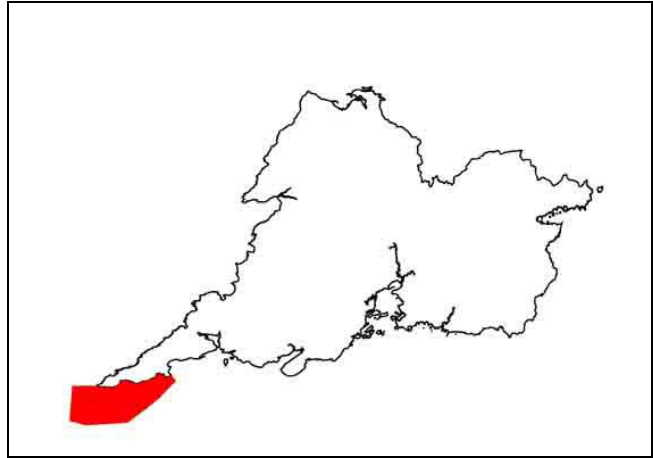


## *AREA 9: SOUTH LOOP HEAD AND SHANNON MOUTH*



### *Key Characteristics*

- Direct views to land across water, i.e. Ballybunnion and Kilconly Point.
- Rinevella Bay is a sheltered sandy inlet.
- The area is largely unspoilt and remote with little evidence of holiday home development or caravan parks.
- Kilbaha pier is of regional architectural significance (20407102NIAH).
- This area marks the limit of the coastal intertidal zone.

## Typical Photograph: Coastline South of Kilbaha



### Landscape Character types and habitat types

LCTs	HLTs	HLT codes	HT	HT codes
Peninsular	Coastal Intertidal	CI	Improved agricultural grassland	GA1
Farmland	Enclosed Land 3	EL3	Sheltered rocky shores	LR3
	Enclosed land 4	EL4	Shingle and gravel shores	LS1
	Rough Ground 3	RG3	Sea Inlets and bays	MW2

### Seascape Character Area Extent

The area extends from the southern tip of Loop Head to Kilcredaun Point at the mouth of the Shannon.

### Geology and Landform

The southern area of the peninsula is largely flat with distinctive long low ridges and hills close to the coastline, e.g. Rehy Hill

### Coastal Ecology

This LCA is largely composed of sheltered coastal farmland compared to the windswept and exposed farms of the North Loop Head Peninsula, but with many of the characteristic linear fields (EL3), which are also found along the north coast. Bridges of Ross (just North of Kilbaha on the road to Loop Head) offers spectacular cliff scenery for some of the best bird watching locations in Ireland. The area is also considered important for mackerel fishing.

### *Historic Seascapes and Human Influence*

The area is served mainly by minor roads except for Kilbaha where a Class B road is present. Development is scattered but is more concentrated than on North Loop Head.

Loop Head is an isolated area of rough ground (RG3), part of the coastal ridge noted along the north coast. The nineteenth century lighthouses at Loop Head (20407101NIAH) and Ladder Rock (20407203NIAH) provide foci and viewpoints. The associated cottages at Loop Head preserve the remains of the c 1700 lighthouse. Despite navigational aids, forty wrecks are recorded between Loop Head and Carrigaholt.

### *Condition and Sensitivity*

The area is in good condition as it remains largely unspoilt and remote.

Large-scale development would be very evident due to the flat open nature of the area with expansive skies. Developments would be visible from North Kerry (Ballybunnion). Traditional small-scale housing developments of scattered white painted cottages should be encouraged.

### *Forces for Change*

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- Insensitive housing development
  - Large scale barns and farm units
  - Agricultural change, intensification or abandonment
  - Removal of field boundaries affecting the integrity of ladder fields
  - Vertical development such as windfarms and masts, which would be particularly apparent
  - Dereliction of traditional cottages and population decline
  - Increased maricultural activities along the peninsula
  - Enhanced access to primary transportation and urban centres as illustrated in the West Clare Local Area Plan
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### *Principles for Seascape Management*

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- Restore existing derelict structures and buildings
  - Careful screening, siting and design is important for any new developments or houses
  - Appropriate proactive planning policies need to be developed and implemented to protect sensitive areas
  - Implement regular monitoring of coastal waters particularly in areas where mariculture and tourism activities are prominent
  - Promote retention of field boundaries to maintain the integrity of both the seascape and landscape.
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