertebrate fauna of the intertidal flats is well-developed, with the following species occurring: *Corophium volutator*, *Hediste diversicolor*, *Arenicola marina*, *Macoma balthica*, *Scrobicularia plana*, *Cerastoderma edule* and *Lanice conchilega*. In the more sheltered areas the intertidal flats are colonised by mats of green algae (mostly *Enteromorpha* spp.), with brown seaweeds occurring on the rocky shores of the shingle spits. Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*) has spread within the estuary since the late 1970s.

The main channel is flanked by salt marshes and wet fields, much of the latter being improved for agriculture. The salt marshes are mainly classified as Atlantic salt meadows, with such species as Sea Purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*), Sea Lavender (*Limonium humile*) and Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*). On the lower levels of the marshes, and extending out onto the open sand and mud flats, occur annual salt marsh species such as Glasswort (*Salicornia* spp.) and Sea Blite (*Suaeda maritima*). The salt marshes at the site are of particular note as they are of the scarce 'lagoon' type. They are also of good quality and parts of them are in active growth.

Part of the site is also a Special Protection Area for birds; the main interest of the area lies in its waterfowl, with flocks of up to 20,000 regularly present during winter (e.g. 1995-96 peak = 19,725). A total of 107 wetland species have been recorded from this site. Maximum figures for the four winters 1994/95-97/98 show that Golden Plover, a species listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive, almost reached internationally important numbers (9,100) and that the Bar-tailed Godwit, another Annex I species, was present in nationally important numbers (494). Eleven other species also occurred in nationally important numbers: Teal (688), Ringed Plover (163), Grey Plover (504), Lapwing (3800), Sanderling (108), Dunlin (3,373), Curlew (1,378), Knot (280), Redshank (300), Black-tailed Godwit (422) and Turnstone (144). Several additional species occur in regionally or locally important numbers.

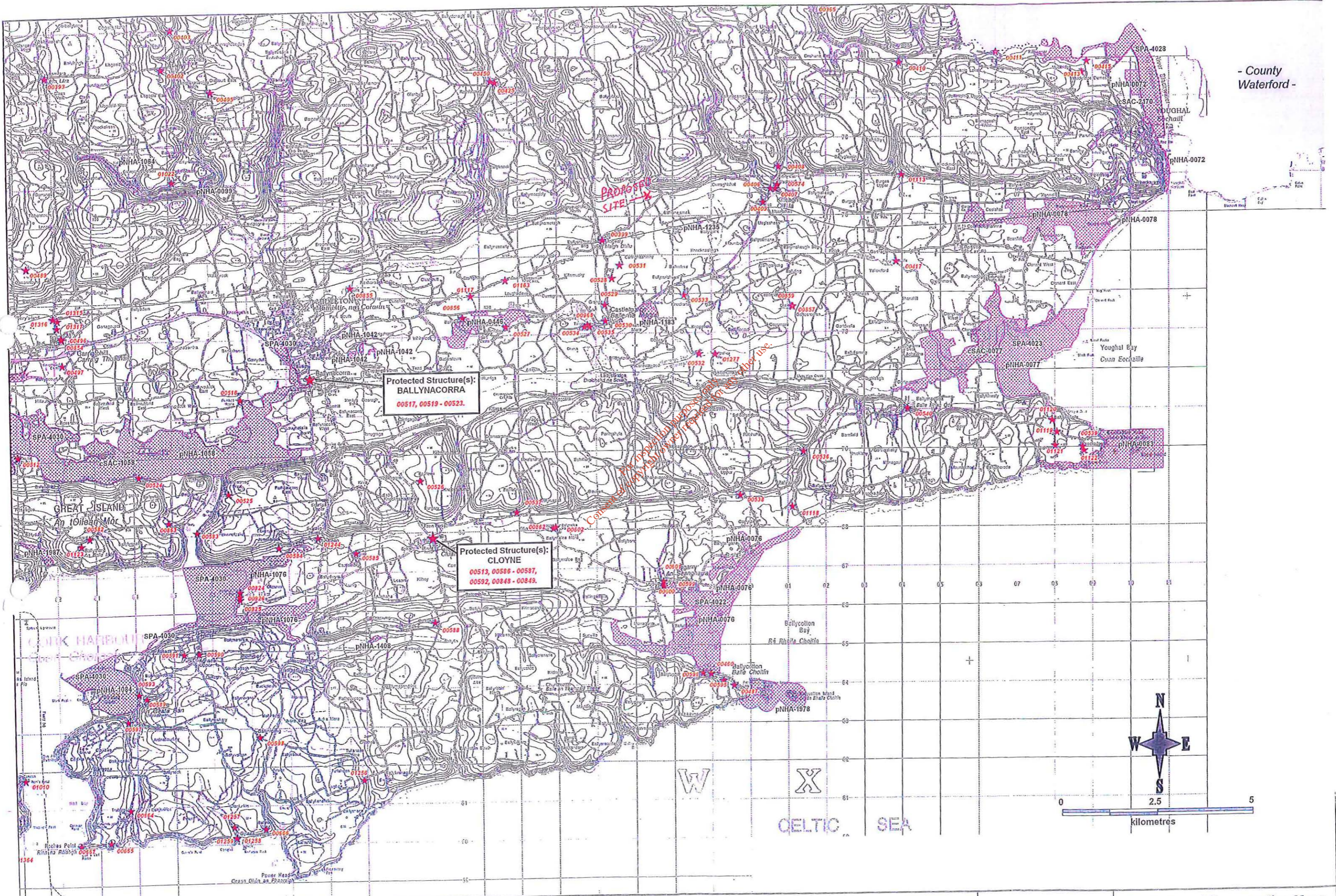
Much of the land adjacent to the estuary has been reclaimed and is subject to intensive agriculture, with cattle grazing and silage being the most common land uses. However, many of these fields remain marshy and are important feeding and roosting

areas for wildfowl, Golden Plover and Lapwing. The most serious threat to the site is water pollution, primarily from slurry spreading.

This site's conservation value derives largely from the presence of a number of important coastal habitats listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. But, there is also considerable ornithological interest; Ballymacoda is one of the most important bird sites in the country and supports a higher number of waders than any other Cork estuary of its size. It also contains important numbers of the Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit, two Annex I Bird Directive species, and nationally important numbers of eleven further bird species.

*For inspection purposes only.
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use.*

8.10.2001



Protected Structure(s):
BALLYNACORRA
00517, 00519 - 00523.

Protected Structure(s):
CLOYNE
00513, 00586 - 00597,
00592, 00848 - 00849.

PROPOSED
SITE

Comments: *to be read in conjunction with...*