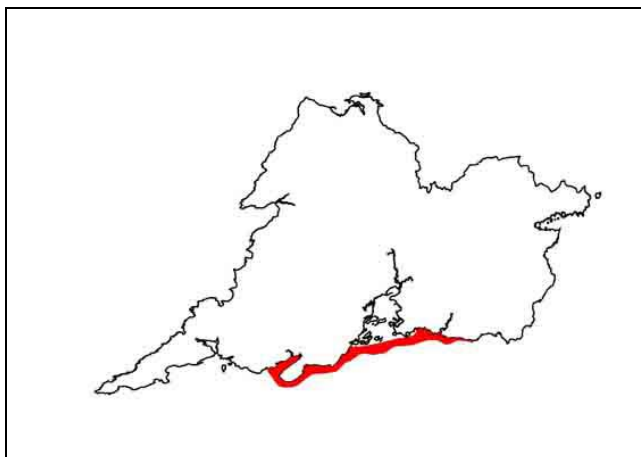


## *AREA 11: RIVER SHANNON*



### *Key Characteristics*

- Coastal fringe is flatter and slopes down towards the sea.
- Views to scattered farm house settlements.
- Deep water berthing facilities.
- Views of shipping, commercial, industrial activity, pasture land and forestry.
- Focal point for travelling the waterways of Ireland.
- Shannon Airport is a landmark transport node of transcontinental significance (also, Fergus Estuary Seascape Area below).
- Car ferry service to Tarbert along the north coast of County Kerry.

*Typical Photograph: Industrial Development along the River Shannon*



*Landscape Character types and habitat types*

LCTs	HLTs	HLT codes	HT	HT codes
Flat Estuarine Farmlands and Islands	Estuarine Intertidal	EI	Improved agricultural grassland.	GA1
	Enclosed Land 4	EL4	Muddy sand shores	LS3
	Airports	A	Estuaries	MW4
	Designed Landscape	DL		
	Devotional and Ritual	DR		
	Rough Ground 2	RG2		

*Seascape Character Area Extent*

The River Shannon SCA extends from Limerick to east of Money Point. It is bounded by Kerry Head to the South and Kilrush farmlands to the North.

*Geology and Landform*

The River Shannon SCA consists of a shallow low-lying and muddy linear coastline. This area is composed of a prominently ridged landscape, with linear hills aligned south-west to north-east. The coastal fringe is flatter and slopes towards the Shannon. It also becomes increasingly flatter towards Kilrush.

### *Coastal Ecology*

The River Shannon offers a zone of passage for migratory fish species including salmon and eel. Other fish species found in the river include shellfish, pollack, conger, thornback, bullhuss, tope, three bearded rocking, dogfish and bass.

Clonderlaw Bay, west of Labasheeda, is a designated SPA with important intertidal mudflats, which provide winter fowl and waders, feeding areas and preserves post-medieval fish traps and a watermill paddle (O'Sullivan 2001, 311-2).

Derrygeeha Lough is situated 2km from Clonderlaw Bay. The main interest of the site is entomological as it is only one of two stations for the caddis fly (*Cyrrus insolutus*) in Ireland.

A resident population of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncates*) are often visible along the River Shannon. The River is also of high botanical value and records of the very rare rush, the Triangular Clubrush (*Schoenoplectus triquetter*), have been documented.

### *Historic Seascapes and Human Influences*

The River Shannon SCA is part of the largest deep water estuarine complex in Ireland. Over 750 vessels enter the estuary annually and range from small coasters to vessels of up to 180,000 DWT. The farmland within one mile of the estuary is mostly large straight-sided fields (ELA, including drained *corccass* watermeadow). It was improved from the seventeenth century onwards through the plantation and settlement of a skilled and compliant population. It is associated with designed landscapes at Cahiracon, Kilmore and elsewhere.

Sixteenth century, ruined castellated tower houses dot the shore, providing viewpoints and reference points (e.g. Mountshannon Point, Castle Donnel and Cratloekeel, Colmanstown Castle and Point) and the Napoleonic war battery at Kilkerrin is of national architectural significance (20406805NIAH).

Saint's Island may indicate a continued reverence of a place: whether historically justified or not, it respects a common interpretation of the landscape as ritual or devotional in character.

Meelick Rocks, in the upper estuary intertidal zone, has an exposure of Mesolithic peat (6240 ± 25 BP, 5299–5078 cal BC; GrN21929) and Neolithic tree-stumps (4160 ± 20 BP, 2875–2634 cal. BC; GrN-21930). A polished stone schist axe (NMI 95E0228:3) indicates prehistoric trade or transport of prestige goods from Connemara, or further, and possibly a ritual deposition.

### *Condition and Sensitivity*

The estuary is in moderate to good condition. However, industrial and commercial activity dominates the view from land to sea.

Low lying, flat and open views to sea increase the area's sensitivity to change particularly from shipping and industrial activities.

### *Forces for Change*

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- Visible impacts of shipping and commercial activity
  - Plantations of coniferous forestry
  - Insensitive housing development
  - Impacts upon water quality due to drainage from the settlements, farmland and industry (bauxite refinery at Aughinish)
  - Effects of Municipal outfalls from activities in and around Limerick City, Shannon Airport and other urban settlements, increased urban expansion leading to faster run off, a steepened flood 'profile', and scouring erosion of mudflats
  - Excess nutrients draining into the River Shannon from Lough Derg
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### *Principles for Seascape Management*

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- Implement regular monitoring of coastal waters particularly discharges from Limerick City and industries in the area
  - Best practice forestry guidelines should be adhered to in order to avoid inappropriately siting or design of plantations
  - Infrastructural developments including road widening along the coastline should consider local landscape character
  - Linear development along the coastline should be avoided and all other development should be screened appropriately.
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