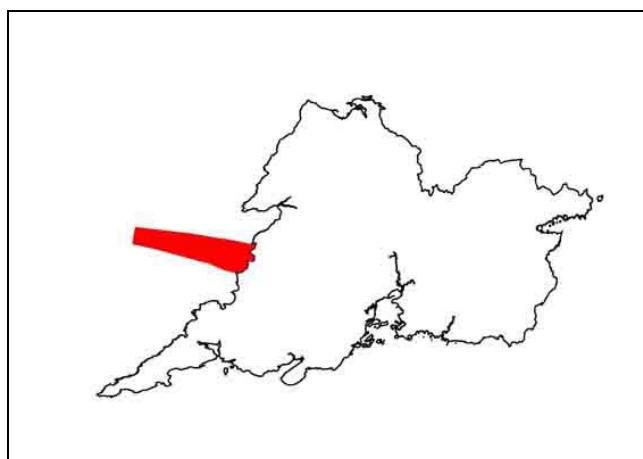


AREA 5: MALBAY



Key Characteristics

- This seascape is part of a candidate SAC extending from Spanish Point to Doonbeg and includes the neighbouring islands.
- Flat, indented coastline, with some wide sandy bays.
- Headland and bay are exposed to westerly Atlantic winds as well as affording impressive sunsets.
- Developments include airport, golf course and campsites.
- Views are available from headland towards Mutton Island, past Caherrush Point.
- Bay displays yellow sand at low tide.

Typical Photograph: Sunset North of Quilty



Landscape Character types and habitat types

LCTs	HLTs	HLT codes	HT	HT codes
Coastal Farmland and Islands	Coastal Intertidal	CI	Sea inlets and bays	MW2
Coastal Plain and Dunes	Recreational	R	Sand shores	LS2
	Enclosed Land 4	EL4	Amenity grassland	GA2
	Settlement 2	S2	Embryonic dunes	CD1
	Dunes	D	Shingle and gravel shores	LS 1
	Devotional and Ritual	DR		

Seascape Character Area Extent

Malbay SCA extends from the southern fringe of Cream Point to Mutton Island, west of Lurga Point on the mainland of County Clare.

Landcover and Geology

This area is underlain by Namurian sandstone and shale. Bedrock is close to the surface or exposed along much of the shoreline and Mutton Island. The coastline is composed of flat rocky headlands and bays with long broad beaches of bright yellow sand, with shingle and berms.

Coastal Ecology

Reefs are present in coastal waters, which probably accounts for the large numbers of wrecks; a total of twenty-five are recorded in SCA5 and SCA6. Small sand dune systems are found near Spanish Point and Lurga Point

Historic Seascapes and Human Influence

Spanish Point (S2) is a focal point for holiday home development, much of it inappropriate in terms of siting and design, situated as it is in visually prominent headland locations. An exception would be the former coastguard accommodation 'Atlantic Lodge' (20403012NIAH).

Spanish Point is named for Armada sailors from the shipwrecked San Esteban and San Marcos (SCA6 below), traditionally said to be buried at Tuama na Spaineach following their extra-judicial execution.

The religious centre of Mutton Island falls within Mal Bay although the rest of the island lies within the next SCA and lends its name to it. Mutton Island may have been the site of an early Christian monastery and its church, burial ground and cross demonstrate a continued role for contemplative pilgrimage in relative isolation.

The headlands are extremely exposed and mostly crowned with highly intervisible promontory forts.

Condition and Sensitivity

Condition improves south of Caherrush Point. However north of Caherrush Point to Spanish Point developments are scattered along the coastline, including a golf course and airfield. Inappropriate holiday home development at Spanish Point, which is a visually prominent headland, detracts from the character.

Spanish Point is highly sensitive to change due to its visible headland. Expansion on Mutton Island would also pose a threat as views to the islands are extensive from the Malbay SCA. Sightlines between promontory forts are a significant factor in their visual amenity.

Mutton Island is currently for sale (Jan 2003, €1.9million) and there is uncertainty about the future intentions of potential purchasers.

Forces for Change

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- Holiday home development, golf courses, and campsites at Spanish Point
 - Degradation of dune system near Spanish Point
 - Visual impacts from the power station
 - Telecommunication masts visible throughout coastal farmlands
 - Global warming and sea level rise
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Principles for Seascape Management

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- Linear development along the coastline should be avoided and all other development should be screened appropriately
 - Careful planning and allocation of coastal tax incentives is needed
 - Implement regular monitoring of bays, particularly in areas where tourism activities are prominent
 - Dune systems should be strictly protected
 - Careful siting of telecommunication masts to protect views to the coastline is needed
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