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Boosterstown Marsh, Dublin

A nature reserve located near the Booterstown Dart station

Environmental and heritage significance

The only remaining saltmarsh on the south shore of Dublin Bay - it provides an environmental awareness amenity within an urban setting. A brackish water marsh, approx. 4.3 ha, with both salt and fresh water intakes. It has a seasonal and annual fluctuation in its pattern of vegetation and this instability is characteristic of marshes of this type.

The only Bird Sanctuary in South Dublin Bay - Dublin Bay is an internationally important feeding and roosting area for ducks, geese and waders, and probably holds the highest concentration of wintering waterfowl of an Irish estuary. As part of the Dublin Bay area, Booterstown Marsh is an essential refuelling and resting spot for migrating birds and provides three main habitats ranging from freshwater to saltwater(Moorhen, Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler, Teal, Snipe, Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Dunlin, and Brent Geese).

Puccinellia fasciculata occurs in the marsh - it is one of only 68 plant species protected, along with its habitat, under the Wildlife Act (Flora Protection Order of 1987).

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History

Up to the early 19th century, the area currently occupied by Booterstown Marsh was part of Merrion Strand and extended as a fringe marsh from Dublin City to Blackrock. Overtime much of this was lost to reclamation and development. In 1834 the new Dublin to Kingston railway was built on a raised stone-faced embankment across this part of the bay, cutting off an area of the strand between Merrion Gates and Blackrock from the sea. On the first six-inch Ordnance Survey map of this area in the 1830's, the resulting tidal lagoon (or intake) measured over 28.3 ha and was already subdivided into three parts. Much of the original lagoon was infilled in the 19th century, leaving only Booterstown Marsh at or near the high tide level. For most of the period from the mid-19th and mid-20th century the marsh area was grazed or cultivated and cultivation ridges, which are still a prominent feature of the eastern side of the marsh. During both World Wars much of the marsh was drained and cultivated, restricting but not eliminating the influence of the inflowing streams and saline ditch. When the allotments fell into disuse, marsh vegetation gradually reclaimed the arable land. In the 1950's and 1960's, land was further infilled at both ends of the marsh, a car park was constructed at the south-western corner, while the Trimleston stream was culverted along the northern edge of the marsh, to discharge to the sea.

How it was acquired by An Taisce

Requested by An Taisce in 1950 to prevent development on wasteland.

Designations

- Bird Sanctuary - An Taisce assigned this title and it gives the site no legal protection but it highlighted the ornithological importance before binding designation was forthcoming.
- Part of a proposed NHA, which stretches from Dun Laoghaire west pier to Merrion Gates out into bay. This will give the Marsh important recognition outside Ireland.
- Part of a proposed SAC for south Dublin Bay (Natura 2000, 210), gives the marsh recognition for its ornithological importance.
- Zoned F in the current Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown County Council Development Plan. This plan also stipulates that the marsh is an Area of Regional Scientific Importance. In the Council Tourism Development Plan the marsh is described as a tourism asset and its development is a priority.
- *Puccinellia fasciculata* occurs in the marsh and is one of 68 plant species, which is protected, along with its habitat, under the Wildlife Act (Flora Protection Order of 1987). As a result, the Wildlife Service plays a monitoring role and must approve any plans for the marsh. This should be qualification for NHA status.

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Boooterstown Nature Reserve Management Advisory Committee (BMAC)

- Rebecca Jeffares - Chair
- Michael Brady - Secretary

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- Jo Callanan
- Mairead Mehigan
- Sean Hogan - Birdwatch Ireland

Friends of Booterstown

Title Type: Leashold

Acquired from: William James Walsh Esq. & Others (Pembroke Estate)

Date acquired: 14th October 1971

An Taisce Local Association: Dun Laoghaire

Location: Rock Road, Booterstown, Dublin

Entrance Longitude:

53.31

Entrance Latitude:

-6.20

Open by appointment for research

Contact: info@antaisce.org

Banner photo by Albert White

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